Press Packet

New Jersey Sikh Civil Rights and Civic Engagement Initiative

December 9, 2003

WWW.SIKHCOALITION.ORG
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About the Press Conference

Today’s press conference is organized by the eight gurdwaras (Sikh houses of worship) of New Jersey and the Sikh Coalition, a national Sikh civil rights organization. Its purpose is to announce both the signing of a New Jersey Sikh civil rights agenda and an intention to more actively engage in New Jersey’s civic life.

Since September 11, 2001, Sikhs across the United States have endured hundreds of acts of bias and discrimination. Like the Sikhs in other parts in the country, Sikhs in New Jersey have faced acts of bias ranging from street harassment to defacement of property to physical attack.

In order to address and hopefully end acts of discrimination against New Jersey’s Sikhs, Sikh leaders in New Jersey have collectively agreed upon a civil rights agenda, that details their concerns in four major areas: hate crimes, employment discrimination, school harassment and profiling. The agenda includes detailed recommendations to state and federal agencies on how to address these concerns.

For decades Sikhs have provided food to New Jersey’s homeless, held blood drives, invited our neighbors to our houses of worship, and taken part in the election of our political leaders. Today’s press conference will also announce the Sikh community’s intention to redouble its engagement in New Jersey’s civic life. It is our belief that through more active engagement with our neighbors barriers of mistrust and ignorance can be broken.

For more information on Sikh, Sikhism, and the challenges facing Sikhs around the country, please review the contents of this packet or visit the Sikh Coalition website at www.sikhcoalition.org.
Press Conference Agenda

11:00 A.M.  Welcome and Introduction of Gurdwara Presidents – Gurparkash Singh, Moderator

11:05 A.M.  Statement on Behalf of New Jersey Gurdwaras - Sutinder Singh Dhanjal, President, Sikh Sabha of New Jersey

11:15 A.M.  Statement on Civil Rights Agenda and Civil Rights Concerns – Amardeep Singh, Legal Director, Sikh Coalition

11:25 A.M.  School Harassment - Jaspal Singh Virdi

11:35 A.M.  Hate Crimes and Public Accommodation – Gagandeep Singh Sadar

11:40 A.M.  Questions and Answers

11:55 A.M.  Picture with New Jersey Gurdwara Representatives
Sikhs in North America

Many of us have seen Sikhs and even worked alongside them without realizing who they are, what they believe, and how they live. We may even have confused them for Arabs, Muslims or Hindus. We may have wondered about these men who wear colorful turbans over long uncut hair.

Sikhs are not new to North America. Their first recorded presence in Canada dates from 1897, over a hundred years ago; their first place of worship (gurdwara) in the United States was established in California in 1906. Sikhs helped construct the Panama Canal in 1904. Sikhism is now one of the five largest religions of the world. Over 500,000 Americans and 150,000 Canadians acknowledge Sikhism as their religion. There is a significant Sikh community in almost every major city in the United States and Canada, with over 100 Sikh places of worship and Community Centers. Some of the best farmers and lumber workers in California and British Columbia are Sikh. There are Sikh blue collar workers and taxi drivers; there are Sikh executives, research scientists and stock brokers in contemporary North American society. There has been a Sikh Congressman in the United States. In Canada Sikhs serve as members of Parliament and as members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

History and Beliefs

Compared to other major religions, Sikhism is relatively young. Its founder Guru Nanak was born in 1469 in Punjab. It was a time of great ferment and creative activity in the world — the voyage of Columbus and his discovery of the New World in 1492, the discoveries of Copernicus who was born in 1473, the printing of the Gutenberg Bible in 1462 were among the many remarkable achievements and events of those decades.

To understand his teachings and his disciples, it is necessary to look at Nanak the man and his times.

During Guru Nanak's time in the fifteenth century the two great religious systems of the world - the Vedantic and the traditions of the Old Testament met in Punjab. Fifteenth century India was ruled by Moslems. Indian society of that time was steeped in idol worship, dogma and superstition, and was stratified into castes with rigidly defined duties and rights for each. Neither those of the low castes nor women were allowed to read the Holy Scriptures.

Nanak rejected both the forced conversions by the rulers as well as the caste system, idolatry and the inferior place of women. He taught a message of love. He defined God as gender-free, not woman or man exclusively. He taught of a universal God, common to all mankind — not a Sikh God, a Hindu God, a Moslem God, a Jewish or a Buddhist God, or one limited to any sect, nation, race, creed, color or gender.

Guru Nanak was followed by nine successor-Gurus over two centuries. They further elaborated on his message of universal love and brotherhood - and sisterhood. They made significant contributions to the development of Sikh institutions. Sikhs believe that all ten Gurus represented the spirit of Nanak and spoke with his authority.
The Sikh religion is strictly monotheistic, believing in one supreme God, free of gender, absolute, all pervading, eternal Creator. This universal God of love is obtained through grace, sought by service to mankind. These were the first teachings of Guru Nanak. Sikhism views life not as a fall from grace but a unique opportunity to discover and develop the divinity in each of us.

From the time of Guru Nanak five hundred years ago until today, Sikh places of worship (gurdwaras) all over the world usually run free community kitchens, which provide meals to the needy. These kitchens are manned and funded by volunteers. Since in the traditional Indian society people of high and low caste would not mix, nor would they break bread together, the community kitchen (langar) of the Sikhs serves to teach the concept of equality by shattering all barriers of caste and class.

Since human dignity and justice form a cornerstone of Sikh teaching, Sikh history speaks of tremendous sacrifice in the cause of freedom and justice. Two Sikh Gurus – the fifth Guru Arjan and the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur were martyrs to the cause of freedom of religion. The tenth Nanak – Guru Gobind Singh – fought several battles and saw his sons die in battle. In more modern times, Sikhs formed some of the most highly decorated soldiers of the British armed services during the Second World War. They had a significant role in the memorable battles of El Alamein, in the Burma-China front and also in the allied assault in Italy.

1699

In 1699 the tenth and last of the human Sikh Gurus – Gobind Singh – recognized the growing maturity of his followers in a most dramatic manner. On the day of Vaisakhi (which falls in early to mid-April) 1699, he summoned his followers to a small town (Anandpur) in Punjab. Over 80,000 came. History tells us that Guru Gobind Singh appeared before his people, flashed a naked sword and demanded a head. He repeated his call until five Sikhs volunteered. These five came from different parts of India and from different castes, three were from the so-called lower castes.

