

# Interfaith Vegan Coalition

## SIKH ADVOCACY KIT



### Demonstrating the Sikh Ideals of Harmlessness and Universal Lovingkindness

Prepared by Jesse Kharbanda Sikh ethics, as derived from the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (the Sikh holy scriptures, abbreviated as “SGGS”), are focused on broad moral principles (e.g., compassion, justice, mercy), rather than strict rules (including dietary rules).

While eating meat is not forbidden in either Sikh scripture (paraphrased as “Gurbani”) or in the Sikh code of conduct (the Rehat Maryada), core Sikh ethical principles, as seen in Gurbani, support a vegan diet.

#### PART I: FIVE SIKH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES THAT SUPPORT A VEGAN DIET

- 1. Having a vegan diet is a compassionate practice, and the Sikh Gurus placed great importance on compassion.**

SGGS Page 51 [Full Shabad](#)

Saṭ sanṭokh ɕaiḡ kamḡvai eh karṇī sḡr. Āp chḡhod sabh hoē reṅḡ jis ɕēē parabh nirankḡr.  
Practice truth, contentment and kindness; this

is the most excellent way of life. One who is so blessed by the Formless Lord God renounces selfishness, and becomes the dust of all.

SGGS Page 272 [Full Shabad](#)

Barahm giḡnī kī sabh ūpar maiḡ. Barahm giḡnī tē kachḡ burḡ na bhaiḡ.

The God-conscious being shows kindness to all. No evil comes from the God-conscious being.

SGGS Page 508 [Full Shabad](#)

Jīa ɕaiḡ maiḡ sarbaṭar ramṇān param hansah rīṭ.  
Show kindness and mercy to all beings, and realize that the Lord is pervading everywhere; this is the way of life of the enlightened soul, the supreme swan. 7

SGGS Page 1354 [Full Shabad](#)

Sabḡān raṭān hiṭān maiḡ kīṭān kalī karam kriṭuḡ.  
To be imbued and attuned to the Shabad; to be kind and compassionate; to sing the Kirtan - these are the most worthwhile actions in this Dark Age of Kali Yuga.

## 2. A vegan diet entails no killing of animals, and the Sikh Gurus valued life.

Jīa baḡhahu so ḡharam kar thāpahu aḡhram kahhu kaṭ bhāi.

You kill living beings, and call it a righteous action. Tell me, brother, what would you call an unrighteous action? SGGS 1103

Jao sabh meh ek khudā e kahaṭ hao tao kio murgī mārai. ||1||

You say that the One Lord is in all, so why do you kill chickens? ||1|| SGGS 1350

## 3. A vegan diet does not involve any exploitation of animals, and the Sikh Gurus and shaheeds (martyrs) throughout Sikh history devoted themselves to fighting exploitation.

Kabīr jīa jo mārēh jor kar kaṭe hēh jo halāl. Kabeer, they oppress living beings and kill them, and call it proper.

Source: [SGGS 1375](#)

## 4. A vegan diet is consistent with the Sikh Gurus' call to live a modest life.

SGGS Page 467 [Full Shabad](#)

onHee mandai pair na rakhi-o kar sukarit Dharam kamaa-i-aa. onHee dunee-aa torhay banDhnaa ann paanee thorhaa khaa-i-aa.

They do not place their feet in sin, but do good deeds and live righteously in Dharma. They burn away the bonds of the world, and eat a simple diet of grain and water.

## 5. A vegan diet, as scientifically demonstrated to be healthier for the body than a diet based on factory farm-produced meat, is consistent with the Gurus' call for Sikhs to eat foods that are good for the body and mind.

O Baba, the pleasures of other foods are false whose consumption makes the body ruined, and

wickedness and corruption enter into the mind. ||1||Pause|| SGGS 16



## PART II: STEPS TOWARDS A VEGAN LANGAR (SIKH FOOD SERVED IN THE TEMPLE AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF WORSHIP)

Gurdwaras (Sikh temples) have historically been lacto-vegetarian. The transition to an almost entirely dairy-free gurdwara is within reach.

1. Invite a dietician or other health professional with familiarity with Punjabi food and the state of health of Punjabis to address the sangat (congregation) and discuss some of the health challenges (diabetes, heart disease) facing the community and the health benefits of a vegan diet.
2. Substitute gheo (clarified butter) with vegetable oils (ideally, olive oil) in the preparation of:
  - A) Daal (lentils)
  - B) Sabzi (vegetables)
  - C) Chapati/Parshada (Indian flatbread)
3. Substitute cow's milk with almond milk
  - A) Kheer (rice pudding)
  - B) Chai (tea)



## PART III: RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

“[Diet in Sikhism](#),” Wikipedia.

“[Guru Granth Sahib on Kindness](#),” Sikhiwiki.

“[Guru Granth Sahib on Meat](#),” Sikhiwiki.

Singh, Harbir, “[Can Sikhs Drink Milk](#),” AskHarbir, April 22, 2016.

Singh, Harj, “[Sikhism and Meat](#),” Harj the Vegan, March 29, 2014.

Singh, Jagraj, “[Should We Eat Meat](#),” Basics of Sikhi, October 31, 2014.

Singh, Manvir, “[The Truth of Industrial Dairy Farming](#),” Manvir Singh, April 19, 2017.

“[Vegetarianism](#),” Sikhiwiki.

### [Explanation of Sikhism](#)

“[Cowspiracy](#)” and “[What the Health](#)” are on Netflix.

“[Earthlings](#)” is a very intense video that shows the unbelievable cruelty endured by animals at human hands. If you plan to show it, you need to give people fair warning. While it has caused many people to go vegan on the spot, it can be traumatic to watch, and viewers need to be given great compassion and care while watching it.

“[A Life Connected](#)” is a short, 11 minute, but powerful and feel-good video [online](#).

“[The Metaphysics of Food](#),” by Will Tuttle.

“[Peaceable Kingdom](#)” and “[The Witness](#)” can be watched free [online](#).

“[A Prayer for Compassion](#),” by Thomas Jackson.

## PART IV: RECIPES

[Vegan kheer](#)

Draft by Jesse Kharbanda for the Interfaith Vegan Coalition, December 2017



ACTIVIST SUPPORT:

**Follow Up Support for You**

SHOULD YOU NEED IDEAS, SUPPORT,  
ADVICE, ETC., PLEASE EMAIL:

[veganspirituality@gmail.com](mailto:veganspirituality@gmail.com)  
or [activistsupport@idausa.org](mailto:activistsupport@idausa.org)  
and/or [jesse.kharbanda@gmail.com](mailto:jesse.kharbanda@gmail.com)