

SIKHISM



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Contents

1.	Sikhism	1
2.	Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji	3
3.	Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji	4
4.	Sri Guru Amardas Ji	5
5.	Sri Guru Ramdas Ji	7
6.	Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji	8
7.	Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji	9
8.	Sri Guru Har Rai Ji	10
9.	Sri Guru Harkrishan Sahib Ji	11
10.	Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji	12
11.	Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji	13
12.	Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji	15
13.	Mata Sahib Kaur Ji	16
14.	Panj Piare	17
15.	Four Holy Sons	17
16.	Sikh History	18
17.	Sikh Martyr's	20
18.	The Takhats	22
19.	The Creation of Khalsa	24
20.	Sikh Emblem -The Khanda	26
21.	Sikh Religious Symbol -Ik Onkaar	26
22.	Gardwara	27
23.	Sikh Flag -Nishan Sahib	27
24.	The Five K's	28
25.	Sikh Baptism -Amrit	29
26.	Naam Karan Ceremony	30
27.	Anand Karaj (Sikh Wedding)	30
28.	Akhand Path	31
29.	Shabad Kirtan	31
30.	The Ardaas (Prayer)	32
31.	Waak (Order of the day)	33
32.	Karah Parsad (The Blessed Food)	34
33.	Langar (The Holy food)	34
34.	Sikh National Anthem	35

Sikhism

Sikhism is the youngest of the world's religions. Its history dates back to 1469 when its founder Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was born in Talwandi, now called Nankaana Sahib in Pakistan. The Sikhs believe in One God, and Gurus as their Holy Teachers. Their shrines are known as Gurdwaras of which five historical Gurdwaras are called Takhats (Thrones).

Who is a Sikh?

A Sikh is a person who believes in:

- a. One God,
- b. The Teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus,
- c. The divinity of its holy Scriptures Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji
- d. The necessity of 'Amrit', the Sikh baptism.

The Pillars of Sikh Faith:

- a. Oneness of God (that the whole humanity has one Father.)
- b. Worship of the abstract form of God (image worship) is not allowed in Sikhism.
- c. Daily meditation. (A Sikh must recite Hymns three times a day: morning, evening and night).
- d. Truthful living. (A Sikh must lead an honest life, helping others and rendering service to the poor and needy) and
- e. Sharing. (the Sikhs must contribute 1/10 of their disposable income for charitable purposes.)

The Sikh beliefs :-

The Sikhs believe in that-

- a. All the Gurus had the same spirit.
- b. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is their living Guru.
- c. The proclamations from the Akal Takhat (Gurmata (resolution) of the Five High Priests of the Sikh Takhats) are eternal.
- d. The congregational prayers are more significant than individual prayers.
- e. The truthful living, incorporating both the meditation and noble deeds, is essential for the liberation of soul from transmigration.

The Sikh Prayers:

The timing and the names of the daily Sikh prayers are as follows:

a. Morning Prayers:

1. *Japji Sahib* : composed by Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj
2. *Jaap Sahib* : composed by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj
3. *Tav Parsaad Sawaiye* : composed by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj
(Above three are the minimum morning prayers for every Sikh)
4. *Chaupai Sahib* : Composed by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj
5. *Anand Sahib* : Composed by Sri Guru Amardas Ji Maharaj
(Reciting more than three i.e. all Five Banis in the morning will do no harm)

b. Evening Prayers:

1. *Rehras Sahib*: collection of Hymns of:
Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Sri Guru Amardas Ji, Sri Guru Ramdas Ji,
Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji and Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji)

c. Night Prayers:

1. *Kirtan Sohila*: (collection of Hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji,
Sri Guru Ramdas Ji and Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji.)

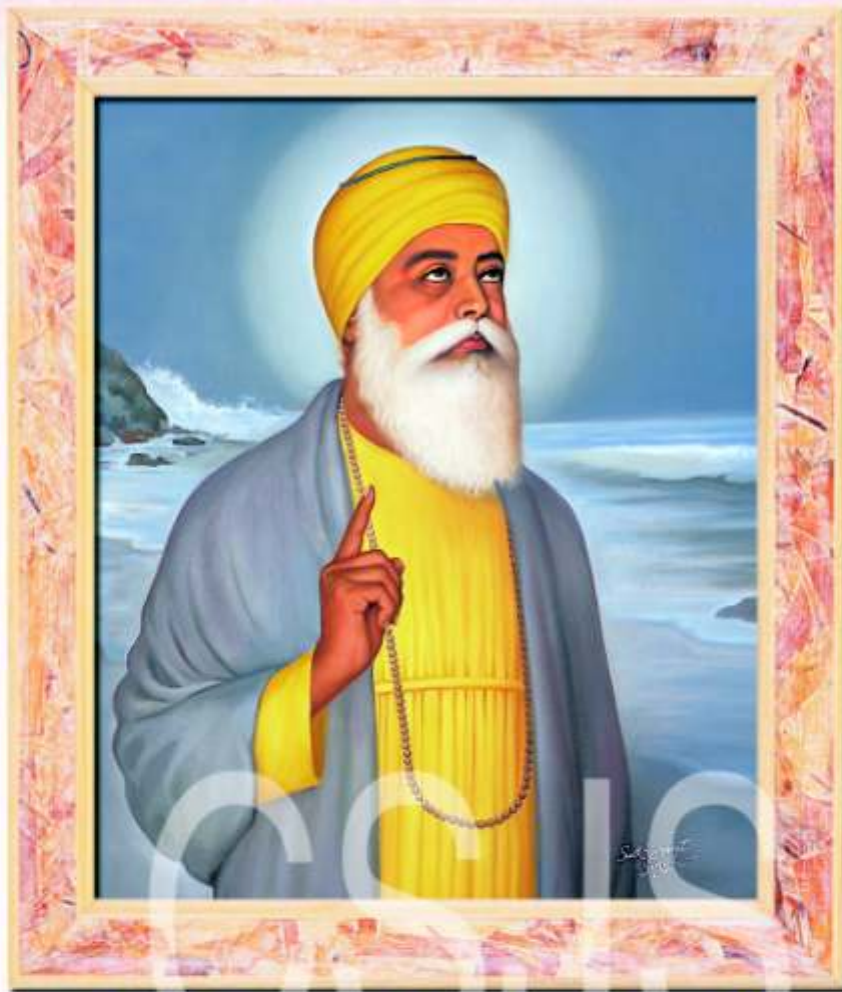
There are many Sikhs who recite, more than ONE JAPJI SAHIB, SUKHMANI SAHIB, ASADI WAAR and many other Bania every day with love and devotion.

