**Student Handout**

**A Brief Introduction to Sikhism**

The term ‘Sikh’ is derived from the Sanskrit term ‘disciple’. Sikhs are disciples of the ten human Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib.

Just over 500 years old, Sikhism is the youngest of the 6 major world religions.

**GU –** dark A Guru is one who dispels darkness and takes one into the light. A teacher.

**RU** – light

The line of human Sikh Gurus is as follows:

1. Guru Nanak (1469 – 1539 CE)
2. Guru Angad (1504 – 1552 CE)
3. Guru Amar Das (1479 – 1574 CE)
4. Guru Ram Das (1534 – 1581 CE)
5. Guru Arjan (1563 – 1606 CE)
6. Guru Hargobind (1595 – 1644 CE)
7. Guru Har Rai (1630 – 1661 CE)
8. Guru Har Kishan (1656 – 1664 CE)
9. Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621 – 1675 CE)
10. Guru Gobind Singh (1666 – 1708 CE)

***The Adi Granth/Guru Granth Sahib (The Holy Scripture) is the eternal Guru of the Sikhs.***

Identity is an issue that has been discussed widely within the Panth. The Rehat Maryada defines a Sikh as one who:

“*Worships one God only, does not indulge in idol worship. Lives a life based on the teachings of the ten Gurus, the Guru Granth Sahib, and other scriptures and teachings of the Gurus. A Sikh should believe in the “Oneness” of the ten Gurus, and should have no other religion.”* **(RM p. 12)**.

The constitution of India still defines a Sikh as belonging to the Hindu faith. Even after the death of Guru Gobind Singh (***debatable by Namdharis)*** Sikhs were regarded as Hindus.

Perhaps the main area of debate are the Sahajdhari Sikhs.

Two symbols in particular are used by Sikhs. The Khanda is very often used as the emblem of Sikhism:



The Ik-Onkar is the sacred word of the Sikhs, and is translated as ‘God is One’, thus indicating the monotheistic nature of Sikhism. The Ik-Onkar symbol appears as below:

