

Cover Page

Title of the essay: By reference to British values, what are the best values for humans to aspire to?

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Introduction

Values are the essential and foundational beliefs that direct or inspire attitudes and behaviour.¹ They facilitate the capacity of individuals and society to recognise matters of importance.² Another definition comes from the Oxford English Dictionary, which defines values as ‘principles or standards of behaviour; one’s judgment of what is important in life’.³ This essay will examine the question of what the best values are for humans to aspire to. It argues that the British values and two of the core values of the religion of Sikhism, (Kirit Karna and Waṇḍ Chakkō) are the best values for humans to aspire to. The essay will outline the British values, Sikhism, and its core values. It also analyses the British values and the two specified Sikh values to seek to demonstrate why they are the best values for humans to aspire to.

British values

British values are the defining ideals that support the social, political and cultural framework of the United Kingdom.⁴ While not formally codified completely, these values reflect the shared ethos of the country.⁵ The values were intended to reconcile freedom of thought, expression and choice in a liberal society with its necessity to

¹ ‘What are Values? - Ethics Sage’ (www.ethicssage.com, 08 August 2018) <www.ethicssage.com/2018/08/what-are-values.html> accessed 29 August 2025.

² *ibid.*

³ Greg Million, ‘Brene Brown’s Value Exercise - Greg Million - An Empowered Now Coach’ (www.gregmillion.com, 11 December 2020) <www.gregmillion.com/brene-browns-value-exercise/> accessed 29 August 2025.

⁴ ‘What are the core British values?’ (www.ourhistory.org.uk, 08 June 2024) <www.ourhistory.org.uk/what-are-british-values/> accessed 29 August 2025.

⁵ *ibid.*

preserve stability and safety.⁶ They are strongly embedded in the country's history and have developed over centuries through major events, legal reforms and societal changes.⁷

The 'British values' comprise:

1. Democracy
2. The rule of law
3. Individual liberty
4. Mutual respect
5. Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.⁸

These fundamental values were initially outlined by the UK government in the 'Prevent' strategy in 2011.⁹ The five values had been established by the government to foster social cohesion and prevent extremism.¹⁰ Islamic extremism, in particular, was considered the most serious threat to national unity in the Prevent Strategy document, with white nationalism also identified as an alarming threat.¹¹ With the context of the British values established, the following discussion outlines each value and examines why it is among those to which humans should aspire.

⁶ Chris Drew, 'The 5 British Values - Explained for Students (2025)' (helpfulprofessor.com, 06 September 2023) <<https://helpfulprofessor.com/british-values/?form=MG0AV3>> accessed 29 August 2025.

⁷ *What are the core British values?* (n 4).

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Home Office, *Prevent Strategy* (Cm 8092, 2011) 34, 107.

¹⁰ *ibid* 5, 34, 44, 53, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72.

¹¹ *ibid* 3, 13, 14, 15, 20, 59.

1. Democracy

Democracy refers to the belief that everyone has the right to engage in the democratic system and to have a voice.¹² There are several practices and principles that shape democracy in the UK, and these will now be explored.¹³

1. The UK's Political System

The UK functions within a parliamentary democracy, in which elected representatives take decisions for citizens.¹⁴ There are two essential features of the UK's political system.¹⁵ The first is the UK Parliament which is composed of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. It is tasked with creating and passing laws. The second is the participation of political parties.¹⁶ In elections several political parties compete. The government is then formed by the majority party.

1. Elections and Representation

Elections serve as the foundation of Democracy in the UK.¹⁷ The two main types of elections in the UK are General Elections and Local Elections. General Elections are conducted to select Members of Parliament (MPs) for the House of Commons. As mentioned earlier, the government is then formed by the party with the majority. In

¹² Anne Morris, 'Understanding British Values | DavidsonMorris' (www.davidsonmorris.com, 12 February 2025) <www.davidsonmorris.com/british-values/> accessed 29 August 2025.

