

Key concepts

- Guru Gobind Singh became tenth guru at a young age after his father's martyrdom. It was a time when Sikhs were suffering under the tyranny and oppression of Islamic Mughal rulers who sought to suppress all other faiths.
- In the face of this threat he developed Sikhism as a religion with a strong identity which was prepared to defend its beliefs and principles.
- He founded the Khalsa at the Vaisakhi assembly at Anandpur. It can be argued that this was the most important event in the history of Sikhism, the event which safeguarded the religion for the future. It is also one of the most important developments in giving Sikhism a unique identity of its own.
- He finalised many elements of Sikhism such as the Guru Panth, the spirit of the Guru present wherever members of the Khalsa made decisions in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib.
- He established the Sikh baptism ceremony and partaking of Amrit Sanskar as the Sikh initiation ceremony. These ceremonies are still an important part of Sikhism today.

- He introduced the 5ks and the distinctive appearance of Sikhs – uncut hair, a comb, a steel wrist guard, a sword, and short breeches. These outward signs of the Khalsa are an important expression of Sikh identity.
- He instituted a new code of conduct for the 'Pure Ones' – tobacco, eating of meat slaughtered according to Muslim ritual and sexual intercourse with Muslim women were to be avoided.

- He replaced the family name with Singh and Kaur. Women were admitted to the Khalsa taking the name 'kaur'. The panj pyares is the collective name given to the five Sikh men, one came from the Kshatriya caste, and another from the Jat and the rest from the Sudra group which was a symbol of caste and sex equality.

- He compiled the Dasam Granth which contains much of his own poetry and translations of classical texts based on the works of many poets employed by Guru. He proclaimed himself the last living guru and established the Guru Granth Sahib as the eternal Guru of the Sikhs, elevating it to the status as a living guru.



Key quotes

'For this purpose was I born, let all virtuous people understand. I was born to advance righteousness, to emancipate the good, and to destroy all evil-doers root and branch.' (Guru Gobind Singh)

'Shed not recklessly the blood of another with thy sword, Lest the Sword on High falls upon thy neck.' (Guru Gobind Singh)

'Blessed, blessed is the Knower of the Lord, my True Guru, He has taught me to look upon friend and foe alike.' (Guru Gobind Singh)

'O God, grant me this boon, that I may never hesitate from righteous deeds. Let me be fearless when I go into battle, Give me faith that victory will be mine.

Let one directive guide my mind, That I always sing your praise,
And when comes the time to end my life, I should die fighting on the Battlefield.'

(A Shabad by Guru Gobind Singh)

Key words

Guru	Gobind Singh	Mughal	Khalsa	Vaisakhi
Anandpur	Guru Panth	Guru Granth Sahib	Amrit Sanskar	5ks
'Pure Ones'	Singh	Kaur	panj pyares	caste
Kshatriya	Jat	Dasam Granth		

Issues for analysis and evaluation

Key arguments/debates

Some would argue that the Sikhism of Guru Gobind Singh was completely different to the Sikhism of Guru Nanak. Others would argue that in terms of beliefs that there was no difference. Some would argue that it was a necessary development of the Sikhism of Guru Nanak.

Key questions

Is Sikh identity more related to Guru Gobind Singh than Guru Nanak?
Would Sikhism have survived without its development by Guru Gobind Singh?
What was Guru Gobind Singh's greatest contribution to the development of Sikhism?