The Guru initiated these five in the new order of the Khalsa and then, in a dramatic and historic gesture, they, in turn, initiated him. On that day he gave the Sikhs their modern form which includes five articles of faith:

1) unshorn hair as a gift of God and Guru and a mark of Sikh identity,
2) a small comb for the hair,
3) a steel bracelet which signifies a reality with no beginning and no end, and is also symbolic of a Sikh’s commitment to the ideals of his faith, much as wedding ring might indicate fealty and identity,
4) a sword indicative of resolve and commitment to justice, and
5) knee-length breeches in keeping with the disciplined life-style of a Sikh.

For the past 300 years, no matter what their street attire, male Sikhs have been easily recognized by their long unshorn hair covered with a turban. (It needs to be pointed out that in the traditional Indian society, only a man of high caste or the ruling class wore a turban.) Sikh women adhere to the same basic life style, symbols, rules and conduct, except that few wear
turbans. You might see Sikh boys, who are much too young to handle a turban, walking about in their schools or play grounds with a top-knot of long unshorn hair covered simply with a scarf.
MEMORANDUM

To: Governor James E. McGreevy; Richard J. Codey, Democratic President, New Jersey State Senate; John O. Bennet, Republican President, New Jersey State Senate; Albie Sires, Speaker, New Jersey State Assembly; Senator John S. Corzine; Senator Frank Lautenberg; Attorney General Peter C. Harvey; Dr. William L. Librera, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Education; Frank Vespa-Papaleo, Director, New Jersey Division on Civil Rights; Hester Agudosi, Chief, Office of Bias Crime and Community Relations; (Name of President), New Jersey County Prosecutors Association; Christopher J. Christie, United States Attorney; Marie E. Tomasso, Director, Philadelphia District Office, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Daniel Cassidy, Secretary’s Regional Representative, United States Department of Education; Reinaldo Rivera, Regional Director, Community Relations Service, Department of Justice, Herb Gilsenberg, Chairman, New Jersey Governor’s Ethnic Advisory Council, Colonel Joseph Fuentes, Superintendent of New Jersey State Police; Chief Michael G. Mastronardy, President, New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police; Thomas E. Culp, Sr., President, New Jersey Bias Crime Officers Association; Ed Dickson, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation

From: Garden State Sikh Association (Bridgewater, New Jersey), Sri Guru Singh Sabha (Glen Rock, New Jersey), Khalsa Darbar of South Jersey, Inc. (Burlington, New Jersey), The Singh Sabha, Inc., (Port Reading, New Jersey), The Sikh Sabha of New Jersey (Lawrenceville, New Jersey), Guru Nanak Society of Delaware Valley (Deptford, New Jersey), Central Jersey Sikh Association (Robbinsville, New Jersey), The Sikh Coalition

Date: December 9, 2003

Re: Civil Rights Concerns of New Jersey Sikhs and Recommendations and Requests to State and Federal Executive Agencies

On behalf of the eight gurdwaras of New Jersey, the Sikh Coalition has drafted this memorandum to communicate the collective concerns of New Jersey’s Sikhs to the state and federal agencies that are responsible for ensuring the realization of our civil rights. The aftermath of September 11, 2001, during which New Jersey Sikhs have endured misguided hate crimes, employment discrimination, school harassment and other forms of bias, has compelled us to come together to endorse the concerns and recommendations outlined herein.
In the Sikh tradition, the gurdwara is not only a place of worship, but the focal point of Sikh community activity and activism. The eight gurdwaras that are signatories to this memorandum, therefore represent the thoughts and concerns of New Jersey’s estimated twenty thousand Sikh-Americans.

From past experience, we have full faith that federal and state government representatives in New Jersey are willing to work with us to ensure our concerns are appropriately addressed. With optimism, we are mindful that representatives from New Jersey’s federal and state civil rights agencies have reached out to our community since September 11, 2001. We are hopeful that this memorandum will clearly delineate our concerns and our recommendations for each agency that is charged with enforcing our rights.

The purpose of this memorandum, therefore, is to: 1) outline the concerns of the Sikh-American community in New Jersey; and 2) respectfully suggest recommendations to the specific state or federal agency that we believe is charged with addressing a particular area of concern. We look forward to continuing our dialogue as we work to guarantee that every New Jerseyan lives a life free of bias and discrimination.

I. Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents

For the year to date, there has been an over 90% increase in bias incidents against Sikhs in the United States from the previous year as reported to the Sikh Coalition. Much of this increase occurred during the period of active combat operations in Iraq where the bias incidents during a two month period almost equaled the number bias incidents against Sikhs during all of 2002. During this period a Sikh American was shot and others were beaten and verbally harassed.

This summer has also seen an increase in bias against Sikhs in the United States. Bias incidents have increased six fold from the summer of 2002 as reported on the Sikh Coalition website. We also believe this increase to be a result of the ongoing tensions in the Middle East. In New Jersey, an elderly Sikh woman is reportedly being harassed by a neighbor this summer. The neighbor has thrown garbage and cigarette butts at the woman.

Despite this increase in reported hate crimes, we are fully aware that the vast majority of hate crimes in the Sikh community go unreported because of language barriers and lack of familiarity with the justice system and hate crime laws among Sikhs in New Jersey.

Given the increase in hate crimes against Sikh-Americans this year and what we believe to be an acute underreporting of hate crimes, we request renewed efforts to protect Sikhs in New Jersey from criminal acts of bias. We therefore suggest the following measures:

To the New Jersey Attorney General and the United States Attorney’s Office for the District of New Jersey:

Designate a Contact Person in Your Office Who Can Regularly Communicate With the Sikh Community on Hate Crime Issues:

We request regular communication about hate crime reporting, investigation and prosecution in New Jersey. To that end, it would greatly help our community to
know who we should contact to: a) report bias crimes; b) find out about the status of ongoing bias crime investigations and prosecutions; c) discuss larger bias crime concerns as they arise.

Once a hate crime is reported to state and federal authorities, Sikhs in New Jersey are often not informed of the results of the ensuing investigation or prosecution. Regular communication on the status of hate crime investigation and prosecution in cases involving New Jersey Sikhs, as well as other targeted groups, will substantially engender confidence that hate crimes are investigated and prosecuted, leading to more reporting of bias crimes to state and federal authorities. We therefore request that the state Attorney General’s office and the U.S. Attorney’s office designate a representative to acts as a liaison to the Sikh community.