Please note that there is no maximum restriction on how much one can do!

Guru Ji Says.... "SAAS SAAS SIMRO GOBINDH"

The more we recite carefully, the more we will understand and then the more we will follow Guru Ji's teaching, to achieve the real objective of our life.

To get better grades in a spiritual sense we should get up early morning at Amritvela to do NAAM SIMRAN (meditation on the name of GOD)



Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji

The first Guru, the founder of the Sikh religion
(1469-1539)

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji is the founder of Sikh religion. Guru Nanak Dev Ji carried the beacon of truth and truthful living into a world entrenched in the darkness of ritual and superstitious practices. He was born in a small village called Talwandi in 1469. He got married and had two children. He was called by God at his eternal abode and was asked to convey the divine message to the world. He travelled up to China in the North, Sri Lanka in the South, Mecca in the West and Decca in the East. People loved him wherever he went.

His message was:

- a. God is one, who is unborn, is beyond death, is beyond enmity, is creator and is self illuminated; that (He) is : merciful, giver of all bounties, is omnipresent, is all powerful and is omniscient.
- b. All humans are equal. (The Guru rejected the Hindu caste system.)
- c. All humans must remember God and sing his glories.
- d. All humans must give a part of their earnings in charity.
- e. All humans must live a truthful and honest life.
- f. Guru Nanak Dev Ji composed over 974shabads and settled at the city of Kartarpur, where he began building a nation of self-respecting men and women, devoted to God, truth and justice, and filled with a sense of equality.



Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji

**The 2nd Guru
(1504-1552)**

Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji was a Sikh of the house of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji and was anointed by Him as the second Sikh Guru.

He was born at Matte ki Sarai in 1504; got married to Mata Khivi Ji and had two sons. He was made Guru at the age of 35. He spread the message of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Guru Ji stressed physical and mental fitness and bestowed Sikhi the Gurmukhi Script (Often referred to as Punjabi)

Guru Ji extended education to the masses, so that spiritual and worldly knowledge were no longer the monopolies of the upper castes and classes.



Sri Guru Amardas Ji

**The 3rd Guru
(1479-1574)**

Sri Guru Amardas Ji was a Sikh of the House of Sri Guru Nanak and was anointed by Him as the third Guru of the Sikhs by Guru Angad Dev Ji.

Sri Guru Amardas Ji was born at Basarke in 1479. He got married to Mata Sulakhani Ji and had four children, two sons and two daughters. He served Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji for 12 years, from 1540 to 1552 and was made Guru at the age of 73. He spread the message of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji.

The Guru also constructed a well (called Baoli) at Goindwal and invited all the people to come and fetch water from there irrespective of their religion and caste. (In those days, the lower caste people had separate wells and were not allowed to take water from the wells belonging to the upper class.) The well was deep in the ground and the Guru made 84 steps to go down and reach the Baoli. It is believed that there are 8.4 million lives in this world and an erred soul may have to go through these lives to merge again in God. The Guru said that those who would recite Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Japji sahib at each step, while going down will be freed from the cycle of transmigration.

a. Guru Ji reinforced the social reforms that the early Guru's began and devoted much of

- his life against caste, prejudices and the curse of untouchability.
- b. Guru Ji instituted Guru Ka Langar (free kitchen), started earlier by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Whether rich or poor, friend or foe, all eat together at one place.
 - c. Guru Amar Das Ji also introduced the Anand Karaj marriage ceremony for Sikhs.
 - d. Guru Ji inducted Manji's to Sikh women as well as men; Manji's gave women authority to administer missionary work in geographical areas.
 - e. Guru Ji abolished the Hindu custom of Sati (widow burning), and also discouraged Islamic practice of pardah (use of veil to cover up women)



Sri Guru Ramdas Ji

**4th Guru of the Sikhs
(1534-1581)**

Sri Guru Ramdas Ji was the son-in-law of Sri Guru Amardas Ji. He was a Sikh and a true devotee of the House of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He was chosen to be the fourth Guru of the Sikhs. He was born at Choona Mandi in Lahore. He got married when he was 19 and had three sons.

- a. The Guru laid foundation of the city of Amritsar and therein dug two sacred pools which were later called as sarovar of Harimandir (Golden Temple) and sarovar of Santokhsar.
- b. Guru Ji recited the Laavan marriage hymn to complete the Sikh Anand Karaj ceremony.
- c. Guru Ji Granted further equal rights to women by allowing widows to re-marry in Sikhi.



Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji

**The 5th Guru
(1563-1606)**

Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji was the youngest son of Sri Guru Ramdas Ji. He was born at Goindwal and became Guru at the young age of 18. He married and had one son. His contribution to the Sikh faith is exemplary.

- He compiled the first version of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, then called Pothi Sahib.
- He constructed Sri Harimandir Sahib Ji which is known as the Golden Temple.
- He laid the foundation of the city of Taran Taaran
- He founded the city of Kartarpur (in Jalandhar)
- Guru ji emphasised meditation and acceptance of Gods Will and was martyred by the Mughal ruler Jahangir for rights to freedom of expression after refusing to change the wording of Gurbani to please the Mughal ruler. Jahangir alleged that Gurbani contained verses which were anti-Islamic and ordered that Guru Ji be sat on a hot plate while hot sand was poured over his body. In accepting the torture as God's Will, Guru Ji breathed his last, meditating on God's Sweet name.



Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji

**The 6th Guru
(1595-1644)**

Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji was the only son of Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji. He was born at Wadali. He opened missionary centres and spread the message of the previous Gurus. In addition he gave to the Sikh faith:

- a. The concept of Miri (royalty) and Piri (sainthood). He wore two swords and injected the spirit of bravery among his followers (Sikhs).
- b. The concept of morning choirs: The Sikhs got together early in the morning and went around places singing the praises of God. Later these choirs became a part of religious ceremonies and processions specially at the birth anniversaries of Gurus.
- c. In the complex of Sri Harimandir Sahib Guru Ji constructed Sri Akal Takhat Sahib- the supreme seat of spiritual and temporal authority for the Sikhs.
- d. In demonstrating that non-violence would encourage evil to prosper unchallenged, Guru Ji introduced the practice of martial arts and created the first Sikh army to defend the weak, defenceless and religion.



Sri Guru Har Rai Ji

**The 7th Guru
(1630-1661)**

Sri Guru Har Rai Ji was the grandson of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji. He was born at Kiratpur. He spread the messages of the previous Gurus.

