



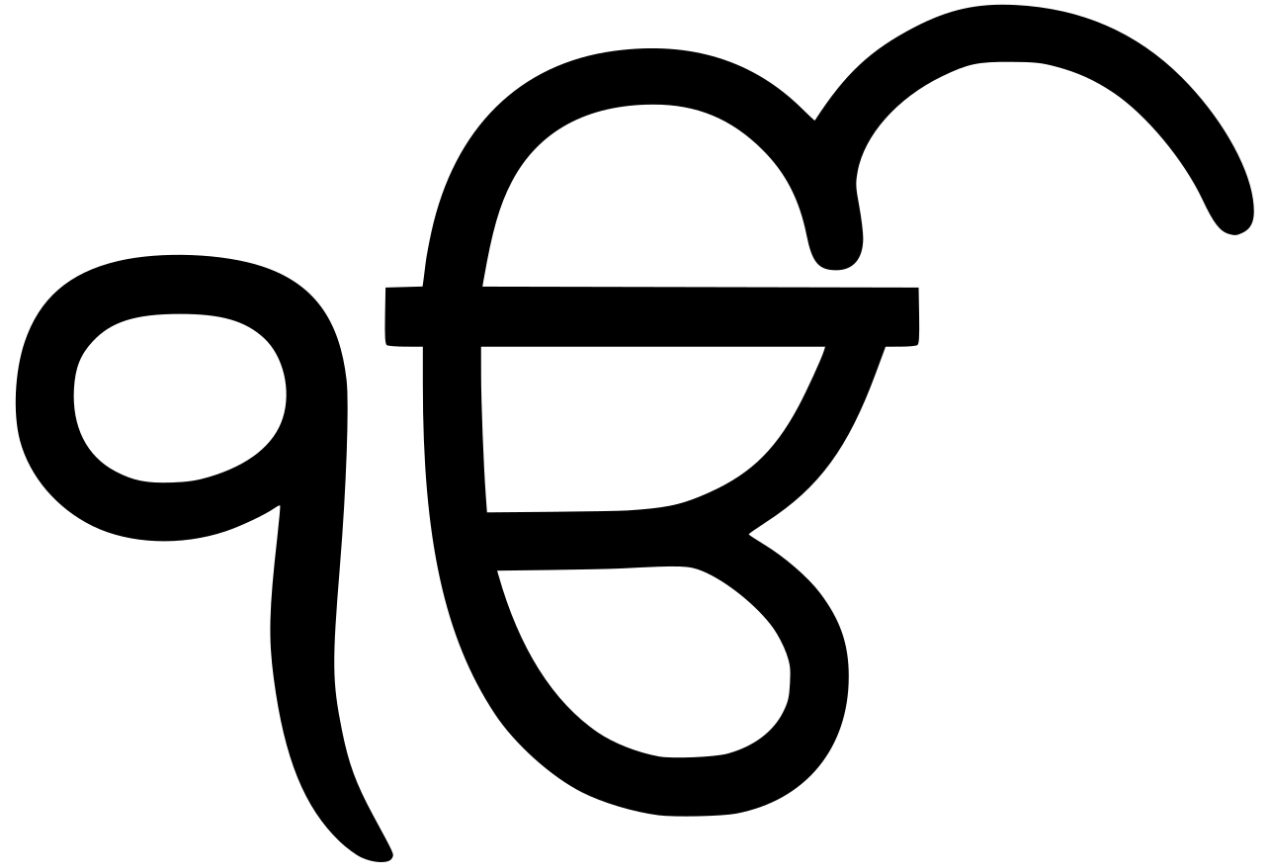
## **What is Sikh Heritage Month?**

Sat Sri Akaal, and welcome to Sikh Heritage Month! We recognize the important contributions that Sikh Canadians have made to Ontario's social, economic, political and cultural fabric. Celebrated every April, the Sikh Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about Sikh Canadians and the important role they have played and continue to play in communities across Ontario.

# Ek Onkar

This symbol ੴ (pronounced Ek Onkar) is the symbol that represents the "One Supreme Reality" or "One God."

This is the symbol that appears at the beginning of the Guru Granth Sahib. It's the icon that starts the holy text which was first written by Guru Nanak.

