

Amrit - Nectar. Sanctified (holy) liquid made of sugar and water, used in initiation ceremonies.

Amrit Sanskar ceremony - The rite of initiation into the Khalsa (Sikhs who commit themselves to a daily discipline).

Amritdhari Sikh - A Sikh who has been initiated into the Khalsa.

Anandpur - A city in the state of Punjab, India.

Atma - Sanskrit word that means soul.

Caste - The anglicised term for varna; originally a Hindu social order of higher and lower class. Also followed by some Sikhs.

daswandh / dasvandh - The Sikh practice in the giving of money (a tenth of one's income) in the name of the Guru to help those who are poorer / less well off.

dhan (dan) - Giving to those in need, a key teaching in Sikhism and form of sewa (service to others). Pronounced 'daan'.

divine spark - The soul, the part of Waheguru (the Sikh word for God) in each person.

five vices - Five emotions that can take over a person's life and lead them to actions they later regret: anger, pride, lust, greed and undue attachment.

Golden Temple in Amritsar - City in North-Western part of Indian. Spiritual centre for Sikhs.

Gurdwara - Sikh place of worship. Literally, the 'doorway to the Guru'.

Gurmukh - God-centred, living by the Gurus' teachings.

Gurmukhi - The script in which the Guru Granth Sahib is written. It is the script used for Punjabi in India's Punjab state.

Guru Amar Das - The third of the ten Sikh Gurus.

Guru Angad - The second of the ten Sikh Gurus.

Guru Arjan - Guru Arjan was the fifth Sikh Guru and the first Sikh martyr.

Guru Gobind Singh - The tenth Sikh Guru.

Guru Granth Sahib - Sikh holy book, treated as a living Guru (spiritual teacher).

Guru Nanak - The first Guru, described as the founder of the Sikh faith (1469-1539).

Haumai - Refers to the pride or ego that make a person too self-centred to see God.

Kaccha - Baggy cotton shorts worn by initiated Sikhs; one of the Five Ks.

Kanga - A wooden comb worn in the hair, which is one of the Five Ks.

Kara - Steel band worn on the right wrist. One of the Five Ks.

Kaur - Princess. Second name given to Sikh females.

Kesh - Uncut hair. Initiated Sikhs are forbidden to shorten, shave or remove their hair in any other way.

Khalsa - The Sikh community, literally 'the community of the pure'. Refers particularly to initiated Sikhs.

Khanda - Symbolises the Sikh faith: it shows a double-edged sword, a chakram and two single-edged swords.

Kirpan - Sword. One of the five Ks.

Kirtan - Devotional singing of the compositions found in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Langar - The kitchen and place where food is eaten in a Sikh Gurdwara. Often volunteers provide and cook food that is served to all as an act of sewa (charity).

Man - The mental aspect of Sewa, eg teaching the Guru Granth Sahib.

Manmukh - Self-centred.

Naam - Naam means "name". In the scripture of Guru Granth Sahib, naam refers to the divine identity and description of the identifying characteristics of the Creator. The Sikh name for God is Waheguru. Naam is compared to a jewel, or treasure, having the power to liberate one from the cycle of transmigration.

Naam Japna - Repeating and remembering God's name.

Nihang - In Sikhism, a person who is bold and who lives without fear.

Panj Pyare - The five beloved ones. Those first initiated into the Khalsa; those who perform the rite today.

Sahajdhari Sikh - A member of the Sikh community who has not taken part and been baptised in the Amrit Sanskar ceremony.

Sangat - Congregation in a Sikh gurdwara.

Sewa - Selfless service to the community.

Singh - Lion. Name adopted by Sikh males.

Soul - The spiritual part of a human being. It is believed by many that the soul is eternal.

Tan - Physical service, eg working in the langar.

Vaisakhi - The most important of the Sikh festivals; also written as Baisakhi.

Waheguru - A Sikh name for God.

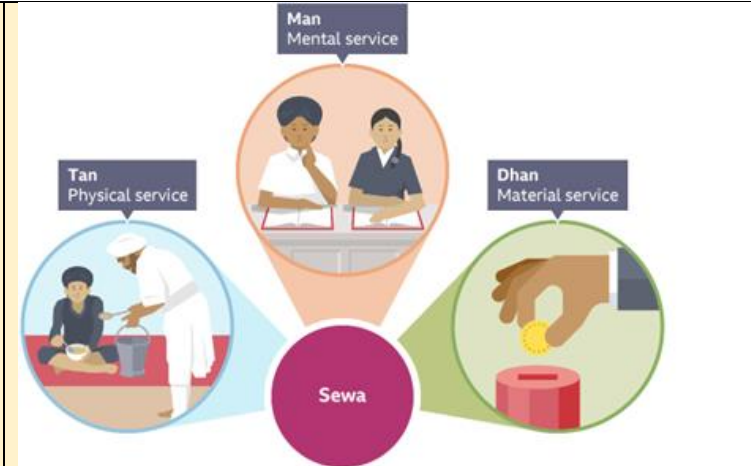
Sikhism



The sangat - Sat sangat' means 'true congregation'. It is formed by people coming together in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib. This can take place anywhere, but it occurs mainly in the gurdwara. When the sangat gather in the gurdwara, they sing hymns together (kirtan), meditate on God's name (Naam Japna) and listen to musicians.

The sangat:

- provides a community in which Sikhs can worship collectively
- gives Sikhs the opportunity to meditate on God's name (Naam Japna)
- enables Sikhs to build their faith in Waheguru on their path to being gurmukh
- is open to everybody, regardless of their age, gender, faith and occupation.



Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was brought up in the Hindu faith. He lived in a place influenced by both Hinduism and Islam and had many friends from both faiths. As an adult, he had a religious experience. He disappeared for three days while washing at the river Bain. Sikhs believe that, during the three days, God revealed himself to Guru Nanak. On his return, Guru Nanak proclaimed, God is neither Hindu nor Muslim and the path I follow is God's.



Tan - Physical aspect of sewa This involves physical work and tasks to show selfless service. For example, these could be cooking or serving in the langar or cleaning the gurdwara.

Man - Mental aspect of sewa This involves Sikhs using their mental skills and talents. For example, they could teach people how to read or understand the Guru Granth Sahib, teach people how to play the musical instruments used during worship or teach people about the history of Sikhism.

Dan (sometimes also spelled 'dhan') - Material aspect of sewa This involves Sikhs selflessly helping others by sharing their material wealth. This could be donating one tenth of their income to the sangat, which is known as daswandh. It could also involve helping others in times of financial difficulty, giving to charity or giving money to the poor.



The five Ks are five items that are worn on the body. They can be considered a uniform for Amritdhari Sikhs, also called 'Khalsa Sikhs'. These Sikhs outwardly show their commitment to the Sikh faith to others. However, many Sahajdhari Sikhs (Sikhs who have not gone through the Amrit Sanskar ceremony) often wear some or all of the five Ks too.

The **Khanda** is the symbol of the Sikh faith. It consists of three different types of weapons: A double edged sword or **khanda** in the centre. A round throwing weapon known as a **chakkar**. Two single-edged swords called **kirpans**, crossed either side of the other weapons.

Sikhs believe in the oneness of humanity. This is the belief that all humans are equal because they were created by Waheguru, which means 'Wonderful God' or 'Wonderful Lord'. Sikhs also believe that Waheguru is present in every individual as the divine spark. The words 'atma', 'soul' and 'light' are sometimes used for this divine spark. Because Sikhs believe that every living thing has a part of God within them, they believe that all humans should be treated equally and with respect.