

History of Ten Sikh Gurus

Why in news?

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Recently, Prakash Parva - The holy day commemorating the 350th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh was celebrated.

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Sikh Gurus

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- The era of the ten gurus of Sikhism spans from the birth of Nanak Dev in 1469, through the life of Guru Gobind Singh.

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- At the time of Guru Gobind Singh's death in 1708, he passed the title of Guru to the Sikh scripture, Guru Granth.

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1. Guru Nanak Dev - Guru from 1469 to 1539

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- Guru Nanak Dev, first of the 10 gurus, founded the Sikh faith, introducing the concept of one God.

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- He started the institution of **Guru Ka Langar**. Langar is the term in the Sikh religion refers to the common kitchen where food is served to everyone without any discrimination.

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- He emphasized the equality of women and rejected the path of renunciation and he rejected the authority of the Vedas.

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- He was the contemporary of Mughal emperor - **Babur**.

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2. Guru Angad Dev - Guru from 1539 to 1552

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 - Guru Angad Dev, second of the 10 gurus, invented and introduced the Gurmukhi (written form of Punjabi) script.
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 - He compiled the writings of Nanak Dev in Guru Granth Sahib in **Gurmukhi Script**.
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 - Popularized and expanded the institution of Guru ka Langar which was started by Guru Nanak Dev.

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3. Guru Amardas Sahib - Guru from 1552 to 1574

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 - Guru Amardas introduced the **Anand Karaj** marriage ceremony for the Sikhs, replacing the Hindu form.
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 - He established Manji & Piri system of religious missions for men and women respectively.
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 - He strengthened the tradition of Guru Ka Langar.
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 - He also completely abolished amongst the Sikhs, the custom of Sati and purdah system.
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 - He was the contemporary of Mughal emperor - Akbar.

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4. Guru Ram Das - Guru from 1574 to 1581

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 - Guru Ram Das, fourth of the 10 gurus, founded the **city of Amritsar**.
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 - He started the construction of the famous Golden Temple at Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs.

- He requested the Muslim Sufi, Mian Mir to lay the cornerstone of the Harmandir Sahib.

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5. Guru Arjan Dev - Guru from 1581 to 1606

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- He compiled the **Adi Granth**, the scriptures of the Sikhs.
- He completed construction of Sri Darbar Sahib also known as Golden Temple in Amritsar.
- He founded the town of Tarn Taran Sahib near Goindwal Sahib.
- He became the **first great martyr in Sikh history** when Emperor **Jahangir ordered his execution**. Thus, he was hailed as Shaheedan-de-Sartaj (The crown of martyrs).

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6. Guru Har Gobind Sahib - Guru from 1606 to 1644

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- He was the son of Guru Arjan Dev and was known as a "soldier saint".
- He organised a small army and became the **first Guru to take up arms** to defend the faith.
- He waged wars against Mughal rulers Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

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7. Guru Har Rai Sahib - Guru from 1644 to 1661

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- Though he was a man of peace, he never disbanded the armed sikh warriors who were earlier maintained by Guru Har Gobind.
- He gave shelter to Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Mughal Ruler Shah

Jahan, who was later persecuted by Aurangzeb.

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- He cautiously avoided conflict with Emperor Aurangzeb and devoted his efforts to missionary work.

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8. Guru Har Krishan Sahib - Guru from 1661 to 1664

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- Guru Har Krishan was the youngest of the Gurus. He was installed as Guru at the age of five.

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- He was contemporary of Aurangzeb and summoned to Delhi by him under framed charges of anti-Islamic blasphemy.

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9. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib - Guru from 1665 to 1675

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- He established the town of Anandpur.

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- He opposed the forced conversion of the Hindu Kashmiri Pandits by Mughal ruler Aurangzeb and he was consequently persecuted for this.

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10. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib - Guru from 1675 to 1708

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- He became Guru after the martyrdom of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur.

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- He created the **Khalsa** in 1699, changing the Sikhs into a saint-soldier order for protecting themselves.

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- **Last Sikh Guru in human form** and he passed the Guruship of the Sikhs to the Guru Granth Sahib.

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11. Guru Granth Sahib

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- Guru Granth Sahib (also known as the Adi Granth) is the **scripture of the Sikhs.**

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- The Granth was written in Gurmukhi script and it contains the actual words and verses as uttered by the Sikh Gurus.

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- It is considered the Supreme Spiritual Authority and **Head of the Sikh religion, rather than any living person.**

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