

Sikhism khalsa code of conduct of 18th century and sikh rehat maryada research pa...

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The Khalsa is also known as the Guru Panth (Jacobsen, 2011). It is a collective body of all Sikhs who have been initiated represented by five Sikhs who are referred to as the five beloved ones. Khalsa can be translated to mean free and it refers to a state of being genuine and pure among the Sikhs. The Khalsa was at first inaugurated by a Guru by the name Guru Gobind Singh on Baisakhi day (30th of March in the year 1699). The guru baptized five Sikhs and then asked the five Khalsas to baptize them also. The Guru then baptized thousands of people into the Khalsa order. A person is supposed to undertake a Khalsa baptism when he feels that he has spiritually evolved and is clean enough to live up to the high spiritual expectations of the Guru (Rait, 2005). Gobind Singh. Amrit, the Khalsa initiation ceremony is usually conducted in a place that is referred to as a Gurdwara in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib and initiated Sikhs (five in number). The five initiated Sikhs represent Panj Piyaranas. Panj Piyaranas refers to the first 5 Sikhs who were ever initiated. During the ceremony, all the principles of Sikhism are affirmed by the participants, prayers are said and religious hymns are also recited from the scripture of the Sikhs (Pruthi, 2004) The candidates drink the Amrit from the same bowl and have the rest of the amrit sprinkled to their hair and eyes. The Amrit is usually a mixture of water and sugar and has been stirred by the use of a double edged sword during preparation. The candidates then recite the fundamentals of Sikhism (Mool mantra). An explanation of Sikhism rules follows readings from the Guru Sahib Granth. The ceremony is finally closed by eating Karah parshad (A ceremonial sweet tasting delicacy that has been blessed for the ceremony. It is made from ghee, sugar and semolina). During the ceremony, the initiate is usually

instructed on the following:

- You shall never cut or remove any hair from your body
- You shall never use any intoxicant like alcohol or tobacco
- You shall never consume the flesh of any animal that has been killed and slaughtered in the way Muslims do.
- You shall never commit the sin of adultery.

On top of the above rules, the initiate shall be expected to put on all the physical symbols that belong to a Khalsa and shall adhere at all times to the Khalsa code of conduct. All Sikhs are supposed to be working towards Khalsa if they have not achieved it. From the year 1699 onwards, the temporary sikh leadership was passed to a Khalsa who had the title of Guru Panth. Guru Granth Sahib was bestowed with spiritual leadership of the Sikhs. The Khalsa was responsible for military, executive and civil authority in the society of the Sikhs. The Khalsa may also be referred to as the Nation of the Sikhs. Khalsa Sikhs must all have undergone the Amrit ceremony that is sacred and initiated by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru.

The khalsa Sikhs are easily identifiable with the titles of Kaur and Singh and the given five Ks. The titles of Singh and Kaur are given to a disciple after baptism into the Khalsa order. The event at which Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa in 1699 had coincided with the day of a new lunar month. He allowed that every Sikh should become an Amritdhari after taking the Amrit and should also follow the five Ks. He taught that the Ks are a physical display of commitment to the Guru Nanak Dev philosophy just like the uniform of an organization. The Ks are not to be taken as mere symbols but should be viewed in this light. A male who has been initiated into the order is

given the title Singh which means a lion while a female initiate is given the title Kaur meaning a princess. The two are commonly referred by the term amritdhari which means that they have taken amrit. The Khalsa order is a major pinnacle of the religion of Sikhism. Once a person has been initiated into the order of the Khalsa, it is believed that he has shed all bodily weaknesses, overcome all inner evils and became as brave as a tiger. A khalsa is not expected to believe any kinds of superstition or perform any ritual. The sikh is only supposed to believe in god who is the only creator of all that walks the face of the earth, the destroyer, the protector and the master.

Khalsa code of conduct:

In regard to worship, all Sikhs are expected to worship only one God who is the creator and the destroyer. They are not to worship any god or goddess or set up any statue or representation that is meant to be worshipped. They are also not expected to worship a human being because humans cannot be gods. Sikhs are also not allowed to believe in any religious book like the Bible or the Quran. They are only supposed to believe in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib. They are however allowed to only read other religious books for the purpose of gaining knowledge but not to believe in them. They can also use these other religious books for comparative study purposes. The sikh is not allowed to believe in the caste system that divides humans depending on their lineage (Singh S. H, 2007). He is not supposed to believe in the concept of un-touch-ability of people from various social classes, omens, magic, astrology and amulets. He is not supposed to participate in unpleasant rituals, fasting, hair cutting ceremonies, wearing of frontal masks, sacred