Encourage Sikhs-Americans in New Jersey to Report Hate Crimes By Visiting Our Gurdwaras and Translating Materials to Punjabi:

We believe that the underreporting of hate crimes is particularly acute in our community because many Sikhs in New Jersey are first generation immigrants who are not familiar with hate crime laws or the face significant language barriers to reporting.

We therefore request, as a low cost but effective measure to boost the confidence of Sikhs in New Jersey, that federal and state officials visit Sikh houses of worship or gurdwaras to assuage concerns about hate crimes.

In addition, so that the message that hate crimes should be reported is widely and consistently disseminated in our gurdwaras, we request the Attorney General’s office and the U.S. Attorney’s office to translate its materials to Punjabi, the language of most Sikh immigrants. Such materials should encourage Sikhs to report hate crimes. If our assistance is needed, we would be happy to develop and translate these materials with you.

To the New Jersey State Police, New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, Federal Bureau of Investigation Field Office in New Jersey, and the New Jersey Bias Crime Officers Association:

Train Officers and Agents on Sikh Americans:

Many police officers are not aware that Sikhs have been targeted for hate crimes in the recent past. They are therefore less likely to understand that a crime may have been motivated by bias when it is directed towards a Sikhs. In addition, many officers are not aware that Sikhs are in particular danger during times of heightened tension in the Middle East or when terrorism in the United States is attributed to Muslim or Arabs. Finally, many officers are not aware of the differences between a Sikh, Muslim or Hindu or of cultural factors that may make Sikhs hesitant to report hate crimes.
We therefore request that during training on hate crimes, officers and agents in New Jersey receiving training on these issues so that they may do a better job protecting our communities. We have done such training in the past for federal agencies, we would be happy to do it for state agencies.

II. Schools

Since September 11, 2001 there has been a distressing increase in harassment of young Sikhs in schools because of their religion. Here in New Jersey, a Sikh middle school student in Middlesex County was physically attacked and called “Bin Laden” by classmates. His family felt compelled to leave his school and move back to his native country of England to avoid physical and verbal abuse from other classmates. Unfortunately, school officials were unable to adequately punish, or stop the harassment in this instance.

Many incidents of verbal harassment reported to the Sikh Coalition are perpetrated by young children or adolescents. We are genuinely concerned that many school children view Sikhs as terrorists or sympathizers of terrorist groups because they are not educated about our religious background and heritage and they do not see images to counter the prevalent image on television of the terrorist with a turban and beard.

Harassment and abuse of Sikh children can significantly impede their educational opportunities. Accordingly we request the following:

To the New Jersey Attorney General, New Jersey Division of Civil Rights, New Jersey Department of Education, and United States Department of Education:

Meet with Sikh Representatives to Discuss Our Concerns:

With the exception of the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights, our community has had no substantive interaction with state and federal officials regarding bias-motivated harassment of Sikh school children. We often do not know who to contact when a child is harassed in schools. As an introduction to our community and our concerns we suggest that state and federal officials meet with representatives of our community to discuss our concerns.

All School Children in New Jersey Should Receive Education on Sikhs

It is our hope that through education, the next generation will realize that their Sikh peers are in most ways, just like them. Sikhs have been in the United States since the early 1900s. There are over 250,000 Sikhs in the United States. It is time that school children learn about their Sikh-American peers so that they can become more acclimated and comfortable with our community.

Designate a Contact Person in Your Office Who Can Regularly Communate With the Sikh Community on School Harassment Issues:
Our interaction with state and federal agencies that combat bias in schools in New Jersey. We would like regular communication with government agencies about school harassment concerns in New Jersey. To that end, it would greatly help our community to know who we should contact to: a) report bias-motivated school bullying; b) find out about the status of ongoing school bias-motivated harassment bullying; c) discuss larger bias-motivated bullying concerns as they arise.

III. Employment Discrimination

Before September 11, 2001, employment discrimination was likely the most pressing civil rights issue for the Sikh-American community. Now that hate crimes have decreased significantly since the period immediately after September 11, 2001, we are concerned that more subtle, private acts of discrimination will increase.

This summer, a prominent New Jersey employer ordered a Sikh employee at a store in West Hempstead, New York to work in the back of a store because his turban made customers apprehensive. After moving to the back of the store, the Sikh employee was eventually fired.

In response to cases like the one described above, the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission developed a “Questions and Answers” sheet about the workplace responsibilities of employers towards Sikhs and other communities affected by post-September 11, 2001 discrimination. This fact sheet describes common workplace scenarios that employers may encounter with their Sikh employees and provides answers on the equal opportunity responsibilities of employers.

In order to combat workplace discrimination against Sikhs in New Jersey, we therefore request the following:

To the State Division on Civil Rights and the Philadelphia District Office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:

Designate a Contact Person in Your Office Who Can Regularly Communicate With the Sikh Community on Employment Discrimination Issues:

We request regular communication about employment discrimination issues New Jersey. To that end, it would greatly help our community to know who we should contact to: a) report employment discrimination; b) find out about the status of ongoing employment discrimination investigations; c) discuss larger employment discrimination concerns as they arise. We therefore request that the state Division on Civil Rights and the Philadelphia district office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission designate a representative to act as a liaison to the Sikh community.

Encourage Sikhs-Americans in New Jersey to Report Employment Discrimination By Visiting Our Gurdwaras and Translating Materials to Punjabi:
We believe that the underreporting of employment discrimination is particularly acute in our community because many Sikhs in New Jersey are first generation immigrants who are not familiar with employment discrimination laws, face significant language barriers to reporting, and are afraid of retaliation by their employer if they report employment discrimination.

We therefore request, as a low cost but effective measure to boost the confidence of Sikhs in New Jersey, that federal and state officials visit Sikh houses of worship or gurdwaras to assuage concerns about employment discrimination. We also request that materials on reporting employment discrimination be translated to Punjabi. We would be happy to assist the Division with this translation.

IV. Religious Profiling

We are concerned that prejudicial assumptions against Sikhs-Americans arising from our appearance has led members of our faith to become more frequent objects of suspicion since September 11, 2001. It is our belief that this prejudice has created the new post-September 11, 2001 phenomena of kirpan harassment and prosecution.

Those whose are initiated Sikhs, wear five mandatory articles of faith, one of which is called a kirpan. A kirpan is a religious sword that reminds a Sikh of their duty to defend justice. It is customarily a few inches in length and is sheathed. For an initiated Sikh, it is a mandatory article of faith that must be worn on the body at all times.

