

Who are Sikhs?

ੴ ਸਿੱਖਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥



ਦੇਗ ਤੇਗ ਫਤਹਿ

# Who are Sikhs?



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## Maharaja Ranjit Singh

The founder of Sikh Empire and head of Sarkare Khalsa watching the Sikhs returning from hunting expedition



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## Who are Sikhs?

- In simple words the Sikhs may be described as the people of yesterday, today and tomorrow.
- In the words of Gokal Chand Narang, “Hindus had a religion but no national feeling while Guru Gobind Singh made nationalism the religion of the Khalsa”.

### History of the Sikhs, Gokal chand Narang

- *Na kahoan ab keen a kahoan tab kee je na hundey Guru Gobind Singh Sunnat hudee sab kee*

### Bullhe Shah

- *Khalsa Akaal Purkh kee fauj, pargatio Khalsa Akaal Purkh kee mauj*” meaning that Khalsa is the army of God and it has taken its birth at his pleasure”

(*Mukh waak Guru Gobind Singh*).

## Maharaja Dalip Singh



## The last King of the sovereign Sikh Empire—‘Punjab’

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## Preface

The story of human efforts towards a higher life in the Indian subcontinent began on the soil of the Punjab in the Indus Valley during the Old Stone Age and the Sikhs now found globally are product of the plains of the Punjab, a region in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent. It is universally agreed upon now that man evolved in Africa and gradually spread over the entire globe. According to Dr H.D Sankalia, the renowned anthropologist, “it is more or less established that at the end of the First Glacial Period and into the beginning of the Second Ice Age, Early man entered the foot hills of the Northwest Punjab, in the area traversed by the Soan, Haro and other rivers within the Indus-Jhelum Doab. Early man spread into the area comprised by Rawalpindi and Attock districts of the Punjab, and the Jammu and Kashmir States”. Recent Genographic studies reveal that these people arrived in India from Central Asia by travelling through the rugged and mountainous Pamir Knot, some 30,000 years ago. Early humans lived as gatherers and hunters, who gradually developed into a great civilization, now known as “The Indus Valley Civilization”, which is one of the oldest civilizations of the world. The natives here farmed the lands and were called ‘Jatt’-ਜੱਟ’, which is the oldest named tribe in India whose name is found even in Mahabharata. After the region was named Punjab by Emperor Akbar in 1590 A.D, the natives of this land came to be called Punjabis. Sikhism took its birth here at the fag end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century among two already well established religions Hinduism and Islam along with Bhuddism and Jainism. The Sikh homeland, because of its location has been the target of frequent invasions from the Middle-East and Central Asia. The Aryan groups entered here from Asia Minor through the passes in the Hindu Kush mountain range as graziers of cattle and settled in the Kashmir region around 2000 B.C. After centuries of their development and multiplication they descended into the plains of the Punjab and tried to culturally dominate the natives of the Punjab called Jatts, through their Brahman priest. But the Jatts of the Punjab refused to accept the Brahmanical dominance and pushed the Aryans out of the limits of the Punjab beyond Jamna River into the Ganga-Jamna divide.

Islamic invasions of the Punjab started in 711 A.D; the Punjabis resisted for three centuries, but the Islamic invaders coming in hordes occupied Punjab and established their rule here in the beginning of the eleventh century (1001 A.D). In spite of all odds the Jatts never left Punjab, they gathered on both sides of the river Ravi around Lahore and kept resisting the invaders including Alexander the Great.

Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in Punjab at the fag end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and he laid down its complete ideology, propagating the oneness of God and oneness of man. At that time Punjab was under the oppressive Islamic rule with Hinduism as dominant religion dividing the society on caste distinctions. Sikhism developed and matured under the guidance of its Gurus over a period of next about two hundred years and it was formally consecrated by Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day 1699 A.D; when he laid down the religious code

of conduct for the Sikhs distinct from the followers of Hinduism and Islam and declared the abolishment of the caste system in Sikhism. The 'Jatts' of Majha (Central Punjab) accepted Sikh initiation en masse. Although all the Sikh Gurus were Hindu Khatri, but the majority of the Khatri, (the descendants of Aryans) refused to sip Amrit from the same communion bowl along with the Shudras as it broke caste, which forms the bed-rock of Hinduism also known as Varn Ashram Dharma. The Hindu hill Rajput rulers around Anandpur Sahib joined hands with the Moghul Muslim government at Delhi and vowed to destroy Guru Gobind Singh and his nascent Khalsa. Guru Gobind Singh accepted their challenge and refused to submit and compromise his principles. Guru Gobind Singh left the mortal world in 1708 AD; after vesting the leadership of Sikhs and Sikhism into "Guru Granth" and "Guru Khalsa Panth". The Sikhs under Banda Singh Bahadur declared the war of independence of the Sikh Nation in 1710 A.D, overcame Muslim oppression and domination of both Muslims and Hindus in their motherland and established their own rule after destroying the unjust and oppressive Muslim rule in their motherland-Punjab in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They built up a commanding position on the NorthWestern frontier, checking for the first time the inflow of the invaders who had incessantly swept through the passes in the hills to loot or rule the Indian subcontinent since the earliest Aryan groups had discovered the route about 2000 to 3000 BC. The Sikhs for the first time in the history of this region reversed the tide of attacks and subjugated the turbulent Afghans and recovered from them the Kohinoor diamond and doors of the Hindu temple of Som Nath, which were taken to Afghanistan in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by Mehmud of Gazni. During the Sikh rule in Punjab, "Sarkare Khalsa" entered into many international agreements with other governments including various kings of Afghanistan, Dalai Lama of Tibet, China and the British. They ruled their country from 1765 to 1849, when it was annexed by the British after many bloody wars not due to the lack of bravery on the part of the Sikhs, but treachery of their civil government dominated by the neo-convert Hindus into Sikhism. A treaty of annexation was signed by the British with the Sikhs. The Sikhs were the last defenders of liberty in India and most difficult nation to fall to the British imperialism in the Indian subcontinent. Disregarding the treaty of annexation with the Sikhs the British at the time of the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, divided the Sikh homeland in two parts, the western part 62% was made over to the newly created Islamic State of Pakistan, while the eastern part 38% was attached to the Hindu India. Since then they are a stateless people. Presently they are internationally recognized as an important and distinct community, but are not identified as a nation in the absence of their separate country. They have been even denied religious identity in India after the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. Therefore they are most misunderstood people in the world. In order to fully understand the Sikhs of the Punjab who are a distinct ethnic group one has to go to the prehistoric era. The description of their story falls into following well marked periods from:

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- The entry of man into the Indus valley--Sikh homeland-(Punjab) to the arrival of the Aryans and the aftermath,
- The start of the Muslim invasions of the Punjab to the end of the Moghul rule, □ Birth and evolution of Sikhism under the Sikh Gurus from Nanak to Gobind Singh, □ Period of struggle (1708-1799).
- Sikh rule (1799-1849)
- Annexation of the Punjab by the British in 1849;
- The British Period (1849—1947 A.D) and; □ Decolonization of the Indian subcontinent
- The post independence era.

I had a strong desire to narrate the story of my people, who have been so far ruthlessly treated by others. I am grateful to the almighty who has given me the opportunity to document it. I hope it will help dispel all doubts and misgivings about the Sikhs if any.

Jagraj Singh

Tampa-Florida

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Jagraj Singh



## Sikh

A Sikh is one who follows the Sikh religion /Sikhism / Sikhi. The Sikh religious code of conduct (*Sikh Rehat Maryada*), defines a ‘Sikh’ as ‘any person who believes in ‘One Immortal Being’ (God), in the ten Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh; in the Guru Granth Sahib and other writings of the Gurus and their teachings, the Khalsa initiation / *Khanday Baatay dee pahul (Amritpaan)* ceremony and who does not believe in the doctrinal system of any other religion. Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in 1496 CE; as revealed to him by the Supreme Eternal Reality—‘Akaal Purkh’ at Sultanpur Lodhi in the present day Kapurthala district of the Punjab..

The term ‘Sikh’, was adopted by the founders of the new religion—Sikhi / Sikhism for its followers. The word \*Sikh is purely Punjabi in origin and is derived from the term ‘*Sikhna*’ meaning to learn. As in English and many other languages of the world some words have more than one meaning, similarly in Punjabi the word ‘Sikh’ has many literal meanings, for instance:

- **It may mean** sermon / instruction / teaching (*Updesh*), "ਜੇ ਇਕ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਣੀ॥--*Je ikk Gur kee Sikh sunee* –i.e, If one were to act and listen to the instructions of the Guru (GGS, p.2 Japji).
- **It may mean** *Choti / Bodi* / --Tuft of hair on the shaven head-ਮੂੰਡੁ ਮੁਡਾਇ ਜਟਾ ਸਿਖ ਬਾਧੀ ਮੋਨਿ ਰਹੈ ਅਭਿਮਾਨ॥--*Moond muda-ay jata sikh baandhi* i.e, Some shave their heads, some keep matted locks, some wear hair tuft (*Bodi*--ਬੋਦੀ) and some observe silence full of pride (GGS, M1, p. 1013).
- **It may mean** follower of Sikh Religion:
  1. "ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖ ਅਖਾਏ॥--*Gur Satgur ka jo Sikh akha-ay---jo saas giraas dhiaay mera har har so Gur-Sikh guru mann bhaa-ay* (GGS. p.305).
  2. "ਆਪ ਛਡ ਸਦਾ ਰਹੈ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਣੈ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ॥ ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਸੰਤਹੁ ਸੇ ਸਿਖੁ ਸਨਮੁਖ ਹੋਏ॥--*Aap chhad sda rahay parnay Gur bin avar na janay koay. Kahay Nanak sunho santoh so Sikh sanmukh hoay*—By renouncing his ego, he ever remains towards the Guru. Without the Guru he knows not any other. Nanak says such a follower abides in the presence of the Guru (GGS, Anand, p 919).
- It may mean learned, “ਸਿਖ ਉਬਾਰ ਅਸਿਖ ਸੰਘਾਰੋ॥--*Sikh ubaar Asikh Sanghaaro*”--Guru Gobind Singh in his prayer to the almighty Supreme Eternal Reality says, “O Lord increase the number of the learned people and destroy the ignorant (not learned ones)” (Guru Gobind Singh Chaupaae).

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## **Asikh (ਅਸਿਖ)**

“Sikh” (ਸਿਖ) in Punjabi, literally means learned and “*Asikh*” (ਅਸਿਖ) means not learned. Guru Gobind Singh in his prayer to the Supreme Eternal Realty (God) says, “ਸਿਖ ਉਬਾਰ ਅਸਿਖ ਸੰਘਾਰੋ।।- *Sikh ubaar Asikh sanghaaro*”, i.e, “ O Lord increase the number of the learned (*Sikh*) people and eliminate the non-learned - not knowledgeable (*Asikh*)- Chaupai, Guru Gobind Singh (Dasam Granth, p.1387).

There are many more similar terms in Sikhism viz:

*Kaal*--Death and *Akaal*--Deathless,

*Mrit* --dead and *Amrit*--immortal,

*Shok*--sorrow and *Ashok*—sorrowless and so on many more such terms.

## ***Sish / Shishiya***

*Sish / Shishiya* is a Sanskrit term, which in English means disciple and in Punjabi means *Chela*. According to the Hindu belief progress on the spiritual path was not possible without formally adopting a worldly Guru. *Sanatan* Dharma / Brahmanism now popularly called Hinduism has a very strong Guru and *chela* (disciple) tradition, but Sikhism forcefully denounces it. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism was not *Chela* (disciple) of any worldly Guru. At the time of his enlightenment he was an employee of Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi working as manager of his food grain stores at Sultanpur Lodhi (district Kapurthala). When the Siddhas / Jogis questioned him in this regard, he replied, “*Shabad Guru Surat dhun chela*” i.e Shabad is Guru, consciousness and intention tuned towards it make one its disciple” (GGM 1, p. 943).

When Guru Nanak embarked upon his mission for preaching his message he had with a Muslim companion named Mardana. When people asked him as to who was his companions. He always replied: *Bhai* Mardana. He never mentioned him as his *Chela* (*Shish*) as is being advocated by the Hindu theologians. Even after Guru Nanak during the period of all his successor Gurus, the word of *Bhai* was used as title of honour for the Sikhs, for instance: *Bhai* Buddha, *Bhai* Mansukh, *Bhai* Gurdas, *Bhai* Salo, *Bhai* Manjh, *Bhai* Joga Singh, *Bhai* Mani Singh, *Bhai* Tara Singh, *Bhai* Taru Singh and so on.

Insisting upon the meaning of the Punjabi term-‘Sikh’ as ‘*Shishya*’--a ‘Sanskrit’ word meaning disciple is invention of Brahmans / Hindu writers / scholars in recent times.

## Singh & Kaur

In order to abolish the divisive Hindu caste system and establish equality, Guru Gobind Singh at the formal consecration of Sikhism on Vaisakhi day 1699 instructed the followers of Sikhism to drop their last names, which in India indicate one's caste and take the last common name 'Singh' for males and 'Kaur' for females as compulsory suffix for their respective names. All Sikh men therefore take the last name 'Singh' and women take the last common name 'Kaur' to show their acceptance of equality of all people regardless of the caste / religion or country, they come from. Hence every Sikh male name ends with the word "Singh" and every female name ends with the word 'Kaur'.

### Singh—ਸਿੰਘ & Sinh--ਸਿੰਹ

Both 'Singh and Kaur' are pure Sikh, Punjabi words. In Hinduism the word Sinh (ਸਿੰਹ) is used for male names in some parts of India by Rajputs since ancient days, but for quite sometime, the Hindus have started pronouncing and spelling their names in English as 'Singh' to mislead the outside world. Every Sikh is a 'Singh', but all persons who spell their names in English as 'Singh' may not be Sikhs. Both 'Singh and Kaur' are pure Sikh and Punjabi words and used as suffix with every Sikh male and Sikh female name respectively. Both these words i.e; Singh and Kaur do not exist in Hindi or Sanskrit dictionaries till date. Singh in Punjabi language literally means lion (ਸ਼ੇਰ).

### Sardar and Sardarni

Sardar is an Arabic word and was used for the leader of a tribe / clan in Islam by the Muslims in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan etc countries. In the Indian subcontinent Punjab had the longest spell of Islamic rule, therefore many Arabic and Persian words came to be used in daily conversation by the the Punjabis. There are many Arabic and words and terms found in Guru Granth Sahib, the Holy Book of Sikhism. After the formal consecration of Sikhism by Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi of 1699 CE, at Anandpur Sahib, the Sikhs organized themselves into various bands called *jathas*. The leader of each band / Jatha came to be addressed as Sardar. With the ascendancy of the Sikhs in Punjab, the term 'Sardar' became prefix for every Sikh male name and Sardarni for every Sikh female name. Since then the full official Sikh nomenclature for instance is 'Sardar Jassa Singh' or Sardarni Jaswant Kaur'. Guru Gobind Singh has extensively used Arabic and Persian words in his Banis Jaap Sahib, Akaal Ustat, Swaiyyas, Benti Chaupai and others.

## Khalsa

“**Khalsa**” is an Arabic term meaning **Sovereign**. Sikhism was formally consecrated by Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day 1699 CE, at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab. On this day he laid down distinct Sikh religious code of conduct for the initiated Sikhs. After the Sikh initiation ceremony (*Amritpaan*), he named the initiated / baptized Sikhs: “**Khalsa**”, literally meaning **Sovereign**, who is not under any earthly king, but for the Supreme Eternal Reality called ‘*Akaal Purkh*’. He said, *Khalsa Akaal Purkh kee fauj, pargatio Khalsa Akaal Purkh kee mauj*” meaning that Khalsa is the army of God and it has taken its birth at his pleasure”. He further said, “*Khalsa mero roop hai khaas. Khalse mein haun karaun niwas*” meaning, “Khalsa is my own self and I dwell within the Khalsa”. He then said, “*Jab lag Khalsa Rahay naira, tab lag tej deo mein saara. Jab ih gehein bipran kee reet mein na karoon in kee parteet* meaning” meaning, “As long as Khalsa strictly maintains its separate identity, I will lend him my full support, when they adopt the Brahmanical culture, I will not believe them”.

The use of this word i.e, ‘Khalsa’, in the Punjab came into vogue during the long spell of Muslim rule here who spoke Arabic and Persian languages. For instance in Punjab the lands belonging to the King / Sovereign of the country were recorded in revenue records as Khalsa lands. It should not be confused with the Punjabi word, “*Khalis*”, meaning pure. Many other Arabic and Persian words were adopted by the local population of the Punjab during the long spell of the Muslim rule here. Many Arabic and Persian terms and words are found in tGuru Granth Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh has freely used Arabic and Persian terms in his Banis viz *Jaap Sahib, Akaal Utatat* and others.

Belief in *Akaal Purkh* (God) through *Gurbani* to the strict exclusion of all other forms of worship, define the basic position of the Khalsa. They believe in ten Gurus and after them in *Shabad Bani* as the Guru, it is embodied essentially in *Guru Granth Sahib*.

### Khalsa Commandments

ਪੂਜਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ--*Pooja Akal Kee* -----Worship only God ਪਰੀਚਾ\* ਸ਼ਬਦ ਕਾ--

--*Paricha Shabad Ka*---Believe only in Gurbani ਦੀਦਾਰ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਕਾ--

*Deedaar Khalsay Ka*-- keep the company of the Khalsa.

\*ਪਰੀਚਯ: It is a Sanskrit word meaning introduction and pronounced as preecha in Punjabi.

## **Sikh, Khalsa and Singh**

The terms Sikh, Khalsa and the Singh refer to the same entity and there is no other category of Sikhs. There are no classification categories in Sikhism. Either one is a Sikh or not a Sikh.

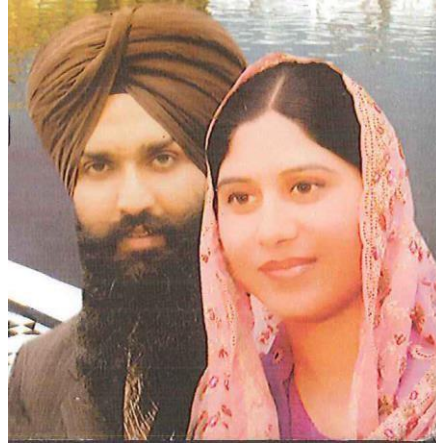
## **Panth**

Panth literally means path / way. Sikh Panth means Sikh way of life known as *Gurmat*. During the period of Guru Nanak and all his successor Gurus, the word *Bhai* was used as title of honour for the Sikhs, for instance: *Bhai Buddha*, *Bhai Mansukh*, *Bhai Gurdas*, *Bhai Salo*, *Bhai Manjh*, *Bhai Joga Singh*, *Bhai Mani Singh*, *Bhai Tara Singh*, *Bhai Taru Singh* and so on. *Bhai* in Punjabi means brother, meaning all Sikhs are brothers and this brother-hood, which follows the path (*Panth*)—way of life, shown to them by the founder of the Sikh faith is called Sikh *Panth*, “*Nanak nirmal panth chalaio*” (Bhai Gurdas). Guru Gobind Singh granted it the status of *Guru Khalsa Panth* at the time of his departure from this mortal world.

## **Signs of Sikh Identity**

All practicing Sikhs express their religious identity in leaving the hair on their body unshorn, in wearing articles of the Sikh faith (by initiated--baptized Sikhs), in adopting a common suffix ‘Singh’ for male and ‘Kaur’ for female names, in avoiding tobacco, Halal meat, in shunning idolatry, ritualism and in abjuring any connection with Hinduism, Islam, Christianity or any other religion. All Sikh men wear turban in Sikh style to cover the unshorn hair on their head. Turban is an essential and complimentary adjunct to unshorn hair. Sikh women wear dupatta to cover their head. Because of their smart turbans, unshorn hair with flowing or well-set or rolled beards, practicing Sikh men can be easily identified among large crowds. They are highly conscious and committed to assert their identity through their dress and appearance and of course through their mother tongue, Punjabi. It stands for their willingness to be identified and held accountable so that their character and actions meet the standards set by the founders of the faith. Like all other religious communities of the world apostates and renegades are found in Sikhism too.

## Outer appearance of the Sikhs



**A young Sikh couple**

### Why identity is necessary?

It is enshrined in the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, “*Daage hoay so run meh joojeh bin daage bhag jaaee*” ‘ਦਾਗੇ ਹੋਹਿ ਸੁ ਰਨ ਮਹਿ ਜੂਝਹਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਦਾਗੇ ਭਗਿ ਜਾਈ i.e, The branded ones fight in the battle-field with zest, the unbranded turn away as renegades (GGS, p. 970).

### Being a Sikh

#### One may be Sikh:

- (1) \*By birth: being born of Sikh parents or
- (2) By conversion: who has embraced Sikhism through conversion from some other religion.

#### **Sikh *Rehatmaryada* (Sikh *Dharm Achaar Shastar*) OR**

### Sikh Religious Code of Conduct

Like all other major world religions, Sikhism too has its own religious code of conduct, which is called ‘the Sikh *Rehatmaryada*’. Sikh way of life is the honest house-holder’s life and to live in the world in the normal way with the endeavor to attain the higher consciousness without entanglements in temporary alluring materialistic attractions and leading a worldly desire free life in the world. Sikh Rehat Maryada (Sikh Religious Code of Conduct) is based on the doctrines and ideology of Sikhism. The Sikh way of life known as ‘*Gurmat*’ was demonstrated by the Sikh Gurus. They supervised the theoretical and practical aspects of Sikhism and guided their followers. Guru Ram Dass prescribed the daily routine of the Sikhs (GGS, p.305), while Guru Gobind Singh completed the form. A religious committee constituted at Akal Takhat, finalized a draft of ‘The

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*Sikh Rehat Maryada* 'Sikh religious code of conduct' based on the canon of the Sikh faith and released it for the Sikh nation, which was published in a booklet form by the Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 1945, regulates individual and corporate Sikh life. It is based on the doctrines and ideology of Sikhism. It comprises of:

- The inner values of Sikhism as per **Bani** / Gurbani (contents of the scriptures constituting the canon of Sikhism).
- Outer appearance—Saroop Supporting of the articles of faith (**Bana**) by initiated Sikhs,
- Practices of Sikhism (dos and don'ts of Sikhism),
- Rites / social ceremonies, customs and traditions etc of Sikhism.

### Inner values of Sikhism:

#### As per Bani / Gurbani a Sikh should possess following qualities / Inner values of Sikhism:

- ਅਉਗੁਣ ਸਭ ਮਿਟਾਇਕੇ ਪਰ ਉਪਕਾਰ ਕਰੈ—*“Augun sab mita-ay ke par upkar Karen”* (GGS, p.218). A Sikh should be free from all vices and do good to others. He should look different from others due to his inner qualities (Bani) and not, because of his outer looks only (Bana).
- ਆਤਮ ਰਸ ਜਿਹ ਜਾਣਹੀ ਸੋ ਹੈ ਖਾਲਸ ਦੇਵ, ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਮਹਿ ਮੋ ਮਹਿ ਤਾਸ ਮਹਿ ਰੰਚਕ ਨਾਹੀ ਨਾ ਭੇਵ—*“Aatam ras jih jaan he so hai-ay khalas dev prabhu mae mo mae taas meh ranchak nahin bhev”* (Sarab Loh Granth).
- ਅਲਪ ਅਹਾਰ ਸੁਲਪ ਸੀ ਨਿੰਦ੍ਰਾ ਦਯਾ ਛਿਮਾ ਤਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ--*“Alp ahar sulp see nindra daya chhama tan preet*  
i.e; Eat little and sleep little, love the practice of compassion and forbearance ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਬਾਹਿਥੋ ਹੈਵਬੋ ਤ੍ਰਿਗੁਣ ਅਤੀਤਿ--*Seel santokh sada nirbahithio, havbho tregun ateet*  
i.e ; Be calm and contended and thus you will gain freedom from the Three States (Rajas, Tamas, Satva) ਕਾਮ, ਕ੍ਰੋਧ, ਲੋਭ, ਹਠ, ਮੋਹ ਨਾ ਮਨ ਸੋਂ ਲਿਯਾਵੇ--*Kaam, karodh, lobh, hath, moh na mann sion liavay* Keep your mind away from lust, anger, pride, greed, obstinacy and worldly love.  
ਤਬ ਹੀ ਆਤਮ ਤਤ ਕੋ ਦਰਸੇ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਹ ਪਾਵੈ--*Tab he atam tat ko darse parm purkh keh pavay”*-Thus you will see the essence of your own soul and also realise the Supreme Lord. (Ram Kali Patshi 10).

Who are Sikhs?

- ਜਹਿ ਕਰਨੀ ਤਹਿ ਪੂਰੀ ਮਤ ਕਰਨੀ ਬਾਝੋ ਘਟੇ ਘਟ--“*Jeh karni tahay poori mat, karni bajhon ghatay ghat*” i.e “A Sikh should mean what he says, any person who does not possess this quality cannot be called a Sikh” (GGS, p.25)
- ਇਉਂ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਆਪ ਨਿਵਾਰੀਏ ਸਬ ਰਾਜ ਸਸਿਰੁਟ ਕਾ ਲੇ--“*Eo Gurmukh aap niwari-ay sab raj srishat ka lay*”  
-- “God shall himself honour such a Gurmukh Sikh and he can rule the whole world” (Ibid, p. 648).

Gurbani further says:

- Those who maintain only the outer appearance of a Sikh but do not possess inner values of Sikhism are not Sikhs. They are called *Bhekhi* (ਭੇਖੀ) Sikhs (Sikhs in disguise--hypocrites):
- ਰਹਿਤ ਅਵਰ ਕਿਛ ਅਵਰ ਕਮਾਵਤ, ਮਨ ਨਹੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਮੁਖੇ ਗੰਧ ਲਾਵਤ, ਜਾਨਣ ਹਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ, ਬਾਹਰ ਭੇਖ ਨਾ ਕਾਹ ਭੀਨ--“*Rehat avar kichh avar kamavat, mann nahin paret mukho gand laavat, jaananhaar prabhu parbu parbeen, bahir bhekh na kahoon bheen*” i.e, "Man professes one thing and practices quite another, in his heart there is no love but in his speech he talks tall. The wise Lord who is inner-knower is not pleased with the outward uniform (Ibid, p. 269).
- ਜਿਨ ਕੇ ਭੀਤਰ ਅੰਤਰਾ, ਜੈਸੇ ਪਸੂ ਤੈਸੇ ਉਹ ਨਰਾ--“*Jin kay bheetar antra, jaisay pasoo taisay uh nara*” i.e, “Those who do not mean what they say, they are as good as animals” (ibid, p.1163).
- ਕਰਤੂਤ ਪਸੂ ਕੀ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਾਤਿ ਲੋਕ ਪਚਾਰਾ ਕਰੁ ਦਿਨ ਰਾਤ--“*Kartoot pasoo kee maanas jaat lok pachara karay din raat*” i.e, “They only look humans but by actions they are animals” (Ibid, p.267). and while commenting on them, Guru Nanak says:
- ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਨਰ ਅਸਲ ਖਰ ਜੇ ਬਿਨ ਗੁਣ ਗਰਭ ਕਰਨ--“*Nanak se nar asal khar, je bin gun garbh karan*” (Ibid, p. 1246) i.e, “Nanak, those persons who have not adopted good qualities, but are full of ego, they are in reality, donkeys and not human being (Ibid, p.1246)

**Saroop** (Outer appearance-*Banaa*):

A Sikh is a saint-soldier (*Sant-Sipahi*). Saint (*Sant*) means that he is scholarly in his knowledge of Gurbani (*Bani*) and leads his life according to the teachings of the Gurus as enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib, while soldier (*Sipahi*) denotes that he is a fearless warrior and maintains the Sikh uniform (*Bana- the five K's--Kes, Kangha, Kachhehra, Kara and Kirpan*)-“*Saabat soorat dastaar sira—ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਿਰਾ*” (GGS, p1084) and follows all the instructions of Guru Gobind Singh issued at the time of *Amritpaan sanskaar*. Guru Gobind Singh has issued a very strict warning in this regard, “ਜਬ ਲਗ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦਿਉ ਮੈ ਸਾਰਾ--*Jab lag Khalsa rahay naira tab lag tej deoon mein saara*-- As long as Khalsa strictly maintains its separate identity, I will lend Him, my full support, ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੈ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ਮੈ ਨਾ ਕਰੂੰ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ।। *Jab eh gahein*



Who are Sikhs?

*bipran kee reet\**, *mein na karoon in kee parteet*---when he adopts the Brahminical ways, *then I shall not believe Him*”

(Sarab Loh Granth, Patshahi Dasween).

Guru Gobind Singh further says:

- ਰਹਿਣੀ ਰਹੈ ਸੋਈ ਸਿਖ ਮੇਰਾ, ਉਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਮੈ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਚੇਰਾ- “*Rehni rahay soi Sikh mera, oh sahib mein os da chera*” i.e, “Only the follower of rehat is my Sikh, he is my sahib (master) and I am his disciple”.
- ਰਹਿਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਮੋਹੀ ਕੋ ਸਿਖ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਨਾਹੀ- “*Rehat piari mohi ko Sikh piara nahin*” i.e, "I love Rehat and not the Sikh i.e I love the law and not the follower of law”.
- ਬਿਨਾ ਸਸਤਰ ਕੇਸਮ ਨਰੂ ਭੇਡ ਜਾਨੋ, ਗਹੈ ਕਾਨ ਤਾ ਕੋ ਕਿਤੇ ਲੈ ਸਿਧਾਨੋ- “*Bina sastra kesam naroo bhed jano, gahey kaan ta ko kitay lay sidhano*” , - Without weapon (sword) a man with kesas (unshorn hair ) on the head is like a sheep, ready to be led by the ear into slaughterhouse any time by whosoever may wish to do so.
- ਬਿਨਾ ਸਸਤਰ ਕੇਸਮ ਦਿਉ ਨਾ ਦੀਦਾਰੇ- “*Bina kes tegham deo na deedaray*” ie, “Don't show me your face without unshorn hair and sword”.

### Amrit: --

*Amrit* also called ***Khanday Baatay Dee Pahul*** in Sikhism is the name of elixir used for formal initiation into Sikhism. Literally the term *mrit* means dead whereas A-mrit means immortal. Amrit in Sikhism means elixir of immortality. *Amrit* is that substance the intake of which is supposed to make a man immortal. Since the physical frame of the human body is mortal, there is nothing in the world, which can make the mortal frame immortal. Immortality cannot therefore means perpetuation of physical body of the individual. By immortality therefore is meant merging man’s Soul (*Atma*) with, the Supreme Soul (*Parm- atma*) while being alive and shun the fear of death. In this way the individual soul becomes immortal, while still in the body.

**Guru Granth Sahib**, the holy Sikh Scripture says:

- ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਏਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪਾਇਆ॥--Nanak says, word, the Name (Naam) alone is the elixir of immortality and it is obtained by guidance of the Guru” (GGS, p.644) □ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਚਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ...The holy Name is the true elixir of immortality beyond description (GGS, p, 33).
- ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀਤੈ ਤਿਖ ਜਾਇ...God’s Name is the elixir of immortality by drinking which thirst goes (GGS, p, 1283).
- ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ਹੈ ਮਿਲਿ ਪੀਵਹੁ ਭਾਈ...O, brothers the elixir of immortality is the treasure of God’s Name. Get together and quaff it (GGS, p 318).

Sikh initiation called *Amrit-paan*, brings total transformation of man from a secular being to gradual progress and ultimate transformation into a divine man. There is spiritual, moral, social and cultural transformation of the whole being of a person who accepts this baptism and thereafter follows the Sikh religious code of conduct.

**Amrit is prepared by five devout initiated Sikhs by reciting five *Banis*:** Jap ji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, Tavparsad Swayay, Chaupai-From *Hamri karo haath de rachha-to---Dushat dokh te leho bachaaee* and Anand Sahib, while each one of them turn by turn keeps stirring the water containing sugar flakes in the steel communion bowl (*Bata*) with *Khanda*, while seated in Bir Aasan. **The hymns of Gurbani turn the elixir into *Amrit***—(elixir of immortality).

- ਗੁਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਮੁਖ ਚੋਇਆ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਿੰਦੜੀਏ॥ ਫਿਰਿ ਮਰਦਾ ਬਹੁੜਿ ਜੀਵਾਇਆ ਰਾਮ॥--The Guru has poured the elixir of immortality into my mouth. O myself, and then my dying self came to life again (GGS, p, 539).
- ਮਿਰਤਕ ਕਉ ਪਾਇਓ ਤਨਿ ਸਾਸਾ ਬਿਛਰਤ ਆਨਿ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ॥ ਪਸੂ ਪਰੇਤ ਮੁਗਧ ਭਏ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਾ ਮੁਖਿ ਗਾਇਆ॥ ਪੂਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਦੇਖ ਵਡਾਈ॥ ਤਾ ਕੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਕਹਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥--In the dead body the Guru infuses breath and he unites the separated ones. When the Guru hymns the praise of the Lord’s Name with his mouth, even the beasts, goblins and fools become attentive listeners. Behold the greatness of the Perfect Guru. His worth can not be expressed (GGS, p,614).
- ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਓ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਮ ਮੁਏ ਜੀਵੇ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਿਭਾ॥--The Great True Guru has implanted the Lord God’s Name within me. By contemplating the Lord, I the dead one, have sprung to life (GGS, p, 1337).

Amrit also known as *Khanday Batay dee Pahul*) was introduced into Sikhism by Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day 1699 CE, at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab, in the Indian subcontinent when he formally consecrated it on this day and created Khalsa.

Who are Sikhs?

**Amritpaan :**

Sikh Baptismal / initiation ceremony is called *Amritpaan*. *Amritpaan* in Sikhism is not just a formal ceremony of conversion and attempt to make a Sikh appear different from the Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others. It brings total transformation of man from a secular being to gradual progress and ultimate transformation into a divine man. There is spiritual, moral, social and cultural transformation of the whole being of a person who accepts this baptism and thereafter follows the Sikh religious code of conduct. It symbolizes a rebirth by which the initiated are considered as having freed themselves of their previous family origin, caste or lineage (*Kulnash*), of having renounced their creeds--communal outlook (*Dharamnash*), of having renounced their previous occupations or professions (*Kirtnash*), of having given up superstition (*Bharamnash*), of having given up rituals (*Karamnash*) and develop catholicity and universality of outlook. By taking Amrit every one acquires equal status in the Sikh brotherhood. It is a total transformation of man from a secular being to a spiritual man, leading him to gradual progress and ultimate transformation into a divine man. There is spiritual, moral, social and cultural transformation of the whole being of the person who accepts this baptism and thereafter follows the Sikh religious code of conduct. One has to prepare oneself for entering the life of an Amritdhari, who is an embodiment of all the virtues constituting the life of a Gur-Sikh

**Amrit-dharee:**

‘Khalsa-Sikh’. *Amritdhari*: One who has been initiated according to Sikh Rites. An Amritdhari / initiated / baptized Sikh known as, ‘Khalsa’. Khalsa is one who remembers God in his words, mind and actions, but simultaneously remains ready to fight against injustice where ever it takes place and to protect the weak and hapless.

He is a saint-soldier (*Sant-Sipahee*), “*Mukh thein har chit mein yudh veechaaray*”

(Guru Gobind Singh).

Who are Sikhs?

## The articles of Sikh faith

All initiated (Khalsa) Sikhs should support the articles of Sikh faith, commonly known as 5K's and these are:

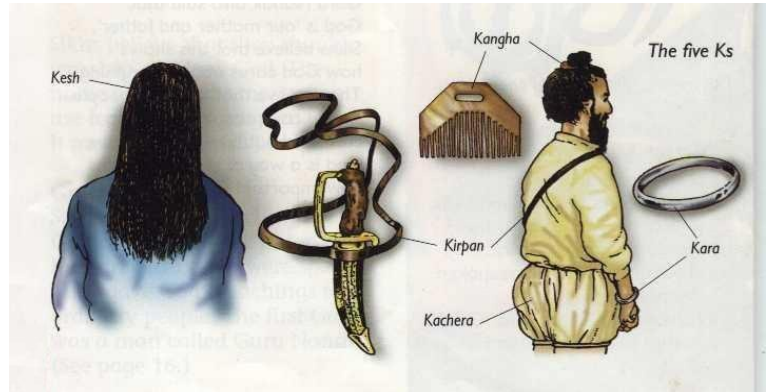
*Kes* ---the unshorn hair

*Kangha* ----small comb for the topknot (Joor)

*Kara* ---a steel wrist bangle

*Kirpan* ---steel sword

*Kachhehra or Kachha*- (Punjabi name for breeches)  
ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੇ ਸਿਖੀ ਈ ਪੰਜ ਹਰਫ,



ਕਾਫ , ਹਰਗਿਜ਼ ਨਾ ਬਾਸ਼ਦ ਈ ਪੰਜ ਮੁਆਫ-- "*Nishane Sikhi een panj*

*harf, kaaf, Hargiz*

*na bashad een panj muaaf*

ਕੜਾ, ਕਰਦੇ, ਕੱਛ, ਕੰਘਾ ਬਿਦਾਂ, ਬਿਲਾ ਕੇਸ ਹੇਚ ਅਸਤ ਜੁਮਲਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ---*Kara, Kardho, Kachh, Kangha Bidaan, Bila Kes hech ast jumla nishan*". (Bhai Nand Lal Goya, Dasam Granth)

**Meaning:** There are symbols of five letters *Kaaf* (Five K's) in Sikhism, which cannot be exempted. These are, "*Kara, Kirpan, Kachha and Kangha*", but these are meaningless in the absence of *Kes*.

In addition:

The Sikhs should wear turban (*Dastaar*--ਦਸਤਾਰ) to cover the unshorn hair on their head.

Every Sikh male name should have 'Singh' and Sikh female name 'Kaur' as compulsory ending of the name.

The five symbols of Sikh faith, give an identity to the organized form of Sikhism. These are national uniform of the Sikhs. These symbolize the fact that the Sikh has been initiated / baptized.

Addressing the Khalsa after completing the *Amrit Paan Sanskar*-(Initiation / Baptismal ceremony) at Anandpur Sahib Guru Gobind Singh said:

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ, ਖਾਲਸੇ ਮੇ ਹੂੰ ਕਰੂੰ ਨਿਵਾਸ-- "*Khalsa mero roop hae khas, Khalse mein hoop karoon niwas*"

Meaning:

Khalsa is my own-self and I dwell within the Khalsa.

Who are Sikhs?

To maintain separate identity from Muslims and to prevent the extinction of the distinct Sikh way of life and relapse of Sikhism into Brahminism (Hinduism) Guru Gobind Singh warned the Khalsa, extorting:

ਜਬ ਲਗ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦਿਉ ਮੈ ਸਾਰਾ-- "*Jab lag Khalsa rahay niara, tab lag tej dioon mein saara,*

ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੈ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ਤਬ ਨਾ ਕਰੂੰ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ-- "*Jab eh gahen bipran kee reet, mein na karoon in kee parteet*". Meaning:

"As long as Khalsa strictly maintains its separate identity, I will lend him my full support, when He adopts the Brahmanical culture, I shall not believe Him".

### **The rationale behind the articles of faith of Sikhism**

#### **Kes and Turban:**

Before the birth of Sikhism, the Arabic and Turkish Muslim invaders took pride in supporting beard and turban. They did not like the slave Hindus to keep beard, long hair, support turban and look like them. Therefore the Muslim rulers after the occupation of Hindustan (now India) issued orders that the Hindus keep the beard and head shaved and wear a prescribed cap (*Topi*) instead of turban.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism and thereafter all his nine successors maintained unshorn hair and supported turbans in defiance of the Muslim imperial order. The sanctity of hair on human body was practiced by all the Sikh Gurus who kept it unshorn, to obey the God's will. How can those be called Sikhs who disobey the Sikh dictum and defy the Sikh code of conduct? Guru Nanak in the very beginning of Japji Sahib at p.1 of GGS proclaimed: "ਹੁਕਮ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਨਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲ।।-*Hukam rajaee chalna Nanak likhia naal*" i.e "To remain under the will of God, is ordained from the very beginning". No doubt is left at all in this respect that God's will has to prevail and everyone has to follow it. The hair on the body are in accordance with the will of God and the appearance of the human body is to be kept intact if one is to live in the will of God. The God's will is defied when we cut hair and refuse to keep it intact. How can so called Sikhs (clean shaven) call themselves to have faith in the teachings of Guru Nanak and the Sikhism?

At the time of formal consecration of Sikhism in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh made *Kes*-and turban as part of the Sikh dress. Both *Kes* and turban in Sikhism represent freedom, liberty, justice and peaceful co-existence. Sikhs keep unshorn hair and wear turban as a distinctive identifying marks. It symbolizes their commitment living the Sikh values of humanity, service and leadership in both public and private lives. It stands for their willingness to be identified and held accountable so that their character and actions meet the standards set by the founders of their faith. Sikhism regards both shave (*Hajamat-Bhaddan*-Tonsure) and cap (*Topi*-) as signs of slavery.

Who are Sikhs?

**Kangha:**

*Kangha* in the topknot (*Joora*) is meant for combing the hair. It signifies negation of filthy living of Sadhus with matted hair.

**Kirpan:**

Every Sikh (Khalsa) is a saint-soldier and weapons are life and soul of the soldier. *Kirpan*-in Sikhism signifies two fundamental tenets of Sikhism namely that it is the basic responsibility of a Sikh to confront and resist injustice, and that asceticism, monasticism or escapism of any kind is wrong. Thus *Kirpan*, on one hand is a constant reminder to the Sikh of his duty, and on the other hand, is a standing guard against reversion to pacifism and otherworldliness. It is meant to protect the weak / hapless and smite the oppressor.

***Kachhehra or Kachha***

The Hindus wore either *Langoti* or *Dhoti* to cover their loin. *Langoti* kept the person half naked and a person wearing a *Dhoti* cannot discharge the duties of a soldier. Guru Gobind Singh discarded both and made *Kachehra* a part of *Sikh Rehat*, which is a smart battle dress.

**Kara (ਕੜਾ):** It is a sign of solemn pledge (*Rakhree*) for adhering to the tenets of Sikhism, to protect the weak / hapeless and smite the oppressor.

**Kangha:** *Kangha* in the topknot (*Joora*) is meant for combing the hair. It signifies negation of filthy living of Sadhus with matted hair.

## The Sikhs

The Sikhs, now found globally are natives of the Punjab, a region in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent forming major portion of the Indus valley. Punjab was an independent country ruled by the Sikhs, before its annexation by the British in 1849 A.D.

Punjab, the country of the Sikhs, separated the Hindu and the Muslim worlds. The Sikhs were the most difficult and last power in Asia to fall to the British imperialism. The British killed the Sikhs politically by not returning their country back to them at the time of decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, which they had annexed from them under a written agreement. They partitioned it into two parts, the western part 62% was made over to the newly created Islamic State of Pakistan and the remaining 38% eastern part was attached to Hindu India. Since then they are a stateless nation.

The Sikhs constitute a distinct ethnic group. They are a “religious community and a political nation” simultaneously and thus they are a unique society in the world. They are marked by a distinctive ideology / religion, distinctly clear Sikh ceremonies, Sikh civilization, Sikh

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culture including language and an intense devotion to their motherland-‘Punjab’. The initiated Sikhs are called ‘Khalsa’ (lit: sovereign), who now represent and spearhead the tasks of Sikh religion. They are recognizable throughout the world as bearded and turbaned persons in Sikh dress. They are concerned with the creation of a just social order and are committed to the social equality and peaceful co-existence. Their history is in essence two kinds of freedom—spiritual and political. The first was achieved through teachings of their Gurus. The second was, won by the Sikhs themselves.

Ethnically and culturally the Sikhs of the Punjab are a distinct people. According to Professor Bruce La Brack, who has written extensively on the Sikh community, “Sikhs have been recognized as an ethnicity in more than sixty countries world-wide”. Recent Genographic studies reveal that these people arrived in India from Central Asia by travelling through the rugged and mountainous Pamir Knot, some 30,000 years ago, who gradually developed into a great civilization, now known as, “Indus Valley Civilization”, which is one of the oldest civilizations of the world. The natives here farmed the lands and are called “Jatt”, which is the oldest named tribe in India, whose name is found even in Mahabharata. After the region was named Punjab by Emperor Akbar in 1590, all natives of this land came to be known as Punjabis, irrespective of their religious affiliations. Majority of these people formally embraced Sikhism, when it was consecrated by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 at Anandpur Sahib.

Physically and mentally the Sikhs of the Punjab are a virile and assertive race. A living spirit possesses the Sikh people. Their skin complexion, their body built, their features, their habits, their language, their literature, their ethics, their dress, their food, their customs and religious ceremonies etc are entirely different from rest of the people in the Indian subcontinent and they have a distinct identity. They are strong, tall and muscular with well-shaped limbs, erect carriage, agile and hardy, brown complexioned, sharp-featured along with strong hair growth especially the beard. From childhood they are used to hard toil in the fields. They were hardened by burning summers and freezing winters, heavy rains and dust storms of the Punjab. During their struggle for sovereignty the teachings of the Guru lent them a dignified look and instilled in them the spirit of bravery and sacrifice. When the call came in the name of the Guru and the Panth, they emerged as fearless fighters. And, however severe their hardships, their mood was always cheerful and morale high. They earned praise even from their bitterest enemies. Qazi Noor Mohammad, a Muslim historian, who came along Ahmad Shah Abdali during his seventh invasion in 1764 A.D; and wrote his book *Jangnama*, which is a contemporary evidence of happenings, made the most contemptuous remarks about the Sikhs says, “After the Durrani no other troops can be compared with the Sikhs. This sect abounds in giant-sized and loin-limbed youth”. He usually called the Sikhs dogs. He further writes, “Do not call them “dogs”. In fact, they are loins in the times of battle and when in festivities they surpass Hatim (a legendary name in generosity). When they hold the Indian sword in hand, they gallop from Hind (Gangetic Doab)

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upto the country of Sindh. Besides their fighting, listen to one thing more in which they excel all other warriors. They never kill a coward and do not obstruct one who flees from the field. They do not rob a woman of her gold or ornaments, may she be a queen or a slave girl. Adultery also does not exist among the 'dogs'. None of them is a thief'-----.

The Sikhs of the Punjab are outspoken, industrious, frugal, resourceful, optimistic, intelligent and tenacious people. They are neither intolerant nor bigoted nor selfish. They have a forgiving nature and do not hold grudge for long. They are frank, honest, simple and courteous people. They are admirers of nature, art and architecture and are quick to adopt good qualities of others. They are quick at learning and grasping, always keen to acquire latest knowledge. They have a natural aptitude for practical trades. They are dependable people and stick to their promise. They have an adventurous nature and are always prepared to take risk, sometimes even at the cost of their life. They are well known for their wanderlust and they have been foremost among the Hindustanis to seek out avenues of employment, agriculture and trade in foreign lands. They give warm reception to their guests. Hospitality and humane love is an organic trait of their culture. The warmth of 'you are mine' is inborn. They give a warm send off to their guests, not empty handed, but with a gift of whatever is available in the house. They love perfection and do not consider any time too long or labour too intense to secure perfection in the execution of a project. They have made name in all spheres of life, but are among the best soldiers, farmers and players in the world. Fighting spirit being the very substance of the Sikh psyche, they rely more on morale than on resources. Cracking jokes is their favourite past time. Initiated Sikhs (*Amritdhari* Sikhs) do not consume any intoxicants including alcohol. Tobacco is a taboo for all Sikhs.

Their religious faith and worldly aspirations are wholly different from other Indians. They believe in oneness of God, all humans are equal, and service and devotion, and morality lead to enlightenment. Honest work, sharing and remembrance of God in words, mind and actions are fundamentals of the Sikh faith. 'Guru Granth Sahib' is the holy book of the Sikhs and Gurdwara is their place of worship. The Sikhs do not worship Guru Granth Sahib as an idol or deity, instead they worship and revere the teachings of God revealed through sacred writings. Sikh worship has plain simplicity, a quite suspicion of aesthetic graces, *Path, Katha, keertan* and *Ardas*. Public spirit and fellow feeling is the characteristic mark of the Sikhs. They do not worship idols, pictures, graves or tombs. They shun all ritualism and do not believe in the divisive Hindu caste system. Individualism is in Sikhism the cardinal sin without expiation, violation of obligation towards community means not just alienation from the holy but also social excommunication. To protect the weak and smite the oppressor are among the major traits of the Sikhs.

In politics, they are devoted to their motherland and have an ideal for Punjab. Democracy an important aspect of modern society is the guiding rule in Sikhism. The traditions



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of *Sangat*, *Panj Piaray*, *Panches*, *Sarbat Khalsa* and *Gurmata* are unparalleled institutions of the Sikhs in the history of religions and nations for taking collective decisions during the times of crisis facing the Sikh nation. Sikhs are not great communicators and are not very adept at striking deals. Political leaders of today show themselves up to be as corruptible as others of their ilk in rest of India, but Sikhs in general reject those who compromise and are quick to react if they realize betrayal of their interest.

The Sikhs are highly conscious and committed to assert their identity through their dress and appearance. It stands for their willingness to be identified and held accountable so that their character and actions meet the standards set by the founders of their faith. Because of their smart turbans, unshorn hair with flowing or well-set or rolled beards Sikh men can be easily identified among large crowds. Their ceremonial dress consists of a long coatdress called *achkin* (ਐਚਕਿਨ) and tight trousers (ਜੁੜੀਦਾਰ ਪਜਾਮਾ), along with turban in smart Sikh style. They have a fine sense of matching colours they wear. They are very fond of good eating, historical experience has made them survivors and hospitable, also generous and with a zest for life. Meat eating is not a prohibition among the Sikhs. According to Sikh religious code of conduct (*Sikh Rehat Maryada*), the Sikhs are permitted to eat only *jhatka* meat. Eating *halal* (kosher) meat is prohibited in Sikhism and the Sikhs follow it very strictly. Tobacco in any form is a taboo for the Sikhs.

Of all the people of India, the Sikhs are perhaps the most travelled and best known in the west. Their handsome appearances, impressive beards and striking turbans, their valour and bravery as soldiers, tireless energy as workers and cheerful dispositions have combined to make them something of a legend.

Presently, the Sikhs constitute roughly a little over two percent of the total Indian population, which has recently crossed over one billion. According to rough estimates there are about twenty three million Sikhs in all, inhabiting the entire globe, out of which nearly 15 million live in the Punjab (Indian), where they constitute 62.2 percent of the total population, about 6 million live in rest of India outside Punjab and about two million are spread all over the world, out of which over half a million live in UK, another over half a million live in North America (Canada and USA) and the rest one million are spread all over the world. Big concentrations are located in Malaysia, Singapore, Africa, France, German, Australia and Newzealand etc. Wherever they have gone they have carried their unique philosophy with them. Every person in a new social, cultural or geographical environment faces many problems. Sikhs have had to face such problems more so because of their distinct appearance. However, they have adapted themselves to their new environment wherever they have settled. They have adopted new places as their homes and mixed well with the society.

## Sikh Gurus

The doctrine of Guruship is a cardinal principle of Sikh religion. And therefore forms a part of what is popularly known as *Mool Mantra* (Basic Postulate of Sikhism). The concluding Salok of *Jap Bani* (Recently called *Jap Ji Sahib*), makes mention of air as Guru, “*Pawan Guru Paanee pita, Maata Dharat Mahat--*” Question arises, how air is Guru? The answer lies in the fact that air is the uniting force, between the body and Human Soul (*Atma*). Air when inhaled is called *Pran*. Life enters the body with first breath and leaves it with the last breath, meaning that air is the uniting force between Body and *Atma*. Gurbani tells about this characteristic of the Guru, “*Nanak Satgur aisa jaaniay jo sabh se lai-ay milaa-ay jeeo*”---Nanak says deem that such is the True Guru, who unites all with the Lord” (GGS, p. 72). Sikh Gurus in human form were:

1. Guru Nanak 1469—1539 CE.
2. Guru Angad—1504—1552 CE.
3. Guru Amar Dass—1479—1574 CE.
4. Guru Ram Dass,--1534—1581 CE.
5. Guru Arjan—1563—1606 CE.
6. Guru Hargobind—1595---1644 CE.
7. Guru Har Rai---1630---1661 CE.
8. Guru Harkishan—1656---1664 CE
9. Guru Teg Bahadur---1621---1675 CE
10. Guru Gobind Singh 1666—1708 CE.

### Char Sahibzaday (The four sons of Guru Gobind Singh)

1. Baba Ajit Singh ---1687—1704 CE,
2. Baba Jujhar Singh—1689—1704 CE,

Both embraced martyrdom fighting the Moghul and Hindu Rajpoot forces at Chamkaur in 1704 CE,

3. Baba Zorawar Singh—1696--
4. Baba Fateh Singh-----1698—

Both embraced martyrdom at Sarhind where they were bricked alive in 1704 CE.

### Panj Piaray

Sikhism was formally consecrated by Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day 1699 CE; at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab. On this historic day the Sikhs had come there in large numbers on the invitation of Guru Gobind Singh. On this occasion he welcomed the Sikhs and praised them for their devotion. He called forth five representatives of the Sikh faith whose adoption was tried at the altar of death and formally consecrated Sikhism by

administering them, '*Khanday Baatay Dee Pahul*' also called *Amrit* in Sikhism. The Guru jointly called the five newly initiated Sikhs, '*Panj Piaray*' and named them 'Khalsa'. They formed the nucleus of the Sikh Nation. Guru Gobind Singh himself got formal initiation into Sikhism from them. They were:

1. Bhai Daya Singh, born at Lahore in 1669 CE. He attended Guru Gobind Singh after leaving Chamkaur Sahib in 1704. He delivered Guru Gobind Singh's letter Zafarnama to Emperor Aurangzeb in Deccan. He accompanied Guru Gobind Singh to Nander Sahib and died there in 1708 CE.
2. Bhai Dharam Singh. He was born to Jat parents at Hastinapur in 1666 CE. He embraced martyrdom in 1704 during battle of Chamkaur.
3. Bhai Mohkam Sijng. 1663—1704 CE. He was born to washer men parents in Dwarka. He embraced martyrdom in 1704, while fighting in the battle of Chamkaur.
4. Bhai Sahib Singh 1662—1704). He was born in a barber family. He embraced martyrdom in the battle of Chamkaur.
5. Bhai Himmat Singh (1661—1704). He was born to water-carrier parents. He embraced martyrdom in the battle of Chamkaur in 1704.

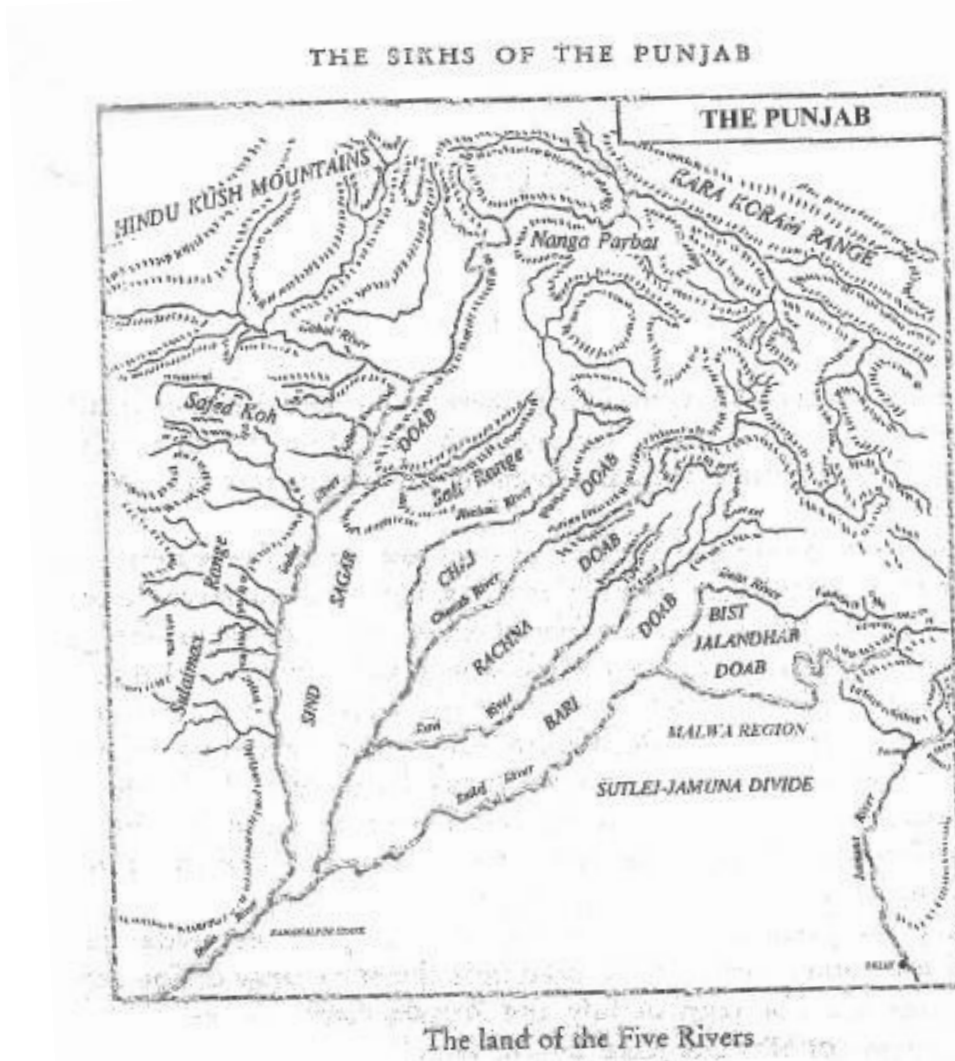
### **Chalee Muktay**

They were those Sikh soldiers from the Majha area of the Punjab, who got separated from Guru Gobind Singh, while crossing the flooded Sirsa rivulet (Nadi), after leaving Anandpur Sahib. After reaching their respective villages they learnt about the presence of Guru Gobind Singh in the Malwa region of the Punjab, they came back along with a large number of the Sikh soldiers from village Jhabal and the adjoining villages. Baba Deep Singh Shaheed was part of this jatha. They were led by Bhai Mahan Singh of village Sur Singh and a warrior lady Bhag Kaur popularly known as Mai Bhago. Meanwhile the imperial Moghul forces searching for Guru Gobind Singh reached there. The Mujhail Sikhs clashed with the pursuing Moghul forces close to Mukatsar and defeated them in the fierce battle which ensued thereafter. The Moghul forces fled away from the field. Guru Gobind Singh reached the scene of the battle, Bhai Maha Singh, was very badly wounded and he was in his last breaths. Guru Gobind Singh put his head in his lap and asked for his last wishes. With folded hands he sought forgiveness for any mistakes, which he might have committed during his association with the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh blessed him and he breathed his last in his lap. Guru Gobind Singh visited the bodies of all the Sikhs who had embraced martyrdom there along with Bhai Mahan Singh. He blessed them profusely and addressed them as *Muktay*—The liberated ones, who were forty in numbers, hence the term *chalee Muktay*—The forty liberated ones.

Who are Sikhs?

### The Sikh Homeland Punjab

The Sikh homeland (ancient Punjab) is located in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent. It has natural boundaries with Korakorum mountain range in the north, Hindu Kush and Sulemanki mountain ranges in the west, Jamna River in the east, Arabian Sea in the south and constitutes major portion of the Indus Valley. It connects the South Asia with Turkish Middle-East and the Central Asia. Because of its location it has been the target of frequent attacks from Central Asia and the Middle-East. Its boundaries have been quite frequently changing after each attack. During the Sikh rule here it shared its boundaries with British India in the East, Afghanistan in the west, Tibet in the north and Baluchistan-Sindh in the south.

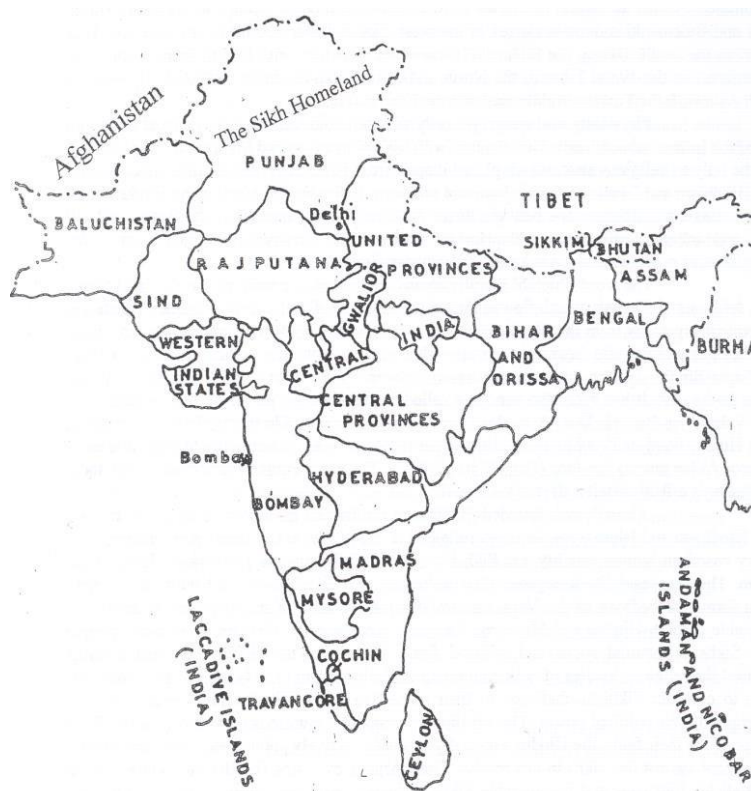


Like its boundaries its name has kept changing with alien invasions and its occupation. Earliest name of this land was Sindhu Des. It has been variously called by the invading people as Sapat Sindhu, Taka Des, Baheek Des or Vaheek Des, Art Des, Pentapotamia, Sindhu Khashtana,

## Who are Sikhs?

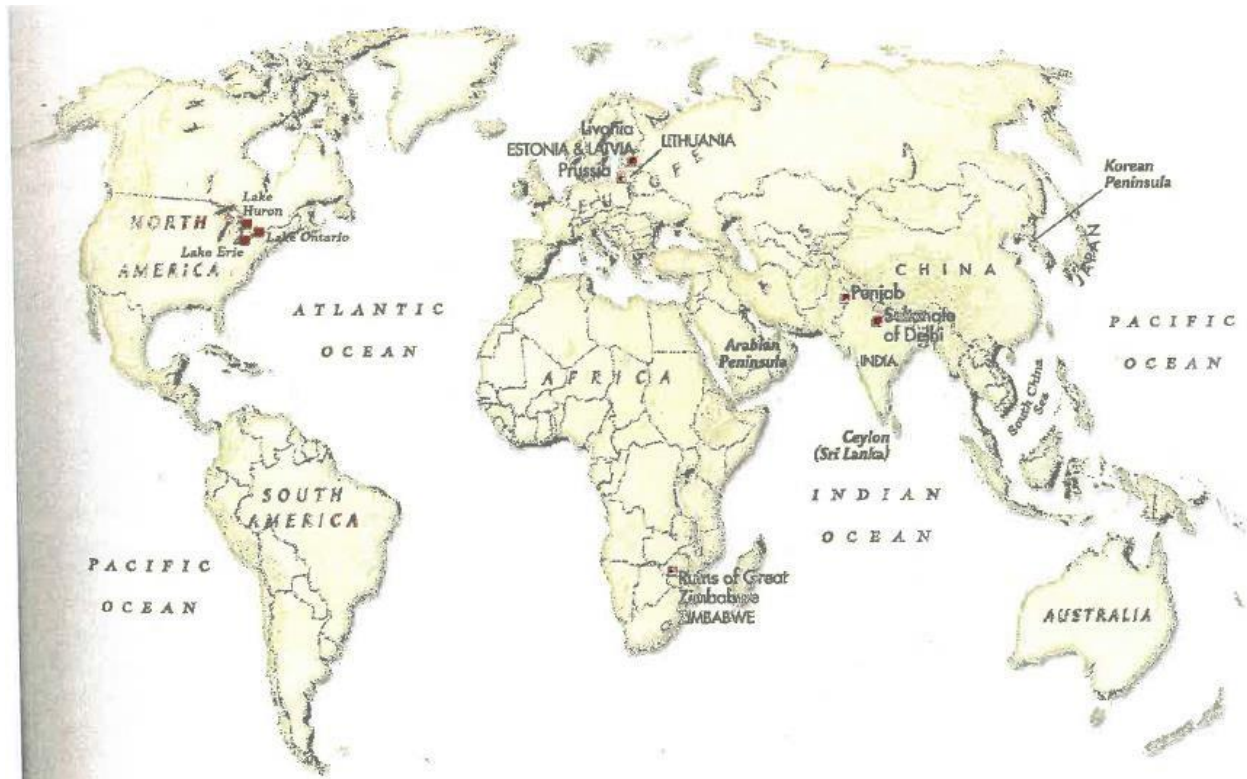
Panchana Sindhu, Hafat Hindu, Panj-nad, Mother Des etc. Native residents of the Punjab have been contemptuously called by various names by the invading people as Taka, Jatraka, Baheeka, Vaheek, Palikas (excluded), Vratyas (heretics) etc. Punjab was occupied by the Islamic invaders in the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. During the Muslim rule here Emperor Akbar named this land, 'Punjab' in 1590 A.D; which has persisted since then. The natives affectionately call it 'Des Punjab'. It has not been a single, stable and unaltered political and administrative unit throughout the course of history and its boundries have kept swelling and shrinking from time to time. For most part of the recorded history it has been an independent country, but at times it became part of India or Middle-East or Central Asia. It is a vast plain sloping from the Korakorum mountain range to the Arabian Sea. The word 'Punjab' literally means the land of five waters (rivers), Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Jehlum and Chenab, which flowed through it.

