Creating the world, God has made it a place to practice spirituality.

Guru Granth Sahib page 1035
Sikhism is a monotheistic religion which originated in India in 1469.

It is the youngest and fifth largest religion in the world.

Sikhism was founded by Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji who laid the basic principles of Sikhism.
Guru Nanak Dev Ji was very inquisitive about the meaning of life. He would spend many hours in meditation contemplating God. One morning, Guru Nanak Dev Ji plunged into the river for his daily bath. Three days had passed and there was no sign of him. On the third day, Guru Nanak arose from the river to proclaim:
There is only one God
He is the Truth
He is the Creator,
He is devoid of fear
He is devoid of enmity
He is beyond death
He is not born
He is self-illuminated
He is the master of all the gifts.

God existed before the start of the time
God existed when the time started.
God exists now and,
God will always exist.

These are the very first verses in The Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Holy Scriptures. (Japji)
By submerging in the river, Guru Nanak was able to attain communion with God. It was during this time that God instructed Guru Nanak to preach the Nam (Word).

“The benefactor Lord listened to the cries (of humanity) and sent Guru Nanak to this world…”

- Bhai Gurdas Ji, Var 1
The term GURU implies descendant of divine guidance to mankind sent from God.

Literally translated:

**GU**– means darkness and **–RU** means light

Thus, ‘Guru’ means the Light that dispels darkness. Therefore, Guru Nanak was the embodiment of divine light.
The Three Pillars of Sikhism

1. Practice Simran and Naam Japna – meditation on God and reciting and chanting of God’s Name, Waheguru.

2. Live as householders and practice Kirat Karni – To honestly earn by ones physical and mental effort while accepting Gods gifts and blessing.

3. Share wealth within the community by practicing Vand Chakna – “Share and Consume together”
At the age of 70, Guru Nanak passed the guruship to the next guru. Each of the Guru’s were of one conscience. This concept of passing down the guruship continued until the 10th guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who officially established the religion.
Then, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the 10th guru, instated the guruship to The Holy Scriptures.

Now, the scriptures were compiled to form “The Guru Granth Sahib,” the 11th Guru, for Sikhs to worship as their living Guru.
WHO IS A SIKH?

A Sikh is one who has taken God’s amrit. (the nectar of immortality)

These 5 symbols were initiated by Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who officially established the religion.

The Five K’s

Kesh - The uncut long hair, gives Sikhs a distinctive appearance in society and makes it impossible for Sikhs to conceal themselves.

Kanga - The comb is associated with Kesh. It performs the function of keeping the hair orderly. The Kesh and Kangha each evoke the meaning of the other.

Kirpan - The sword, is meant for self-defence and is a sign of bravery. Its function is not to create fear or inflict violence on others, but to ensure unjust actions are not carried out against the weak.

Kachhera - The Kachhera is short drawers that symbolise alertness as well as saintliness. The attire demonstrates one’s fidelity to one’s state of life.

Kara - The iron bracelet, indicates courage. It reminds Sikhs to think before they act so that they do not commit a moral mistake. It symbolises the oneness of God, the Kara a circle has neither a beginning or end.
The Many Faces of Sikhs
In contrast to most religions, Sikhism believes that there are many paths to God. Anyone can achieve salvation irrespective of the religion that they follow if they endear God in their heart and daily actions.

The Golden Temple is a sacred place for the Sikhs. There are doors on all four sides which signifies that people from all over the world are invited to worship our Creator, irrespective of caste, color, religion, and race.
The concept of having more than one path to God, allows for the believer to recognize that the unifying message of most religions is the same:

- God has entrusted us His caretakers for the earth.

- Because God dwells in all creation, including the oceans, mountains, plants, animals, humans, and the universe, we should make an honest attempt to safeguard all of creation.

- Our purpose on earth is to unite with our Creator, by first respecting His creation. Rather than coexisting in harmony with creation, we as mankind have brought corruption and destruction to what was originally considered “wonderful” by God.
Throughout scripture, we are frequently reminded of God’s close relationship to the environment.

Too many believers fail to recognize the importance of the natural world as a spiritual place of worship.
Sikhism follows 300 year cycles which are assigned by chosen Sikh leaders. The most recent one has finished in 1999. The next current cycle which ends in 2299 is the Cycle of the Environment.

A concern for the environment is an important part of an integrated approach to life and nature. Because all creation is united by the same beginning and ending, we as believers must have concern for a healthy relationship with the rest of creation.
Within the Universe,  
Earth was created  
to be a shrine.  
- Guru Nanak Dev Ji
Earth, the shrine of the universe, is increasingly being deprived of her value. Although God exclusively created this world for mankind to practice spirituality, we have drifted away from the ideal to preserve the earth, which is our very temple for salvation.

The ultimate goal in Sikhism is to achieve harmony with God, while remaining earth-conscious. Thus, supporting environmentalism is a necessity in order to maintain this world as a spiritual place.

To attain you must first achieve harmony with the earth and creation.
The body has 9 open gates: 2 eyes; 2 nostrils; 2 ears, the mouth and 2 below the waist. However, only through meditation, the 10th gate can be opened.