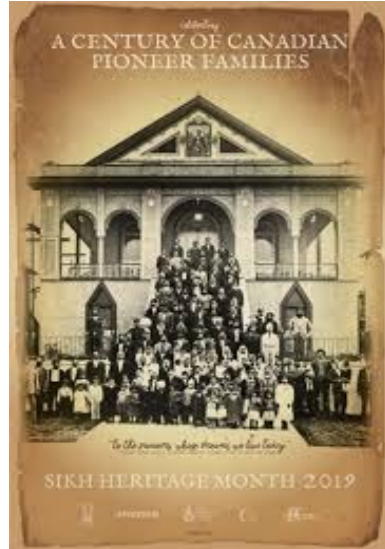


# Khanda

The Khanda, the symbol of the Sikh faith, attained its current form around the 1920's. The modern Sikh symbol/logo is never written on or in any copy of the Guru Granth Sahib. The main symbol/logo traditionally used in the Guru Granth Sahib and Gurdwaras across the world is "Ek Onkar".

The Khanda is made up of four parts. Two kirpans (sword) are on either side, in the middle is a Khanda (double edged sword) and the chakkar (throwing ring) which is a circular shape.





# Sikh Heritage Month in TDSB

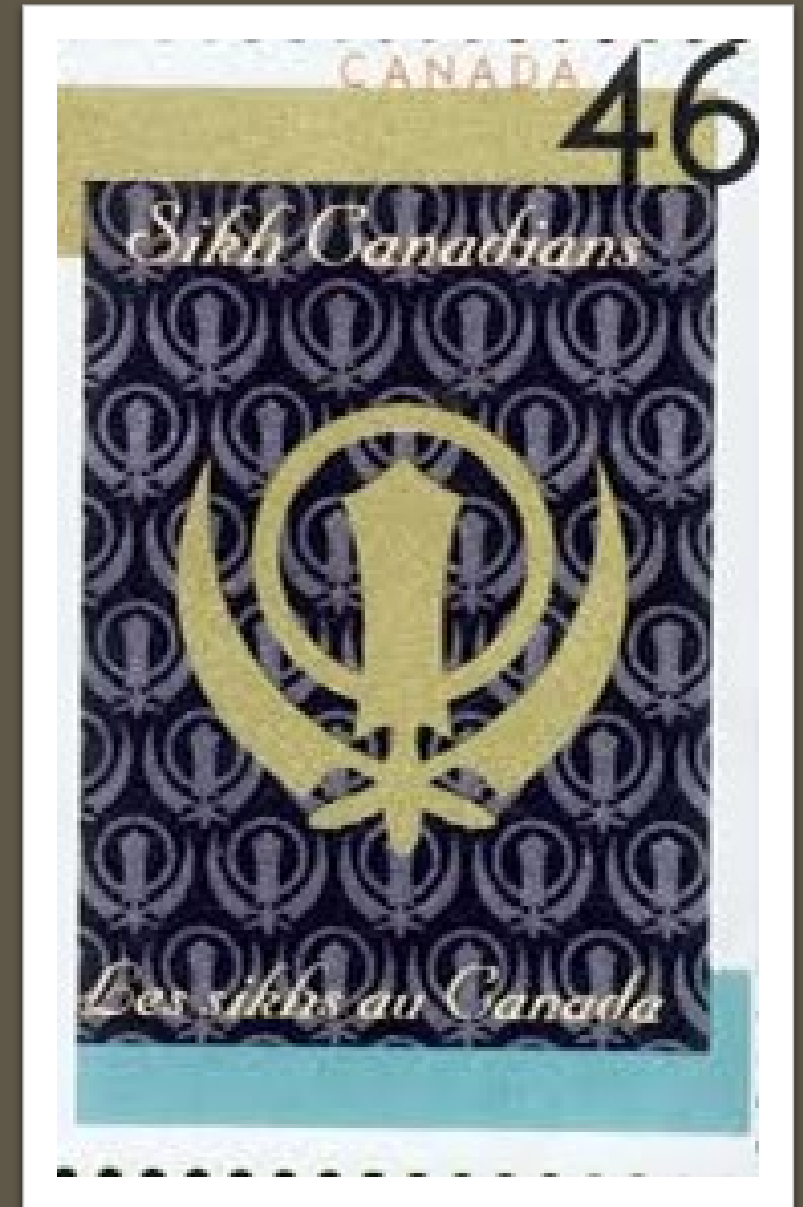
Sikh Heritage Month is proudly recognized at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) during the month of April. On March 22, 2016, the Board of Trustees voted to designate April of each year as Sikh Heritage Month, making TDSB the first school board in Canada to do so, and matching recognition by the Province of Ontario who proclaimed the Sikh Heritage Month Act in December 2013.

