

# The World of Sikhism

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## Abstract:

This research study consisted of traveling to then inquiring on and observing the Devon Gurudwara Sahib Of Chicago. We (Arub Sumayli & Mohamed Eljerary) traveled to the Gurudwara on 04/13/2023 and explored how worshipers prayed and how the Gurudwara is run. We also saw individual items and décor and the meaning behind them.

## Intro:

Many today are still unfamiliar with the Sikh faith. Often, Sikhs find themselves misrepresented and underrepresented. The lack of understanding of the Sikh faith and the Sikh community is an issue that we as Loyola students and ambassadors of Jesuit code and values must strive to resolve to the best extent that we can. Therefore, we went to the Devon Gurudwara Sahib and were introduced to the inspiring World of Sikhism. We were introduced to the fundamental values of Sikhs, the history of the Sikh community, and the customs, practices, and methods of the Devon Gurudwara.

## Method & Findings:

We made our way to the Gurudwara on the bus. Upon arrival, we entered through the front door and saw a sign saying, “remove your shoes and put on a head covering”. In the Sikh faith, as it was later explained, is a way of showing respect to the Gurudwara, being the philosophy that Guru Gobind Singh had. We noticed a basket with the head covering so we each put one on our heads and tied them. We then made our way into the prayer area up the stairs. When we reached the area (the Darbar), we were greeted by a worshiper named Jai, and he offered to lead us around the Gurudwara. First, we sat down with Jai, of which he revealed himself to be a follower of the “Sanatana Dharma (endonym for Hindu worshiper)” and explained that he comes to the Gurudwara regularly because it accepts all people, so he offers the Sikh prayer there and meditates. He showed us how to “greet the Gurudwara” by prostrating in front of the structure housing the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh holy book) called the “Palki Sahib” He gave us a rundown of the Sikh faith and the history of the Sikhs in India. We then asked about the Gurudwara itself, of which he explained to us in depth. After the introduction, he showed us throughout the Gurudwara. First, he explained the purpose of the Palki Sahib, being the focus of worship housing the Holy Book and being the direction for prayer for the worshipers. We were not supposed to see the actual book as it was meant for the time of worship only to be opened and read. As we walked over to the back of the Palki Sahib, we were shown an area where the head of the Gurudwara (Baba Ghil is the term used to refer to the head, indicating the respect and rank of the head) recites from the holy book and where the “Chaur” is (flying whisk used to clear and purify the environment around the Guru Granth Sahib). Then we were shown the portraits of Guru Nanak (founder of Sikh religion), Guru Gobind Sindh (tenth Sikh Guru being the warrior and philosopher leading the Sikhs during his time), and the Ten Gurus. After that we were shown the “Langar”, which is the free kitchen used to make vegetarian meals for any person of any faith, ethnicity, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, or philosophy to eat from around sundown, everyday. Jai explained to us that all the ingredients used to make the meals are freely donated, and there is no requirement to eat from the Gurudwara regardless of any donation made. It was made clear at that point by Jai what the rules are for attending the Gurudwara. One must dress modestly, preferably with bright colors, and with no extra-revealing clothes, speak softly, wear the head covering, and bow at the Palki Sahib if their faith allows them. We were then asked to help with carrying a new delivery of food donations, we obliged and carried over a hundred pounds worth of food for the Gurudwara. When we finished helping, we said goodbye to Jai the way Jai said one should say greet and say goodbye to one in the Gurudwara (placing both hands together and lowering your head to the other person) and left.

## Conclusion:

As we walked back from the Devon Gurudwara, we reflected on our visit. A place like this where people come from all around Chicago, all ages, speak all kinds of languages (although mainly Punjabi), sing the Mantras there and come together to eat. We felt that this is a place that all people should know about, where people must come to appreciate and learn from. Here Sikhism is represented in a kind and positive way, open to anyone and promoting education of kindness and tolerance that Sikhism fosters. This tenet, we feel, was reflected by us as ambassadors of Jesuit values from Loyola. We accepted the Gurudwara and learned a great deal about it, became enriched in its roughly 30-year history. In the future when others research this Gurudwara, I find that they too shall struggle to pick exactly what to focus on since the establishment is rich with possible topics. Something like Guru Granth Sahib alone could have an entire research project done on it. In the end, whatever that topic may be, The connection that Loyola students can make with them, their world, and the Sikh religion in this Gurudwara will be strengthened in a way that will familiarize all of us with this great religion and place of worship.

