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May the joy of Baisakhi bring happiness and prosperity into your life. Wishing you a day filled with the warmth of loved ones and the vibrant colors of the harvest.

Baisakhi

is a significant cultural and religious festival by the Sikh community



Baisakhi : The Birthday of the Khalsa



Baisakhi, also pronounced as Vaisakhi, marks the onset of spring season in India and usually signifies the end of the harvest season. It falls on 1st day of the month of Vaisakh and is one of the most awaited major festivals of North India especially in Punjab, Haryana and J&K. Since Baisakhi festival marks the time of harvest of Rabi crops, it is time of tremendous joy and festivities for farmers. The people celebrate the day with a lot of enthusiasm and gaiety by performing "Bhangra" and "Gidda" in the open fields. Other than marking the season of harvest, Baisakhi also has religious significance for the Sikhs. On the occasion of Baisakhi festival in 1699, a revolution occurred in Punjab. The Khalsa Panth was born on this day under the 10th Sikh Guru, Shree Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji at Keshgarh Sahib in Anandpur Sahib in Punjab. That was the Baisakhi festival of 1699 when 10th Sikh Guru, (then) Guru Gobind Rai ji sent special messages to Sikhs all over India that they would meet at Anandpur Sahib on the auspicious occasion of Baisakhi.

On this occasion, after the Gurbaani recitation was over, Guru ji went to the stage in an unusual mood, drew his sword and called for a brave Sikh to come forward to offer his head to the Guru. This unexpected call was answered with complete

silence from the audience. The Guru raised his voice and repeated his words, demanding the head of a Sikh. At this, Bhai Daya Ram ji, A Khatri from Lahore calmly came on the stage. Guru ji took him to the nearby tent and came back on the stage again with bloody sword in his hands to ask for another head of a Sikh. This was done for a total of 5 times and five Sikhs came forward one by one. Bhai Daya Ram ji, a Khatri of Lahore, Bhai Dharam Chand ji, a Jat from Delhi, Bhai Himmat Dass ji, a washerman of Dwaraka, Bhai Mohkam Chand ji, a calico printer of Puri, Orissa, and Bhai Sahib Chand ji, a barber from Bidar in Karnataka state offered their heads one by one to Guru ji. Then, to the surprise of the whole congregation, all 5 Sikhs were brought back on the stage, alive and dressed in special clothing. They were dressed like their master, in saffron garments. Their faces dress and appearances were like their master's. Guru ji, then prepared AMRIT for them by reciting from holy Gurbaani, the five compositions: Japu, Jaap, Swayas, Chopai and Anand Sahib ji. The water kept in an iron vessel was stirred with a double edged sword and was sweetened by adding sugar, (Pattass), in it. The "AMRIT", thus prepared was administered to those chosen 5 to whom Guru ji called

as "Panj Playrey", the five beloved ones. They were given a common surname, Singh, and were to be called as "Khalsa." They were told that from onwards, they were no more Jats, Khatri, high or low caste people. The divine message of Guru ji was "Maanas Ki Jaat, Sabhe Eke Peachanbo" (All human beings created by the almighty were equal) There should not be any discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, creed and gender. One should not have any fear except the fear of the Almighty who is the sole creator of this universe. Everyone is equal and they were all like brothers. Anyone accepting "Amrit" became a Singh and the Singhs in a group were given the name of "Khalsa." They have the full authority to take decisions regarding the situation and problems faced by the "Khalsa Panth". The decisions have to be taken in accordance with the directions of the holy Guru Granth Sahib Ji and are to be respected and obeyed by all the Sikhs. Guru ji paid the the greatest tribute to the Khalsa when he said: "Khalsa Mero Roop Hai Khaas, Khalsa Mai Main Karu Niwaas" (The Khalsa is my own image and I reside in the Khalsa) It is written in Sarb Loh Granth Sahib ji as under: "Khalsa Akalpurkh Ki Fauj, Pargatiyo Khalsa, Parmatam Ki Mauj" (Khalsa is the army of eternal Lord, raised by him out

