
UNIT 3 INTRODUCTION TO SIKHISM

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

Though Sikhism is the latest religion in the Indian sub-continent, it has a tremendous impact on the life and belief system of the people of India. Sikhism is indebted to the Hindu Vaishnavite *bhakti* tradition and the Islam Sufi mystic tradition. This paper introduces the student to the background, the contribution of Guru Nanak, the Guru tradition, Sikh Scriptures, the concept of Gurudwara, the *Khalsa* Movement, rituals and festivals, ethical teachings, and the basic principles of Sikhism, so that the student may broaden his/her understanding of other religious traditions and approach them with openness and respect.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak (1469-1539) in the 15th Century AD in the present day Punjab. The word Sikh means disciple — from the Sanskrit word *shishya*, or the Pali root *sikkha*. In this sense, the Sikhs are the disciples of the ten Sikh Gurus starting from Guru Nanak. The word Sikh is also interpreted by some as the elect, chosen by God, or God's own. Sikhism, the youngest of the world religions, has integrated ideas, practices, and doctrines mainly from Islam and Hinduism. Like the Golden temple with open doors to all sides, Sikhism is a liberal religion open to other religions and cultures. Like many other religions, Sikhism also has undergone transformations and accommodates paradoxes in its existence — like simplicity and splendor, military prowess and tenderness, and poetry and pragmatism. Most of the Sikhs live

in the state of Punjab, the others in Haryana, Delhi, and in the other parts of India. Many have migrated to the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and to other countries in Europe.

3.2 THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF SIKH RELIGION

The Mogul rulers exploited the poor economically and persecuted the Hindus in the name of religion, imposed a religious tax on them, and conducted forced mass conversions. The *Brahmins*, the dominant class in the Hindu society, though submissive to the Muslim rulers were intolerant towards the lower class. The life of an ordinary Hindu was miserable because he was politically exploited by the Moghul rulers and religiously exploited by the high caste *Brahmins*. Rampant social evils like *sathi*, child marriage, the dehumanizing caste system, and female infanticide aggravated the misery of the ordinary people. The socio-cultural milieu was ripe enough for a transformative movement. That was the time Guru Nanak appeared on the scene with his liberal ideas on God, religion, and social life. Nanak found that “The kings have become man-eaters, their officials behave like dogs, they lick blood and eat flesh of people.” He lamented, “O God! Thou who art the Lord of us all, didst Thou not feel pain when there was so much slaughter and lamentation?” “O *Lalo*, modesty and religion have disappeared and falsehood is reigning.”

The origin of the Sikh religion can be traced back to the *Vaishnavite bhakti* tradition which started in Tamil Nadu as a protest movement against the *Brahmin* hegemony over the Hindu rituals and the dehumanizing caste system, and the Islam Sufi mysticism. The Sufis welcomed the non-Muslims to their gatherings and they believed in singing hymns of praise and meditation under the leadership of a Guru. Lalla – a Kashmiri *vishnavite* saint, Namdev – a *vaishnavite* saint and poet, Ramananda of Banares, and Kabir the Sufi mystic considerably influenced the religious atmosphere of the time. Kabir (1440-1518) the mystic poet of the Sufi tradition was the link between the *Vaishnavite Bhakti* tradition and Sufi mysticism. Kabir who was from a low caste weaver’s family, inherited and integrated both the Sufi and *bhakti* traditions. His mother was a Hindu, and his father a Muslim who must have been a Hindu convert.

3.3 GURU NANAK AND HIS LIFE

Guru Nanak (1469- 1539) was born into a Hindu family in the village of Talvandi of a Muslim *zamindar*, 65 kilometers away from Lahore. His father, Mehta Kalu, was a revenue collector belonging to the Bedi (conversant with the Vedas) sub-caste of the *Kshatriyas*. He inherited the name Nanak from his mother’s father. As a child, at the age of 5, he was sent to a Hindu *pandit* and later was educated by a Muslim teacher. After his education, he got married to a girl in Sultanpur and had two children. For a while he worked as the accountant of Daulat Khan, the Afghan chief in Sultanpur. Later he came in contact with a Muslim servant, Mardana. Mardana gave music to the hymns composed by Nanak and together they conducted community singing. They organized a common canteen where people of different castes and religious traditions could eat together without any hesitation, at a time when caste discrimination controlled every walk of life.