Before September 11, 2001, Sikh-Americans in New Jersey were able to wear their kirpan freely without fear of arrest. In the climate of fear since then, however, Sikhs are being more frequently stopped by law enforcement officers or more frequently reported to law enforcement as suspicious persons by fellow citizens. During these stops, law enforcement officers are now sometimes choosing to charge Sikhs with crimes for carrying the kirpan.

Two representative examples include:

- A Sikh-American was arrested at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft, NJ for wearing a kirpan. He was detained for one hour and given a summons to appear in court. The case was ultimately dismissed once the prosecutor’s office understood the religious significance of the kirpan and that it is not intended to be a mere weapon.

- At JFK Airport a Sikh-American was stopped for wearing a kirpan. Local police incarcerated him for two nights. He was prosecuted for carrying a concealed weapon. The Queens DA dismissed the case after the Sikh Coalition made his office aware of the religious significance of the kirpan.

The kirpan is an article of faith. There is no criminal intent in carrying it. Its removal or the prosecution for wearing it is insulting and injurious to initiated Sikhs and likely violates
constitutional norms protecting the free exercise of religion. Accordingly, a handful of jurisdictions in the United States exempt from criminal prosecution those who carry a knife or sword as a “recognized religious practice.” Ann Arbor, Michigan and Los Angeles, California are examples of such jurisdictions. We therefore request the following measures:

To the New Jersey Attorney General and County Prosecutor’s Association:


Sikhs should not be prosecuted for wearing the kirpan. It is injurious to the Sikh community and waste of the state’s prosecutorial resources. There is no unlawful intent in carrying the kirpan. It is less dangerous than many of the instruments that average citizens may carry such as scissors or hammers or nail files. Just as it is recognized that these instruments may be freely carried without prosecution because there is no unlawful intent in carrying them, we request that Sikhs not be prosecuted for carrying an article of faith. We therefore request the Attorney General to provide guidelines directing country prosecutors not to prosecute Sikhs for carrying the kirpan.
PRESS RELEASE

December 9, 2003
Contact:
Amardeep Singh (917) 628-0091
Gurparkash Singh (908) 719-8625

For more information visit:
www.sikhcoalition.org/njcivilrights.asp

Sikhs Announce Plan to Combat Discrimination in New Jersey

Incidents of Bias Increase This Year

New Jersey Sikh leaders announced today a plan to combat hate crimes and discrimination in New Jersey. The plan, jointly agreed to by the leaders of New Jersey eight gurdwaras or Sikh houses of worship, calls on state and federal officials to work more closely with Sikh leaders to address acts of discrimination.

Since September 11, 2001, Sikh Americans have endured a significant increase in acts of hate and discrimination. The Sikh Coalition, has documented over 200 incidents of bias against Sikhs across the country ranging from verbal harassment in public, to harassment of children in school and physical attacks, including over thirty such incidents in New Jersey.

“Bias against Sikhs increased this year. We want our government and our fellow New Jerseyans to help us stop it,” said Amardeep Singh, Legal Director of the Sikh Coalition.

This year has seen a significant increase in discrimination against Sikhs in New Jersey and across the country. It is believed this increase is a result of the heightened hostilities in the Middle East and resulting animosity against Americans of Arab descent or of the Muslim faith. Sikhs, who are predominantly from South Asia and practice a unique religion, are often believed to be Arab or Muslim.

Over the past year a Sikh child in Marlboro, New Jersey felt compelled to leave his school and go back to his native England because of the harassment he endured from other students. During today’s press conference, Gagandeep Singh Sardar, a Sikh student at Rutgers described being denied entry to a party because a bouncer did not want persons with turbans in the club.

“My dignity was assaulted. The only reason I was turned away at the door was because of my faith,” said Mr. Sardar.

In addition to announcing a civil rights agenda, the Sikh leaders announced a plan to become more engaged in New Jersey civic life. Specifically the leaders pledged to redouble ongoing efforts to conduct voter registration, invite the local communities to gurdwaras, and engage in charitable acts such as feeding the homeless and holding blood drive.

“Engagement and education are key,” said Sutinder Singh Dhanjal, President of the Sikh Sabha gurdwara in Lawrencville, New Jersey. “The more New Jerseyans interact with us, the more they will see our common humanity.”
# Listing Incidents of Bias in New Jersey

The following is a title listing of general public reports of bias incidents in New Jersey. The Sikh Coalition website has received thirty-five incident reports of bias in New Jersey. To view the full report please go to the bias incident search engine at: [http://www.sikhcoalition.org/ListReports.asp](http://www.sikhcoalition.org/ListReports.asp).

## Displaying 1 to 20 of 35 Results

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<tr>
<td>322</td>
<td>7/17/2003</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Throwing cigarettes at Sikhs</td>
<td>Parlin/Old Bridge, NJ US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>327</td>
<td>7/17/2003</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>arrested for wearing Kirpan</td>
<td>middletown, NJ US</td>
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<tr>
<td>299</td>
<td>4/2/2003</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Two African-Americans shouted Osama</td>
<td>Jersey City, NJ US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>271</td>
<td>5/21/2002</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>A Sikh businessman Denied Service by Fleet</td>
<td>Carteret, NJ US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>357</td>
<td>4/15/2002</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mistaken Identity</td>
<td>Newark, NJ US</td>
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<tr>
<td>251</td>
<td>1/21/2002</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Profiling at Newark Airport</td>
<td>Newark Airport, NJ US</td>
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<tr>
<td>219</td>
<td>11/4/2001</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Had to remove turban at the airport</td>
<td>Newark Airport, NJ US</td>
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<td>213</td>
<td>10/30/2001</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Gun Gesture ...</td>
<td>Jutland, NJ US</td>
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<tr>
<td>192</td>
<td>10/10/2001</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>While driving to work, was bothered by another driver who tried to impersonate a police officer, run me off the road, and threw a large cup of coffee on my windshield. (Old Ref: 308)</td>
<td>Parsippany, NJ US</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>10/2/2001</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Car tailgated (Old Ref: 284)</td>
<td>Pompton Lakes, NJ US</td>
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<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>9/21/2001</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Pulled over by cops..for no reason (Old Ref: 252)</td>
<td>Belleville, NJ US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>9/17/2001</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Death Threat (Phone) (Old Ref: 182)</td>
<td>Union, NJ US</td>
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<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>9/17/2001</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Racial Confrontation with Baseball Team (Old Ref: 181)</td>
<td>Union, NJ US</td>
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<td>168</td>
<td>9/16/2001</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Horror on the roads (Old Ref: 139)</td>
<td>New Jersey, NJ US</td>
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<td>130</td>
<td>9/14/2001</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Hindu temple firebombed in New Jersey (Old Ref: 158)</td>
<td>Matawan, NJ US</td>
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<td>92</td>
<td>9/13/2001</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Rock thrown through living room window (Old Ref: 250)</td>
<td>Bound Brook, NJ US</td>
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<td>9/13/2001</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Unwelcome Attention (US/Canada Border) (Old Ref: 175)</td>
<td>New Brunswick, NJ US</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>9/13/2001</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Verbally assulted(life threatened) (Old Ref: 46)</td>
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16
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<td>9/13/2001</td>
<td>Car of Sikh attacked</td>
<td>Asbury</td>
<td>NJ</td>
<td>US</td>
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<td>9/12/2001</td>
<td>Gas station owned by Sikh defaced</td>
<td>Florence</td>
<td>NJ</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12/2001</td>
<td>Car tire slashed <em>(Old Ref: 45)</em></td>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>NJ</td>
<td>US</td>
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By GREG MARANO

