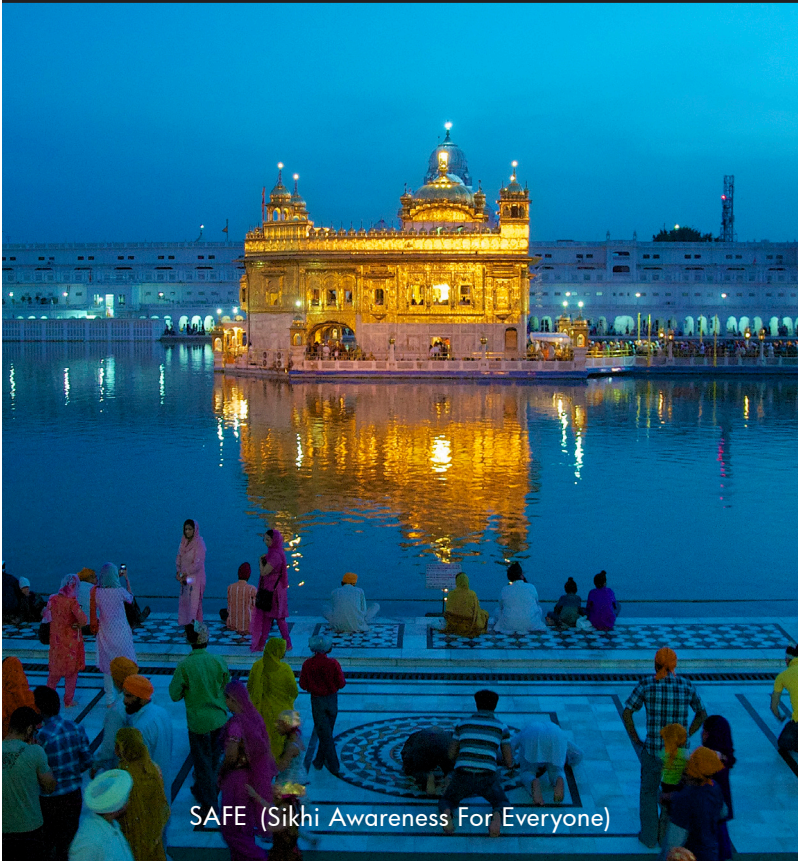




TOP 10 QUESTIONS ABOUT SIKHI

The 5th largest world religion



SAFE (Sikhi Awareness For Everyone)

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ੴ	=	The number one (1) in Punjabi. Refers to 1 Supreme Being
Sikhi	=	Sikh term for "Sikhism"
Gurbani	=	Divine revelation, written by the Gurus
Karam	=	Karma; earned by our thoughts, words and actions
Kaur	=	Princess; collective royal surname given to all Sikh females
Khalsa	=	The collective body of initiated Sikhs
Kirpa	=	Grace; earned through walking Guru's path to God
Langar	=	Free global open kitchen operated by Sikhs
Naam	=	ੴ's name; the experience of connecting to ੴ
Singh	=	Lion/Tiger; collective royal surname given to all Sikh males

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1. WHO IS THE SIKH GOD?

The only Eternal Reality is the ੴ Supreme Being who Creates, Sustains and Destroys. The ੴ expanded into the world and its light permeates everything. It is Infinite Bliss, Pure Love, Without Hate or Fear, Compassionate, All Knowing, Eternal, and Ever-Forgiving. We can experience the ੴ.

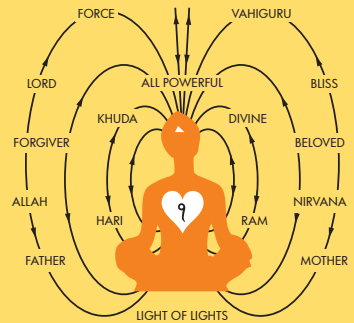
There is no religion and God has no chosen people. We are ੴ human race (all equal), some of whom are connected to this and others who have yet to realise their Divine potential.

Sikhi is a revealed path of Enlightenment, as taught by Ten Gurus from 1469 – 1708. Like scientific truths exist in all languages, so does the Truth of Sikhi also exist in other faiths. We respect all people and their religious freedom. Since most people know very little about Sikhi, here is some context:

Like Christians we sing God's praises and love our Gurus, but we do not believe salvation is only for Sikhs or there is a devil.

Like Muslims we follow the ੴ, but we do not impose on others or believe in eternal hell. Like Buddhists, we meditate, remain mindful and aim for a blissful consciousness (nirvana). However we do worship the ੴ Immortal Creator and do not believe in monastic living. Like Hindus we accept re-incarnation but don't accept the caste system or idol worship. Sikhs connect to all paths yet remain distinct and follow only the teachings of our 10 Gurus.

