*parshad* is then distributed equally to all the faithful present, no matter to what caste they belong. The object of this ceremony is to abolish caste distinctions.

There may be said to be three degrees of strictness in the observances of the Sikhs. There may first be mentioned the zealots such as the Akalis, who, though generally quite illiterate, aim at observing the injunctions of Guru Govind Singh; secondly, the true Sikhs or Singhs who observe his ordinances, such as the prohibi­tions of cutting the hair and the use of tobacco; and, thirdly, those Sikhs who while professing devotion to the tenets of the gurus are almost indistinguishable from ordinary Hindus. These are largely Nanakpanti Sikhs, or followers only of Guru Nanak. The Nanakpanti Sikhs do not wear the hair long, nor use any of the outward signs of the Sikhs, though they reverence the *Granth Sahib* and above all the memory of their guru. They are distinguished from the Hindus by no outward sign except a slight laxity in the matter of caste observances.

Sikhism attained its zenith under the military genius of Ranjit Singh. After the British conquest of the Punjab the military spirit of the Sikhs remained for some time in abeyance. Then came the mutiny, and Sikhs once more were recruited in numbers and saved India for the British crown. Peace returned, and during the next twenty or twenty-five years Sikhism reached its lowest ebb; but since then the demand for Sikhs in the regiments of the Indian army and farther afield has largely revived the faith. The establishment of Singh Sabhas, of Sikh newspapers, and the spread of education have largely tended in the same direction, but the strict ethical code of Sikhism and the number of its obligatory divine services have caused many to fall away from the faith: nor does the austere Sikh ritual appeal to women, who generally prefer Hinduism with its picturesque material worship and the brightness of its innumerable festivals. At the present day the stronghold of Sikhism still remains the great Phulkian states of Patiala, Nabha and Jind and the surrounding districts of Ludhiana, Lahore, Amritsar, Jullundur and Gujranwala. In these states and districts are recruited the soldiers who form one of the main bulwarks of the British empire in India.

For authorities see Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs;* Sir Lepel Griffin, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (“Rulers of India” series, 1892); Falcon, *Handbook on Sikhs* ; and specially Μ. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors* (6 vols.,∙ 1909), and two lectures before the United Service Institution of India on “The Sikh Religion and its Advantages to the State ” and “ How the Sikhs became a Militant Race.” (Μ. Μ.)

**SIKH WARS, two** Indian campaigns fought between the Sikhs and the British, which resulted in the conquest and annexation of the Punjab (see Punjab).

*First Sikh War (1845-46).—*The first Sikh War was brought about by the insubordination of the Sikh army, which after the death of Ranjit Singh became uncontrollable and on the nth of December 1845 crossed the Sutlej, and virtually declared war upon the British. The British authorities had foreseen the outbreak, and had massed sufficient troops at Ferozepore, Ludhiana and Umballa to protect the frontier, but not to offer provocation. So complete were the preparations for advance that on the 12th, the day after the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej, Sir Hugh Gough, the commander-in-chief, marched 16 m. with the Umballa force to Rajpura; on the 13th the governor-general, Sir Henry Hardinge, declared war, and by the 18th the whole army had marched 150 m. to Moodkee, in order to protect Ferozepore from the Sikh attack.

Wearied with their long march, the British troops were enjoying a rest, when the news came in that the Sikhs were advancing to battle at four o’clock in the afternoon. The British had some 10,000 men, and the Sikhs are estimated by some authorities as low as 10,000 infantry with 2000 cavalry and 22 guns. The battle opened with an artillery duel, in which the British guns, though inferior in weight, soon silenced the enemy, the 3rd Light Dragoons delivered a brilliant charge, and the infantry drove the enemy from position after position with great slaughter and the loss of seventeen guns. The victory was complete, but the fall of night prevented it from being followed up, and caused some of the native regiments to fire into each other in the confusion.

After the battle of Moodkee Sir Henry Hardinge volunteered to serve as second in command under Sir Hugh Gough, a step which caused some confusion in the ensuing battle. At 4 A.Μ. on the 21st of December the British advanced from Moodkee to attack the Sikh entrenched camp under the command of Lal Singh at Ferozeshah, orders having been sent to Sir John Littler, in command at Ferozepore, to join the main British force. At 11 a.m. the British were in front of the Sikh position, but Sir John Littler, though on his way, had not yet arrived. Sir Hugh Gough wished to attack while there was plenty of daylight; but Sir Henry Hardinge re­asserted his civil authority as governor-general, and forbade the attack until the junction with Littler was effected. The army then marched on to meet Littler and the battle did not begin until between 3.30 and 4 p.m. The engagement opened with an artillery duel, in which the British again failed to gain the mastery over the Sikhs. The infantry, therefore, advanced to the attack; but the Sikh muskets were as good as the British, and fighting behind entrenchments they were a most formidable foe. Sir John Littler’s attack was repulsed, the 62nd regiment losing heavily in officers and men, while the sepoys failed to support the European regiments. But the Moodkee force, undaunted, stormed and captured the entrenchment, though the different brigades and regiments lost position and became mixed up together in the darkness. The army then passed the night on the Sikh position, while the Sikhs prowled round keeping up an incessant fire. In the morning the British found that they had captured seventy-three pieces of cannon and were masters of the whole field; but at that moment a fresh Sikh army, under Tej Singh, came up to the assistance of the scattered forces of Lal Singh. The British were exhausted with their sleepless night, the native troops were shaken, and a determined attack by this fresh army might have won the day; but Tej Singh, after a half-hearted attack, which was repulsed, marched away, whether from cowardice, incapacity or treason, and left the British masters of the position.

After the battle of Ferozeshah the Sikhs retired behind the Sutlej, but early in January they again raided across the river near Ludhiana, and Sir Harry Smith was detached to protect that city. On the 21st of January he was approaching Ludhiana when he found the Sikhs under Runjoor Singh in an entrenched position flanking his line of march at Budhowal. Sir Harry Smith passed on without fighting a general action, but suffered considerable loss in men and baggage. After receiving reinforcements Sir Harry again advanced from Ludhiana and attacked the Sikhs at Aliwal on the 28th of January. An attack upon the Sikh left near the village of Aliwal gave Sir Harry the key of the position, and a brilliant charge by the 16th Lancers, which broke a Sikh square, com­pleted their demoralization. The Sikhs fled in confusion, losing sixty-seven guns, and by this battle were expelled from the south side of the Sutlej.

Ever since Ferozeshah Sir Hugh Gough had been waiting to receive reinforcements, and on the 7th of February his siege train arrived, while on the following day Sir Harry Smith’s force returned to camp. On the loth of February Sir Hugh attacked the Sikhs, who occupied a strong entrenched position in a bend of the Sutlej. After two hours’ cannonading, the infantry attack commenced at 9 a.m. The advance of the first brigade was not immediately successful, but the second brigade following on carried the entrenchments. The cavalry then charged down the Sikh lines from right to left and completed the victory. The Sikhs, with the river behind them, suffered terrible carnage, and are computed to have lost 10,000 men and 67 guns. The British losses throughout the campaign were considerably heavier than was usual in Indian warfare; but this was partly due to the fact that the Sikhs were the best natural fighters in India, and partly to the lack of energy of the Hindostani sepoys. After the battle of Sobraon