The Sikh Khalsa

The information on this handout provides further insight into the nature of the Sikh Khalsa.

The Five Ks

The Five Ks are physical symbols of membership in the Khalsa. Each one signifies a particular aspect of Sikh identity.

**1.** ***Kes.*** The long, uncut hair of a Khalsa member symbolizes spirituality and reminds the member that she or he should always follow the example of the ten Gurus.

**2.** ***Kangha.*** The comb symbolizes hygiene and discipline. Unlike many ascetics who characteristically neglect their matted hair, Sikhs are expected to wash and comb their hair regularly.

**3.** ***Kara.*** The steel bracelet (or wrist guard) reminds the Khalsa member to act with restraint and to remember God always.

**4.** ***Kirpan.*** The sword or knife symbolizes the Sikh commitment to the struggle against injustice. It is worn solely as a religious symbol, never as a weapon.

**5.** ***Kachh.*** The pair of shorts symbolizes chastity and self-control.

The Khalsa Code of Conduct

Members of the Khalsa follow a specific code of conduct. Here is a summary of some of the main requirements:

Sikhs worship only one God—no gods, goddesses, idols, or statues are to be used in worship, and no human being is to be worshipped.

The Adi Granth is the only religious book in which a Sikh may believe. Other religious books can be studied only for knowledge and comparison.

Sikhs do not believe in the caste system or the status of untouchability, nor do they believe in magic, omens, astrology, and many other widely known superstitions and religious practices.

Members of the Khalsa maintain their distinctness by the Five Ks, but they are to avoid hurting the feelings of others who believe in different religions.

Sikhs are to pray before beginning any work.

Sikhs must learn the language Punjabi and teach it to their children.

Sikhs are forbidden to use drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

Men and women of the Khalsa are not to pierce their ears or noses. Women do not wear veils.

Sikhs must give to the poor with the attitude that all they give goes to the Guru.

Sikhs are to live by the earnings of their honest labor.

Sikhs must not gamble or steal.

Members of the Khalsa should dress simply and modestly.

When one member of the Khalsa meets another, the two are to use this greeting: *Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa*, *Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh*, which means, “The Khalsa belongs to God; victory belongs to God.”