

Youth/Children Page

# Let's Learn Sikhi..... Q&A on the Basics of Sikhism

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Questions by Brevinder Singh  
Answers by Sitvinder Kaur

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## What is God?

The opening paragraph of the Guru Granth Sahib provides the answer. EK – He is One. OANGKAR – He is omnipresent. SATNAM – He is forever. KARTA PURAKH – He is the creator-being, meaning He resides in everything He creates. NIRBHAO – He is fearless. NIRVAIR – He has no enmity. Reason for both – He has no competitor. AKAL-MOORAT – His being is beyond time and space. AJUNEE – He is not born, nor does He die. SAIBHANG – He is self-created. GURPARSAD – He is realized through the grace of the Guru.

## Who is a Sikh?

He who worships One God, has faith in the *Guru Granth Sahib* as his spiritual guide and takes *Amrit* from *Panj Pyares*.

## Who are our Gurus?

Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Angad Dev Ji, Guru Amar Das Ji, Guru Ramdas Ji, Guru Arjun Dev Ji, Guru Hargobind Ji, Guru Har Rai Ji, Guru Har Krishen Ji, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Our present Guru is Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

## What is our Holy Book/Scripture?

The full name is *Aad Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj*. Meaning of words: *Aad*- First, *Shri* – Leading, *Guru* – Spiritual Master, *Ji* – Respectable, *Maharaj* – Lord.

## What is inside our Holy Book?

The Banee (writings) of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Angad Dev Ji, Guru Amar Das Ji, Guru Ramdas Ji, Guru Arjun Dev Ji, many Hindu, Muslim and Sikh Bhagats such as Kabeer, Fareed and Bhai Mardana from all over India.

## What is a Shabad Guru?

The Guru Granth Sahib is in the form of the Shabad – spiritual messages received by our Gurus while in communication with God. It is thus the shabad that is our Guru – Master and Spiritual Guide, not the paper it is written on and not the person who reads or interprets its for us. The Shabad has the power to unite us with Waheguru hence the term *Shaktee Guru* for *Shabad Guru*. *Shaktee* means power.

**Some people claim to be Gurus.**

Sikhs believe in *Shaktee* (power of the *Shabad*) Guru not *Veakti* (physical person) Guru. The world has plenty of individuals calling themselves *Gurus*, Saints, Prophets, even God. They make a living out of such fraud and make fools out of their victims. A Sikh does not fall prey to such tricksters.

**What are a Sikh's Daily Prayers?**

In the morning – *Japji Sahib*, *Jaap Sahib* and *Amrit Swaiyas*. In the evening *Rehras*, and before bedtime *Kirten Sohela*.

**What are the Five K's?**

*Keshas* – Unshorn, Uncut, Natural Hair symbolizing living as Nature created us. *Kanga* – wooden comb symbolizing the diligent upkeep of *Keshas*. *Kara* – Iron bracelet symbolizing God and creation being a continuous process with no beginning and no end, with no circumference and no center. *Kachaira* – Sikh Shorts symbolizing morality. *Kirpan* – Small Sword symbolizing preparedness to fight evil within the human mind and outside of it.

**What are the Four Kurehits (Major Sins)?**

1. Cutting, removing or otherwise interfering with the natural growth of hair. 2. Use of Liquor, Tobacco and other intoxicating substances. 3.

Eating of meat prepared/slaughtered ritualistically. 4. Adultery.

Committing any of the above makes a Sikh Patit (a fallen Sikh) who needs to be re-baptized.

**Who are the Panj Pyares (Five Beloved Ones)?**

1. Bhai Dya Singh Ji. 2. Bhai Dharam Singh Ji. 3. Bhai Himmat Singh Ji. 4. Bhai Mohkam Singh Ji. 5. Bhai Sahib Singh Ji.

**Why are they called Pyares?**

They answered the Guru's call to give their heads on Baptism Day, 1699. For that the Guru gave them the honor of being His beloved.

**Who are the Chaar Shaibjades?**

They are the sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. 1. Baba Ajit Singh Ji. 2. Baba Jujhar Singh Ji. 3. Baba Zorawar Singh Ji. 4. Baba Fateh Singh Ji.

**Why are they called Baba even though they were children?**

Baba is used for those who are wise and mature. The Sahibjades accomplished feats that defy wisdom and maturity despite their tender ages. The two elder ones (16 and 14 years) died fighting for Sikhi in Chamkaur and the younger ones (9 and 7 years) were bricked alive in Sirhand for refusing to give up Sikhi.

