

Vaisakhi



What is Vaisakhi?

Vaisakhi or Baisakhi is a Sikh festival. It celebrates the harvest, the Sikh New Year and the founding of the Sikh community, known as the Khalsa. It is celebrated on the 13th or 14th April each year.



The Story of Vaisakhi

Vaisakhi was a harvest festival that had been celebrated for many years in the Punjab region of India. In 1699, Sikhs from all over the Punjab gathered together to celebrate the harvest.



The Story of Vaisakhi

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, chose this occasion to establish the Khalsa, meaning 'pure ones'. The Guru called upon Sikhs to uphold their faith. He came out of a tent carrying a sword and asked anyone who was prepared to give his life for his religion to come forward.



The Story of Vaisakhi

One Sikh came forward and followed the Guru into his tent. The Guru came back out alone, with his word covered in blood, and asked for another volunteer.



The Story of Vaisakhi

This continued until a total of five men had gone into the tent. Finally, the Guru emerged from the tent with all five Sikhs, who were dressed in yellow and were wearing turbans. Guru Gobind Singh called these 5 Sikhs the Panj Pyare (the Five Beloved Ones).



The Story of Vaisakhi

Guru Gobind Singh baptised the Panj Pyare into the Khalsa community, in a ceremony called Pahul and prepared amrit – holy water meaning nectar – in a bowl using a steel sword.



The Story of Vaisakhi

His wife, Mara Sundri, added patashas (sugar crystals) to the amrit. After saying prayers, Guru Gobind Singh sprinkled the amrit on each of the Panj Pyare. Then, he knelt in front of the Five and asked them to baptise him.



The Story of Vaisakhi

- After his baptism, he said, "Where there are Panj Pyare, there am I, when the Five meet, they are the holiest of holy."
- The Panj Pyare were the first members of the Sikh community called the Khalsa.
- Guru Gobind Singh gave the Khalsa a unique identity with 5 special symbols, known as the 5Ks.



The Story of Vaisakhi

Khalsa men take the surname Singh which means 'lion'. This is a reminder to be courageous. Women take the surname Kaur which means 'Princess' and this is a sign of dignity.

The names of the five Panj Pyare were:

1. **Bhai Daya Singh** – first of the Panj Pyare and represented kindness.
2. **Bhai Dharam Singh** - second of the Panj Pyare and represented justice and righteousness.
3. **Bhai Mukham Singh** – third of the Panj Pyare and represented organisation.
4. **Bhai Hummat Singh** – fourth of the Panj Pyare and represented courage.
5. **Bhai Sahib Singh** – fifth of the Panj Pyare and represented majesty.

Through the distinct Khalsa identity, Guru Gobind Singh gave all Sikhs the chance to live with courage, sacrifice and equality.

How is Vaisakhi Celebrated?

People wear special, colourful clothes.



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How is Vaisakhi Celebrated?

Services are held at Gurdwaras, the Sikh place of worship.



How is Vaisakhi Celebrated?

Sikhs have the opportunity to be blessed with the amrit. Drinking amrit shows that they are accepting that all people are equal, to help those in need and those who are badly treated by others.



How is Vaisakhi Celebrated?

There are parades through the streets.
There is also music, singing and dancing.