It was the habit of Nanak to wander around in solitude and to spend time in meditation in the forest of Sultanpur. Around the age of twenty he received illumination and set out to awaken “a depressed, demoralized, superstitious and priest ridden race.” Once while he was having a bath in the river, he disappeared into the water for three days and when he reappeared he proclaimed, “There is no Hindu, there is no Mussulman.” The first written account on Nanak is known as *Janamsakhis* — birth stories in prose written in the Gurumukhi alphabet, developed and refined by Nanak himself. Some of the stories related to the life of Nanak are:

- Nanak as a boy refused to wear the sacred thread; asked for a thread that would not break or burn, or get soiled or lost.
- Nanak used to be in trance while the cattle grazed unattended.
- Once Nanak was sent to purchase food materials with a servant. He gave away the money to beggars and returned empty handed; his father got angry.
- Went for a bath, disappeared into the water; then he was taken to the court of God where he was given a cup of nectar and commissioned to teach others; appeared after three days.
- At Mecca, once the Guru was sleeping with his legs towards the *Kaaba*. An infuriated *mullah* kicked Nanak. Nanak asked the *mullah* to show him a place where God is not present.
- The Mogul emperor Babur invaded Punjab and imprisoned Nanak; made him grind corn at a hand-mill; Nanak sat in meditation and the hand-mill worked on its own.

Nanak called himself *sachiar*, a man of truth, but his followers considered him a reincarnation of one of the numerous immortals and called him a *deva*. At the time of Nanak's death, three factors were well settled in the Sikh community: a) 974 hymns composed by Nanak which formed the origin of the *Adi Granth*, b) a well knit community with an ideology, c) a well-established guru tradition

Influence of Guru Nanak on the Sikh Community

- Self-confidence and courage
- Sense of unity
- Open minded and free from superstitions
- Free from caste discrimination
- More practical in their approach
- Galaxy of warriors, patriots, scholars, poets, and saints

Three interpretations regarding the status of Guru Nanak

- An *avatara*
- An ordinary person made perfect
- Guru a man, but born perfect

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What was the socio-religious background of the origin of Sikhism?

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2) What were the two major influences on the early Sikh Religion?

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3) How did Nanak and Mardana start their mission?

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4) How did Nanak influence the Early Sikh community?

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3.4 THE GURU TRADITION IN THE SIKH COMMUNITY

Guru Angad. (Guru 1539-52) Twenty days before his death, Nanak installed Lehna a *kshatriya* disciple as the next guru. Both his sons were not fit enough to succeed him as guru. While on the way, the guru's jug fell into the mud, both the sons refused to get down into the mud and get the jug, while Lehna got the jug washed, filled it with pure water and gave it to the guru. After a stirring speech, Nanak placed a coconut representing the universe and five coins representing the five elements of the universe and named him Guru Angad and bowed to him. Angad, as the second Guru, consolidated the Sikh community, collected the poems of Nanak and systematized the Gurmukhi language.

Guru Amar Das. (Guru 1552-74) Constructed a water tank with eighty-four steps representing the numerous births of a human soul. He divided the Sikh community into 22 *Manjis*, each under the leadership of a head called *Sangatias* and appointed woman preachers. His policy was *pehle pangat* (eating) *piche Sangat* (meeting). Emperor Akbar sat with him for a common meal. He was generous, open, and tolerant towards other cultures and religions. Akbar figures

prominently in the life of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th gurus. *Guru ka Langar* was a way of emphasizing the equality of all mankind irrespective of their birth and status.

Guru Ram Das (Guru 1574-81) Son-in-law of Amar Das, founder of the city of Amritsar, concentrated on social reforms like *sati* and widow remarriage. He composed a hymn which is widely used in the Sikh marriage ceremony. Numbers increased considerably and the guru's role became more important in building up the community.

