

1. Guru Angad

Guru Angad was the second Guru. He was chosen by Guru Nanak himself. Guru Nanak had set a test to see who should be the next Guru by dropping a cup into a muddy ditch and asking his two sons to get it for him. Both of his sons refused as felt this was a job for a servant and not the son of a Guru. Angad jumped down into the ditch and fetched the cup without being asked.

Guru Angad is remembered as being the Guru who worked out Gurmukhi – the alphabet in which all Sikh scriptures are written (before there was no agreed written language for the language they spoke). Angad felt the need to be able to write down Nanak's teachings rather than relying on memory. He also created hymns to add to Nanak's teachings. Angad also started to teach young people, encouraging them to learn Gurmukhi in order to allow Sikhism to continue.

2. Guru Amar Das

Guru Angad was only 48 when he died, he was a distant relative to Guru Amar Das, who continued spreading the work of Sikhism.

Amar Das stressed the importance of women preachers, and he was the first Guru to choose men and women to go out and preach to other people about the new faith.

Amar Das stressed how important it was that everyone should be able to eat together. On one occasion, the Emperor came to see him and the Guru insisted that he ate with everyone else. This became known as langar – where all eat a free meal together regardless of status. This is still served in Gurdwaras today.

3. Guru Ram Das

Guru Ram Das was Guru Amar Das' son in law. He is remembered for writing the hymns which Sikhs use at weddings. Before this Sikhs had to go through a Hindu wedding ceremony. Ram Das was also responsible for the buildings which became the Sikh city of Amritsar, in the Punjab.

4. Guru Arjan

Guru Arjan was Ram Das' son. He continued the building at Amritsar which his father had begun, and built a beautiful Gurdwara in the middle of an artificial lake there known as the golden temple, the most important building in the Sikh religion.

During his time, Sikhs enjoyed good relations with the rulers of the country. However, in 1605 the Emperor of India died, and the new Emperor accused Guru Arjan of helping a rival for the throne. He was arrested and tortured to death in 1606.

5. Guru Har Gobind

Guru Har Gobind became Guru when his father was killed. He realised that the Sikhs needed to form an army if they were going to survive they had to be able to defend themselves with force if it became necessary. He lived like a soldier and worked hard to make sure that many Sikhs became excellent fighters. When he died, he anointed his grandson as the next Guru.

6. Guru Har Rai

Guru Har Rai worked to make the religion of Sikhism stronger. During his time, Sikhism spread more widely in northern India. He tried to make peace in the wars between Sikhs and Muslims.

7. Guru Har Krishan

Guru Har Krishan was only five years old when he became Guru and he died when he was only eight. He used to care for people with smallpox disease before he caught the disease and died.

8. Guru Tegh Bahadur

Guru Tegh Bahadur was the son of Guru Har Gobind. Whilst he was Guru, the Sikhs were being persecuted again. At the time Islamic rulers were persecuting Sikhs and Hindus' wanting them to become Muslim. The Hindu leaders went to Guru Tegh Bahadur for advice as new he was a holy man. He agreed to speak to the Emperor on behalf of Hindus and encouraged Sikhs and Hindus to not give up their faith. The Guru was arrested. He was offered all sorts of rewards to change his religion, but he would not accept any of them. He was even made to watch while three of his followers were tortured to death, but he persisted it was important for everyone to be able to choose their faith. Realising they could not change him, they beheaded him. Sikhs remember this Guru for his pride and bravery, being willing to sacrifice his life for his beliefs.

9. Guru Gobind Singh

Guru Gobind Singh became the tenth Guru when he was only 9 years old. He began the Khalsa community, the 'brotherhood' of Sikhs who are full members of the religion. This community were ready to fight to defend their faith from the Emperor. Once initiated, Sikhs wear the five Ks. This initiation ceremony into the Khalsa still exists today.

Just before he died the Guru said that he was not going to choose a new human Guru as the other Gurus had done. He said that in future the Guru would be the Sikh holy book. This contained the teachings of the Gurus, and it would be the Sikhs' only teacher. Since that time, it has been called the Guru Granth Sahib.