The Gurus path is one of earning grace and achieving Oneness with the Divine ੴ.



2. WHAT IS THE POINT OF LIFE?

The Supreme Being is our real Soulmate. Although we search for happiness in worldly things, deep within, our Soul seeks union with the ॴ. The ॴ is inside us and accessible to all of us.

At the top of our head, there is an energy centre that allows us to experience the Infinite and Divine ॴ. When we connect to the ॴ, we cry tears of joy, our body tingles and divine bliss floods our mind.

Love is the fastest and surest way to get to the Supreme ॴ. Once this fire is kindled within us, we feed it with spirituality. Chanting God's name, singing divine songs written by the

Gurus themselves and serving selflessly, we attune ourselves to the Immaculate ॴ. This is the process of purifying our Soul so it too shines with the light of its True Divine Origin.

Calling the ॴ (Naam) is the most powerful way to manifest the ॴ within us. Naam is both the journey and the destination. Celibacy or asceticism is not required; being a positive member of society is just the first step towards spirituality. Like a bird needs two wings to fly home, we need both Morality (Miri) and Spirituality (Piri).



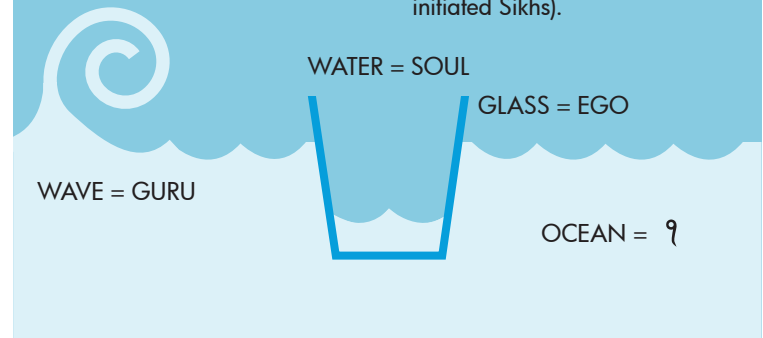
3. WHY GURU?

Just like a wave rising up from the ocean is powerful and distinct, then disappears within the ocean, so do Saints appear in the world. Already merged with the ॴ, they come to spread the light to others. Our Gurus are the mirrors of the Divine ॴ. They shine with Truth, speaking revelation, and have the power to awaken us to our divine potential. Sikhi is about submitting to both God's will and Guru's teachings. Anyone of any background, can be a Sikh (disciple) and earn Guru's kirpa (grace).

The Gurus were sent by the ॴ to show the world this spiritual and moral path and are key to merging with the ॴ. Just like a glass of water taken from the ocean, remains as

ocean water, so does our Soul remain the same as the ॴ. We are inside ॴ, it's all around and inside us. Our ego is what separates us from ॴ. Guru has the power to remove this ego but the Sikh must surrender the ego first. A Sikh falls in love with Guru; love in Sikhi is unconditional. Walking the Guru's path, a Sikh earns Guru's grace and merges with God.

There was an unbroken line of 10 human Gurus from 1469 to 1708. All the Gurus are seen as the same light, reflecting the ॴ. In 1708, Eternal Guruship was bestowed upon Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Scripture) and Guru Khalsa Panth (collective of initiated Sikhs).



4. VALUES AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM?

Union with the ॴ involves going inwards. The Soul within is the light of God and has no colour, religion, sex or nationality. Religious labels do not guarantee spiritual progress. Religion itself is not real, only God is real. The ॴ is not exclusive, but inclusive.

Make humanity your family. Disregard distinctions of race, religion, success, gender and education. All these labels are irrelevant to the ॴ. See only the ॴ's light in all Creation, treat all equally.

Spiritual progress comes from moving away from negativity

(lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride, slander, jealousy, discrimination and ungratefulness) and embracing positivity (spiritual realisation, detachment, contentment, compassion, righteousness, equality, forgiveness, humility, thankfulness, courage and love).

The source of justice and righteousness is compassion. Empathise with those less fortunate and open your heart. Compassion brings with it a desire to not exploit others but to serve them selflessly.

The Gurus valued freedom of religion and Sikhs do not convert or slander other faiths. Anyone can choose to follow Guru or not, without fear of punishment.



5. WOMEN AND SIKHI?

The ॴ has no gender and neither does our soul. In fact, all of us (men and women) are described as brides to the ॴ, our true Soul Partner.

The Gurus taught that women and men are equal. Women and men pray together and sit equally. Women can work, lead congregations and be preachers. The first Sikh was a woman and the Gurus themselves appointed women preachers to spread Sikhi. Sikhs have even had women soldiers and generals.

Interestingly, as Sikh first names are related to the Soul's purpose, they are not gender specific. Thus, Sikhs have a surname of either Singh for men or Kaur for women. Both of these are royal surnames. Kaur remains Kaur their whole life, regardless of marriage.

Unlike many other religions, Sikhi teaches that women are not sinful nor require a veil; it's men's eyes

that need controlling. Women are not property, neither are slaves or concubines permitted. Women are not polluted by menstruation, rather women's power to give birth is honoured as the source of all humankind, kings and prophets included. In fact, Guru explicitly describes the ॴ as our Mother too.

After voluntarily joining the Khalsa collective, Kaur is armed and empowered as part of Guru's body. Also, Kaur is freed from the need to cut hair or shave to conform to the 'ideal' of women having the body hair of a pre-pubescent girl.

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6. SCIENCE, CREATION AND REINCARNATION?

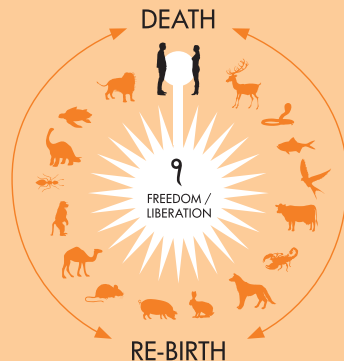
The very first word in our Scripture is IkOangKaar, which describes the Big Bang and the origin of the Universe. From Singularity (Ik = ੴ) there came a Sound (Oang) which expanded into Creation (Kaar).

Guru explicitly describes creation as multi-dimensional and infinitely vast, with countless galaxies and planets. This includes planets with other beings who are also trying to connect to the ੴ. Gurbani dismisses limitations like 7 heavens, 7 hells or a flat Earth. It explains the Big Crunch (opposite of the Big Bang), and states that this cycle of creation/destruction has occurred many times before (cyclical theory). Guru states that Air was the first created thing (Hydrogen) and from Air came Water (H₂O) and from water came all Life. When scientists look for life on other planets, the first thing they look for is signs of water.

Guru states that God's Name (Naam i.e., the manifestation of the Intangible ੴ) is supporting all creation, like the God Particle. We can connect to this Divine Force inside us through our Tenth Gate, an energy centre at the top of our

head. This experience is pure bliss and power.

We don't believe in the Apocalypse or Judgement Day. Just like the universe goes through cycles of creation and destruction, so do we re-incarnate millions of times through every species on Earth. Our current life situation is not from chance, rather it's all part of our Karma. Our soul's purpose is to connect to the ੴ, something only possible for humans. Therefore, human life is a priceless opportunity to experience Naam. Without the glory of God's Name, we cannot be liberated. Blessed are those who chant God's Name.



7. WHAT IS THE GLOBAL MISSION OF SIKHI?

Sikhi aims to bring about a world centred on Dharam (justice and righteousness), where people have freedom of belief. Compassion for others should be the main guiding principle of society.

Guru has ordered Sikhs to ensure everyone has access to basic human needs like food, shelter, medicine, education and freedom from oppression. In order to fulfil this mission, the Guru Khalsa was created. The Khalsa aspire to a spiritually awakened Saintry Soldier ideal to serve others, defend them from injustice and work to destroy oppression.

To this day, the free langar in all Gurdwaras has fed billions

of people regardless of their background and there are many Sikh hospitals, orphanages and schools throughout the world.

In our short history, Sikhs already de-stabilised the Mughal regime, saved Hinduism from extinction and saved scores of women from being sold into slavery in Afghanistan. Sikhs also fought against the Nazis in WW2 and were instrumental in India's independence.

Sikhs don't aim to convert others nor impose Sikh law on everyone. Although Guru is the straight path to ੴ realisation, people of other faiths (and none) can be inspired by Guru's wisdom without converting.

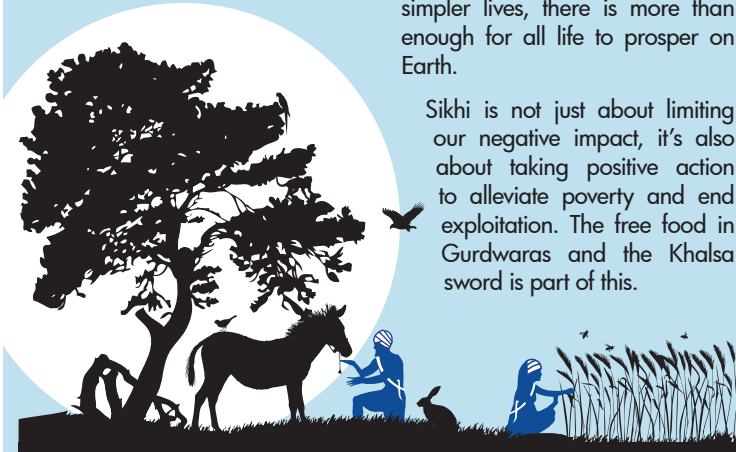


8. ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT?

