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Mota Singh on racism.

Mota Singh grew up in a tiny village in the Punjab, India. Mota Singh was the first Sikh mayor in Britain. Mota moved to England in 1963 to get a better education, earn money and then return home. When Mota first came here people treated him badly just because he was different. People thought that he wasn't clever just because he was different. People didn't let him buy their house just because he was different. People didn't even let him have a job. In 1964 he started work at the Ford motor company, where he stayed for 10 years. But before that he tried to get a job in the Post Office but failed because they didn't let him work there just because he had a turban. Imagine a time when if you were different you couldn't get the job you wanted! In 1974 the

law changed because lots of people demonstrated against the post office. Finally, Mota got his job. He worked for the Post Office for approximately 28 years before going into politics. In 2000 he became chairman of the County Council for one year. While chairman Mota met Prince Charles and also went for dinner at the royal palace in London with many other county chairmen around England. In 2003 Mota Singh became the first Sikh mayor in Britain when he became the mayor of Lemington Spa for one year. When I asked Mota Singh for his view on racism, he said, it is a very bad thing, and that people shouldn't discriminate against others just because they're different or their religion is different. Mota Singh thinks that the only way to stop racism is

to teach children that everyone should be treated equally whether they are black, white or Asian. In December 2005 Mota's son Gurpreet got married in the village where Mota was born. I went to the village wedding and it changed my life for ever. For the first time I understood what poor meant. It is not just about money. It's about health, housing, education, clean water. This is why Mota Singh has set up a trust to help the people in the village. That is why I think Mota Singh is a great man.

Interview by Jack Tully
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Mota Singh