



GURU NANAK

Founder of Sikhism

The founder of Sikhism, first of the ten Gurus of Sikhs, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, was born to Kalyan Das Mehta (aka Mehta Kalu) and Mata Tripta Ji, on Saturday, April 15, 1469, in the village Rai Bhoeki Talwandi (now known as Nankana Sahib, near Lahore, Pakistan). Although, Guru Nanak Dev Ji's parents were Kshatri (Khatri), he himself did not believe in or practice Hindu rituals. That he was an enlightened soul was recognized early on by the people around him, especially by his older sister, Bebe Nanki.

There are several stories associated with his early childhood, all of which reflect that he was endowed with divine powers and was, in fact, a messenger of God. His mission was to spread God's word for the benefit of communities, regardless of people's own religious beliefs. Guru Nanak Dev Ji achieved mastery in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, and composed hymns (gurbani), which his two closest disciples, Bala and Mardana (who played the rebab), recited at community gatherings to educate the masses about the virtues of God. According to him, all humans are creations of God, and so, there is no Hindu and no Muslim.

He traveled extensively to as far away as Iraq, spreading the message of truthfulness, compassion, honest living, sharing, asking the people to dispel superstition, and exercise restraint against anger, greed, lust, ego and attachment to worldly possessions. His message was for all mankind, not limited to any religion, nation, race, creed, color, or gender.

GURDWARA SAHIB of SW HOUSTON

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GURU NANAK DAY

Celebrating 550th
Birth Anniversary
of the
Founder of Sikhism

Saturday, November 16th, 2019



Ek Onkar
(One God)

JESSI KAUR



Jessi Kaur, a TEDX speaker has written three children's books that are used as diversity education and enrichment literature in several public schools in US, UK and Canada. She produced The Royal Falcon as a musical with a multi-cultural caste. Jessi Kaur's new book Home of the Beloved is being hailed as a must read for those who wish to get acquainted with the spiritual concepts enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Holy Scripture. Sound principles like commonality of the human race and respect and dignity for all, and simple values like integrity, compassion, patience, altruism expounded in Home of the Beloved have the power to transform our life.

Jessi's essays on Sikhi and contemporary issues have been widely published. She is a frequent speaker at international conferences, including several times at the Parliament of World's Religions. She was the Co-Founder of International Institute of Gurmat Studies, founder of IGS Now and has been on the board of Kaur Foundation since its early years. She is a Talent Acquisition Consultant to high tech companies. Prior to moving to the US, she taught English Literature at Delhi University. www.jessikaur.com

ABSTRACT

Guru Nanak's egalitarian message and its relevance today

Guru Nanak Sahib, the founder of the Sikh faith was a disrupter of the existing social and religious state of affairs in the 15th Century. His message of One Creator and one human race, and his emphasis on equality, liberty and dignity for all was a radical clarion call in a social milieu that was ridden by a rigid caste system on the one hand, and forcible religious conversions by bigoted invaders on the other. Guru Nanak traveled widely to convey his doctrine of Oneness. Jessi Kaur will share Guru Nanak Sahib's egalitarian message and its relevance today.

MEETA KAUR



Meeta Kaur, MFA, is a writer, community advocate, educator, and mother-in-progress. She was the managing editor of 'Her Name Is Kaur' – a book about the Sikh American Women and a collection of Their Love Stories. Her past experience writing for numerous news outlets, receiving a grant and writing residency for fiction, and serving as a community advocate has given this project the foundation needed to be a significant literary contribution globally. She is also working on a women's fantasy fiction that fuels her own creative power. Meeta finds the challenge of being a mother who authentically gives her children unconditional love one of her finest life experiences.

ABSTRACT

Guru Nanak's vision for women today

By granting Sikh women equal status to Sikh men, Guru Nanak Dev Ji not only elevated Sikh women to the highest ranks of Sikh society during the Gurus' era, Guru Nanak Dev Ji gave Sikh women of future generations permission to rise to the highest ranks in global society today.

Gurbani Kirtan (Sikh Hymns)



Dr. Gurnam Singh Ji
Gurmat Sangeet,
Punjabi University



Bhai Bhupinder Singh Paras Ji
Head Granthi, GSSWH

RALPH SINGH



Chair, Wisdom Thinkers Network Network
Author, story-teller, educator, and community builder

Ralph believes stories have the power to change the world. His award winning multi-cultural "Stories to Light Our Way," are used in public and private school social emotional learning programs to honor diversity, nurture character, and deter bullying.

In 1971, Ralph was drawn to the feet of Baba Virsa Singh ji, where he lived for 6 years as Babaji's first foreign devotee, rising early to recite Nam, do Path, and working in the fields. He lectured throughout Punjab, from villages, to Gurdwaras and Universities.

Stateside in '77, with his wife Joginder, he helped develop the early Sikh education and camp movement, inner city langars, campaigned against 84 abuses, and helped bring the Sikh community into the interfaith movement. He speaks of the Power of SGGS to triumph over the post 9-11 arson attack on Gobind Sadan, USA, and brought the forgiveness, healing, and community building needed in today's fractured world.

ABSTRACT

Building a world without walls

In today's fractured world where everyone is defined by their boundaries, the mystical yet practical teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji, enshrined in our Eternal Guru, Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji leads us to embody the pluralism it teaches: everyone is part of my community – I see no one as an "other".

And as engaged citizens to defend the universal principals of Truth, justice, and equality for all. Our character, work ethic, and compassion can provide a model for today's global citizens and civilization's needs – an ethos of love, born out of devotion to a shared Higher Power – a universal authority for Truth that transcends any worldly boundaries. It defies definition and despises artificial walls meant simply to solidify man's power and deny the glory of the Eternal transcendent One from which all power, all life, and all matter springs.