

Faith & Fashion

Arpita Basu

America isn't used to seeing turbaned Sardars on Fifth Avenue

billboards. More so, after the turban came to be reflexively associated with terror mongers the day the twin towers fell. So, when Sonny Caberwal landed up on Kenneth Cole posters early last year, it was more than just a fashion campaign.

It made Sandeep Singh Caberwal America's first Sikh model - a label which Sonny, as he is better known, takes more than just aesthetic interest in. "The company thought that a Sikh man born and raised in the United States would challenge people to think beyond stereotypes. I've received a thousand messages from people around the world. Some of the most touching letters have been from the families of those who faced physical violence in the post-9/11 backlash," he says.

Sonny recalls how he learnt, as a 22-year-old law student in 2001, that it was best to "avoid places and people who were likely to be both racist and prone to violence. But credit should be given to all those people who were willing to listen, understand, and educate themselves and those around them," he clarifies. "This country has changed by leaps and bounds since. Although there are pockets where I'm sure no Sikhs have been seen for a long time, most people understand that wearing a turban does not equate to being a member of the Taliban. That being said, racism exists here for all kinds of minorities - just as it does elsewhere - and Sikhs are obvious targets." Sonny wouldn't call himself a perfect Sikh, but he cherishes the responsibility that has come with stepping into 'different shoes'. What began with sending out profile shots on a whim. ("My brother-in-law forwarded me an email from a Sikh organisation that was looking for a Sardar to feature in the Kenneth Cole campaign") saw the 29-year old practising attorney-turned-entrepreneur become a champion of Sikh concerns. And a darned stylish one, at that.

"I'm always amazed when people recognize me on the streets. It's humbling, because it reminds me of what a significant opportunity this is, to create a positive representation of Sikhs and the South Asian community. I also hope the campaign impacts how young Sikhs and South Asians view their cultural traditions. I'm fiercely proud of my Indian, Punjabi, and Sikh traditions," asserts Sonny, whose grandparents - on whom he practises his "pretty rusty" Punjabi still live in Chandigarh. His Hindi, he brushes up with a little help from Bollywood block-busters. The latest being "*Singh is King*, of course!"

Currently working with a mobile company that is involved in music, Sonny, who has been playing the tabla since he was five, has an ear for Hindustani Classical music, too. "It is the most complex and fulfilling musical tradition in the world ... But I guess, I'm biased! I began playing tabla by watching the Giani Jis in the Gurdwara, and because I lived in a small town like Carolina, I found other non-traditional ways to perform. Besides, I trained with a visiting student from India," reveals Sonny, who has also collaborated with the Washington-based Thievery Corporation on the album *The Richest Man in Babylon*.

Visual identity, Sonny acknowledges is a powerful thing. And if the dapper young Sikh smiling down from post white billboards can detach from the turban some of the associations heaped on it by grainy terror camp videos, fashion can, indeed, take itself a lot more seriously.

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Healthy Hair

Threety Irani & Nilufer Babaycon

Everyone wants to have beautiful silky hair today, but few realise that the only way one can achieve this is by correct living habits and haircare. **The amount of hair on your head is decided before you are born and the size of the circumference of each follicle is fixed irrevocably.** If your hair does not please you, there is no doubt it will affect the way you feel and look. It is only by knowing your hair type correctly that you will be able to do things that you like with it and the less you will try to expect the impossible from it.

Is your hair oily, dry or mixed? The answer to these questions will help you determine a correct haircare routine and style which will make sure you are getting the maximum from this vital part of your persona. So, like your skin, your hair needs to be looked after and nurtured, both from inside and outside.

Whatever your age, if you want healthy hair you must eat properly. Diet is the most effective way to control hair health. The foods to eat are fresh fruits and vegetables, proteins and lot of water. The bad foods are too many dairy products, animal fats, sugar, too much salt and, in cold climates, spices. This diet is for a lifetime and in addition to healthy hair it keeps you fit and smart always.

A correct haircare routine is vital if your hair is to look its best all the time. In order to arrive at the correct routine, you have to establish your hair type - is it oily, dry, mixed or normal? Then its texture - is it fine, medium or coarse, thick or thin, curly or straight?

Choose products that are especially formulated for your hair type. The key to healthy hair is a healthy scalp that allows the hair follicles and the sebaceous gland attached to them to function correctly. Today, the rule is to wash your hair whenever it looks or feels in need of it, but do remember that you need to rinse off the shampoo thoroughly - rinse and then rinse again is one of the secrets of fresh hair. It also adds volume to your hair.

Use a conditioner after you shampoo - this acts as a moisturiser for your hair. The purpose of conditioner is to counteract dryness of the hair shafts and to make it manageable so you can comb it out more easily. It also prevents split ends and breakages. It is, therefore, a vital part of your haircare routine if you want it to stay healthy and glossy.

There are two types of conditioners - the instant ones to wash off after each shampoo, or the deep conditioners, ones that need to be used weekly if your hair is damaged, or once a month for healthy management. Before stepping out of the shower, adjust the temperature so that cooler or cold water runs over your hair for few seconds. This helps seal in a little of the conditioner and washes off any remaining residue. It leaves your hair feeling squeaky clean and gives it body and shine.

Have a hair spa done monthly - this is a deep conditioning treatment that helps to release and rejuvenate your locks. It usually begins with a dry massage to stimulate the blood circulation and help your scalp relax. This is followed by a shampoo. Then the hair is rinsed out only so that some of the conditioner remains for a couple of days.

In other types of spa therapies, a serum is applied after the dry massage and the client is given an hour's massage with oils that relax the scalp. It ends with a hair wash and shampoo. Remember, deep conditioning treatments are essential to restore damaged or dried-out hair.