¹³ 'Democracy in the UK - Principles and Practices | Comprehensive Guide' (www.lifeintheuktest-online.co.uk) <www.lifeintheuktest-online.co.uk/post/democracy-uk-principles-practices> accessed 29 August 2025.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *ibid.*

Local Elections, representatives for local councils and mayors are chosen.¹⁸ In addition, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland possess distinct devolved governments holding authority in specific policy areas.¹⁹

2. Citizen participation

Participation of citizens is integral in a democracy. One method of participation for citizens in the UK is voting. Citizens who are eligible hold the right to vote in referendums and elections. A second method of Citizen participation is petitions. Citizens are able to start and sign petitions to present concerns to Parliament.²⁰ Another method of Citizen participation is through protests and advocacy.²¹ Public demonstrations and advocacy groups enable citizens to voice their views and affect policy.²²

Why should humans aspire to democracy?

‘[I]t has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time...’²³ Democracy may not be perfect, but it is profoundly important and must be valued.²⁴ Citizens should aspire to

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *ibid.*

²³ ‘The Worst Form of Government - International Churchill Society’ (winstonchurchill.org, 25 February 2016) <<https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/quotes/the-worst-form-of-government/>> accessed 29 August 2025.

²⁴ Mark Elliott and Robert Thomas, *Public Law* (5th edn, OUP 2024) 227.

democracy because it enables them to exercise their voice in decision-making.²⁵

Democracy acts as a cohesive force that connects differences and cultivates solidarity.²⁶ It guarantees that the shared voices of citizens, regardless of background, continue to influence the path of a dynamic and thriving society.²⁷

2. The rule of law

The rule of law refers to the significance of the law in regulating society and the belief that laws ought to be enforced impartially to every member of society.²⁸ Lord Bingham captured the essence of the rule of law when he stated, in a lecture, that ‘all persons and authorities within the state, whether public or private, should be bound by and entitled to the benefit of laws publicly and prospectively promulgated and publicly administered in the courts.’²⁹ The two main principles of the rule of law will now be outlined.

2.1 Equality before the law

The principle of equality establishes that all individuals are governed by the same law.³⁰ *Entick v Carrington* (1765), which was a pivotal case, established this

²⁵ ‘Why Is Democracy A Shared British Value? - London Status’ (londonstatus.co.uk, 03 December 2023) <<https://londonstatus.co.uk/why-is-democracy-a-shared-british-value/>> accessed 29 August 2025.

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *Morris* (n 12).

²⁹ ‘The Rule of Law’ Text Transcript | Centre for Public Law’ (www.cpl.law.cam.ac.uk) <<http://www.cpl.law.cam.ac.uk/sir-david-williams-lectures2006-rule-law/rule-law-text-transcript>> accessed 29 August 2025.

³⁰ ‘Understanding What is the Rule of Law UK | Legal Priority’ (legalpriority.co.uk) <<https://legalpriority.co.uk/legal-advice/understanding-what-is-the-rule-of-law-uk/>> accessed 29 August 2025.

principle.³¹ It held that no person, even state officials, can take action without legal authority.³² This precedent continues to be essential in averting abuse of power by public bodies.³³

2.2 Legal certainty and predictability

Legal certainty enables citizens and businesses to prepare with assurance.³⁴ It guarantees that laws are transparent, available to the public, and uniformly applied.³⁵ For instance, legislation.gov.uk offers unrestricted access to statutes, fostering openness.³⁶ Judicial independence also reinforces certainty.³⁷ Courts interpret laws objectively, upholding impartiality.³⁸ Such objective interpretation promotes predictability, enabling citizens to anticipate judicial decisions in analogous cases by reference to established legal rules.

Why should humans aspire to the rule of law?

Citizens should aspire to the rule of law because only the rule of law can ensure justice, by preventing despotism and oppression.³⁹ The Universal Declaration of

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ ‘Legislation.gov.uk’ (www.legislation.gov.uk) <www.legislation.gov.uk/> accessed 30 August 2025.

³⁷ *Understanding What is the Rule of Law UK* (n 30).

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ Mortimer NS Sellers, ‘What Is the Rule of Law and Why Is It So Important?’ in James R Silkenat, James E Hickey Jr and Peter D Barenboim (eds), *The Legal Doctrines of the Rule of Law and the Legal State (Rechtsstaat)* (Springer 2014) 7.

Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations without objection, affirmed that ‘it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law’.⁴⁰ The rule of law is important because it restrains the unchecked control of those in leadership.⁴¹ Public authority is essential, as Thomas Hobbes correctly noted, to safeguard against private power, but the rule of law upholds the honesty of public authorities.⁴² Individuals should aspire to the rule of law because solely the rule of law mandates ‘the formation of good and equal laws, an impartial execution, and faithful interpretation of them, so that citizens may constantly enjoy the benefits of them, and be sure of their continuance.’⁴³

3. Individual liberty

Individual liberty involves supporting the freedom of individuals to exercise their personal rights and freedoms, as long as they do not violate the rights of others.⁴⁴

Individual liberty is reconciled with societal priorities and the necessity to protect community safety and stability.⁴⁵ This balance is vital in a democratic nation.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, GA Res 217 A (III), UN Doc A/810 (10 December 1948) Preamble; Hilary Charlesworth, ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)’ (2nd edn, 2008) *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law* <<https://opil.ouplaw.com/display/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e887>> accessed 29 August 2025, para 1.

⁴¹ Sellers (n 37) 9.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ John Adams, *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* (C Dilly 1787) vol I 128.

⁴⁴ Morris (n 12).

⁴⁵ ‘Individual Liberty in the UK - Rights and Responsibilities | Comprehensive Guide’ (www.lifeintheuktest-online.co.uk) <www.lifeintheuktest-online.co.uk/post/individual-liberty-uk-rights-responsibilities> accessed 29 August 2025.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

Central elements of Individual liberty

Individual liberty in the UK encompasses various central elements.⁴⁷ The first is freedom of expression.⁴⁸ Freedom of expression is characterised by individuals having the right to articulate their thoughts, beliefs, and opinions without restriction.⁴⁹ The second is privacy.⁵⁰ There are legal safeguards that exist to protect individuals' privacy.⁵¹ The third is equality.⁵² Equality is the state in which all individuals have the right to equal treatment and protection in accordance with the law.⁵³ The fourth is freedom of movement.⁵⁴ Freedom of movement involves people having the ability to move unhindered inside the country and travel abroad.⁵⁵

How is individual liberty protected?

Individual liberty is maintained by numerous legal rights and protections.⁵⁶ One example is the Human Rights Act 1998.⁵⁷ This Act integrates the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law, making sure essential rights are upheld.⁵⁸

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Human Rights Act 1998, sch 1 art 5.

⁵⁸ *ibid* ss 2–3, sch 1.

Another example is data protection laws.⁵⁹ These laws protect individuals' private information and privacy.⁶⁰

Why should humans aspire to individual liberty?

One reason citizens should aspire to individual liberty is that it protects personal freedoms, including freedom of speech, assembly, and religion.⁶¹ This is significant because personal freedoms protected by individual liberty enable citizens to voice their opinions, select their religion, and lead their lives without undue interference by the state or other institutions.⁶²

A further reason individuals should aspire to individual liberty is that it performs a key role in societal development.⁶³ Individual liberty promotes ingenuity and creativity by permitting people to pursue new ideas and perspectives without fear of oppression.⁶⁴ An example of societal development through individual liberty is social progress. Social progress is profoundly linked to individual liberties.⁶⁵ When people are at liberty to articulate their identities and beliefs, societies grow more welcoming

⁵⁹ *Individual Liberty in the UK* (n 43).

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ *What are the core British values?* (n 4).

⁶² Morris (n 12); *What are the core British values?* (n 4).

⁶³ Donald Labat, 'Exploring the Importance of Individual Liberty in Society – Shoreshim' (shoreshim.org, 05 March 2025) <<https://shoreshim.org/exploring-the-importance-of-individual-liberty-in-society/>> accessed 29 August 2025.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

and diverse.⁶⁶ This diversity can result in a more vibrant cultural landscape and a society of greater peace.⁶⁷

4. Mutual respect

Mutual respect is the recognition and valuing of the intrinsic worth and dignity of every person.⁶⁸ It involves treating others with compassion, thoughtfulness, and empathy, irrespective of their heritage, beliefs, or views.⁶⁹