Staff Writer

BRIDGEWATER - Members of the Sikh faith must wear a small sword called a kirpan at all times. To them, it symbolizes a duty to defend justice.

But to police and security guards, it may look like any other weapon.

That was one of the cultural misunderstandings Sikh leaders hoped to dispel Friday night. They met with regional law enforcement officers to teach them about their faith and work toward preventing hate crimes and harassment of Sikhs, which they say have dramatically increased this year.

"If we're going to have relationships, people need to be able to come together," said Charlie McKenna, executive assistant to the U.S. Attorney in Newark.

They met at the Bridgewater Gurdwara, a place for devotion and learning. Once inside, all visitors were asked to remove their shoes and cover their heads in accordance with Sikh beliefs.

Sikh leaders explained some core religious beliefs that have led to incidents with police. One belief involves the turban, which men must wear all day. To be forced to remove a turban, such as at a security checkpoint, is considered a very severe insult.

They also addressed harassment fueled by the Sept. 11 attacks and this year's war in Iraq.

Amardeep Singh Bhalla, legal director of the Sikh Coalition, said he gets particularly upset when people tell him to "go back where you came from."

"I was born and raised here, I played Little League baseball, my mom was a soccer mom, I'm a die-hard Yankees fan - where am I supposed to go?" he said.

Prabhjot Singh of South Orange said that in addition to being shocked with the rest of the country at the Sept. 11 attacks, Sikhs have been further harmed by the mistrust and harassment that have followed Middle Easterners since.

"We have suffered twice," he said.

Sikh leaders Friday said much of the harassment comes from people who don't even realize the Sikh faith is completely independent of both Islam and Hinduism.

Hester Agudosi, chief of the New Jersey Office of Bias Crimes & Community Relations, believes a lot of the crimes go unreported because victims don't know where to take their complaints.

She said every county prosecutor's office has a bias investigator and encouraged victims to report any incidents.
Meetings such as Friday's have been taking place at Sikh centers around the country this week.

"The best way for us to make these hate crimes and biases go away is through education," Prabhjot Singh said.
Speaker offers insight to ancient Sikh religion
Incident at Marlboro Middle School prompts lesson for student leaders
By Jeanette M. Eng
Staff Writer

MARLBORO — When students were asked to guess the origin of the bearded man wearing a turban, they never fathomed that he was from London.

For the next two hours, the man proceeded to shatter more misconceptions and stereotypes as he enlightened them on the Sikh religion.

On April 30, Savraj Singh Dhanjal, a Princeton University senior and lifelong Sikh, gave student leaders at the Marlboro Memorial Middle School, Nolan Road, a crash course on the 500-year-old religion.

He was asked to speak at the Marlboro Middle School and at the Marlboro Memorial Middle School because of two incidents of verbal and physical harassment that were directed toward a Marlboro Middle School student in November and February.

A Local Incident

A Sikh family, after residing in Marlboro for four years, is now grieving in the aftermath of recent incidents. The woman of the family addressed the middle school students that day.

"My boy enjoyed your friendship and loved going to school here. Recently, however, he was subjected to verbal abuse and was physically injured because of his appearance and religious beliefs," she said.

The mother said the incident has cost her family psychologically, financially and has left them very insecure. Her son’s grandfather, who lives in England, rushed to the United States to see his grandchild. Fearing for the boy’s safety, the grandfather, with the parents’ permission, took the boy back to England.

"We miss him and his sisters miss him every day of our lives that our family is divided," the boy’s mother said.
Their lives have been "turned upside-down," according to the boy’s father. Nevertheless, the family has chosen not to press charges against those who committed the acts and have decided to focus instead on the positive possibilities of their boy’s misfortune.

The father said he does not believe in punishment, but believes that education is the right way to go.

"I don’t think punishment solves anything, and [I think] that it builds more hatred," he said. "I think these boys need to be spoken to and asked why they did what they did. School is a place of education, not just for math and English, but about diversity."

Knowing there are Sikh children in Marlboro’s younger grades and that more Sikh families are moving into town, the father believes that "the children have to be educated now."

Making Things Right

Borne out of this incident are the combined efforts of the Marlboro K-8 school district and the Sikh family to educate students and their parents about Sikhism.

"I want to tell parents to please talk to your children and please educate them to not prejudge a person based on looks or dress," the father said.

According to the parents, administrators have been very positive and have worked with them to implement positive changes including: the presentation by Dhanjal; a review of the student handbook to clarify the "no hats" issue and to clearly prohibit behaviors such as harassment and discrimination; a request to the Monmouth County Prosecutor’s Office to offer a program to students and faculty on bias and related issues; presentation of the issues to the Administrative Council; Assistant Superintendent Dr. Marc Gaswirth assuring that at regular faculty meetings at each school this issue is addressed by the principal; and the creation of scripted tolerance discussions to be led by teachers through the social studies classes.

"The demographics of Marlboro have changed dramatically since I’ve been here," said Superintendent of Schools David C. Abbott, noting that the district’s Asian enrollment has jumped from 7 percent to 20 percent of the enrollment. "That’s a very multicultural and diverse population and we try to teach people to celebrate that."

