

## Key concepts

- Many Sikhs believe that the significance of the Mul Mantra is in what it teaches. The teaching in the Mul Mantra, whilst simple, is also very complex and incorporates all other Sikh teachings about the role of the gurus and the ultimate purpose of life. It is a complete philosophy in itself.
- It teaches Sikhs about the nature of God – ‘One God, True Name, Creator, Without Fear, Without Hate, Eternal, Without Birth, Self-revealed, By the Guru’s Grace.’
- Another important and significant teaching in the Mul Mantra is the Oneness of God. This stresses the unity of God and is especially significant in Sikhism as it gives the religion its own identity in terms of belief, distinguishing it from Hinduism.
- It also teaches that spiritual enlightenment (mukti) is by God’s grace (prasad). So, the individual has some dependence on this blessing from God.
- It emphasises the importance of the five stages of prayer and the belief that it is the force of grace that drives spiritual development. It is through the decisive role of grace that mukti is achieved.

- The recitation of the Mul Mantra is a central part of daily prayers and so brings Sikhs into a relationship with God every day. They can recite God’s name in ‘sat nam’ as a mantra to purify the mind and come close to God.
- It is repeated each day during early morning prayer. The first words of the Mul Mantra are ‘Ik Onkar’, meaning ‘there is one God’. It was also composed by Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith. It is the most important prayer of the Sikhs.
- The Japji is often referred to as a summary of the Guru Granth Sahib and as such is a summary of Sikh faith.
- The Japji is at the beginning of the Guru Granth Sahib and introduces key themes such as grace (gurprasad) and the five khandas.
- Many regard the Japji as an elaboration of the Mul Mantra which is the kernel of Sikh spirituality.
- The Japji in its content sets out the basis of householder ethics.



## Key quotes

*‘The entire Granth Sahib, which is the central scripture of Sikhism, is basically an elaboration of the Mul Mantra.’ – (Abhijit Naskar, Neurons, Oxygen & Nanak)*

*‘The Mul Mantra, the Root Mantra, is the only cure for the mind; I have installed faith in God in my mind.’ – (Guru Granth Sahib p. 675)*

*‘One Universal Creator God. The Name Is Truth. Creative Being Personified. No Fear. No Hatred. Image Of The Undying, Beyond Birth, Self-Existent. By Guru’s Grace.’ – (Mul Mantra)*

*‘My God is one, truly, my God is one.’ – (Guru Nanak AG 350)*

*‘God is the fish and the fisherman, the water and the net, the float of the net and the bait within it.’ – (Guru Nanak AG 23)*

## Key words

|            |            |              |                   |               |
|------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Mul Mantra | Mukti      | Prayer       | Grace             | Householder   |
| Japji      | Sat nam    | Five khandas | Spiritual         | Nature of God |
| Ik Onkar   | Guru Nanak | Role         | Guru Granth Sahib | Oneness       |

## Issues for analysis and evaluation

### Key arguments/debates

Some would argue that the Mul Mantra is the most important statement of faith in Sikhism. Others would argue that the Japji deserves this status within Sikhism.

Some would argue that they complement each other and that no aspect of a religion is more important than another, since they are interdependent.

### Key questions

Is there any difference in importance in worship between the Mul Mantra and Japji of Guru Nanak?

Are there any significant differences between the two texts?

Are there any alternative explanations or conclusions to be drawn from the debate?