He is particularly known for love towards animals. He made special hospitals for animals; He also made zoos and kept all species of animals and birds and gave them his utmost love. (In other words the present concept of RSPCA was recognised and started by him way back in those days.)

He also propagated the use of Ayurvedic medicine.

After banishing their older son Ram Rai for changing a line in Sri Aad Granth Sahib Ji, Guru Har Rai Ji installed their younger son Har Krishan as the eighth Guru.



Sri Guru Harkrishan Sahib Ji

**The 8th Guru
(1656-1664)**

Sri Guru Harkrishan Sahib Ji was the youngest son of Sri Guru Har Rai Ji. He was born at Kiratpur and became Guru at the age of 5. He stayed on Gur Gaddi for 3 years. Sri Guru Har Krishan Sahib Ji, Known as the Child Guru, recieved the divine light and became Guru at the age of 5. They devoted their short life serving and caring for the Sikh community and baffled scholars with their spiritual powers and knowledge. He served and healed the residents of Delhi who were suffering from an outbreak of smallpox and cholera. Guru Harkrishan Sahib Ji left for heavenly abode in 1664. They declared that the next Guru would be in the village of Bakala.



Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji

The 9th Guru
(1621-1675)

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji was the youngest son of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji and grand uncle of Sri Guru Harkrishan Sahib Ji. He was born at Amritsar. He became Guru at the age of 43. Like Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, He travelled and spread the message of one God and also the teachings of the Sikh Gurus.

As master swordsman Guru Ji fought many battles and was a firm believer in the right to freedom of worship. It was for this cause they faced martyrdom in the face of forceful conversion of Hindus to Islam, even though Guru Ji was steadfast in their opposition to Hindu mythological idolatry and superstitious practises.

Guru Ji sent a message to Aurangzeb that all Sikhs would embrace Islam if the Emperor could first convert the Guru. Guru Ji and the Sikhs that accompanied Guru Ji to court arrest in Delhi where brutally tortured before each was barbarically martyred. Thus through passive resistance, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was martyred by public beheading at Chandni Chowk in Delhi where Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib is now established. There by saving the Hindus from compulsory conversion into Islaam. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji showed that death is better than living in slavery and accepting injustice.



Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji

The 10th Guru
(1666-1708)

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji was the only son of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadar Sahib Ji. He became Guru at the age of 9. He was married and had 4 sons. His bravery is unchallenged and sacrifices are unlimited. **He is the creator and founder of Khalsa Panth.** He and his handful brave Sikh soldiers managed to deter the mighty forces of Muslim Emperors from imposing Islam on to Hindus. In doing so he had to pay the price of sacrificing all he had :-

His two youngest sons Baba Zorawar Singh Ji (aged 7) and Baba Fateh Singh Ji (aged 5) were embedded alive in a brick wall by Mughals, but never gave up Sikhism. They lived and left this world with honour and dignity.

At the fort of Chamkaur, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji (accompanied with only 40 of his beloved Singh soldiers) were surrounded by mighty forces of the Muslim Emperor Aurangzeb. Guru Gobind Singh Ji's two eldest sons Baba Ajit Singh Ji and Baba Jujhaar Singh Ji chose to fight alongside other brave Sikh soldiers; they individually lead a handful of soldiers and sacrificed their life in the struggle, never accepting conversion to Islam. They were fine examples of Sikhs and showed never to accept defeat in the eyes of

evil. They left this world with honour and dignity.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji is the founder of Khalsa Panth (as mentioned above). He made compulsory that every Sikh should take Amrit (be baptised) and should wear five K's:

1. Kesh (uncut hair)
2. Kangha (wooden comb)
3. Kara (Steel bracelet)
4. Kirpaan (sword)
5. Kachhehra (specially tailored shorts)

After taking Amrit (baptising), the Sikhs became Khalsa (the pure ones), and were known as Singhs (lions) and the ladies were called Kaurs (Lioness). When this Khalsa Panth was created, during the ceremony, He first gave Amrit to Panj Piarey (five beloved Sikhs) who then became Singhs. Then He immediately kneeled down to his five Singhs (then known as Panj Piarey) and requested them to give him Amrit and make him a Singh, thereby changing His name from Gobind Rai to Gobind Singh. By becoming disciple of his own disciples (a unique act), the Master introduced democracy into the spiritual world.

Thus at this point, a new but very important chapter in the Sikh religion was born.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji advised the Sikhs that:

- a. The Mission of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji has now completed.
- b. The Granth Sahib will be called Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Sikh's living Guru) and there will be no more Sikh human Gurus hereafter.
- c. The Sikhs will get their spiritual guidance from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and temporal advice from Panj Piare (five baptised Sikhs).



Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

The final living Sikh Guru

(In 1708, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave Guruship to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and said that this shall be *the final living Sikh Guru and thereafter no more Sikh human Gurus*)(1601-1604,1708)

Guru Gobind Singh Ji brought the lineage of living Gurus to an end and declared Shabad Guru (The Sacred Scriptures) Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as the Eternal Master of the Sikhs.

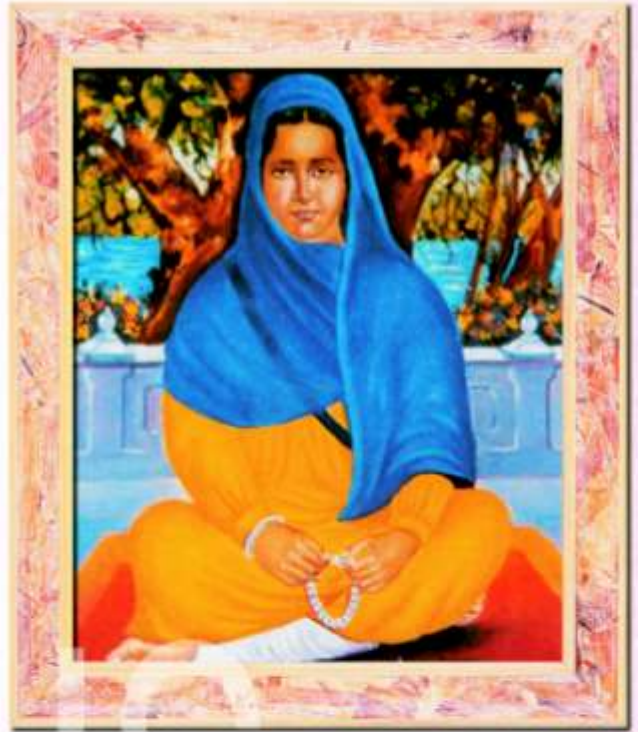
The first Holy Scriptures of Sri Granth Sahib Ji were compiled by Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji. The work on compilation was started in 1601 and completed in 1604. This recension was called Pothi Sahib and was installed at Harimandir Sahib in 1604. The Pothi was called Kartarpuri Bir.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji added Hymns of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadar Ji to the Pothi Sahib and changed the name to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. In 1708 Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave the Guruship to Sri Guru Granth Sahib and said that the **MISSION of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji has been completed**. There will be no more human Gurus thereafter and Sikhs will get their guidance from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and temporal advice from Panj Piarey.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji has 1430 pages known as Angs (Limbs or Body parts). These 1430 Angs contain the Hymns of 6 Sikh Gurus, 15 Saints, 11 Bhats (poets of the Gurus Court) and other Sikhs.