**Map of the Punjab under Sikh rule and British India - 1846**



Who are Sikhs?

## Global position of Punjab



Punjab is known as land of exciting opportunities with a landscape which pulsates with prosperity. It is known as the land of vibrant folk dances and for the legacy of valour and romance. The glorious land is also a land of wonderful and rich culture.

The New Stone Age culture was marked here by the beginning of agriculture, domestication of animals and growth of village life. The second most important archaeological discovery was made at Mohenjo-Daro in Sind, Harappa in West Punjab and then at several locations in the Ropar district which show evidence of what has come to be known as the Indus Valley Civilization. Punjab has been the cradle of world's greatest civilizations, the Vedic age and the epics of Ramayna and the Mahbharta. There is indeed no other land mass in the entire world so richly endowed with the bounties of nature as this Land of Five Rivers.

**Physically** the Sikh homeland formed the most important part of the Indian subcontinent. The 'Punjab' with 'Sikhs as rulers and Sikhism as their religion, was the only trireligious state, which placed it apart from other parts of the Indian subcontinent, with Hinduism and Islam as the two dominant religions. It divided the Muslim and Hindu worlds and acted as a transitional zone between them.

**Historically**, Islamic invaders captured Punjab and established Islamic rule here in the eleventh century. Of all the Indian provinces the Punjab alone had the longest period

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of Muslim rule and suffered the largest number of foreign invasions from the north-west. Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in the Punjab in 1496 as revealed to him by God. Hinduism and Islam, two major religions were there in the Punjab at that time. Most of the natives of the Punjab did not profess any religion and worshiped only nature. The Brahmanical Hindu caste system had divided the society into water tight compartments which prevented its homogenous growth. In order to create a society based on equality Guru Nanak declared oneness of God and oneness of man. The Sikh Gurus forcefully attacked the caste system, formalism and the ritualistic practices of the Brahmanical religion i.e, Hinduism. Similarly they opposed the bigotry preached by the Mullahs and also the approval of the oppressive and unjust rule of the Islamic rulers by the Qazis. Guru Nanak rejected the escapist life of the Jogis and praised the life of householder. Jogism was the most dominant sect of all the six systems of Hinduism in the Punjab at that time.

Because of its principles Sikhism was acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. The mass acceptance of Sikhism by common people made Sikhs a potential social and political force. Erosion of the Hindu and Muslim faiths surprised the leaders of both communities. Both of them (The Qazis and Brahmins) began to consider Sikhism challenge to their respective faiths. The Muslims in addition felt challenge to their political power. The Muslim government therefore tried to suppress the Sikhs and spread of their faith, the Hindus especially the Brahmins actively collaborated with the Muslim government against the Sikhs in this resolve. Guru Arjan Dev was executed in Lahore on false charges of treason. His son and successor, Guru Hargobind was forced by the Moghul Muslim government to move the Sikh headquarter from Amritsar to Kiratpur in the Shivalik foot hills. Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Teg Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh, all his four sons and innumerable Sikhs embraced martyrdom in their struggle against injustice and oppression.

After the demise of Guru Gobind Singh in 1708, the Sikhs declared the war of independence of the Sikh nation under the leadership of Banda Singh and launched an open armed struggle to uproot the unjust and oppressive Muslim rule from their motherland. They captured vast areas of their motherland-Punjab between Lahore and Delhi, destroyed Sirhind, killed its governor, Wazid Khan responsible for killing the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh, minted Sikh coins, released Sikh calendar and issued orders under the Sikh seal. Banda Singh was captured alive and executed in Delhi in 1716 in Delhi. After the death of Banda Singh two most powerful empires in Asia at that time, emperor of Hindustan from Delhi and King of Afghanistan from Kabul vowed to exterminate the Sikhs from the face of the earth. The Sikhs refused to submit and abandon their struggle for freedom. They left their homes and hearths and escaped into the safety of jungles, mountains of the Punjab and desert of the adjoining Rajputana. During this period, the Punjab saw nine devastating invasions, one by Nadir Shah and eight by Ahmad Shah Abdali, an excursion by the Marathas and the death blow dealt to them by Abdali at Panipat. These events involved the Sikhs in the harshest ordeals. They faced these with

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unflinching courage and perseverance and ultimately destroyed the oppressive and unjust Muslim rule and domination in their motherland by 1765; achieved sovereignty and established small Sikh confederacies in the form of Sikh Misals, between Afghanistan and Delhi and earned a place under the sun, where they will not be persecuted for their beliefs. In 1801 they established the Sikh Empire, Punjab under Ranjit Singh, which was annexed by the British in 1849 A.D, and merged with the rest of the Indian subcontinent already under their control for administrative purposes and made a part of Hindustan (India).

**Geographically** Punjab is located in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent. Geographically, Punjab may be divided into following distinct regions:

(a) The High Mountain Ranges (b)

The Region of Lower Hills.

(c)The Plains

**(a) The High Mountain Ranges**

Along the whole of the northern border of the Indian subcontinent from Assam to Afghanistan lie the Himalayas. The main line of these ranges, the Korakoram, lies to the north-east, while lower range is the Pir Panjal. Between these two ranges lies the famous valley of Kashmir. The rain and melting of snow over these mountains constitute an important source of water for the rivers of the Punjab, which have made the Punjab Plains very fertile and productive. At the western end of the Himalayas are the Sulemanki and Hindu Kush ranges, skirting the Punjab and Sindh and forming western frontier of the Indian subcontinent. These ranges contain a number of passes which connect Punjab with Afghanistan. Of these passes Khyber Pass is the most important, which connects Kabul near Jamrud with Peshawar. Towards the south of Khyber Pass are the Kurram, Tochi and Gomal passes, which connect Kohat, Bannu and Derajat with the mid Afghanistan. Far to the south lies the Bolan Pass. These passes served as trade routes between India and countries of Central Asia. It was through these passes that all the foreign invaders from Alexander to Shah Zaman led expeditions to the Punjab.

**(b) The Region of lower Hills:**

To the south of and running parallel with the snowy mountain ranges of the Pir Panjal lie the low hill ranges of the Shiwaliks and Kasauli. They are separated from the mountain ranges by a series of valleys. Though receiving plenty of rainfall and abounding in vegetation, this tract is not so productive as the plains. This submountain region comprises portions of the districts of Ambala, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Sialkot.



©**The Plains:**

The plains constitute the largest, most populous and most important region of the Punjab, the real Punjab- as it were. It lies between the Indus and the Jamna. The most remarkable feature of this tract, which lends it all importance and vitality, are its five rivers, the Satluj, Beas, Ravi, Chenab and Jehlum. After traversing for hundreds of miles the mountainous regions of the Himalayas, these rivers descend into the plains, fertilizing the soil, and continue their course generally to the south and south-west until, after their confluence the Indus, the amalgamated waters fall the ocean. The rivers of the Punjab have played various important roles in the history of this region. These rivers have not only added to the agricultural prosperity of this area, but also been useful in various other ways. They served as boundaries of Doabs and subas / Sarkars. They also served as natural means of defense, because in those days building of bridges and provision of boats were no easy tasks for the invader, especially during the rains when they became almost impassable. These rivers also served as a means of transportation for trade purposes, because country boats could ply up and down these rivers carrying various goods from place to place. Timber was brought down the rivers from the hills to the plains. The river beds were very wide in the plains but narrow just below the hills. In view of this difficulty the invaders followed a more northerly rout to Delhi, just below the hills, where the rivers were narrow and the work of bridge-building was easier. They invaded India in the beginning of winter and departed in March when the rivers were at their lowest ebb. During the Muslim rule here, Emperor Akbar divided the plain of the Punjab into five extensive natural sections, described by the term, *doab*, signifying a great tongue of land lying in the bifurcation above the confluence of two rivers. Doab is a Persian word and means the area between two waters (Rivers). **The five Doabs are:**

1. **The Bist Doab:** Comprising the territory between the Satlej and the Beas. It is the smallest of all doabs, but surpassed the others in population. Bist Jalandhar Doab is very fertile tract. It contains the important towns of jalandhar, Phagwara, Phillaur, Goraya, Hoshiarpur, Sultanpur, Kartarpur, Bholath, Begowal, Adampur, Alawalpur, Sham Chaurasi, Tanda, Mukerian, Rahon and Nurmahal.
2. **The Bari Doab:** It includes the tract between the Satlej / Beas and the Ravi. It consisted of a number of famous cities and towns like Lahore, Kasur, Dipalpur, Chunian, Multan, Pakpattan, Amritsar, Tarn Taaran, Patti, Goindwal, Kadur Sahib, Fatehabad, Jandiala, Batala, Kartarpur and Gurdaspur. The two most important cities of the Punjab, Lahore and Amritsar, are situated in this Doab. This is also known as Majha.
3. **The Rachna Doab:** Enclosed by the rivers Ravi and Chenab, this fertile tract comprises the notable towns of Gujranwala, Sheikhpura, Wazirabad, Sialkot, Eminabad, Jhang and Maghiana. Its lower part was called Sandal Bar.

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4. **The Chaj Doab:** Lying between the Chenab and the Jehlum, this tract has the important towns of Gujrat, Bhera, Miani, Sahiwal, Shahpur and Mian Daullah. This area is also called Jangal and is popularly known as Bar
5. **The Sindh-Sagar Doab:** The tract between the Jehlum and the Indus is known as Sindh-Sagar Doab. Parts of both Lahore and Multan provinces fell in this doab. The surface of this tract was partly hilly and partly desert. This area is not very fertile and productive. The important towns of this Doab are Attock, Hasan Abdal, Rohtas, Jehlum, Rawalpindi, Pind Dadan Khan and Mianwali.

### **Regional subdivisions of the plains of the Punjab:**

Besides the Doabs, the plains of the Punjab are divided into: **Majha** (Between River Ravi and Satluj), **Doaba** (The areas between Beas and Satluj Rivers), **Malwa** (The areas between Satluj and River Ghaggar, **Haryana** (The areas between Ghaggar and Jamna Rivers), **Pothohar** (The areas beyond Jehlum River up to the border of the Punjab with Afghanistan and **Pahar** (The hill tracts of the Punjab including Jammu and Kashmir) were indigenously recognized regions within the Sikh ruled Punjab, which have somewhat different ecologies and populations have different psychologies and constitutions.

**Majha:** The territory between the Ravi and the Satluj is called Majha, which in the north has forests tracts of Gurdaspur and arid and dreary desert-region of Naka in the south. It is broad and fairly cultivated towards north, becoming more and more of a desert in the south, covered only with low bushes and at times with long grass, much valued as a pasture-ground for horses and cattle. This tract is situated in the center of the Bari Doab.

**Doaba:** This tract of land lies between the Satluj and Beas rivers. It is very fertile region and is thickly populated.

**Malwa:** The territory between the Satluj and the Gaggar, and comprising the towns of Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Patiala, Sangrur, Sirhand, Malerkotla, Faridkot, Bathinda and Nabha is popularly known as the Malwa region.

**Haryana:** The tract between Gaggar and Jamna rivers is known as Haryana. It includes the districts of Ambala, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Panipat, Jind, Rohtak, Gurgaon and Hissar.

**Sandal Bar:** It includes the area between Ravi and Chenab rivers.

**Jangal and Pothohar:** **Pothohar** (The areas beyond Jehlum River up to the border of the Punjab with Afghanistan was a dry, desert region, abounding only in thorny plants and tall grass. Jangal and Pothohar were part of this area. Multan was the only important place in this region. In the south-west lie the deserts of Baluchistan, Sindh, Bahawalpur and Multan. Having a very scanty rainfall is very arid and infertile.

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**Nakka:** The region at the confluence of the rivers of the Punjab, between Pakpattan and Shikarpur.

**Pahar:** (The hill tracts of the Punjab including Jammu and Kashmir).

Those were indigenously recognized regions within the Sikh ruled Punjab, which have somewhat different ecologies and populations have different psychologies and constitutions.

Scattered over the entire country, but mostly in the vicinity of the rivers there are numerous towns and villages in the Punjab. The important among them being: Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Pindi Gheb, Pind Dadan Khan, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Mankera, Dera Ghazi Khan, Srinagar, Baramula, Ladakh, Iskardoh, Jammu, Gujrat, Sahiwal, Sialkot, Pasrur, Rasul Nagar, Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Muzufferabad, Ladakh, Iskardoh, Chiniot, Sheikhupura, Jhang, Kamalia, Bhasoli, Kangra, Kullu, Chamba, Nurpur, Anandpur Sahib, Kiratpur Sahib, Pathankot, Dina Nagar, Kalanaur, Batala, Sri Hargobindpur, Kahnuwan, Fatehgarh Churian, Dera Baba Nanak, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Baba Bakala, Goindwal Sahib, Khadur Sahib, Fatehabad, Jhabal, Patti, Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Qasur, Choonian, Dipalpur, Pakpattan, Multan, Mithunkot, Siba, Datarpur, Mandi, Suket, Hoshiarpur, Mahilpur, Bajwara, Noormehal, Goraya, Shahpur, Nakodar, Kartarpur, Sultanpur Lodhi, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Phillaur, Ludhiana, Phagwara, Machhiwara, Chamkaur Sahib, Jagraon, Ferozepur, Mamdot, Faridkot, Muktsar, Nabha, Bathinda, Talwandi Sabo (now Damdama Sahib), Malerkotla, Sangrur, Patiala, Ambala, Shahbad, Ropar, Samana, Sadhaura, Banoor, Sirhind (now Fatehgarh Sahib) Jagadhri, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Jind, Karnal and Panipat etc; up to Delhi.

During the Sikh rule it shared its boundaries with British India in the east, Afghanistan in the west, Tibet in the north and Sindh-Baluchistan and desert of Rajputana in the south. It joins the Gangetic Plain with the Turkish Middle-East and Central Asia. The present Punjab is only a very small part of the region that has traditionally been known as the Punjab.

The ancient Punjab connected Hindustan (India) with Middle-East and Central Asia. It enjoyed its natural boundaries with Korakorum mountain range in the north, the Thar Desert in the south, Sulemanki and Hindu Kush mountain ranges in the west and Jamuna River in the east.

### **Administrative subdivisions of the ancient Punjab:**

The ancient Punjab consisted of two provinces of Lahore and Multan and the Sarkar of Sarhind which was a part of the Delhi province. The province of Lahore extended from Satluj to the Indus in width whereas the province of Multan extended from Ferozepur to Sindh in length and shared its border with Lahore in the north-west. Foreign invaders from the north-west had to pass through the Punjab after passing through the passes in the mountains for invading Delhi (Hindustan). The chief concern of the Delhi kings therefore in those days was to guard the northwest frontiers, in order to check the progress of the foreign invader. Hence in Punjab two seats of government were established, one at Lahore and the other at Multan.

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**Lahore** was located on the main route and occupied a safe position on the eastern bank of river Ravi. It is situated midway between Khyber Pass and the imperial capital at Delhi and roughly 300 kms from Multan. Roads to Kangra, Jammu and Kashmir originated from this place. On account of its strategic importance, it became the chief military base and a great market.

**Multan** commanded an equally important position in the southern part of the Punjab. It was connected with all important places in the doabs of the province through the rivers. It controlled the waters of the Punjab and also the roads leading to Delhi, Lahore and Sarhind including the routes from Tochi, the Gomal and the Bolan passes. Because of its geographical location it became the most important center of trade in the south where Punjab goods were brought through the rivers and where they were exchanged by caravans for the commodities of Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Iran.

**Sarhind** was a division of the Delhi province. It was flanked on its eastern side by the Yamuna and the Sirmaur hills, on the west by the Satluj and the state of Bahawalpur, by the mountains on the north and by the desert of Bikaner on the south. The invader after crossing Satluj could straightway march to Delhi without encountering any natural obstacle, but of course he had to measure his strength with the Delhi armies which as a rule, advanced to oppose him here. That is why the Sarhind plain has served as the battlefield of India from time immemorial. It is studded with strong forts at Delhi, Hisar, Bhatner (Bathinda), Kaithal, Sarhind, Ludhiana and Machhiwara. After its annexation the British merged the “Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab” with rest of the British India, already under their control, for administrative purposes and thus it became part of Hindustan (India). Kashmir, which was a province of Punjab, was sold out to Gulab Singh Dogra, governor of the province of Jammu and Kashmir, who had treacherously bargained with the British and betrayed the Sikhs. In addition to this North-West Frontier Province was carved out of the “Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab”.

### **Punjab from 1849 to 1857**

The Sikhs were the last defenders of liberty in India and most difficult power to fall to the British imperialism. After annexation of the “Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab”, the British adopted dual policy towards the Sikhs. The loyal to the crown were rewarded, while those who had opposed the British in the Anglo-Sikh wars were ruthlessly suppressed. Entire Sikh population was disarmed and not even a knife was left with them. People both Hindus and Muslims from whole of Hindustan on the eastern side of Jamuna River called *Poorbias* by the Sikhs in Sarkare Khalsa region, who had helped the British to subjugate the Sikhs, were now working as occupation force in Punjab on behalf of the British. They were daily heaping insult upon the Sikhs and harassing and even raping the Sikh women at the gun point.

In 1857 the Poorbiahs (both Hindus and Muslims) revolted against the British rule in India under the leadership of the deposed Moghul Emperor Bahadur Shah with the help of some disgruntled princes. There was a great massacre of the British men, women and children. Faced with Hindu and Muslim hostility, the British desperately asked the Sikhs for their help. For the Sikhs it was a God sent opportunity to get rid of the menacing *Poorbiahs*. They reacted sharply to the appeal and readily agreed to the British appeal for help. The Sikhs refused to listen to the appeal

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of the poorbials to save the Hindu Dharma from the beef eating feringis. The appeal of the Poorbials was very surprising for the Sikhs because these were the same people who now calimed to be crusaders for freedom, eight years ago had been the Feringi's instrument in reducing the Sikhs to servitude, plunder their homes and insulted and even raped their women after their defeat and more over presently were hurling insult on them daily as occupation force on behalf of the British. The Sikhs decided to avenge the Moghul and Poorbiah tyrannies committed against them both in the recent and distant past by helping the British. The Sikh soldiers of the disbanded Khalsa army gathered under the Sikh Flag, led the assault on Delhi and they captured the city on September 20, 1857. The Sikhs captured Emperor Bhadur Shah, Begum Zeenat Mahal, three sons and a grandson of the Emperor. Under the security provided by the Sikhs, Major Hudson stripped the princes naked and shot them dead publically with his carbine. The Sikhs took the corpses of the princes to Chadni Chowk and laid them out on display in front of Gurdwara Sis Ganj in Chandni Chowk, where their Guru Teg Bahdur had been executed by the orders of their ancestor Emperor Aurangzeb in 1675 CE.

Thereafter the British opened up the doors for the Sikhs for their recruitment in the army and because of their bravery the Sikhs became most sought after soldiers in the British Indian army. They valiantly defended the British Empire from collapsing in both World Wars. They sincerely defended the British colonies throughout the British Empire.

The final phase of struggle for the Independence of India started in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is worth mentioning here that the Sikhs were on the top in the struggle for the movement of Indian independence, followed by Bengalis. It is for anybody to verify the number of persons hanged, exiled or jailed or fined during the struggle for the Indian independence against the British rule in India. This annoyed the British and they decided to kill them politically.

At the time of the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 the British refused to hand over the country of the Sikhs back to them because of their grave annoyance with the Sikhs for their bitter opposition to the British rule in India and abroad. In order to punish both the Sikhs and the Bengalis, the British at the time of decolonization of the Indian subcontinent divided both Punjab and Bengal, thereby creating West Pakistan (now Pakistan) and East Pakistan (now Bangla Des). They penalized and killed the Sikhs politically by denying them back their independent country, which they had annexed from them in 1849 under an agreement.

### **Partition of the Sikh Homeland Punjab, 1947CE and the Sikhs becoming a homeless nation**

The Sikh homeland was partitioned into two parts, the western part 62% was made over to the newly created Islamic State of Pakistan and the remaining eastern segment 38% was handed over to Hindu India against the wishes of the 'Sikh Nation'. Since then we find Indian Punjab and the Pakistani Punjab and no Sikh State on the map of the world.

As soon as the boundary line was drawn bloody riots broke out and the non-Muslims, of which about 70% were Sikhs, were forced by the Muslims to leave the western segment and migrate to the Indian segment or other parts of the world. Presently the Sikhs do not have an independent country of their own and majority of them live in the truncated Indian segment of Punjab in which they constitute 60.2 % of the total population. Now they are found settled in almost all countries of the world.

The Sikhs were denied their country where their Gurus were born, Sikhism flourished, they have their religious and historical shrines (Gurdwaras), paid 40 % of the land revenue, were

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running more than 200 self-dependent educational institutions and before the arrival of the British were the rulers of this land.

## Post Independence truncation & division of the Punjab in 1966

&

### Punjab today



After gaining independence, the congress government of India dominated by radical Hindus, officially recognized *Shastri* (Hindi) i.e, the vernacular spoken in and around the cities of Delhi and Lucknow, as the official language of India. Thereafter Hindi came to be symbolized as the language of all Hindus irrespective of the region they lived in. The Punjabi Hindu fundamentalists disowned Punjabi language and propagated that Punjabi was the language of the Sikh Nation only as it was the language of their scriptures (Guru Granth Sahib); the mother tongue of the Punjabi Hindu was Hindi. The Punjabi Hindu spoke Punjabi, but when it came to writing he felt more at home with English or Urdu and refused to accept Punjabi as his mother tongue, which was an absolute lie and when the Sikhs said their language was Punjabi, the Hindus sometimes accused them of motives beneath one's dignity to accept. Not only had the Sikh to defend his language but with that his honour as a patriot as well. When the Punjabi Hindus finally were reconciled to the inescapable fact that Punjabi was to be their mother tongue, they trotted out

a lame excuse that Gurmukhi was not a proper script for Punjabi. They wanted it to be written in ‘*Dev Naagri*’ script and not in Gurmukhi script.

Secondly, shortly after independence the government of India announced that boundaries of all the Indian States would be redrawn along linguistic lines and consequently, this was done for all the 14 major languages spoken in India except Punjabi. The Sikhs, therefore, raised the demand for the creation of a “Punjabi speaking state of the Punjab” through a campaign of non-violence in-order to defend the Sikh traditions and identity in addition to their cultural, linguistic, religious, economic and other interests. The Hindu organizations reacted by appealing to members of their community to formally disown Punjabi language. The Hindus in Punjab registered their language as Hindi in the census of 1951. Hindu organizations like Arya Samaj, Hindu Maha Sabha and Jan Sangh opposed the Sikh demand vehemently. The Hindus of Punjab and the Press dominated by Arya Samajist Hindus dubbed the Sikh demand as a stepping-stone towards the creation of an “independent Sikh State”. Hindu Sikh riots broke out in many towns. The Hindu congress government with Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru as Prime Minister and Sardar Partap Singh Kairon as Chief Minister of Punjab opposed, each and every Sikh demand. Both in India and abroad the government-controlled media projected that the Sikhs demand an independent Sikh State. The Sikhs cajoled, threatened, pleaded, marched and suffered to win a “Punjabi speaking state,” but India resisted.

Both Pt Nehru and Kairon, the arch opponents of the Sikh demand, died in 1964. Lal Bahadur Shastri became the next Prime Minister of India. Sant Fateh Singh, the then president of Sharomani Akali Dal, threatened to launch *morcha* (agitation) for the creation of Punjabi speaking state. Clouds of war between India and Pakistan were looming large at that time. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri gave an understanding to the Sikh leadership to concede their demand provided they co-operated with the government in case of war between India and Pakistan. War broke out between India and Pakistan. The Sikhs played a remarkable role for defending the Indian borders. Ultimately on the conclusion of the Indo-Pakistan war in September 1965 in which the Sikh peasantry played a notable role helping Indian troops on the front line, a commission was appointed to demarcate Punjabi speaking areas from the Hindi speaking. In 1966, the already truncated Punjab was split into four states: Haryana, Himachal, Union Territory of Chandigarh and ‘Punjabi speaking Punjab’. The division of the state was done by the congress government dominated by radical Hindus on communal lines and not on linguistic basis leaving large tracts of Punjabi speaking population out of the ‘Punjabi Speaking Punjab’.

Sikhism and the Sikhs fulfill all the globally defined norms and parameters of a religion and nation, all that they lack is their own independent country, which they lost to the British in 1849.

#### **Location, Boundaries and Geography:**

Punjab is located in the north west of the Indian subcontinent. During the Sikh rule it shared its boundaries with Afghanistan in the west, Tibet in the north, Baluchistan -Sindh in the south and the British India in the east. It connected the Middle East and Central Asia on one hand with South Asia on the other. It enjoyed its natural boundaries under the Sikh rule with Korakorum

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mountain range in the north, Thar Desert in the south, Hindu Kush and Sulemanki mountain ranges in the west and Jamna River in the east.

Majha (The area between River Beas / Satlej and River Ravi), Sandal Bar between Ravi and Chenab river, Pothohar (The areas beyond Chenab River up to the border of the Punjab with Afghanistan) Doaba (The areas between Beas and Sutlej Rivers), Malwa (The areas between Sutlej and River Ghaggar), Haryana (The areas between Ghaggar and Jamna Rivers), and Pahar (The hill tracts of the Punjab including Jammu and Kashmir) were indigineously recognized regions within the Sikh ruled Punjab, which have somewhat different ecologies and populations have different psychologies and constitutions.

**Area:**

The undivided Punjab, before 1947 had an area of 138, 105 square miles. The present day Sikh dominated Punjab in which they constitute about 60.2 % of its total population is a part of Hindu India, sharing its western border with Pakistan. It has an area of 50,255 square kilometers and is 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the prepartition Punjab.

**Terrain:**

Terrain is largely plain, sloping from the sub-Himalayas in the north towards the Thar Desert in the south. At the end of the seventeenth century when the Sikhs rose to power, the region fell into three divisions-The Punjab plains, the Punjab hills and a large tract of broken country between them. The three areas were part of the same Punjabi region but differed greatly in communications and accessibility. It was easy to move in the plains, difficult in hills, while the belt of the country in between, with low hills and jungle gave excellent shelter to bands of marauders in times of distress. Here they could avoid capture and organize brigandage and revolt.

**Climate:**

Punjab witnesses extremes of weather conditions. Summer 48C to 35C, Winter 14C to 0C. The rains of July, August and September (Monsoon) mark the end of extreme heat of May and June and return of spring in March and April marks the end of extreme cold of December and January. The most temperate weeks come in February-March and October / November.

**Natural resources and economy:**

The present day Indian Punjab is a farm country, one of the world's most heavily irrigated regions. 80% of its population is dependent on agriculture and 80% of Punjab farmers are Sikhs. Punjab survives only on economics of its agriculture it neither has, mineral resources nor heavy industry. It has its land, its rivers, and hard working farmers, with just about two percent of India's total cultivable land Punjab has been contributing 50% of country's total out put of food grains. Dairy farming and poultry farming are also contributing their own share. Major crops are wheat, rice, sugar cane, cotton, Potatoes, maize and pulses. Sunflower, mustard and sesame seeds are grown as oil seeds. Kinnow-oranges, grapes, mango, Litchee are grown in some pockets. Punjab



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has developed a good system for marketing agricultural produce by its farmers but lacks in food processing.

**Communications:**

Punjab is the first state in India to link its all villages with paved roads, after the green revolution in mid-sixties. It has a good railway network and all its cities are connected by rail. All its major cities have rail link with the Indian capital New Delhi. It has two international airports, one at Amritsar and the other at Mohali. It has domestic airports at Bathinda, Pathankot and Ludhiana.

**Population and character of population:**

Presently total population of the present Indian Punjab is about 25 million, out of which 70% lives in villages. 80% population of the Punjab is constituted by farmers, out of whom 80% are Sikhs. The Sikhs constitute about 60.2% of its population, the rest about 40% are Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Thus Punjab stands apart from other parts of the Indian subcontinent with Hinduism and Islam as two major religions.

**Language:**

Punjabi is the spoken language of all Punjabis including those in Pakistan, but it is sacred to the Sikhs, because their scriptures are in Punjabi. Like the name of the Punjab, its language has been variously and contemptuously been called by different names by the invading people, who tried to force their own culture especially the language upon them. It has been variously called Sindh Saagri, Harappan, Taki or Takri, Apabhramsha, Prakrit, Sauraseni, Jatki, Zabane Jattaan, Hindvi, Desi, Sant Bhasha, Lahori and finally Punjabi, when Emperor Akbar named this region as Punjab in 1590, the name which has persisted since then.

**Countries of the Sikh homeland:** The Sikh homeland under Sikh rule had in it:

1. Sikh Empire / Sikh Kingdom / The Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab under, "Sarkare Khalsa" having natural boundries with Korakoram mountain range in the north, Hindu Kush and Sulemanki mountain ranges in west and Thar Desert in the south, sharing its borders with Afghanistan in the west, princely states of the Punjab in the east, Tibet in the north and Baluchistan-Sindh in the south. Lahore was the capital of the "Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab".
2. The princely States of Patiala, Nabha, Faridkot, Malerkotla, Kaithal, Jind, Kalsia etc; were located between river Sutlej in the west, River Jamna (Delhi) in the east.

## Punjabi

### The religious and National language of the Sikhs and Sikhism

Punjabi has been the spoken language of all the natives of the undivided Punjab, since prehistoric times. F.E Keay and Grierson, both well-known Orientalists are of the opinion, “that Punjabi is of greater antiquity than any of the languages of the Indo-Gangetic plain”. Hence it is one of the oldest spoken languages in the world, although it was given different names at different times.