of his pleasure). Their distinguishing features were their uncut beard, unshown hair (Kesh) with a Turban (Pagri), an iron bangle (Kara), a small sword (Kirpan), dangling on the left, an underwear (Kachhara), and a small comb (Kanga), in the hair. They were meant to be legions of the timeless God, commissioned to establish the rule of Dharma on our motherland and uproot all evil. The Guru ji himself joined them to fulfill this mission. Guru ji held his Chosen five in so high esteem that he knelt before them and asked them to initiate himself in to the "Khalsa Panth" in the same way he had done them before. The Guru ji was then administered "Amrit" in, the same manner and was given the surname "Singh". Guru ji, thus, became Guru Gobind Singh ji from Guru Gobind Rai ji (Guru ji's previous name) The Khalsa, with God's light shining within was meant to be a global society. They were not to form a separate denomination, as that was totally against the Guru Ji's concept of universal brotherhood. The creation of the Khalsa was, thus, the crowning event of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji's life from the stand point of both organisation and ideology. Ideologically the creation of the Khalsa aimed at a well balanced combination of the ideals of Bhakti and Shakti of moral and

spiritual excellence and militant valour and heroism of the highest order.

Sri Aurobindo, a great Indian philosopher said, "Guru Gobind Singh Ji picked up five souls from the multitude and breathed fire of faith in to them. The creation of the Khalsa Panth by the 10th master was a marvel by itself. At the age of 33 years, Guru ji got 33000 people gathered on the day of Baisakhi in 1699 at Keshgarh Sahib in Anandpur Sahib, Punjab and called five Sikhs to give life at the feet of Lord. What a submission, dedication, and devotion indeed!" In the words of J D Cunnigham, another historian, who authored "History of the Sikhs" in 1849, "The creation of the Khalsa ideally transformed the life, outlook and aspirations of the people and imparted a new direction to Indian history." Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore held that, "Guru Gobind Singh Ji appeared on Indian National scene with the message of militarism of the community for the defence of social equality and religious freedom.

In order to execute his plan, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji unified the Sikhs, taught them how to face any crisis calmly and boldly and generated a new hope and confidence." Incidentally, Baisakhi, in its local flavor, is also observed in different parts of India by its diverse names.



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Baisakhi the harvest festival

Baisakhi significant role in resistance against Mughal rule. Every year on April 13 Sikhs celebrate with pomp and gusto the birth of the Khalsa Panth. "The Background" In the year 1667 Aurungzeb, the Mughal Emperor installed himself as the Emperor of India after annihilating almost all his family opposition. Immediately after gaining power, Aurungzeb embarked on a policy of religious persecution and started the process of Islamization of India. Brahmins became the prime targets of Aurungzeb in this regard as his clerics made him convinced that once the Brahmins accepted Islam the others would follow. Pursuing his agenda, Aurungzeb levied unethical religious taxes against Hindus and shut their temples and places of learning. "The Brahmins, particularly those of Kashmir, desperately felt the need for a dynamic leadership to fight this subversion by the Mughal Emperor. They approached Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675), the ninth in the line of Sikh Gurus, who was on the throne of the Sikh religion and asked him for guidance on the issue. "During this meeting, Guru Tegh Bahadur's nine-year-old son, Gobind Rai, was sitting beside him. Finding Guru Tegh Bahadur under deep contemplation, the young son asked the reason of his repose. The Guru explained the situation to the child and said