Mutual respect is a value profoundly ingrained in British culture, shaped by historical traditions and social norms.⁷⁰ It stems from the varied and pluralistic history of the British Isles.⁷¹ Initial contributions can be attributed to the Roman, Saxon, Viking, and Norman invasions, which introduced multiple cultures, religions, and traditions to Britain.⁷² All of these eras added to a fabric of cultural interactions and exchanges, paving the way for a society that needed to adapt to and unite different groups.⁷³

Parliament's enactment of laws that advance equality and safeguard from prejudice, as exemplified by the Race Relations Act 1965 and the Equality Act 2010, have

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ 'Understanding British Values and their Importance in Education' (www.caw.ac.uk, 23 April 2025) <www.caw.ac.uk/caw-news/understanding-british-values-and-their-importance-in-education/> accessed 29 August 2025.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *What are the core British values?* (n 4).

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ *ibid.*

institutionalised this value.⁷⁴ The UK's diverse history, characterised by epochs of immigration and multicultural assimilation, has likewise nurtured an ethos of respect for distinct backgrounds and perspectives.⁷⁵

Why should humans aspire to mutual respect?

One reason citizens should aspire to mutual respect is that it is vital for productive communication and rapport-building.⁷⁶ It establishes the foundation for constructive dialogue, enabling people to voice their views without fear of judgment.⁷⁷ When mutual respect is evident, disputes can be settled more peacefully, as parties are more inclined to listen to each other and pursue common ground.⁷⁸ This not merely improves personal relationships but also contributes to a greater cooperative workplace.⁷⁹

Another reason individuals should aspire to mutual respect is that it has an enduring effect on relationships and communities.⁸⁰ It promotes an environment where people feel comfortable to express themselves and work together with others.⁸¹ By giving precedence to mutual respect, a more inclusive and compassionate society can be

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ 'What is: Mutual Respect - Understanding Its Importance' (holistichealthpathways.com, 30 September 2024) <<https://holistichealthpathways.com/glossario/what-is-mutual-respect-importance/>> accessed 29 August 2025.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ *ibid.*

created in which everyone is appreciated and heard.⁸² This dedication to mutual respect not only improves personal interactions but also supports the overall welfare of organisations and communities.⁸³

5. Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

Tolerance refers to the capability or readiness to tolerate, and to have respect for, the existence of faiths, beliefs, opinions, and behaviour that one dislikes or disagrees with.⁸⁴ This value underscores respecting differences and nurturing harmonious coexistence.⁸⁵

Britain's intricate religious past has influenced tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.⁸⁶ Throughout the Reformation in the 16th century, religious hostilities between Catholics and Protestants emphasised the necessity for tolerance.⁸⁷ The formation of the Church of England under Henry VIII and the ensuing religious upheaval under his immediate rulers, including the oppression of Catholics and nonconformist Protestant sects, highlighted the significance of seeking a means to coexist amicably despite

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ Morris (n 12); Chris Dolman, 'What are British Values and why are they important? - HBTC' (www.hbtc.co.uk) <www.hbtc.co.uk/what-are-british-values-and-why-are-they-important/> accessed 29 August 2025.

⁸⁵ 'British Values in 2024: Understanding a Changing Nation' (octillion.org.uk) <<https://octillion.org.uk/british-values-in-2024-changing-nation/>> accessed 29 August 2025.

⁸⁶ *What are the core British values?* (n 4).

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

religious differences.⁸⁸ The eventual recognition of multiple Protestant denominations established the foundation for more expansive religious tolerance.⁸⁹

The Reformation, succeeded by phases of religious discord and settlement, as exemplified by the Glorious Revolution, emphasised the necessity for religious tolerance.⁹⁰ The Toleration Act of 1689 conferred freedom of religious observance to Nonconformists, and later laws have further safeguarded religious freedoms.⁹¹

The Enlightenment in the era of the 17th and 18th centuries continued to advance the value of tolerance by means of its focus on reason, science, and individual rights.⁹² Philosophers such as John Locke advocated religious tolerance and the delineation of church and state, proposing that people should be at liberty to observe their religion without encroachment from the government.⁹³ Locke's ideas shaped British society by advancing a greater inclusive and respectful framework to distinct beliefs and lifestyles.⁹⁴

Why should humans aspire to tolerance of different faiths and beliefs?