April is an important month for the Sikh community. In this month, Sikh Canadians celebrate Vaisakhi, which marks the creation of the Khalsa and the Sikh articles of faith. Sikh Canadians widely celebrate Vaisakhi, also known as Khalsa Day, across Ontario.

# History of Sikhs in Canada

The first Sikh settlers in Canada arrived on the shores of British Columbia from Punjab, India at the turn of the 1900's, and settled across the lower mainland and island by working on the farms and in the forestry industry. Soon after, in 1908, local Sikhs started to build a Sikh Temple (Gurdwara) in a true community effort, under the auspices of the Khalsa Diwan Society.

Today, the presence of Sikhs can be seen in every aspect of the civic life of Canada, from volunteers to professionals, from sports fans to Ministers, and even the Senate.





# Sikhism

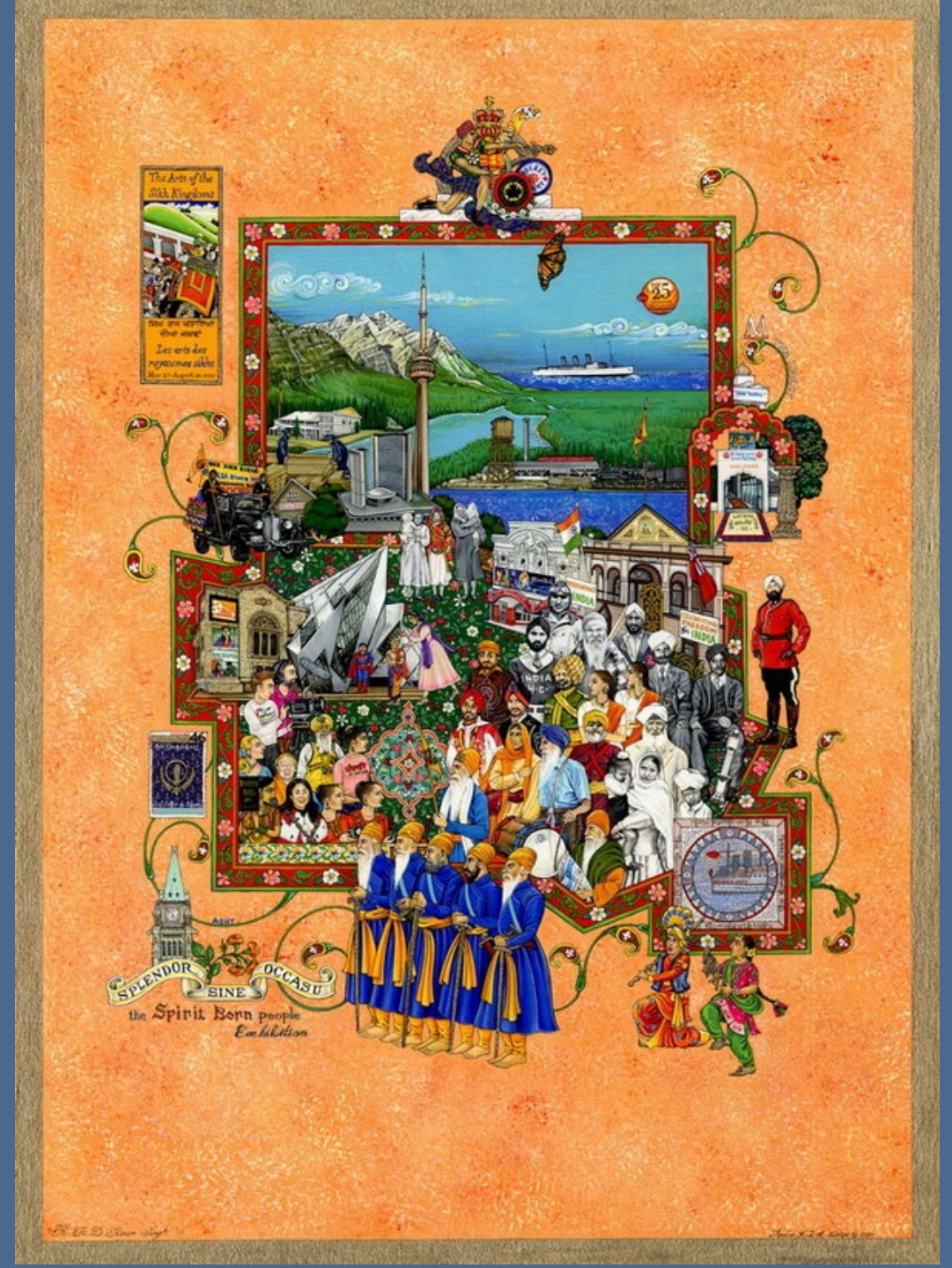
The Sikh faith was founded by **Guru Nanak** (1469-1539) and shaped by his nine successors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in South Asia.

