



Guru Nanak Dev Jayanti

For Prelims: Guru Nanak Dev, Sikhism,

For Mains: Teachings of Guru Nanak Dev, Important Personalities

Why in News?

Recently, the 553rd birth anniversary of [Guru Nanak Dev](#) was celebrated.

Who was Guru Nanak Dev?

▪ **Birth:**

- In 1459 at Talwandi Rai Bhoi village near Lahore, which was later renamed as Nankana Sahib.
- He was the **first of the 10 Sikh gurus and the founder of [Sikhism](#)**.

▪ **Contributions:**

- Initiated inter-faith dialogue way back in the 16th century and had conversations with most of the religious denominations of his times.
- Wrote compositions which were included in the **Adi Granth**, compiled by **Guru Arjan (1563-1606)**, the fifth Sikh guru.

- This came to be known as **Guru Granth Sahib** after the additions made by the **10th Sikh guru - Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708)**.
 - Advocated the '**Nirguna**' (**devotion to and worship of formless divine**) form of **bhakti**.
 - **Rejected sacrifices**, ritual baths, image worship, austerities.
 - Set up rules for **congregational worship (Sangat)** involving collective recitation.
 - Gave the basic mantra of '**Ek Onkar**' to his followers and **insisted on treating all human beings equally**, without discriminating on the basis of caste, creed and gender.
- **Death:**
 - In 1539 at Kartarpur, Punjab.

What is the Relevance of Guru Nanak Dev for Modern India?

- **Building an Egalitarian Society:** His idea of equality can be deduced by the following innovative social institutions, as given by him:
 - **Langar:** Collective cooking and sharing of food.
 - **Pangat:** Partaking food without distinctions of high and low caste.
 - **Sangat:** Collective decision making.
- **Social Harmony:**
 - According to him, the **whole world is God's creation, and all are born equal**. There is only one universal creator i.e. "**Ek Onkar Satnam**".
 - Apart from it, forgiveness, patience, forbearance, and kindness are the core of his teachings.
- **Creating a Just Society:**
 - He placed the motto of "**kirat karo, naam japo and vand chhako**" (work, worship and share) before his disciples.
 - He stood for karma as the basis of dharma, and he transformed the idea of spiritualism into the ideology of social responsibility and social change.
 - He **advocated the concept of "dasvandh" or donating one-tenth of one's earnings among needy persons**.
- **Gender Equality:**
 - According to him, "**Women as well as men share the grace of God and are equally responsible for their actions to him.**"
 - Respect for women and gender equality is perhaps the most important lesson to be learnt from his life.
- **Bringing Peace:**
 - According to Indian philosophy, **a Guru is the one who provides illumination, dispels doubt and shows the right path**.
 - In this context, **the ideas of Guru Nanak Dev can help promote peace, equality and prosperity across the globe**.

[Source: PIB](#)

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