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² *ibid.*

⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁴ *ibid.*

One reason why individuals should aspire to tolerance is that it can facilitate the avoidance of conflict and foster peace.⁹⁵ History has demonstrated that religious intolerance has frequently been a fundamental source of violence and conflict.⁹⁶ Through the advancement of tolerance, it is possible to pursue the prevention of religiously inspired violence.⁹⁷ Such efforts also support the promotion of dialogue and cooperation among different religious communities.⁹⁸

Another reason citizens should aspire to tolerance is that it cultivates understanding and empathy among people of different faiths and beliefs.⁹⁹ By respecting the faiths and beliefs of others, it is possible to dismantle divisions and forge bridges between communities.¹⁰⁰ This can result in enhanced dialogue and collaboration, ultimately advancing a more inclusive and amicable society.¹⁰¹

Sikhism

The discussion now turns to a brief outline of the religion of Sikhism, followed by a presentation of the first core value of Sikhism. It then sets out the second core value, Kirat Karna, and then proceeds to explain why humans should aspire to it, before applying the same two-step approach to the third core value, Waṇḍ Chakkō.

⁹⁵ ‘Discussing the concept of religious tolerance and acceptance – Fyi Magazine’ (fyimagazine.org, 19 May 2025) <<https://fyimagazine.org/discussing-the-concept-of-religious-tolerance-and-acceptance/>> accessed 29 August 2025.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*

Sikhism is a prominent religion of India and the fifth most widely practiced religion in the world.¹⁰² As of 2025, Sikhism has approximately 25 to 30 million followers.¹⁰³ Sikhism is a religion whose teachings form a way of life grounded in self-discipline, combined with a conviction in the unity of God and the equality of all people.¹⁰⁴ It also entails devotion to the Guru's word and a commitment to compassion toward all individuals.¹⁰⁵ Those who follow Sikhism are referred to as Sikhs.¹⁰⁶ The foundational stage for a Sikh is to acknowledge the reality of God and to worship God exclusively through their tongue, mind, and conduct.¹⁰⁷ A Sikh places greater trust in God than in their relatives or possessions and conducts themselves in accordance with God's name.¹⁰⁸

Guru Nanak (1469–1539 CE) established Sikhism, as imparted to him by 'The Supreme Eternal Reality'—Akāl Purkh (God), in 1496 CE, in Sultanpur Lodhi, Punjab.¹⁰⁹ He proclaimed the oneness of God and the universality of the brotherhood of humankind.¹¹⁰ He formulated the complete ideology of Sikhism, which was further

¹⁰² Jagraj Singh, *A Complete Guide to Sikhism* (Unistar Books Pvt Ltd 2011) 13.

¹⁰³ 'Sikhism by Country 2025' ([worldpopulationreview.com](https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/sikhism-by-country)) <<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/sikhism-by-country>> accessed 29 August 2025.

¹⁰⁴ Gurbachan Singh Sidhu, 'A Brief Introduction to Sikhism' (library.gurmat.info) <<https://library.gurmat.info/download/a-brief-introduction-to-sikhism-gurbachan-singh-sidhu.pdf>> accessed 29 August 2025, 10.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Singh (n 100).

¹⁰⁷ Sidhu (n 102).

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Singh (n 100).

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

developed under his nine successors, the remaining Sikh Gurus from Guru Angad to Guru Gobind Singh.¹¹¹ He repudiated the polarising Hindu caste system; idolatry (worship of images or statues); henotheism (exclusive devotion to one god while acknowledging others); polytheism (belief in many gods); hypocrisy; superstition; asceticism (strict self-denial); celibacy; renunciation (deliberate, often ritual withdrawal from worldly life); and ritualism (overemphasis on ceremonies) as a means of propitiating the deities.¹¹² He extolled the householder's life, who rendered service to society.¹¹³

Guru Nanak lived during the period in which the caste system prevailed.¹¹⁴ The caste system was a hierarchical classification of individuals into four formally ranked castes known as varnas.¹¹⁵ They were classified on the basis of occupation, and this occupational division governed eligibility for wealth, power, and privilege.¹¹⁶ At the lowest level were the Dalits, who were regarded as the 'untouchables'.¹¹⁷ They were not deemed to be part of the ranked castes.¹¹⁸ People subjected to the strictures of the caste system, the oppressive foreign rule, and religious bigotry, could not reasonably be presumed to assume the social responsibilities of, and adapt to, the liberation

¹¹¹ *ibid* 13, 14.