the world is aggrieved by oppression and no brave man had yet come forward to willingly sacrifice his life to free the earth from the burden of Aurangzeb's persecution of Hindus. To this young Gobind Rai replied, "For that purpose who is more worthy than thou who art at once generous and brave." Pleased with his son's reply, Guru Tegh Bahadur entrusted the Guruship to Gobind Rai and proceeded towards Delhi, the seat of the Mughal Empire. "Just as they reached Delhi, the mighty Aurungzeb imprisoned the Guru and his loyal attendants. Foreseeing his ecclesiastic journey during imprisonment, Guru Tegh Bahadur thought of testing his son's courage and capability to carry on the Guru's mission. In a letter to Gobind Rai, the Guru wrote, "My strength is exhausted, I am in chains and I can make not any efforts. Says Nanak, God alone is now my refuge. He will help me as He did his Saints." In his reply young Guru Gobind Rai wrote, "I have regained my Power, my bonds are broken and all options are open unto me. Nanak, everything is in Thine hands. It is only Thou who can assist Thyself." "Later, Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred in Delhi in the presence of hundreds of people. The executioner abandoned the Guru's body in the open. But no one dared to come forward to claim the body to perform

religious rites. Even the ardent disciples withdrew unrecognized. It was only when the stormy weather occurred, that two persons took advantage of the situation and covertly took the body of Guru Tegh Bahadur for cremation. This cowardice of Sikhs incited in Gobind Rai an urge to endow his Sikhs with a distinct identity. "With the desire to instill courage and strength to sacrifice among his fellow men, Gobind Rai became the tenth Sikh Guru. At the age of 33, Guru Gobind had Divine inspiration to actuate his designs. The Guru found the occasion of Baisakhi could serve his purpose, as every year thousands of devotees would come to Anandpur at the time of Baisakhi (springtime) to pay their obeisance and seek the Guru's blessings. Early in the year 1699, months before Baisakhi Day, Guru Gobind Rai sent special edicts to congregates far and wide that that year the Baisakhi was going to be a unique affair. He asked them not to cut any of their hair and to come with unshorn hair under their turbans and chunis. Besides, men were asked to come with full beards. "The Baisakhi Day" of March 30, 1699 "At the call of the Guru, thousands of people gathered at the Anandpur Sahib, the famous Golden Temple of Amritsar, India on the Vaisakhi Day, March 30, 1699. To instill courage in the fellow men, Guru Gobind made a powerful oration and revealed to them his

divine mission of restoring amongst Sikhs and preserving the Sikh religion. At the end of his speech, the Guru flashed his unsheathed sword and said that every great deed was preceded by equally great sacrifice and demanded one head for oblation. To the Guru's call, Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore offered himself. The Guru took him inside a tent. A little later he reappeared with his sword dripping with blood, and asked for another head. One by one four more earnest devotees - Daram Das - a Jat of Delhi, Mohkam Chand - a washerman of Dwarka (Gujarat), Himmat - a cook of Jagannath (Orissa) and Sahib Chand - a barber of Bidar (Karnataka) offered their heads. Every time the Guru took a person inside the tent, he came out with a bloodied sword in his hand. Astonished with their Guru's behavior and believing him to have gone berserk, people started to disperse. Shortly after, Guru Gobind emerged with all five men dressed piously in white. He baptized the five in a new and unique ceremony called 'Khande di Pahul' (the double-edged Sword Amrit), what Sikhs today call Amrit. After this, the Guru asked the five baptized Sikhs to baptize him as well. They were then knighted as Singhs, as the Five beloved ones, the first members of the new community of equals, to be called the Khalsa, meaning "pure". Guru Gobind proclaimed that the Panj

Pyare or the Five Beloved Ones would be the embodiment of the Guru himself, "Where there are Panj Pyare, there am I. When the Five meet, they are the holiest of the holy." These "saint soldiers" were to dedicate their lives to the service of others and the pursuit of justice for people of all faiths. The Guru also said whenever and wherever the five baptized or Amritdhari Sikhs comes together, the Guru would be present. All those who receive Amrit from five baptized Sikhs will be infused with the spirit of courage and strength to sacrifice. Thus with these principles, Guru Gobind established Panth Khalsa, the Order of the Pure Ones. "Social Significance of Baisakhi Day" Apart from fighting the political tyranny, Guru Gobind also sought to eliminate social discriminations in the name of caste with the establishment of Khalsa Panth. The Panj Piyaras set by the Guru amalgamated people of low and high caste into one as it consisted of people of different strata of the society. To further do away with the system of caste discrimination and to give to all Sikhs an opportunity to live lives of courage, sacrifice, and equality, the Guru gave the surname of Singh (Lion) to every Sikh and also took the name for himself. From Guru Gobind Rai, he became Guru Gobind Singh. He also pronounced that all Sikh women embody royalty, and gave them the surname Kaur (Princess).



