



## [A Must-See This Weekend: The Sikh Film Festival of NYC](#)

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The fifth [Annual Sikh Film Festival](#) will certainly be warming up the Big Apple this upcoming chilly Fall weekend! Starting with a spectacular [Gala](#) on Friday, October 3rd at [Cipriani](#) on Wall Street - featuring Sufi Punjabi recording artist [Rabbi Shergill](#) - and ending well into the night on Saturday with [Basement Bhangra](#) founder and world-renowned [DJ Rekha](#), this is one festival that is bound to put an extra spring in your step and a craving for what makes life exciting into your heart.



For those very few who may be unfamiliar with Rabbi Shergill, his musical debut **“Bulla Ki Jaana”** (*watch the video below*) was a runaway hit in Asia and Europe alike, turning Mr. Shergill into an unofficial ambassador for world unity and personal acceptance. His latest album is produced by personal favorite and music legend [Mauro Pagani](#) - a fellow Italian who makes us proud of our own heritage. DJ Rekha will be in charge of the rocking After-Party at [Asia Society](#) on Park Avenue, where all the films will be shown. Tickets are going fast, but can still be [purchased online](#) at the time of this article’s publication.

Something amazing has happened this year which makes the festival more poignant than ever before. Our very own NY State Governor David A. Paterson has issued an official document declaring the week of October 3rd through the 10th **“Sikh Heritage Week”** in the Empire State. And how right with the times this is. We can only stand to learn from

the principles of [Sikhism](#) - the world's fifth largest organized religion - during these turbulent and uncertain moments in our own world history.



Originally hailing from the West Punjab region that is today part of Pakistan, the majority of Sikhs can now be found in Indian Punjab. And around the world, of course. The word “Sikh” itself comes from a Sanskrit root word meaning “disciple” or “learner”. The principles of this world religion, based on the teachings of [Guru Nanak Dev](#) and the nine successive Gurus, can be summed up in the words of Guru Nanak himself: **“Realisation of Truth is higher than all else. Higher still is truthful living”**. A doctrine which places value on being a householder - someone belonging to a family nucleus - and repudiates discrimination based on caste, difference of political or religious views and even the intensity of one's faith, it can be safely declared the most well-balanced of world religions these days. And on a lighter note, the elegant turbans worn by the men - also known as “Dastar” - and the fantastically colorful [Punjabi Suits](#) worn by the women, make this culture one of the most fashionable as well.



The Film Festival offers a little of everything, to those lucky enough to live in the NYC area, or making a weekend of it for the occasion. Starting [Saturday morning](#) with a Children's Session, then moving on to Shorts, followed by Documentaries - which include the informative [“Sikhs in America”](#) by Marissa Aroy and Niall McKay - and finishing with the highly anticipated feature [“Oceans of Pearls”](#) (*see photo at top*). **“Oceans of Pearls”** is a film directed by Sarab S. Neelam, about the struggles faced by a doctor in modern America, who happens to be from a traditional Sikh upbringing but lives within a world that frowns on traditions.

If this fantastically magical evening should then leave you longing for even more spice and some exotic drinks, may I suggest moving your whole party down to [Tabla's Bread Bar](#) across from Madison Square Park for some great Goan-Style - alas, not Punjabi, I'm afraid, but equally delicious - food and something in the ballpark of a [Kumquat Martini](#)... But regardless of what you choose to do with your night, make sure to check out this not-to-be-missed cultural event first!