



The Sikh Gurus

Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji 1469 – 1539

Founder of the faith, creates the core Sikh tenants of worshipping God, giving to charity and earning an honest living. Composed the first text of Sikh worship, the *Japji Sahib*

Sri Guru Angad Dev ji 1504 – 1552

Created the Gurmukhi script, develops the institution of a free communal kitchen, or *langar* and selfless service, or *seva*.

Sri Guru Amar Das ji 1479 – 1574

Created social equality by fighting against caste restrictions and prejudices against women (including female infanticide, veiling and widow burning).

Sri Guru Ram Das ji 1534 – 1581

Major contributions to Sikh Scripture including the wedding hymns known, or *lavaa*

Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji 1563 – 1606

Compiled the scriptures of his predecessors along with his own and that of selected Sufi and Bhakti saints into the *Aad Granth*, martyred for upholding the sanctity of the writings.

Sri Guru Hargobind ji 1595 – 1606

Militarised Sikhs by creating and maintaining a standing army as well as a political seat of authority by building the *Akal Takht*.

Sri Guru Har Rai ji 1630 – 1661

Continued the martial traditions but introduces elements of botany and animal welfare

Sri Guru Har Krishan ji 1656 – 1664

Succeeds to the Guruship aged 5 and showing spiritual awaken can come at any age. Heals many in Delhi suffering from smallpox

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji 1621 – 1675

Major contributions to Sikh Scripture, steps forward to be martyred to appease Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's policy of forceful conversion of Hindus

Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji 1666 – 1708

Created the *Khalsa* brotherhood in 1699 based on a concise code of conduct, a poet and scholar whose writings are contained in a separate scripture called the *Dasam Granth*

Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji 1708 – eternity

Core scripture of the Sikhs containing the spiritual teachings of the Gurus and selected texts verses from Bhakts and Sufis from different castes. Revered in the same way as the Guru in human form, including being ceremonially installed in a Gurdwara beneath a canopy denoting royalty. The Guru Granth Sahib ji is at the crux of all Sikh occasions.

* *Sri* and *ji* are terms of the highest respect possible which are given to the Gurus; they are used here in introduction but not elsewhere.



Above: A traditional depiction of what the Guru's looked like – Guru Nanak is in the centre followed by the next four Gurus in clockwise on the left. Guru Hargobind is top right followed by the next three Guru's and Guru Gobind Singh below Guru Nanak.



Learning Outcomes

- 1 – Find out who the ten Sikh Gurus were
- 2 – What the contributions of each Guru was to the development of Sikhism
- 3 – The importance of the eternal Guru

Questions

- 1 – Who was the first Guru?
- 2 – What was the contribution of the fifth Guru Arjan Dev?
- 3 – What did Guru Hargobind introduce to the Sikh faith?
- 4 – When did the tenth Guru create the Khalsa?

Content from: Turbanology: Guide to Sikh Identity by Jay Singh-Sohal, Dot Hyphen Publishers, 2013