Guru Arjan (Guru 1581-1606) His time saw the unprecedented growth of the community; many *jats* joined and fought against the Mughal tyranny. *Daswandh* (10% tax) was regularly collected from the members. The revenue was used for the construction of large tanks and holy buildings. Harmandir at Amritsar was constructed during his time. While guru Arjan was away on missionary work, his elder brother Prithi Chand compiled a collection of hymns and put it forward as the authentic scripture of the Sikhs. This attempt by Prithi Chand prompted guru Arjan to entrust the work of compilation to Bhai Gurdas. The completed compilation was installed in the Harmandir in August 1604 and is known as the *Adi Granth*. In these verses you will find three things —, truth, peace and contemplation. Besides Amritsar he built three other cities — Taran Taran, Kartarpur, and Hargobindpur. Arjan was martyred. The following Mughal emperors were associated with the history of Sikhism: Babur 1526-30, Humayun 1530-40 and 1555-56, Sher Shah 1540-55, Akbar 1556-1605, Jehangir 1605-27, Shah Jehan 1628-58, Aurangzeb 1658-1707.

Guru Hargobind (Guru 1606-44) developed royal authority and maintained an army. He emphasised the idea of *Piri* and *Miri*. *Piri* from the root *pir* that was used in Sufism to denote a religious teacher, and *miri* from the Muslim term *amir* (used by Caliph Umar) meaning commander. The third and fifth gurus engaged in politics, and supported the overburdened peasants and the poor Hindus. These two concepts continued till the tenth guru. Today the Sikhs speak about *tegh* and *deg*, meaning sword and cooking pot, which represent the protection of the oppressed and the feeding of the hungry. *Tegh* and *deg* show the social responsibility of the Sikh community. Fighting is considered as the last resort. Hargobind seems to have given more importance for *miri* than *piri*. Goswami Ram Das, the guru of Sivaji asked Hargobind, 'I hear that you are the successor of Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak had renounced the world while you wear the sword, keep horses and an army, and people call you *Sacha Padshah*. What kind of a sadhu are you?' The Guru replied, 'Saintliness is within. Sovereignty is external.' Bhai Gurdas presented some similar popular accusations against the guru in one of his poems. Bidi Chand, one of the guru's famous companions, was a reformed bandit. He reformed the *dharmasala*, provided a pennant for his troops which became the flag of Sikhism, and a kettle drum for them which later became a necessary item in each *gurudwara*.

Guru Har Rai (Guru 1644-61) Son of the eldest son of Guru Hargobind became guru at the age of fourteen. He was soft hearted but firm in decision. During the last days of Emperor Shah Jehan, war broke out between two of his sons Dara and Aurangzeb. The Guru supported the former with an army of 2000, but Dara was defeated and Aurangzeb became the emperor. Guru Har Rai's son Ram Rai remained with the Mughal court as a rival to the Sikh gurus.

Guru Har Krishan (Guru 1661-64) became the guru at the age of five and was taken to Delhi to meet emperor Aurangzeb. There he contracted small pox and died.

Guru Tejh Bahadur (Guru 1664-75) was the great uncle of Har Krishan. Tejh Bahadur was a brave fighter. Once appointed the guru, he rose to the occasion and provided brave leadership to the community. When there was dissent in the community and a plot to kill the guru, he pardoned the assassin. Meanwhile Aurangzeb started vigorous Islamisation by destroying Hindu temples and closing down Hindu schools. Compulsory religious tax or *jizya* on non- Muslims and forcible conversions gave rise to civil war. Guru Tejh Bahadur was imprisoned. When he refused to get converted, he was martyred. His martyrdom was a brave act of sacrifice for religious freedom and liberty.

Guru Gobind Singh (Guru 1675-1708). He had the good qualities of his illustrious predecessors. He was highly educated, skilled in arms and horsemanship, chivalrous and generous in character. The most important guru after Nanak, he fought against the Islamization of Aurangzeb, and supported Bahadur Shah the next ruler. The starting of the *Khalsa* and installation of the Adi Granth as the Guru Granth Sahib were the two most important decisions by Gobind Singh. The Sikhs believe that the spirit of the Guru will be present where there are five (*panch pyare*) assembled together. He was a restorer of *dharma* and one who identified the *sangat- guru* as and True Guru. Sikhism which followed a *panth* tradition seems to have taken over militant political ideology with the war cry of Banda Singh 'Raj Karega Khalsa' in 1710

