

Introduction



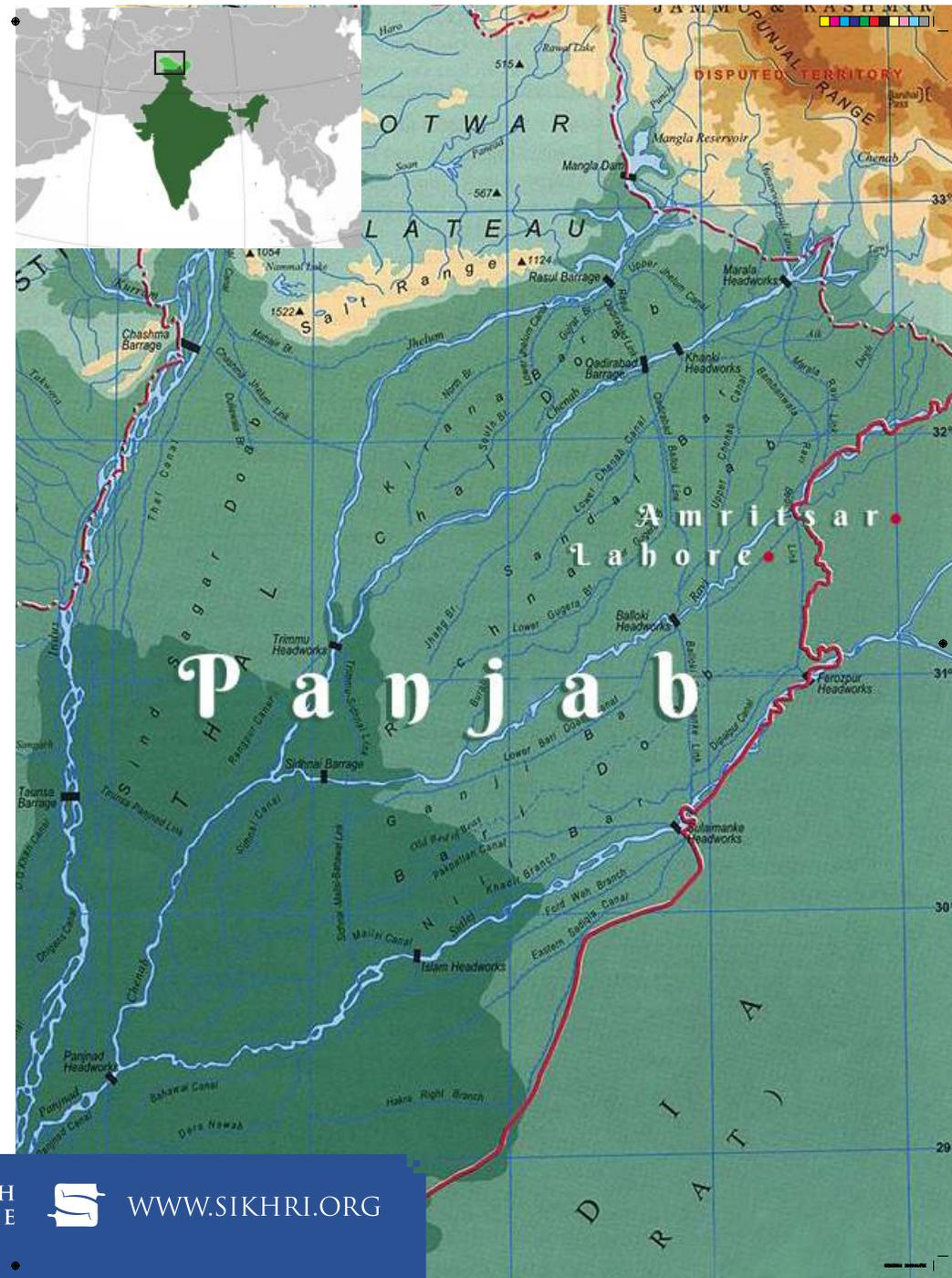
Over 500 years ago, Guru Nanak, the first Guru-Perfection of Sikhi (popularly called Sikhism), inspired a revolution in South Asia that sought to transform the social and religious conditions of

Sikhi emerged in the region of Panjab (literally: the Land of Five Rivers), in South Asia. Guru Nanak laid the foundations for a distinct, unique and monotheistic faith with its own founder, scripture, and ethical code.

Guru Nanak unequivocally rejected exclusivism and caste hierarchy of existing religious traditions. Instead, he created a highly egalitarian society in which all human beings were treated with dignity and seen as equals.

Over the next two-and-a-half centuries, nine Gurus would follow, contributing to this revolutionary vision of a new social and intellectual order through the articulation of Sikh theology and the establishment of Sikh institutions.

the time. Guru Nanak envisioned and established a new social order where all people would feel a deep, thoughtful connection to their faith and would be entitled to equal rights and individual respect.



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Gurus

“Guru” is derived from *gu* - darkness, and *ru* - light. Thus for Sikhs, a guru is a singular institution guiding the seeker from ignorance to enlightenment. The Guru is Perfection for a Sikh.

Sikhs believe that the same divine light illumined each of the ten Gurus. The mission and values of Guru Nanak were carried forward by nine successive Gurus over the course of almost 250 years.

The Gurus shared their wisdom through *sabads*— revelatory messages written in divinely-inspired poetic form and set to a *rag*, a system of musical measures. Their *sabads*, along with those of other divine personalities of South Asia, were compiled into what is called the Guru Granth Sahib, the repository

of Sikh spiritual authority. The Guru Granth Sahib was declared to be the Guru forever by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708.

