

Nishaan Sahib

ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ

DIGNITY OF THE KHALSA

The flag of every denomination has its own distinction of color, shape, design, and symbol and of other details to make it specific to represent the physical body it stands for (country, nation, group, faith, organization) and to proclaim identity. A flag represents loyalty, unity and distinction as well as uniformity of the philosophy of the group it stands for. It lays right and claim to the territory and indicates presence, possession and authority of the group whose flag is there. It announces sovereignty which is: the independence of the mind and body of the people, organizations, and faith it belongs to.

For Sikhs, this flag is called the Nishaan Sahib
"Nishaan" means a seal, stamp, a mark of identity and "Sahib" is added for respect. It is sometimes referred to as *Kesri Jhanda* (*Kesri*-saffron colored, *Jhanda*-flag). In ardaas we say "*jhandey bungaiy jugo jug ata*" means: Eternal be the Nishaan Sahib and its safeguard! Nishaan Sahib has spiritual under-tones and it commands a high level of respect. The Sikhs consider the Nishaan Sahib auspicious and revere it as something special from the Guru.

Nishaan Sahib represents the freedom of the Khalsa *Panth*. Every Gurdwara Sahib has Nishaan Sahib hoisted outside front of the main Darbaar Hall. It stands for the Sikhs in their body, mind and action. It is an assertion of their physical and mental independence and of the unity under its protection. It indicates purity of thought and spiritual elevation through belief in one God, faith in Guru Granth Sahib and in the order of the Sikh principles including the discipline.

The Nishaan Sahib had been leading the Sikh armies, parades like *Nagar Kirtans* and *Parbhat Pherees* (Morning hymn singing parades). Carrying the flag is considered a special honor. Religious processions are preceded by five Nishaan Sahibs carried by the devotees. People en route bow to the Nishaan Sahib and their bearers.

Nishaan Sahib is a living representation of equal supports for the needy regardless of any discrimination. Where Nishaan Sahib is hoisted there it indicates that there is food and shelter for needy people. There is always the presence of Guru Granth Sahib and His Sikhs.



During the war Nishaan sahib is the symbol of total freedom - Unlike all the flags in this world Nishaan Sahib once hoisted never comes down other than for maintenance.

The reason why the Nishaan Sahib is normally raised high because there is a noble principle of the Sikh nation behind it. It is also it is easy so the people can see it from far away. Its dignified waving prompts every one to lead a life of high ethics as prescribed by our Gurus. The highest Nishaan Sahibs in the world are gracefully standing on the 17,000 feet height at Hemkunt Sahib in India.

Nishaan Sahib has following parts:

- a) A Pole: Usually bamboo or steel
- b) Khanda: A Nickel plated Khanda (double edged sword) on top of the pole
- c) Chola: The pole is wrapped with a cloth and on the top part it is triangular portion left to wave in the air. The cloth is mostly saffron color. Saffron color stands for courage and sacrifice.
- c) An Emblem is embroidered or printed on the triangular part on the top and is symbol
- d) Phuman: It is a small black pompom attached to the apex of the flag through a short length of a black string. It makes fluttering of the flag smooth in high wind and as well, enables it to flap when the wind is low.



Respect of Nishaan Sahib:

Nishaan Sahib is the pride of the Sikhs. Once hoisted, it is never done half-mast. The cloth is normally changed once a year. Shabad-Kirtan, Ardaas, Jaikaras, distribution of Parshaad is conducted while doing this sewa of changing cloth. The pole is lowered, washed with buttermilk and cleaned before putting on the new *chola* (cloth). Bowing to Nishaan Sahib is another way of paying respect to the principles of Gurus.

*Jhoolte Nishaan rahen Panth Maharaj ke.
May ever flutter the banner of the Great Panth!*

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