The energy of ੴ pervades all life and we are connected through the re-incarnation cycle. Compassion towards animals is the duty of every human as we've been blessed with the greatest potential of all earthly beings. The 7th Guru, Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji, set up an animal shelter for injured and orphaned animals and was renowned as an expert in herbal medicine. He even shed a tear when his robe broke a flowerhead. Guru discourages exploitation and mistreatment of animals which is why many Sikhs are vegetarian.

The 1st Guru's writings describe the Earth as the Great Mother and one that has all the resources that we need. In western economic theory the basic problem is unlimited wants and limited resources; Guru's solution is to limit our wants and share the resources. Sikhs are encouraged to live honest lives and share with others whilst avoiding greed, pride and attachment. We earn karma through our actions and should limit environmental damage, e.g. by recycling and using renewable energy. If humans focus inwards, meditate and live simpler lives, there is more than enough for all life to prosper on Earth.

Sikhi is not just about limiting our negative impact, it's also about taking positive action to alleviate poverty and end exploitation. The free food in Gurdwaras and the Khalsa sword is part of this.



9. WHERE DO SIKHS PRAY?

Gurdwara, meaning the 'Guru's Door', is our place of worship and training ground to learn Guru's outlook on life. Gurdwaras are open to all regardless of faith, race or gender. It's two intrinsic parts are the prayer hall and the dining hall.

In the darbar (prayer hall), Sikhs bow to the Eternal Guru, Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS); poetic scripture composed and compiled by the Gurus themselves. Men and women sit communally and at an equal level to read or sing divine hymns of love from Gurbani. Singing is usually led by musicians sitting at the front on a stage. Music is the language of the soul. Guru taught that singing the praises of ੴ is the highest action. The Gurus were amazing musicians and in fact arranged the SGGS into sections by music. Sikhi has no priests; any Sikh (male or female) can lead the congregation in reading or singing Gurbani.

In the langar (dining hall), free food is constantly served and available to anyone of any background. Everyone sits equally and eats the same food putting equality into practice. The food is prepared by volunteers and anyone is able to serve and experience the joys of selfless service (seva). Around 100,000 people eat langar everyday at the Golden Temple in Amritsar alone. Guru taught to apply seva in the wider world and one of the biggest food banks in Toronto is run by Sikhs.

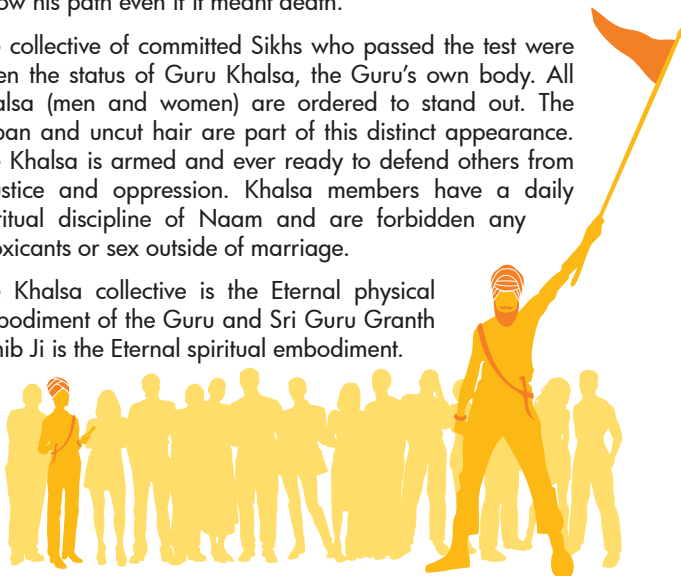


10. WHY TURBANS AND BEARDS?

In 1675, the 9th Guru sacrificed his life for the principle of religious freedom. Many Sikhs who were present in Delhi when he was martyred denied that they were Sikhs. Their physical fear of death had made them forget their spiritual commitment to live without fear. His successor and son, the 10th Guru, vowed he would give the Sikhs a unique identity so they would stay faithful. In 1699 he tested his Sikhs to see who would follow his path even if it meant death.

The collective of committed Sikhs who passed the test were given the status of Guru Khalsa, the Guru's own body. All Khalsa (men and women) are ordered to stand out. The turban and uncut hair are part of this distinct appearance. The Khalsa is armed and ever ready to defend others from injustice and oppression. Khalsa members have a daily spiritual discipline of Naam and are forbidden any intoxicants or sex outside of marriage.

The Khalsa collective is the Eternal physical embodiment of the Guru and Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the Eternal spiritual embodiment.



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