Although there were no longer human Gurus, the dynamic wisdom of the spiritual cannon was intended to be a guide to the contemporary administration of political justice. The Guru Granth Sahib is therefore accorded every respect as a human Guru whenever Sikhs handle or discuss the text.

It is important to note that the Gurus clarified that they were not to be worshipped as deities. Of equal importance, Guruship was not inherited through lineage. Instead, a combination of merit and grace elevated one to *sacha patshah*, meaning “The True Sovereign.”



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|---|----|----------------------------------|
| Columbus lands in the Americas 1492 | 1 | Guru Nanak 1469 - 1539 |
| Leonardo da Vinci paints the Mona Lisa 1503-1506 | | |
| Michaelangelo paints ceiling of the Sistine Chapel 1508-1512 | 2 | Guru Angad 1539 - 1552 |
| Martin Luther posts his 95 Theses 1517 | | |
| Elizabeth I is crowned Queen of England 1558 | 3 | Guru Amardas 1552 - 1574 |
| Galileo Galilei & William Shakespeare are born 1564 | | |
| Francis Drake circles the world 1577-1580 | 4 | Guru Ramdas 1574 - 1581 |
| Birth of René Descartes 1596 | 5 | Guru Arjan 1581 - 1606 |
| Jamestown is settled in North America 1607 | | |
| King James version of the Bible is published 1611 | 6 | Guru Hargobind 1606 - 1644 |
| The Pilgrims arrive at Plymouth on the Mayflower 1620 | | |
| St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican is built 1626 | 7 | Guru Harirai 1644 - 1661 |
| Harvard University is founded 1636 | | |
| Thomas Hobbes publishes <i>Leviathan</i> 1651 | 8 | Guru Harikrishan 1661 - 1664 |
| The British establish New York 1664 | | |
| The Great Fire of London 1666 | 9 | Guru Teghbahadur 1664 - 1675 |
| Isaac Newton publishes <i>Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica</i> 1687 | 10 | Guru Gobind Singh 1675 - 1708 |
| Salem witch trials held in Massachusetts 1692 | 8 | Guru Granth-Panth 1708 Onward |

The Khalsa

In the spring of 1699, Guru Gobind Singh institutionalized the Khalsa Panth, (order of committed Sikhs) and bestowed the Five articles of faith upon Sikhs who have received Amrit (initiation ceremony).

After initiating five devoted Sikhs in the presence of the entire congregation, the Guru then asked them to initiate him in the same manner. The formation of the Khalsa (Sovereign) thus formalized Guru Nanak's idea of servant-leader: No person would hold him or herself above any other person, and no particle of Infinite Wisdom would be accessible to some but not others.

Once an individual receives Amrit, that person is responsible for living according

to the Sikh Rahit Maryada (code of conduct).

In the decision to receive Amrit and become a member of the Khalsa Panth, one voluntarily surrenders the self to the Guru, indicating a continuous effort to live according to the Guru's wisdom. In many ways, the journey of life only begins with this act of humble submission.

At this time, Guru Gobind Singh also conferred upon all female Sikhs the title "Kaur" and male Sikhs the title "Singh." In practice, Kaur and Singh are used by Sikhs worldwide as their middle or last name. Last names are a common way to determine a person's caste or lineage. It was Guru Gobind Singh's creative genius



Five devoted Sikhs always lead a Sikh parade.



Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib, Panjab, where the Khalsa was inaugurated.

to demolish these caste-based markers of inherited status. Sikhs are to live humbly, see "no strangers or others," and treat each person with dignity and respect.

Khalsa Panth as a collective was fostered by the ten Gurus and the tenth Guru gave it its final shape and invested it with Guruship in 1699.

The Guru's ordinance is to give voice to the voiceless toward establishment of a just and equitable society. The Khalsa

Panth is a political as well as a spiritual institution. The Khalsa Panth considers part of its mission to protect against exploitation of the people by those who abuse power. In doing so, Sikhs must exhaust all peaceful means but are prepared for resistance as well, when peaceful methods fail.

In this way, the two institutions, Guru Granth (Perfect Wisdom) and Guru Panth (Collective Authority) lead the Sikh community today.

Guru Granth Sahib

The Guru Eternal



ਬਾਕ ਖੇਤ ਤਿੰਨ ਖੰਡੁ ਪਈਓ ਨਤੁ ਨਤੀਖੁ ਖੇਤਾਰੇ ॥
ਮਾਠੀਤੁ ਨਾਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੇ ਡਾ ਪਈਓ ਸਿਨ ਡਾ ਨਭੁ ਮਧਾਰੇ ॥
ਜੇ ਕੇ ਖਾਏ ਜੇ ਕੇ ਭੁੱਖੇ ਤਿਨ ਡਾ ਤੀਏ ਰੁਧਾਰੇ ॥

-ਨਾਮ ੫, ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪ. ੧੪੨੯

In the platter, three things lie:
truth, contentment, contemplation.
They contain the Immortal Identification,
by which we are all sustained.
They who eat, they who savor, they are liberated.
-The Fifth Sovereign, Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1429

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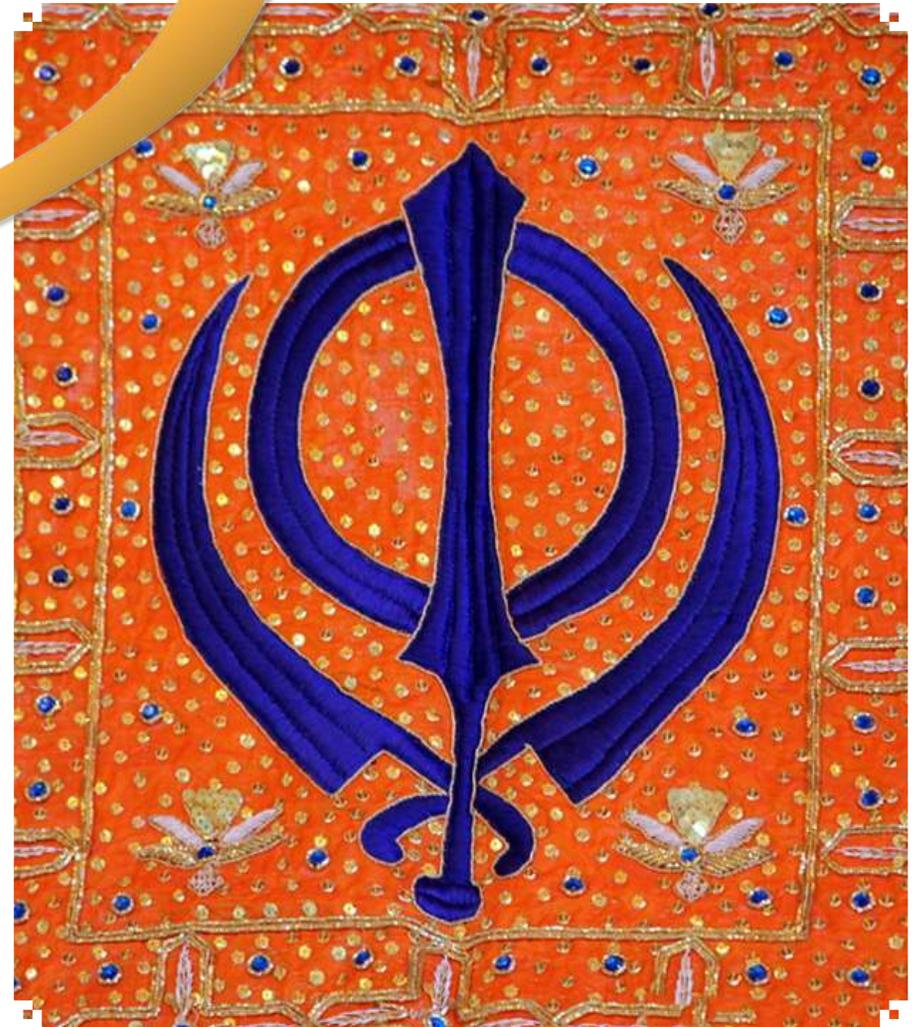
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Worldview

Sikh principles include living a life dedicated to securing a pluralistic and progressive society where all people have equal opportunity. Sikhs strive to follow a path that is divine-oriented and principle-based; a lifestyle that is humble and disciplined, and ever-ready to combat injustice through organized resistance.

The *Khanda* emblem adorns *Nishan Sahib*—the Sikh flag—and captures the entire Sikh worldview. The design of the *Khanda* incorporates four weapons which were used in early Sikh history.

In Sikhi, a balanced life involves harmony of the outer life, called *Miri* (political sovereignty), and the inner life, called *Piri* (spiritual sovereignty). *Miri* and *Piri* are represented by the two swords on the outer edge of the design. The double-edged sword in the center, also called a *Khanda*, represents



the passage one takes through life as illustrated by the ten founding Gurus of Sikhi.

The circular throwing disc, known as a *Chakkar*, represents the all-embracing Divine and the oneness of creation. Taken as a whole, the *Khanda* represents the creative sovereign power of 1 Force that governs the universe in its entirety.

Ik Oankar (1 Force) depicts the Sikh worldview that God is not the exclusive deity of any one religion. Rather, *Ik Oankar* can be realized by anyone who is willing to discover the Infinite Wisdom through love.

Core Beliefs

The Sikh vision seeks to create an open, progressive society while developing an organized resistance to injustices.

Sikhs seek to connect with the Divine within the context of their daily life. They aspire to love humanity through spiritual experiences and selfless service, while actively contributing to the global community.

In the Mul Mantr (literally “root-verse”), which is the opening verse of the Sikh scriptural canon, Guru Nanak expresses the qualities of the Divine.

This reflection of the Divine precedes every prayer session, and is an opportunity for all Sikhs to focus their thoughts on qualities they strive to embody.

ੴ
ਨਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਰਤਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ
ਨਿਰਭੈ ਮਾਇਆ ਨੂਰਿ ਮਜਣੀ
ਨਿਤਿ ਭਰੁ ਪੁਰਖਿ

1 Force

*Identified by Truth, Pervasive Creator, Fearless,
Without Enmity, Timeless Being, Unborn,
Self-Illumined, Realized by Perfection's Grace*

Nam japna - Remember

To be in constant remembrance of the ever-present force of the Creator.

introspective living

Kirat karni - Earn

To earn in a just manner with integrity and honesty.

truthful living

Vand chakna - Share

To share the rewards of life rather than merely accumulating wealth.

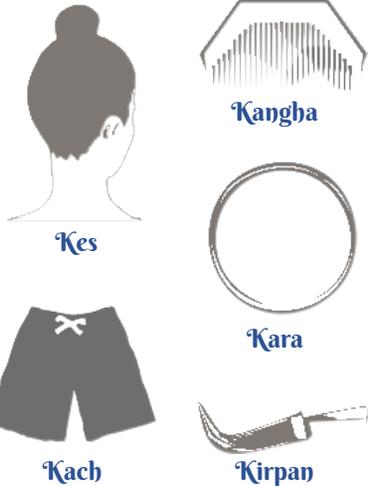
generous living

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Identity

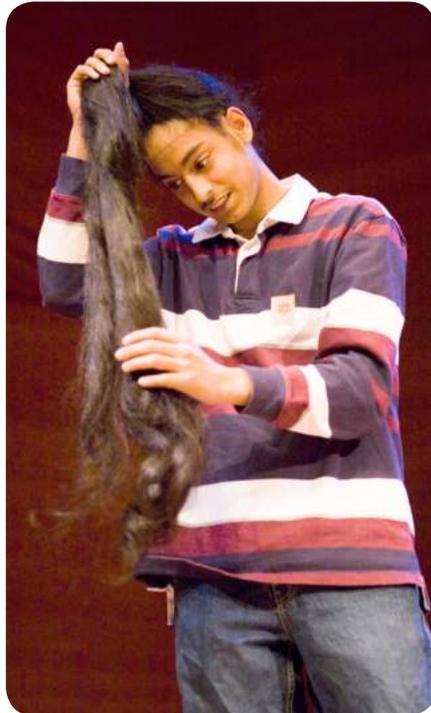


The Sikh identity is rooted in part in the observance and maintenance of five articles of faith. Adherents recognize these articles as gifts from their beloved Guru and they are worn with absolute love and appreciation.

The Five Kakars, or “Five Ks,” as they are popularly termed, are:

- Kes - uncut hair
- Kangha - wooden comb
- Kara - iron bracelet
- Kirpan - traditional sword
- Kach - undershorts

Principally, Sikhs wear the dastar (turban) as a head covering for their unshorn hair.

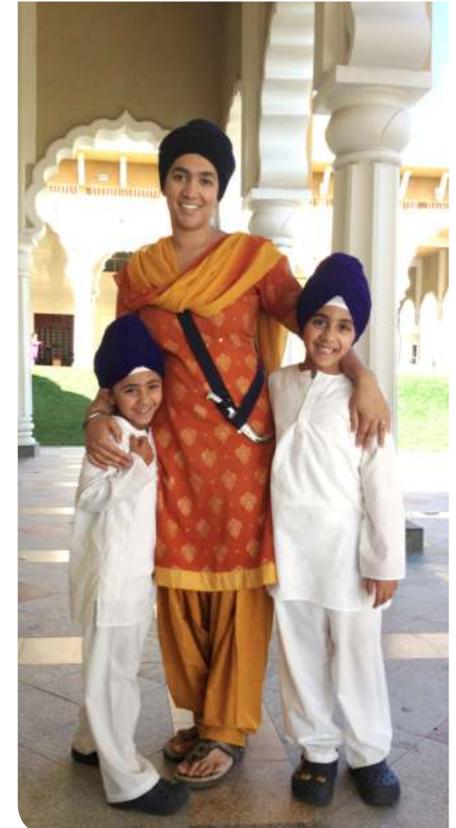


These unique external attributes are an assertion of the social and political sovereignty of the Sikh identity. They are a major part of the Sikh psyche and resonate with the Sikh values of realizing the nobility and divinity within each individual. Every Sikh is a representative of the faith.



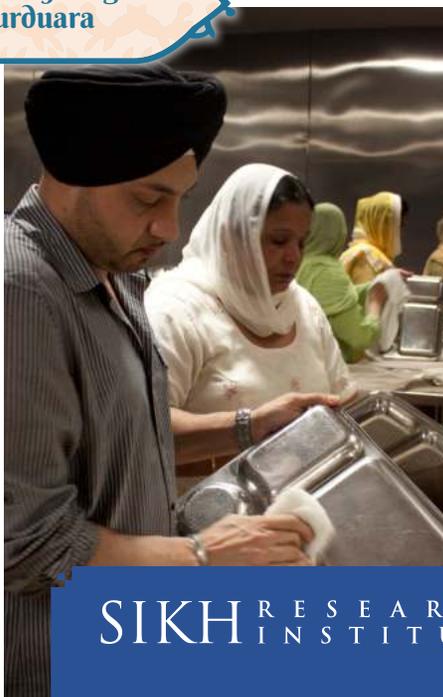
Along with maintaining the articles of faith, Sikhs are required to refrain from:

- Cutting or trimming any hair on the body
- Eating halal or sacrificial meat
- Consuming tobacco, alcohol, or recreational intoxicants
- Engaging in infidelity





Preparation of langar at a Gurduara



Gurduara



Gurduara, literally: “through the Guru,” is the name given to the Sikh place of worship and learning; it is where Sikhs assemble for spiritual and political growth.

The Guru Granth Sahib is placed on a high palanquin under a canopy in the middle of one end of the hall, recreating a darbar (a royal court). This arrangement symbolizes the Guru’s sovereign status.

At a gurduara, all women, men and children are treated as equals. The gurduara is a meeting place and an important center of social activity; it is not an exclusive sacred space.

The institution of the gurduara has embraced all visitors, from peasants to emperors. Attached to every gurduara is a kitchen where *langar* (food) is prepared for free distribution. During this meal, everyone sits together on the floor to symbolize equality and humility. To



prepare, serve, and clean up after a meal is an honorable *seva* (service) that community members perform.

Sikh communities welcome all visitors to gurduaras.

Gurpurabs & Ceremonies



The Sikh Wedding Ceremony -
Anand Karaj.

Every day is a gift, an opportunity to realize Ik Oankar. No specific time, day, or month is regarded as sacred for Sikhs, though the Sikh community assembles to commemorate historical events and to celebrate gurpurabs. A gurpurab is a

day associated with the life of the Guru on which Sikhs remember the Guru's achievements and contributions. Sikhs celebrate rites of passage through



Turban Tying Ceremony - Dastar Bandi -
Marks the right of passage to adulthood.

the life journey as families and as a *sangat* (congregation).