Punjabi with Gurmukhi script is the religious language and national language of the Sikhs and it is sacred to them, because their scriptures are in Punjabi with Gurmukhi script. Presently Punjabi is 10<sup>th</sup> popular spoken language in the world. Punjab, the Sikh homeland, lies in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent and connects the Middle East and Central Asia with the South Asia. Because of its geographical location, a series of invaders from the north and west have trampled over this land for centuries. Every invader tried to destroy the local culture especially its language and impose his culture and language on the people of this land. Its different dialects have been variously and contemptuously been called by the invading people as: Harrapan (The language spoken by the people in and around Harrapa and Mohenjodaro), Prakrit lit: the language of the people who work for others-ਪਰਾਈ ਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੋਲੀ, Apbhransh literally meaning corrupt, Taki or Takri (lit: The language of the malechh people), Sindh Sagri, Sauraseni, Sahaskriti, Jatki (The language of the Jatts), Zabane Jattan, Hindvi, Sant Bhasha, Desi (lit:: local), Lahori (lit: The language spoken in and around Lahore) etc. During the Muslim rule here Emperor Akbar named this region of the Indus Valley as ‘Punjab’ in 1590 A.D, after which gradually the local vernacular came to be called ‘Punjabi’, the name which has persisted since then.

It is universally agreed upon now that man evolved in Africa and gradually spread over the entire globe. According to Dr. H.D. Sankalia, the renowned anthropologist, “It is more or less established that at the end of the First Glacial Period and into the beginning of the Second Ice Age, Early Man entered the foot hills of the Northwest Punjab, into the area traversed by the Soan, Haro and other rivers within the Indus-Jhelum Doab. Early man spread into the area comprised by Rawalpindi and Attock districts of the Punjab, and the Jammu and Kashmir States”. Recent Genographic studies reveal that these people arrived in India from Central Asia by travelling south of the rugged and mountainous Pamir knot, some 30,000 years ago. Early humans lived here as gatherers and hunters, who gradually developed into a great civilization, now known as “The Indus Valley Civilization”, which is one of the oldest civilizations of the world. The natives of the Indus Valley lived by farming the lands and were called “Jatts”. ‘The Jat tribe’ is the oldest named tribe in India whose name is found even in Mahabharata. Because of its location and prosperity this region of the Indus valley has been target of repeated attacks from Middle-East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. In spite of all odds the ‘Jatt’ tribe never left this region, got concentrated on both sides of the river Ravi between Satluj / Beas and Chenab / Jhelum rivers in the central Punjab around Lahore and faced every invader defiantly. After the region was named Punjab by Emperor Akbar, its natives came to be called Punjabis and their dialect (Language) came to be called Punjabi. It is these people who embraced Sikhism en-mass in large numbers, after it was founded by Guru Nanak.

More than 4000 years ago (about 2000 B.C), people of a white tribe from Asia Minor who called themselves 'Aryans' entered into the hills of the Punjab as herds-men and graziers of the cattle, through the passes in the Hindu Kush mountains and settled in the Kashmir region. It is a well-known fact that the earliest spiritual traditions in the world began in the Punjab in the Indus Valley. People professing spirituality among the Punjabis called themselves Jogis / Siddhas (lit: knowledgeable). These Jogis believed in 'One Supreme Eternal Power', whom they called 'Brahma'. They remembered their spiritual revelations orally and transmitted them from generation to generations verbally and did not produce any written scriptures, perhaps they feared loss of their sanctity by putting them into writing, although they had a script called, Brahmi / Sidhmatrica. The Aryans spoke an Indo-European language that originated on the steppes of Eurasia. The Aryans although tribal in nature, but apparently smart people very early realized the importance of education and knowledge. Some of them learnt spirituality from Jogis of the Punjab. They developed a slang dialect of Punjabi for worship purposes and cleverly called it, 'Brahm Bhasha' literally: the language of God, but later on named it 'Sanskrit'. Around 1000 BC; they produced scriptures in *Brahm Bhasha* (Sanskrit). The Scriptures were named, 'Vedas' literally meaning books of knowledge, which were memorized by them orally and continued to be transmitted verbally from one generation to the other for centuries. Romila Thapar in her book titled, "The Penguin History of Early India" writes that Rishi Panini laid the rules for Sanskrit grammar in Taxilla (located in the foot hills of the Punjab) around 500 BC and wrote Sanskrit grammar, the *Ashtadhyai*. As Sanskrit was devoid of any script, the Aryans created Sanskrit literature by using the local script in the place of writing, for instance they used *Brahmi / Sidhmatrica* script of Punjabi Jogis in the Kashmir region of the Punjab. The persons among the Aryans having knowledge of Vedas became the priestly class and called themselves 'Brahmins' (having knowledge of Brahma). The Brahmins made Sanskrit as the language of their scriptures, which could only be interpreted by them, because it was neither spoken nor understood by the common mass of the native people. The first center of Aryan culture in the Indian subcontinent developed in the hills of the Punjab in the Kashmir region. After centuries of their stay, development and proliferation in the hills of the Punjab in the Kashmir region the Aryans descended into the plains of the Punjab. They tried to dominate the 'Jatts' through the Brahmin. The Jatt spirit of freedom and equality refused to submit to the Brahmanical dominance and pushed the Aryans out of the limits of the Punjab and in its turns drew the censure of the learned Brahmins who pronounced that "no Aryan should stay in the Punjab for even two days because the Punjabis refused to obey the priests"\* . Henceforth the Aryan Brahmin developed an extremely hostile attitude towards the jatts of the Punjab.

After their exit from the Punjab by the 'Jatts', the Aryans settled in the Ganga Jamna divide in the Malwa region of India, built their religio-cultural center there and named it 'Ujjain', which they affectionately called, 'Dev Nagri' (देव नगरी), a town inhabited by Brahmins, who are gods (Devatas-देवते) in human form. Here they used the local form of Sidhmatrica script for writing their Sanskrit literature but named it 'Dev Naagri' (देव नगरी). After sometime they shifted their center of activity in the easternly direction into the fertile and mineral rich area and built here their religio-cultural center on the banks of Ganges and named it Kashi (Varanasi-Banaras). Here they wrote more religious books in Sanskrit and named them, 'Shastras' in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Because of the

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shastras the language spoken in and around Kashi (Varanasi-Benaras) came to be popularly called '*Shastri*' (now Hindi).

The Aryans gained religious and cultural control of the Gangaes valley through the priest (Brahmin) by blending their culture with that of the natives, who believed in many Gods, the principal ones being by Brahma (creator), Vishnu (sustainer) and Shiva (destroyer). The Aryan society consisted of priests and warriors. The priests communed with the gods through animal sacrifices. They worshiped fire and chanted mantras from the Vedas. The warrior class consisted of tribal chieftains. The Aryans as a group lorded over merchants, land lords and the under class whom they called *dasas*, who served as laborers and farmers. Later on this class system was turned into hereditary caste system by Manu, the Hindu law giver. Because the native people revered cow, the Aryans discarded animal sacrifices, prohibited meat eating, introduced vegetarianism and started worshiping the Gods of the natives.

The Punjabi Jogis / Siddhas lived away from human habitations meditating for seeking personal salvation in the caves, jungles and snow clad mountains therefore acquisition of knowledge by the common man in the plains of the Punjab became impossible.

After the Aryans, foreign invasions of the Punjab started in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and continued until 1849 AD. A series of invaders from the north and west trampled over this land for centuries. They included the Persians (Iranians), Shakas (Scythians), the Parthians, the Greeks, the Bactrians, the Kushans, the Huns, the Turks, the Mongols (Mughals), the Afghans (Pathans) and the British etc.

Islamic invasions of the Punjab began in 711 AD. Its people resisted for centuries, but ultimately it fell to the invading Islamic forces in 1001 A.D. They named the area east of Indus River as 'Hindustan' in the beginning of the eighth century and called its inhabitants "Hindi," and later on Hindus. After the occupation of the Punjab they spread into the remaining India without any resistance. They made Persian as court language and Arabic as religious language of this region. They recorded the native language of the gangetic plain, in Persian script, which came to be called '*Urdu\*\*\**' and became the Muslim language in Hindustan.

For centuries Punjab has witnessed numerous invasions in ever changing political upheavals. Every invader tried his best to kill the Punjabi language, Punjabi culture and civilization and replace it with his own. In spite of all odds the Punjabi language and the Punjabis have remained unvanquished and proud, protecting their land and their rich heritage and assimilating all new comers.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) founded Sikhism in the Punjab at the fag end of 15th century. At that period of time with the exception of Muslim rulers and the Muslim elite, Punjabi was the spoken language of the Punjab and Persian was the official language, Arabic was the religious language of the Muslims and Sanskrit was the religious language of the Hindus. Neither Sanskrit, nor Persian nor Arabic was spoken or understood by common mass of the People of the Punjab, who conversed among themselves in Punjabi. Guru Nanak gave his '*Bani*' in local vernacular that is Punjabi, instead of Sanskrit, which till then was the traditional medium for religious poetry / philosophy among the Hindustanis. As mentioned earlier Punjabi has been the spoken language of

the people of the Punjab since prehistoric times, but till the birth of Sikhism it was only a spoken language and did not have a script for its proper pronunciation and expressions, therefore it did not have any written literature. Guru Nanak developed the script for Punjabi language by selecting appropriate letters from other scripts (Brahmi / Sidhhmatrica / Lande etc) current in north India and creating some new ones. He purged the Sidhhmatrica and its offspring, Devnagri, of their irritating and unscientific characteristic of being an alphabet without consonants. He perfected the script with vowels and laid down the rules for its grammar. The alphabet has thirty five letters. He composed a hymn enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib in Rag Asa M1, on pages 432 to 434, as '*Patti Likhi*' in the form of an acrostic, making use of the 35-letter alphabet. Thus the Sikhs developed their dialect into written language. It gave the Sikhs a written language distinct from written language of Hindus-Sanskrit (Vedas) and Mussalmans-Arabic (Quran). The script was named *Gurmukhi* (The script used to write the language spoken from the mouth of the Guru) by his successor, Guru Angad, who greatly propagated the use of Gurmukhi letters in his drive for literacy among his followers, 'the Sikhs'. He gave form and finish to the alphabet, prepared primers (*Baalupdes*) of Gurmukhi (Punjabi) alphabet and made copies of Guru Nanak's hymns and distributed them among the people leading to the increase in the number of literates in the Punjab. He broke the monopoly of the Brahmin over learning. Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Sikh Guru compiled, Granth Sahib (Guru Granth Sahib), the holy Sikh scripture in Gurmukhi script, in 1604 AD. Guru Gobind Singh established the first Sikh seat of learning in 1706AD, at Talwandi Sabo, now called Dam Dama Sahib in Bathinda district and named it *Guru Ki Kanshi* as counter part to the Hindu seat of learning in Varanasi (Benaras--Kanshi). After Guru Gobind Singh Sikhs were busy in their struggle for existence and were unable to pay any attention for the development of their mother tongue. At one time the teaching of Punjabi was forbidden in schools, which retarded the development of Punjabi literature. During the Sikh rule in Punjab Persian remained the official court language, no efforts were made for the promotion of Punjabi by them, because they remained busy in expanding and securing the borders of their young kingdom. Although Punjabi was not the official language of the Sikh court, but being the language of the rulers it flourished immensely during the Sikh rule in the Punja, copies of Guru Granth Sahib were produced and Sikh literature written in Punjabi.

The British annexed the Sikh Kingdom, Punjab in 1849 A.D. Punjabis unlike the Bengalis and Sindhis were not allowed by them to use their mother tongue as an official language because they feared the development of Punjabi-Sikh nationalism. They made Urdu along with English as the official court language in the British Punjab. The Muslims were made to believe that Urdu was their mother tongue. None of the alien languages i.e, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Greek, Urdu or English etc, was spoken by the common mass of people of the Punjab, who continued to communicate among themselves in Punjabi, irrespective of their religious affiliations. After its annexation by the British, Christian missionaries came to Punjab and started seeking conversions of the Sikhs into Christianity in the Sikh homeland. Also a Gujrati Brahmin named Dyanand Saraswati, came to the Punjab in and founded his Hindu sect, Arya Samaj in Lahore. He started propagating the teachings of the Vedas and claimed that the Sikhs were a sect of Hindus and that Sikhism was not a separate religion. He started attacking the Punjabi language, Sikh scriptures (Guru Granth Sahib), the Sikh Gurus and other Sikh institutions. This awakened the Sikh intelligentsia, who founded Singh Sabha (society of the practicing Sikhs) in 1873 AD, in Amritsar, for the propagation of the Sikh religion, Punjabi language and Punjabi culture.

Who are Sikhs?

Development of the Punjabi language and Gurmukhi script started after the birth of Singh Sabha. Singh Sabha started first Punjabi printing press in the Punjab with Gurmukhi script in Lahore in 1876 A.D, and published first Punjabi paper in Gurmukhi-Khalsa Akhbar. Under Singh Sabha movement Punjabi gained admittance into the university curriculum; in spite of severe opposition by the Hindu members of the Punjab University Lahore, who viewed it as no more than a rude dialect without any literary tradition and hence not worth teaching. Teaching of Punjabi in Gurmukhi script started in Oriental College Lahore in 1877. This gave Punjabi a communal label as language of the Sikhs, just as Shastri (now Hindi) was of the Hindus and Urdu of the Muslims. As a result, although Punjabi remained, as before, the spoken language of all Punjabis, whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian, its literary output came to be largely confined to the Sikh writers. Till the advent of print media and the modern broadcasting system, different dialects of Punjabi were spoken in different parts of the Punjab viz: *Majhi*, *Malwai* and *Doabi* were spoken in the central Punjab. *Poadi*, *Haryanvi*, *Sarhandi*, *Raathi*, *Bhatiani* and *Kangri* dialects were spoken beyond Ghaggar river, whereas *Dogri*, *Kangar*, *Himachali* were spoken in the hill tracts of the Punjab. *Multani*, *Jhangi*, *Pothohari* and *Dhani* dialects were spoken beyond Chenab River. After the advent of print and modern broadcasting media, the writers and broadcasters have evolved a standard form of Punjabi based on the dialect spoken in and around Lahore i.e, central Punjab called '*Majha*' giving it its present global form.

Development of Punjabi suffered a severe set back, when Punjab, the Sikh homeland was partitioned by the British in 1947 and Lahore, the capital of the Sikh Democratic Republic of Punjab, the nerve center of Punjabi culture and headquarter of Punjabi press was denied to Sikhs and transferred to Pakistan by the British at the time of the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent.

After gaining independence, the congress government of India dominated by radical Hindus, officially recognized *Shastri* (now Hindi) i.e, the vernacular spoken in the united provinces (Agra Wa Auvadh) around the cities of Delhi and Lucknow, as the official language of India. Thereafter Hindi came to be symbolized as the language of all Hindus irrespective of the region they lived in. The Punjabi Hindu fundamentalists disowned Punjabi language and propagated that Punjabi was the language of the Sikh Nation only as it was the language of their scriptures (Guru Granth Sahib); the mother tongue of the Punjabi Hindu was Hindi. The Punjabi Hindu spoke Punjabi, but when it came to writing he felt more at home with English or Urdu and refused to accept Punjabi as his mother tongue, which was an absolute lie and when the Sikhs said their language was Punjabi, the Hindus sometimes accused them of motives beneath one's dignity to accept. Not only had the Sikh to defend his language but with that his honour as a patriot as well. When the Punjabi Hindus finally were reconciled to the inescapable fact that Punjabi was to be their mother tongue, they trotted out a lame excuse that Gurmukhi was not a proper script for Punjabi. They wanted it to be written in '*Dev Naagri*' (ਦੇਵ ਨਾਗਰੀ) script and not in Gurmukhi script.

Secondly, shortly after independence the government of India announced that boundaries of all the Indian States would be redrawn along linguistic lines and consequently, this was done

for all the 14 major languages spoken in India except Punjabi. The Sikhs, therefore, raised the demand for the creation of a “Punjabi speaking state of the Punjab” through a campaign of non-violence in-order to defend the Sikh traditions and identity in addition to their cultural, linguistic, religious, economic and other interests. The Hindu organizations reacted by appealing to members of their community to formally disown Punjabi language. The Hindus in Punjab registered their language as Hindi in the census of 1951. Hindu organizations like Arya Samaj, Hindu Maha Sabha and Jan Sangh opposed the Sikh demand vehemently. The Hindus of Punjab and the Press dominated by Arya Samajist Hindus dubbed the Sikh demand as a stepping-stone towards the creation of an “independent Sikh State”. Hindu Sikh riots broke out in many towns. The Hindu congress government with Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru as Prime Minister and Sardar Partap Singh Kairon as Chief Minister of Punjab opposed, each and every Sikh demand. Both in India and abroad the government-controlled media projected that the Sikhs demand an independent Sikh State. The Sikhs cajoled, threatened, pleaded, marched and suffered to win a “Punjabi speaking state,” but India resisted.

Both Pt Nehru and Kairon, the arch opponents of the Sikh demand, died in 1964. Lal Bahadur Shastri became the next Prime Minister of India. Sant Fateh Singh, the then president of Sharomani Akali Dal, threatened to launch *morcha* (agitation) for the creation of Punjabi speaking state. Clouds of war between India and Pakistan were looming large at that time. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri gave an understanding to the Sikh leadership to concede their demand provided they co-operated with the government in case of war between India and Pakistan. War broke out between India and Pakistan. The Sikhs played a remarkable role for defending the Indian borders. Ultimately on the conclusion of the Indo-Pakistan war in September 1965 in which the Sikh peasantry played a notable role helping Indian troops on the front line, a commission was appointed to demarcate Punjabi speaking areas from the Hindi speaking. In 1966, the already truncated Punjab was split into four states: Haryana, Himachal, Union Territory of Chandigarh and ‘Punjabi speaking Punjab’. The division of the state was done by the congress government dominated by radical Hindus on communal lines and not on linguistic basis leaving large tracts of Punjabi speaking population out of the ‘Punjabi Speaking Punjab’.

The Punjab Legislative Assembly under the Chief Ministership of Sardar Lashman Singh Gill in 1967, legislated and made Punjabi in Gurmukhi script as the official language of the Punjab and thereafter, the development of Punjabi language and production of Punjabi literature began in the right earnest.

Punjabi language has its own expressions and manifestations amongst the languages of the world. It is not in any way inferior to any other language. Unlike English Punjabi has a specific-name for each and every relationship, which indicates its cultural strength. Hierarchy in Punjabi families is very important and at a very young age children learn the appropriate kinship terms. One particular example of precise meaning of kinship names in Punjabi might be given as a demonstration, for instance an aunt might be called:

*Masee* if she is mother's sister

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*Mamee* if she is mother's brother's wife

*Bhooa* if she is father's sister

*Chachee* if he is father's younger brother's wife

*Tae* if she is father's elder brother's wife

The richness of the Punjabi language can be further gauged from many other examples for instance human excreta is called *ghunh* (gUMh), in case of buffalo / cow it is called *Phos* (ਫੋਸ), camel passes *laidnay* or *laiday* (ਲੈਡਣੇ , ਲੈਡੇ), goat passes *maingna* (ਮੈਂਗਣਾ), a horse passes out *liddh* (ਲਿੱਦ) and so on. Similarly a buffalo / in heat is called *boli hoee*, a bitch in heat is called *mushkee hoee*, a mare in heat is called *vaigee hoee*, a shee camel is called *Bahaar vich* and so on.



## **A brief account of the Sikh Civilization, Culture, Art and Craft etc.**

Geographically, the Sikh homeland lies in the northwest at the periphery of the Indian subcontinent. Because of its location it has been natural land-gate for invasions of the Indian subcontinent from the Middle-East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, through the passes in the mountains on its northwest borders, since 2000 B.C. Centuries of successive raids of foreign invasions left Punjab utterly ruined. Every invader tried to destroy local culture, especially its language and impose his own culture / language on the local people, but the Punjabis and Punjabi language remained unvanquished. The development of art, culture and education, which need peaceful atmosphere for growth, was severely hampered in the Punjab during this long tumultuous period of time. The Punjab, which forms major portion of the Indus Valley and was the fountain head of the Indus Valley civilization / culture stood utterly ruined. Till the end of 15<sup>th</sup> century its people had no written literature, no inspiring religion, no commerce and no education. The invaders variously called it Sapt Sindhu, Sindhu Des, Taka des, Bahika Des, Jataka Des, Hafat Hindu, Pentopotamia etc; and finally during the Muslim rule here in the sixteenth century, in 1590 CE; Emperor Akbar named it Punjab, the name, which has persisted since then.

The major language spoken and understood by the common people in the Punjab has been variously and contemptuously called *Sindh Sagri, Taki or Takri, Prakrit, Sauraseni Apabhrams, Zabane Jattan, Jatki, Hindvi, Sahaskriti, Desi and Lahori* etc, by the invading people. Guru Nanak (1469-1539) founded Sikhism in Punjab in 1496 A.D, towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He preached in the local vernacular of the Punjab. At the time of the birth of Sikhism, the language spoken and understood by the people in and around Lahore was called '*Lahori*' and people used its regional dialects to communicate among themselves in different parts of the Punjab. Although Lahori was the spoken language of the people of the Punjab since prehistoric times, it did not possess a script before the birth of Sikhism. Guru Nanak developed a script for the vernacular of the Punjab and wrote an alphabet of thirty five letters, completed the script with acrophils and laid rules for its grammar. The script was named *Gurmukhi* (the script used for the language which flowed from the mouth of Guru) by his successor, Guru Angad Dev. Gradually with the passage of time, the dialect of the Punjab, came to be called *Punjabi*, but its script continues to be called *Gurmukhi*. Both *Punjabi* language and its script *Gurmukhi* form the basis of Sikh culture.

Thus Sikh religion, Sikh culture, Punjab the name of this region in the Indian subcontinent and Gurmukhi script for the Punjabi language were born here almost simultaneously. Eighty percent of the people of the Punjab are dependent on agriculture and out of them eighty percent are Sikhs, hence any art, craft, culture and civilization of the Punjab is Sikh in origin. The Sikhs established their own rule here in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; after which the Sikh culture, art and craft etc started flourishing here in the right earnest.

### **Sikh Civilization**

Punjab, the Sikh homeland forms major portion of the Indus valley, which is one of the oldest civilization in the world. Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in Punjab in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It was embraced by people belonging to various native tribes in small numbers, but the “Jatt tribe” of central Punjab called “Majha” embraced Sikhism en-masse. Now Sikhism has gone global and is the fifth largest world religion.

The Sikh Gurus introduced city civilization in Punjab. No Sikh Guru settled in his ancestral village, but instead founded a new model town for his family and followers to give a new and fuller content to the secular living of their people. Guru Nanak founded the first Sikh town on the western bank of River Ravi in Shakargarh tehsil of the Punjab and named it Kartarpur (now in Pakistan). After him the towns of Khadur Sahib, Goindwal, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Sri Hargobindpur, Kartarpur (Bist Doab), Keeratpur Sahib, Anandpur Sahib etc; in the Punjab were founded and developed by the Sikh Gurus on the main trade routes. The cities founded by them were preplanned and not haphazard. Stone, brick and lime, instead of mud, were used as building materials. All these towns had plenty of water supply from public wells, brick lined streets, public baths, tanks and very good drainage system. From the time of the sixth Guru these cities were girdled with forts and fortresses to take care of their defense requirements. These towns served as centers for the development of commerce, art, education, banking, trade, industry etc. and since then Punjab and the Sikhs have become leaders in all fields of life in the Indian subcontinent. The area of Punjab on both sides of the river Ravi, called Majha i.e, central Punjab, is the fountainhead of Sikhism, Sikh culture and the Sikh civilization.

### **Sikh towns founded and developed by Sikh Gurus**

Following towns were founded and developed by the Sikh Gurus as centers of Sikh religion, Sikh art, architecture, Sikh culture and Sikh civilization:

1. Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) in Rachna Doab,
  2. Khadur, Goindwal, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Chheherta and Sri Hargobindpur in Bari Dab,
  3. Kartarpur, Kiratpur Sahib, Chak Nanki and Anandpur Sahib in Bist Doab.
- The land for founding these towns was either provided by the Sikh devotees or was purchased by the Sikh Gurus. Sikh Gurus never took any land grants from the rulers. All Sikh Gurus or their parents were born in the central Punjab called Majha within a radius of about fifty miles around Jhabal in the Suba of Lahore. This area forms the fountain head of Sikhism.

### **SIKH CULTURE**

The dictionary meaning of the word culture is “intellectual development,” where as sociologically culture represents a whole complex, which includes language, knowledge, belief systems, art, technology, food, fashion, symbols, music, dance, laws, customs, pursuits, behaviours, ideals, pleasures, dreams and any other capabilities or habits acquired by man as a member of society in common parlance or every day use and are passed on to succeeding

generations. Sikh culture is totally based on Gurmat. Any thing contrary to Gurmat is not Sikh culture.

Language forms the most important tool of a culture, viz; Hebrew (Jews-Judaism) English (Christians-Christianity), Sanskrit (Hindus-Hinduism), Arabic (Muslims-Islam), Pali (Buddhists-Buddhism) and Punjabi (Sikhs-Sikhism). Guru Arjan Dev the fifth Guru of the Sikhs created the holy Sikh scripture, Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) as the revealed and final doctrinal authority of Sikhism in Punjabi language with Gurmukhi script. Thus Punjabi language forms the identity of the Sikh culture. In addition to the Punjabi language, hospitality and humane love is an organic trait of Sikh culture. The warmth of 'you are mine' is in born. The Sikhs excel in social intercourse. They are irrepressibly extroverts. They are open-minded people and share the festivities with other communities. They believe in the universal golden principle of 'live and let live'. They are people of today and tomorrow, yet proud of yesterday.

Equality of mankind (egalitarianism) is the biggest trait of the Sikh culture and it is found in all spheres of Sikh way of life irrespective of caste, creed, race, gender or social, economic or political status of the individual and is marked by, *Sangat--praying* together as equals, *Pangat--sitting* together as equals, *Langar*: eating together as equals, *Sarovar*: bathing in the same pool as equals, *Pahul*: drinking Amrit from the same bowl as equals, *Karah Parshad*: accepting Karah Parshad as equals, equality of name: compulsory ending of the all Sikh names with 'Singh' for males and 'Kaur' for females, equality of dress: Turban for males and dupatta for females with or without a small turban (*Keski*) under it, *Kameez*, *Kachhehra* and observance of Sikh religious symbols as equals by the initiated Sikhs. Truthful living, social justice, peaceful co-existence, sharing, *Sewa* and *Simran* are other significant traits of Sikh culture.

Idolatry is strictly prohibited in Sikh culture. Any act or even a tinge of such idea is fiercely contested. Sikh habits are totally different from other systems. They maintain their faith on "Waheguru" in happiness and sorrow. Saying, '*Waheguru*' in the face of a calamity is a matter of courage and deep conviction in God. They traditionally distribute *Karah Parshad* in sorrow too. After death in a family, wailing and crying is strictly prohibited in Sikhism. They maintain dignified appearance in the face of heavy odds and abhor label of cowardice. A Sikh has become synonymous with bravery, courage, honesty, fairplay and empathy. He is ever ready to help the needy.

In Sikhism woman, the mother of mighty heroes is elevated to the highest position in the hierarchy of human beings. In Sikh culture she symbolizes 'the principle of eternal creation'. She is granted equal status with man in all aspects of life. She must be honoured in the same way as the man, each completes the other. She is *ardhangini* i.e if completeness of life were taken as a unit woman was one half, the other half being the man. Veiling of women is prohibited in Sikh culture, but vulgar display of body or parts of the body is against the Sikh culture. A head covering, turban for males and *Chunni* or *Dupatta* for females is part of Sikh culture. Naked head in Sikhism is treated as a mark of disrespect. Music occupies prime position in Sikh culture. The entire Guru Granth sahib (The holy Sikh scripture) is structured on the basis of Ragas-- Classical music (Gurmat Sangeet)

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in which the portions are supposed to be sung. Sikh music is of two types, religious music (Shabad Keertan) and folk music. However, sensual music is prohibited in Sikhism.

The Sikhs are very lively people and their male folk dances of *Bhangra* and *Jhoomar* are known throughout the world. Similarly, *Giddha* and *Kikali* are well known Sikh female folk dances. However ritualistic dancing is not permitted in Sikhism. The Sikh cultural ethos are best represented in the *Melas* (fairs), which form an important part of Sikh culture in the Punjab, where their cultural life can be seen in full bloom. The Sikh folklores, folk dances, folk customs, their martial and traditional games, folk traditions, folk tales and legends can be witnessed there. Important Sikh Melas are Vaisakhi, Diwali, Maghi and Hola Moballa, which draw audience from every nook and corner of Punjab. *Nakleas* and *Bhands* form an important part of the Punjabi Sikh culture. Like all other cultures of the world, Sikh culture is not static and keeps on making additions to its rich heritage.

### **Status of woman in Sikh culture**

Before the birth of Sikhism the plight of the woman in the Indian subcontinent was highly deplorable. She had the most inferior position in the society. In Hinduism she was treated at par with animals. Tulsi Dass in his Ram Chrit Manas Says, “ਢੋਰ ਗਵਾਰ ਸੂਦਰ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਨਾਰੀ॥ ਯਹ ਸਭ ਤਾੜਨ ਕੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ॥”-

*Dhor, ganwar, shudra, pashu, nari, yeh sab tarin ke adhikari*”-i.e, “The stupid person, the Shudra, animal and woman all deserve reprimand”. Manu the Hindu law-giver has attributed all that is good and great to males and on the contrary, assigned all that is bad and obnoxious to females. Woman was considered an obstacle in the holy path. Even Bhagat Kabir did not speak very high of woman and he has described her as a source of lust and passions and refuse of the world. In Buddhism a male Bhikshu is not supposed to touch and rescue a drowning woman even if she was his mother. Dighambra Jains believe that a woman cannot reach Kavalya and has to achieve first male incarnation. She was assumed to be defiled and scorn worthy. Upon parent’s death only sons had the right to perform funeral and cremation ceremony. Even emersion of remains (ashes) at the holy places (which is considered to be a help in salvation of the soul) has to be performed by a male child. This is why the birth of a female child was not welcomed and considered a curse. Hence woman was required to produce a male child. Man’s right and undue control over woman had increased to the point that woman was like any other material possession of man and could even be given as alm (*Kanya Daan*) or wagered in gambling as was done by Raja Nul and Pandavas. Woman was considered so low that she was not allowed to wear Janeu (sacred thread). On death of her husband she was made to burn herself with him. This inhuman and tragic ritual was ironically called “Sati”, a sacrifice for Truth.

The position in Sikhism however is totally different. One of the most notable social improvements introduced by Sikhism is the emancipation of women. The Sikh Gurus laid down norms of ethical equality of woman with man and granted her an exalted status. Sikhism does not consider woman inferior to man rather her position has been eulogized in Guru Granth Sahib (The holy Sikh scripture): □ “ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ॥ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੇਸਤੀ ਭੰਡੋ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ॥ ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ

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ਭਾਲੀਅ ਭੰਡੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ॥ ਸੇ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥ ਭੰਡੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਿਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ॥--*Bhand jam-meeai bhand nim-meeai bhand mangan weeah. Bhandah hovai dostee bhande chalai raah. Bhand muua bhand bhaaleeai bhande hovai bandhaan. So kion mandaa aakhiai jit jammah raajaan. Bhandah hee bhand oopjai bhandai baajh na koe. Nanak bhandai baahiraa eko sacaa so-ay--*. From the woman is our birth; in woman's womb are we conceived. To woman are we engaged; to woman are we wedded. The woman is our friend and from woman is the family. If one woman dies, we seek another, through the woman are the bonds of the world. Why call the woman evil who gives birth to kings? From a woman, a woman is born. Without the woman there can be none. Nanak says, only the True Lord is without a woman”-(GGS Var Asa Ml, p.473).

