

## Key concepts

- Sikh spirituality is centred around the need to understand and experience God, and eventually become one with God. Sikhs believe that God cannot be understood properly by human beings, but He can be experienced through love, worship, and contemplation.
- Naam, Shabad, or Word, is the quintessence of Sikh spirituality and is mentioned 2546 times in the Sikh Holy Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, literally meaning the Name of Gods or God.
- Naam Japo is the remembrance of God by repeating and focusing the mind on His name or identity.
- 'Naam' is the great creative and controlling power of God. Naam has no beginning and no end. It is unchanging, ancient and eternal and it is the life current which pervades the entire creation. The withdrawal of Naam from creation would lead to its decay and destruction.
- Naam, the primal sound current is in fact only one continuous vibration. However, as it steps down through five different planes of existence, with their varying degrees of density, the frequency of Naam changes and this creates the 'Panj Shabad', the five distinct melodies. These are contained within the mantra Sat Naam and are S, T, N, M and A. These five melodies come from God and become the means of re-uniting us back with God. It is this internal experience of the five shabads that inspired the Sikh Gurus and Yogis to create instruments like the Dilruba, Saranda, Taus, Sitar and Rabab which re-created the sounds of Naam to enable common people to experience these sounds.
- The five planes of existence are mentioned at the end of the Japji, which is the first poem in the Sikh Holy Scripture. The five planes include:
  1. 'Dharam Khand' or the Realm of Action
  2. 'Gyan Khand' or the Realm of Knowledge
  3. 'Saram Khand' or the Realm of Spiritual Endeavour
  4. 'Karam Khand' or the Realm of Grace
  5. 'Sach Khand' or the Realm of Truth.



## Key quotes

*'Repeating the Naam, the Name of the Lord, the mortal is exalted and glorified. Repeating the Naam, sin is banished from the body. Repeating the Naam, all festivals are celebrated. Repeating the Naam, one is cleansed at the sixty-eight sacred shrines.'* – (Guru Granth Sahib p. 1142)

*'Meditating on the Naam, the Name of the Lord, I cross over the terrifying world-ocean. With your eyes, behold the Blessed Vision of the Saints. Record the Immortal Lord God within your mind. Listen to the Kirtan of His Praises, at the Feet of the Holy.'* – (Guru Granth Sahib p. 189)

*'In that blessed house, the Shabad vibrates; He infuses His almighty power into it.'* – (Guru Granth Sahib)

*'In the Realm of Karam, the Word is the Effort. No one else dwells here, except the great spiritual heroes.'* – (Guru Nanak)

## Key words

Naam	Shabad	Spirituality	Word	Primal
Eternal	Naam Japo	Existence	Gurus	Yogis
Khand	Panj Shabad	Grace	Sat Naam	Truth
Guru Granth Sahib	Realm			

## Issues for analysis and evaluation

### Key arguments/debates

The Five Khands are important as guides to spiritual development. Some would argue that they have little influence on Sikh life. Others would argue that other aspects are more important in spiritual development.

### Key questions

- Is it possible to have a mystical union with God?
- To what extent is Naam Japo evidence of such a union?
- How important is the practice of Naam Japo in Sikhism?