All Sikh ceremonies and celebrations are

held in the presence of and incorporate the wisdom of the Guru Granth Sahib. The four main Sikh ceremonies which mark most initiated Sikh's lives are: *janam* (birth), *amrit* (initiation), *anand* (marriage) and *mirtak* (death).

Diaspora



Millions of Sikhs have migrated from the homeland of Panjab over the last century, influencing global art, culture, business and politics. As of 2014, over five million Sikhs lived outside the Panjab.

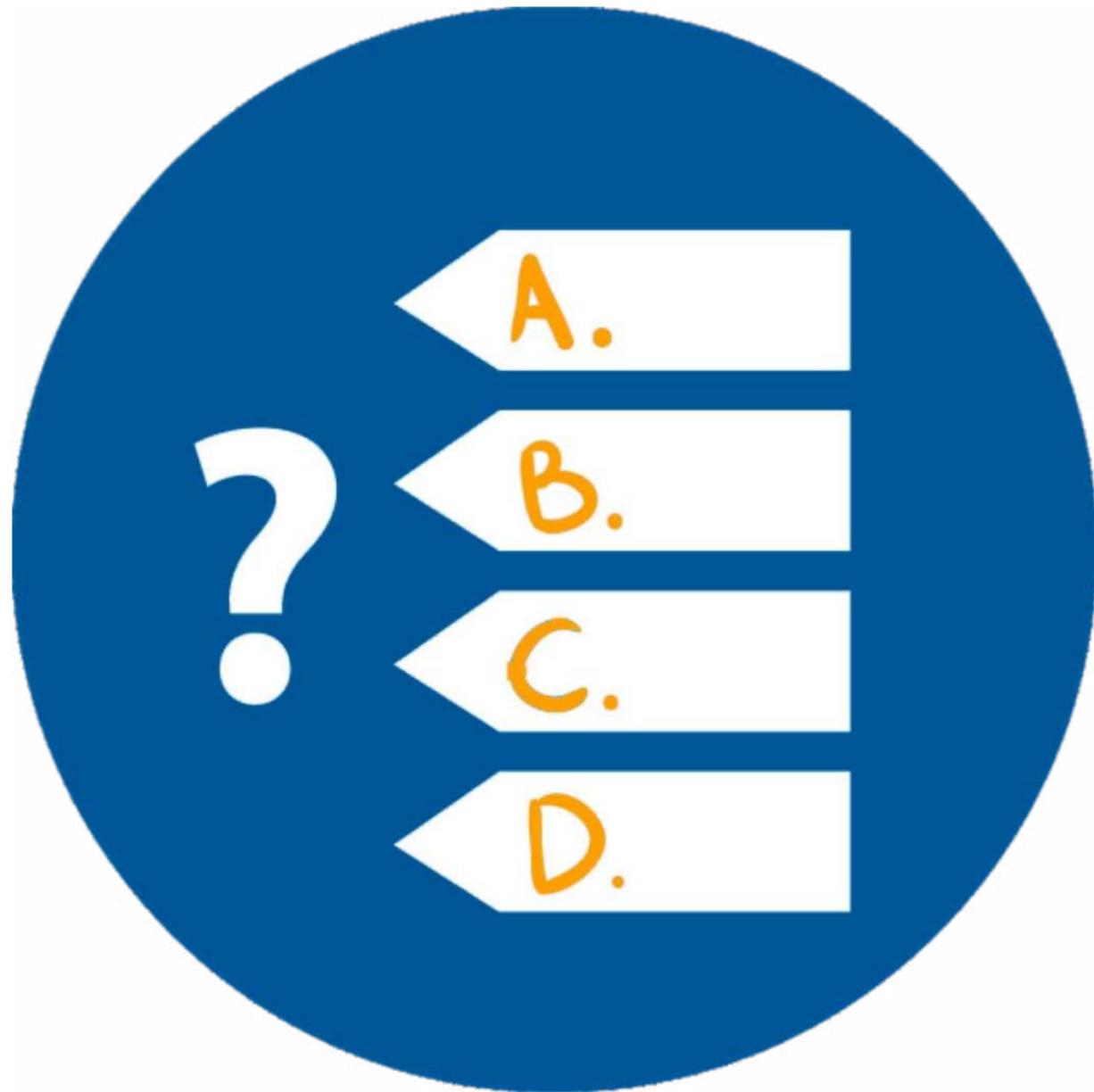
The largest diasporic populations can be found in Western Europe—especially the United Kingdom—and North America. Sikhs have lived in the U.S. and Canada since the first Sikh pioneers reached the Pacific coast in the 1890s.



WHO ARE THE SIKHS?



QUICK QUIZ



- a) Sikhism is a sect of Islam
- b) Sikhism is a sect of Hinduism
- c) Sikhism is a blend of Hinduism and Islam
- d) Sikhism is an independent religion

CAN YOU GUESS?