¹¹² *ibid* 13.

¹¹³ *ibid* 14.

¹¹⁴ 'Sikhi and the Caste System – SNA' (www.sna.org.uk, 23 May 2015) <www.sna.org.uk/sikhi-and-the-caste-system/> accessed 29 August 2025.

¹¹⁵ Manali S Deshpande, 'History of the Indian Caste System and its Impact on India Today' (digitalcommons.calpoly.edu, 2010) <<https://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=socssp>> accessed 29 August 2025, 3.

¹¹⁶ *ibid*.

¹¹⁷ *ibid* 3, 26.

¹¹⁸ *ibid* 3.

afforded by the new infant Sikh society immediately.¹¹⁹ It was necessary to foster the infant Sikh society for some time to preclude its relapse into the parent societies.¹²⁰ Accordingly, Guru Nanak instituted the system of succession to advance his mission into the future.¹²¹ The message of Guru Nanak was then conveyed by means of his nine successors, the other Sikh Gurus.¹²²

Core values of Sikhism

Naam Japo, Kirat Karna, and Waṇḍ Chakkō can be recognised as the three core values of Sikhism.¹²³ They were envisioned by Guru Nanak.¹²⁴

Naam Japo

Naam constitutes the central tenet of Sikh spirituality and is referenced 2,546 times in the Sikh holy scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib.¹²⁵ Literally, it is understood to mean the Name of God or Gods.¹²⁶ The value Naam Japo, also referred to as Naam Japna, denotes the remembrance of God and the deliberate calling upon of His presence within one's conscious.¹²⁷ Naam Japo involves meditation through the repetition and

¹¹⁹ Singh (n 100) 14.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ *ibid.*

¹²² *ibid.*

¹²³ Ravinder Kaur Cheema, 'Core Values in Sikhism: A Way of Life' (2016) 3 International Journal of Asian History, Culture and Tradition 14, 14, 15.

¹²⁴ *ibid* 15.

¹²⁵ 'Name of Gods: The Concept of Naam | WaheguruNet' (wahegurunet.com) <<https://wahegurunet.com/name-of-gods/>> accessed 29 August 2025.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁷ Cheema (n 121) 15; 'Naam Japna | Gur Vichar' (gurvichar.com, 30 September 2017) <<https://gurvichar.com/2017/09/30/naam-japna/>> accessed 29 August 2025.

contemplation of multiple Names of God (or qualities of God), particularly the chanting of the word Waheguru, which signifies ‘Wonderful Lord’ — the formless being, the Creator.¹²⁸ Through practices such as Kirtan (singing hymns), chanting, or Simran (mantra-based meditation), Sikhs seek to continually recite God’s Name and ensure an unbroken connection with the Divine.¹²⁹

Kirit Karna

The value of Kirat Karna refers to earning an honest, ethical, and dedicated livelihood.¹³⁰ It involves applying one’s God-given skills, talents, and abilities, and engaging in diligent labour for the well-being and advancement of the individual, their family, and the wider society.¹³¹ Guru Nanak emphasized that his disciples were required to earn their income by the sweat of their brow.¹³² It can be said that his disciples are obliged to prohibit mendicancy, robbery, ‘parasitism’, ‘prostitution’, and dependence upon alms or temple offerings.¹³³ The accumulation of wealth by means of exploitation of the weaker strata of society is unequivocally condemned.¹³⁴ Guru Nanak himself subsisted on his earnings from conscientious labour.¹³⁵ Of particular

¹²⁸ Jas, ‘Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s Teachings: Kirat Karo, Naam Japo, Vand Chako – ReflectandRespond’ (<https://reflectandrespond.com/>, 29 November 2020) <<https://reflectandrespond.com/guru-nanak-dev-ji-3-teachings-kirat-karo-naam-japo-vand-chako/>> accessed 29 August 2025; ‘Naam Japo: A Beginner’s Guide to This Spiritual Practice – India’s Biggest Dashakarma Bhandar | Poojn.in’ (www.poojn.in) <www.poojn.in/post/36058/naam-japo-a-beginners-guide-to-this-spiritual-practice> accessed 29 August 2025.

