

Teaching Sikhism with the Theatre of Learning

Active, Experiential and Multisensory approaches to teaching RE.

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Winner of the Shap Award 2004 for making an outstanding contribution to the teaching of world religions.

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Primary trainees on a two day course at UEA on experiential techniques for teaching each tradition prepare to re enact a wedding

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Sikhism

Introduction:

The files on Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism were originally published as one book. These modern updates have been published separately but share the same introduction which introduces you to the learning style and contains a brief overview of the history of religion. If you already have one of the others in this series skip straight to the lesson recipes!

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Introduction to the revised edition.

This book is based on the drafts of the resource files submitted to SfE(now Tribal) and published between 2003 and 2007. The drafts have not been professionally edited for publication as those were, so I apologise for any typos that remain.

I have revised and updated each of them to reflect that the pattern and style of classroom work has moved on considerably.

In the beginning

I began to change my approach gradually, working in a multisensory, active and experiential way in a process of experimentation from about 1996, responding, as many of you know, to an awful set of examination results. These were the product, the class told me, of being so bored that they could not be bothered to revise. “This is nothing to do with us or anything that we know!” young Lizzie famously responded, banging her fist on the desk. I was very fortunate that I began this process before the more formulaic prescription of today’s classroom but having said that **I wish I knew then, what you know now about embedding learning.**

In the early days, working with my former PGCE student and subsequent inspirational colleague, Julie Woodward, I in a sense threw everything out and started again – the furniture, the books ,the worksheets, in my attempt to find

other routes to the transmission of information that pupils had to know but did not want to.

The first re enactments

I remember the first time we held a **Hindu wedding** with our disaffected and challenging year nine classes. We put them both, all sixty of them, in my huge classroom, which had been turned into a temple. We had a washing line across the room which we draped with sheets. We put boys on one side girls on the other. We got the bride and groom dressed, we got as many girls into saris as we could, gave out tambourines and played Bhajans on the CD player while we re enacted what happened, with me in role as “priest”, explaining what was happening and why. We finished with sharing ginger cake. It was chaotic noisy and full of excitement as we got ready, then silent as the bride entered. We had never done anything like this before. Big dead periods in the lesson, where learning was not happening, because we were getting dressed and organising the practicalities.

The pupils had not been prepared so that they could learn as much as possible from that re enactment and there was no plenary. What was that? It was an experiment. The children knew that and were keen for us to continue.

The following week we put each class in separate classrooms round the school with desks, pens and paper and asked them to describe what happened.

There was to be no recap and no help. The results were astonishing. They got to work with a will and remembered lots. It was a mixed ability class and everyone wrote. There were accounts of what Julie and I did and said, It was all there, relevant or not!. They remembered it a week later in considerable detail because they saw it and experienced it in a multi sensory way – what had they understood? very little!!! but we were off!. We had engagement – that was so wonderful in itself! challenging behaviour and negative reactions to RE reduced considerably. When levels and the literacy strategy appeared we embraced them as useful tools but **there is now so very much more you can get out of lessons like these!**

This old photograph below from May 2000 is from the very early days, possibly not the first one but soon after, as we began to bring what was working so well at GCSE down into key stage three,



“Experiential learning is not for me, it is too pink and fluffy”

I can see why some people might think this, sometimes trainees will come at the end of a day with me and confess that is what they thought before they took part and saw for themselves how it can be used for learning - or not !

Special circles

I will never forget the first time I tried a **special** circle in a GCSE class, where the topic - The Torah, was introduced and brought alive by the pupils' sharing of their most precious object in the circle and how they felt about them . RE came alive for them, they bonded as a group, sharing their stories as

we held special circles throughout the two year course. In this way we related their own special books, places, journeys and people to the Holy Books, places of worship, pilgrimage, and founders from ways of life and world views that were so very different from their own . **They became relevant to their own lives because of the bridge to understanding built through empathy, through looking at the feelings, that believers might have about things which are of great importance and significance to them but mean nothing to those outside - the children in my classroom.**

I discovered something very interesting about this simple but highly effective introduction to a topic after I retired. As many of you know I offer day courses and residential events which enable us to look at traditions in depth .on these I discovered what happened when I tried them with teachers.

I sometimes described special circles, but did not actually hold them with teachers as they did not seem necessary. The description was I thought self evident. What I had not realised was that the *experience* was so key. Of course this aspect is difficult to describe so actually taking part is important in assessing its effectiveness. Finally in a residential in 2014, with more time at my disposal I did hold one.

I invited each person in advance to bring a **special photograph** to share in the circle. **We were using it as way into icons and images.** We had time to listen to each other and also I wanted to help them bond as they were spending 24 hours together. I was worried that they might feel this was a waste of time - hardly needing a demonstration, or appropriate in today's classroom where every moment has to be about learning. I was worried that I would think that too when we tried it!

I was very surprised by how much they were looking forward to it and how significant they found the *experience* of sharing, how much thought they had put into what they would bring and how much it meant to them to be able to share it and experience the response.

A number of teachers and trainees come regularly to the courses, so realising that experiencing the special circle was a powerful tool for them to become aware of important it is how to build their groups and nurture relationships as

well as begin to make RE relevant to the lives of the children, I did others. They were particularly useful in introducing new members to the group .

I was struck by how often “Special book” led them to reflect on and share memories from long ago that influenced how they became RE Teachers. They looked forward to them and incorporated them into their teaching.

One trainee described her sixth form group as being shy and reluctant to discuss on front of one another. She somehow managed to create a special circle as an introduction to Freud. That evening she had a phone call from a student’s mother thanking her for enabling her son to express his feelings to the group with which he now felt much more comfortable . The dynamics of the group changed. Discussions ensued!

What I hoped that teachers would see is how important a special circle is in *facilitating* learning.

What I would argue is that the time spent on listening to class members experiences ie *not learning specific testable information about the Torah , images etc* (although it is very important that links are made at the beginning and the end) will make the following hours on the specific subject material much richer and more meaningful. The course as a whole will be more productive. .

If this were a PowerPoint and I could represent it visually I would put up a list of lesson topics from a GCSE syllabus . I would represent them in a colour, say blue, and I would invite you to imagine the depth of colour, according to how engaging, meaningful accessible and relevant you thought each of them were.

Think of your reaction when you first see an examination spec. Some topics are immediately engaging and would be deep blue. Some would be paler. I hear trainees everywhere despairing about how interesting university is and then they get into school and feel they are having to drill the children in things they do not want to know.

My argument is that special circles and other experiential injections enable the colour to become richer for all of them. It is precisely where you colour them lightly that you need the experience to enable the richness of colour/ meaning to emerge. That was my challenge, that was what set me off on the journey. You will see this particularly in lessons across the resources on the Sermon on the Mount, the Reformation, Church leaders, Halakah and Haggadah, the work of charities, ideas about God.