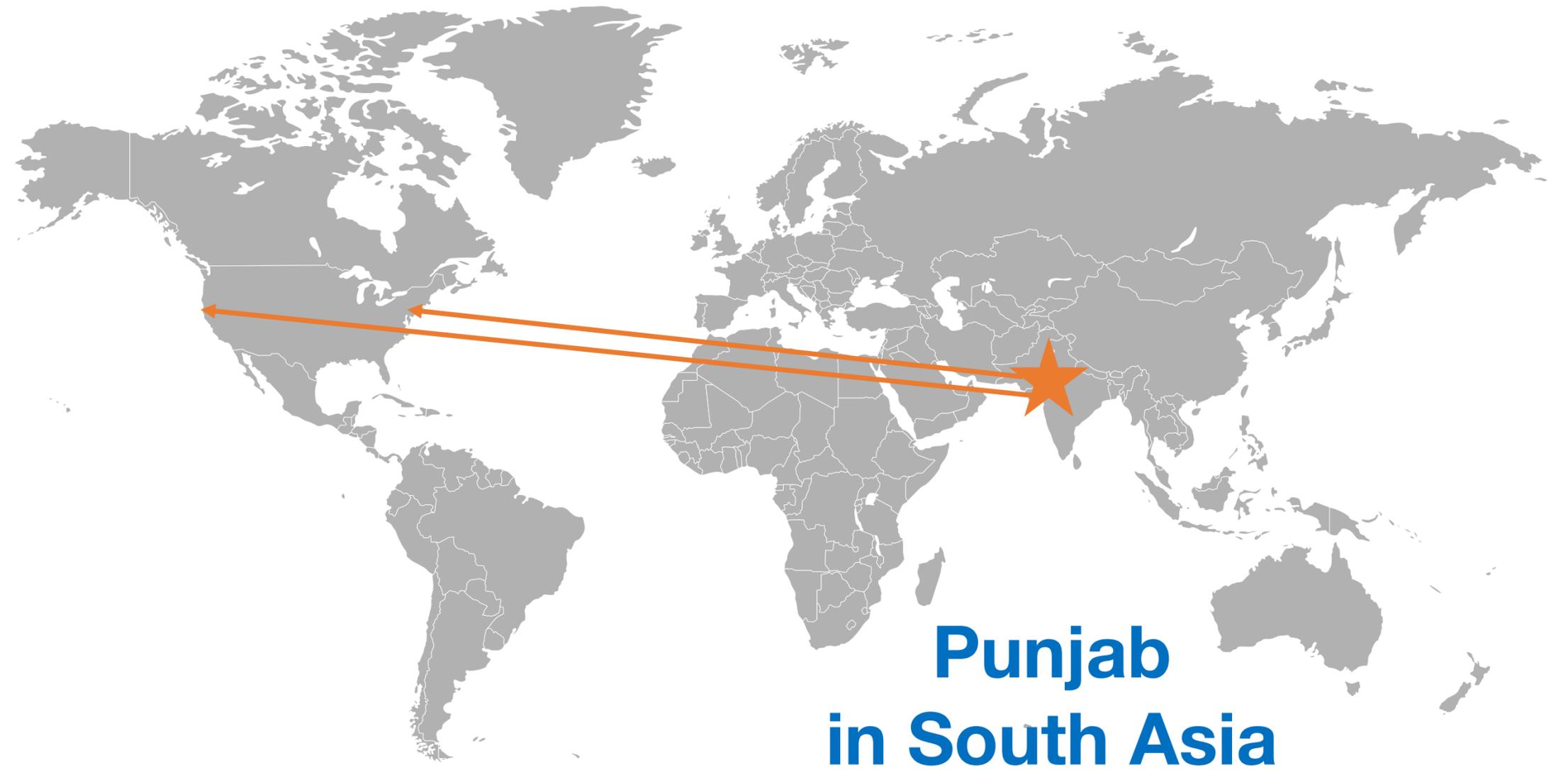
Sikhism is the ____ largest religion in the world?

- 1) Christianity – 2.2 billion
- 2) Islam – 1.4 billion
- 3) Hinduism – 900 million
- 4) Buddhism – 396 million
- 5) Sikhism – 25 million**
- 6) Judaism – 15 million

Sikhism is the 5th largest religion.



HISTORY



**Punjab
in South Asia**

SIKHS IN AMERICA

PIONEERS



SIKH VALUES

ONE GOD: *Loves and sustains all humanity*

EQUALITY: *Respect for all genders, religions, races, etc.*

LIVE & EARN HONESTLY

SERVICE TO HUMANITY

SOCIAL JUSTICE



SIKH BELIEFS



Founded on the teachings of ten Gurus (1469-1708)

The eternal living Guru of the Sikhs is the Guru Granth Sahib (the sacred scripture) which embodies the Gurus' teachings and guides Sikhs.

IDENTITY:
TO SERVE, PROTECT
AND BE HELD
ACCOUNTABLE



THE SIKH IDENTITY



Making a commitment by joining the Khalsa – community of initiated Sikhs

- Living by a code of conduct
- Having ultimate allegiance to the Sikh way of life
- Maintaining a distinct identity
- Can be done at any time in one's life

ARTICLES OF FAITH



Uncut Hair (Kesh)
Spirituality



Iron Bracelet (Kara)
Good Deeds



Comb (Kanga)
Cleanliness



Kirpan
Protection



Underpants
(Kachera)
Self Discipline

DASTAAR

THE SIKH TURBAN

- **99%** of the people wearing a turban in the U.S. are Sikhs
- Means that Sikhs can always be recognized and are duty bound to offer help
- Mandatory religious obligation for Sikhs
- Under no circumstances can the turban be forcibly removed



DASTAAR: SIKH TURBAN STYLES



GURDWARA



- Place of prayer, service and learning
- Everyone is welcome
- Services in America typically held on weekends



LANGAR



- Langar is a meal served at every Gurdwara throughout the world.
- Prepared and served by volunteers
- Everyone sits together on the floor to share the food in the spirit of equality.

LANGUAGE: PUNJABI

80+ million people
speak Punjabi
including many
Sikhs living in the
U.S.

ਗੈਲੋ



CHALLENGES SIKHS FACE IN AMERICA

- Hate Crimes
 - Victims of homicide, assaults, vandalism, etc.
- School Harassment
 - Bias-based bullying, name calling, physical attacks, etc.
- Workplace Discrimination
 - Sikhs denied jobs in law enforcement and numerous corporate settings because of turban and beard.



Everyday Sikhs



Artists



U.S. Army



Basketball Player



Actor & Model



Scientist



Police Officer

Everyday Sikhs



Politician
Politician



Lawyer



Farmer



Pilot



Doctor

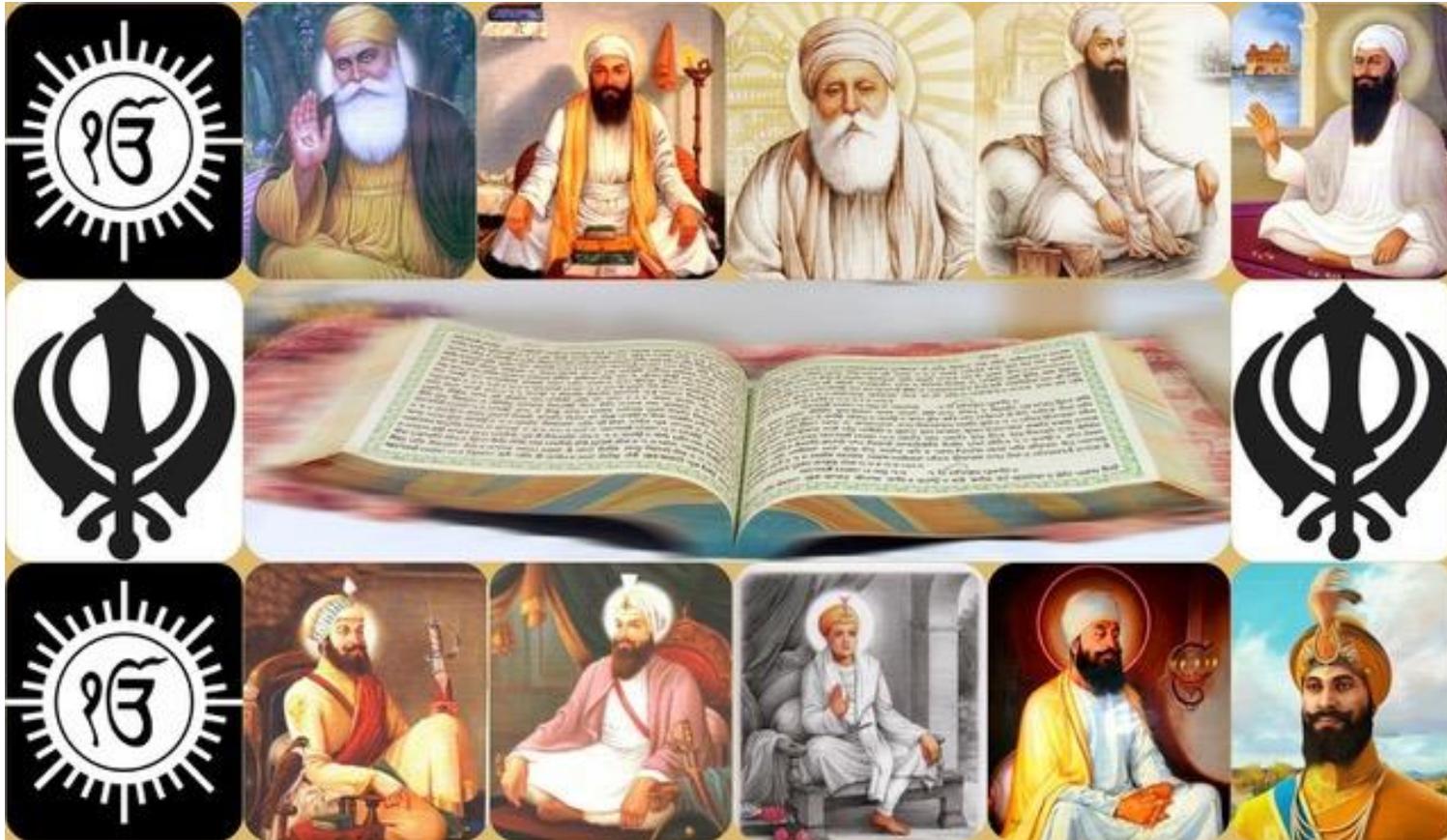


Filmmaker



THANK YOU!
www.sikhcoalition.org

Ten Sikh Gurus and Eternal Guru Granth Sahib



The era of the ten gurus of Sikhism spans from the birth of Nanak Dev in 1469, through the life of Guru Gobind Singh. At the time of Guru Gobind Singh's death in 1708, he passed the title of Guru to the Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

1. Guru Nanak Dev Ji- Guru from 1469 to 1539

- Guru Nanak, first of the 10 gurus, founded the Sikh faith, introducing the concept of one God.
- He started the institution of **Guru Ka Langar**. Langar refers to the community kitchen where food is served to everyone without any discrimination.
- He emphasized the equality of women and denounced the caste system.

2. Guru Angad Dev Ji- Guru from 1539 to 1552

- Guru Angad Dev, second of the 10 gurus, invented and introduced the Gurmukhi (written form of Punjabi) script.
- He compiled the writings of Nanak Dev Ji in Guru Granth Sahib in **Gurmukhi Script**.
- Popularized and expanded the institution of Guru ka Langar which was started by Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

3. Guru Amar Das Sahib Ji- Guru from 1552 to 1574

- Guru Amar Das introduced the **Anand Karaj** marriage ceremony for the Sikhs.
- He established Miri & Piri system of religious missions for men and women respectively.
- He strengthened the tradition of Guru Ka Langar.
- He also completely abolished the custom of Sati and purdah system amongst the Sikhs.