Mother of the Khalsa Panth Mata Sahib Kaur Ji

In Sikh history Mata Sahib Kaur Ji is known as the Mother of the Khalsa. This honour was bestowed upon her by the Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. When a Sikh receives the gift of Khande Dee Pauhul (Amrit), he/she is told that from today onward your spiritual father is Guru Gobind Singh Sahib and your spiritual mother is Mata Sahib Kaur Ji. Mata Sahib Kaur Ji, whose name before taking Amrit was Mata Sahib Devaan Ji, was born on the 1st November 1681 in a village called Rohtas, in West Punjab, (now in Pakistan). Her mother's name was Mata Jasdevi Ji and father's name was Bhai Ramu Bassi Ji. Her father, who was an ardent sewak (devotee) of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, influenced her to the extent that she wanted to devote her whole life in service of the Guru Sahib. From her



childhood, Mata Sahib Kaur Ji was a sweet and quiet natured girl. Because of the religious atmosphere at home, she was deeply influenced by Gurbaani during her formative years. She had inherited humility, love and sacrifice to humanity and devotion to Waheguru.

When she came of age, her father and other devotees of village Rohtas, took her to Sri Anandpur Sahib and requested Guru Gobind Singh Sahib to take her as his bride. Guru Sahib told the Sangat that he was already married and could not marry again. However, Mata Sahib Devann Ji's father had pledged his daughter to Guru Sahib and no-one else would marry her now. Therefore, Guru Sahib said if Mata Sahib Devann ji agreed to be as "Kunwara Dola", she could stay with the Guru's family, however, they could not marry or ever have children. Guru Sahib instead promised Mata Sahib Devann Ji, that you will become a great Mother to thousands (i.e. the Mother to the Khalsa Panth). Mata Sahib Kaur Ji lived in Guru Sahib's household and served Guru Sahib and the Sangat with full shardaa (devotion).

Mata Sahib Kaur Ji accompanied Guru Sahib throughout his life, even during battles, serving him in every possible way. On Vaisakhi 1699 in the first Amrit-Sanchaar, Mata Sahib Kaur Ji was bestowed the honour of eternal motherhood of Khalsa Panth.

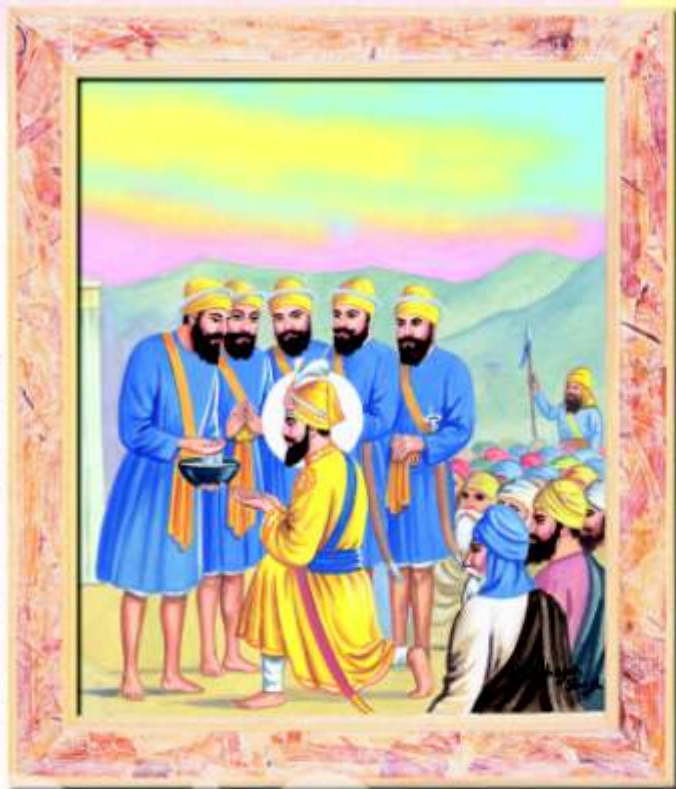
When Guru Gobind Singh Sahib reached Abchal Nagar (Sri Hazoor Sahib), he sent Mata Sahib Kaur Ji to Delhi. Guru Sahib also gave her five weapons (Talwaar, Khanjaar, Jamdhaar, & 2 Khandee) of the Sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, for safekeeping. These weapons are today displayed at one of the historical Gurdwara. Mata Sahib Kaur Ji left for heavenly abode at the age of sixty six in 1747 and her last rites were performed in Bala Sahib, Delhi.

Panj Piare **The five beloved ones**

*Bhai Daya Singh Ji,
Bhai Dharam Singh Ji,
Bhai Himmat Singh Ji
Bhai Mohkam Singh Ji,
Bhai Sahib Singh Ji,*

The word Panj Piare refers to the five Amrit-Dhari (baptist) Sikhs. This was established in (1699) when The Khalsa Panth was created by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

In 1708, He gave the Guruship to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and said, "that the Mission of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji has now completed. There will be no more Sikh human Guru thereafter and Sikhs will get their spiritual guidance from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and temporal advice from Panj Piare.