These techniques, as facilitators to learning in a broader sense, should not be under rated. **I talk constantly of education being a holistic process, working best when emotion and imagination are used as well as reason. *but they should also be used sparingly*** .The atmosphere created by them and the response of needy children enjoying being appreciated, valued and listened to as individuals rather than feeling like learning machines (and the response of teachers feeling like factory foremen) is seductive . Never forget their purpose, however for learning and academic progress.

To return to our colour image. You have a small amount of time - say fifteen minutes to teach your new found subject knowledge in an interesting and meaningful way. A few minutes spent on a religion neutral exercise paralleling the ritual or ceremony you wish to teach can turn several hours of future lessons a deeper colour.

So At the end of a lesson like that would it have made the evidence of progress clearer? I doubt you could even begin to measure it, but what it did do was utterly transform the lessons that followed, especially when we went on to build a synagogue in the classroom, turning an old cupboard into an Ark and we re-enacted Orthodox and Reform Synagogue services , explored the role of women and re enacted rites of passage.

I remember during our staffing crisis in 2001 – a national issue. I taught all the RE classes in the school on a three week rotation commuting between two sites with my boxes of artefacts. On one occasion I put sixty children into my room where we re enacted a Jewish wedding. The children were stunned by the Huppah decorated with scarlet and gold ribbons and Ivy , the music, the atmosphere.

For six months I taught an experiential lesson every three weeks to year seven and eight children I hardly had time to meet so that the supply teachers that followed could base their work on (in those circumstances) the inescapable worksheets that followed and I could somehow hold on to the value of RE in the minds of the children .

It was some years later that I discovered that even then it had an impact as pupils opted later for GCSE, based on the memory of those lessons.

One described how our Passover meal in a crumbling hut on one of those hectic commutes when she was in year eight had kindled her desire to teach and to teach RE. She referred to it often when we finally met in my A level class for which she gained an A . She went on to gain a first class degree in Religion at Bristol and has become an outstanding teacher of RE and a close friend.

What was happening then in those early days was engagement. It was absolutely transformational and happened overnight. These challenging disaffected children in a school placed in special measures in 2003 when the RE department was given outstanding for behaviour and relationships,(but coming after our year of chaos and no teachers, inadequate for achievement!)

Looking back I could have mined those experiences so much more in terms of critical thinking and embedding the learning. Had I known then what **you** know today.

My mantra everywhere I go now is that

- **Experiential learning is the gateway, not the destination.**
- **It is the route to better memory, understanding and evaluation and therefore to a better written outcome.**
- **However, it is what you do *after* the experience that matters.**

It is a learning journey that six years into retirement I am still on . It is why Theatre of Learning is still relevant because the experiential injections used at the right time in your scheme of work enable progress to a considerable degree but **if you do not exploit that experience through probing and questioning and capture that thinking on paper and then re visit and reflect on that learning, continuing to build understanding and make links**

throughout their time with you then you will have had an experience but it will not be learning and it will not be RE.

These lessons then, began to emerge, before the advent of the smart board, PowerPoint and the first two before even the literacy strategy. The three part lesson was in its infancy, lessons were far more teacher led and less interactive. Learning was not pupil led to any great degree. Today, there is now a greater emphasis on questioning, checking learning, peer assessment and showing evidence of progress. I have borne these things in mind as I have updated the work.

I have retained the level descriptors I used then in order to be able to communicate meaningfully. You will of course be able to adapt the literacy work to the needs of your own school.

What I think the literacy work does, as it stands, is give you an idea about the level of differentiated questions you can set, moving through description, which has to exist in even the most complex academic text. There have to be facts in any piece of critical thinking, right through to demanding topics, perhaps more commonly found at A level. I set this A level question for year nine “Brahman, Atman are they the same or different?”. The original file contained a disc with their essays as illustrations of how deeply they could think and respond with the degree of motivation and engagement experiential approaches had given them.

Reference to scripture needs is made, as it does in this essay title. I cannot emphasise how important I think this is.

Enable your pupils to encounter the scriptures of the tradition you are discovering – go beyond description of what people in a tradition do in all its diversity and get back to the scripture itself. **Get them comfortable with the principles of authority and interpretation.** Then you will have equipped them with the skills to make sense of all this diversity and be able to see extremism for what it is and you will be eroding the roots of prejudice and enabling the young people you meet to see the incredible complexity of modern life and the challenges of living together.

If through our exam syllabuses we perpetuate the acquisition of information we fail to use the opportunity they present to also develop positive attitudes to themselves and others. Using experiential techniques in short, sharp bursts as injections of spirituality, emotional intelligence, empathy and gateways to understanding the complexity and diversity of religion enables us to combine both challenge and personal growth .For me education is about people making, producing good Citizens and if they choose to be parents . Rather than having to make a choice between good examination results and personal growth , these techniques enable you to do both and I would argue that your results will improve because of both the **motivation** – which should never be underestimated - many of you know how profoundly helpful I think Maslow is - and the deeper understanding it generates. If they don't want to learn – believe me they wont ! and no amount of **telling** them it is important will work, enabling them to discover it through experience will .

2a:Introduction adapted From the original publication

How this book helps the non specialist, trainee or NQT

If you are a non specialist, or a trainee or coming to a particular tradition for the first time you will find this file very helpful because it is written especially with you in mind. I am a specialist, but I graduated a long time ago, when the teaching of world religions was in its infancy. I came to these traditions quite fresh and like many teachers, began with a simple class text book from which to gain an over view and to learn basic facts. I was able to fit this new knowledge into a framework for studying religion that I already had..Nonetheless, it was sometimes hard to get a sense of the tradition as a whole and certainly of its spirituality. Information on its own does not do that .I hope that this resource file does.

I have assumed no previous knowledge in any part of the book. I have concentrated on helping you get a sense of what the tradition is about rather than providing you with lots of information that you will find in any textbook so in that sense it is not comprehensive. I have written the resource that I would have liked to have thirty years ago when I started teaching and knew absolutely nothing of what is in these pages.

The fact that I had an overview of the history of religions was a great help and it enabled me to put the development of each tradition into context. This file will give you that .

It was a still a struggle, though, to develop lessons which were more than just the relaying of information. The lesson recipes here will enable you to do that, either followed as they are set out here, or better still, adapted to your own teaching style and circumstances.

It would be helpful if you are able to read the first resource file **Making RE make sense**. There you will be able to read about how to teach using the techniques of the Theatre of learning. You will also be able to see photographs in full colour of the sets I create in my classroom in order to teach these lessons. You may not have a specialist room and you may also have to teach from a variety of rooms used by others. These lesson recipes will show you how to create a multi sensory lesson out of a box, while on the move.