- Guru Nanak says, “ਪੁਰਖ ਮਹਿ ਨਾਰਿ ਨਾਰਿ ਮਹਿ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਬੁਝਹੁ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ॥-*Purkh Meh Naar, Naar Meh Purkha Boojho Brahm Giani*” (bid, p.879)-man is born of woman and woman of man, realize this O’ God-enlightened man.
- “ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਇਹ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਬਹਨਿ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਇ॥ ਏਕ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੇਇ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਇ॥--They are not wife and husband who sit together. Rather they are wife and husband who have one spirit in two bodies”. (GGS, p788).
- ਲੋਕ ਵੇਦ ਗੁਣ ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਚਿ ਅਰਧ ਸਰੀਰੀ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰੀ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸੁਖ ਫਲ ਨਿਹਚਉ ਨਾਰੀ[[--“From temporal as well as from spiritual point of view, woman is man's other half and assists him to salvation. She assuredly brings happiness to the virtuous”. (Var 5. Bhai Gurdas)
- Guru Hargobind during the course of his conversation with Sant Samrath Ram Dass, the mentor of Shiva jee Marhatta called woman, “*Aurat eemaan--ਔਰਤ ਈਮਾਨ*”---Woman is the conscience of man. This shows unequivocally the high esteem in which a woman is required to be, held in Sikhism.

### Music in Sikh culture

Music is God’s own language, which has the magical effects on human mind and Soul. It is one of the fine arts of the world and occupies prime position in Sikhism. Sikhs love music and would sit through all night performances. Sikh music is of two types:

1. Sikh religious music
2. Sikh folk music

### Sikh Religious Music (*Gurmat Sangeet / Shabad Kirtan*)

Sikh Gurus understood the power of music and it was for this reason that they conveyed their message in sacred and devotional music. This sublime music called *Kirtan* inspires the disciple to higher spiritual goals. It promotes spiritual vision and is quite different from ordinary wordly music that is meant for entertainment. Divine poetry sung in appropriate Ragaas in perfect accompaniment of musical instruments stir the mind of the listener. This magical impact helps an

ordinary human mind for a change in his behaviour towards betterment. Music in both vocal and instrumental formats helps the devotees to meditate on the Invincible God. Guru Granth Sahib contains excellent formats of Divine- Poetry to stir the mind, soul and heart of the reader and listeners. Gurbani Kirtan creates Divine environment wherein the pangs of affected human mind and soul get new lease of fruitful living. This Divine Balm leaves soothing and rejuvenating effect on the defeated soul. The effect of tender words of Shabad, in Guru Darbar, release waves of Divine elative comfort to the ailing minds. This lasts in the subconscious mind of the dedicated listener for long duration thereafter while he is doing his routine work in the following hours.

The entire holy book of Sikhism, ‘Guru Granth Sahib’ except for the initial seven and the concluding seventy seven pages is structured on the basis of *ragaas* in which the portions are supposed to be sung. *Bani* under *Shabad Kirtan* is to be sung according to the prescribed ragas, raag forms, singing styles, music signs, *Rhaao*, *Ank* (digit) etc. This style of singing is known as *Gurmat Sangeet* called *Shabad Kirtan*. Each *Raga* is associated with the specific timings (*pehar*) of the day or night or sometimes with particular season, and is designed, by virtue of its constitution, to express a certain mood or sentiment. 24 hours of the day and night have been divided into three hour time span each of a *Pehar* making 8 *Pehars* as described ante. There are various Raagas specified for each particular *pehar* and the learned Gurbani Kirtan performers choose Shabads from those hymns which have been composed accordingly. The impact of the specific Raaga can be appreciated at a specified time for that Raaga. This time theory, which governs the *Ragaa* is the most unique feature of the Sikh religious music.

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Raga</b>
6 AM-9 AM:	Bairari, Devghandhari
9 AM-12 PM:	Saarang, Suhi, Bilaaval, Gujri, Gond, Todi
12-3PM:	Vadhans, Maru, Dhanasari
3-6 PM:	Maajh, Gauri, Tilang, Tukhari
6-9 PM:	Sri, Basant, Maali Gaura, Jaitsri, Kedara, Kalyaan
9-12 PM-AM:	Bihagra, Nat Narayan, Sorath, Malaar, Kaanra, Jaijaiwanti
12 AM-3AM:	No Ragas from Guru Granth Sahib
3 AM-6AM:	Asa, Ram Kali, Bhairav, Parbhati

Bani composed in some Ragas has seasonal effects, for instance Raag Basant is very popular raga and is sung during the entire season of Spring (*Basant-Ritu*). Shabads with this theme of happiness are clustered under this raga in Guru Granth Sahib. Also, Malaar raga can be sung at any time in the rainy season. Shabads with this theme of separation are clustered under this raga in Guru Granth Sahib.

Who are Sikhs?

The *Maryada* (Tradition) of *Gurmat Sangeet* was established by the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev ji. Today *Gurmat Sangeet* has its own recognized placement in Indian classical Divine music.

Indian classical music has two main branches: Hindustani and Karnatic, constituted by 84 Ragas, the mention of which is found on the last two pages of Guru Granth Sahib (1429-1430) in the *Rag Maala*, which says that there are major six Ragas (*Khast-raag*) and thirty Raginies. Together they have their off-springs. Hence there are some Raagas which form parental axis along with the major Raagnies. Their collective number becomes 84. *Rag maala* in Guru Granth Sahib gives their breakup thus: “*Khasht* (6) *raag un gaa-aio sang raagni tees* (30). *Sabhay puttaraagin kay aatharah* (18) *das* (10) *bees* (20) making a total 84.

Guru Granth Sahib has representation of 31 Shudh and 31 Mishrit Raagas in which the Bani is composed. The Hindustani and Karnatic Ragas which did not conform to the ideology of Sikhism did not find place in the holy book of Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib. Some of the Raagas included in Guru Granth Sahib are such that were developed by the Sikh Gurus from *Lok-Dhuns* e.g. Aasa, Tilang, Maajh and Vadhans etc. 31 *ragas* are included in Guru Granth Sahib. The 31 *ragas*, which appear in Guru Granth Sahib are: *Sri, Majh, Gauri, Asa, Gujri, Devgandhari, Bihagra, Vadhans, Sorath, Dhanasri, Jaitsri, Todi, Bairari, Tilang, Suhi, Bilawal, Gaund, Ramkali, Nat Narain, Mali Gauda, Maru, Tukhari, Kedara, Bhairav, Basant, Sarang, Malar, Kanada, Kalyan, Parbhati* and *Jaijai-wanti*. The ancient Ragas like *Megh, Deepak, Maalkauns, Jog* etc, which create more than desired (excessive) tranquility, hype, sadness or happiness have not been used in Gurbani and if used at all, then in a mixture with other Ragas viz, Gauri-deepki, Basant-hindol etc. Ragas in Guru Granth Sahib begin with Sri Rag. There are a large number of Shabads pertaining to Jogis in Rag Ram Kali, whereas Asa, Suhi and Tilang have more Sermons pertaining to Muslims, because Muslim Divines freely made use of these Ragas. Sikh religious music has two subdivisions:-

(a) *Shabad Kirtan*

(b) *Dhadi Darbar*

### **Instruments used for Sikh Religious Music**

The Gurus while creating *Gurmat Sangeet* (*Shabad Kirtan*) developed and chose special musical instruments. Playing on *Rabab* by Bhai Mardana during Guru Nanak's time, *Jori, Siranda* and *Israj* during the period of Guru Arjan Dev, *Taus* and *Dhad-Sarangi* for Vaar singing during the period of the 6<sup>th</sup> Guru, *Mirdang* the 9<sup>th</sup> Guru's time, *Tanpura* and *Dilruba* during Guru Gobind Singh's time are peculiar, which explicitly proves the use of special instruments. The use of the '*Tanti*' (stringed) instruments is especially useful for purity of notes, of Ragas and traditional excellence of *Gur Shabad Kirtan*. Dhadis use *Sarangi* and *Dhads* for singing ballads (*Varan*). During *Nagar Kirtan* and *Parbhat Pheris Dholki, Chimta and Chhanay* are used.

These days *ragis* generally perform *kirtan* with harmonium and *tablas* (drums). Harmonium was developed in Europe in 1842 and subsequently introduced in Punjab by the Hindustani court musicians and thereafter adopted by the Sikh *Keertankaars* (Sikh religious musicians) for performing keertan.

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### Sikh Folk Music

It includes: *Kissey, waraan, jugni* and *mahia, dohray, tappay, suhag, ghorian, Alahunian* etc. Folk music is part of every day Sikh life in Punjab. There is no festival or event in Sikh life, which is without music.

### Commonly used Instruments for Folk Music:

*Dhol, toombi, algozay, vanjali (bansuri)* and *been* (ਬੀਨ) are the commonly used Sikh folk musical instruments in Punjab.

**Sensual music (Saakat Sangeet)** is prohibited in Sikhism.

### Dancing in Sikh culture / religion

Sikhism does not prohibit any sensible hobby, entertainment, pleasure or enjoyment, Gurbani says:

- “ਨਚਣੁ ਕੁਦਣੁ ਮਨ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨੁ ਮਨਿ ਭਉ ਤਿਨਾ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਉ॥–*Nachan kuddan mann ka chaao Nanak jin mann bhao (Bau) tina mann bhaao (Bwau)*” i.e, “Dancing and jumping are mind's yearnings. Nanak, those who have God's fear in their mind have real joy” (GGS, p.465).

However, Sikhism is definitely opposed to ritualistic bhagti by clapping of hands/ *Chhanay* (ਛੈਣੇ), *Khartalaan* (ਖੜਤਾਲਾਂ) and dancing in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. All these *Vaishnava--* Hindu practices are strictly prohibited in Sikhism. Gurbani says:

- “ਪਾਖੰਡਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਨਿਰਤਿ ਦੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ॥–*Pakhand bhagat nirat dukh hoe.*--To exhibit devotion through ritualistic dancing leads to suffering” (GGS, p364).

Sikh mysticism is neither ritualistic performances (Vedas) nor outwardly acts of show (Vaishnavism--Bhagwad Gita) but teaches that the presence of God, the Timeless Being (*Akaal Purkh*) is to be “discovered” within each human spirit. All forms (*Sarguna*) are informed by the formless (*Nirguna*). One should foster an “exhbrant love for the Lord”. To love God love His creation.

The male dance of Hindus is called *Taandav* (ਤਾਂਡਵ) and the female dance is called *lasai* (ਲਾਸਯ). Jointly it is called ‘*Nirat*’ (ਨਿਰਤ). In Hinduism dances are influenced by religion, Lord Krishna’s *Baal Lila and Prem Lila, Raas Lila* in UP, *Keligopal* in Asam, *Maharaj* in Manipur, *Dahi-Handi* in Maharashtra and *Garbha-Rass* in Gujrat glorify the life of Lord Krishna through dances, whereas Sikh dances diverge from religious themes. None of the Sikh dances have religious themes as their basis. Sikh dances are performed collectively. They are spontaneous expression of the myrth and joy of the toiling people. *Bhangra, Ghidda* and *Jhoomar* are performed with beats of



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dhol (drum), claps and a few words of a simple song. These folk dances do not relate any story or theme therefore no hero or heroine's role is essential.

The male and female dances of the Sikhs in the Punjab expressing happiness and joy are distinctly different. Male dances are, *Bhangra and Jhoomar*, whereas female dances are *Giddha* and *Kikali*.

## **ARTS AND CRAFTS**

### **OF**

## **THE SIKH HOMELAND - PUNJAB**

Arts and craft as a phrase mean decorative designs and handicraft. In this field also, Punjab, the Sikh homeland has an ancient and distinguished tradition which people have maintained in spite of the odds of time. The important items of art and craft of the Sikh homeland, Punjab include:

- Plastering of mud walls and drawing ferns, plants, several fascinating motifs by women of Punjab.
- Paper mache utensils (gohle) for storing house hold necessities in colourful designs were made out of paste made by women in Punjab by mixing paper and various kinds of earth.
- Floor mats and curtains were woven from *Sarkanda*. *Chhaj* used for separating edible food from the grain was also made from *Sarkanda*. Household items like *Chiks*, *Bohey*, *Pitarian*, *Changeran*, *Chhikkoos* and *Mooras* were also made from *Sarkanda*. Rattlers (*Chhankanas*) and other toys for children were also made from *Sarkanda*, which used to grow in plenty in Punjab before green revolution. Although these crafts of Punjab are not yet completely forgotten yet they are moving fast towards fading out.
- Weaving of *Nawar* for beds and *Durries* on myriad motives and designs especially by young girls in villages has been a long tradition in Punjab.
- Embroidery: Needlework of Punjab is aspect of life and the beautiful designs, which dextrous fingers of Punjab's proverbially beautiful women create, have such a wealth of form and motif that they defy enumeration. Some of these are called *Baghs* literally: a garden, *Phulkari*,s literally: flower work. The patterns of needlework on bed spreads, *Chunnis*, *Dupattas* and shirts and *Salvars* are still different.
- Punjabi hand fans (*Pakhian*) like the Japanese are almost typical and their leaves are made in much the same way as *Phulkaris* etc are made.

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- The shoes made in different parts of Punjab have different traditions. Earlier shoes, which have come to be known as Punjabi *Juttis* throughout the world were embroidered with gold or silver wires all over in different patterns covering every part of the pair so that it looked as if it was made of gold or silver. Even now golden and silver threads are used to embroider these shoes, with the quality of these world famous shoes, still being maintained.
- Tailoring: The Punjabi *Salwar* and *Kameez*, typical Punjabi Sikh female dress attracts the attention worldwide.
- The woodwork of Punjab has also been traditionally famous. Artistic beds with comfortable, skillfully made backrests filled with mirrors and carved colourful legs called *Pawas*, low seats called *Peeras* and *Peerian* were made by carpenters in every village. Sikh carpenters designed, Sikh chair based on early nineteenth century English examples, but it had a kind of new looped-arm to allow sitting in squatted position, giving it a novel Sikh effect. The town of Kartarpur in Bist Jalandhar Boab is famous for its woodwork. Amritsar excelled in ivory and woodcarving. Specimens of carving can be seen on some old doors, windows, panels, railings, ceilings and facades of balconies. The art of woodcarving owed much to the large number of Sikh carpenters of Amritsar.
- Gold and silver ornaments in Sikh style are manufactured and sold in villages and towns of Punjab. *Bazar Sarafan* in Amritsar is the biggest market in north India dealing with jewellery. Work in gold and silver leaf and in gold and silver thread is well known in the Amritsar city from its foundation.
- Pottery: All sorts of clay and metal pottery manufactured in old and modern Punjabi Sikh style in different designs is available in Punjab.
- Textile: Kashmiri craftsmen manufactured shawls here. Amritsar is still very popular for its shawls and textile.

## Sikh Architecture

The Sikhs have their own distinct architecture, which forms an important distinctive feature of the Sikh culture and civilization. The first building constructed in Sikh style is Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar, a marvel of late 16<sup>th</sup> century. The founder of the Sikh architecture was Guru Arjan Dev. He designed and built Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple).

The cities founded and developed by the Sikh Gurus in Punjab are well planned and present an example of the Sikh architecture. The Sikh architecture flourished and reached its zenith during the Sikh rule in the Punjab with Maharaja Ranjit Singh patronizing the buildings of forts, palaces and bungalows (residential places) etc. The Bungalow of the Ramgarhia chief Jassa Singh in Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Complex Amritsar is an artistic legacy of the Sikh architecture of late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The buildings of Ram Bagh palace of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Gobindgarh forte, Khalsa College Amritsar and the palace of Maharaja Sher Singh at Batala present the examples of Sikh architecture

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of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Characteristics of Sikh architecture are gilded fluted domes, cupolas, kiosks and stone lanterns on the roofs of the Gurdwara buildings.

The Sikh Gurdwaras built in Sikh style all over the world stand uniquely different from the Hindu Mandirs, Muslim Mosques, Christian Churches, Jewish Synagogues and Buddhist Monastries.

### **Sikh Jurisprudence**

The Sikhs most faithfully abide by the law of the land they live in. However, they have their own jurisprudence in the matters relating to their religion, politics, inheritance and social dealings, including marriage. The Sikh legal system is based upon Guru Granth Sahib, Dasam Granth, the writings of Bhai Gurdas, the writings of Bhai Nand Lal, the Sikh customs, the Sikh customary laws and the Sikh traditions. The sanction of the Sikh jurisprudence vests in the Sarbat Khalsa, in the name of Akal Takhat under the patronage of Guru Granth Sahib. Father gives nationality to children. Only males inherit the property of their father, the female receives share from the property of her father-in-law or husband.

### **Sikh Politics**

The base of Sikh politics is religion and any leader who defies Sikh religious doctrines, values, traditions and institutions is bound to lose his grip among the Sikhs. The institutions governing the politics in Sikhism are, Gurdwara and Akal Takhat, the doctrines being 'Guru Granth' and 'Guru Khalsa' Panth, while the traditions include: Sarbat Khalsa (the Sikh commonwealth) and Gurmatta (the Sikh system of consensus). Any Sikh leader who tries to make religion subservient to politics is bound to be doomed.

The Sikhs believe in democracy, secularism and egalitarianism. Sikh democracy is not the rule of the majority even the smallest minority too has complete say in this ideology. 'Sangat', 'Panches', 'Sarbat Khalsa' and 'Gurmatta' form the basis of democracy in Sikh politics. Sikhism preaches a secularism, which respects other people's right to be different. Sikhism preaches egalitarianism and believes in granting equal rights to every one irrespective of caste, creeds, gender or race etc.

### **Sikh Marriage Act**

Punjab was the only country in the entire world, which was under the Sikh rule and acted as a buffer between the Hindu and Muslim worlds. It was annexed by the British in 1849 A.D. During the Sikh rule in the Punjab, there was neither any written constitution nor any written legal code and it was governed by unwritten hereditary / customary laws. After its annexation, the British merged Punjab with rest of the Indian subcontinent (Hindustan) already under their control and enforced here written constitution having civil and criminal procedures. The Sikhs in their independent country (Punjab) solemnized their marriages (*Anand Karaj*) according to the Sikh rites called "*Lawan*" as enshrined in their Holy Book, "Guru Granth Sahib"-Rag Suhi pp. 773-774, but the Sikh marriage ceremony did not figure in the British Legal System.

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The Hindus of the Punjab in collaboration with their co-religionists from other parts of the Hindustan cleverly started describing Sikhism as a sect of Hinduism and contended in the courts of law that since Sikh Anand Marriage did not figure in the legal system, therefore, the marriages solemnized in the Sikh way were constitutionally illegal and hence were not acceptable in the courts of law and the children born out of such wedlocks were illegal / illegitimate. They wanted the Sikhs to solemnize their marriages according to the Hindu Vedic rites. Under the circumstances the Sikhs sought enactment of Sikh Marriage Act from the British government in order to maintain and prove their separate existence and remove legal hurdles in the courts of law. They represented their case through Crown Prince Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, who, at that time was a member of the Punjab Legislative Council. He prepared a draft of the Sikh marriage Act called 'Anand Marriage Act' and sent it to the Imperial Council. However, during this period on account of completion of his term, Crown Prince Ripudaman Singh was replaced by the British with Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia, who presented the Anand Marriage Bill before the Imperial Legislative Council on 27 August 1909 A.D; council meeting was presided over by Viceroy Minto. After discussion the Bill was referred to select committee and Mr Sinha, Sir Herbert Rosley, Mr Merck and Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia were nominated as its members. The bill was passed on 22 October 1909 and became an act, in spite of its bitter opposition by Pujaris, Mahants and Hindus.

#### References

Sikh Dharam te Sikhi, ikk yatharthak vishleshan (Punjabi) by Dr Maan Singh Nirankari p.140-141.

## Symbols of Sikh sovereignty

**Sign of invocation in Sikhism:** ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Punjab-The Sikh Homeland,

The Sikh Empire, its capital was Lahore and the Sikh National government was called:

Sarkare Khalsa, the Sikh National government with international agreements,

Punjabi--The Sikh national language,

Gurmukhi—The script for Punjabi language,

'Guru Granth Sahib'--- The holy Sikh Scripture, Gurdwara:

The Sikh place of worship.

Gurdwara Darbar Sahib / Harmandar---Golden Temple—Spiritual World seat of Sikhism

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Who are Sikhs?

Amritsar—Theo-political capital of the Sikhs,

Akaal Takhat—Supreme Temporal seat of the Sikhs and Sikhism,

Nishan Sahib—The Sikh national flag,

Sikh National Emblem—Deg Teg Fateh,

Sikh national anthem: “Deg-O-Tego- Fateh-Nusrat-Berdarang-----Raj Karega Khalsa— Sikh national seal----The Seal of Akaal Takhat

Sikh national coins—Nanak Shahi coins.

Sikh national calendar—Nanak Shahi solar calendar,

Vaisakhi—Birth day of the Khalsa

International treaties of the Sikh Nation



**Gurdwara The Sikh place of worship**

Gurdwara is the Sikh place of worship, prayer and piety. It is the center of Sikh life. It is indestructible symbol of Sikh faith. Gurdwara emerged as the new edifice on the Indian subcontinent's religious landscape in the seventeenth century, when in 1604 AD, Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, in Amritsar, placed with reverence the first volume of Aad Granth in the building, which had been completed by him three years earlier. Till then Sikh place of worship was popularly called Dharamsal. First Dharamsal was established by Guru Nanak at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan).

The term Gurdwara is a combination of two Punjabi words; Guru and Dwara, literally meaning, Guru's door, but in Sikh theology it means, the Guru's house i.e, the house of the divine. It is the

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Sikh center of spiritual, social and educational activities. The term Gurdwara is purely Sikh in origin and it was coined by Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith and is found written in the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib on pages 351, 554, 730, 922, 933, 937, 1015, 1075 and 1234. Usually there are four parts of the complex: The main hall for worship, *Langar* (The Community kitchen), Serai also called Saran (inn i.e, residential area) and the school. All major Gurdwaras have all these facilities, but, in small Gurdwaras, one or more of these facilities may not be available. Every Gurdwara, besides religious worship, is expected to provide food and lodging to visitors/ travelers, free of cost. Hence, a Serai /-Saran (Inn i.e, Hostel), is usually attached to most of the Gurdwaras. A school to teach Punjabi language, Gurmukhi script, Sikh history, philosophy along with modern science and other languages is part of major / big Gurdwaras. Every Gurdwara has a *Jora Ghar-joVw Gr* (shoe house) outside the main complex for depositing the shoes, as shoes are not allowed inside the main Gurdwara complex and the visitor has to go bare foot after washing his / her hands and feet.

The main structure in the Gurdwara is a big hall, where Guru Granth Sahib wrapped in fine Rumalas is seated over a small bed (*Manji Sahib/also called Peerah Sahib*) with nice bedding on a raised platform in a *Palki* (palanquin) with *Chandoa/ Chanani*, hanging from the ceiling of the hall. The place where Guru Granth Sahib rests is the most decorated part of the Gurdwara. Except when it is being read, it is kept covered. The Granthi waves *Chaur-cOr* over Guru Granth Sahib. *Chanani and Chaur* are symbols of royalty and their presence is not functional Guru is *Sachcha Padshah* (True king/ King of Spiritual Realm)).

In a Gurdwara there are no images, altar or pulpit, the object of Sikh reverence is the scripture (Guru Granth Sahib) itself, and the Sikhs bow before it, walk around it and if they wish, find a space in the hall, sit cross legged on the floor in a position facing Guru Granth Sahib to listen the Ragis (religious musicians) proclaim verses from its sacred pages. A Sikh is supposed to join Sangat (congregation) in the Gurdwara as frequently as possible.

## **Difference between Gurdwara and Mandir (Temple)**

### **Gurdwara**

The Sikh place of worship is known as Gurdwara. In a Gurdwara there are no Images, Statues, Idols, Altar or Pulpit, the object of Sikh reverence is The Sikh Scripture---Guru Granth Sahib, and it is universal.

The Sikh worship in the Gurdwara is congregational, therefore the main structure in the Gurdwara is a big hall where Guru Granth Sahib wrapped in fine Rumalas is seated over a small bed (*Peerah Sahib*) with nice bedding on a raised platform under a chandoa hanging from the ceiling of the hall. The Sikhs bow before Guru Granth Sahib and if they wish find a space in the hall, sit cross legged on the floor in a position facing Guru Granth Sahib to listen the *Ragis* proclaim verses from its sacred pages.

The Gurdwara building is built on a level ground and there is no prohibition on the number and direction of doors and windows in any direction.

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### **Mandir (Temple)**

The Hindu place of worship is known as *Mandir* (Temple), *Devi- dwara or Shivdwara*. The objects of worship are Idols or Statues of different Hindu deities. Different Mandirs have statues of different deities and there is no universality.

The Hindu worship is not congregational like the Sikhs / the Christians / the Muslims and is mainly personal. The main structure of the temple where the image of the deity is installed is therefore based on the principle of having a *small garbha griha*. There is a passage for circumambulation of the *garbha griha*. This is the heart of the temple and the dome or the spire is normally above the *garbha griha*. Passage around the idol is an essential part of the structure of the temple as circumambulation after prayers is very necessary. There is a small passage called *antrala* (Vestibule), which connects the *Garbha Griha* to *Mandapa* or the pillard hall where devotees gather for worship. The entrance porch is called *Ardh-mandapa*.

The Hindu temple is built on a raised platform with stairs and has only one door, which is used both for entrance and exit purposes.

### ***Dera: Sant Dera / Baba Dera / Sant Baba Dera***

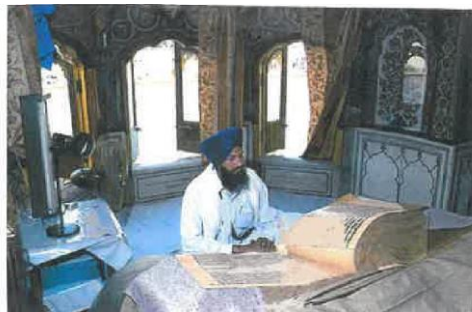
Settlement of a spiritual leader, where his followers get together to listen his sermons is called Dera. It is his personal property and is managed by himself alone or through his family trust and not by Sikh Sangat. The Sant Deras were established in Punjab in the Sikh Princely States in the *Malwa* region of the Punjab by the learned Brahmins, who came here from Banaras and Paryag after the British signed the peace treaty with Sarkare Khalsa in 1809. They came here to penetrate into the institutions of Sikhism as they had done before with Bhuddism, because the use of other methods to halt the progress and eliminate Sikhism by Brahmanism had failed. These Brahmins were patronized by the rulers of the princely states of the Punjab probably on the instructions of their British masters. The Brahmin and British nexus is well known to all concerned. These Brahmins assumed Sikh appearance. They set up their establishments in this region of the Punjab, called *Malwa*, between Gaggar and Jamna rivers. These establishments were named by them as *Sant Deras / Baba Deras / Sant Baba Deras*. Although these *Sant Babas* conducted the Sikh service in the presence of the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, but they performed not only un-Sikh but even anti-Sikh ritualistic practices of Brahmanism / Hinduism in their establishments. They also produced a lot of literature on Sikhism, introduced mythological stories in it and made several interpolations, which are now being used against the Sikh religion.

The Sikh Gurdwara Act was enacted in 1925, but it did not apply to the *Malwa* region of the Punjab falling under the control of the Princely Sikh States of the Punjab, therefore

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this *Malwa* region of the Punjab remained out of the control of Sharomani Gurdwara Parbadhak Committee and thus cut off from the practices and policies of the main stream Sikhism being observed in Majha and Doaba regions of the Punjab. Majority of the *Riasti* Sikhs became followers of these Babas / Sants. Neither the Sant Babas themselves nor their followers have ever accepted or followed the teachings of the Gurmat or the Sikh religious code of conduct published by the SGPC in 1945, but instead because of their Brahmanical bias they have always defied it with impunity. The Malwa Sikhs joined the main stream Sikhism only after the creation of the Punjab speaking state in 1966 and since then because of their numerical strength they have come to dominate the main stream Sikhism and refused to accept the established Sikh Religious Code of Conduct (Sikh Rehat Maryada), published and practiced by SGPC. The Sants Babas and their followers refuse to accept the authority of Akaal Takhat, the Supreme Temporal Seat of authority in Sikhism in Amritsar. Each Baba Dera has its own religious code of conduct (*Rehat Maryada*) and refuses to follow the religious code of conduct of the main stream Sikhism followed and published by the Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 1945. They defy the established and published Sikh religious code of conduct with impunity. Now these Sant Babas have spread internationally and established their Deras in different countries. They make exposition of the Sikh Scriptures according to *Vedanta* (Philosophy of Hinduism) and not according to Gurmat (Philosophy of Sikhism). They are trying their best to Hinduise Sikhism through their practices and preaching. All of them are Sikh in appearance, but majority of them are Hindu at heart and Brahmin in thought.

## Scriptures of Sikhism



**Guru Granth Sahib (The Holy Sikh Scripture)**

Guru Granth Sahib is the Holy Scripture of the Sikh faith. Guru Arjan Dev the 5<sup>th</sup> Sikh Guru, compiled it as the revealed and final doctrinal authority of Sikhism in the beginning of the seventeenth century. He started the compilation in 1601 and completed it in 1604 A.D. He called it '*Pothi Sahib*' / '*Granth*'. It was, recensed by Guru Gobind Singh in 1706 AD, when he entered the Gurbani of the 9<sup>th</sup> Guru, Guru Teg Bahadur, at Talwandi Sabo, now called Damdama Sahib. It



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was installed as Guru Eternal on October 5, 1708 by Guru Gobind Singh and since then it is called 'Guru Granth Sahib'.

The Sikhs believe Guru Granth Sahib as the 'living' embodiment of ten Gurus and it is the only focus of Sikh faith. Guru Granth Sahib is treated with the same respect as the human Gurus received. In addition to the hymns of the Sikh Gurus it contains the writings and hymns of saints and preachers with different religious backgrounds, whose philosophy conformed to the spirit of Sikhism. Many verses composed by Gurus are either a contradiction or clarification of a similar verse of a Bhagat or an answer to the questions raised by Bhagats in their compositions. From Sheikh Farid (born 1173) to Guru Teg Bahadur (died 1675), the galaxy of writers covers full five centuries of India's spiritual thought.

Guru Granth Sahib is a literary classic and a spiritual treasure. It throws light on the path leading to the highest goal of spirituality. It contains the eternal truth, proclaims God, and shows the way of His realization. It lays down moral and ethical rules for the development of the soul and religious commandments for the progress of morality and attainment of salvation. In it philosophy is propounded through the songs of love and devotion. The message of love, truth, contentment, humility, fatherhood of God, brotherhood of man, restraint of passions, mercy on living beings, purity of mind and body, search for the self and Higher Soul, equality of man and equality of man and woman, service to others, liberalism in the matter of food and clothing, and references to the political, economic and social life of the people of Hindustan during the fifteenth century and sixteenth century constitute the main contents of Guru Granth Sahib. It is a guide to Sikh way of life. Its goal is of the ideal man, who attains perfection by linking himself with God. References to *Vedas* (Hindu) and *Katebas* (Semitic) scriptures are also found in it. Guru Granth Sahib rejects all types of *Karam Kanda* (ritualism: Fasting, pilgrimage, penance and ritual sacrifice) and all formalism for spiritual attainment. It lays stress on selfless action performed in the best interest of the society. It condemns asceticism, which has the effect of negativism. It lays stress on the dynamic attitude towards life. It supports normal family life (*Grahisti jivan*) and social commitment. It recommends leading of a pure life whilst fighting temptations and imperfection of this world. It is the only scripture where each and every conceivable aspect of human life has been addressed, discussed and analysed. Mythological references are only illustrative and do not indicate any Guru's belief in mythological personages or their actions.

In its present lithographed diction, Guru Granth Sahib contains about 5894 Hymns and Verses mainly in Punjabi, Hindi, Braj, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Sindhi, Lehndi, Dhaki, Bengali and Marathi, in Gurmukhi script on 1430 pages, composed and arranged in well-known 31 Ragas i.e; tunes / musical settings (*Gurmat Sangeet*), except for the initial seven and last seventy seven pages. It is a treasure of Indian languages and musical Ragas. Rigmala at the end mentions the families of eighty four Ragas and Raginies.

Guru Granth Sahib is the only scripture in the world, which mentions with respect Ram, Gobind, Hari, Allah, Rahim, Karim etc, (names for God) used by different religions and which includes writings of holy people born in other religions (Hinduism, Islam) in addition to the Sikh Gurus. It

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is the only source of Sikh philosophy that has been written and authenticated by the Gurus themselves and whose authenticity has never been questioned. It is the only scripture, which traveled through the generations without the change of a single letter. It is final and unalterable scripture.