Four Holy Sons of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji

*Baba Ajit Singh Ji,
Baba Jujhar Singh Ji,
Baba Zorawar Singh Ji,
Baba Fateh Singh Ji*

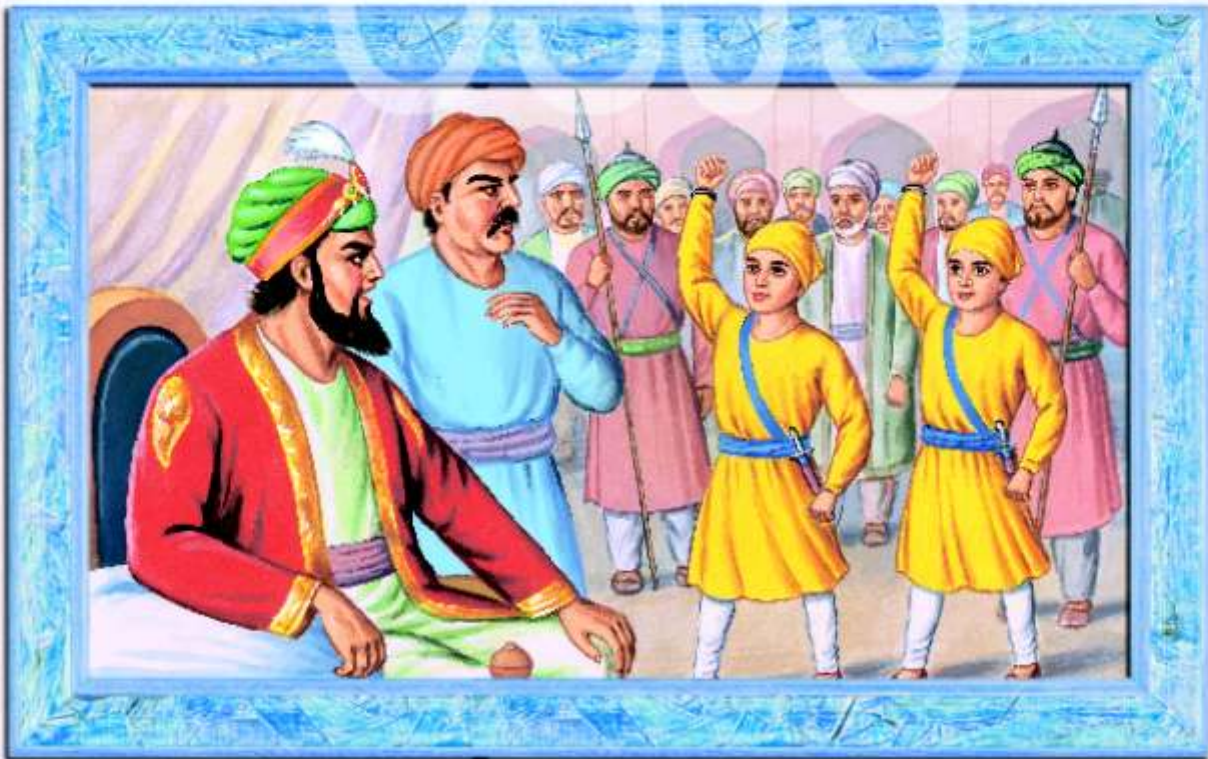
The Sikh History

The Sikh history can be summarized as follows:

- a. **The Gurus period lasted from 1469 to 1708 (239 years in total);** this is from first Guru, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji (the founder of the Sikh religion), to the last (10th) Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. After this period all Sikhs were instructed by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji to follow Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji from 1708 to Eternity. 'Aagyaa Bhaee Akaal Ki Tabhi Chalayo Panth, Sabh Sikhan Ko Hukam Hai Guru Maneyo Granth'.
- b. **The fifth Guru, Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji,** became the First Martyr for the Sikh faith. He was brutally tortured. He was made to sit on hot plate, while hot sand was being poured onto his head and body. Finally He was thrown into cold water. In spite of all this inhumane treatment by the Mughals, He never gave up and stayed calm.
- c. **The ninth Guru, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadar Ji,** sacrificed his life to save Hindu religion from compulsory conversion to Islam by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. His four devotee Sikhs were also tortured; one was cut to pieces, one was put on spinning wheel, one was thrown into boiling water, one was burnt alive.
- d. **The tenth Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji,** sacrificed all He had for the Sikh Faith (Khalsa Panth). His father along with his devotees became martyr as mentioned above in paragraph (c); his two beloved sons aged 5 and 7 were embedded alive in a brick wall in Sirhind and His two elder sons sacrificed their lives in the battle of Chamkaur.
- e. **Guru Gobind Singh chose Banda Singh Bahadur** to be the commander of Sikh forces. From 1708-1715 Baba Banda Singh Bahadur established the first Sikh Empire in the North comprising mostly of the territory of the present Himachal Pradesh. He was ambushed by the Mughal forces, arrested and brutally tortured to death.
- f. **During 1715-1762, Mughal Empire tried to obliterate Sikhs from this Earth** by torturing many hundreds of thousand of Sikhs. In fact it was made legal to kill a Sikh. During this period, Sikhs lived in thick forests, always on the move and as warriors made their homes on the horses backs.
- g. **In spite of all these hard times (1762-1799),** the Sikhs managed to keep hold of Punjab and rule it. This period is known as Misl period. A Misl is a confederation; Punjab was divided into 12 areas and ruled on a secular basis through this confederation.
- h. **From 1799-1839** Punjab was ruled by Maharaja Ranjit Singh Ji.
- i. **The British annexed Punjab in 1840 after bloody battles.**
- j. **The Sikhs were the first to wage war against the British for independence.** (Note: Though Sikh were only 2% of India's population but their sacrifices in the war were more than 80% of the total sacrifices made by all the Indians).