If you are a non specialist you may not have time to do very much back ground reading and you need something brief and clear to give you an overview of what the traditions are about. What you also need is something to give you ideas about t

Using the lessons in this resource to support the literacy strategy

Since I began this project sixteen years ago the **literacy strategy** has come on board and evolved considerably. Distinctive features of this are the **three part lesson** and the importance of hitting as many different **teaching and learning styles** in a lesson as we can. Now we add to this by making sure that we can show progress, that pupils know where they are in their learning and what they need to do to get better. These lessons aim to do that.

Not only are the lessons **multi sensory** and **experiential**, they reinforce learning in many different ways. The ideal model to help a mixed ability class full of individuals is to create a learning experience with a **starter** and a **plenary** in which the meat of the lesson states the **aim** and **delivers the material to be learned in a variety of ways**.

The purpose of a starter is to engage pupils from the moment they enter the room. Without one, there is a dead period while the pupils drift in. The lesson cannot begin until everyone has arrived, equipment is distributed and the register taken.

My lessons often had no starter – because they had no dead beginning. In a full on experiential lesson, pupils enter an atmosphere created by music and a set . They, and I, are in role from the beginning. In a lesson where that is not the case, they might find a **cloze procedure** from the previous lesson on the board and will jot down the gaps in the back of their books.(I have retained this out of date technique , rather than simply deleting them because they are used not just for filling in gaps but as scaffolds for thought . They are also useful for revision ..) They may have some fresh vocabulary to write down or be tested on vocabulary already learned. There may be some **sentence stems** to complete. They may have a **matching exercise** set out on their chairs, a column of words or pictures that needs to be matched to the correct word phrase or picture on the opposite side. They take a moment to do, but reinforce what is being learned in the active lessons. I quickly learned the error of posing a philosophical question as a starter – the lesson never began!

I do not always state the aim of the lesson – if it is a puzzle for the pupils to solve, then stating the purpose would make it impossible to fulfil that purpose ! Do not be afraid to break the rules, as long as you have stated in your lesson plan *why* you are deviating from the three part lesson, then you will not have a problem. It shows that you thought about it, rather than just left it out.

Lesson planning is vital. After more than thirty years of teaching full time my planning is more and more complex. The process of planning is how you work out what you are going to teach and why and how you are going to get there. As a Professional Tutor and Advanced skills teacher, involved in coaching and mentoring, and now supporting teachers through my PGCE presentations and e mail support I know that many teachers do not know *why* they teach the lessons that they do. They do it because the topic is on the syllabus. No wonder the lesson is dull. This file tells you why a topic is important, how it helps the pupils learn , how it leads on from the previous topic and how it will build a foundation for the next topic.

The introduction to each lesson also tells you how the lesson will develop the pupil's own spirituality.

Using the lessons in this file to develop emotional literacy

The work that is emerging now on **emotional literacy** or **emotional intelligence** is important .The importance of educating young people in a **holistic** way is being recognised as significant factor in enabling them to learn. People are on the whole

more comfortable with talking about emotion rather than spirituality, with its association with religious belief. The lessons in this resource address the pupils' spirituality and in so doing emotional intelligence is developed and emotional literacy is used.

Work on developing emotionally literate schools has shown that the poor behaviour of children in school can arise simply from being bored and lack of variety and activity. Our children are used to absorbing information at fantastic speeds as any music video, TV advertisement or play station game will show you. Sitting behind a desk taking in information that appears to have no relevance to their lives, especially if it is copied, or paraphrased from some other source, is mind numbing for many. Learning for many children is a deadly chore, which the well behaved tolerate and accept as a necessary path to a successful future.

How the lessons in this file will help new teachers How the lessons in this file will help new teachers understand the learning process

We can learn an awful lot about how children like to learn by *listening* to them. As you will know if you read the beginning of my journey in the first chapter of **Making RE Make Sense** . I learned the hard way, from a group of GCSE pupils where over half refused to take exam because they were so bored. It took me a long time to find a way forward . These resource files are the result of that journey, the last two reflect further progress since the first.

These files will also help you to unpack the learning process. Not only will they provide you with the subject knowledge and the reason why a topic is being taught in a particular way, it will also tell you how a particular activity, done in that way at that point in the lesson will help the children learn. If you are a trainee or a non specialist ,a good textbook will give you the *what* of what you need to teach. This file will also give you the *how* and the *why* .

Plenaries are vital: I have always done them .I called them a **de brief** . This is the only way to be sure that everyone has learned. A skilful well planned de brief or plenary will ensure that everyone takes part with games like **true/ false .Stand up** if you think..... all stand **sit down** if you think.... **Plenaries can reinforce literacy**, giving everyone the opportunity to read something and perhaps answer a question about it . Using **flash cards** at the end is helpful. Always read the word you are holding up aloud so that every child knows what it is and then ask some questions about the word . Plan to **ask some questions at different levels** . Write them on coloured cards and give each child a chance to pick a level. Preserve self esteem by saying that you will try asking a question above their target level

If you plan the way you deliver these lessons, literacy will never be a barrier to learning and the lessons themselves will enable and motivate every pupil to write more successfully than from a lesson delivered from a worksheet or textbook alone.

Assessment for learning

All the way through various activities are assessing and reinforcing the learning and telling you how and why they work

I hope that if you are a **specialist** that you will bear with me in this and turn instead to the lesson recipes themselves for ideas and inspiration to deliver the subject knowledge you know so well, in a fresh and meaningful way to make RE make sense and develop the spirituality of your pupils. I hope also that you will find the vocabulary and differentiated levelled written tasks save you a lot of work. They are all tried and tested and what I use with my own pupils. Examples of some of their work can be found at the end of some of the chapters.

I teach in a large comprehensive school in southern England with a considerable number of challenging pupils who may also struggle with literacy and with managing their emotions and behaviour. These lessons and the tasks which follow have been honed with their input and experience.

If you have trainees and non specialists in the department I hope that these files will help you with your training and mentoring of them, save you time and set them off preparing, interesting, engaging and effective lessons from the word go.

How to use the resource file

It is very important that you use this book with whatever textbook you normally use. These lesson recipes describe a *process* not content. I will ensure you have all the subject knowledge you need to be able to deliver an interesting and affecting lesson but when your pupils tackle the written work that follows they will need to read and research the content more fully using books and the internet.