The author of Guru Granth Sahib is God Himself. He revealed the religious truth to the Sikh Gurus and ordained them to spread it to mankind all over the globe. Guru Nanak did not claim divinity, only that he was a messenger of God, ਜੈਸੇ ਮੈ ਆਵੇ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ-“*Jaisay mein aavay khasam kee bani, Taisra kari gian vay Lalo*” ie “As the word of the ‘Master’ comes to me so I make known to thee” (GGS, Tilang M1, p.72). Guru Nanak bestowed the Guruship to the Shabad (Divine Word) in his Bani, ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੁ ਸੁਰਤ ਧੁੰਨ ਚੇਲਾ-“*Shabad Guru Surat Dun Chela*” ie, “Shabad is

Guru, conscience and intention towards it make one its disciple” (Ibid, M1, p.943). Thereafter, all the Gurus of the House of Nanak taught the same principle, i.e *Shabad (Bani i.e, The Divine Word)* is the Guru. Guru Amar Dass said, “ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਜੇਵਡੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ।।-*Waho waho bani nirankaar hai tis jevad avar na koay* i.e; Praise be to the Bani of the Formless, Whom none can equal” (Ibid, p .515). Guru Ram Dass says, ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਰੇ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕਰੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਜਨ ਮਾਨੇ ਪਰਤਖ ਗੁਰੁ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ-“*Bani Guru, Guru Hai Bani Vich Bani Amrit Spray, Gurbani Kahay Sewak Jan*

*Maanay Partakh Guru Nistaray*” ie, “Bani is the Guru and Guru is the Bani and it contains the elixer of life. If the devotee obeys what Bani teaches us, the Guru confers His grace on him” (Ibid, M4, p.982). Guru Arjan says, “ਧੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਆਈ।।ਤਿਨਿ ਸਗਲੀ ਚਿੰਤ ਮਿਟਾਈ।।-*Dhur kee bani aae tin saglee chint mitaaee* i.e; Bani has come from God, it effaces all worries and anxieties” (Ibid, M5, p.628). He further adds, “ਪੋਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨ-“*Pothi Parmesher Ka Than*” ie, The Book is the Abode of God” (Ibid, M5, p.1226).

It is believed that he, who attentively reads, sings, listens and acts upon the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib, attains bliss and is brought into direct personal contact with the Guru-‘God’ (Ibid, p376). Therefore, Guru Granth Sahib is treated to be the presence of the Guru himself in the Sangat. It is the presiding deity in every Gurdwara or Sikh place of worship and every visitor there bows before it in reverence before assuming his / her seat. When moved, it is accompanied by five initiated Sikhs.

NB:

Who are Sikhs?

- Sikhs have the original scripture and it is not subject to textual analysis by any one. It is the eternal Guru of the Khalsa (Sikhs).  
(SGPC Amritsar, Jan 5, 1996)
- In Sikh scriptures, the word 'Guru' has been used to denote at least three different senses. First, it has been used for God Himself, secondly, the word has been referred to as teacher-Guru and finally it is used for the Holy Sikh scripture, "Guru Granth Sahib".
- Translation of Guru Granth Sahib cannot be installed in a Gurdwara.
- Guru Granth Sahib is not like the idol in a Hindu temple nor the statue of the virgin in a Catholic Cathedral. It is the means and not the object of worship.
- The instalment of Guru Granth Sahib is mandatory at a Sikh service.

### History of Guru Granth Sahib

The Bani was recorded in books (*Pothis*) from the time of Guru Nanak and passed on from one Guru to another and finally when Guru Arjan received it from Guru Ram Dass as an ancestral treasure, he said, "ipau dwdy dw Kol ifTw Kjwnw qW myry mn BieAw inDwnw—" *Pio Daday da Khol Ditha Khazana, Taan Meray Man Bhaia Nidhana* (GGS, M5, p186) i.e, As the inherited ancestral treasure (Gurbani of ancestors- Gurus) was opened and viewed, then my mind was illuminated with the treasure (Gurbani)". In this ancestral treasure he added his own Bani, the Bani of the Bhagats and Bhattas (Minstrels). The first edition of the 'Granth' as we know it today, was compiled by Guru Arjan and he called it '*Pothi Sahib/Granth*' (now Guru Granth Sahib). He started the preparation of the Granth in 1601 AD. The scribe was Bhai Gurdas, an uncle (*Mama-mWmw*) of Guru Arjan Dev. The first (original) volume signed and sealed by Guru Arjan was installed in Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Harmandar---Golden Temple) on August 16, 1604 AD, with Baba Buddha as first Granthi. Hence-forth, Guru Arjan and his successors always took a lower seat for themselves than the Granth, whenever the two happened to be together.

Sikhism because of its principles and vigorous preaching by the Gurus was acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. The mass acceptance of the Sikh faith by the common people made Sikhs a potential force. The erosion of the Muslim and Hindu faiths surprised the leaders of both ---Qazis and Brahmins. Both of them began to consider Sikhism a challenge to their respective faiths, the Muslims in addition felt challenge to their political power. The Muslim government therefore tried to suppress Sikhs and spread of their faith, the upper caste Hindus actively collaborated with them in this resolve. The tensions that followed between the Sikhs and the provincial administration at Lahore resulted in the execution of Guru Arjan. Guru Arjan's only son Hargobind succeeded him

as the 6<sup>th</sup> Guru of the Sikhs. Guru Hargobind got many copies of Aad Granth prepared for the propagation of Bani. Maximum number of copies was prepared during the period of Guru Har Rai.

The combination of provincial Mughal officials, *Minas* (The rival claimants to Guruship i.e, Pirthi Chard, brother of Guru Arjan and his progeny) and upper caste Hindus forced Guru Hargobind to leave Amritsar. He moved the headquarters of Sikhism from Amritsar to Kiratpur, in the Shivalik foot hills, in May, 1635 AD. The *Minas* gained control of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, which remained in their occupation for over six decades till 1699 A.D. During this period the *Minas* in collaboration with the upper caste Hindus created havoc with Sikh theology. The minas had employed two Brahmins named Hari Das and Keso Dass for corrupting and denaturalizing Sikh Scriptures. They introduced mythological stories into them. Meharban himself wrote *Janam Sakhi* of Guru Nanak. The *Minas* composed their own Granth, in which they included the compositions of the first four Gurus besides their own but excluded the compositions of Bhagats, as they were from low castes. The *Minas* installed their own Granth at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Har Mandar---Golden Temple) in place of Guru Arjan's *Granth*, which was taken away by Dhir Mal (grandson of Guru Hargobind) to Kartarpur (in Bist Doab) in 1644 AD. The original manuscript is still in the possession of Sodhis at Kartarpur and is now known as *Kartarpuri Bir*. Due to the hostile attitude of the provincial government neither Guru Har Rai nor Guru Harkishen ever visited Amritsar. Guru Teg Bahadur, during his visit to Amritsar was not allowed to enter Gurdwara Darbar Sahib by the *Minas*.

Guru Gobind Singh formally consecrated Sikhism, on the Vaisakhi day 1699 A.D; and abolished caste system in Sikhism by asking all initiates to drink 'Amrit' from the same vessel. The Hindu hill Rajas around Anandpur Sahib, who had been willing to accept the teachings of equality as preached by Guru Nanak, were not willing to drink Amrit from the same vessel (Communion bowl) along with the Shudras (low castes), as Guru Gobind Singh wished them to do. They took it as a threat to their *varn Ashram Dharma* i.e Hinduism, whose very foundation is based on the caste system. They vowed to destroy Guru Gobind Singh and his newly consecrated Sikhism in the form of 'Khalsa'. At first they tried on their own, but having failed, they sought the help of Moghul Emperor at Delhi and also the provincial Muslim governor of Lahore. The joint forces of Hindustan from Delhi, provincial forces of the Punjab from Lahore and the forces of the Hindu Hill Rajas of the Punjab, attacked Guru Gobind Singh, who entrenched himself inside the forte at Anandpur. Having failed to capture the forte and dislodge the Sikhs, they laid a seige to the forte. The seige also proved a failure and the joint forces were unable to kill, capture or force Guru Gobind Singh into submission. The besiegers entered into an agreement with Guru Gobind Singh to provide him and his forces, a safe passage if he left Anandpur and settled at 'Kangar' in the 'Malwa' region of the Punjab. The Guru along with the Sikh forces left Anandpur in the darkness of the night between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Decamber 1704. Guru Gobind Singh and his Sikh forces had hardly covered a few miles when forgetting all promises and solemn pledges, the joint Moghul and Hindu hill Raja forces attacked them from the rear. The hostile forces continued in hot pursuite of the Guru and his Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh successfully defeated the pursuing forces at Muktsar and then retired to Talwandi Sabo (now Damdama Sahib) in Bathinda district. In his journey from Anandpur to Talwandi Sabo, the entire valuable literature including the Bir of *Granth Sahib* were washed away in the flooded Sirsa Rivulet, all his four sons, mother and many Sikhs embraced martyrdom. At Talwandi Sabo he wanted to have a 'Path' (Recitation) of Aad Granth from the Bir signed and sealed by Guru Arjan Dev. He sent five Sikhs to Kartarpur to bring the volume of Aad Granth,

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which was lying there in the possession of the descendants of Dhirmal, but the request was turned down with sarcastic remarks, that if he was the Guru, he should produce the Granth himself. The Sikhs returned to Talwandi Sabo and narrated the whole story to Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh was *Hafiz* of *Aad Granth Sahib*. He dictated the whole volume from his memory, which was jointly caligraphed by Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh, turn by turn. In this volume he entered the Bani of his father, ninth Guru (Guru Teg Bahadur). The present volume prepared and recensed by Guru Gobind Singh is known as *Damdame wali Bir or Damdami Bir*. When Guru Gobind Singh was preparing to leave for *Deccan* (South) to meet Emperor Aurangzeb, the Sikhs requested him to make arrangements to avoid a recurrence. Guru Gobind Singh appointed Baba Deep Singh to make copies of Aad Granth and teach meanings of Gurbani to Sikhs, thus making Dam Dama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo) the Sikh seat of learning and he called it *Guru Ki Kanshi* as a counter part to Hindu seat of learning in Kanshi (Banaras). Four more copies of the Granth were, made by Baba Deep Singh, which still exist today. Later on numerous copies of *Damdami Bir* were prepared by devout Sikhs. The volume signed and sealed by Guru Gobind Singh was taken to Kabul by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1762 A.D; and became untraceable thereafter.

Guru Gobind Singh made Granth Sahib his successor when he departed from the world. He told the Sikhs not to grieve as even if they would not see him in physical manifestation, he would remain ever present among them. Finding his end near Guru Gobind Singh ended the human Guruship and vested it with the Sikh scriptures, *Pothi Sahib / Granth* and accorded it the status of Guru Granth and since then it is revered as 'Guru Granth Sahib'.

There are several documents, which attest the fact of succession having been passed on by Guru

Gobind Singh to Guru Granth Sahib. For instance, Bhai Nand Lal, who was present by the side of Guru Gobind Singh when he breathed his last at Nander (Hazoor Sahib) in his *Rehatnama\** (popularly known as *Tankhahnama / Nasihatnama*) thus records Guru Gobind Singh's last words in his Punjabi verse:

He who would wish to see the Guru,  
Let him come and see the Granth.  
He who would wish to speak to him,  
Let him read and reflect upon what says the Granth.  
He who would wish to hear his word, He  
should with all his heart read the Granth,  
Or listen to the Granth being read.

After Guru Gobind Singh, the Granth Sahib became the Guru and received divine honours. It is for the Sikhs the perpetual authority, spiritual as well as historical. They live their religion in response to it.

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Singh Sabha reformers used printing press for producing copies of Guru Granth Sahib with a standard text of 1430 pages. First lithographed edition of Guru Granth Sahib was prepared in 1904 A.D. The present day *Bir* of Guru Granth Sahib with separate words called *Pad shed wali Bir* was first published in 1945.

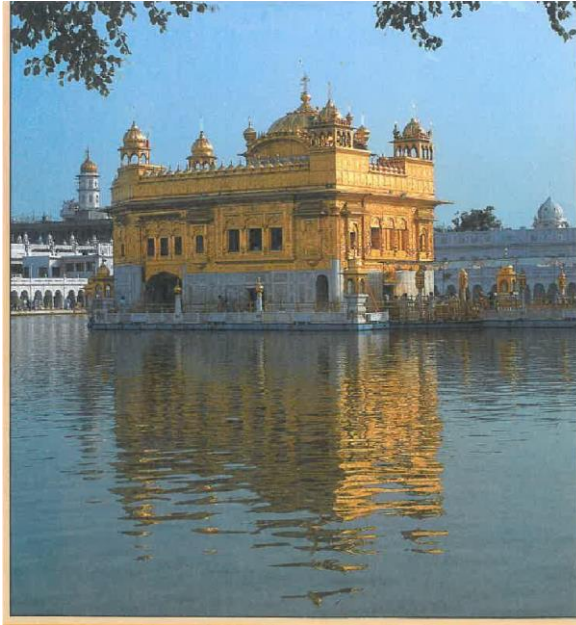
**\*The work popularly known as Tankhahnama of Bhai Nand Lal is one of the earliest Rahitnamas. A copy of this work dated 1718-19 in the library of GNDU (MS770) which refers to the work as Nasihatnama.**

#### **Writings of Bhai Gurdas & Bhai Nand Lal**

The holy Sikh Scripture Guru Granth Sahib, hymns of Guru Gobind Singh, compositions of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal form part of the canon of the Sikh faith.

As per Sikh religious code of conduct (*Sikh Rehat Maaryda*) only hymns from Guru Granth Sahib, Hymns of Guru Gobind Singh, compositions of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal, can be recited in Gurdwaras.

Who are Sikhs?



**Golden Temple---Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Amritsar**

### **WORLD SEAT OF SIKHISM**

Amritsar with Gurdwara Darbar Sahib\* also known as Har Mandir\*\* in Punjab and India, and Golden Temple in the western world, is the world seat of Sikhism as the Kabba in Mecca for Muslims, Vatican in Rome for Christians and Varanasi in India for Hindus. Gurdwara Darbar Sahib is a living symbol of spiritual and historical traditions of the Sikhs. It emerged as the new edifice on the Indian subcontinent's religious landscape in the seventeenth century, when, in 1604 AD the first volume of Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib---Holy Sikh scripture) was placed here with reverence by Guru Arjan Dev, in the building which had been completed by him three years earlier, making it, the world seat of Sikhism. Guru Arjan Dev also clearly declared the independent position of Sikhism by writing in the Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib), in Rag Bhairon, on page 1136 that:

“I do not keep the Hindu fast (*vrata*) or observe the Muslim Ramzan,  
I serve only the One Supreme Being who alone is my refuge,  
I serve the One Master who ministers justice to both Hindus and Muslims,  
I have broken with the Hindus and Muslims,  
I neither worship with the Hindu nor like the Muslim go to Mecca,  
I serve Him alone and no other,  
I do not pray to idols nor say the Muslim prayer  
Taking the formless One in my mind I make obeisance there to the Supreme Being, for we  
are neither Hindus nor Mussalman”.

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The foundation stone of the building was, laid by the Muslim Divine Hazrat Mian Mir, at the Guru's request in 1589 and the building was completed in 1601AD. The glistening shrine stands in the midst of a square tank of each side about 150 meters with some 18meters Parikarma (path) on all four sides. A causeway about 60 meters long has to be covered to reach the shrine which itself is 12 meters square and rests upon a 20 meter square platform.

The basic architectural concept of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden temple) was that of Guru Arjan Dev himself. Instead of building the shrine on a high plinth, as was the Hindu custom, Guru Arjan Dev had it built on a level lower than the surrounding land, the worshippers have to go down the steps to enter it and the head of the devotee automatically bows down with humility, while entering it, to have a glimpse. And, unlike the Hindu temples, which had only one entrance Guru Arjan Dev had Gurdwara Darbar Sahib open on all four sides denoting that it was open:

To all the four *Varnas* of *Varn Ashram Dharma*,  
To the followers of all religions of the world from all directions  
To all people irrespective of their caste, creed, gender and  
nationality, To all economic sections of the society, rich and poor  
alike,

The architectural features were intended to be symbolic of the new faith (Sikhism), which required the humble to be humblest and whose doors were open to all who wished to enter. It is the destination of all the Sikhs visiting Amritsar.

\*Darbar Sahib: Literal meaning: divine court. \*\*Harimandir: Literal meaning: abode of God.



## Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib



### **The Supreme seat of Temporal Authority of Sikhism**

Akal Takhat literal meaning: throne of the immortal--Almighty-God- (Eternal Throne). It is the seat of supreme temporal (Worldly /secular) authority in Sikhism. It was established in Amritsar by Guru Hargobind, as counter part to the imperial throne in Delhi, when the Sikh religion made a formal bid to proclaim its basic commitment to politics and social problems. It is situated in the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden temple) complex. The Guru established it, because he thought that secular (Temporal) matters should not be considered in the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), which is meant purely for worship of God (spirituality). Before Guru Hargobind's accession to Gur Gaddi, Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Amritsar was the place where Guru Arjan Dev used to sit and give spiritual guidance to the Sikhs. With Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom and changed circumstances the dire need of such a place was felt where Sikhs should assemble in the presence of the Guru and discuss their secular affairs. Since they were faced with an intolerant and oppressive government they required a place where they should be able to hold deliberations for their self-preservation. So, the Guru ordered in 1609 A.D, the construction of Akal Takhat at a distance of about one hundred yards from Gurdwara Darbar Sahib opposite the *Darshani Deori* (gate way). The building of Akal Takhat comprises of a high throne (Platform) of an altitude three times as high as was permitted to any authority by the Mughal sovereigns of Hindustan and it is higher than the Mughal Throne balcony in the Red fort at Delhi. Guru Hargobind associated with him Baba Buddha and Bhai Gurdas for its construction. No other person was associated for the construction and completion of this monument. Thus, Guru Har Gobind, by establishing the Akal Takhat and building this high throne openly repudiated the Mughal sovereignty over Hindustan and proclaimed the Sikh claim to a co-equal sovereign status. Here the Guru held his court, received envoys settled disputes, administered justice and decided matters of

military strategy and policy. The congregation (Sangat) heard extolling feats of heroism instead of listening to religious discourses.

The building of Akal Takhat opposite to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden temple) has a great significance. The Gurdwara Darbar Sahib stands for spiritual guidance and the Akal Takhat for dispensing justice and temporal activity (Sikh politics). The two are complementary to each other. During the day Guru Granth Sahib is kept in the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib and the same is kept for the night in a room called '*Kotha Sahib*' in Akal Takhat.

The new entrants to Sikh faith were baptized or initiated here, a practice still in vogue. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D; when Sikhs had to take shelter in the forests, they used to have their special gatherings at Akal Takhat, which became a rallying point. On the occasions of Vaisakhi and Diwali, the Sikhs used to have their general gatherings at Akal Takhat and the Sarbat Khalsa (the whole Sikh nation) used to discuss their plans in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, before these were adopted as Gurmatas (the decree of the Guru). It was from here that Guru Hargobind issued Hukamnamas to Sikhs during his stay here. Traditionally all Sikh warriors seek blessings here before going to battle or launching a '*Morcha*' (political agitation) for a Sikh cause. Presently, the Sikh *Sewadars* (care takers/Sikh high priests) issue Hukamnamas on the matters concerning the Sikh nation from here, which are binding on all Sikhs. The Sikhs (Dal Khalsa-The Sikh army) with Ranjit Singh as their leader under the supremacy of Guru Granth Sahib at Akal Takhat founded the mighty Sikh kingdom and put the Sikh nation and the Sikh Democratic Republic of Punjab, on the map of the world. In spite of his being ruler of the Sikh state Ranjit Singh was awarded punishment twice by the Sewadar (priest) of Akal Takhat Akali Phoola Singh, for violating the principles of Sikhism, once for marrying a Muslim woman who refused to embrace Sikhism and then for dyeing his beard. Both times the Sikh Monarch presented himself at the Akal Takhat and accepted the punishment like a humble Sikh.

Akal Takhat Sahib is the only *takhat* established by the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib. Neither he nor any one of the succeeding Gurus established any other *takhat* during his life time. Akal Takhat was established to look after the temporal affairs of the Panth. After the loss of Sikh rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, all Sikh political movements by the Akalis (the Sikh political party) have been launched and directed from here. Ever since its founding Akal Takhat has remained, the supreme seat of temporal authority of the Sikhs. When ever, any important issue arises the Sikh nation holds a meeting of the Sikh nation (Sarbat Khalsa), takes decisions here on matters of war and peace and settles disputes between the various Sikh groups. The decision taken by the Sarbat Khalsa (Sikh nation) at Akal Takhat in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib is called Gurmatta (the decree of the Guru) and is issued as Hukamnama to the Sikh nation by the Sewadar (the high priest-care taker) of the Akal Takhat under the seal of Akal Takhat, the decision is binding on all the Sikhs.

In order to cater to the political and religious matters relating to the Sikhs in different regions of the Indian subcontinent, the Panth has added four more *Takhats*. But none of these takhats despite their being connected with the life of the Guru Gobind Singh, was established as *takhat* by the Guru himself.. These *Takhats* are: Takhat Patna Sahib in the east, Takhat Damdama Sahib in the west, Takhat Hazoor Sahib in the south and Takhat Kesgarh Sahib in the north. They are regional high courts of the Sikh religion, which deal with the temporal affairs of the Sikhs. The Supreme

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Authority (Supreme Court) in the temporal affairs of the Sikhs is Akal Takhat Amritsar, where an appeal can be filed and vital decisions concerning ‘the Sikh religion’ and ‘The Sikh Nation’ are taken. The ruling of Akal Takhat is binding on all the Sikhs.

Only renowned, neutral and catholic Sikhs with a track record of selfless community service are selected and appointed, as Sewadars (Care takers- Jathedars) of these five Takhts by the Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) Amritsar.

**NB:** Akal Takhat is not a Gurdwara, therefore it neither falls under the purview of the Sikh Gurdwara Act 1925 nor is meant to be governed by the Sikh clergy created by the SGPC. It is the sovereign seat of Temporal Authority of the Sikh nation under the supremacy of Guru Granth Sahib to be served by a sewadar selected by consensus by the Sikh Nation.

### Sikh National Seal / Seal of Akaal Takhat



Guru Gobind Singh says, “*Deg Teg jag mein do-oo chalay, raakh taath day mohay avar na dalay (Mukh vaak patshahi 10)*. Banda Singh introduced an official seal for the State documents and letters marking the Sikh rule with following inscription expressive of his deep sense of devotion and loyalty to the Gurus, which is found stamped on his letters (1708—1716). It bears the following couplet:

*Deg-O-Teg-O-Feteh, and Nusrat-i-Bedrang*

*Yafat Az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh*

The cauldron- sword—the symbols of service and power, victory and unhesitating patronage have been obtained from Gurus Nanak-Gobind Singh. This inscription was, later on adopted by the leaders of Sikh Misals and the Sikh rulers for their coins. Now the official Sikh seal of of Akal Takhat (The supreme seat of temporal authority in Sikhism) bears this inscription:

*Deg Teg Fateh Nusrat Bedrang,*

*Yafat Az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh*

*Sri Akal Ji Sahai*

### Some Coins of Sarkare Khalsa



**Rupee coin of Sarkare Khalsa**

**Paisa coin of Sarkare Khalsa**

The Sikh standard rupee was Nanakshahi. The Sikh coinage did not carry the name of the ruler. Sikhs issued coins in the name of their Gurus, Nanak—Gobind Singh.

- The first Sikh coin was, issued by Banda Singh Bahadur in 1710 A.D; with the following inscription:

*“Sikka zad par har do alam teg Nanak vahab ast, fateh Gobind Singh Shahe shahan fazle sachcha sahib ast”*---“By the grace of the True Lord is struck the coin in the two worlds, the sword of Nanak is the granter of all boons and victory is of (Guru) Gobind Singh, the king of kings”. The reverse had the following words in praise of his newly founded capital:

*“Zarb be aman ald har musavrat shehar zeenat al takhat Mubarak bakhat”*—“Struck in the city of peace, illustrating the beauty of civic life, and the ornament of the blessed throne”.

Later on he issued coins with following inscription:

*“Deg-O- teg-O-fateh, nusrat bedrang, yafat az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh”*.

- During the Misal period Sikh coins were issued, with the same inscription in 1765, 1786, 1787 and 1789 A.D.
- Ranjit Singh issued his first coin in 1800 A.D; the rupee coin was called *Nanak Shahi* rupee and the Paisa was called *Nanak Shahi Paisa*. Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s coinage did not carry his own name, it bore the inscription *Akal Sahai* (Immortal Protector) on one side and *Nanak Shahi* (The Realm of Nanak) on the other. Some of the coins bore the inscription: *“Dego-Tgo Fateh Nusrat Bedrang Yafat Az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh”* on one side, while the other side bore the inscription: *“Darul Saltnat Lahore, Samvat 1808*

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*Memeenat Manos*". The inscription was both in Gurmukhi and Persian. The coins were struck in gold, silver and copper.

Sikh mints were located at Lahore, Amritsar and Multan, which regularly minted coins. Some coins are known to have been minted from provincial mints established at Peshawar, Jhang, Pind Dadhan Khan, Jammu and Anandgarh. The coins of the Sikh Kingdom are replete with symbols: Loin, Sword, Katar, Trident--Trishul, The banner, the pipal leaf, loin in walking and standing positions, Fish, Rosette, Crosses and branches. Sikh coins did not have any pictorial representation of the Gurus, though auspicious tokens did.

- Sikh coins remained in circulation from 1710 to 1850 A.D.

## Amritsar

### Theopolitical Capital of the Sikhs and Sikhism

Amritsar is the holiest of the Sikh places, the biggest centre of Sikh politics and strongest defence post on the north-western frontier of India. It lies at a distance of 264 miles in the northwest of Delhi. In the evolution of the Sikh community it has from the beginning of its existence played a key role, and subsequently enshrines numerous hallowed memories for the Sikhs. Amritsar with Gurdwara Darbar Sahib\* also known as Har Mandar\*\* in Punjab and India, and Golden Temple in the western world, is the world seat of Sikhism as the Kabba in Mecca for Muslims, Vatican in Rome for Christians and Varanasi in India for Hindus.

Guru Ram Dass, the fourth Guru of the Sikhs laid the foundation stone of the present city of Amritsar in 1574 A.D, on a piece of land selected by Guru Nanak and aquired by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Nanak, Guru Amar Dass. Guru Ram Dass excavated the famous Sarovar (tank), which he named Amrit-Sarovar (Lit: The pool of elixir of life / *Aabe hiyat*). Initially, the township was appropriately called-Ram Dasspur or the town of Guru Ram Dass, which ultimately came to be known as Amritsar, after the name of Amritsarovar.

Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, compiled and placed the first volume of the Aad Granth (now Guru Granth Sahib) in 1604 A.D in the building, which he had completed three years earlier in the midst of Amrit-Sarovar, making it first religious center of the Sikhs for all times to come. He called it Harimandir (now popularly called Golden Temple). Guru Arjan Dev also clearly declared the independent position of Sikhism by writing in the Aad Granth on page 1136. Aad Granth became the way of Sikh life and all religious observances of the Sikhs. The Gurbani (contents of Aad Granth) containing spiritual knowledge became the object of the highest reverence for the Sikhs. Thus Amritsar became the spiritual capital of Sikhism.

The growing popularity of Sikhism among Hindus and the Muslims led to the execution of Guru Arjan Dev at the hands of the intolerant, oppressive and bigoted Islamic government of Hindustan, who wished to stop the spread of the Sikh faith. Hargobind the only son of Guru Arjan Dev

succeeded him as the 6<sup>th</sup> Guru of the Sikhs. Seeing how peaceful resistance to oppression had proved abortive, Guru Hargobind recognized recourse to sword as a lawful alternative. He took the seat of his father with two swords girded round his waist, one symbolizing spiritual power and the other temporal authority. He built Akal Takhat as counter part to the imperial Delhi throne, where he held his court and instead of chanting hymns of peace, the congregation (Sangat) heard ballads extolling feats of heroism instead of listening to religious discourses, discussed plans of military conquests. Here the Guru received envoys, settled disputes and administered justice. Ever since then, The Akal Takhat has remained the seat of supreme temporal authority of the Sikhism.

With Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Harimandir) as supreme seat of spiritual authority and Akal Takhat as the supreme seat of temporal authority of the Sikhism Amritsar became Religio-Political Capital of the Sikhs and it became a rallying point for the Sikhs, which resulted in great heart burning among the *meenas* (Pirthi Chand elder brother of Guru Arjan Dev and his progeny, the rival claimants to Guruship). The *Meenas*, orthodox Hindus, especially Brahmins and the provincial Moghul government at Lahore forged an alliance to contain the growing Sikh power. In order to kill or capture Guru Hargobind, the provincial Moghul forces of Lahore repeatedly attacked Guru Hargobind, but were defeated by the Sikhs each time. In order to avoid further confrontation Guru Hargobind shifted his headquarter from Amritsar to Kiratpur in the Shivalik foot hills, out of the Jurisdiction of the Lahore government. Thereafter, the administration of the 'world seat of Sikhism', 'Gurdwara Darbar Sahib' passed into the hands of the *Meenas*. Henceforth all the Sikh Gurus maintained their headquarters in the Shivalik foot hills.

Sikhism was formally consecrated by Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaiskhi day 1699 at Anandpur Sahib in the Shivalik foot hills. By that time the *Meenas* had virtually relapsed into Hinduism, became irrelevant for the Moghul government and instead suffered persecution, because of their previous Sikh connection. Under those adverse circumstances they vacated Amritsar, left Majha area, crossed the river Sutlej and settled in the sandy desert region of the Punjab called 'Malwa', where they founded the town of Guru Harsahai. Guru Gobind Singh appointed, Bhai Mani Singh as Sewadar of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. He took over the charge of the shrine in the month of June, 1699 and started regular service. Thereafter, Amritsar became the nerve centre of all Sikh activities. Being the Religio-Political Capital of the Sikhs and Sikhism, it has been the target of attacks of contemporary governments inimical to the Sikhs, all of whom wanted to make Sikhism as their hand made religion.

Guru Gobind Singh left this mortal world in 1708 A.D. The Sikhs declared the war of independence of the Sikh Nation in 1709 against the oppressive and bigoted Muslim rule, under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur and occupied vast areas of the Punjab between Lahore and Delhi. Banda Singh was captured alive and executed in Delhi by the Moghul Government of Hindustan in 1716, after which two most powerful nations of Asia at that time, the Moghul Emperor of Hindustan from Dehli and Ahmad Shah Abdali King of Afghanistan from Kabul vowed to wipe out the Sikhs from the face of the earth. The Sikhs left their homes and hearths and escaped to the safety of jungles, mountains of the Punjab and desert of the adjoining Rajputana, refused to submit and continued their struggle for the independence of the Sikh Nation. They re-

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organized themselves and first Sarbat Khalsa meeting was held at Akal Takhat Amritsar under the leadership of Jathedar Darbara on the Vaisakhi day in 1726. Thereafter Amritsar became the headquarters of Dal Khalsa, Buddha Dal, Taruna Dal and then 12 Misals.

The Khalsa soon brought down the Moghul Government to its knees and suzerainty of the Sikhs over the Parganas of Patti, Jhabal, Dipalpur and Kangalwal etc, with Amritsar as their headquarter in the territory of the Province of Lahore was accepted by the Mughal government in the Sarbat Khalsa meeting held at Akal Takhat Amritsar in 1733 by conferring the title of Nawab on the Sikh leader Sardar Kapur Singh Faizalpuria (Singhpuria). The biannual meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa on the occasions of Diwali and Vaisakhi festivals were held at Akal Takhat Amritsar, where all vital decisions were discussed and passed bearing on the problems facing the Sikh Nation.