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Baisakhi, is a significant cultural and religious festival celebrated primarily by the Sikh community



Visakhi, also spelled as Vaisakhi or Baisakhi, is a significant cultural and religious festival celebrated primarily by the Sikh community. It holds great importance in Sikhism as it marks the creation of the Khalsa Panth, the Sikh community's collective identity. Visakhi is celebrated with much enthusiasm and fervor, not only by Sikhs but also by people from various other communities, especially in the Indian subcontinent.

History and Significance:

Creation of Khalsa: Visakhi commemorates the day in 1699 when Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, established the Khalsa Panth. He initiated the first five members of the Khalsa, known as the Panj Pyare or the "Five Beloved Ones," who then initiated him, thus creating a community of baptized Sikhs. **Agricultural Importance:** For many communities in the Indian subcontinent, Visakhi also marks the harvest festival. It signifies the culmination of the harvesting season and the beginning of the new agricultural year.

Social Harmony: Visakhi is not only about religious significance but also about promoting social harmony and community spirit. It is a time when people come together, irrespective of their caste, creed, or religion, to celebrate and share joy.

Traditions and Celebrations:

Religious Observances: Sikhs typically begin the day with special prayers at Gurdwaras (Sikh temples). The holy book, Guru Granth Sahib, is ceremonially bathed and carried in processions.

Nagar Kirtan: A Nagar Kirtan, which is a religious procession led by the Panj Pyare, is held in various cities and towns. This procession involves singing hymns, martial arts displays, and the distribution of food and sweets.

Community Service: Many Sikhs engage in community service activities such as volunteering at local food banks, organizing free medical camps, and serving meals to the less fortunate.

Cultural Performances: Colorful cultural performances, including traditional folk dances, music, and dramas, are organized to celebrate the spirit of Visakhi.

Fairs and Markets: Visakhi fairs are organized in many places, offering a wide array of goods, including handicrafts, clothes, and food items. These fairs often feature entertainment activities and rides for children. **Free Food (Langar):** One of the central aspects of Visakhi celebrations is the Langar, where free meals are served to everyone, regardless of their background. This tradition symbolizes equality and sharing.

Conclusion: Visakhi is a festival that embodies the spirit of unity, equality, and community service. It serves as a reminder of the principles of Sikhism, including selfless service, social justice, and devotion to the Creator. Beyond its religious significance, Visakhi is a time for people to come together, celebrate diversity, and reaffirm their commitment to peace and harmony.

Anandpur sahib

Anandpur Sahib holds particular significance during the celebration of Visakhi, also known as Vaisakhi or Baisakhi, among Sikhs. Visakhi marks the founding of the Khalsa Panth (the community of initiated Sikhs) by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, on April 13, 1699.

Anandpur Sahib was the site where Guru Gobind Singh initiated the first batch of Khalsa during a historic gathering on the occasion of Visakhi. The Guru called upon Sikhs to gather at Anandpur Sahib without informing them of the purpose of the meeting. When thousands of Sikhs assembled, Guru Gobind Singh emerged from a tent carrying a sword and asked for a volunteer who was willing to sacrifice their head. After a dramatic demonstration of commitment by the willing volunteer, the Guru initiated the first five Khalsa members, known as the Panj Pyare (the Five Beloved Ones), and then requested them to initiate him as well. This event marked the formal establishment of the Khalsa identity and initiated a new era in Sikh history.

