

## Key concepts

- Sant Sipahi is the Sikh concept of warrior-saint. Sant is used to refer to a wise, knowledgeable person or 'person with knowledge of God. Someone who has gained a reputation as a teacher. It is sometimes mistranslated and misunderstood as 'saint'. Sipahi means warrior or soldier.
- Philosophy and lifestyle first endorsed by Guru Hargobind and developed by Guru Gobind Singh.
- Guru Hargobind taught that after all other means have failed it may be necessary to take up the sword to protect the weak and the oppressed. Guru Hargobind was first of the Gurus to take up arms to defend the rights of all. At that time it was only Emperors who were allowed to sit on a raised platform, called a takhat or throne.
- At the age of 13, Guru Hargobind erected the Akal Takhat Sahib, ten feet above the ground and adorned it with two swords, Miri and Piri, representing temporal and spiritual power. The order of the two words is important as it reflects the significance and importance of Sikh duties.
- First duty of a Sikh is to be a 'sant' – a modified form of the word 'sat' which can simply mean 'true'. The second word in the phrase is "Sipahi". So, this "Sant" should also be a soldier able to fight and engage in warfare.
- Sikhs suffered throughout their early history from oppression, injustice and persecution from Mughal rulers. These experiences and the need to defend and protect the religion, its beliefs and practices, have heavily influenced the development of the concept of Dharam Yudh.
- The concept from its beginning has emphasised two factors – resistance to tyranny and oppression and justice. These are the factors which influence the specific teaching of the concept. The concept sets out specifically and clearly the conditions that are required for a conflict to be regarded as Dharam Yudh.
  - The concept is clearly expressed in the rules of the Khalsa as it sets standards of behaviour, which are clear and distinctive for Sikhs.



## Key quotes

- 'Let him sit fully armed on his throne and maintain an army to the best of his capacity.' (Guru Arjan)
- 'No one is my enemy  
 No one is a foreigner  
 With all I am at peace  
 God within us renders us  
 Incapable of hate and prejudice.' (Guru Nanak)
- 'When all efforts to restore peace prove useless and no words avail,  
 Lawful is the flash of steel. It is right to draw the sword.' (Guru Gobind Singh)
- 'Death is a privilege of the brave, if they die for a noble cause.' (Guru Nanak, Guru Granth Sahib p 579)
- 'To give security to God loving men, to destroy evil mind and sin, and to ensure victory of good over evil, to create a just society.' (Guru Gobind Singh, "Bachittar Natak")

## Key words

Sant	Sipahi	<i>Hargobind</i>	guru	takhat
Khalsa	Gobind Singh	persecution	miri	piri
Mughal	spiritual	temporal	oppression	tyranny
Dharam Yudh				

## Issues for analysis and evaluation

### Key arguments/debates

Some argue that religion and warfare are never compatible. Others would argue that there is such a concept as a just war. Some would argue that the use of force can be justified in certain circumstances.

### Key questions

- Is it possible to be a saint and a soldier?
- How relevant is the concept of sant-sipahi to Sikhs today?
- Can killing other human beings ever be justified?