Sikhism is one of the world's youngest religions being founded just over 500 years ago. Despite being so young, it is the fifth largest religion in the world with over 30 million followers.



# Message of Sikhism

The Sikh religion exists as a faith of life-affirmation. A Sikh regards the world not as a place of suffering, but as a meaningful creation of God wherein noble, truthful, and selfless actions can bring a person closer to realizing Him. Sikhism preaches universal equality, and therefore, regards all religions and people as equal before the eyes of God. A Sikh is enjoined to rise above ego, live a truthful family life, share earnings with the less fortunate, and, as a human being, work toward progress on the individual and social level.





# Sikh Gurdwara

Sikhs worship at home and in the Sikh temple called the **Gurdwara** . Each gurdwara has a Guru Granth Sahib, the holy Sikh scripture.

Food or Langar is cooked and served by the members of the Sikh community, to all people at the Gurdwara. The idea is to demonstrate equality of all people, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, race or sex.

The "**Nishan Sahib**," is a yellow (saffron) triangular flag bearing the Sikh symbol of "Khanda" and flies in front of every Gurdwara. The term 'Nishan' means 'flag' and 'Sahib' is a term of respect.







# The 5 K's

The five sacred Sikh symbols prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh are commonly known as Panj Kakars or the 'Five Ks' because they start with letter K representing Kakka in the Punjabi language.



They are:

1. **Kesh or unshorn hair**, regarded as a symbol of saintliness.
2. **Kangha or the wooden comb** is necessary to keep the hair clean and tidy. A Sikh must comb his hair twice a day and tie his turban neatly.
3. **Kara or the steel bracelet** symbolises restraint from evil deeds. It is worn on the right wrist and reminds the Sikh of the vows taken by him, that is, he is a servant of the Guru and should not do anything which may bring shame or disgrace.





## The 5 K's

4. **Kachh or the briefs/shorts** must be worn at all times. It reminds the Sikh of the need for self-restraint over passions and desires.



5. **Kirpan or the sword** is the emblem of courage and self-defence. It symbolises dignity and self-reliance, the capacity and readiness to always defend the weak and the oppressed.



# Sikh Festival - Vaisakhi

**Baisakhi**, or **Vaisakhi**, is the festival which celebrates the founding of the Sikh community known as the **Khalsa**, in 1699. It is celebrated on 13 or 14 April, and began as a harvest festival in Punjab before it became the Sikhs' most important festival.

For 48 hours, ending on the morning of Baisakhi, there is an **Akhand Path**, a continuous reading of the whole of the Guru Granth Sahib. At Baisakhi, the Nishan Sahib is replaced and there is a procession of the Guru Granth Sahib. Sikhs remember the unity, courage and strength of the Sikhs and also the meaning of the Khalsa.

Sikhs often play team sports at Baisakhi as a reminder of these qualities. There may also be bhangra dancing, fairs and exhibitions.



# Sikhs in Canada

Sikhs have been living in  
Canada for over 100 years!