Moghul government unilaterally cancelled the agreement in 1735, and drove Sikhs out of Amritsar and reoccupied Gurdwara Darbar Sahib. Bhai Mani Singh the custodian of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib was arrested and cut to a limb in Lahore in 1738. Sardar Shahbeg Singh the broker of peace agreement between the Sikhs and Moghul government was captured along with his young son Sardar Shahbaz Singh, on false charges of passing government secrets to the Sikhs, They were asked to accept Islam or face death. Both refused to accept Islam and were crushed on the wheel in Lahore publically.

In view of the central role which Amritsar was playing in the Sikh resistance to the Mughals and after them the Afghans, the enemy attached the maximum importance to the devastation of Amritsar as a precondition of total destruction of the Panth. What was a survival struggle for the Panth was also a survival struggle for the city of Amritsar as the Panth derived its sustenance mainly from Amritsar. During this period, to be a Sikh was a crime punishable with death, but the Sikhs refused to submit and continued their struggle for the independence of the Sikh Nation. Ultimately, they successfully destroyed the Muslim rule and domination in their motherland, the Punjab in 1765 and established small socialistic confederacies in the form of *Misals*. Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Hrimandir-Golden Temple) was bown up with gun powder and destroyed by the Afghan invaders thrice in 1757, 1762 and 1764, but it was soon rebuilt by the Sikhs every time. It was finally built in its present structure during the period of Sikh *Misals* in 1765. Khalsa completed the construction of Amrit Sarowar, the building of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, the bridge and the Darshani Deori by 1776. The Parikarma and the residential places (Bungas) around the tank were completed by 1784.

Amritsar was the common city of entire Khalsa Panth. The leaders of various Sikh Misals built their own localities called katras there, which they named after their own or after the name of the Misal. When they came to Amritsar various Sardars lived and behaved as brothers to one another.

In 1798 Shah Zaman the king of Afghanistan and grand son of Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded Punjab for the second time to avenge his defeat at the hands of Khalsa forces in 1796. Sardarni Sada Kaur, mother-in-law of Ranjit Singh called Sarbat Khalsa, at Akal Takhat Amritsar. Ranjit Singh was unanimously elected leader and given the command of the *Dal Khalsa*. The Afghans

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were routed in the battle, which ensued there-after. All the Sikh Misals on the western side of river Satlej in the Punjab with Ranjit Singh as their leader announced the establishment of 'Independent Theocratic Sikh State of the Punjab', based on the Sikh principles, values and traditions of Sarbat Khalsa, Panj Piaray and Gurmatta, under the supremacy of Akal Takhat in 1799 A.D. Ranjit Singh moved his seat of power from Gujrat to Lahore. He was formally installed as Maharaja of 'The Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab' in 1801. Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Harimandir--Golden Temple) was gold plated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1805. Gobindgarh forte was constructed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809. City was walled by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1825 and it had twelve gates. Maharaja Ranjit Singh built his palace in the Garden, called Ram Bagh in the north of the city five hundred yards from Darwaza Ram Bagh. The construction of the palace was completed in 1831. The degree of attention which

Maharaja and his Sardars bestowed upon Amritsar soon elevated it to first position among all the cities in the kingdom. He made it the greatest centre of trade and industry in the entire state. The city served as second capital of the Sikh Kingdom and as head office of the governor of the Majha tract.

The city of Amritsar came under the British rule in 1849, after the annexation of Punjab by the British. The British were shrewd enough to realize, quite early in their period of rule, the importance of keeping Amritsar under their firm control. They conducted the administration of the Golden Temple through a British appointed custodian entitled '*Sarbrah*'. The *Mahants* whose duty was to discharge religious functions at the place were placated by special favours, such as conferment of land proprietary rights, and were protected against their detractors. They established Civil Hospital here in a building outside Ram Bagh in early 1850s. Municipality was set up in 1858. Railway station was constructed in 1859. Railway service started between Lahore and Amritsar in 1862. Town Hall was completed in 1870. Building of Government School in the neighbourhood of town hall was completed in 1873. Hall Gate was constructed in 1873 by breaking the wall around the city to connect the Town Hall with Railway Station and the Civil Lines. Singh Sabha, which gave modern orientation to the Sikh community, was founded by the Sarbat Khalsa in 1873, in Amritsar. The buildings of District Courts and Treasury were constructed in 1876. Work on the Victoria Jubilee Hospital (now Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital) started in 1891. Singh Sabha established Khalsa College in 1892. City was electrified in 1913. Jallian-wala Bagh tragedy took place in Amritsar in 1919.

Sarbat Khalsa at Akal Takhat Amritsar established, Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and Sharomani Akali Dal in 1920 with the object of freeing the Sikh shrines (Gurdwaras) from the control of corrupt *Mahants* and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) from the British control. After a prolonged struggle of five years, the Sikhs forced the British to legally recognize SGPC and Sikh Gurdarwa Act was enacted in 1925. All the peaceful agitations popularly called *morchas* by the Sikhs, for fulfilment of this purpose were planned, launched and spearheaded by the Sikhs under Sharomani Akali Dal from Akal Takhat, Amritsar.

At the time of the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent by the British in 1947, the Sikh homeland was divided into two parts. The eastern segment 38% was attached to Hindu India and



the western part 62% was made over to the newly created Islamic State of Pakistan. The Sikhs and Hindus in the western segment were forced to migrate either to the eastern segment or other parts of the world. The city of Amritsar witnessed large scale violence and carnage. The partition of the Punjab and its close proximity to Indo-Pak border and then continuous strained relations between the newly created states of India and Pakistan were serious setbacks to the development of the city. Even during this period of widespread feelings of social insecurity, Amritsar was able to perform deeds of rare courage and heroism. After India gained its independence several states were re-organized on linguistic basis on the recommendations of the States Re-organization Commission (1956). But Punjab's demand in this respect, persistently voiced over by the Sikhs since the time the country had attained freedom was totally disregarded. There were sharp reactions to this act of denial of justice to the state, resulting in several peaceful agitations popularly called *morchas* by the Sikhs in Punjabi. Ultimately the struggle met with success in 1966, when the government of India carved out a Punjabi speaking state out of the already truncated Punjab. However, this reorganization of the Punjab was done by the central government more on communal, rather than linguistic basis and large tracts of Punjabi speaking areas were kept out of the Punjab. All the *morchas* on this issue were also planned, launched and spearheaded by Sharomani Akali Dal, the supreme representative body of the Sikhs from Akal Takhat Amritsar. Guru Nanak Dev University was established here in 1969.

On June 26, 1975, the entire country was placed under emergency and all civil liberties were denied to its citizens by the then government of India headed by Mrs Indira Gandhi in order to curb a popular agitation launched by a veteran socialist leader, Jayaprakash Narayan, which threatened to bring down her government. The Sikhs under Sharomani Akali Dal launched incessant agitation (*morcha*) from Akal Takhat Amritsar against the imposition of emergency and in the process nearly forty five thousand Sikhs courted arrest for its withdrawal and thereby restoration of civil liberties. No other political party in India dared to oppose the government action. Most Akali leaders spent the emergency years in jail. The elections that followed in March 1977, after lifting the emergency, Mrs Gandhi's Congress Party was routed and an alliance of different parties under the name of Janta Party formed a government at the Centre and Sharomani Akali Dal headed by Sardar Parkash Singh Badal formed government in the Punjab. Akali-Janta Government barely lasted for two years and the coalition heading the central government collapsed due to ideological differences between its various factions. Fresh elections to Parliament were announced in 1980. Congress Party won the elections and Mrs Indira Gandhi came to power with a vengeance against the Sikhs, who had opposed her emergency. She made up her mind to teach the Sikhs a lesson. She dissolved the Punjab State Legislative Assembly and called for new elections. Congress Party routed the Akali-Janta combine and Darbara Singh was elected chief minister of the Punjab State. Thereafter, chaotic conditions were engineered by the central government in the Punjab through various mechanisations. Darbara Singh government was dismissed on October 6, 1983 and the State of Punjab brought under President's Rule. The Akalis started agitation (*morcha*) from Akal Takhat Amritsar, based on their Anandpur Sahib Resolution (1973) demanding more financial powers to the states and a separate Sikh Civil law like the Hindus and Muslims in that country. The central government did not care to find out an amicable solution to the problem. The law and order situation in the state deteriorated everyday, but it was allowed to proceed to its worst possible position.

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Indian army on the instructions of the government of India occupied Punjab on June 3, 1984, imposed curfew and promulgated an undeclared martial law and snapped communication with the outside world. On June 5, the government of India invaded Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) and Akal Takhat along with 120 other Gurdwaras throughout the length and breadth of Punjab, with its full military might, resulting in the killing of charismatic Sikh leader Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, Bhai Amrik Singh president of all India Sikh students federation, general Shahbeg Singh, hero of Bangla Desh war along with thousands of innocent Sikhs, destruction of Akal Takhat, damaging the building of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) with innumerable bullet marks, destroying the buildings around Parikarma of the shrine, burning Sikh reference library, damaging Darshani Deori housing Tosha Khana thereby burning of Chanani studded with jewels presented to Maharaja Ranjit Singh by Nizam of Hyderabad and setting ablaze Langar hall, Guru Ram Dass Serai, and Teja Singh Samundri Hall-the meeting place of Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak committee. Sikh soldiers rebelled. Several of them were killed and several thousand arrested and court marshaled. Sikh leaders including the president of SGPC, the president of Sharomani Akali Dal and other established political leaders were arrested for waging war against the central government. There was great turmoil in the Sikh state. The government of India entered into an agreement with the Sikhs, popularly known as, "Rajiv Longowal accord" on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1985, which has yet to see the light of the day. The Sikhs have rebuilt the Akal Takhat and repaired the damage to the building of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, but the Sikh demands are still unresolved.

### **Sikh national anthem**

*Deg-O-Teg-O-Fateh- Nusarat-i- bedrang yafat- az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh*

#### *Dohira*

*Agya Bhaie Akal kee tabi chalaio Panth,*

*Sabh Sikhan ko hukam hai Guru manio Granth*

*Guru Granth ji manio pargat Guran kee deh,*

*Jo prabh ko mil bo chahey khoj shabad meim leh,*

*Raj karega Khalsa aakee rahey na ko-ay,*

*Khuar ho-ay sabh milien gay bachay sharan jo ho-ay.*

#### **Meanings:**

As per command of the Almighty, the Panth was launched,

All Sikhs must have faith in Granth Sahib which is their Guru-Eternal,

Guru Granth sahib is the manifestation of the Ten Nanaks,

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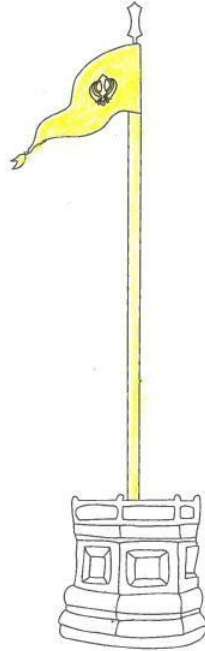
Whosoever wishes to have a dialogue with the Almighty, shall find Him in the Word,

The Khalsa shall rule sovereign and none shall be able to oppose them,

Those who astray from the path shall rejoin the main stream Those

who have faith in Him shall be protected.

This epilogue to the Sikh national Ardas is confirmation of the command of Guru Gobind Singh which he gave to the Sikh nation on October 5, 1708.



### **Sikh National Flag—Nishan Sahib**

The Sikh national flag called Nishan Sahib is made up of a triangular piece of deep yellow (Basanti) cloth with Sikh National insignia (logo) imprinted on it. The whole flag pole is covered with deep yellow (Basanti) cloth. A Khanda (double edged sword) is surmounted on the top of the flag pole. Till the end of the Sikh rule in the Punjab, it used to be a spear on the top of the flag pole, but since possession of spear was made illegal by the British government, therefore it was replaced with Khanda during the British rule. There is no fixed length for the flag pole but it must be taller than the Gurdwara building. Sikh national flag is hoisted in front of every Gurdwara, eversince they (Sikhs) lost the Sikh State in 1849 A.D. The use of Nishan Sahib started during the days of Guru Hargobind, when the Sikh religion made a formal bid to proclaim its basic commitment to politics and social problems. During period of the Sikh Gurus the colour of the Nishan Sahib was blue, but during the last days of the Sikh rule in Punjab it was changed to yellow under the influence of the Hindu Dogras Hira Singh, Gulab Singh and Brahmins i.e Miser Sardars Tej (Ram) Singh and Lal (Chand) Singh. Akalis also called Nihangs the real custodians of the Sikh faith have not discarded the blue colour of the Sikh Nishan Sahib till date.

**Sikh National Logo (Emblem of Sikhism)**



***“Deg Teg Fateh”***

The Sikh national Emblem was created by the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) after its constitution in the early twentieth century, when it depicted the Sikh doctrine “*Deg Teg Fateh*” in the emblematic form (Emblem / logo). Since then it is seen inscribed on the Sikh national flag/ letter heads and the stamps of various Sikh organizations. The doctrine is first found in written form in Persian, on the seal of Banda Singh Bahadur (1708-1716), stamped on his letters. The seal bore the inscription:

*“Deg-O-Teg 0 Fateh-Nusrat-I -Bedrang Yafat -Az Nanak--Guru Gobind Singh”* i.e, “The kettle (*Deg*)- (The Sikh symbol of economy, the means to feed all and sundry on an egalitarian base), sword (*Teg*)-(The Sikh symbol of power, to protect the weak and hapless and smite the oppressor), victory and unending patronage are obtained from Gurus Nanak-- Gobind Singh”. After Banda Singh this inscription was adopted by the Sikh Misals and then by Sikh rulers for their coins also. Now the official seal of Akal Takhat bears this inscription.

The circle in the emblem of Sikhism represents the *Deg* (caldron) used to prepare food, *Guru ka Langar* initiated by the founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak to remove caste barriers, teach people equality and humility before each other and to feed all and sundry on an egalitarian base so that no body sleeps empty stomach.

The two swords on the outside represent the *Miri--Piri (Bhagti and Shakti)* doctrine of Sikhism, *revealed by Guru Nanak and put into practice by his sixth successor, Guru Hargobind* indicating the integration of spiritual and temporal powers together and not treating them as two separate and distinct entities.

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In the center is the *Khanda*, the double-edged sword, used by the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh to prepare *Amrit* to initiate the Sikhs. *Khanda* has cutting edge on both sides indicative of two swords fused together representing *Bhagti and Shakti* (spiritual and temporal powers), giving birth to “The Khalsa”, who is a saint-soldier (*Sant-Sipahi*), the saint meaning scholarly in knowledge of Gurbani and soldier meaning martial in spirit.

To summarize, the Sikh national Emblem, reminds the Sikhs that they are warriors, they should take *Pahul (Amrit)*, become ‘Khalsa’ i.e, The ultimate form of the Sikh, keep *Guru Ka Langar* going so that no body sleeps hungry, protect the weak and hapless, fight injustice and oppression, wherever it takes place, the victory will be theirs: ‘*Deg-Teg-Fateh*’.

### **Sikh national day—Vaisakhi**

Vaisakhi, the first day of the month of Vaisakh in the Nanak Shahi Calendar is the Sikh national day. According to the Common Era Calendar it falls on 14<sup>th</sup> April every year. It is most important day for more than 23 million Sikhs living throughout the world, who celebrate it with great fervour. Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith was born on this day in 1469 A.D. Secondly Guru Gobind Singh formally consecrated Sikhism through Sikh initiation ceremony (*Khanday Batay dee Pahul—Amritpaam*), at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab, on this day in 1699. Thirdly the Sikh Kingdom was formally founded on this day in 1801 A.D.

The Sikhs all over the world celebrarte Vaisakhi as ‘*Khalsa Sajna Diwas*’: (The Sikh consecration day). Sikh men, women and children dress up themselves with best available clothes, visit Gurdwaras and pay their obeisance. Best food is prepared and served in homes, charity is given to the poor and *Daswandh* is sent to Gurdawaras. Sikhs hold congregations in Gurdwaras all over the globe, bhog of Akhand Path is held in every *Gurdwara*, *Katha*, *Kirtan* and *Dhadi Darbars* are organized and *Guru ka langar* is served to all. *Nagar Kirtan* takes place. The Sikh who want to join the Khalsa often do at Vaisakhi, *Amritpaan sanchar* takes place in Gurdwaras. At some places shows of martial games like wrestling, horse riding, tent pegging and *Gatka* (sword fighting) etc are held and prizes are given to winners. Main function is held at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar. Nishan Sahib is given new cloth covering in all Gurdwaras on this day. Outside Punjab and India Vaisakhi is celebrated as Sikh festival with full zeal in USA, Canada, UK, Malaysia, Australia etc.

### **Sikh National Calendar & Sikh Calander Year**

The Sikh Calendar year is called Nanak *Shahi Samvat*. The year one of Nanak Shahi Calendar begins in 1469 CE—The year of the birth of Guru Nanak. It is based on the

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length of the tropical (solar) year 365 d, 5h, 48m 45s. Its first five months contain 31 days each and last seven months 30 days each. It has fixed leap year rule—last month to have one extra day every four years. It was officially adopted by SGPC in 2003, who since then uses Gregorian Calendar for its secular life and for Sikh religious life it uses the Sikh Nanak Shahi calendar. The Sikh calendar is based on *Barah Mah* authored by the Gurus, which starts from the month of ‘CHET’ (ਚੇਤ). 01 ‘CHET’ of Nanak Shahi corresponds with 14 March CE.

Nanak Shahi calendar introduced by Banda Singh Bahdur was lunar in character and like the Hindu *Bakrami Samvat*, the dates of various Sikh festivals and historic events changed every year. The Sikhs therefore, have now developed it into solar one to avoid confusion

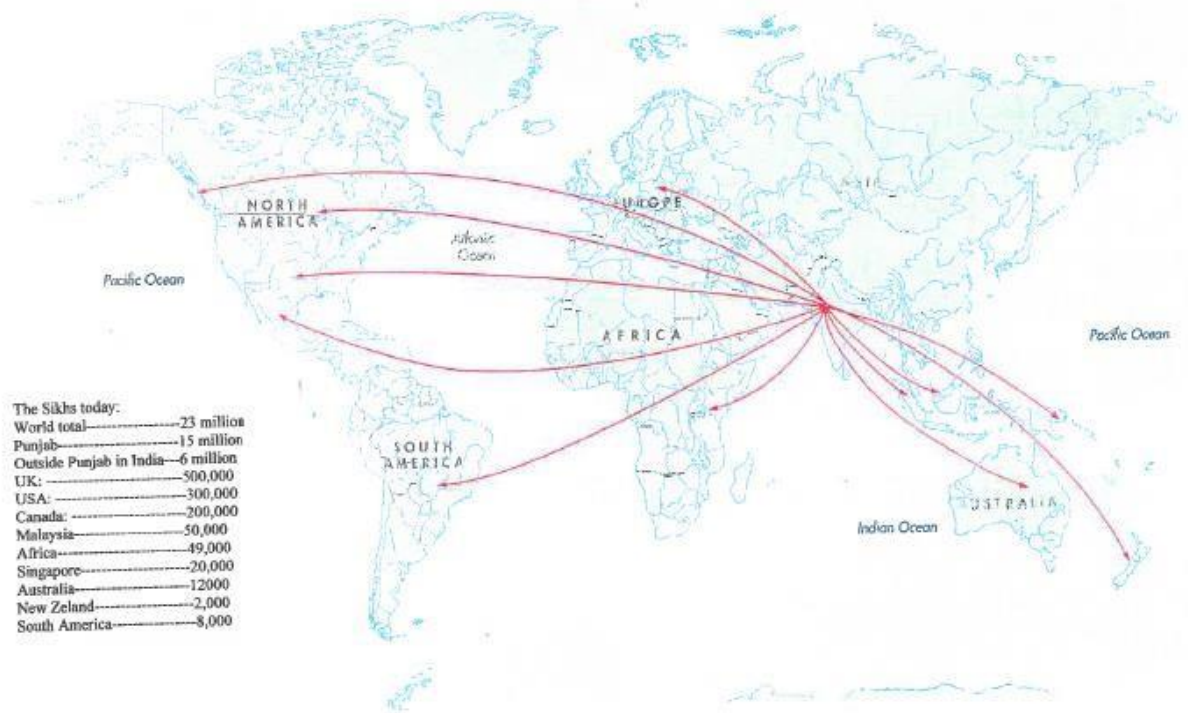
### **International treaties of the Sikh Nation**

1. Treaty between Sikhs led by Sardar Baghel Singh and Moghul Emperor Shah Alam ii Emperor of Delhi, after the Sikhs captured Delhi in March, 1778 AD.
2. Treaty of mutual friendship signed between Sarkare Khalsa (Sikhs) and the British 1809.
3. Treaty of Ropar for trade between British India and Sarkare Khalsa, October 1831.
4. Tripartite treaty at Ferozepur between the Sikhs, the British and Shah Shuja of Afghanistan 1838.
5. Treaty over traditional boundaries of Ladakh, Tibet, China and the Sikhs under Maharaja Sher Singh, 1838, after the Sikh captured and annexed Ladakh to the Sikh Empire.
6. Treaty of annexation of the Punjab between the Sikhs and the British 1849.
7. Rajiv Longowal accord, between the Sikhs and the government of India, 1984.

### **Sikh Organizations**

- Singh Sabha
- Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee
- Chief Khalsa Diwan

## The global spread of Sikhism & The Sikhs



### The Sikh Diaspora

Till the closing years of the nineteenth century the Sikhs were confined to their motherland. The global spread of Sikhism has been mainly through migration of the Sikhs from the 'Punjab' and not through mass conversions from other faiths. Recently because of its principles, Sikhism has been embraced by many white people and now many white Sikhs and even black Sikhs can be found internationally, particularly in USA. Their children are being brought up in the Sikh way and some have been even educated at Sikh schools in the Punjab in India. Now 'Gora Sikhs' dressed in Punjabi clothes is a common site in Amritsar.

Today Sikhism is a world religion and presently Sikhs are found in most of the countries of the world. Wherever they have gone they have carried their unique appearance and their unique philosophy with them. Every person in a new social, cultural or geographical environment faces many problems. Sikhs have had to face such problems more so because of their distinct appearance. However, Sikhs have adapted themselves to their new environment where ever they have settled. They have adopted new places as their homes and have mixed well with society. There have been several reasons for the Sikhs to migrate out of India:

### **Migration of the Sikhs to South East Asia:**

The out migration of the Sikhs from their country--Punjab, started in small numbers, after its annexation by the British in 1849; when the young Sikhs from aristocratic families whose privileges had been abolished by the British for their anti-British role during the Anglo-Sikh wars and were reduced to the level of ordinary farmers, were harassed and kept under surveillance felt uncomfortable in the Majha area of the Punjab around Lahore and Amritsar. In the beginning the Sikhs escaped to Bengal out of the Punjab and from Bengal they traveled by ships to Hongkong, Malaya (Malaysia), Singapore, Thailand, Sumatra, Shanghai and Manila etc, where they worked as watchmen, policemen, and caretakers etc.

Second phase of the Sikh migration beyond India began after 1857 A.D, the year of the first independence struggle, known to British historians as the Mutiny. Sikhs stood aside from this uprising because the *Poorbiahs* (The people belonging to the eastern side of the Punjab--both Hindus and Muslims), who now claimed to be crusaders for freedom, were the same people, who eight years ago (1849 A.D) had been the *feringee's* instrument in reducing the Sikhs to servitude, plundered their houses and insulted and even raped their women after their defeat and were presently hurling insult on them daily as occupation force on behalf of the British. Moreover, the reestablishment of Muslim rule under the Moghul King Bahadur Shah, who led the mutiny, was not acceptable to the Sikhs, who had suffered under the Muslim rule for generations. This won the Sikhs favour with the British, who began recruiting them into their army in large numbers. By 1870 Sikh soldiers were serving overseas and defending the British colonies. During the first and second world wars they fought in Asia, Middle-East, Africa and Europe. After retirement many of them returned to the counties they had visited during their service tenure and settled their.

Mid nineteenth century was the hey-day of the British Capitalism. The Punjab after its occupation by the British was opened to a vigorous process of colonization and developed as an agricultural appendix of the imperialist market economy. The strategy which the British pursued for the development of agriculture in the British Punjab, built a strong infrastructure, raised production, but simultaneously unleashed forces of increasing exploitation of the small and medium peasantry. The process of oppression was set in motion by new system of land revenue, law and justice. Although, the revenue assessment, was lower than that of the precolonial days, but the measures adopted for its collection on a due date in cash were very harsh. Whether the crop was good or bad in a particular year was no consideration. Since most peasants hardly saved any cash, money for payment of taxes had to be borrowed and lands mortgaged. The privilege, granted by the new revenue laws, for selling and mortgaging of land, facilitated borrowing from the *Shahookaar* (money lender / *Bania*), resulting in a fast rise of indebtedness of the peasants and consequent alienation of lands in the *British Punjab*. Once caught in the coils of *Bania* the poor peasant had little chance of respite, let alone release. The security of the British legal system facilitated exploitation by the money lender; his manipulation of accounts (*Dheli vich haveli*) lay beyond the reach of law. The lawyers turned out to augment and share the spoils. The autonomous Princely States of the Punjab in the Malwa region and in the hills of the Punjab remained free from these oppressive measures of the British. Only the peasants of the British Punjab suffered.



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Economic conditions worsened further in the Sikh homeland during the first decade of the twentieth century. Monsoons failed successively from 1905-10. This led to famine. Epidemics of malaria and plague during this period further added to their woes. Under the circumstances, many enterprising Sikhs left their country to seek livelihood elsewhere.

The Sikhs were the first people to migrate out of India in large numbers to different parts of the world, as they neither believe in the Hindu concept of pollution (ਭਿੱਟੇ ਜਾਣਾ) by crossing the *Kala Paani* (Sea) nor the Hindu ideology, which says, "It is exclusive privilege and grace of God that enables man to be born a Hindu in the sacred land called, Bharat, that is India; a birth in other lands, no matter of how excellent a condition and however frequently, is no better than a repetitious frustration and wearisome waste" i.e; "*Krsnanugrahato labhadawa manave janam bharte, anyasthane brtha janam nispphlanca gatagatam*" (*Vishnupurana*), which prevented the Hindus from migrating abroad.

### **The Sikhs in Australia**

From Hong Kong and other South Asian countries the Sikhs started entering Australia in the 1880's and got employment in the sugar-cane fields there. Soon the Australian whites started bitterly opposing the coloured labourers, though directed in particular at Chinese, it affected Indian workers. The 1901 Immigration Restriction Act effectively promulgated the infamous White Australia policy. This made it impossible for all but a handful of students, travelers and merchants on temporary permits to Australia, while the entry of women and dependents almost ceased. India gained Independence in 1947 and the period of colonization was over and Australia could not afford to strain trading relations with other nations by its stance on non-white people. The White Australia policy was therefore abandoned in early 1970s. Changes in the Australian laws made migration relatively easy to that country and enabled professional Sikh men to bring their families with them. They have purchased lands here and converted them into granaries of food. In Woolgoolga, a place south of Brisbane most of the land is owned by the Sikhs and they are rich growers of Avacado, pears and bananas. Some Sikhs, who were merely cane cutters in the beginning, now stand out for cane farming in the Cairns area up in Far North Queensland. In recent years, the number of Sikhs in Australia has grown considerably who have entered there as professionals or as refugees seeking political asylum after operation blue star, in 1984.

### **Sikhs reach New Zealand**

From Australia some of the Sikhs migrated to New Zealand in or about 1890. There they adopted diary farming as their main profession, but when their presence became visible the government there also legislated to ban the entry of Asians. After India gained independence in 1947 a number of Sikhs have entered there as professionals or as refugees after the 'Blue Star Operation, against the Sikhs by the government of India in the year 1984.

### **Sikhs in Africa**

A large number of Sikhs came here between 1896 and 1901, as part of the skilled labour to build the East African Railway. Majority of them were Ramgarhia Sikhs (carpenters, blacksmiths and

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masons), knowing skills the British needed and the native Africans lacked. Major Sikh concentrations developed in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

### **Sikhs in the Middle East**

Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism himself visited Baghdad, where a Gurdwara stands in his memory. The building of this historic Gurdwara is said to have been damaged during the course of the on-going war between Iraq and USA. A large number of the Sikhs are working in gulf countries on contract basis.

### **Sikhs in Central Asia**

Guru Nanak preached Sikhism in Central Asia. A considerable number of Afghan Sikhs are found in Afghanistan. After Afghanistan came under Taliban rule, majority of them were forced to leave Afghanistan, when they migrated to India, where most of them have settled in the Indian capital, Delhi.

### **Sikhs migrate to the West**

The Sikhs migrated to the west in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The deposed King of the Sikh Empire, Maharaja Dalip Singh became the first Sikh to immigrate to the west, when he reached Paris in June 1886 after renouncing Christianity and re-embracing Sikhism. First Gurdwara was established by the Sikhs in Britain in 1911 in Putney. Mass scale immigration to Great Britain occurred after the world war two, when men were needed to run the industries there.

At the time of the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, the British partitioned the Sikh homeland, Punjab into two parts: the eastern 38 % segment was attached to Hindu India, while the western 62% percent was made over to the newly created Islamic State of Pakistan. As soon as boundry line was drawn bloody riots broke out and the Sikhs and Hindus were forced by the Muslims to leave the western segment and migrate to either Indian side or other parts of the world. Being citizens of common wealth country, a large number of the Sikhs migrated to Great Britain and settled in the industrial centres like London, Birmingham, West Yorkshire, Central Lancashire, the East and West Midlands to work as labourers and technicians in factories.

After gaining independence in late 1960s, the East African countries pursued the policies of Africanisation due to which a large number of Sikhs there migrated to Britain. A substantial number of the Sikhs moved to Britain from Africa following their expulsion from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972. Britain now has largest Sikh population outside India, where their estimated number is more than half a million and Britain has more than one hundred Gurdwaras. Presently Sikhs are located in substantial numbers in France, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Italy etc.

## **The Sikhs in North America**

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated in 1897. The government of India sent Sikh Lancers and Infantry Regiment to London to attend the Jubilee celebrations. On their return journey after crossing the Atlantic by ship they travelled from Montreal to Vancouver by train. They were impressed by the Canadian prosperity. They thought of settling in Canada for a better life. On the way back to their homes in the Punjab, these soldiers met the Sikhs posted at Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Penang and Rangoon etc, and told them about the better opportunities in the new world. From most of the available sources of information it becomes evident that the Sikhs started entering into North America in small batches during the last decade of the nineteenth century. They landed on its Pacific Coast and settled in Seattle, Oregon, California in America and the adjoining British Columbia in Canada. Soon, thereafter the waves of emigration from rural areas of the Punjab especially from the most congested districts of Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur started. Among these early arrivals 98% were Sikhs and hardly two percent were Hindus and Muslims and around fifty percent among them were ex-soldiers who had served in the British Indian Army.

## **The Sikhs in Canada**

The Sikhs entered Canada towards the end of nineteenth century. Most of them settled in the province of the British Columbia in and around the city of Vancouver and were engaged in lumbering, timber trade and farm labour. Their wages were lower than those of white workers, still, because of their frugal habits, they were able to save enough money to send back home in the Punjab. This attracted more Punjabi Sikh immigrants. During 1906, the Punjabis started landing in Canada in large numbers. Among these 98% were Sikhs and two percent were Hindus and Muslims. By 1908 their numbers in the province was estimated to be around 5,000 and together with the Chinese and Japanese immigrants, were perceived as threat to their jobs in addition to other social and political issues, by the relatively small Anglo-Saxon population. As British subjects, South Asian Immigrants had been able to vote; but the British Columbia legislature removed that privilege, denying South Asians municipal and federal voting rights and other civic rights like serving as school trustees, on juries or in public service, holding jobs resulting from public works contracts or in public service, holding jobs practicing the professions of law and pharmacy. Asiatic exclusion League came into existence on August 12, 1907. The main object of the League was to expell all the Asiatic people from British Columbia and not to let even one person to land on Canadian soil in future. The governments of Britain and India indirectly supported the Asiatic Exclusion League to keep Canada white. When the politicians, missionaries, union leaders and the controllers of local press wanted to get rid of Sikh labourers, they made up their mind to stay and not to be pushed around. They organized themselves under the auspices of Vancouver Khalsa Diwan Society and built their first Gurdwara in Vancouver, which was inaugurated on 19<sup>th</sup> of January, 1908. Wherever they settled they built more Gurdwaras, which in addition to being place of worship served for the benefit of visitors and new settlers as community centers.