threads, traditional death rites and graves. A khalsa is expected to remain distinct by wearing the five Ks. He should however be very humble so that he does not hurt the feelings of other people by professing a different religion or implying that he is above the rest due to his or her sikh status. A khalsa has usual prayers that he or she is supposed to make each day. Above these prayers, the khalsa is supposed to make prayers to God before starting any piece of work. This shows that he respects his god and that the god is the giver for example of the work that the khalsa wants to do. A khalsa is allowed to learn and speak as many languages as he desires and is capable of learning. However, he should know how to speak and write in Punjabi. On top of this all the Khalsa's children should also learn to read and write in Punjabi. All male khalsas should add the word singh after their names and all female khalsa should add the word Kaur after her names. Whether male or female, khalsas are not expected to remove any hair from any part of their bodies. All Sikhs are forbidden from using any intoxicant. They intoxicants may include tobacco, alcohol or any other form of drug that makes the body intoxicated. All khalsa men and women are not allowed to make holes on their noses or ears. They are not supposed to establish any form of connection with people who kill their daughters. Sikh women are exempted from the rule that requires all women to wear veils. All Sikhs are expected to live honest lives from their labor. They are also expected to give to the poor generously at all times imagining that they are giving out to the Guru (Jacobsen, 2011). Stealing and gambling have been forbidden to Sikhs. These are vices that men and women of their purity should avoid at all times. Khalsas have rules governing their modes of dressing. The dressing

should be modest and simple. However, it is worth noting that there are no restrictions on the dressings of the khalsa except for the turban and the kacha. When two khalsas meet, they are supposed to salute each other by saying, The Khalsa belongs to god, and victory belongs to god (Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh).

The mior rahits

Tanakha -nama

This code was written approximately in the year 1718 making it one of the oldest of its kind. Tanakha means a reward or salary. Receiving a penalty after doing a wrong is a reward according to this code. The penalty has the effect of putting the believer who has offended back on the desired track. The major tenets of tanakha-nama include recitations of the divine name (nam), charity (dan), and purity of the mind (isnan).

Rahit-nama

The rahit sets out the code of conducts that govern the Sikhs. The namas provide statements that are systematic about the required principles of the khalsa. Nanak who was the founder of the Sikh tradition used rahit as a term that designated a particular way of living by the Sikhs. When Gobind Singh established the Khalsa, the rahit was expanded to include new obligations. These obligations included forbidding hair cutting among other rules. Rahit-namas is the name that was given to the texts in which this information was comprehensively recorded.

Rahit Maryada

This is a code of conduct that all believers in Sikhism should observe. They are not supposed to involve themselves in hair cutting ceremonies. They are also not allowed to use alcohol, tobacco or any other intoxicants. The spiritual expectations placed on them are usually very high and intoxicants and drugs would make them unclean. All Sikhs are supposed to participate in community work so that they can learn how to serve others.

Rehat Maryada

Rehat Maryada is refers to the code of conduct of all Sikhs as was released by the SGPC. According to Rehat Maryada, a Sikh is any male or female person who faithfully believes in the eternal existence of a sovereign God. The Sikh accepts only accepts Guru Granth Sahib as their spiritual guide and other ten human Gurus who live by and follow their teachings. The Sikh does not owe allegiance to any other form of religion or is one who is getting ready to take the Amrit baptism as was advocated by the tenth Guru.

The living of a Sikh is divided into two major aspects:

- Living a strong family life and strict adherence to a specific personal discipline (Individual or personal life).
- Involvement of the Sikh in the lives of people in the local community and ensuring the well being of even the weakest members of the society. This involvement is both local and international for the good of all mankind. This aspect is the practical aspect of the pillars of Sikhism that were advocated for and promoted by Guru Nanak. The pillars are called Wand kay Shako meaning share and consume (panthic or corporate life)

The personal life of the sikh involves meditation on divine substance (Nam) and the scriptures, living a strict life according to all the teachings of the Guru and involvement in voluntary services.

In regard to meditation on scriptures and divine substances, the sikh should wake up approximately three hours before dawn, take a bath and concentrate her/ his thoughts upon an immortal being. He should then repeatedly say the words Waheguru which means a wondrous destroyer of darkness. The sikh should also recite various spiritual compositions each day. The first composition is the Japu and the quartets. The second composition is the Sodar Rehras which has various compositions in it. The third and the last composition is the Sohila. The sikh should then recite the Ardas. The sikh should at all times participate in voluntary activities around him to help people (Rait, 2005). He or she should also participate in voluntary activities around the place of worship. A sikh should ensure his or her individual spirituality always. This is achieved through meditation to God on Nam using divine substance. The divine substance is also referred to as an attribute of the self by god. Individual spirituality is also ensured through leading a life in strict adherence of the teachings of the Guru. The sikh should observe all the teachings without discrimination. Individual spirituality is also achieved through active participation in voluntary works in the community.