3.5 THE SIKH SCRIPTURES

The Adi Granth or Guru Granth Sahib is the most important scripture in the Sikh religion. It contains the poems of the first five Gurus: Nanak (974), Angad (62), Amar Das (907), Ram das (679), Arjun (2218), Gobind Singh who incorporated 115 hymns composed by this father Tegh Bahadur. Poems by the Hindu *bhaktas* or Muslim saints like Kabir, Namdev, Trilochan Sein, Ravidas, and Jaidev are also incorporated in the Adi Granth. The first surviving compilation was made by the grandson of Guru Amar Das at the instruction of the Guru. Guru Arjan made another enlarged compilation of the poems in 1604, and Guru Gobind Singh by adding the poems of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur made another compilation in 1704 which is the present Adi Granth. Adi Granth in the present form has about 6,000 hymns in 1430 pages and thirty one sections. The language used in the Adi Granth is Gurmukhi. The singing is called *kirtan*, and the congregation may or may not participate. There are three singers, one at the drum, another with a portable harmonium and a third one who sings and explains the hymns which are sung in simple *ragas*. The Adi Granth is soteriological in character and the basic concern is the essential unity between God and the human soul. Right living is the key to a proper relationship with God. Truth, contentment, and meditation are the three important ideas dealt with in the Adi Granth.

The Guru Granth Sahib plays a very important role in the daily life and worship of the Sikh community. People reverently bow down as soon as they enter the Gurudwara. In the 1920s, because of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists, there arose a controversy whether or not to accept *karah prasad* from the low caste Sikh converts. The Adi Granth was consulted and

it read: “Upon the worthless he bestows his grace, brother, if they will serve the True Guru. Exalted is the service of the True Guru, brother, to hold in remembrance the divine name. God himself offers grace and mystic union. We are worthless sinners brother, yet the True Guru has drawn us to the blissful union”. (AG 638:3) These words of Guru Amar Das settled the issue.

The Dasm Granth. These are the poems of Guru Gobind Singh and his contemporaries compiled by Bhai Mani Singh in 1734.

Rahatnamas contain the code of conduct for the members and the traditions of the Khalsa community.

3.6 GURUDWARA

Gurudwara means the gateway to the Guru. Guru Nanak built the first Sikh temple at Kartarpur which is known as *dharmasala* (place of faith). There are more than 200 historical gurudwaras associated with the Gurus, which are controlled by the Sikh Gurudwara Prabandhak committee (SGPC). The Golden Temple in Amritsar (a-mrit-sar —undying waters or water of immortality) is the most important place for the Sikhs. The temple was built during the tolerant Muslim ruler Akbar’s reign in 1761, and used a unique style of construction borrowing from both Hindu and Muslim architecture. The Persian Muslim Ahamed Shah destroyed the temple and killed devotees. The present structure was reconstructed by Maharaja Ranjith Singh. Tarn Taran is the second most important gurudwara built by Guru Arjun who was cured of leprosy in the waters there. Lepers go to Tarn Taran for healing even today.

Guru Hargobind founded the Akal Takt, the throne of the immortal, opposite to the Golden Temple, and introduced a military set up in the Sikh community. Emperor Jehangir imprisoned Hargobind Singh but later released him. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the Siromani Gurudwara Pargandhak Committee (SGPC) is the highest decision making body based on the Sikh Gurudwara Act passed in the year 1925. Guru Gobind Singh, before his death, installed the Adi Granth as the living Guru of the Sikhs.

The following items are kept in the treasury of the Golden Temple:

- Eight gold doors
- The curved sword of Maharaja Ranjith Singh
- Five gold spades
- Horse-tail-like fan
- Wedding veil
- Smaller golden swords
- Sixteen silver candle sticks
- Hemispherical shell of gold
- An inverted bowl

The Akal Takht and the Darbar Sahib stand vis-à-vis. The Darbar Sahib is dear to all Sikhs, whereas the Akal Takht is dear to the devotee of the war like diety Akal, who are called Akalis.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What were the important contributions of Guru Arjan?

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2. Guru Gobind Singh is known for two major contributions, what are they?

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3. How do you explain the two compilations and the composition of the Adi Granth?

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4. What is the importance of a Gurudwara and the Golden Temple?