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The government of Canada hatched a conspiracy to please the Asiatic Exclusion League and keep Canada white. The first step the government of Canada took and passed the 'continuous journey' legislation on January 8, 1908. The Canadian Federal government effectively banned further South Asian immigration by requiring South Asians to purchase a ticket for a through passage to Canada from their country of their birth or nationality or citizenship that led to the unfortunate *komagata Maru* incident, which involved considerable embarrassment and left an enduring memory which continues to the present day among the Sikhs. However, wives and children of men living in Canada were allowed to immigrate from India from 1919 onwards. On account of racial discrimination, the Sikhs had to face severe hardships, but they faced them cheerfully. In spite of all these difficulties, the established Sikh families flourished economically and maintained their religious foundation through the Khalsa Diwan Society and its *Gurdwaras*, which exerted continual pressure on provincial and federal politicians to cancel the 'continuous journey' rule and restore the right to vote to South Asian Canadians. They firmly remained determined to make Canada as their permanent home against all odds.

After Britain gave independence to India in 1947, the Indian government pressed Canada to institute an annual immigration quota such as had been established in the United States. Giving in to the pressure from the government of India from outside and from the Khalsa Diwan Society within, the Canadian government initiated a quota system for South Asian immigrants. In 1957 a new immigrant agreement between Canada and India raised the Indian quota from 150 to 300 per year, of which one-half was to be preferentially filled by relatives of South Asians who were already Canadian Citizens. By the end of 1961, under this new policy, dependent relatives and others entered into Canada. Under the other category mostly professors, engineers, doctors, teachers and technicians arrived into Canada. These professional immigrants settled all over Canada resulting in major Sikh concentrations in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Calgary, after Vancouver. This pattern continued throughout the 1960s as Canada was then experiencing a shortage of professionals. Thus, while the earliest South Asian immigrants to Canada had been well-off Sikh farmers, the second influx of their relatives arriving in the 1950s and 1960s, were well-educated professionals. There was, however, another important dimension of this later group of South Asian immigrants, not all were Sikhs. Gradually during the 1950s and 1960s, other ethnic / religious groups began to arrive: Muslims from Pakistan, Hindus from Punjab, Gujrat, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Madras and other Indian states etc. A large number of the Sikhs entered Canada and sought asylum there as refugees after operation Blue Star in 1984. Presently they are said to constitute two percent of the total Canadian population, which is equivalent to their percentage in India.

### **Migration of the Sikhs to America**

Since ancient times, second popular name for India is Hindustan and as a result all its residents migrating into America were labeled as Hindus by the immigrant officers at the ports of their entry, irrespective of their religion, therefore it is not possible to mark a date of entry of the Sikhs into U.S.A with certainty. However, according to an article that appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 April 1899, 'four Sikhs, namely Bakkshlied Singh, Bood Singh, Variam Singh and Sohava Singh, on the Nippon Maru ship were permitted to land by immigration officials in San Francisco. All of them belonged to the district of Lahore'.

## Who are Sikhs?

After 1908, the Indian immigrants in Canada mostly Sikhs, began to cross over to the USA, because of the conditions created in Canada by its government. In USA, the Sikh immigrants found employment on farms and in lumber mills in Washington, Oregon and California States. Small communities of the Sikhs grew up in San Joaquin and Sacramento villages. Some went further south to the Imperial Valley, where the climate was similar to Punjab. The Indian immigrants in America were inspired by a strong spirit of brotherliness. They treated one another as brothers irrespective of caste, creed or religion. The Sikhs organized themselves religiously and formed Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society and built their first small prayer hall in 1906, in Stockton. In 1908 Baba Jwala Singh (Tathian) and Baba Wasakha Singh (Dadher near Patti) formed a registered company and started farming after acquiring 500 acres of land on lease in the town of Holt (Halt) near Stockton. They ran a free kitchen. All new comers stayed with them until they got employment. They also provided scholarships to students to enable them to prosecute their studies. The USA whites had far less of racial prejudice than the Canadians. They were liberal and progressive in their outlook. Hence, the immigrants there had not to face racial discrimination of type and vehemence, which the immigrants had to experience in Canada. But, soon, there set in a severe depression in USA. The influx of cheap Punjabi labour added to their difficulties. Thereby the social and economic balance got shaken even in USA. There were wide spread race riots. The majority of Hindustani immigrants were Sikhs from the Punjab. The Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan society purchased a piece of land in Stockton on South Grant Street in September 1912 and started their first Gurdwara after installing Guru Granth Sahib in the building, which already existed there on the lot. Nishan Sahib (The Sikh national flag) was hoisted in front of the Gurdwara. Baba Wasakha Singh (Dadher Sahib) and Baba Jwala Singh (Tathian) were the first Granthis. The Sikhs now realized that they were given this prejudicial treatment, because they were not citizens of a free country. It gave birth to the *Ghadar* movement in 1913 in USA to free India.

The United States Government Legislated Banned Zone Act in 1917 to halt the Asian immigration to U.S and the denial of citizenship to the South Asians in 1923. California's Alien land laws, originally designed to prevent the Japanese from leasing or owning agricultural land on the basis of their status as 'Aliens' ineligible for citizenship, were applied to 'Punjabis'. This was a telling blow, because most of the Punjabi men were Sikhs from farming backgrounds in Hindustan and were doing well. U.S restrictions on Asian immigration prevented all but a handful of Punjabi women from joining their husbands, made personal and family life of these early immigrants from the Punjab, very hard. Miscegenation laws prohibited marriage with women of other races. Hispanic women, like the Indians technically Caucasian but viewed as non-white, became the major source of wives in U.S for Punjabi men. Only six Sikh women from Punjab, resided in the country from 1904 to 1947.

Dalip Singh Saund born in 1899 in village Chhajalwadi, district Amritsar, Punjab, India, came to USA in 1920, after securing his B.A. degree in mathematics from Punjab University in 1919. He attended the University of California at Barkley, from where he graduated with a master's degree in 1922 and Ph. D in 1924. During his college days he served as president of the national Hindustan Association of America and had many opportunities for public speaking, defending the nationalist movement in India and demand for self-rule. After completing his studies he chose to become a

farmer. He got married with Marian Kosa in 1928. He was a successful farmer for nearly three decades in Imperial Valley, California. He decided to lead a life of fight to end restrictions that prohibited the naturalization of immigrants from India as reflected in such draconian laws like Quota Immigration Act, the Cable Act and the National Act in the 1920s. He worked very hard in the drive for U.S. citizenship, particularly in rousing the Indian residents of California, who had become discouraged after years of legal and legislative defeat. Saund did not waver in his pursuit of American dream, even though he was subjected to racial prejudice and discrimination, not only being prohibited from owning the land he farmed on, but even his American wife stripped of her citizenship for marrying an alien. After years of lobbying on Capitol Hill he was able to convince Congresswoman Claire Booth Luce of Connecticut and Congressman Emmanuel Celler of New York to introduce legislation granting naturalization rights to Asian Indians and Filipinos. In 1946, the legislation was signed into law by President Harry S Truman. The passage of the Luce-Celler Bill made South Asians eligible for U.S. citizenship and therefore for leasing and owning of agricultural land. This change meant that the new citizens could bring immediate relatives. A small number of immigrants from Hindustan started arriving. In spite of discrimination, the Sikh community in California prospered, and a second Gurdwara was built in El Centro in 1948. Saundh became U.S. citizen on 16 December 1949. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1956 from the 29<sup>th</sup> Congressional district of California—the first native of Asia elected to the United States Congress. He served three terms, working vigorously for all the constituents of his district. While running for re-election for a fourth term in 1962, Saund suffered a disabling stroke that ended his political career. He died on April 22, 1973 in Hollywood in California.

The trickle of new Sikh immigrants into USA became a flood when in 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, popularly known as Hart-Celler Act was signed, which lifted “national origin” quotas and began a period of vigorous immigration from South Asia. These early Punjabi immigrants mostly Sikh settled in rural California, particularly in Yuba City / Marysville area. A large number of the Sikhs entered into different countries of the world including U.S.A; and sought asylum there as refugees in 1984 after the military action code named as ‘Operation Blue Star’ against them by the Indian government to suppress their genuine demand for more economic powers to all Indian states and a separate Sikh Civil Law like Hindus and Muslims in that country.

Presently the estimated number of the Sikhs in the world is about 23 (twenty three) million, out of which about 15 million live in the The Sikh Homeland, ‘Punjab’, around six million live in the rest of India outside Punjab, while the rest about 2 million are spread all over the world, half a million (5 Lakhs) are in UK, another half a million are in North America out of which 3.5 hundred thousand (3.5 Lakhs) are in Canada and about 1.5 hundred thousand (1.5 Lakhs) are in located in United States Of America, the remaining one million are spread all over the globe. Big concentrations are located in Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New-Zeland, German, Norway and other Asian, African and European countries.

All over the world the Sikhs now stand distinguished among the top ranking farmers, players, soldiers, industrialists, businessmen, professionals and of course politicians. They are loyal to the countries in which they live but they look to the Punjab and its traditions, for spiritual inspiration.

## Important terms used by the Sikhs and their meanings

*Aad*: First: Original

*Ant*: The end

*Akaal*—Literally beyond time—Immortal. Only God is beyond time and therefore immortal.

*Akaal Purkh*: The Being beyond time; God *Akali*: Worshipper of *Akaal*. Literally immortal.

*Akali / Nihang*:

Nihangs constitute an order of the Sikhs, who never care about death and misery. They are ever-ready for martyrdom and remain unsullied by worldly possessions. They are house-holders and have families. Originally they were death-squads of the Sikhs, who spearheaded the task of toppling down the

Moghuls and Afghan' political hegemony in the Punjab, according to the programme given to Banda Singh Bahadur by Guru Gobind Singh in the year 1708. Ever since the days of Guru Gobind Singh, they have been in the vanguard of the Sikh struggle against tyranny and foreign rule. They rendered most conspicuous service in establishing Sikh power in the Punjab between Khyber and River Jamna (Delhi). At that time they were known as *Akalis* literally meaning immortals and were greatly feared as determined warriors. Through their extraordinary zeal and enthusiasm, they acquired the character of priests in which capacity they acted effectively while directing the conduct of Sikh councils at the *Akhal Takhat*. Nihangs can be recognized from a distance as they wear dark blue robes with their legs bare below the knees and high blue and yellow turbans laced with steel discs. They trace the origin of their blue dress from Guru Gobind Singh, who dressed himself with blue robes like a Muslim divine (*Uchch da pir*) to conceal his identity from the pursuing Moghal imperial forces, after his escape from the fortress at Chamkaur. For part of the year they remain in their 'camps' called '*chhaunis*', attending to cultivation. At other times they roam around the Punjab and adjacent states on horse back. They usually carry spears, swords (Kirpan), daggers, shields and now of course guns. For the festival of Hola Mohalla they converge on Anandpur to participate in mock battles. They use a charming vocabulary of Punjabi slang language, which they developed during the worst persecution of the Sikhs, for the purpose of communicating among themselves, which has found its way into Punjabi language. Their contingents are called "*Guru kian ladlian faujan*". Therefore they enjoy the regard of the whole Sikh community. They have many deras in the Punjab.

This Sikh Sampardai has its headquarters at Damdama Sahib, a holy Sikh shrine established by Guru Gobind Singh himself in Bathinda district of the present Punjab. Guru Gobind Singh reorganized his fighting force and established a Sikh military cantonement here, which came to be known as *Chhauni Nihang Singhan* and exists till today. He fortified it with fully trained and fully armed Sikh army capable of facing any future eventuality. Baba Deep Singh Shaheed was the first general incharge of this cantonement. The Nihang Sampardai has also produced innumerable sons for the Sikh nation and among whom Baba Deep Singh and Akali Phoola Singh's names stand most distinguished.

Who are Sikhs?

*Akaal Sahai*: God bless / help you

*Akaash*: Sky

*Akal* (ਅਕਾਲ): Wisdom

*Anand*: Bliss

*Anand Karaj*: Marriage in the Western world is regarded a contract, but in Sikhism it is regarded blissful union of the two souls and is called Anand Karaj meaning blissful union, and this union is life-long till death separates the couple

*Anhad naad*: Sound produced by striking an object

*Anaahad naad*: The Celestial sound / music, heard in the higher state of spiritual consciousness.

*Akhand Path*: Continuous, uninterrupted reading of Guru Granth  
Sahib, by a relay of readers

*Akiratghan*: Ungrateful

*Ades*: Epipheth used as greetings by Jogis

*Asikh*: Non-Sikh. Literally means not learned.

*Avidya*: Lack of education

*Ardas*: Sikh prayer—A humble and sincere request to Akaal Purkh i.e; God.

*Atman*: Soul / Spirit / Self

*Avtar*: Incarnation of God

*Bhakhia*: language

*Bhau* (ਭਾਉ): love of divine majesty.

*Bhai-ay* (ਭੈ): Feeling of awe-ful fear.

*Buddh*: Wisdom

*Bhand*: Woman

*Bani*: Contents of all the Holy Scriptures forming canon of Sikh faith.

*Bana*: It means dress, which gives outer appearance to the person. The Bana of Sikh faith, gives

an identity to the organized form of Sikhism. These five K's are national uniform (*Bana*)

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Who are Sikhs?

of the initiated / Baptized i.e, *Amritdhari* Sikhs. These symbolize the fact that the Sikh has been baptized. It gives corporate identity to the Sikh religion i.e, Sikhism.

*Bhai*: Literally, brother; an epithet of respect used for a Sikh connected with religious affairs.

*Bhagauti* (ਭਗੌਤੀ) means Kirpan / sword. It also means / symbolizes power-- *Shaktee* .

*Bhagauti* (ਭਗਉਤੀ) means devotee (Bhagat)

*Bhagauti* (ਭਗਉਤੀ): Another name for God in Sikhism

*Bhog*: Concluding ceremony of Sikh service

*Bhoom*: Earth

*Baoli*: A well with stairs down to water level

*Baba*: Title given to a respected man (often elderly)

*Brahm-Giani*: God-illuminated human being, a perfect saint

*Banda* (ਬੰਦਾ ): Man

*Buddhi*: Woman

*Baanda* (ਬਾਂਦਾ ): Slave

*Baandi*: Slave woman

*Bhataar* (ਭਤਾਰ): Husband

*Bharam* (ਭਰਮ): Unfounded belief

*Birdh* (ਬਿਰਧ): Old person

*Bird*(ਬਿੰਦ): Follower (ਮਰੀਦ)

*Bird kee Paij* (ਬਿੰਦ ਕੀ ਪੈਜ): Follower's honour

*Bungay*: Places of residence

*Bip, Biper, Brahmin*: Purist Hindu Varna entitled to become priest and teacher.

Who are Sikhs?

*Bipran kee reet*: Brahmanical culture

*Charn and Charn Kamal in Gurnat* (Sikhism):

The term, Charn and *Charn Kamal* in Gurbani have been used as metaphors / similies for Shabad / Word / Teaching of Guru (God). In Punjabi *charn* literally mean feet and *kamal* means lotus, therefore *charn kamal* jointly literally means lotus feet, but theosophically in Gurnat it means *Gur Shabad* / Guru's word / Guru's teachings / Guru's principle i.e; a fundamental truth, law, doctrine or motivating force/ a rule of conduct, especially of right conduct. Shabad is Guru in Sikhism, which has no hands or feet. Gurbani emphatically says, "*Roop na rekh na rang kichh, treh gunn tay prabh bhin, tisay bhuja-ay Nnaka, jis hovay so parsan*" (Jaaap Sahib).

The words, *Charn* and *Charn kamal* have been used in Guru Granth Sahib at a number of places:

- ਹਿਰਦੈ ਚਰਣ ਸਬਦੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਾਧਿਓ ਪਾਲ...By enshrining Lord's teaching in his heart, Nanak has tied the holy word of the True Guru to his sash (GGS, p.680)
- ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਚਰਣ ਰਿਦੈ ਲੈ ਧਾਰਉ॥ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਨਮਸਕਾਰਉ॥--Enshrine thou Guru's teachings in thy mind. Ever make obeisance unto the Guru, the Supreme Lord (GGS, p.864).
- ਹਰਿ ਚਰਣ ਰਿਧੈ ਵਸਾਇ ਤੂ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਨਾਸੁ॥-Enshrine thou the Lord's teachings in thy mind and thine sins shall be annulled (GGS, p.491).
- ਜਨ ਕੇ ਚਰਨ ਵਸਹਿ ਮੇਰੈ ਹੀਅਰੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਪੁਨੀਤਾ ਦੇਹੀ॥- *jan ke charn vasah meray heearay sang puneeta dehee* i.e; The Lord's teachings abide within my heart with them my body is rendered pure (GGS, p.680).
- ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲ ਬਸੇ ਰਿਦ ਅੰਤਰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਸ ਚਾਖੇ॥--*Charn kamal basay rid antar amrit har ras chaakhay*-i.e; By imbibing the Lord's teaching in mind one tastes the sweetness of God's elixir (GGS,p.616).
- ਹਿਰਦੈ ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਧਾਰੇ॥ ਪੂਰੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ॥ *Hirahai charn kamal prabh dharay. Pooray satgur mil nistaray* i.e;Within my mind I have logged the Lord's teachings. By contact with the Perfect True Guru, I have been emancipated (GGS, p.193).
- ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਉਰਧਾਰੀ॥ ਮਨ ਤਨ ਧਨ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਅਧਾਰੀ॥ i.e; Guru's teachings I have embedded in my mind and heart. I tender my mind, body and wealth to the Guru, the prop of my very life (GGS, p193).

In the Sikh architecture at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), the World Seat of Sikhism in Amritsar, inverted lotus over the domes of the building depicts the ignorant human mind. As the lotus blooms with sun light after sun rise similarly the ignorant mind gets enlightened with the Divine Light of The Shabad, and blooms with spiritual wisdom. Guru

Who are Sikhs?

Granth Sahib, the Shabad Guru, lies in the central hall directly under the big central dome, which has an inverted lotus upon it.

- ਉਲਟਿਓ ਕਮਲੁ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ॥--*Ultio kamal brahm beechaar*.-meaning--The inverted lotus (ignorant mind) has turned upwards (has become enlightened) by Lord's meditation (GGS, p. 153).
- ਬੁਧਵਾਰਿ ਬੁਧਿ ਕਰੈ ਪ੍ਰਗਾਸ॥ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਕਮਲ ਮਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਬਾਸ॥ ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਦੋਊ ਏਕ ਸਮ ਧਰੈ॥ਉਰਧ ਪੰਕ ਲੈ ਸੁਧਾ ਕਰੈ (GGS, p.344)—On Wednesday man should enlighten his understanding. So that the Lord may acquire dwelling in his heart lotus. On meeting the Guru, he should consider both the weal and woe alike. He ought to handle and set right the inverted lotus of his heart.

*Charn Pahul:*

Before the introduction of *Khanday Batay Dee Pahul (Amrit-paan)* in Sikhism by the tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 AD, the devotees used to come to Guru Darbar voluntarily bowed their head before the Guru and vowed to lead the life according to Gurmat (Guru's word/ teachings / Bani and not any body else). This was known as *Charn Pahul*, “ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲ ਬਸੇ ਰਿਦ ਅੰਤਰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਸ ਚਾਖੇ॥--*Charn kamal basay rid antar amrit har ras chaakhay*-i.e; By imbibing the Lord's teaching in mind one tastes the sweetness of elixir of immortality” (GGS,p.616).

The Vedantins make wrong exposition of *Charn Pahul* as the water obtained by washing the feet of the Guru or touched by great toe of his foot and given to the followers for drinking, which was the practice then prevalent in Brahmanism

(Hinduism) and discarded by the Sikh Gurus. Sikhism forcefully rejects all such ritual practices of Brahmanism (Hinduism).

*Choohra:* Member of serf class outside the pale of Hindu caste system i.e, *Ashoot*.

*Chaunkian:* Guard posts

*Chaur:* A fan of Yak hair or peacock feathers, waved over Sri Guru Granth Sahib as a sign of respect, a symbol of authority.

*Chanani:* Canopy over Guru Granth Sahib

*Chardi-Kala:* Active optimism

*Char Padarath:* Arth, dharm, kaam, moksh

Who are Sikhs?

*Chaunka*: Place reserved for cooking food, literally meaning square.

*Dhan* (ਧਨ): Wife

*Darbar Sahib*: Sikh name for Golden Temple

*Deewan*: Sikh act of congregational worship, literally means court.

*Darsan*: Literally, glimpse, whereas in Indian theosophy means Philosophy

*Daswandh*: literally meaning one tenth, but practically it is voluntary contribution by the Sikhs to Gurdwara for the welfare of society and propagation of their religion i.e, Sikhism.

*Deg*: Cauldron

*Dahri*: Beard

*Fakir*: Muslim divine who lives on alms.

*Guru*: In Sikh scriptures, the word 'Guru' has been used to denote at least three different senses. Firstly, it has been used for God Himself, secondly, the word has been referred to as teacher-Guru and finally it is used for the Holy Sikh Scripture, "Guru Granth Sahib".

*Gurdwara*: Sikh place of prayer and piety

*Guru Granth Sahib*: The holy Sikh scripture.

*Granthi*: Reader of Sikh scriptures during service.

*Giani*: A person learned in Sikh teachings.

*Gutka*: Hand book of hymns for daily devotion in Sikhism.

*Gurmat*: Philosophy of Sikhism.

*Gurmatta*: Collective decision taken by the Sikhs in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib.

*Gurmukh*: God-oriented.

*Grahisti*: Householder

*Gurpurb*: Anniversary of a Guru's birth, death or succession.

*Gaddi*: Seat of authority

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Who are Sikhs?

*Gola*: Servant

*Hukam*: Literally order, theologically divine command

*Haumai*: Self-centeredness/ Ego

*Havan*: A Hindu religious ceremony whereby they worship their gods. A fire is lighted and kept alive by pouring butter oil on it continually. The devotees sit around the fire and the priest utters some mantras.

*Jaat*: Caste

*Jatha*: A band or group of the Sikhs

*Jathedar*: Leader of the Jatha

*Jeevan mukat*: Liberated while still alive, God conscious person.

*Joor*: Top knot

*Jat* (ਜਤ): Self-control

*Janeyoo*: A cotton thread worn around the neck by the upper class Hindus with the belief that it dispells all sins and keeps mind pure. A special ceremony is held when a young boy wears the thread for the first time. Lower class Hindus and women are not allowed to wear janeyoo

*Jog*: One of the six systems of Hindu philosophy.

*Jot*: Earthen lamp or lamp made of wheat flour and lit up with clarified butter in Hinduism. *Katha* (ਕਥਾ): Exposition of Gurbani.

*Keertan*: Keertan is the name for Sikh mode of worship, in which music is a catalyzing aid to numinous experience. It literally means to sing the *Keerat* (praise of the Almighty) *Kartar*: God

*Karta Purkh*: Creator person

*Khanda*: Double edged sword

*Kar* (ਕਰ): hands

*Kaar Sewa*: Service with hands

*Koorh*: (ਕੂੜ) Falsehood

*Karm*: Ritual / action / a unit of measurement in Punjab

*Karm Kaand*: A chapter of Vedas dealing with ritual of Hinduism

*Kamdhenu*: Wish-filling cow

Who are Sikhs?

*Kirtam*: Created beings

*Khintha*: Coat of patches

*Kwaree*: Virgin

*Kaam*: Sexuality, lust.

*Kaiaa*: Body

*Kaal*: Time (ਮੇਰੀ), death, black, tomorrow

*Khalis*: Punjabi word meaning pure.

*Khalsa*: Arabic / Persian word meaning sovereign.

*Kes*: Unshorn hair on the head.

*Kachhehra*: Breaches extending upto knees worn by initiated Sikhs.

*Kanga*: Special comb used by the Sikhs.

*Kara*: Iron wristlet.

*Kirpan*: Sword

*Karah Parsad*: Karah Parshad is one of the sacraments of Sikhism, which is a freshly prepared sanctified soft pudding made by mixing and heating equal parts of water, wheat flour, sugar and clarified butter . It is sanctified by placing it in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib throughout the service, offering Ardas and presenting it to Kirpan towards the end of Ardas. It is distributed amongst all attending persons at the conclusion (Bhog) of all Sikh ceremonies and congregations, happy or sad.

*Kafir*: Non-believer

*Kookas*: A break away sect of the Sikhs, who believe in Guru Granth Sahib but along with it also believe in the continuity of a living Guru after Guru Gobind Singh. The sect was founded by Baba Balak Singh / Ram Singh. They have lost relevance in main stream Sikhism because of their belief in the continuity of a living Guru.

*Katebas*: Holy Semitic Scriptures.

Who are Sikhs?

*Kala Pani*: Literally means black water, but in Hinduism it refers to sea water, which Hindus consider as ritually polluting to cross.

*Kirar-rh* (ਕਿਰਾਰੜ): Opportunist. In Punjab this term Kirar-rh is also used for merchantile community of Punjabi Hindus called Khatri. About them Guru Nanak says, “*Khatriaan taan dharm chhodia malesh bhakhia gahee*” (GGS p.663), *Naal kirarha dostee* (GGS, p.1412).

*Khaniaan*: Sources of production.

*Landa*: A script used by shopkeepers in the Punjab, before the creation of Punjabi speaking Punjab (punjabi Suba)

*Lawan*: Literaly separation, Hymn read at the time of somenization of marriage in Sikhism.

*Lala* (ਲਾਲਾ): Slave (ਗੁਲਾਮ). Title used by the Muslim Pathan invaders for the Hindu Khatri of the Punjab.

*Lok & Lokae*: World. *Lok* also means people.

*Mehta*: Minister / *Wazir*: Guru Nanak’s father’s name was Kaloo and he is called Kaloo *Mehta*, because he was a minister of local chief namely Rai Bulaar. ਲਬੁ ਪਾਪੁ ਦੇਇ ਰਾਜਾ

ਮਹਤਾ...*Labb paap doay raja mehta*|| (GGS, p 468). Mehta was not his caste as is

being described by the Brahmin scholars, but it was his title of job. Similarly the

Bedi caste associated with his name is also their creation and is not found in the

Indian literature before him. Guru Nanak himself never associated, Mehta or Bedi with his name.

*Murdar*: Carion

*Madh*: Middle

*Maheel*: Troposphere

*Malechh*: Unclean

*Man-mukh*: Self-centered person

*Mann*: In Guru Granth Sahib Mann has been used for : Brain, Atma (Spirit) and thought process.

Who are Sikhs?

*Masands*: Order of the Sikh missionaries established by Guru Arjan and abolished by Guru Gobind Singh in Sikhism.

*Math*: a monastery

*Matt*: (ਮੱਤ): Wisdom

*Maya*: Deceptive power of material world

*Meena* (ਮੀਣਾ): Scoundrel

*Moorti*: Representation of deity used for worship in Hindu temples and homes.

*Misar*: Another name for Brahmin

*Mullah*: Muslim religious teacher.

*Mundavani*: Stamp

*Maartand*: Sun (ਸੂਰਜ).

*Naad*: Sound

*Nishan Sahib*: Sikh national flag

*Nitnem*: Daily devotional routine of the Sikhs

*Nirmalas*: Literally sinless. They believe in Guru Granth Sahib, instead of Sanatan image worship and caste observance, but because of their being deeply rooted in vedic philosophy have lost their relevance in Sikhism.

*Parkash*: Ceremonial opening of the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib early in the

Morning or at any time during the day.

\**Pahul* (ਪਾਹੁਲ) in Sikhism

According to encyclopaedia of Sikhism (Mahan Kosh, p, 759) by Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, *Pahul*, means temper (*Paan*-ਪਾਣ), which is given to mild iron to turn it into hard steel.

Mild iron can be bent easily but after temper when it turns into steel, it will break but cannot be bent. Sikh initiation is called *Amrit-paan*, which turns an ordinary person's mind firm like steel, which can break but cannot be bent. Therefore *Amritpaan* literally means tempering the mind of the initiate with the elixir of immortality.

\*ਪਾਹੁਲ: ਪਾਣ ਚੜਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਗੁਰਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਲ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਲ।।

*Paat* (ਪਾਤ): Dynasty



Who are Sikhs?

*Paataal*: Netherland

*Path* (ਪਾਠ): Recitation of Gurbani.

*Pathi*: Reciter of Sikh scriptures.

*Panth*: The entire Sikh community

*Panj kakaar*: Five symbols of Sikh faith, worn by initiated Sikhs.

*Parchar*: Preaching.

*Parlok*: Beyond this world

*Parviti*: Ceremony / rite of others (ਅਨਯਰੀਤਿ)

*Parjaat*: Mythical wish filling tree in Hinduism.

*Pasaar*: Propagation.

*Patka*: Piece of cloth used by Sikh children as head covering.

*Pandit*: Learned i.e, teacher Brahmin

*Pandiya /Panda*: Tirath Brahmin.

*Peer* (ਪੀਰ): Muslim divine

*Pir* (ਪਿਰ): Husband

*Pujari*: Priest of a temple

*Qazi / Qadi*: Muslim legal authority. *Rav*

*/ Ravi*: Sun (ਸੂਰਜ).

*Raj* : *Sovereignty*

*Ridh* (ਰਿਧਿ): Wealth.

*Ridaa* (ਰਿਦਾ) Heart.

*Raagee*: Sikh religious musician

*Ramraiya*: Sikh follower of Ram Rai , Rival claimants to Guru Gaddi

*Rann* (ਰੰਨ): Married woman

Who are Sikhs?

*Sas/ Saseer* (ਸਸ / ਸਸੀਅਰ) -- moon

*Sikhi*: Sikhism

*Sikh*: Follower of Sikhism i.e, Sikh faith. Literally meaning, learned.

*Sangat*: Congregation

*Sant*: Holy person, comes from the word *Shaant* meaning who has controlled his desires.

*Sehaj*: Equipoise—Spiritual knowledge / *Aatmic adolta* / *Giyān*.

*Sehaj-dhari*—Practitioner of Sehaj.

*Siddh*: A hermit possessing mystic powers.

*Sidh*: (ਸਿਧਿ) Supernatural i.e, miraculous power.

*Sidharan Path* / *Sehaj Path*: Recitation of Guru Granth Sahib not over a specified period of time.

*Surat*: Concoiusness

*Sanatan*: Literally means ancient.

*Sanatanism* / *Sanatanwaad*: The word Hindu and Hindustan is not found in the Indian literature

before the arrival of Islam in India. It was the Islamic invaders who introduced this term in the Indian subcontinent. The religion of the ancient Aryans was known as

*Sanatan Mat* and the people practicing it were called *Sanatanis* / *Sanatan Dharmi* /

*Sanatanwaadis*. The Islamic invaders called them Hindu, a derogatory term in Persain and Arabic languages. The word Hindu became current in India in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

*Tan*: Body

*Tirath*: Place of pilgrimage

*Teg*: Sword

*Udasis*: Udasi sect in Sikhism was founded by Sri Chand s/o Guru Nanak. Its followers are called Udasi Sikhs, who believe in Guru Granth Sahib, but donot grow long hair and believe in renunciation, asceticism and celibacy. They have also lost their relevance in Sikhism, because of their Hindu practices.

*Vaak*: A random reading from Guru Granth Sahib

*Var*: Ode, ballad, a composition about the deeds of a hero.

Who are Sikhs?

*Vaisakhi*: The first day of the month of Vaisakh. On this day in 1699 AD, Guru Gobind Singh formally consecrated Sikhism at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab and created Khalsa literally meaning sovereign people. Literally Vaisakhi means a stick used by the weak or disabled persons for walking or support.

*Vidhya*: Education

*Vismad*: wonder

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