A sikh should always seek to join other Sikhs in their places of worship since it is believed that a sikh is more deeply and effectively influenced by Gurbani when in a sangat (engaged in a congregation). At the congregation, the sikh benefits from joint study and participates in worshiping god with the other

Sikhs. No person should ever be barred from entering a place of worship regardless of his or her religion, sex, class, caste, Nationality or race. The Gurdwara should remain open to all people every time to enable them see the holy Guru (Jacobsen, 2011). However, when going to see the Guru, a person should not carry with him anything that has been banned by the sikh religion. These include tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

A sikh should live according to way of the Guru. The sikh should promote and live by all the tenets that are stipulated by the holy Gurus. The first tenet is that the sikh should believe in the existence of one God. There is no other God apart from God the creator who created all humans and everything else that we can see or perceive. The sikh should also promote the tenet of equality of the human race. All people are equal and none is superior to the other because all people have been created by the almighty God without bias or discrimination. There should be no discrimination of people based on religion, race, creed, education, social status, caste or any other divisive idea. The sikh should also promote the tenet of respect for all people regardless of gender, age, status, color or any other dividing approach. The sikh should also exercise great self control in their lives. They should have the strength to kill the five vices or evils. They should not participate in rituals, become superstitious, consume drugs or participate in gambling. These are all vices that the sikh should not participate in.

Sikhs are also expected to participate in all ceremonies associated with the sikh culture. These include baptism ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, funeral ceremonies and baby naming ceremonies among others.

Participation in the ceremonies is very important to the sikh since the

ceremonies are very important to the culture. A sikh should not miss either of the above ceremonies.

A sikh should also participate in voluntary services very actively. Sewa (meaning voluntary service) is a very important aspect of the sikh religion. Whenever an opportunity arises, Sikhs should involve themselves in voluntary services. Voluntary service in its simplest forms can involve washing and sweeping the places of worship (Gurdwara), serving, cooking and serving food in the langar (Communal eating facility of the Gurus), dusting the shoes of visitors to the Gurdwara, fanning the congregation and washing dishes in the communal eating place used by the Gurus. The Guru ka Langar (Guru's eating facility) is a very important facility to Sikhism (Rehat, n. d). It has two main purposes in Sikhism. First, it trains believers on performing voluntary works and provides a good opportunity to serve believers (Sikhs). The second importance of the facility is that it helps to kill all the social stratifications that may exist in the community. These include the caste system and social differences. It achieves this objective by being a place where all Sikhs interact during meals and voluntary services.

A sikh should also learn how to serve in the worship places/ Gurdwaras. As a congregational service takes place, only one activity should be performed inside the hall in which the SGGGS has been installed regardless of whether it is the delivering of discourse, performance of the Kirtan, reading of the scriptures or interpretative explanation of the sikh scriptures. The kirtan is a spiritual hymn during congregational meetings. Only a sikh is allowed to perform the hymns strictly from holy compositions from the scriptures using traditional musical measures. Singing of popular music or any unscriptural

hymns is prohibited. It is only compositions of Bhai Nandi Lal and Bhai Ghurdas that can be performed during a congregational meeting.

Sikhism is a religion that is majorly concerned with the individual life of a person as well as his corporate life involving his relationship with the community and society in general (Singh N 2008). In regard to an individual, the religion is concerned with person's meditation on god and study of the sikh scriptures. It ensures that the person lives according to the way of the Guru and participates actively in all communal works and services.

Members of the religion who have been baptized usually carry a symbolic sword that is known as a kirpan. The kirpan at times may raise concerns among people who are not familiar with the religion like it has ever happened in Canada. The sword is an ingrained part of the religion and at some point it is the equivalent of a cross in Christianity. Just like devout Christians wear the cross, Sikhs who have been baptized are required to wear the kirpan at all times. The kirpan is meant to be symbolic just like the cross is to Christians.

Sikhism is a worldwide religion that boasts around 20 million followers. It has been ranked as a major world religion with more followers than Judaism. The religion of Sikhism is also practiced in Canada. A woman by the name Wanda McDonald became first turbaned sikh woman to serve in the Royal Canadian Army while wearing a turban. She is based in Helifax as a sonar operator and joined the Canadian Royal Navy in 1997. This example shows that sikhism as a religion has been accepted the country of Canada. There have been issues and controversies over time in regard to practices of people who are in the faith of Sikhism. A school in Montreal at one time prohibited a 12 year old by

the name Gurbaj Singh from wearing the sikh ceremonial knife that is known as the Kirpan. The school management feared that the boy may probably use the knife to harm a person in the school. The supreme court of Canada overturned the ban on wearing kirpans as an issue of public security concern in that memorable case. The court tried to strike a balance between the two conflicting sides. It was a test of balance between public safety and religious freedom. In Canada, there is an organization by the name World Sikh Organization. The organization helps in addressing sikh issues that may arise within the country. It also provides advice on various issues affecting Sikhs in the country. The issues addressed may vary from social, economic and educational issues affecting any member of the community in the country. Sikhism as a religion has been accepted in Canada. Members of the faith have equal rights to their friends who profess different faiths as stipulated in the constitution of the country.

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