The **written work** is designed to give you a basic framework which you can adapt to your own lessons. Each lesson or topic is followed by a **vocabulary list** from which you can make **flash cards**. (**Making RE Make sense** gives you ideas for a variety of ways you can use these). There is a **cloze procedure /writing frame** enabling your pupils to write from level four to level six. Your very least able pupils may only manage to complete the blank spaces in the cloze passages. Each one has opportunities built into it where pupils can write in their own words up to level six. Some cloze passage/ writing frames offer the opportunity to build in **research** and write up to level eight.

Some tasks invite pupils to write a story using their **imagination**. The structure provided with the story guides them to fulfil the learning objectives and write up to level eight. Examples of the outcome from these tasks are included at the end of some chapters so that you can see what the lessons and the structured tasks inspire and enable pupils to do in my school, where 40% of the pupils have special needs and a significant number have challenging behaviour.

Most chapters also have a **levelled essay** enabling pupils to write up to level seven or eight. Having this framework here to adapt should save you a lot of time. All you have to do is to adapt the wording to fit the requirements of your own particular syllabus.

All the tasks are designed to fit a simple **level description** to enable both your pupils and yourself to carry them in your head so that they are a working classroom tool. Here it is.

Level Descriptors

- **Level Three: Facts**
- **Level four : Why, because**
- **Level five: the effect of religion on a person, family or community**
- **Level six: The variety of religious belief within a tradition.**
- **Level seven: Critical analysis**
- **Level Eight : Historical development and comparison between traditions.**

In order to get the best possible written work from pupils every one should know their **target level** based on their prior ability scores. This may be SATs scores from key stage two or three and or cognitive ability tests which may be used in your school. Your school may also provide you with a prediction of what level a pupil

should reach at the end of the key stage. This will fall somewhere between the median (average) level which the pupil should achieve and the upper quartile ie what the top 25% of pupils with that particular prior ability score might achieve.

This is a brilliant **assessment** tool. It will help your teaching and learning become much more focussed and it will enable to challenge your pupils - and therefore be more interesting for you both. This is how it works :

Assessment for learning summary

- Give each pupil a predicted level for them to aim for
- Explain what kind of thinking and writing is required for each level
- Have them write their predicted level and a simple level descriptor in their exercise book (I record it all in the front cover so that they and I can see progress at a glance)
- Make sure that the tasks you set match the level descriptors and that pupils can move through them from facts to understanding to the ability to evaluate, critically assess and compare and contrast the traditions.
- Now, and this is very important, plan your **plenary/ debrief** to ask the pupils questions at all these levels. This will ensure that every child is stretched.

My colleague, Julie Woodward has a brilliant game for this. Its called the **true/ false game**. It is very simple and not original so you may already know it. It is fast fun and is an excellent tool to help you **assess the learning** of each child in the room at the end of a lesson or at the beginning of the next.

True/False Game (Traffic Lights)

- Give every child two pieces of card of different colours. One colour represents true, the other false. and one not sure .
- Read out a series of statements which you have prepared in advance to check the learning of the lesson you have just taught .
- Make sure you have questions there which reflect all the levels.
- Each pupil needs to hold up the correct card. It means that everyone is involved and everyone is thinking - but here is the cunning bit !
- Many statements are ambiguous, build these in and children become very excited, perhaps holding up both cards , now you can pounce ! The child with great pleasure will explain why the answer is not clear cut and everyone will listen, intrigued.
- Here is a simple example .“The Jewish ritual bath is called a mezuzah”. Everyone enthusiastically holds up their false card, a few waverers have now learned something and are paying attention .
- You can now ask what the correct word is . A Mikveh

- Now you can ask when and how it is used as you rapidly go over its use by men and women, its use at Yom Kippur and before burial. You can cover a vast amount of information in a few moments.
- You can then return to the Mezuzah. What actually is that? Having covered a lot of facts and vocabulary very rapidly, you can quickly ask some more probing questions at level six. How the Mezuzah or mikveh affect a Jewish person.
- You can possibly seek comparisons with other traditions the class has studied, working orally at level eight.
- To be able to tell a child who is just about at level five they have just answered a level eight question will have them glowing with pleasure.
- Your mixed ability class will be revising and learning and a highly effective fast and furious pace.

My two **non readers** in my GCSE class are both whizzes at true/ false. – and why do these two know it all in the first place? - because they have watched it all re enacted and taken part in experiential exercises. This was perfectly illustrated when we were filmed recently by the Culham institute for a DVD on different teaching methods in RE. One of them came up after we had re enacted a part of the experiential lesson on Yom Kippur to tell me that I had missed out the part where I took off my gold ring and removed my shoes to show that we do not wear gold or leather on Yom Kippur. I was thrilled. This delightful pupil (who truants or is badly behaved in some other lessons) will find it very difficult to read the GCSE paper on the day of the examination but she has a store of knowledge and feels happy and confident in the lessons as a result.

Why active, experiential multi sensory learning works.

What the experiential lessons will do is enable our pupils to make sense of what they read and to empathise with the believer.

What they are studying will be so much more meaningful for them because of what they have experienced in class. They will be more motivated to tackle their written tasks when they are doing so after a meaningful, affecting lesson.

Having a lesson about A Hindu Temple, looking at stunning pictures on the overhead, and hearing about meditation and puja (worship) is great but how much more interesting is it to have that lesson *after* having created a temple in the classroom, *experienced* meditation, *re enacted* puja and discussed in a plenary how it made the class feel and how it might make Hindus feel?

Pupils with literacy difficulties already have a head start because they can remember and understand what happened and may be able to talk about Hindu worship at level six or above even if they cannot write it.

What the lessons recipes do, above all, is offer you a teaching method to help your pupils make these traditions make sense . They are designed to help every child become aware of and develop its own spirituality. This is important in its own right but what is also vital, if they are to take part in meaningful RE is to be able to empathise with believers. It is only through this empathy that they can really evaluate and respond thoughtfully to examination questions such as “It is a waste of time to dress up for prayer, discuss, giving more than one point of view.”

Before I began to teach experientially I would *give* the children the answers. I would have to tell them what to say, especially as the majority of them *did* feel it was silly to dress up to prayer. From the outside it must seem so. The children had no sense of how the process of donning tallit and tefillin in the Jewish tradition, for example, affected a Jewish person. I hoped that the notes I put up on the board to explain why it was important would convince them. It did not .The experience remained outside and alien to them, “nothing to do with us and anything that we know “ which as some of you may know is the comment from a year eleven pupil which started me on this journey. Teaching experientially transformed their understanding and led to what I regard as by far the most important reason for teaching and learning about RE, something that goes beyond the importance of academic knowledge, that is, real respect for people whose beliefs and way of life are different from ones own.

Experiential learning is an antidote to racism

This empathetic understanding is something more than toleration, something deeper. An empathetic understanding of the essential spirituality in all traditions equips us to deal with the religious extremism which so often hits the public eye and can lead young people and adults to see religion only as something harmful and divisive, against the common good.