Today, Anandpur Sahib commemorates this historic event during Visakhi with grand celebrations, attracting Sikhs and visitors from around the world. Devotees gather at Gurdwaras in Anandpur Sahib and participate in special prayers, kirtan (devotional singing), processions, and community meals known as langar. The festivities often include Nagar kirtan, a street procession where Sikhs march through the city, singing hymns and distributing food and sweets to the public. The celebration of Visakhi at Anandpur Sahib is a joyous and spiritually uplifting occasion, allowing Sikhs to reconnect with their religious heritage and reaffirm their commitment to the values of the Khalsa. It is a time of reflection, gratitude, and communal unity, symbolizing the essence of Sikhism.

April 13th holds significant importance in Sikhism

April 13th holds significant importance in Sikhism as it marks the festival of Visakhi (also spelled Vaisakhi or Baisakhi). Visakhi commemorates the formation of the Khalsa Panth (the community of initiated Sikhs) by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, in 1699. On April 13, 1699, Guru Gobind



Singh called upon Sikhs to gather at Anandpur Sahib without revealing the purpose of the meeting. Upon the assembly of thousands of Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh emerged from a tent car-

rying a sword and asked for a volunteer who was willing to sacrifice their head.

After a dramatic demonstration of commitment by the willing volunteer, the Guru initiated the first batch of Khalsa members, known as the Panj Pyare (the Five Beloved Ones), by administering

Amrit (nectar) and giving them the five Ks (Kesh - uncut hair, Kangha - a wooden comb, Kara - a steel bracelet, Kachera - cotton undergarments, and Kirpan - a sword) as symbols of Sikh

identity. This event marks the formal establishment of the Khalsa and is celebrated with great fervor by Sikhs worldwide. On April 13th each year, Sikhs commemorate the founding of the Khalsa by participating in prayers, kirtan (devotional singing), processions, and community meals known as langar. Nagar kirtan, a street procession, is a common feature where Sikhs march through the streets singing hymns and distributing food and sweets. April 13th is a day of joy, reflection, and communal unity for Sikhs, symbolizing the birth of the Khalsa and the reaffirmation of their commitment to Sikh principles and values.

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Happy Baisakhi: History and significance of this harvest festival

Baisakhi, also known as Baisakhi marks the Sikh New Year and is a spring harvest festival celebrated in Punjab and other parts of North India.



Baisakhi, also known as Vaisakhi marks the Sikh New Year and is a spring harvest festival celebrated in Punjab and other parts of North India. Baisakhi falls on 13 April this year and it commemorates the formation of the Khalsa Panth, under the leadership of Guru Gobind Singh Ji in the year 1699. Hindus celebrate the descent of Goddess Ganga on Earth on this day. In her honour, devotees gather for a holy dip along the banks of the river Ganga. In Punjab, Baisakhi marks the harvest of the rabi crops and farmers pay their tribute by thanking God for an abundant harvest, which is a symbol of prosperity. On Baisakhi, the Khalsa Sikh order was founded after which the Guru Teg Bahadur was persecuted and beheaded by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb when he refused to be converted to Islam. Following these events, in the year 1699, the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji laid the foundation of Panth Khalsa, by baptizing Sikh warriors to defend religious freedom. This festival is celebrated across Punjab and parts of North India. A number of processions called Nagar Kirtan led by five Khalsas, dressed as Panj Pyaare passes across the streets in the wee hours of the morning. Devotees visit Gurudwaras to offer special prayers and a number of fairs are organised where festivities are observed with Bhangra and Gidda performances, folk songs, amusement rides and good food.

Vaisakhi, Khalsa Sirjana Diwas: Epitome Of Universal Brotherhood

Vaisakhi is a very important day for Sikhs and one of the most colourful occasions in the Sikh calendar. It occurs during mid-April every year (the Sangrand of vaisakh month as per the Nanakshahi calendar. Historically, Vaisakhi consents in Punjab with the first yearly harvesting of golden grain. The completion has been a joyous event and is a time for celebration. In 1699, it becomes a significant religious event for Sikhs due to the invocation of the Khalsa Panth. The Khalsa tradition commenced on Vaisakhi in 1699 when the tenth Guru of Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib laid down the foundation of the Khalsa Panth which is the order of the pure Ones, by Initiating Sikhs to become "Saint — Soldiers". This gave rise to the Vaisakhi or Baisakhi festival as a celebration of Khalsa Panth referred to as Khalsa Sirjana Divas or Khalsa Sajna Divas.

Khalsa mero roop hai khaas
Khalse maih hau karo nivaas
"Khalsa is my true form, within the Khalsa, I abide."

Historically, Baisakhi is associated with the formation of the Khalsa — a military order of Sikh warriors, by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of Sikhism, in 1699. On this day, Guru Gobind Singh organized a special ceremony called the Khalsa Initiation,

where he baptized his followers and formed the Khalsa Panth (community of initiated Sikhs). Khalsa in Punjabi means "the pure." It is the purified and evolved Sikh community created by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. Sikhism is a religion developed in the Punjabi region of India at the end of the 15th century. The Sikhs believe that one knowledgeable and loving spirit has embodied ten Gurus.

Baisakhi marks the first day of the month of Vaisakha in the Hindu calendar, and it always falls in mid-April, usually April 13 or 14 in the Gregorian calendar. The Hindu calendar is a lunisolar calendar, meaning it contains elements that are based on the moon cycles and others based on the sun. The date of Baisakhi depends on the sun, so the date doesn't move around as drastically as with the lunar festivals on April 13th every year, except for a few occasions on April 14th — once every 36 years.



This variation is due to the festival being observed as per the Indian solar calendar.

Vaisakhi is a joyous festival celebrated during mid-April on the Sangrand of Vaisakh month as per the Nanakshahi calendar which in turn is

derived from the name of a Nakshatra known as Vishakha. Sangrand is the time when the sun passes from one constellation of stars to the next. "Sangrand" is a term derived from the Sanskrit word "sankrant." The first part, "san" means "in a positive way." The second part, "krant" means "change." Hence, Sangrand is the day of moving forward to the next month.

On the day of Baisakhi, people wake up early morning and visit Gurudwaras (Sikh temples) for prayers

and participate in religious processions called Nagar Kirtan in the afternoon. The processions include singing hymns, chanting religious slogans, and showcasing traditional martial arts known as Gatka. The holy scripture of Sikhism, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, is also carried in a beautifully decorated palanquin (palaki) during the processions. After the religious ceremonies, people gather to celebrate with joy and enthusiasm. They engage in traditional folk dances, such as Bhangra and Giddha, which are performed to the beats of drums (dhol) and other traditional instruments. People dress up in vibrant traditional attire, and the entire atmosphere is filled with music, dance, and jubilation.

India is a land of diverse cultures, cuisines and festivals with hundreds of festivals celebrated across the country each year. However, spring harvest is an important time in the country with people in various parts of the country praying to the Almighty God for a better harvest in the coming year. The spring harvesting festival also coincides with the New Year in certain states and religions. Baisakhi is not only significant for religious reasons but it is also celebrated as a harvest festival in North India, particularly in the Punjab region.

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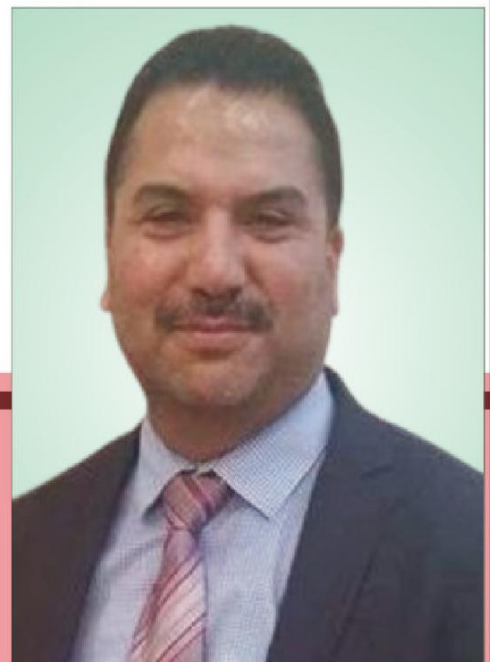
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History of Baisakhi