**Baba Ajit Singh Ji, Baba Jujhar Singh Ji
Battle Field Chamkaur**

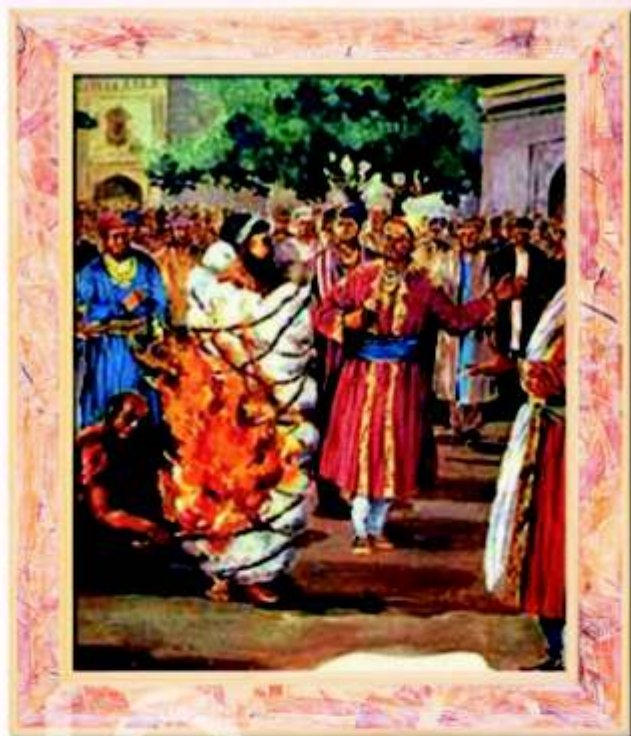


Baba Zorawar Singh Ji, Baba Fateh Singh Ji

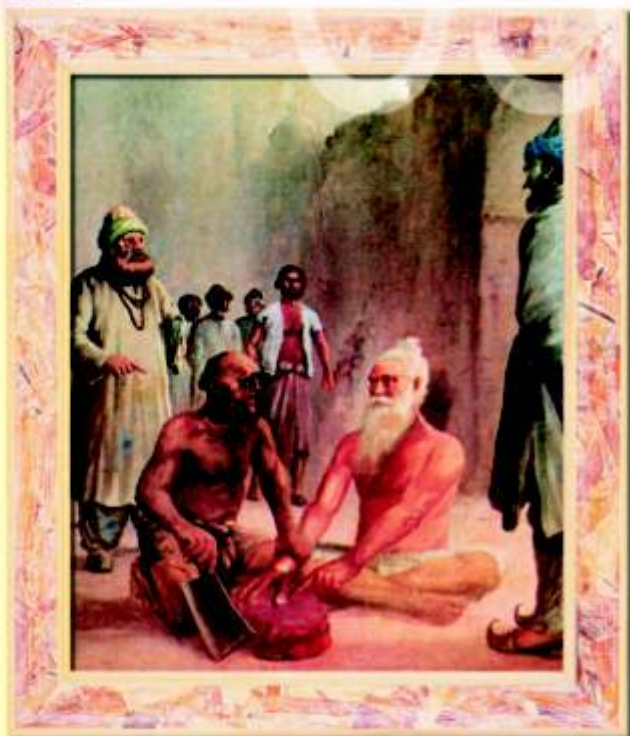
Sikh Martyrs



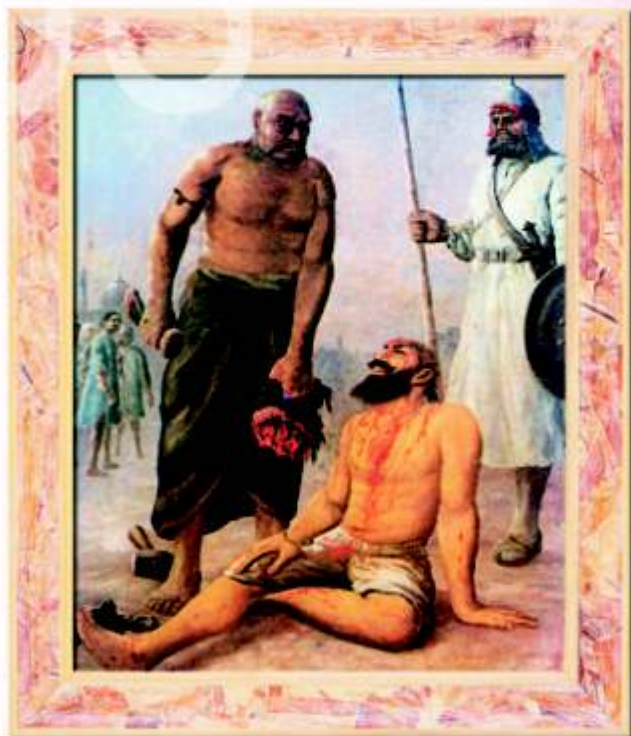
The holy words of the Guru were on the lips of **Bhai Dyala Ji** as he was being boiled alive in a kettle.



Bhai Sati Dass Ji was burnt alive by being wrapped in cotton and being set on fire, the holy words 'Guru Guru' were being recited by Him at all times'.



Shaheed Bhai Mani Singh Ji
As he never accepted compulsory conversion, mughal's ordered to cut his limbs into pieces.



Shaheed Bhai Taru Singh Ji
As he refused to become Muslim, his hairs were mercilessly scraped off along with his scalp.



Sikhs being mounted on the wheels to be broken alive.



Bhai Mati Dass was sawn alive in twains while reciting Sri Japji Sahib.



A scene of a time when it was made legal to kill a Sikh and get a reward for his head from Mughals.



Baba Baj Singh whose body was battered to bits and his flesh was pinched apart with pincers and his young son being mercilessly martyred in front of his eyes but he never accepted compulsory conversion to Islam.

The Takhats

Five Historical Gurudwaras mentioned below have been designated as Takhats. The five jathedars from five Takhats hold judicial, legislative and executive powers for the religious acts and wrongs of the Sikhs.

List of five Sikh Takhats :

1. Takhat Sri Akal Takhat Sahib:

This was founded by Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib ji and is situated in the complex of Harimandir Sahib (the Golden Temple) Amritsar. The Jathedar of this Takhat is recognised as a supreme leader and thus He makes all the pronouncements.

2. Takhat Sri Patna Sahib:

The Takhat is the birth place of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. It is situated in Patna in Bihar, India.

3. Takhat Sri Kesgarh Sahib:

The Takhat is the birth place of the Khalsa. It is situated in Anandpur in Punjab, India.

4. Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib:

It is located where Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji spent his last days. It is situated in Nanded in Maharashtra, India.

5. Takhat Sri Damdama Sahib:

It is the place where Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji compiled the second (final) version of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The Takhat is situated in Punjab, India.



Takhat Sri Akal Takhat Sahib



Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib



Takhat Sri Patna Sahib



Takhat Sri Kes Garh Sahib



Takhat Sri Dam Dama Sahib

The Creation of Khalsa

On the occasion of the most famous North Indian festival of Baisakhi in the year 1699, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave an unusual general call to his devotees and others to assemble in the spacious ground of Anandpur. Thousands of people thronged to Anandpur and on the appointed day assembled in front of a specially pitched tent, which was carefully decorated for the occasion. Thousands of the devoted eyes were longing for a glimpse of the divine master when, lo and behold! He appeared characteristically in a splendid martial uniform, brandishing a sword in his hand. His blissful eyes looked like ball of fire. His face red and his appearance was terrifying.