¹²⁹ Jas (n 126).

¹³⁰ Cheema (n 121) 17.

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² *ibid.*

¹³³ *ibid.*

¹³⁴ *ibid.*

¹³⁵ *ibid.*

significance is the fact that Kirat Karna (Honest earning) was eventually adopted as the instruction and order in the Rehatnama (code of conduct for Sikhs).¹³⁶

Why should humans aspire to Kirat Karna?

The importance and the philosophy set out in Kirat Karna is that it aids in developing self-respect and integrity in an individual's character.¹³⁷ This, in turn, can advance the public good.¹³⁸ It is contended here that this is true because, through honest means of livelihood, an individual can prevent themselves from becoming engaged in societal evils such as robbery, exploitation, and other serious crimes.¹³⁹ Such honest conduct fosters the cultivation of an honest character.¹⁴⁰ Individuals should aspire to the value of Kirat Karna, as in doing so they strengthen their honesty. In a society where honesty prevails, the UK becomes a better place to live, with reduced crime and diminished disruption to public order and the peace of its members.

Waṇḍ Chakkō

Guru Nanak instituted a novel practice of sharing personal income.¹⁴¹ The value of Waṇḍ Chakkō denotes a technique and practice of sharing what you generate in income and utilising it collectively as a community.¹⁴² This may include wealth, food,

¹³⁶ *ibid.*

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

¹³⁹ *ibid* 17, 18.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid* 18.

¹⁴¹ *ibid* 17.

¹⁴² *ibid.*

and other similar resources.¹⁴³ Waṇḍ Chakkō also encompasses donating to charity, providing for the Langar (free kitchen), and more broadly assisting those in need within the community.¹⁴⁴ A Sikh is expected to allocate at least 10 % (Daswand) of their income (Kirat Kamai) to the impoverished people of the world or for a legitimate cause.¹⁴⁵ Daswand was incorporated into the Sikh code of conduct during the time of the tenth Guru (Guru Gobind Singh) for the advancement of Sikh social, religious, political, and military order.¹⁴⁶ Daswand was expressed through service to humanity.¹⁴⁷ In essence, Waṇḍ Chakkō is about sharing the results of an individual's labour with others before prioritising oneself, in order to live as an inspiration and a source of support to the entire community.¹⁴⁸

Why should humans aspire to Waṇḍ Chakkō?

It is argued here that individuals should aspire to the value of Waṇḍ Chakkō because it ensures that all members of society can enjoy the minimum standard of living expected in the UK. Poverty remains a persistent issue in the UK.¹⁴⁹ It is possible to envisage that some households have surplus food that is discarded, while others face such scarcity that parents or relatives skip meals so that children can eat. If, in accordance with Waṇḍ Chakkō, those with the means contribute money, food, and

¹⁴³ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*; Singh (n 100) 14.

¹⁴⁷ Cheema (n 121) 17.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Brigid FrancisDevine, *Poverty in the UK: Statistics* (House of Commons Library Research Briefing Paper No 7096, 4 April 2025), 7, 8.

other necessities to those in need, recipients are placed in a position to live with dignity in the UK. They would also take pride in belonging to a country committed to the welfare of its people. The value of Waṇḍ Chakkō would therefore foster a more balanced society in which all are grateful for and derive genuine happiness from life in the UK.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is contended that the British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs), together with the second and third core values of Sikhism (Kirit Karna and Waṇḍ Chakkō), are the best values for humans to aspire to. It is submitted that these values foster solidarity within society, ensure the representation of all voices, promote justice, reduce the likelihood of crime, alleviate poverty, improve the quality of life for individuals, and ultimately create a more balanced, diverse, compassionate, and peaceful society. Since both individuals and society collectively would enjoy these benefits, it is argued that the UK, and other countries which aspire to these values, in turn become better places in which to live.

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