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Sikhs: Disciples in Need of Sat Guru Yeshu

By Irene Wayne*

Today marks the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the first Sikh guru and founder of the Sikh religion. Guru Nanak was the first of ten gurus who were responsible for shaping the belief system of the Sikhs. His birthday, Guru Nanak Jayanti, is considered one of the most sacred Sikh festivals. In recent days, Sikhs have been participating in early morning processions where they sing hymns, many of which were written by Guru Nanak. A three-day reading of the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikhs' holy book, will end today.

Guru Nanak was born in Punjab in 1469. He was from a high caste Hindu family, but refused to tie the sacred thread that marked upper caste Hindus because he didn't see how a thread could make a person pure. He was against injustice, superstition, rituals and social inequality as practiced by the caste system. He was always interested in religion and liked to listen to different holy men as they traveled around. He liked to write poems and hymns. As a young man Nanak worked for one of the Muslim rulers of the area.

When he was around 30 years old, Nanak had a mystical experience. He disappeared one morning after he'd gone to bathe. Everyone assumed he was dead, but three days later he returned and announced, "There is but one God. There is no Hindu; there is no Muslim, so whose path shall I follow? I shall follow God's path. God is neither Hindu nor Muslim, and the path I follow is God's." This was the beginning of Nanak's teachings and the foundation of the Sikh religion.

At the end of his life, Nanak chose one of his disciples, Angad, to become the next guru, rather than one of his own sons. Guru Angad continued to teach the disciples, or "Sikhs." The word "sikh" means "learner" or "disciple."

There were ten gurus in all. The fifth guru, Arjun Dev, compiled the writings and hymns of the earlier gurus into a book. At his death, the 10th guru, Gobind Singh, ordered that the Granth Sahib, holy scriptures of the Sikhs, would be the final and living guru. The Guru Granth Sahib is the ultimate spiritual authority for the Sikhs. The Granth Sahib is a holy collection of hymns that describe what "God" is like and instructions for living right.

Sikhism is the newest of the world religions and the fifth largest. There are about 28.5 million Sikhs worldwide. About 75 percent of the Sikhs (22 million) live in the Indian state of Punjab where they comprise 60 percent of the state's population. Large communities of Sikhs can be found throughout India and throughout the world.

Sikhs believe that salvation or "mukti" is release or freedom from the endless cycle of reincarnation. It is the removal of ignorance and self-ego. It is also attaining union with God. Sikhs believe that "mukti" can be *achieved* through self-realization in one of three ways: (1) meditation on the name (of the guru, or god), (2) by the guru's grace ("Guru Kirpa"), or (3) service to the guru and the "Sangat" (congregation). When it comes down to it, though, salvation is a matter of works. One Sikh background believer shared, "I used to ask my mother *how* to find God's grace, but she couldn't give me any answer. I found the answer in Jesus Christ, but my mother still has no answer as she is still following Sikhism."

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...and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. (Revelation 7:9, HCSB)

Day of Prayer & Fasting

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Pray for the Sikhs:

- **Pray for South Asian Sikhs around the world to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ this month.**

“For by grace you have been saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10, NASB).

- **Pray that Sikhs will hear God's true Word and recognize that the only way to union with God is through accepting Jesus as their Savior.**

“For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:17, NASB).

- **Pray that Sikhs will discover that Jesus Christ is the One who is full of grace and truth.**

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14, NASB).

- **Pray that Christians will seek out Sikhs in their neighborhoods, establish friendships with them, and boldly invite them to learn more about the Christian faith.**

- **Praise God for Sikh background believers who are taking the Gospel to their own people. Pray that they will continue to share faithfully about the Sat Guru, Jesus Christ. (Sat Guru means “true Guru” and is a term used for God.)**

Thank you for praying for the Sikhs this month.

To receive regular South Asia prayer newsletters & updates contact us at:
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