

## SIMPLE FACTS ABOUT THE SIKH FAITH

1. Sikhism is one of the youngest religions of the world—originating only 540 years ago.
2. World wide Sikh has over 25 million followers making it the 5th largest religion of the world. Sikh have made North America their home since 1880 and presently 1 million to 2 million Sikhs happen to reside in North America.
3. It was founded by Guru Nanak in the 15th century in Northwest India.
4. The principal belief of Sikhism is faith in one Universal God—'WaheGuru'—and oneness of mankind and so for all practical purposes prostylization is not practiced in Sikhism.
5. Guru Nanak also emphasized the following as a means to attain salvation—the spiritual union with God through the following principles:
  - *NaamJapna*—Meditation on God's name through the heart, soul and spirit.
  - *Kirat Karna*—To balance one's work (and family life) thru righteous living.
  - *Vand Chakna*—Concept of sharing thru charity. *Langar*—distribution of free food is integral part of Sikhism.
6. The Turban in the Sikh religion is not a sign of orthodoxy, fanaticism or priesthood but is an integral part of the religion. 99% of the guys with a turban that you see walking down the street in your town are just ordinary Sikhs.



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## OUTREACH PROGRAM *About* SIKH AWARENESS

## THE SIKH GURUS

Guru Nanak was followed by nine Gurus. Guru means teacher. These Gurus successively upheld and reinforced teachings of Guru Nanak and further developed the directions for a Sikh life style culminating in a distinct Sikh religion. Some of the teachings included social reforms such as opposition to the caste system, dowry, Idol worship and emphasis on enhanced belief in the equality of man and woman. The fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev, compiled the *Guru Granth Sahib*—the holy book of the Sikhs and he was also responsible for the construction of the Golden Temple at Amritsar, India. His persecution and death at the hands of the Muslim rulers inspired the successive Gurus and mainly Guru Gobind Singh to organize Sikhs to defend themselves and the country against the attacks of Mughal forces.

In order to attain this goal, in 1699, the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh introduced baptism to the Sikhs. These baptized Sikhs are known as the *Khalsa* and were required to wear the 5 *K's* or the FIVE ARTICLES of Faith and fight against the tyranny perpetuated by the Mughal rulers. The 5 *K's* (ARTICLES) are *Kesh*—Uncut hair and hence the turban to cover it; *Kanga*—a comb to keep the hair clean; *Kara*—Steel bracelet; *Kirpan*—ceremonial short sword; and *Kacha*—special undergarment. The 5 *K's* have both symbolic and practical purposes.



## GURU GRANTH SAHIB

The Sikhs consider this scripture as their FINAL and ETERNAL Guru of the Sikhs. It contains the compositions of the first five Gurus and the ninth Guru and is a unique treasure of interfaith communion of twenty two Hindus and Sufi Saints as well as two Sudras, the untouchables in the caste system, then prevalent in India. Therefore, it is the first and only true interfaith and universal scripture putting into practicality the Sikh belief of oneness of mankind and total tolerance towards other religions. Within the Guru Granth are 1430 pages of hymns written in poetry adaptable and in congruence with different Ragas (musical notes) of Indian classical music. It preserves the originality and provides a divine experience through music and sound of God's creation. The Guru Granth Sahib is not an autobiography or biography of the Sikh Gurus or second hand information but rather contains the original teachings that provide spiritual guidance on how to live a proper spiritual and moral life. The Guru Granth Sahib is always enthroned in a Sikh *Gurdwara*, the Sikh religious place of worship and upon entry every Sikh bows to it in a most respectful way. The reverence itself is for the teachings it contains and not because it is a Holy Book. The hymns from The Guru Granth Sahib are sung accompanied by musical instruments and this is known as *Kirtan* when performed in a congregation in the Gurdwara. This is considered to be the highest form of Sikh meditation.

## MOOL MANTRA—THE SIKH PREAMBLE

This is the very first verse in the Guru Granth Sahib and its most important composition and is the basis of Sikh theology. *“One Universal Creator God. The Name Is Truth. Creative Being Personified. No Fear. No Hatred. Image Of The Undying, Beyond Birth, Self-Existent. By Guru's Grace.”*

Therefore, Sikhs do not believe in the monopoly of God or that their religion is the only path to God and salvation, but rather that all religions are different paths leading to the same destination—that of one Universal God.

## SIKH PRINCIPLES AND BELIEFS

- Well-Being and equality of Human Race.
- Accepting the will of God.
- Selfless service & Donation to Charity
- Purity of mind and body. Live a healthy life without intoxicant, without Smoking or drinking while keeping good moral character
- Optimism- exalted spirit
- Consider truth as higher Virtue but highest still it the truthful living
- Maintain 5 *K's* and preserve the Sikh identity with full uncut hair, beard and turban.

PREPARED BY THE SEVADAARS OF SIKH  
OUTREACH PROGRAM AT GURDWARA  
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