

## TOPIC: What is it to be a Sikh?

The Sikh religion was founded by the Guru Nanak, a devoutly spiritual man who became disillusioned with the Hinduism that surrounded him when he was growing up in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Islam had also influenced this area since the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Guru Nanak viewed the Hindu emphasis on ritual, pilgrimage and prophecies deflected from the most important belief; God. One of Sikhism key philosophies is the idea of social justice and equality.



### Key Beliefs (Evidence)

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| <b>Guru Nanak</b>        | The founder of the Sikh religion he was born in 1469 to a Hindu family in the Punjab region of India. During his early life there was a lot of tension between the Hindu's and the Muslims and social division. Nanak received a revelation from God telling him to spread the word of God. Nanak stated: <b><i>"There is no Hindu or Muslim, so whose path shall I follow? I shall follow the path to God"</i></b> . He then embarked on a 25 year mission travelling and preaching the word. He was then given the name Guru (teacher) and Sikhism began. | <b>5 K's (5 articles of faith)</b> | After a Sikh is baptised into the Khalsa order they are then expected to wear the 5 articles of faith, this is an outwards expression of their status as saint-soldiers:<br><b>Kesh:</b> Uncut hair – Hair is viewed as sacred<br><b>Kirpan:</b> Ceremonial sword, symbolising courage and dignity<br><b>Kachera:</b><br><b>Kara:</b> Steel bracelet worn as a symbol of the vows taken during Baptism<br><b>Kanga:</b> Special comb used to hold the hair in place under the turban |
| <b>Guru Granth Sahib</b> | This is a collection of hymns and verses compiled and written by the succession of 10 Sikh Gurus, the leaders of the faith, written between 1469-1708. Guru Gobind Singh completed the text and nominated it as his successor, the final Guru. The Guru Granth Sahib takes centre place in all Gurdwara.  | <b>5 Vices</b>                     | The Khalsa protect the weak and dedicate themselves to a virtuous (morally right) lifestyle by ridding themselves of the 5 vices:<br>Lust<br>Anger<br>Greed<br>Emotional attachment<br>Egotism   |
| <b>Guru Gobind Singh</b> | The tenth and final human Sikh Guru who completed the Guru Granth Sahib and also founded the Khalsa. He abolished all social divisions' including gender inequality and the Caste system, so that everyone could follow the gateway to God. Guru Gobind Singh introduced the Turban to Sikhism to give the religion a strong sense of identity and social cohesion. The hair is viewed as sacred in Sikhism so the turban also has a practical purpose to protect the hair.   | <b>Life after death</b>            | Sikhs believe that when you die your soul (atman) will be reincarnated into another human body. Your next life will be determined by your Karma in the present life. Karma determines how many challenges you will face in your next life.   |
| <b>Khalsa</b>            | The <b>Khalsa</b> is a Sikh order in which the majority of Sikhs are initiated into, it was formed by <b>Guru Gobind Singh</b> . The Khalsa's main focus was to protect the weak and the poor and would lead a virtuous lifestyle, ridding themselves of the <b>5 vices</b> . They are known as <b>'saint-soldiers'</b> meaning most importantly they lead the life of a saint in their devotion to God but will act as warriors to defend their faith or prevent injustice if necessary.   | <b>Equality</b>                    | This is central to Sikh beliefs and is considered one of the most egalitarian of all religions, quite free of division or discrimination by race, class, or sex. All are welcome in gurdwaras (Sikh temples) regardless of faith; there are no priests – decisions are taken by the community and both men and women can read from the Sikh holy book. <b><i>'There is no Hindu or Muslim, so whose path shall I follow? I shall follow the path of God'</i></b> .                   |

### KEY VOCABULARY:

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|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Guru</b>              | This means 'Teacher'   |
| <b>Guru Granth Sahib</b> | This is the name given to the holy text and it is classes as the 11 <sup>th</sup> living Guru. |
| <b>Gurdwara</b>          | The holy building also known as the Sikh Temple  |
| <b>Monotheistic</b>      | Belief in one God  |
| <b>Karma</b>             | The consequences of your behaviour.  |
| <b>Reincarnation</b>     | Where the soul is reborn again after death   |

### KEY VOCABULARY:

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|----------------------|---|
| <b>Revelation</b>    | A message or a sign from God.   |
| <b>Castes system</b> | A social hierarchical Indian system. This meant discrimination towards the lower caste members. |
| <b>Adi Granth</b>    | The first version of the Guru Granth Sahib.   |
| <b>Turban</b>        | A head ware made of cloth, to protect the hair and to identify religious belief.                |
| <b>Khalsa</b>        | Meaning 'pure' of the 'free'  |
| <b>Equality</b>      | Everyone should be treated the same regardless of sex, race, caste system                       |