The human being who begins each day in prayer or meditation, who develops a deep calm and sense of compassion, who leaves that time of quiet spiritual nurture and goes about his or her daily business better able to behave with loving kindness, generosity and without judgement toward their fellow beings will never hit the headlines. Their spirituality is private, personal, silent and possibly beyond words.

As our children experience, through regular religion neutral exercises, this well spring of spiritual nurture in each of the traditions their growing understanding and empathy means that when they encounter extremism, terror and violence they are able to see it as that, and not what a religious tradition is essentially about.

They allow themselves to become aware of their own prejudice and fear of what is different and that they don't understand and to set it aside in favour of seeing what links us all, believer and non believer alike. *What they see when they work experientially and affectively in RE is the point of religion. They see its value to believers and to society and therefore to themselves.* I spent the first fifteen years of my career battling with "I don't believe in this rubbish, so why do I have to learn about it , It's boring!" I cannot remember the last time I heard a comment like that. Experiential RE has transformed the quality of my own life, motivated and engaged my pupils and has done the same for many of the teachers who are using these methods. One of the many unforeseen benefits of teaching this way has been is that it has awakened and developed my own spiritual awareness and many teachers tell me that it has affected theirs.

Pupils who have taken part in regular experiential lessons and allowed themselves to be affected are far less likely to throw stones through the window of a shop owned by an Asian family. What was "nothing to do with us or anything that we know" has turned from lessons about other people and what other people do to an understanding of the universal spirituality which is part of being human.

They involve using the techniques of the Theatre of learning. Detailed chapters on how to use these can be found in **Making RE Make Sense**. These techniques are

- **Working in circles** These are built using trust building exercises and teaching the children to use Listening skills.
- **Teaching in a multi sensory environment in which literacy is never the starting point.** These lessons provide the stimulation understanding and motivation to enable pupils to write at the highest levels of the national curriculum.
- **Religion neutral exercises**, which parallel the aspect of the tradition you are helping the children to understand.

- **Participatory symbols**, which are actions which help us to understand something which we might not otherwise have done . They help children to understand that ritual and liturgy are very powerful because they enable the believers who take part in them to feel changed.
- These are all combined in **re enactment** and in **creating a concrete platform from which to teach abstract concepts**
- **Planning every lesson to hit the spiritual target** developing spiritual awareness in pupils and teacher, enabling both to recognise the universal spirituality in all religious traditions and make RE make sense.

2b:A personal overview of the history of Religious ideas - a guide for the non specialist and trainee teacher.

First, a word of apology; This is a *personal* overview .This is the skeleton on which I hang my subject knowledge. It helps me to make sense of where the traditions fit in . It helps me to make connections between ideas and to see where religious ideas and cultures influence each other. It is an *interpretation* based on the connections I see and is therefore a huge oversimplification that would make academic toes curl.

Since this overview goes back to the beginning of human evolution then it is necessarily based largely on speculation about artefacts left behind and discovered often by chance by ancient people, who were not yet writing . Because they did not write, not a word of what I am about to suggest, regarding the ancient world is therefore *true*.

This overview with all its personal interpretations grew as a result of the questions I asked when I left University and began to teach. It also arose from the questions that my pupils asked. "Where did religion come from, Miss , did Jesus start it off ?" or "Who made God ?" I remember the first time a year seven pupil asked me that . I hadn't a clue how to answer it. I was panic stricken and rushed into the staff room at break to ask Christian colleagues what they would say. Everyone was stumped. I knew that I had to offer these young people answers ,or rather, offer a response that would be helpful.

I remember a friend who taught undergraduates saying to me in 1980 "You can't teach about myth to children. It is an academic minefield "and my reply "Yes, and

the minefield starts on page one of the Bible. I have to !, however much I oversimplify the issue”.

The important thing, though is to recognise that what we are doing *is* an oversimplification and that it is a great deal more helpful than sitting in a quagmire of academic debate and sinking in it. What follows, therefore, is a branch to haul you out of the quagmire and a raft laid across the top to help you navigate your way forward.

It follows a particular strand to help you make sense of the traditions described in essay for completion and wholeness. They have mounts which help hembolise aspthis book. It goes from theories about the origin of religion and spirituality and follows their development through what was happening in India

Not a lot of attention is paid, today, to the origin of religion, more on how it is practised in communities but I think that exploring its possible origins does two very important things, first , It helps us make RE make sense by setting the study of religion into context and secondly it reminds us that the six traditions are actually quite modern in human being's relationship to religion and that by the time the human race comes to an end or evolves into another kind of life form, whatever our future holds, that they may well be seen as temporary stages in our relationship with spirituality .

The oldest of them (Hinduism and Judaism) are roughly between five to three thousand years old. The most modern (Islam and Sikhism) are around 1,500 and five hundred years old. When we remember that human evolution now dates as far back as six million years and the first *possible evidence* of religious belief dates back to 40,000 BCE we begin to put the study of the six traditions into context . When did humans begin to believe in God ? (whatever we mean by that) How did they come to develop this belief ? What did they believe and do for the thousands and thousands of years before what we recognise as the religious traditions present today, began to emerge.?

This realisation allows us to step back and recognise the universal spirituality that underpins them all. When we start to become aware of, and focus our attention on

that, we are able to plan religion neutral exercises that develop that awareness in our pupils, whatever relationship they have with religion. In the case of my largely secular pupils , that means, none. We are able to ask ,as we approach a new topic ,” now what is it about the spirituality behind this belief or ritual or ceremony that applies to us all, whatever tradition we are associated with or whatever time period we live in ?”

What does the word religion mean?

Religion comes from a word whose root means, among other things, to connect . I think it is fundamentally about connecting with our inner selves, our emotions, our family and our community and thus with society at a large. This is important if we want to help our young people to feel empathy with, and care about, people who are suffering in any part of the world.

I think the reality of the universal spirituality and what I believe is the natural instinct to create special stories that help us make sense of our personal and community journeys and to use ritual and ceremony to mark important stages of our life is borne out in the success of **The Island** .

The Island is a concept building story described in **Making RE Make Sense** , now used by hundreds of schools to introduce their pupils to the main ingredients of RE. rites of passage , festivals, holy books, moral laws, pilgrimage and religious sects .

In the story the pupils find themselves shipwrecked on an island that does not exist .trapped forever, they have to deal with a variety of situations presented to them by the teacher, in role, as the leader of the community.

Each class, faced with the birth of the first child on the island, instinctively creates a rite of passage. After thirty years on the island when the first ones on the island begin to die, the community decides to write the story of the old life and the shipwreck down in order to preserve the traditions. They carve it on a rock where it will last forever.

