



Topic: How are Sikh teachings on equality and service put into practice today?

I need to know:

- The key beliefs of Sikhism.
- The life of Guru Nanak and its importance today.
- The Gurus and their importance for Sikhs living in Britain today.
- How Sikhs interpret the Mool Mantar and what it tells them about God, life and how to live.
- How and why Sikhs put their beliefs into action in different ways.
- How beliefs and teachings guide Sikhs in responding to the challenges of life in Britain.
- How Sikh teachings on equality and service put into practice today?

Key Words and Definitions

- **Guru** - moving from darkness (gu) to light (ru).
- **Khanda** – the Sikh symbol which is a double-edged sword.
- **The Guru Granth Sahib** - The Sikh holy book.
- **Gurdwara** – the Sikh place of worship.
- **Mool Mantar** – A poem by Guru Nanak describing God.
- **Sewa** - selfish service to others.
- **Gukta** – Prayer book.
- **Langar** – A kitchen where vegetarian food is prepared for free.
- **Nam Simran** - meditation on God’s name
- **Kirat karna** - hard work.
- **Vand chhakna** - sharing, charitable giving.
- **Gurmurkhi** - the language developed by Guru Nanak.

The Five Ks -These are five items worn for Sikhs to show their faith. This was instructed by Guru Gobind Singh to the Khalsa.
 1) **Kesh** – uncut hair. 2) **Kara** – a steel bracelet/ bangle. 3) **Kangha** – a wooden comb. 4) **Kirpan** – steel sword 5) **Kachera** – cotton shorts.

Guru Nanak was born in 1469 and died in 1539. He was the founder of Sikhism. Following Guru Nanak there were nine other Gurus that led Sikhism until 1708. The last of the Ten Gurus was Guru Gobind Singh.

The Ten Gurus

- Guru Nanak - the founder of Sikhism.
- Guru Angad - taught people to read the script that Nanak used to record hymns.
- Guru Amar Das - worked for the rights of women
- Guru Ram Das - helped to reorganise the religion and the city that became Amritsar.
- Guru Arjun Dev - Built the Golden Temple.
- Guru Hargobind - Freed 52 prisoners of conscience and designed the Sikh flag, the Nishan Sahib.
- Guru Har Rai - Collected plants, rare species. An expert in medicine.
- Guru Har Krishan - He died as a child while he served people with cholera and smallpox during a pandemic.
- Guru Tegh Bahadur – he led a nation-wide non-violent protest movement against new laws. He was executed in 1675 for defending the right of non-traditional Muslims and non-Muslims to practise their beliefs.
- Guru Gobind Singh – Finalised the Sikh scriptures and founded the khalsa in 1699. The Khalsa are a dedicated religious group that Sikhs can join.
All Gurus achieved liberation (mukti).

The story of Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak was the first Guru of the Sikhs. Although he was born into a Hindu family he didn’t want to be tied to the Hindu faith. Even at the age of 13, he refused to take the Scared Thread ceremony, which was the most important ceremony for Hindu boys. His best friend Mardana, was a Muslim.

When Nanak was 30 years old (1499), he went to bathe in a river and disappeared. Many thought he was dead but he returned three days later. When he reappeared in the same spot where he disappeared, his face was said to have had a special glow. His first words were: *‘There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim’*. He said there was one true God. He claimed he had been taken into the presence of God. He said he had been given direct knowledge about God, life and reality.

Nanak had achieved liberation (mukti). He gave away all his possessions to the poor. He travelled over 30,000 miles to spread the message.

Sikh’s three duties:

1. Nam Simran -meditation on God’s name.
2. Kirat karna - hard work
3. Vand chhakna – sharing and charitable giving.

In Sikhism, God is called the Real Guru.



The Sikh path of life

Do not be self-centred (**manmukh**) but be God-centred (**gurmukh**). Overcome the ego (**haumai**) by living according to the will of God (**hukam**). This will enable a person to escape from the cycle of life, death and rebirth (**samsara**) and achieve liberation (**mukti**).

Arrow Tasks You could enhance your learning by visiting one of the suggested websites such as <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zws4d2p> , <https://binged.it/2H92xUp> (Guru Nanak animation), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/znmvtv4/revison/2> (on the Mool Mantar), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZJiodQRuC4> (langar) and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zi6i_fNEgZU (sewa). Find out how did Sikhs help in the UK during the covid-19 pandemic?