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3.7 THE *KHALSA* MOVEMENT

Aurangzeb imposed a special tax on the hill tribes and kings of the hill regions of U. P and Punjab. They revolted and fought against the emperor. But the tribes got divided amongst themselves on the basis of caste and race. The Sikh army, under the leadership of Guru Gobind Singh, decided to form an army that was free from caste considerations. Like Nietzsche, Gobind Singh believed in 'will to war, and will to power'. "Blessed is he," says Gobind Singh, "in this world who cherishes war in his heart at the same time does not forget God". Gobind Singh in a letter to Aurangzeb wrote, "When affairs have gone beyond all means, it is virtuous to take a sword in hand. I have been forced to come to arms and to enter a battlefield." (Sher Singh 1966, p. 49)

Khalsa in Persian means pure, a new fraternity was started by Guru Gobind Singh, on the Hindu New year day on 13 April, 1699. During the Hindu New year celebrations Guru Gobind Singh with an unsheathed sword in hand asked for a head for the cause of *dharma*. When everyone backed out, five of the backward caste came forward; he baptized them and in turn got baptized by

them. They were called the *panch pyare*. He was of the opinion that Indians had an inferiority complex, so he advised his followers to “live courageously but not dangerously”. The five Ks are compulsory for all the members of *Khalsa*: i) *Kesha* or long uncut hair, ii) *Kangha* or comb to clean up the hair and the beard, iii) *Kara* or steel bangle, ; a symbol of the Guru’s grace and omnipresence of God, iv) *Kacha* or drawers; a symbol of chastity, v) *Kirpan* or the symbol of resistance.

3.8 RITUALS, CEREMONIES AND FESTIVALS

Guru Nanak was against any kind of ritual or ceremony. Once at Haridwar when some devout Hindus were throwing water towards the east as an oblation to the ancestors, Nanak started throwing water to the west saying that he was watering his farmland. Arjun Singh said, “I neither perform *haj*, nor go on pilgrimage, neither worship one particular way nor the other, for, I bow down within my heart to the one formless God and not another.” Respect for all human beings and love and concern for all creatures was the basic approach. The Sikh Gurus were against performing miracles because they believed that by performing miracle they are denying the grace of God. The highest form of prayer is meditative silence or *ajapa jap*.

Nanak was strongly against any kind of pilgrimage:

“One gains but a seed’s weight of merit

Through pilgrimages, austerities and benevolence;

One might rather mind God’s bidding and cleanse himself

By the love he bears within his heart.”

“If bathing in the Ganges affords salvation, how fortunate are fishes and frogs.

Going on pilgrimage, you may indeed gain some reverence for water, but

All places of pilgrimage are valueless, even though the pilgrim drowns himself at Kashi (Benares)”.

But now there are pilgrim groups in the Sikh community. Satnamis—low caste, chamars — leather workers, Kabir Panthis — Kabir followers, Sahajadaris — Nanak followers, and Nirankaris—the formless, are some of the pilgrim groups.

3.9 THE OTHER MOVEMENTS IN SIKHISM

Nirmalas: A group of scholars, pundits. Five disciples were sent to Benares to study Sanskrit and Hindu Philosophy and the influence of western thinking. Overdependence on Hindu philosophy and stress on scholarship made them unpopular and later gave rise to the Akali Movement and the Singh Sabha movement, *Ham Hindu Nahim*.

Gyanis: Theologians of the religion, expositors of Adi Granth who focus on the doctrinal expositions and *Janam Sakhi* (life story) and traditional exposition. These scholars move from place to place and concentrate mostly translations and commentaries.

Namdhari: As a reaction to the luxury and pomp, Baba Ram Singh advocated a simple life and meditation.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What is *Khalsa* and what is its relevance in the Sikh religion?

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2) What are the five K's?

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3) What are the other movements in Sikhism?

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3.10 ETHICAL TEACHINGS

Sikhism, basically is an ethical religion based on three fundamental concepts i.e., i) work, worship and charity (*kirt karo, nam japo and vand cako*) should be the guiding principles in life; ii) Self-reliance is the greatest obstacle to God realization which is manifested in lust, anger, greed, materialism, and pride. Guru Nanak remarked, "Sweetness and humility are the essence of all virtues" (AG 470); iii) It is as a householder that a Sikh should seek God realization. 'The householder who gives all he can afford to charity is as pure as the water of the Ganges, (AG 952). God realization through renunciation is easy but it is more challenging and difficult while being actively involved in the world. Guru Nanak said, "Do not covet your neighbour's possessions. Without the Name we cannot attain inner peace nor still our inner hunger. The Guru has shown me the real life of the city, the real life of its shops, it is the inner life. We must be traders in truth, moderate in our eating and sleeping. This is true yogism." (AG 939).