## Reference:

Devon Gurudwara Sahib Of Chicago. 2341 W Devon Ave. Chicago, 60659. 04/13/2023. Place.



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A photo of the Guru Nanak Dev Ji



A photo of the golden temple in Amritsar, Punjab, India.



A photo of the golden temple in Amritsar, Punjab, India.



A photo of the head covering we had to wear.



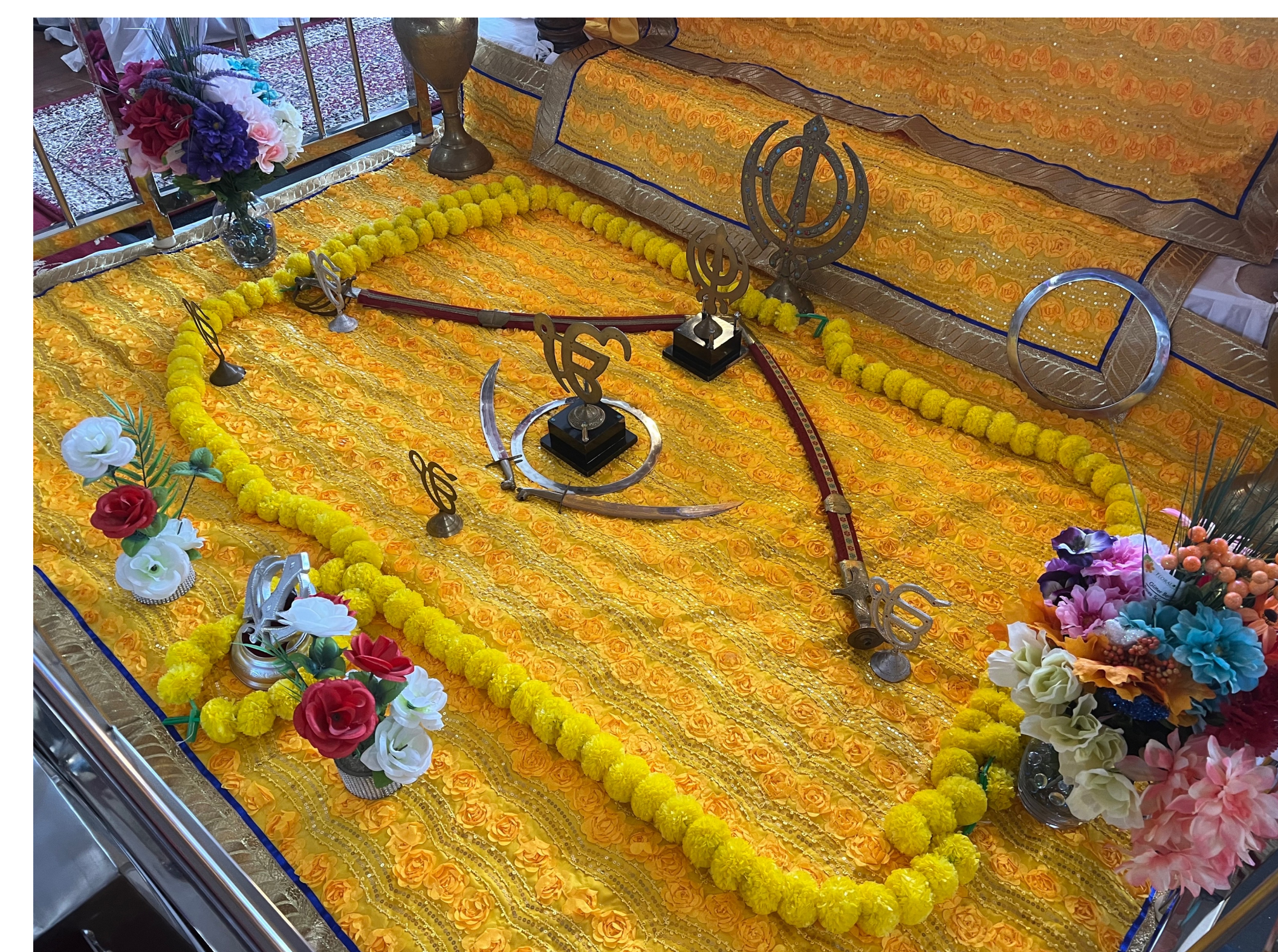
A photo of the Guru Gobind Singh



The community kitchen called langar.



A photo of the donated supplies for the langar.



A photo of the symbols of Sikhism in front of the Guru Granth Sahib.