4. Guru Ram Das Sahib Ji- Guru from 1574 to 1581

- Guru Ram Das, fourth of the 10 gurus, founded the city of **Amritsar**.

- He started the construction of the famous Golden Temple at Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs.
- He requested the Muslim Sufi, Mian Mir to lay the cornerstone of the Harmandir Sahib.

5. **Guru Arjan Dev Ji- Guru from 1581 to 1606**

- He compiled the **Adi Granth**, the scriptures of the Sikhs.
- He completed construction of Sri Darbar Sahib also known as Golden Temple in Amritsar.
- He became the **first great martyr in Sikh history** when Emperor Jahangir ordered his execution. Thus, he was hailed as Shaheedan-de-Sartaj (The crown of martyrs).

6. **Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji- Guru from 1606 to 1644**

- He was the son of Guru Arjan Dev and was known as a "soldier saint".
- He organized a small army and became the first Guru to take up arms to defend the faith.
- He waged wars against Mughal rulers Jahangir and Shah Jahan

7. **Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji- Guru from 1644 to 1661**

- Though he was a man of peace, he never disbanded the armed Sikh warriors who were earlier maintained by Guru Har Gobind.
- He gave shelter to Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Mughal Ruler Shah Jahan, who was later persecuted by Aurangzeb.
- He cautiously avoided conflict with Emperor Aurangzeb and devoted his efforts to missionary work.

8. Guru Har Krishan Sahib Ji- Guru from 1661 to 1664

- Guru Har Krishan was the youngest of the Gurus. He was installed as Guru at the age of five.
- He was summoned to Delhi by Aurangazeb under framed charges of anti-Islamic blasphemy.

9. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji- Guru from 1665 to 1675

- He established the town of Anandpur.
- He opposed the forced conversion of the Hindu Kashmiri Pandits by Mughal ruler Aurangazeb and he was consequently persecuted for this

10. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji- Guru from 1675 to 1708

- He became Guru after the martyrdom of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur.
- He created the **Khalsa** in 1699, transforming the Sikhs into a saint-soldier order to protect themselves and their faith.
- Last Sikh Guru in human form passing the Guruship of the Sikhs to the Guru Granth Sahib.

11. Guru Granth Sahib Ji

- Guru Granth Sahib (also known as the Adi Granth) is the **scripture of the Sikhs**.
- The Adi Granth was written in Gurmukhi script and it contains the actual words and verses as written by the Sikh Gurus and other enlightened scholars of the Hindu and Muslim faiths.
- It is considered the Supreme Spiritual Authority and Head of the Sikh religion, rather than any living person.



Akal Takht



Akal Takht at Night

Akal Takht

The Akal Takht ("Throne of the Timeless One") is one of five takhts (seats of power) of the Sikhs. It is located in the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, Punjab, India. The Akal Takht was built by Sri Guru Hargobind in 1606 as a place of justice and consideration of temporal issues. It is the highest seat of earthly authority of the Khalsa (the collective body of the Sikhs) and the place of the Jathedar, the highest spokesman of the Sikhs.



Golden Temple at Night



Golden Temple-Harmandir Sahib



Gurdwara Bangla Sahib

Gurdwara Bangla Sahib

Gurdwara Bangla Sahib is a prominent Sikh gurdwara in New Delhi, India, known for its association with the eighth Sikh Guru, Guru Har Krishan, as well as the holy river inside its complex, known as the "Sarovar." Guru Har Krishan resided in the bungalow originally situated at the site of this Gurdwara. During his stay in Delhi

in 1664, there was a smallpox and cholera epidemic and Guru Har Krishan Ji helped the suffering by giving aid and fresh water from the well at this bungalow.



Huzur Sahib

Hazur Sahib

Hazur Sahib is the principal Sikh Gurdwara at Nanded in the Indian state of Maharashtra. It marks the site where Guru Gobind Singh had his camp in 1708 after the departure of the emperor Bahadur Shah. In October 2008, the 300th anniversary celebration of the Guruship of Guru Granth Sahib took place.

Kirtan / Devotional Singing

Kirtan is a tradition established by the first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji and his minstrel companion, Bhai Mardana. Traditional instruments used to perform Kirtan are an integral aspect of the Sikh worship service which is musical in nature. Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of Sikhism, is a compilation of hymns composed in raag, India's classical

music system. A variety of instruments such as Tabla, Harmonium, Kartal and stringed instruments are played to accompany vocal expression of adoration whenever sacred **shabads** are sung in praise of the divine.

The Harmonium, also known as Baja or Vaja, is a type of hand operated pump organ popular for kirtan since the 1800s. The tabla is a set of large and small drums played in a variety of rhythms to accompany the harmonium.

Seva/ Selfless Service

Seva short for the word Karseva refers to "selfless service", work or service performed without any thought of reward or personal benefit. All Sikhs are encouraged by their Guru (Guru Granth Sahib) to perform Seva or Selfless Service. You will find Sikhs engaged in free service in Gurdwaras washing dishes, cleaning the floors and serving food. Sikhs are also encouraged to help the community by serving in hospitals, homes for the elderly and communities affected by natural disasters. Volunteers engaged in Seva are referred to as Sevadaars and for many people this activity forms an essential part of their life, providing spiritual fulfilment and practical benefits.

Sikhism is founded on principles of **Sarbat da bhalla** - working towards the "common good of all". For Sikhs, this means reaching out to serve and uplift all of humanity as an expression or devotion to the Creator.