As a reaction to the then existing social evils, Sikhism was against the caste system, and demeaning the status of women. The Harmandir at Amritsar had four doors open to all the four castes. Sikhism accepted people of all denominations irrespective of their caste or social status. Hereafter no one is distinguishable by caste (AG 349). Guru Arjan spoke about the Adi Granth, "This divine teaching is for everyone, Brahmin, Kshatriya, vaishya and Sudra. Whoever utters the Name which lives in all hearts, under the Guru's instruction, is delivered from Age (Kal Yug)' (AG 747).

Guru Nanak as a spiritual preceptor followed the principle of non-violence even in slavery and violence by the Babur's army. He even considered the Mughal invasion as the chastisement by God for the evils of the people. "Are you pitiless, Creator of all? You have sent Yama (god of death) disguised as the Mughal. Did you feel no pity for what happened, for the screams of those who cried in agony? The social realities in the later times forced the subsequent Gurus to take to arms to protect the poor and helpless people from the exploiters. The tenth guru, Gobind Singh, accepted the idea of just war: "When all efforts to restore peace prove useless and no words avail,

Lawful is the flash of steel, it is right to draw the sword." But he reminded his followers that a Sikh should never be the first one to draw the sword.

Vegetarianism is commonly practiced in the Sikh *langars* but there are different opinions regarding the strict adherence to vegetarianism. Respect for women was part of Sikh social life, widow remarriage was encouraged. Care of the needy and service to the poor is practised in the Sikh community. *Sangat* is a democratic gathering and *langar* allows people to eat together irrespective of their caste and social status and ensures social equality.

Check Your Progress IV

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What are the three basic concepts in Sikhism?

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2) Explain the understanding of non-violence, and fight against evil in Sikhism?

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3) Explain the approach of Sikhism towards the social evils like the caste system, *sati* etc.?

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3.11 KEY WORDS

<i>Adi Granth</i>	The Guru Granth Sahib, sacred scripture of the Sikhs compiled by guru Arjan in 1604
<i>Akhandapath</i>	‘Unbroken reading’, an uninterrupted reading of the entire contents of the Adi Granth performed by a relay of readers
<i>Amrit</i>	Nectar, the water used for baptism in the initiation ceremony of the Khalsa
<i>charan pahul</i>	Baptism with water in which the guru’s toe has been dipped.
Dasam Granth	The Book of the Tenth (Guru), a collection of writings attributed to Guru Gobind Singh
<i>granthi</i>	A reader of the Guru Granth Sahib, the functionary in charge of a gurdwara
<i>gurdwara</i>	Gurdwara, Sikh temple
<i>Gurmukhi</i>	From the mouth of the guru, the script in which the Punjabi language is written
<i>Gurupurab</i>	A Sikh festival celebrated on the birth or death day of a Guru
<i>Harimandir</i>	The Temple of God, the central Sikh shrine in Amritsar, commonly known as the Golden Temple
<i>Hukam-nama</i>	A decree, a list of instructions
<i>Janam-sakhi</i>	Hagiographic narrative, especially of the life of Guru Nanak
<i>karah parsad</i>	Sacramental food prepared in a large iron dish.
<i>Khalsa</i>	The Sikh order or brotherhood, instituted by Guru Gobind Singh.
<i>Kirtan</i>	The singing of hymns, particularly from the Adi Granth.
<i>langar</i>	The kitchen attached to every gurdwara from which food is served to all, regardless of caste or creed.
<i>pahul</i>	The Khalsa initiation ceremony.
<i>panj kakke</i>	The five Ks, the five external symbols which must be worn by all members of the Khalsa.
<i>Rahit-nama</i>	A recorded version of the Khalsa code of discipline.

Sangat

Assembly, religious congregation.

Sraddha

Rites for the dead performed after cremation to nourish the deceased for the passage to the world of ancestors.

3.12 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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