Abbott said youngsters sometimes do things that are inappropriate, but that is why the district is now extending its outreach efforts.

Although the district has made these efforts, the parents of the boy who was harassed said one of the most hurtful things is the fact that they have not received an apology from the school district, from the students who harassed their son or from the parents of those students.

"I don’t understand. Why is it so hard to say sorry in the United States?" the father said. "It means a lot."

"We try to accommodate as best as we can, listen to people and look to see how we can help, but our responses are the same to everyone," Abbott said, noting that the bottom line for the K-8
school district is always academic achievement.

The father has been contacting politicians in the hope of implementing educational programs at a higher level.

He said that especially in today’s society, which is marked with terrorism and war, the schools should take measures to protect Sikh children.

"They are visible targets if other children relate them to terrorists. We should look after these children and make the schools safe for them," he said. "Otherwise, we’re allowing another form of terrorism."

Sikhism

Sikhism is a distinct religion, founded in 1469 by Guru Nanak, Dhanjal said. A line of 10 Gurus compiled their teachings into the Guru Granth Sahib, a collection of divine scriptures, which Sikhs follow today. With the word "Sikh" meaning disciple or student and "Guru" meaning teacher, Sikhs are considered the students of their 10 prophet-teachers.

Worshipping the same God as other mainstream world religions, Sikhism’s ultimate goal is to get as close to God as possible. Values of this faith include defense of the innocent, community service and equality of gender, race, caste and creed.

The Turban

Much of the discussion at the Marlboro Memorial Middle School centered around the turban, one of the most identifying characteristics of Sikhs.

Sikhs intentionally remain easily identifiable by their five articles of faith, or the "five Ks," Dhanjal said. These are Kesh (uncut hair), which is often kept covered by a distinctive turban and serves as a symbol of strength and God’s creation; Kara (metal bracelet), symbolizing equality and eternity; Kirpan (ceremonial sword), symbolizing freedom, liberty and the defense of the oppressed; Kanga (comb), meant to promote a neat and respectful appearance; and Kaccha (under-shorts), symbolizing modesty and fidelity.

"I always have to remember God in all of my actions," Dhanjal said, explaining why he wears his turban. "I will always stand out and will always be held accountable [for my actions]."

In honor of Kesh, Dhanjal does not cut his hair and motioned just above his backside in an indication of its length. He explained that every morning, he puts his hair into a bun and carefully ties 15 feet of cloth into his turban.

"There are many different turban styles and I wear whatever color matches," he explained.

Viewed as a crown by Sikhs, the turban is a symbolism of discipline, integrity, humility and spirituality that must be worn in public. Misconceptions
Nevertheless, the turban, a symbol of pride for the Sikhs, has recently become mistaken as a symbol of terrorism by some Americans.

"How many of the terrorists from 9/11 had turbans and beards?" Dhanjal asked the students.

When students realized that not one of the 19 terrorists looked this way, Dhanjal said the confusion stems from media saturation of Osama bin Laden wearing a turban and even well-meaning cartoons such as Aladdin.

"Bin Laden’s turban is not a mandate of his faith. It is a traditional Afghani headdress," Dhanjal explained.

People are taking these few turban-wearing figures, however, and assuming that everyone who wears a turban is from the Middle East, Dhanjal said. He said the fact is that 99 percent of the people wearing turbans in the United States are actually Sikhs, because it is specifically mandated by their faith.

After the events of 9/11, he said, the tragedy was exacerbated as some Americans focused their contempt toward Sikhs.

"After 9/11, I knew that everyone was staring at me," he said.

Dhanjal told a story of a Sikh doctor who treated patients at the World Trade Center until 2 a.m. on the day of the attack only to leave to a barrage of racial statements such as, "Go back to your own country."

Along the same lines was the story of Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Mesa, Ariz., resident who was shot and killed while he was planting flowers in front of his shop shortly after the 9/11 attack.

Dhanjal said a movie starring comedian Eddie Griffin compounded the misconception when in the movie, Griffin points to a Sikh man and proclaims, "Osama bin Laden, I found him!"

"Everyone that sees that will be convinced that we are Arab," Dhanjal said. "And it’s a double-whammy because African-Americans [Griffin is black] themselves have fought so long for equality."

"Sikhs are victims of hate crimes, profiling and job discrimination," Dhanjal summed up. "It is being made much harder for us to wear our articles of faith, which is our basic constitutional right."

To further illustrate that Sikh values fall in line with American ideals, Dhanjal said that in the same way the United States is fighting oppression today, Sikhs have also fought oppression.

"During the time of the fifth Guru, the Mogul Emperors persecuted Sikhs, saying that we must ‘convert to Islam or die.’ " he said. "They offered a year’s salary to anyone who could produce a head of uncut hair. We have a non-violent view and believe that fighting is the last resort."
He said Sikhs grieve with America and condemn the terrorist attacks.

Sikhs were on the scene helping the victims, they have been giving blood and donating money, food and clothing as well as participating in candlelight vigils, national prayers and memorial services all over the country, according to the Internet Web site SikhEducation.com.

Students at the middle school were very curious about Sikhism and asked questions such as "How do Sikhs pray?" "When do you go to Gurdwara [the Sikh houses of worship]?" and "What do you do if you break one of the rules?"

Dhanjal explained that Sikhs pray whenever they want to, but that the ideal is to remember God at all times. He said Gurdwaras are open 24 hours a day, but that most Sikhs attend on Sundays. Special occasions such as the Gurus’ birthdays also call for a visit to Gurdwara.

"We are all human, so there are times that we may break a rule of our faith," Dhanjal said. "Then we apologize to the congregation of the Gurdwara and are assigned a service."

The students asked questions for as long as they could, satisfying curiosities even about how heavy Dhanjal’s turban was.

Middle school psychologist Dr. Nancy Asher-Schultz said it is hoped that these seventh- and eighth-grade conflict managers and student leadership corps members will go on to spread the knowledge they gained.

"I really didn’t understand the Sikh religion before except for little snippets," seventh-grader Paula Shulman said. "This has opened up a new door."

A Bigger Effort

For Dhanjal, an active volunteer for the Sikh community, the day’s presentation was just a small part of a bigger effort of himself, his university affiliations and the Sikh community across the country.

"The bottom line is awareness," he said. "Ignorance is what breeds hatred. People don’t know who I am, what Sikhs are and the events of 9/11 have shown that."

