



Challenging Common Misconceptions about Sikhism.

The general public has many misconceptions about Sikhs. Here are some good answers you can give when someone brings them up.

Misconception 1: The Sikh religion is a blend of Islam and Hinduism or a sect of Hinduism.

Truth 1: Sikhism is a unique revealed religion. It is not derived from any other religion. It is not a blend of any two or three religions. Guru Nanak started a new faith. Sikhs have a unique physical identity with their 5 articles of faith, the 5 Ks. Spiritually, the concepts of the caste system, rituals, and other main components of Hinduism are rejected by Sikhs.

Misconception 2: Sikhism supports the patriarchal model.

Truth 2: The tenets of Sikhism apply to all Sikhs, regardless of whether one is a Sikh man or a Sikh woman. Sikhism demands the equal treatment and involvement of men and women.

Misconception 3: Sikhs are Indian.

Truth 3: Sikhism is a religion. Indian is a nationality. Those Sikhs born in the United States, Canada, UK or any other place adopt the nationality of that country. Sikhism as a religion spans any such geo-political boundaries.

Misconception 4: Sikhs are Hindu.

Truth 4: Sikhism is a unique faith and is not derived from Hinduism. Sikhism challenges and rejects many precepts of the Hindu religion. It is only due to a shared geographic culture that some ideas or methods may be similar.

Misconception 5: Anyone with a turban and beard is Muslim and from the Middle East.

Truth 5: Not all turban-wearers are Sikhs, but all Sikhs must cover their heads at all times (mostly done with a turban.) Sikhs must to keep unshorn hair, but non-Sikhs may have long hair, unshaved legs, or beards out of personal choice. The turban is worn in many countries as a cultural dress; but to Sikhs the turban is a powerful symbol of Sikh faith.

Misconception 6: Sikh fundamentalists are those who have undergone the Amrit (commitment) ceremony and are vocal in fighting social injustice.

Truth 6: Sikhs are not fundamentalists. Amritdhari Sikhs (those who have taken Amrit) are devout in their faith and strive to balance spirituality and community service.

Misconception 7: Sikhs are terrorists

Truth 7: Sikhs are against terrorism. Sikhs strongly condemn killing innocent people. In fact, Sikhs are commanded to defend the innocent and fight against oppression. Sikhism preaches to resort to violence only when all other means of resolution have failed.