

Combating ignorance in America

Washington: Undeterred by comparisons being made with terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden due to beards and turbans, American Sikhs are making a determined effort to end hate crimes against the community by engaging the administration as also compatriots in a dialogue.

"Sikhs in America have a great educational task. We need to inform and educate the compassionate American public as to our beliefs in religious tolerance and in the values of all religions," says Jaspreet Singh, of Sikh council on Religion and Education (SCORE), a community think-tank in USA, which recently organised a conference to highlight challenges faced by the community in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist strikes.

At the Washington Sikh leadership conference, several Sikh community leaders advocated the need for cross-faith participation to combat hate crimes and to work together on progressive politics and evoked good response from representatives of various US departments. As the American Sikh leaders stressed on increased cultural sensitivity towards the Sikhs among law enforcers, Rick Thornton, a senior member from the Civil Rights Unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) appreciated that their concerns were "important and legitimate".

He assured Sikhs that the FBI would "continue to work with the Sikh community to develop an effective strategy to address these matters of concern."

[Courtesy: PTI]

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Iran Website on Sikhism - Message from Tehran

Sr. Pervinder Singh writes: By the blessings of Kalghidhar Padshah Shahenshah Maharaj Guru Gobind Singh, the portal www.gurugobindsingh.net dedicated to Maharaj Guru Gobind Singh is Online for the purpose to Empower the Future Generation of Sarbat Khalsa. It is totally non commercial, non controversial and non political, aimed at the welfare of universal brotherhood and empowering our future generation to be recognized within the theme of Khalsa. The True Saviour of the world humanity, the protector and leader in every sphere to promote dialogue among civilizations.

It is the first portal which would go under construction step by step with democratic feedback online from Sarbat Khalsa and all the Sikhs world-wide who share the same cause so that we are able to follow on the footsteps of Maharaj Guru Gobind Singh Ji involving every Sikh and sharing with them the progress.

Therefore it is humble appeal to all the Gursikhs and Cyber Sangat to spare some time at convenience and fill in the Online feed back from which would help the *sewadars* to complete this project.

Kindly share with your support in this cause and promote it to all the Sarbat Khalsa Sikhs and institutions known to you and please click the following link and fill in your feedback.

<http://www.gurugobindsingh.net/feedback.htm>

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Sikhism and Critical Theory: Hofstra N.Y. Conference

Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY: Hofstra University hosted a conference entitled "Sikhism and Critical Theory" on September 13-14, at its campus in Hempstead, New York. The conference was held under the auspices of the Sardarni Kuljit Kaur Bindra Chair in Sikh Studies, occupied by Dr. Arvinder Pal Singh Mandair, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies.

The conference attracted distinguished scholars from the U.S.A., Canada, the U.K. and Japan who, over two days, debated a wide range of issues, including Sikh identity, text interpretation and diasporic transnationalism. The keynote speaker was Professor Christopher Shackle, pro-Director of the University of London's prestigious School of Oriental and African Studies, and himself a leading scholar of Sikhism.

A special feature of the conference was the Public Forum, held on Saturday, September 14, 2002 at 2 p.m. in the Student Center Theater. It featured prominent members of the Sikh community who led a discussion on the future of community education in the Sikh diaspora. The public forum was followed by Professor Shackle's keynote address.

"Sikhism and Critical Theory" was the second in a series of conferences supported by the Bindra chair. During the last two decades the growth of Sikh settlement in North America has given the Sikh diaspora a voice hitherto occupied by a few mostly non-Sikh Western academics. Recent years have seen the emergence of new intellectual demands for a Sikh studies agenda capable of addressing the needs of a Sikh diaspora in the English-speaking world. In accordance with this demand "Sikhism and Critical Theory" explored new ways of relating contemporary Sikh experience to recent movements of critical thinking in the humanities and social sciences.

The Sardarni Kuljit Kaur Bindra endowed chair was established at Hofstra University in September 2001, by the Bindra family of Long Island, to promote the study of Sikh religion and culture. In addition to creating a new teaching program focussing on the Sikh tradition, the endowment supports annual conferences and workshops.