The children become involved, quite naturally, in the questions about interpreting these stories and ensuring they are passed down without corruption. They discuss whether the shipwreck was an accident or designed for a purpose..

They discuss whether it really happened or was a myth .

Artefacts from the decaying ship are preserved in a special place. 500 years later the various communities that have spread across the Island are recognised by the children to have different ways of interpreting the moral code and the story of the shipwreck. Each community still visits the special place and the rock where the story is carved for posterity.

The story ends with the Island community preparing to celebrate 500 years on the Island. The young people argue about whether they want to wear the ball gowns and dinner suits worn by the first ones when the ship ran aground and read from the story in a language they no longer understand.

The point about this story is that class after class react in an individual, but similar way, to each situation as it arises, creating rites of passage, holy books, special places and places of pilgrimage. God has never appeared in their stories, but as the story is debriefed, pupils recognise that they instinctively decide to react to events in this way, just as the human race did before them.

Ever afterwards, as they study the explicit rituals and ceremonies of each tradition, these practices no longer seem strange. They are no stranger than the things they, themselves, chose to do. That they are full of symbolic meaning is now obvious to the pupils, as were their own creations, like the necklace of eighty seeds given by one group of pupils to the first baby born on the island. There was one seed for every person on the ship. The circle represented the community and the connection of the old life with the new. The seeds represented the new life that was growing on the island.

The Beginning of Religion

This has to be, of course, unknown because there was no writing. Theories about the origin of religion are associated with Neanderthal man who lived around 40,000 BCE. That is the time when the first possible *evidence* of belief is found.

Neanderthal man is a step back from modern humans, not quite fully evolved. Because they appear to have lived in communities, hunted together and used fire it is assumed that they had language.

The possible evidence we are talking about is this *.It appears that they buried their dead*. This strikes me as absolutely remarkable because considering the precarious existence they lived in which meat was a crucial part of their diet and gained only by a life threatening hunt, why did they not eat the meat that the dead provided ? The other thing that strikes me as remarkable is that they buried their dead in pebble lined graves and usually in a tightly curled up position. They were sometimes sprinkled with red powder. Occasionally they were buried with artefacts. Why I think it is remarkable is that they buried their dead in a house they created, however simple, unlike their own, which would be a cave that came ready made. Time, energy, meat and artefacts were wasted and furthermore the bodies were tightly curled not laid straight as is the case in many cultures.

Showing children the pictures of these burials and setting it up as a puzzle to solve has them instantly engaged. Lesson recipes on teaching early religion can be found in **Teaching Abstract Concepts** .

Ultimately we cannot be sure why this was done but it seems to indicate that in **Neanderthal humans believed in an after life** and that the bodies were placed in a foetal position, sometimes with powder for blood ready to be re born. No matter how many times I tell this story it never loses its power to fill me with amazement with all its implications for how early belief in something beyond the limitations of the body emerged.

Now I am going to describe the rest as though it happened in order because it makes it easier to understand, it is unlikely to have happened like that, there will have been overlap. Human development is not that straightforward.

What I have described is what I like to describe as the first stage of religious belief, for neatness sake. **The first stage of religious belief then is that we continue live after the death of the body. There seems to be some recognition that perhaps we have a spirit that does not die the death of the body.**

Animism

What next ? I think it is the belief that everything around had a spirit. We call this **animism** from anima, it also gives us the word **mana** from which we get mania and manic.

The problem with presenting this developmentally is that it looks as though we go from one stage to another, getting ever more sophisticated. Not only is animism alive and well today in religion but it is also there in modern religion .I think looking at early religion helps us recognise it in ourselves. We are instinctively animistic. This will make more sense as we move towards modern times and I can make that link clearer.

The evidence for this in a world of non writing is cave painting. We can only guess what cave paintings mean, if anything, but if we examine a number of them we find themes emerge. They are always of animals and hunting. Now if they are diaries of daily life, messages or decoration, then they would have greater variety, furthermore they are often in caves where no one lived or which are dark and could have only been lit by torches. Other paintings do not show the animals head and or show the feet covered by hand prints.

To cut a long story short (you can read the lesson recipe for this in **Teaching Abstract Concepts**) scholars surmise that early humans believed that the animals around them had spirits which they could control .They believed that by acting out the hunt in the large caves and dressing in the skins of the animals they wished to capture that they could bring the spirits of the animals under their control , perhaps they thought in a way that they could take on the characteristics of the animals. Perhaps the hand prints were saying” I want this, this is mine”. It all has to be so much speculation, but the point is that it seems to have been an instinctive reaction on the part of early humans the world over, to create what we call hunting magic. These first ceremonies and rituals were presided over by the shamans, the precursors of the priests, the go between god and man.

We see this instinctive reaction to the world of the spirits later in the Graeco Roman and Egyptian Mystery religions and dare I say it, it is there today in the Eucharist . This is not to denigrate the Eucharist at all but to recognise it as part of the human longing to be one with god and of the vital ability of ritual and liturgy to nourish the spirit, to enable us to express the inexpressible and to connect in the latter case with the “other”.

The third stage of religion in my artificially created evolution of ideas is **fertility**.

Fertility

What we have been describing is centred around human survival, the necessity for meat. The desire to conquer the fear and danger and over ride the sheer luck involved in getting it

Around 10,000 BCE life changed. This again would have been very gradual, but put simply, humans learned to grow crops and to keep animals in pens and breed them. They became farmers. This meant they no longer had to live a nomadic existence and were to stay in one place . This caused a massive leap in human development. It caused this leap because humans were then able to develop technologically. They began to make themselves homes and of course with experience they became more and more complex and effective. Other tools began to develop rapidly now that people were settled and did not have to focus on hunting constantly to stay alive, weapons, boats, wheels. With a community settled in one place it was inevitable that individuals would exhibit a special interest or ability in certain skills and so specialist craftsmen grew up. Human development from then on was rapid.

How does this affect religion ? *The focus of worship changed from the spirits of the animals to that of the sky and the earth.* What made the crops grow? The sky who began to be personified as a father sending the rain, like male seed, to the womb of the earth mother in which the crops grew.

Polytheism

We see fertility cults the world over. Later the spirits of the earth and sky were personified in families that reflected the families on earth. This is **polytheism**, the belief in many gods. The polytheistic period is dominated by the personification of abstract concepts like love, beauty, war and wisdom and seems to be a movement forward from animism and fertility alone

Here we come to an area of knowledge that most of us have already encountered but perhaps did not know how it fitted into the scheme of things, that is the gods and

goddesses of Greece and Rome, the Norse gods, the gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt, sometimes combining the animistic elements of earlier pagan times in their animal heads with human personification, shown in the human body.

