

# Guru Nanak and the Start of Sikhism





## Learning About Religions

The first Guru of Sikhism was called Nanak. He was born in 1469 in a village in northern India called Talwandi.

Nanak's parents were Hindus. When he grew up, he worked with Muslims. Their beliefs were very different from the beliefs of Hindus. Nanak enjoyed talking to people about their beliefs. He learned a lot about the two religions.





## Nanak's Vision



One morning when he was about 30 years old, Nanak went to bathe in the river as usual. Then he disappeared. People searched for him for 30 days but could not find him. Everyone thought he must have drowned. Then he returned, but he did not speak for a whole day. The first thing he said was, 'There is neither Hindu nor Muslim, only God's path. I shall follow God's path.'



Nanak told the people that whilst he was away he had been taken to see God, and he had been blessed. He had had a vision in which he had been shown that it is not the religion that people follow that is important, it is the way people live which really matters, and this comes from knowing God.

From this time on, Nanak was known as Guru Nanak.



For the next 20 years, Guru Nanak travelled. He made long journeys, going to Varanasi, the holy city of the Hindus, and to many other places in India.

He went to Arabia and the Muslim holy city of Mekkah. Wherever he went, Guru Nanak taught people. His message was that the way to find God was in the way you live and what you believe, not by following the outward practices of a religion without being sincere.



At last, Guru Nanak settled in a village in northern India. A group of people who wanted to follow his teachings came to live nearby. They became the first Sikhs, people who came to learn from the Guru.

One man who came to join was called Lehna. He became one of Guru Nanak's closest followers. Guru Nanak chose Lehna to be the next Guru. He gave him a new name, Angad, which means 'part of me.' Guru Angad was to carry on the work which Guru Nanak had begun.