

Vocabulary

Sikh – a person who follows the religion of Sikhism – it actually means learner.

Khalsa – Sikh community.

Khanda – the symbol of Sikhism

Guru – leader, guide or teacher of faith

Gurdwara – temple for Sikhs

Langar – community kitchen in the temple.

Panj Kakkar – the 5 articles of faith, the 5 K's.

Punjab – area in India where Sikhism began.

Guru Granth Sahib – Sacred Text

Gurmukhi – Language of the actual text used in the holy book (script).

Nishan Sahib – Sikh flag that is yellow or blue.

Main Beliefs

Sikhism teaches that all human beings are equal and can realise the divine within them through devotion to God, truthful living and service to humanity.

The core beliefs

One God

All Are Equal

Men and Women have the same rights/responsibilities

Meditation

Remember God

Live Honestly

Sikhs are supposed to work hard and live honestly

Share with Others

Give to the needy.



Sikh showing his horsemanship skills at the festival

Festivals

Hola Mohalla - February/March - a time for contests when Sikhs show their skills at athletics, horsemanship and martial arts.

Baisakhi or **Vaisakhi** – March/April - is the festival which celebrates Sikh New Year and the founding of the Sikh community in 1699, known as the **Khalsa**.

Diwali - October - a festival when the story of Hargobind, the sixth Guru, is told.

Guru Nanak's Birthday - October/November- The Guru Granth Sahib is carried through the streets by five men.



The Khanda is the symbol of Sikhism. It is a double edged sword. It represents the belief in one God.

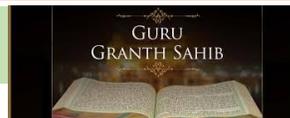
Sikh Fact: Sikhs believe in reincarnation.

Sikhism

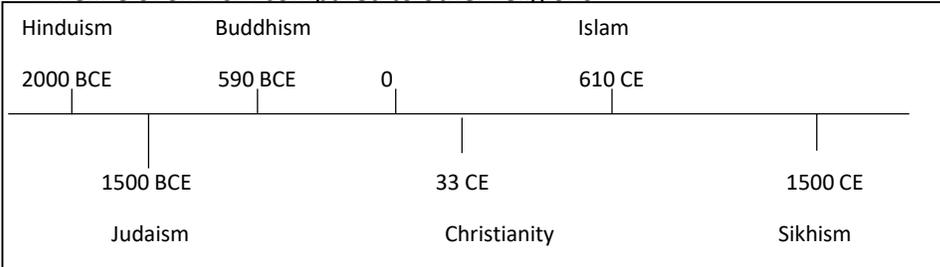
Sikhism is the youngest of the six main world religions.

Sikhs believe in one God who has no form or gender. They believe everyone is equal before God.

Sacred Text: Guru Granth Sahib.



Timeline of Sikhism compared to other religions



The 5 five articles of faith - Panj Kakkar

Sikhs display their commitment to their beliefs by wearing the Sikh articles of faith. The five articles of faith start with the "k" alphabet in Punjabi, and are thereby referred to as the 5 K's.

They are:

1. **Kesh** (uncut hair)
2. **Kanga** (comb)
3. **Kara** (steel bracelet)
4. **Kirpan** (sword)
5. **Kaccha** - Kachhera (soldier's shorts).

The 5 K's



Traditional Sikh clothing.

Young Sikhs are 14 before they embrace all of the 5 K's.



Kara – one of the 5 K's.



Kanga (comb) one of the 5 K's

Rules and Laws

Three golden rules, namely, meditation on God's name (nam japna), earning an honest living (kirat karna), and sharing one's earnings with others (wand chhakna).

Worship and prayer

Three main functions are carried out in all public Gurdwaras:

Kirtan - the singing of hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib

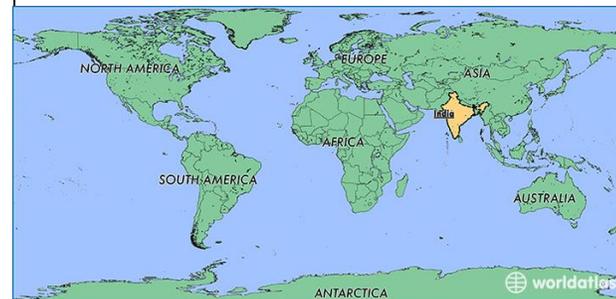
Katha - the reading of the Guru Granth Sahib and explanations.

The Langar - free community kitchen for all visitors of all religions.

Along with these main functions Gurdwaras around the world also serve the Sikh community in many other ways including, libraries of Sikh literature and schools to teach children Gurmukhi and the Sikh scriptures.

Where Sikhism Began: Punjab region of India

Map of the world showing India



Map of India showing Punjab region.

Main Festivals

Hula Mohalla, Baisakhi, Diwali, Guru Nanak's birthday.

Place of Worship:

The Gurdwara



Nishan Sahib – Sikh flag.



Gurdwara in Southall, London



Eating at the Gurdwara

Place of worship is Gurdwara

All Gurdwaras across the globe have: **The Sikh scripture** - Guru Granth Sahib

Community Kitchen - langar

Food is cooked by the members of the community and served by members of the community, to all people at the Gurdwara. The idea is to demonstrate equality of all people, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, race or sex.

Four Doors

The gurdwara usually has four doors to show that it is open to all.

The "Nishan Sahib," a yellow (saffron) triangular flag bearing the Sikh symbol of "Khanda" flies from every Gurdwara. The term 'nisan' means 'flag' and 'sahib' is a term of respect.

Visitors irrespective of their religion can expect shelter, comfort and food at all Gurdwaras.

Everyone who enters a gurdwara must cover their head and take their shoes off. Hands are washed and in some Gurdwaras there are feet washes.

There are no chairs, everyone sits on the floor.

Men and women do not sit together. The women sit on one side of the Guru Granth Sahib and men on the other. (In some smaller Gurdwaras, men and women may be seen sitting mixed in the congregation.)



Gurdwara



Kirpan – one of the 5 K's.



Nishan Sahib – Sikh flag.

Other Sikhism facts:

Sikhs do not believe in the following:

Fasting, superstitions, ritualism, caste system, alcohol, smoking and drugs.