The people were stunned and silent. The master broke the silence in a roaring voice, "I want the head of a devoted Sikh! Is there any Sikh who can quench the thirst of my sword?" What a Request! The demand was met by a Sikh called Daya Ram. He was taken into the tent. A thud! And the sound of a falling body! The Master came out of the tent with his sword dripping with blood and he looked ever so fierce. In a thundering voice, He announced again, "I want a head of another Sikh. Is there anyone who loves me more than anything else?" After sometime the demand was again met and it repeated three more times. By this time most of the people had slipped away. The Master did not come out of the tent for a while. The crowd was wondering what next. "What had gone wrong with the Master?" To their amazement, The Guru came out with those beloved five, dressed in shining gold robes like the Master himself.

(This is the unique way the Master selected the leaders for a spiritual democracy).



Guru Gobind Singh brandished the sword and said :
"Is there any one among you who is prepared to die for the Sikh faith?"

Further the Master took an iron bowl with some clean water in it, and his wife, Jito Ji, added sugar cakes to the water. While reciting the Sikh Holy Hymns the Guru stirred the water with a **Khanda** - (doubled-edge sword.. Insignia of the Sikhs). The sugar cakes dissolved in the water and the Holy Hymns transformed the syrup into an **Amrit**. The Guru asked all the five beloved ones to continue uttering - Waheguru ji ka Khalsa. Waheguru ji ki fatch - (The Khalsa belongs to the Wonderful Lord, and all glory to him) while:

1. They were given to drink draughts of Amrit five times. This was to purify their body.
2. Guru Ji sprinkled the amrit into their eyes. This was to purify their vision so that they can receive a clear picture of God and His creation.
3. Guru Ji put drops of Amrit on their Kesh (hair). This was to purify their intellects.

After this Guru Ji changed their names, so that instead of having various suffixes like Das, Ram and Chand etc., their names ended with Singh. Thus he gave them one Universal Brotherhood (**Khalsa**) and asked them to keep five symbols- **Kesh** (long uncut hair), **Kangha** (a wooden comb), **Kirpaan** (A sword), **Kara** (a steel bangle) and **Kachhehra** (a short-specially tailored). All the symbols start with 'K' and thus termed - 5 Ks-.

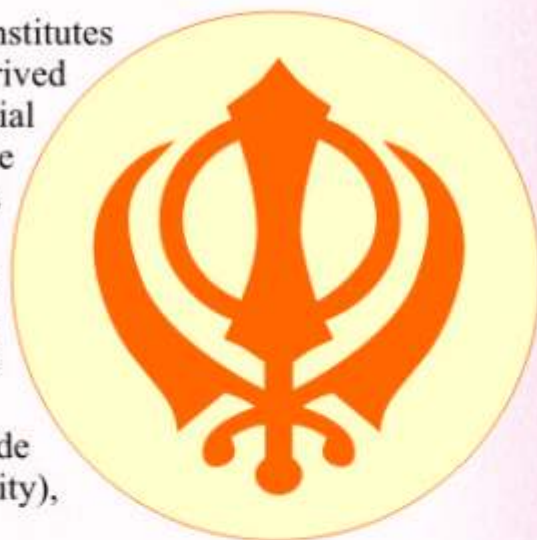
After giving Amrit (baptising) the first five Sikhs, The master kneeled before them and begged them to go through the same ceremony for him. The Panj Piare then asked Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, that we have given our heads for this Amrit, what will you give? Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji replied, I will sacrifice my everything for this Sacred Amrit. This shows the importance and the need to take Amrit if we are to follow in our Guru's footsteps and become True Sikhs. Thus the master introduced democracy into the spiritual world by becoming the disciple of his own disciples.



The Khanda

The Sikh Emblem (Insignia)

- a. The 'Khanda' is the Insignia of the *Sikhs*. It constitutes three symbols in one. However, the name is derived from the central symbol, Khanda which is a special type of doubled-edged sword. This symbolises the only *one*, the *truth*, the *creator*, and thus the Sikhs belief in *one God*.
- b. The '*Chakkar*', or the circle, represents the infiniteness of the timeless absolute. The circle is also symbolic reminder to Sikhs to stay within the rule of God.
- c. The two '*Kirpaans*', or the swords, on either side of the circle each symbolise : *Peeri* (spiritual authority), and the other *Meeri* (political or temporal power).

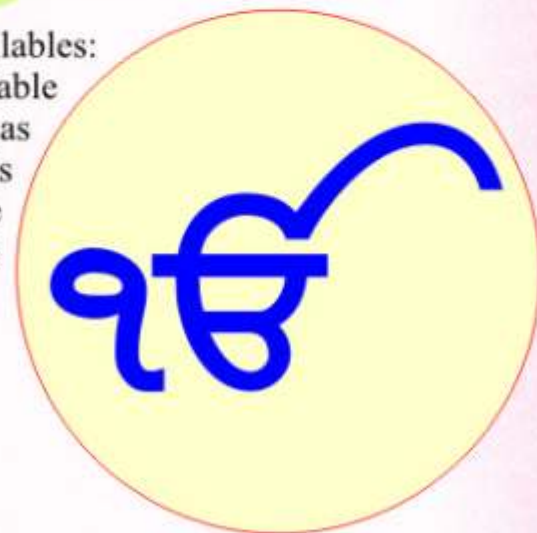


'The Khanda'

Ik Onkaar

The Sikh Religious Symbol: (*Ik Onkaar*)

The symbol word '*Ik Onkaar*' is made of two syllables: first syllable is 'Ik' (one), and the second syllable '*Onkaar*' (God), the complete word pronounced as '*Ik Onkaar*' means one God for the Universe. It is the first word in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The whole of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji indepth explains the meanings of Ik Onkaar.



Gurdwara



A Sikh temple is called a gurdwara. It means a gateway to the Guru. The Guru Granth Sahib is kept here. It is a place of worship but not of idol worship. Gurdwaras can be seen from a distance by the tall Nishan Sahib. Langar (free food for all: A concept started by our Guru Sahibs) is served in most gurdwara's. They are open to all.



Nishan Sahib

Nishan Sahib is the name given to the Khalsa flag. It is made of a saffron coloured cloth and has a black Khanda in the middle. It flies on top of a flagpost with metallic Khanda at the peak. The flag post is covered with saffron coloured cloth and displays the Nishan Sahib way higher than Gurdwara building.

The Five K's and their significance:



Amrit Dhari (a baptist) Sikh must wear five K's

1. **Kesh** (long uncut hair) :

The uncut hair symbolises *chivalry, saintness and courage*. Kesh also symbolise the acceptance of Gods Hukam (Gods Will)

2. **Kanga** (wooden comb):

A comb is needed to keep the long hair set and tidy. *It symbolises cleanliness.*

3. **Kirpaan** (sword):

A sword is a symbol for royalty and knighthood. The kirpaan also symbolises our duty as Sikhs to stand up for Righteousness, Truth and Justice and to protect the needy as well as ourselves.