Dhanjal said he was pleased with the responsiveness of the students and impressed with their insightful questions.

"Unfortunately, as people get older they are afraid or embarrassed to ask questions [and] will just assume incorrect things," he said. "Kids, however, don’t have these inhibitions and it’s easy to see what needs to be explained or cleared up."

Nevertheless, the effort is far from over and Dhanjal pointed out that there is still much more that can be done.
With images of terrorists appearing in the media regularly, the media, at the same time, has done very little, if anything to lessen the repercussions of this, he said.

Dhanjal’s resolve to correct this is evident in his involvement.

Dhanjal is an active member of Sikh Media Watch and Resource Task force and is a fellow of his campus’ Religious Life Council, a group that seeks to deepen the understanding of, and cultivate respect for all faiths.

"I am a proud American citizen practicing my faith, and for people to judge me or associate me with a terrorist from abroad because of my outward appearance is nothing short of racism and ignorance. I seek to correct that," Dhanjal said.
Hate-crimes investigators are pursuing "solid leads" on suspects who yelled "Bin Laden family" and attacked three Sikhs on a Woodside street, a police commander said yesterday.

Capt. Douglas Rolston, commanding officer of the 108th Precinct in Long Island City, said investigators are aggressively working on the Aug. 3 incident in which a Sikh couple and a cousin were attacked outside their home.

Rolston discussed the case in the Shri Guru Ravi Dass Temple in Woodside, telling Sikh leaders "there are some solid leads" but cautioning that it doesn't necessarily mean an arrest is "imminent."

Sitting barefoot in a circle on the floor, about two dozen Sikh religious and community leaders raised several concerns about bias incidents across the city and complained that none of the estimated 200 incidents against South Asians, Muslims and Arabs since Sept. 11, 2001, have resulted in arrests.

"There has been no action on any one of them. No one has been caught," Mohinder Singh of a Richmond Hill temple told the captain.

While the Sikh leaders tried to strike a cordial note, some asked if police would take more interest in the cases if the victims were not South Asians, Muslims or Sikhs, whose turbans are sometimes mistaken for Muslim garb.

Rolston said he couldn't speak for other precincts but assured the group that the police department takes all bias attacks seriously.

"We do not condone any type of bias-related crime," Rolston said. "We are very aggressive when it comes to investigating these types of incidents."

He added that after last week's incident, uniformed patrol and detectives launched an aggressive investigation, interviewed witnesses and dispatched helicopters to search for suspects.

In the incident, a Sikh couple and a cousin were walking to their Woodside home when they were attacked by three white men.

The men yelled "bin Laden family" and told them to go back to their country before getting out of a livery cab and attacking the family. The suspects fled after a pizza delivery man intervened, police said.

Brian Pu-folkes, executive director of New Immigrant Community Empowerment, who attended the meeting, is among activists planning a related candlelight vigil Aug. 19 at 6:30 p.m. in Jackson Heights.

Pu-folkes said yesterday's meeting was a "good start, but the really important thing is to follow through" to
deter bias crimes.

Rolston encouraged the group to reach out to religious leaders from other faiths and to visit the precinct and address police officers about the culture of Sikh people, such as why Sikh men wear turbans.

Ivan Dilan, a conciliation specialist with the U.S. Department of Justice, also attended the meeting.
One year ago last week, Harpreet Grewal decided to take his wife out on the town to celebrate her birthday. But when they arrived at Donzi's Restaurant in the Strip District, they were turned away, because Grewal, a Sikh, was wearing a turban.

He was angry, but he didn't pursue the matter, thinking it was an aberration.

Last week, Grewal, an Oakland resident, decided to take his wife, Gultaj, out again for her birthday, this time to Touch, also in the Strip -- and also run by the owner of Donzi's, Tom Jayson.

And once again, the couple was denied entry.

"While my wife and I were in line, we were approached by an employee of the club who told us I wouldn't be allowed in unless I removed my turban," said Grewal, 27, a doctor who is completing his residency in internal medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. "I explained that it is an article of my faith and I couldn't comply with such a request."

But the manager wouldn't budge.

"They told me they wouldn't even let a Jewish person in wearing a yarmulke unless he removed it," said Grewal. "They said, 'If we let you in, other people will start saying wearing hats is part of their religious beliefs, and we're trying to promote a certain image here.' "

What kind of image?

"An upscale image," said Grewal, a graduate of Stanford University and the University of Michigan Medical School.

The club had no comment on the incident or its dress code.

Such incidents are all too common nationwide, said Manjit Singh, executive director of Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force, a Maryland-based nonprofit group that helps Sikhs protect their religious rights and monitors misinformation about them in the news media.

"Denial of services in public accommodations is an ongoing problem," said Singh, citing similar examples of Sikhs being turned away over the years at nightclubs in New Jersey and Texas for wearing turbans. Those cases were eventually settled, with the Sikh individuals allowed access. "Unfortunately, many times the establishment is unaware that the turban is a religious article of faith."

In 1997, he noted, a Princeton University computer science professor won a $10,000 settlement from a Mexican restaurant in New York City that had denied him entry when he refused to remove his turban. The restaurant also put up a sign that said: "Men must not wear hats, except for religious reasons."

The 500-year-old Sikh faith, which is based in Northern India, requires men to keep their heads covered. The religion promotes a distinct identity that is supposed to show a follower's devotion to God, which includes having unshorn hair and covering that hair with a cloth turban.
About 500,000 Sikhs live in the United States, with about 100 families in the Tri-State area who worship at a Sikh temple in Monroeville.

In some parts of the country, the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, made things worse for Sikhs, who were targeted for abuse and hate crimes, Singh said, because they resemble Afghans due to their turbans and skin color. Many people also associated them -- wrongly -- with Osama bin Laden, a Muslim.

The first victim of a post-Sept. 11 hate crime was a Sikh, and a month after the attacks, a Sikh was forced to remove his turban and have his hair examined at an airline check-in counter, to his great humiliation and distress, Singh said. Also Sikhs seeking to visit an inmate in a Washington state prison were denied access until officials were informed that the prison was violating federal civil rights laws, which guarantee equal access to places of public accommodation without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion or national origin.

The same situation may be true here, say some civil libertarians.

"This club clearly has a problem of religious discrimination, because it applies not just to Sikhs but Orthodox Jews, and I frankly cannot think of any reason why this club would continue this policy," said Vic Walczak, legal director of the Pittsburgh chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Grewal says he plans to fight the policy, but is at a loss to explain it.