Here we can fit in the various forms of African religion, the Native American Indian and the Aborigines which span animism, fertility and polytheism. Trying to draw a clear distinction between animism, fertility and polytheism is not easy. As long as you and your pupils have got the gist of what was happening in the first 38,000 years or so that we know about then all is well.

Now we come to the six traditions. There will be a more detailed introduction to each of the ones treated in this book at the beginning of each section so this is just a very brief thumbnail sketch – blink and you will miss it!

Hinduism

Hinduism is the oldest of the six traditions and to express its origins simply it does not have a founder. It seems to have grown out of animism, elements of which are still there along with polytheism and the most sophisticated abstract monotheistic notion of Brahman/Atman the universal life force or energy in all living things. It is difficult to pin point a time when each of these stages emerged, but generally Hinduism is thought by some scholars to have arisen out of the Indus valley civilisation around 2,500 BCE.

Hold on to the thought that all over the world different cultures had polytheistic fertility cults. Whether their similarities were because they blended as a result of the intermingling of cultures, or whether they are similar because they arise out of the same instinctive response to nature and the need to survive, is hard to say.

Let me give you an example; Most people are familiar with Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of Love, Venus is her Roman name. In the Babylonian culture she is Ishtar. In the Canaanite, Astarte. In ancient Britain, Oestre from which we get our word oestrogen and Easter.

Does Hinduism arise out of the polytheistic fertility cult of the Indus valley? There are similarities with modern Hinduism, ritual bathing, the importance of the symbol of

fire and the worship of Shiva who is thought by some to be represented on the so called Proto Shiva seal. Or was Hinduism, as we know it, brought by the Aryan invasion in 1,500 BCE, which may have brought with it myths and ideas that originated in Mesopotamia? Perhaps it is a combination of both.

The point is that Hinduism seems to have evolved naturally into its present day form without a significant reforming figure taking it into a dramatically different direction.

It is hard also to pinpoint when monotheism emerged but it is very important to convey to our pupils, the monotheism in Hinduism with which they can identify. This is what lies behind the image worship that appears on the surface.

Images in Hinduism

Hindus worship hundreds of images who are aspects of the one great god **Brahman**, the universal life force. Three chief gods, a kind of trinity or **trimurti** represent the cycle of creation, preservation and destruction. They are the creator god Brahman who has four heads showing he thinks on all things, **Vishnu** the preserver, he is represented as blue in colour like the sky representing infinity and Shiva, the god of destruction who represents the constant cycle of change in the universe (detailed lessons recipes on God in Hinduism appear later in the file.) The many gods have consorts, female aspects. The unity of male and female are necessities of what they have to teach us symbolically. such as **Ganesha**, the elephant headed god, who is the son of Shiva and his consort **Parvati** has a mount who is a rat. As you will see in the lesson recipe on Ganesha, the symbols associated with his image are about conquering greed. The rat represents greedy humans hoarding everything they can get like the rat hoarding grain. I hope you are beginning to get a sense of the Hindu idea of god which encompasses every aspect of religion that we have explored so far, animism, fertility polytheism and monotheism. This is all because of its very great age.

As Hinduism developed so did the priesthood. They became concerned with ritual worship. These rituals became so elaborate that only they could perform them on behalf of the people. It was in this way that they became powerful because they were the guardians of salvation. Image worship became the dominant form of religious practice in this period. Concerns were expressed by some that spirituality was being repressed.

A number of scriptures had emerged by this time (about 200 CE) The **Ramayana** in which we find stories of Rama and Krishna is very significant. These are believed to be the incarnations of The god Vishnu who is believed to have come to earth ten times to rescue it in times of evil. The tenth incarnation is still to come. Stories of Rama and Krishna are very important in popular Hinduism. Their stories appear in this file. **Diwali** is an important festival which celebrates the triumphal ending to the story of Rama.

The **Bhagavad Gita** (120BCE) is a short, readable and very important Hindu scripture. It is an account of a conversation between a warrior and Krishna on the nature of the spiritual life . if you read nothing else, have a look at chapter two which encapsulates Hindu ideas about life death and rebirth in a way that pupils can relate to. There are also **Upanishads** (600 –300BCE) which contain beautiful monotheistic poems. These are worth dipping into and you will see quotations from them in textbooks.

Buddhism

For those who expressed concern that aspects of the emerging tradition which we now know as Hinduism was overly concerned with ritual rather than the spirit, it was ripe for reform. It came in the shape of **Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha**. He was born at a time when monotheistic and non theistic ideas were developing. Jainism a non theistic tradition emerged at this time and this was also the time of the Upanishads,

In 583 BCE this Hindu prince was born into great luxury. Legends says that he grew up away from any kind of suffering, unaware of how most of us live. One fateful day he left the confines of the palace and saw a beggar, a sick man and a dead man. Shocked to the core at the true nature of human existence he left the palace that night and wandered for five years **seeking the answer to the problem of suffering** . One night the answer came to him deep in meditation and he became known as the enlightened one, the Buddha. He spent the next 40 years wandering through India preaching about the answer he had found to the problem of suffering.

In a nutshell, he realised that suffering is a fact of life that cannot be escaped. Suffering is caused by desire, greed and selfishness and that the way to conquer this suffering is by eliminating desire. The distinctive feature of early Buddhism was that the Buddha said that belief in god was not helpful. Although in some forms of Buddhism, Buddha himself is worshipped as god.

Hinduism is all embracing and tolerant. It has no problem with the idea of the spirit of god incarnating itself on earth as an avatar .In Hindu tradition god appears on the earth in human form to help humanity, whenever it is especially under threat from evil forces, usually incarnated as demons. The most famous are the incarnations of Vishnu. In Hindu thought Buddha became one of the avatars of Vishnu. Like Christianity, Buddhism really took root in cultures away from the land of its birth, where its philosophy was compatible with the needs of the people. Tibet, Sri Lanka , Thailand ,China and Japan. Like most traditions it formed two great sects **Theravada**, its original form and **Mahayana**, where Buddha may be worshipped .

Islam

The next reforming movement in India was the gradual invasion by the Moslems from around 1,000 CE onwards . The overriding characteristic of Islam is submission to the one God, **Allah**. It means The God. Islam had begun in Arabia in 622 CE. At the age of 40 a man called **Mohammad** would go frequently to a cave in the mountain side near his home to be alone and meditate. Over a period of 23 years he received a number of revelations from the angel Gabriel. These were written down and collected together to form the **Qur'an**, the holy book of the Moslems.