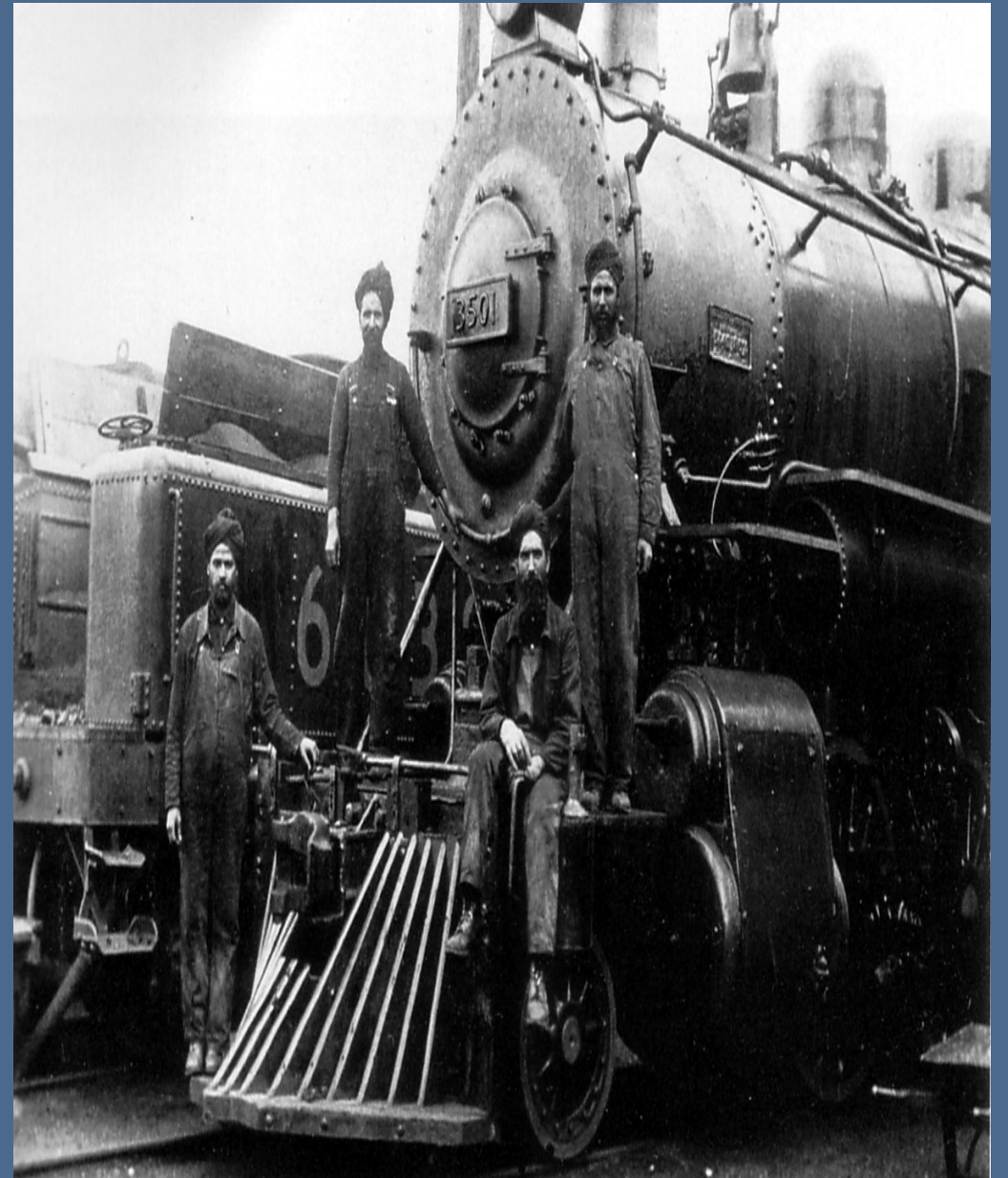
# Sikhs in Canada

As settlers and pioneers, they worked on the lumber mills, and cement quarries...



# Sikhs in Canada

As settlers and pioneers, they  
toiled on farms and helped  
build the railway.....



# Sikhs in Canada

As servers and protectors....