"I was born and raised in the United States," Grewal said. "My parents emigrated here from India in 1970, and I have traveled all over the U.S. and the rest of the world without any such problem occurring.

"But more than anything, I'm just tired of this. I'm tired of being treated like a second-class citizen just because I have a different appearance, and I don't think I should be treated as anything less than equal."
Frightened by a wave of violence and harassment, Sikhs across the country are struggling to explain to an uncomprehending public that despite their turbans and beards, they are not followers of the Taliban and not in any way responsible for last week's terror attacks.

Although there are fewer than a half million Sikhs in the United States, they have attracted a disproportionate share of the anger following Tuesday's attacks. On Saturday in Mesa, Ariz., a gunman drove into a Chevron station and shot to death the Sikh owner. The gunman then fired on a Lebanese clerk at a nearby Mobil station and into the home of an Afghan family.

"I'm a patriot," the suspect, Frank S. Roque, said as he was arrested. "I'm a damn American all the way."

Since the attacks, people who look Middle Eastern and South Asian, whatever their religion or nation of origin, have been singled out for harassment, threats and assaults. Mosques have been fired upon. Arab-owned businesses have been burned. A young Indian Catholic and his friend were beaten.

The F.B.I. is also investigating two other shooting deaths as possible hate crimes. In San Gabriel, Calif., Adel Karas, an Egyptian Christian grocer, was killed Saturday at the market he owned. The same day, Waqar Hasan, a Pakistani Muslim, was found shot dead at his store in the Pleasant Grove section of Dallas.

But the nation's Sikhs, conspicuous in turbans that resemble the head wrap of suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden, have suddenly found themselves particularly vulnerable. By yesterday afternoon, more than 200 Sikhs had reported incidents to a Sikh anti-defamation group. Newspapers around the country have reported that Sikh temples in Cleveland and West Sacramento were vandalized and, in San Mateo, Calif., a gasoline bomb was thrown through the window of a Sikh family's home, hitting a 3-year-old on the head, but not exploding.

On Sunday, near Eugene, Ore., a 54-year-old California woman was arrested for trying to pull the turban off the head of a Sikh man at a highway rest stop.

"People in our community are just terrified," said Mandeep Dhillion Singh, a lawyer in Menlo Park who is a spokesman for the Sikh Media Watch and Resource Task Force. "We haven't gotten beyond the shock of our own nation being attacked, and now we're being attacked."

On Sunday, in a telephone conversation with President Bush, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India expressed concern about the safety of Sikhs in the United States.

For many Sikhs, fear has disrupted the rhythms of daily life. "I haven't been out much this week," said a Sikh woman in Atlanta, who spoke only on the condition she not be identified. "It's a time to be very cautious. It's not a time to do any unnecessary shopping."

Sikhism, founded in the late 15th century by Hindu-born Guru Nanak, is a monotheistic religion that has grown to become the world's fifth largest after Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Sikhs reject the caste system, and to this day Sikh men take the name "Singh" and women, the name "Kaur," to connote the equality of all believers.

A majority of the world's 18 million or so Sikhs live in the Punjab region of northern India, but there are
sizable Sikh populations in England, Canada and the United States.

In the wake of the terrorism attacks, some Muslim and Hindus have discussed changing their traditional dress so as not to be conspicuous. But Sikh men say their religion requires them to leave their hair uncut and covered, either by a turban or a small bun called a patka.

Balbir Singh Sodhi came to Mesa to open a gas station. Prosecutors said the only reason for the killing was his turban and his dark skin. At the time of the incident, he was outside the station doing landscaping with four Mexicans, but he was the only one shot.

Lakhwinder Singh, a brother of the victim, said Sikhs in the Mesa area began hearing threats the day of the terror attacks.

"My brother and I and some other Sikhs who owned stores talked about going to the media to try to clarify that we are not Muslims," said Lakhwinder Singh. "We knew there was very little understanding of Sikhs in this country."

Among Sikhs in the United States, there is now intense debate about how to go about distinguishing themselves from Muslims while not implying that attacks on Muslims are justified.

"It would be antithetical to our faith to have materials saying, "We are not Muslims," said Inderpreet Singh, a Sikh in Boston. "It's understandable that people now are worried about being mistaken for Muslims, but we have to be very careful not to do that."

In Chicago, Inderjit Singh, a Sikh taxi driver, yesterday taped a flier about his religion to the partition separating him from the passengers.

The flier describes the history and basic beliefs of Sikhism, and then adds, "Some people have the misconception that Sikhism is an offshoot of Hinduism or the Muslim religion when actually it is a separate religion by itself."

Attackers, however, are making no such distinctions. In San Francisco, Sean Fernandes, a 26-year old Indian Catholic, said he was walking with a white Australian friend early Saturday morning, when a man came up, called him a "dirty Arab," and punched him and the friend. His friend was stabbed in the ensuing brawl and remains hospitalized in critical condition.

"I've lived in this country for eight years, and felt at home here, but this makes me re-evaluate," said Mr. Fernandes, a software engineer. "I'm completely shocked. I've always thought people here were very tolerant, but I guess tough times bring out their true colors."
Additional Resources

**Gurdwaras in New Jersey**
To contact representatives from these gurdwaras, please contact Gurparkash Singh at (908) 719-8625

Central Jersey Sikh Association  
Robbinsville, New Jersey

Dashmesh Darbar  
Carteret, New Jersey

Garden State Sikh Association  
Bridgewater, New Jersey

Guru Nanak Society of Delaware Valley  
Deptford, New Jersey

Khalsa Darbar of South Jersey, Inc.  
Burlington, New Jersey

Sri Guru Singh Sabha  
Glen Rock, New Jersey

The Sikh Sabha of New Jersey  
Lawrenceville, New Jersey

The Singh Sabha, Inc.  
Port Reading, New Jersey

**Resources of Sikhs and Sikhism**

The Sikh Coalition  
P.O. Box 7132  
New York, New York 10150-7132  
866-Sikh-Voice  
info@sikhcoalition.org  
[www.sikhcoalition.org](http://www.sikhcoalition.org)

[www.sikhs.org](http://www.sikhs.org)

[www.allaboutsikhs.com](http://www.allaboutsikhs.com)

[www.sikhwomen.com](http://www.sikhwomen.com)