

How is Sikhism unique?

Sikhism is a unique religion and is very distinct compared to the other religions. In this essay, we will be exploring the major parts of this religion including how it began, where Sikhs worship and how they represent their faith today.

There are many religions around the world and these are categorised into Dharmic and Abrahamic religions. Abrahamic religions originated in the Middle East, while Dharmic religions originated around the Punjabi area in India. Sikhism was the last Dharmic religion to be created.

Sikhism started with Guru Nanak, who was born into Hinduism. He always heard his parents fighting with the Muslims who lived nearby. They were fighting about which religion was superior. Every morning Nanak would bathe and meditate by the river. He took off his clothes as usual and plunged into the water. After a few moments, Nanak still hadn't emerged. The women and children who were bathing in the water started to panic and they went and told his family. They were shocked and ran down to the river. His clothes were still there

but Nanak wasn't. Two days passed and the villagers thought that he had drowned. On the third day, they went down to the river to see if Nanak was there and to their surprise, he was. The village was so delighted to see Nanak and to see him looking so healthy. After a long time, he finally told them that he had seen God, and that God had told him to share the message that everyone was equal no matter what their gender, occupation, age or wealth. In those days, there was something called the caste system. At the top there were Brahmins who were priests and teachers and right at the bottom there were Sudra, who were street cleaners. The idea of Sikhism went against the caste system, which upset the Hindus and the Muslims. The village started calling him Guru Nanak, which meant teacher and so the religion of Sikhism had been created.

Guru Nanak had become the first guru of ten. One day, he knew that he would have to pass his guruship onto another person so they could still share the message of Sikhism. He selected a man called Lehna. For him to become the next guru, he had to pass three tests. Lehna's first test was when Guru Nanak told him to pick up bales of hay. He obeyed, even though it meant his

new, expensive clothes would get muddy and get ruined. This test showed it does not matter what you wear and material things aren't important. Guru Nanak then told him to fix one of his walls. He obeyed and started fixing the wall. The next day the wall had been destroyed. Nanak told him the wall wasn't good enough. He then started to build the wall again. Nanak said it still wasn't good enough. This test showed obedience is important. The third and final test was when Nanak had organised a feast for him and his friends. Before his friends arrived, Nanak told Lehna that he could have anything on the table that he liked. Lehna told him that he would eat last and let all Nanak's friends eat before himself. This test shows that you should always put others before yourself. Lehna had passed the three tests and had become the next guru. He was now called Guru Angad.

Guru Angad invented a new language called Gurumukhi meaning "from the mouth of the guru." The religion of Sikhism was passed down by songs which were easy to remember and could spread emotion. The next guru was Guru Arjan. He built the Golden Temple. He collected most of the writings for the Adi Granth. Then Guru Arjan disappeared in the lake after being tortured by Muslims for five days. He became a martyr

which is a person who dies for their beliefs. Guru Hargobind was Arjan's son and he created a Sikh army. He told them to only fight in self defence.

The five ks of Sikhism are very important to the Khalsa, which is the Sikh community. The Khalsa was formed at the festival of Vaisakhi in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh. The five ks of Sikhism are: The Khanga, which is a wooden comb, the Kirpan, which is a small sword, the Kara, which is a small steel bracelet, the Kachera, which is a pair of cotton underwear and the Kesh, which is uncut hair. These things are very special to the Khalsa.

The holy text of Sikhism is the Guru Granth Sahib. Five thousand eight hundred and sixty seven hymns are in it. Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the ten Gurus, handed down his guruship to this special book. It is known as the Eternal Guru. It was written in the language of Punjabi and in the Gurumukhi script. The Mool Mantar summarises the essential teachings of Guru Nanak.

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion which means they only believe in one God. The most common name for

their God is Waheguru which means Wonderful Lord/Guru. Sikhs believe that you can have a personal connection with God, like they are a member of your family. They believe that he is omnipotent (all powerful) and omnipresent (present in everything).

The place where Sikhs worship is called a Gurdwara. The Gurdwara has four entrances to show that everyone is welcome. The Divan hall is the main prayer hall where the Guru Granth Sahib is kept during the day. The Sach Khand is where the Guru Granth Sahib is put to sleep, as if it was a human. The Langar is the free kitchen where anyone who goes to the Gurdwara is able to eat. Volunteers provide vegetarian meals to everyone. This is called Sewa and means selfless service to the community. The Golak is a collection box that helps to pay for the Gurdwara.

Being a Sikh is part of your identity. Some people say it is like a brotherhood or a sisterhood because you are so close to the people of the Gurdwara. The festival of Vaisakhi is a way to celebrate who you are and what your identity is.

Sikhism is a unique religion because of how it was founded and how they practice it.