How does a Sikh inhale fresh, deep breaths during meditation with increasing smog and pollution in our air?
Meditation is restricted in a polluted environment. To purify ourselves, we must first purify the environment.

Therefore, protection of the air is a necessity. We must decrease pollution so that we may continue on our path to God.
For thousands and thousands of ages and for millions of aeons there was nothing in the beginning but nebulous density.

When God Willed, He created the universes. The expanse was caused without a formal cause None knoweth His limits or limitlessness. The True Teacher revealeth this secret.

Neither the yogi nor any else knows the lunar day, week day, season, and the month. The Creator who creates the world, He Himself knows (the time).
Nirankar (Formless) assumed the form and called Himself Ekankar, the one boundless Being.

In the form of Nirankar, God started the creation of the universe.

Then, from Ekankar emerged Oankar, the word sound; and the world was created.

With One Word Thou didst effect the world’s expansion.

There is no difference between Ekankar and Oankar. Both are God. But, to avoid any confusion, Guru Nanak used the figure “1” infront of Oankar, to form IK OANKAR.
That which is inside a person, the same is outside; nothing else exists. By divine prompting look upon all existence as one and undifferentiated; the same light penetrates all of existence. (p 599)

God is indelibly present within every person. Guru Nanak has stated that humans create around themselves a reflection of their inner state. The increasing bareness of the earth’s terrain is a reflection of the emptiness of God within humans.
Secondly, He fashioned the creation; seated within the creation, He beholds it with delight. True are Your worlds, True are Your solar Systems. True are Your realms, True is Your creation. Wonderful are the beings, wonderful are the species. Wonderful are the beings who wander around naked. Wonderful is the wind, wonderful is the water. Wonderful is fire, which works wonders. (p 463)

In these verses, God is emphasizing the beauty and importance of creation. Mankind is accountable for the destruction which he has caused by poisoning the oceans with pollutants and disrespecting the land.
All of creation is wonderful. Humans need to derive sustenance from the earth. Economic benefits and individual needs are depleting the earth’s resources.

A sacred relationship with the environment is crucial in maintaining a spiritually healthy and ecologically balanced planet.
Where is that Gate, and where is that Dwelling, in which You sit and take care of all?

The Fearless Lord is in the oceans, just as He is in the mountains.

He established the earth, the sky and the air, the water of the oceans, fire and food.

He created the moon, the starts and the sun, night and day and mountains; he blessed the trees with flowers and fruits. (pg 6)

God dwells within every aspect of His own creation. By exploiting creation, we are destroying that which is sacred.
Sikhs believe in the concept of reincarnation. All creatures are believed to have souls that pass to other bodies upon death until liberation is achieved.

By living a life according to God’s plan, humans can end the cycle of rebirth.

*For several births thou became a worm and a moth,*
*In several births, thou wert an elephant, a fish, and a deer.*
*In several births, thou became a bird and a snake.*
*In several births, thou wert yoked as a horse and an ox.*

*Meet the Lord of the world, this is the time to meet Him*
*After long period of time hast thou attained human body.*

(p176)
We have passed through 83,999,999 species to reach the stage of man. The soul is imperishable and was alive before taking human birth.

We assumed the forms of numerous trees and plants and many times we were born as beasts.

There are 2,400,000 types of trees. There are 400,000 species of animals. There are 750,000 reptiles. There are 750,000 birds. Half of the world resides in the sea and half outside. (4,200,000 in the sea and 4,200,000 on land)

Trees and plants are equally alive and evolving just as living beasts. They have both spiritual and ecological value.
Through 8.4 million incarnations, you came. If you stumble and fall now, you shall find no home or place of rest.
(panna 936)

For Sikhs, the human form is the only opportunity to unite with God. According to scriptures, liberation is possible only in the human life. Of all the beasts, God has manifested the power of a voice, only to man.

Out of all the 8.4 million species He created, The Lord has blessed man with glory. (pg 1075)

Yet, if you refuse to use this valuable voice to praise God, then surely God will grant you the life of a beast who will continuously regret his mistake; not forgetting God, even for a second.

The 8.4 million species of beings all yearn for the Lord.
(panna 29)
Sikhism states that he who can give life, has the right to take away a life. The person who cannot give a life – has no right to kill an animal. It is only God who has the power to grant and end a life as He pleases.

Guru Ji has said,

*Thou killest life and deemest that as a religious act;*

*Thou, tell me then, O my brother, what calls thou an irreligious act?*

Sikhism states that he who can give life, has the right to take away a life. The person who cannot give a life – has no right to kill an animal. It is only God who has the power to grant and end a life as He pleases.
God is the primary connection between all existence. The Earth and universe are sacred elements. Because God dwells in everything, all of creation has intrinsic value.

Sikhs should defend, safeguard, and fight for the rights of all creatures. They are living, breathing creatures, trapped in the cycle of rebirth.
This project undertaken in association with the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee and under the guidance of the Alliance for Religions and Conservation involves: tree plantation, creation of nurseries, community compost, encouraging children's participation in environmental issue, promoting usage of solar energy, and discouraging usage of environment.
http://www.sikhgurdwarasj.org/

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(Still need to include a picture here)
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