**Who is a Khalsa?**

Guru Gobind Singh provides the answer in *Jagat Jot Japai Nis Basur...*

A Khalsa adores the ever-glowing Waheguru, is immersed in Him, does not believe in rituals, and has an illuminated and pure conscience.

**What is the Sikh Fateh?**

When Sikhs meet up they greet each other with *Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh*. Meaning the *Khalsa* belongs to *Waheguru* and victory belongs to *Waheguru*. The creator of the Fateh is Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

**What is the Sikh slogan?**

*Bole So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal*. Meaning: Whoever calls (*Bole*) on God who is Everlasting, Supreme and Eternal, is blessed (*Nihal*) by Him. This slogan was used in wars; it is now used at the close of our Ardas in the form of a Jaikara (Cry of Victory) to express our unity and unshakable faith in *Waheguru*.

**What is the function of a Gurdwara?**

A Gurdwara allows us an opportunity for Sangat and Sewa. In the sangat we sit and pray as a common group. Listening to Bane and Kirten and doing Ardas is praying. The Gurdwara is also a place to learn. Katha and Kirten are instruments in this regard. It is a place to do sewa. The making and distribution of langgar, washing and cleaning up are examples of this sewa. The Gurdwara is also a place

to do daswand – give a portion of our income for charity work.

**What the way to behave in a Gurdwara?**

One should go in humility and the right frame of mind. The frame of mind is set by our purpose of going there. The purpose is to pray, share, learn and help. Arriving punctually is important. Go the Guru first. Bow respectfully and sit down attentively with devotion and concentration. Enjoy the Kirten; listen to the messages and the Hukamnama. Stand attentively during Ardas and participate in the Jaikaras.

**What is the reward for those who come with the right frame of mind?**

Bhai Gurdas answers that in his shabad – *Charan Saran Gursikh Ek Paenda*....IF you come with the right frame, for every one step you take to come to Me, I (the Guru) will take a million steps to get to you).

**What is the wrong frame of mind for a Gurdwara?**

Going there to socialize. Going to show off. Being late. Sitting in the langgar hall and yacking away over a cup of tea. Discouraging others from going into the Sangat. Not sitting in the Sangat at all, or coming into the Sangat during Degh distribution. Letting your children run around and scream. Leaning against the walls and or sleeping. Not switching off hand phones.

Taking note of who comes, who wears what etc. Talking to other people in the Sangat. Commenting about others. Gossiping. Criticizing other sewadars. Scrambling for Degh and Langgar. Coming just to eat. Complaining about the langgar, Degh and service. Not helping out. Wearing other people's shoes or jackets due to carelessness. Littering.

**What is the injunction for those who come with the wrong frame of mind?**

The Guru Granth Sahib provides the answer. *Nawan Chale Teerthi, Mun Khote...* Those who come with the wrong frame of mind...they wash off one sin (just by coming) but take on many more (with their wrong frame of mind). *Saadh Bhaley Unnahthean..* It is better that they don't come (because that way they don't add on more sins). Guru Gobind Singh says sins committed in a Gurdwara are worse than those committed outside. *Paap Karey Parmatam Key...*

**What is the injunction for those who create disturbance in the Gurdwara?**

The Rehat is extremely strict for those who talk in the sangat and distract others. Guru Gobind Singh once answered this question from a Sikh named Bhai Chaupa Singh Ji. He said a Sikh who talks during *Kirtan, Katha* or the *Hukamnama* earns himself a place in hell. The reason for such harshness is that disturbing

others breaks their *Dhyan* (attention) with God. *Dhyan* is a difficult thing by itself.

**What is the position of Castes in Sikhism?**

Sikhs have no castes. They belong to one caste – Khalsa caste. Gurbani says those who believe in castes are *Murakh Gavars*– lost fools. *Jaat Ka Garab Na Kar Murakh Gavara.*

**Do Sikh Fast?**

Fasting has no place in Sikhism. Sikhs eat to live.

**Do Sikhs have any special days ?**

The Guru Granth Sahib says: All days are special as long as God is remembered. And all days are cursed when He is forgotten. There are no sacred days in Sikhism.

**How can I be a better Sikh?**

The word Sikh means a learner. So keep learning. Learn about Sikhi, learn Punjabi, learn Gurbani, and learn Kirten. The word Sikh also means a disciple. So be a disciple – inculcate discipline and responsibility in your Sikhi – personally and at the Gurdwara. Follow the teachings of the Gurus and practice what you have learnt. A Sikh also means a leader. So be a good example to everyone around you. A Sikh is a reflection of our Gurus. So do our Gurus proud by being exactly that. A Sikh stands out in a million. So lets stand out. End.