



Importance of Gurudwara in the life of Sikh.

The Gurudwara is the Sikh place of worship. Gurudwara means 'the doorway to the Guru'.

A Gurudwara has three main functions, these are:

- Religious importance
- Social importance and
- Emotional importance

In this section I will be writing about the three main functions of a Gurudwara and its importance to a Sikh today.

Religious importance

Sikhs believe in only one God. In a Gurudwara they can be in a room with God, thank God e.g. for a baby and sing to God. Basically they go to be close to God. This is a sign of respect and is a Sikh tradition. Sikhs respect the holy book the Guru Granth Sahib, as it is to the last of the Gurus, they show respect by: a Chauri (fan), a palki, dais (type of throne), a Manji sahib (a small

bed) etc, being in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib is important to a Sikh because the Guru Granth Sahib is a Guru (teacher) and is therefore treated like a living Guru. The Guru Granth Sahib is central in the public worship of Sikhs and is the central importance to a Sikh life, work and worship.

A Gurudwara is also a place to celebrate rites of passage including birth, marriage and funeral services; this is to do them in front of God and the Guru as it shows respect to all. Sikhs can demonstrate SEWA, which is a religious duty by attending the Gurdwara, there are 3 types of SEWA, and they are:

- Tan- physical- service to the community e.g. working in the Langar, helping to build and physically maintain a Gurdwara,
- Man- mental- service to the Guru e.g. studying and helping others to understand the teaching of the Gurus expressed through the Guru Granth Sahib,
- Dhan- material- service to humanity e.g. giving money

Festivals such as Baisakhi and diwali are celebrated in the Gurdwara.

Baisakhi is the Sikhs New Year where they renew the Nishan Sahib, they wash the flagpole in yoghurt before being wrapped in clean clothes and a new Nishan Sahib is attached. The flagpole being washed in yoghurt is a symbol of cleanliness and purity. Baisakhi is celebrated in April/ May.

Diwali is the festival of light. It celebrates the return of Guru Hargobind who is the 6th Guru. Diwali originated as a Hindu festival but is also celebrated by Sikhs as Guru Hargobind was imprisoned alongside Prince Rama (a Hindu prince). It is celebrated in October/ November.

Social importance

The Gurudwara can be a meeting place where people can socialise, strengthen relationships/ bonds between each other (if they are new in town), encourage and support others, experience a sense of belonging etc. The Gurudwara is a place of hospitality, e.g. the hungry can find a meal in the Langar. This helps Sikhs demonstrate SEWA.

Educational importance

A gurudwara is a place to learn about God, the Gurus and the history the religion. They learn about the importance of the holy book, teachings of the ten Gurus, so the faith can be passed



on from generation to generation (father to son to their kids and so on). Sikhs can learn their language (Punjabi). Some Gurudwaras hold music lessons as music plays a huge important part to worship and the Gurudwara. The children can seek advice about social and religious issues from the granthi (a person who reads from the holy book). A gurudwara may contain a library that can help those learn about the religion.