

# MoonLight

## GURU NANAK DAY

Guru Nanak Jayanti, also known as GURPURAB, is one of the most significant festivals in Sikhism, commemorating the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism and the first of the ten Sikh Gurus. This auspicious occasion is celebrated with great fervor and enthusiasm by millions of Sikhs and followers around the world. Here's a comprehensive overview of Guru Nanak Jayanti, its significance, customs, and celebrations:



### Historical Background:

Guru Nanak Dev Ji was born on April 15, 1469, in Talwandi, present-day Nankana Sahib, near Lahore, Pakistan. He was born into a Hindu family but from a young age, he showed a deep spiritual inclination and questioned the societal norms and religious rituals. His teachings emphasize the oneness of God, equality of all humans regardless of caste, creed, or gender, and the importance of living a truthful and righteous life.



## **Significance of Guru Nanak Jayanti:**

Guru Nanak Jayanti holds immense significance in Sikhism as it marks the birth of the first Sikh Guru and the beginning of Sikhism. It is a time for Sikhs to reflect on Guru Nanak's teachings, his legacy, and the principles he preached. His teachings are enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of Sikhism, and provide guidance on leading a virtuous and purposeful life.

## **Customs and Traditions:**

1. **Nagar Kirtan:** The celebrations often begin with Nagar Kirtan, a procession led by the Panj Pyare (Five Beloved Ones) carrying the Sikh flag, known as the Nishan Sahib, and the Guru Granth Sahib. The procession is accompanied by singing hymns, chanting prayers, and spreading the message of Guru Nanak.
2. **Akhand Path:** Sikhs also observe Akhand Path, the continuous recitation of the Guru Granth Sahib, which usually takes place in Gurudwaras in the days leading up to Guru Nanak Jayanti. Devotees participate by listening to the recitation and offering prayers.
3. **Langar Seva:** Another integral part of the celebrations is Langar, the community kitchen, where volunteers prepare and serve free meals to all visitors, regardless of their caste, religion, or social status. This tradition embodies the principle of equality and serves as a symbol of selfless service.



## **Global Celebrations:**

Guru Nanak Jayanti is celebrated not only in India but also across the globe where Sikh communities reside. Countries like the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia host grand celebrations, including processions, kirtan performances, langar, and seminars on Sikhism, to mark the occasion. These celebrations serve to promote awareness about Sikhism and foster harmony among different communities.

### **Reflection and Renewal:**

Guru Nanak Jayanti is a time for introspection and spiritual renewal for Sikhs. It offers an opportunity to reflect on Guru Nanak's teachings and how they can be applied to contemporary issues and challenges. The day reminds believers of the importance of compassion, humility, and service to humanity in their daily lives.

### **Conclusion:**

Guru Nanak Jayanti is not just a religious festival for Sikhs but a celebration of universal values and principles that are relevant to people of all faiths and backgrounds. It inspires individuals to strive for spiritual growth, social justice, and communal harmony. As Sikhs around the world come together to commemorate the birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, they reinforce their commitment to his teachings and carry forward his legacy of love, compassion, and unity.