4. **Kara** (iron bracelet):

An iron bracelet is a symbol of everlasting love for God. It is round like a ring and therefore no beginning or an end.

5. **Kachehra** (Underwear):

It is a specially tailored shorts that symbolise purity and restraint.

Amrit (Sikh Baptism)

A Sikh must take AMRIT and follow the tenets of the Sikh faith.

A date of 'Amrit Sanchar' (baptism) is normally announced. Those who wish to become Amrit Dhari (baptised), enlist their names. They must wash themselves and clean their long uncut hair, wear the five K's and present themselves for the Amrit ceremony.

Panj Piare (five baptist Sikhs) prepare Amrit in presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji and the participants are called one by one to take Amrit, and each of them is asked to utter *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa Waheguru ji ki fateh-* (The Khalsa belongs to the Wonderful



Lord, and all Glory to Him) while:

1. He is given to drink draughts of Amrit five times; this is to purify his body,
 2. Amrit is sprinkled into his eyes five times: this is to purify his vision so that he can receive a clear picture of God and His creation.
 3. Drops of Amrit are put on his Kesh (hair) five times; this is to purify his intellect.
- When all of them have gone through the above procedure they are asked to stand in a semi circle and the bowl containing the AMRIT is brought to them by Panj Piaare and each of them in turn is asked to take a sip from the bowl starting from left to right and then from right to left.

This introduces spiritual democracy, confirms the belief in social equality and the desirability of ideal behaviour. As they have joined the Khalsa Panth they are told to live their lives according to the '*Sikh Rehat Maryada*' (The Sikh code of conduct).

Naam Karan Ceremony

The naming of a new-born child is done in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib. A name is chosen beginning with the first letter of the 'Waak'. (Waak is a shabad (hymn) on any particular Ang of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji when opened at random).



Anand Karaj (Sikh Wedding)

Anand Karaj, is a ceremony of bliss to the couple who is going to get married in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. During the ceremony the couple is asked to come and sit in front of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Then a set number of Hymns (Lavan) are recited by the Ragis & singers.

Before the lavan, the father of the bride hands to her the fringe of the scarf hanging on the shoulders of the groom and advises her to hold it tight during the Lavan ceremony. A special Hymn is sung by the Ragis.

Four Lavans are performed during the Anand Karaj. They are first read from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and then sung by

the Ragis. During the time of singings of the Lavan the couple go around Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and then bow to them before sitting down; this means accepting all the vows and promises of the Anand Karaj ceremony and then couple is declared wed.

After the ceremony Ardas (prayers) is said, followed by the 'Waak'.

Finally, Karah Parsaad is distributed.



Akhand Path

The reading from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

The Sikhs regard Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as their living Guru and pay all the worthy respects.

In order to read Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji correctly, a practicing Sikh must learn Punjabi. The reading of Hymns is called 'PATH'.

To get the blessings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji on occasion of birth, death, marriage, opening of a business, going abroad or any other social occasion. A path is arranged:-

A 'PATH' may take any of the following forms:

- 1. Akhand Path:** The reading is performed continuously (day and night) for forty eight hours. There is no time limitation to that.
- 2. Sadharn Path, (Sahaj Path):** This type of reading refers to reading of only a few pages a day and could take months to complete Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.



Shabad Kirtan

Kirtan (Singing of Hymns)

Kirtan is a popular form of worship. It is the singing of Guru's hymns from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji to the accompaniment of musical instruments. It is the participation of Sangat in prayer in the divine atmosphere.

As Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji pointed to us:

**“Kirtan is like a valuable diamond,
full of bliss and deep in quality,
on whomsoever the Lord showers his grace,
Kirtan becomes his sustenance.”**



The Ardas

Ardas (Prayer)



Ardas is a common prayer of the Sikhs. *It is usually recited at the beginning or an end of an important task.*

In Gurdwara or at home, Ardas is invariably offered at the end of every service; the whole congregation (with folded hands) stands silently facing Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, while the leader of the congregation recites ARDAS.

The wording of the ARDAS can be divided into four sections:

1. Composition by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji which reminds Sikhs of the services rendered by all the Gurus.
2. Sacrifices made by the Sikhs to uphold the Sikh faith.
3. Wording which are optional are drafted according to the nature of the service eg. a happy occasion, sad event or a routine occasion.
4. Offering of thanks to God for all bounties and gifts and asking for forgiveness in our shorfalls.

'Waak' (order of the day)



'Waak' or **'Hukam Nama'** (the order of the day for every Sikh) refers to the random reading of one complete SHABAD (holy hymn) from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji; it is done in the morning in every Gurdwara or in every household that may have Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. It is for blessing and guidance.

Waak normally begins from the top left hand page or right hand side of the previous page of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. (It is handy if every Sikh can learn the Punjabi language and get trained in reading correctly Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and read Waak daily by themselves).

Karah Parsaad

Distribution of Karah Parsaad (the blessed food)

Karah Parsaad is a holy food distributed to sangat (congregation) after every service which is done in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The contents of the Karah Parsaad are flour, butter, sugar, water and during its preparation Hymns from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji are recited.



Langar

Langar (holy food)



Langar is a Holy food, prepared in the Gurdwaras while reciting Holy Hymns from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Food for preparation of Langar is bought from the combined contributions of all the devotees and is served free to everybody in Gurdwaras.

The institution of Langar, started by Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji at Kartar Pur and carried forward by other Gurus. All who visit the Gurdwara sit down together irrespective of the recipient's caste, creed, colour or country to eat LANGAR. *Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji says, "Let all share equally; no one should be viewed as an outsider."*

Sikh National Anthem

*Deh Siva bar moh ihai, subh karman tay kabahoo na taroo.
Na daroo ur soo jab jaah laroo, nischay kar apnee jeet karoo.
Ar Sikh hoo apnay hi mun ko, ih laalach hau guna tau uchroo.
Jab aav kee audh nidhaan banay, ut hi run mai tab joojh maroo, 231 (99)*

Grant me this boon,
O Lord that I may never be deterred from doing good deeds.
I Should have no fear of the enemy,
When I go to battle and turn victory to my side.
Let one directive guide my mind exclusively
That I may ever be zealously singing Thy praises;
And when the time comes, I should die,
fighting heroically on the field of battle.(99)