



There are 20 million Sikhs in the world, most of whom live in the Punjab province of India. The 2001 census recorded 336,000 **Sikhs in the UK**.

Sikhism was **founded** in the 16th century in the Punjab district of what is now India and Pakistan. It was founded by **Guru Nanak** and is based on his teachings, and those of the **9 Sikh gurus** who followed him.

The most important thing in Sikhism is the internal religious state of the individual.

- Sikhism is a **monotheistic religion**
- Sikhism stresses the importance of doing good actions rather than merely carrying out rituals
- Sikhs believe that the way to lead a good life is to:
 - keep God in heart and mind at all times
 - live honestly and work hard
 - treat everyone equally
 - be generous to the less fortunate
 - serve others
- The Sikh place of worship is called a **Gurdwara**
- The Sikh scripture is a book called the Guru Granth Sahib

The tenth Sikh Guru decreed that after his death the spiritual guide of the Sikhs would be the teachings contained in that book, so it now has the status of a Guru, and Sikhs show it the respect they would give to a human Guru.

The community of men and women who have been initiated into the Sikh faith is the **Khalsa**. The Khalsa celebrated its 300th anniversary in 1999.

Guru Gobind Singh decreed that where Sikhs could not find answers in the Guru Granth Sahib, they should decide issues as a community, based on the principles of their scripture.