# Sikhs in Canada

As leaders and legacy  
builders....Bardish Chagger &  
Jagmeet Singh





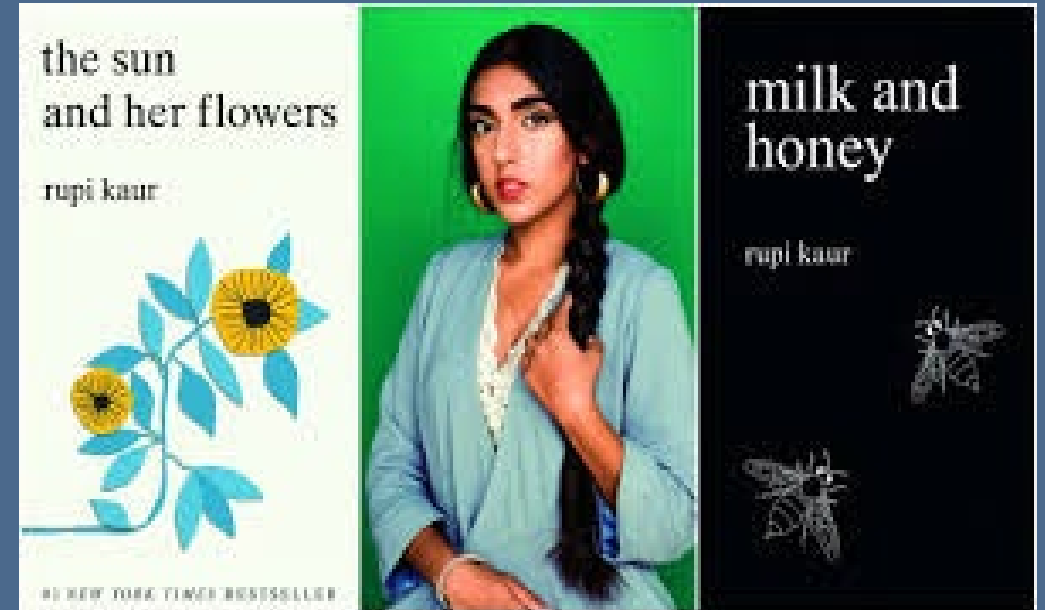
# Sikhs in Canada

As farmers and students...



# Sikhs in Canada

As poets and athletes.... Rup  
Kaur & Pardeep Singh Nagra



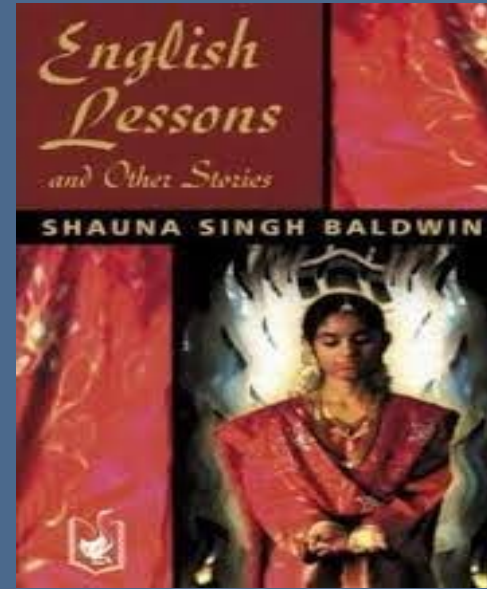
# Sikhs in Canada

As musicians and  
broadcasters....Kiran  
Ahluwalia & Harnarayan  
Singh



# Sikhs in Canada

As writers and wrestlers....  
Shauna Singh Baldwin &  
Jinder Mahal (Yuvraj Singh  
Dhesi)





# Sikhs in Canada

As influencers and superfans.... Kay Ray (Kiran Rai) & Nav Bhatia



# Sikhs in Canada

As judges and entertainers....  
Justice Palbinder Shergill &  
Lilly Singh



# Sikh Farmers in Canada



Thanks to the farmers like these ones in Richmond, Vancouver, yielding a crop of cranberries, Canada is today the second largest producer of this 'healing' fruit which is now sold as the analogue version of aspirin.

And the legacy continues to grow our future...