Baisakhi or Vaisakhi Festival is celebrated as the Sikh New Year and the founding of the Khalsa Panth. History of Baisakhi traces its origin from the Baisakhi Day celebrations of 1699 organized by the Tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh to form Khalsa - Brotherhood of Saint Soldiers to fight against tyranny and

among his fellow men. To fulfil his dream, Guru Gobind Singh called on the historic Baisakhi Day congregation of Sikhs at Keshgarh Sahib near Anandpur on March 30, 1699. When thousands of people assembled for Guru's blessing, Guru Gobind Singh came out of the tent carrying an unsheathed sword.



oppression.

Story of Baisakhi

The story of Baisakhi Festival began with the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru who was publicly beheaded by the Aurungzeb, the Mughal ruler. Aurungzeb wanted to spread Islam in India and Guru Teg Bahadur stood up for the rights of Hindus and Sikhs and the Mughals therefore saw him as a threat.

After the death of Guru Teg Bahadur, his son, Guru Gobind Singh became the next Guru of the Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh wished to instill

courage
and
strength
to
sacrifice

He gave a powerful speech to infuse courage amongst fellowmen. At the end of the speech he said that every great deed was preceded by equally great sacrifice and demanded that anyone prepared to give his life come forward. On the Guru's third call, a young man offered himself. The Guru took the man inside a tent and reappeared alone with a bloodied sword. Guru Gobind Singh asked for another volunteer. This was repeated another four times until a total of five Sikhs had gone into the tent with the Guru. Everyone present was worried and though that Guru Gobind Singh has killed five Sikhs. At this point Guru presented all the five men before the people. Every one present was surprised to see all five men alive and wearing turbans and saffron-coloured garments.

These five men were called Panj Piara or 'Beloved Five' by the Guru. The Guru blessed them with a Pahul ceremony. In an iron vessel, the Guru stirred with a sword called Khanda Sahib, the batasha that his wife, Mata Sundari Ji had put into water. The congregation recited verses from scriptures as the Guru performed the sacred ceremony. The water was now considered the sacred nectar of immortality called amrit. It was first given to the five volunteers, then drunk by the guru and later distributed amongst the crowd. With this ceremony, all those present, irrespective of caste or creed, became members of the Khalsa Pantha (the Order of the Pure Ones). The Guru regarded the Panch Piaras as the first members of the Khalsa and the embodiment of the Guru himself. With the constitution of the Panj Pyare the high and low castes were amalgamated

into one as among the original Panj Pyare, there was one Khatri, shopkeeper; one Jat, farmer; one Chhimba, calico printer; one Ghumar, water-carrier; and one Nai, a barber. The Guru gave the surname of Singh (Lion) to every Sikh and also took the name for himself. From Guru Gobind Rai he became Guru Gobind Singh. This was seen as a great step in national integration because society at that time was divided on the basis of religion, caste and social status.

G u r u

Gobind Singh also bestowed on Khalsa, the unique Sikh identity. He directed Sikhs to wear five K's: Kesh or long hair, Kangha or comb, Kripan or dagger, Kachha or shorts and a Kara or bracelet. Guru Gobind Singh also discontinued the tradition of Gurus and asked all Sikhs to accept the Grantha Sahib as their eternal guide. He urged them to come to him with their hair and beard unshorn to get baptized by the sword.



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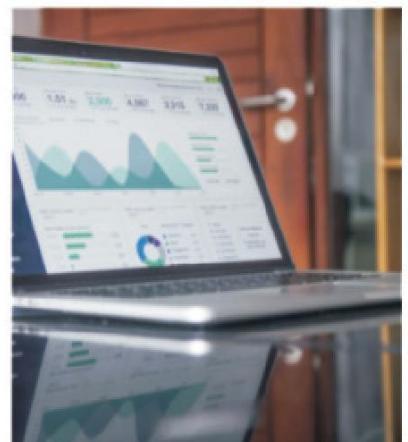
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EQUIPMENT FINANCING

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