Mohammad was concerned to convey to his animistic and polytheistic people the absolute oneness of god. He went to **Mecca** where there stood an ancient building called the **Kaaba**. It was full of idols. In its side was a stone believed to have been placed there by Abraham, founder of the Jewish people through his son, Isaac and Arab people through his son, Ishmael. Mohammad ordered the idols to be cleared away and the Kaaba. now empty of images, and imageless itself became a focal for Moslems and a place of pilgrimage. It represents the heart of Islam and all Moslems pray towards Mecca wherever they are in the world They try to go on **pilgrimage (Hajj)** there at least once in their life time.

The Moslem place of worship is the Mosque , the place of prostration .

Mosques are free of all images in stone wood metal or drawing and so in consequence the most wonderful geometric designs emerged as decoration for these beautiful buildings. The Arabic script that forms the Qur'an also adorns the Mosques of the world turned, into an art form in itself.

We have much to learn about Islam but for now we need to think about its impact on India . On the surface it appeared that this intense, monotheistic worship of the one god was to meet the apparently polytheistic worship of Hinduism. Whatever a Hindu's belief in god, images would play a prominent part in worship as symbols of the inexpressible god which is beyond form. There was much tension and bloodshed as the two cultures clashed and the **Mughal** empire was established. The most famous piece of architecture from that period is the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum built by a broken hearted prince for his wife who died in 1631. There are many Moslems today in India and you will doubtless know that in 1947 that Pakistan was formed as a Moslem state.

Sikhism

In the fifteenth century CE another important figure arose, born as a Hindu and influenced by Islam, his life and work led to the establishment of the most modern of the six traditions, **Sikhism** .The boy who was later to be known as Guru (teacher , or leader into light) Nanak 1469 -1539. Was deeply concerned about injustice. Even as a young boy. He was disturbed by the Caste system in Hinduism which had become a rigid hierarchical division. People were not able to move out of the caste in which they found themselves. To **Guru Nanak** this led to cruel inequalities.

As a young boy, he refused to take the sacred thread, a Hindu initiation ceremony which only the higher born castes took. This rejection was also a sign that he was also beginning to look inward, beyond outward, ritualistic forms of religion. What developed was an intense spirituality based on a deep personal relationship with god which he felt was beyond Hinduism and Islam. After a significant religious experience lasting several days, during which he disappeared, much to the consternation of his family, he re appeared saying "There is no Hindu. There is no Muslim." He had a lifelong passion for equality and racial harmony. The Sikh scriptures, which were collected over time, include not only the sayings and hymns of Guru Nanak and others of the ten gurus who were the founders of Sikhism but also spiritual writing from Hindus and Muslims.Far from rejecting these two traditions he embraced their essential spirituality, incorporating the view of god that they shared .what he did not incorporate was the outward cultural forms such as the treatment of widows in hinduism which he did not think expressed the essential oneness of humanity with god.

After a deep religious experience ,in early adulthood ,lasting several days,he set up his home as a centre where everyone was to be treated equally. It was characterised by all visitors eating together which the caste system forbade.This became **Langar** ,a central aspect of Sikhism. Alongside this comes **Sewar**, service to others.

Nanak rejected the ascetic ideal of Hinduism where men and women withdraw from society to develop their inner relationship with God. Nanak emphasised the householder stage of life teaching that the expression of the oneness of humanity with God was best expressed in service to others, not withdrawal from them. The inspiration for this life of service and all embracing equality is **Nam Samram**, contemplation of the Name. Nanak's experience taught him that humans are most moved by music and so the scriptures now known as the Guru Granth Sahib are sung in worship. Known as **ragas** they are sung by **ragis**, skilled musicians

The relationship of the gurus with Islam varied from the total support of emperor Akbar a tolerant and thoughtful Muslim ruler, in the time of the third guru, who sat on the floor and shared langar with the community, before meeting with the guru, to outright repression and aggression. During those periods Sikhs were forced to fight with weapons for their freedom. Nine gurus followed Nanak. The tenth guru, Gobind Singh, living in a time of repression left two vital legacies which created the Sikhism which we recognise today. First he created the **khalsa**, the pure ones, the family or community of initiated Sikhs which led to the wearing of the 5 K's as important symbols. The turban was not one of these but many men adopted this as a way of keeping the uncut hair tidy. Today Sikh men and women may or may not wear uncut hair. From this time men were given the name Singh meaning lion, and women, Kaur, meaning princess as a way of stressing the equality of all, beyond caste or family.

The remaining legacy he left the Sikh community was that he decreed that there were to be no more Gurus. The spiritual leader of the Sikhs was to be their holy book, the Adi Granth, henceforth known as the **Guru Granth Sahib**. Its very nature expresses the spirituality of the inward experience of the one God which is beyond image and ritual. This recognition of the essential oneness of humanity with God is the source of the gurus' passion for equality, service and acceptance to be offered to all human beings encapsulated in the Granth.

The Hindu Renaissance

We need to finish our Indian saga with a modern update. Around two hundred years after Guru Nanak, the British arrived to trade. The East India Company eventually became the ruling force in India, which became a British colony. By the end of the 19th century Victoria was its empress. British rule had enormous impact. The British needed a civil service to run the country for them and so they set up British schools. Indian nationals were taught English and Christianity. At the universities Indians discovered the ideas of the enlightenment about liberty and equality.

This extraordinary cultural mix in the universities with Indian academics being influenced by Christianity, European philosophy, and Islam led in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century to modern reform movements in India. Men like

Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda were influenced not only by their own Hindu texts but also by the ideas of Islam and Christianity and so **from this period emerged a Hindu monotheism that was palatable to the West.** The scriptures were translated and read eagerly by Western scholars who were able to appreciate the lofty spirituality of these apparently pagan idol worshippers for the first time.

It really was a time when East met West ,as in Europe the enlightenment of the 18th century had opened up a world where it was possible to question everything, to be an atheist, to embrace scientific ideas. The impact of Darwin and Biblical criticism was being felt. In this climate of liberalism and intellectual freedom the study of world religions was born.

Lesson Recipes for Teaching Sikhism

3:Creating an Ideal Community – a series of religion neutral lessons

Introduction: understanding Sikh spirituality and what it can offer to all the children we teach .

Imagine yourself standing on the edge of a pool shimmering in the early morning mists. Rising from its centre lies a beautiful building covered in gold. It seems to float upon the water.

It has four entrances symbolising that it is open to the people of all four corners of the earth.

Inside visitors from many nations sit on the floor to share a meal together. No one is excluded. Only those who exclude themselves would not attend.

The building fills with the sound of hymns to the one true being, a being beyond time, a being beyond words, a being with whom a human can experience oneness in the present moment.

The inspiration of the words is to a life of service to all humanity without distinction of race, creed, gender or colour.

Commitment to this way of life is a commitment to participate fully in the common weal. It unites rather than divides, participates rather than withdraws. It is life affirming rather than life denying.

The spirituality of the Sikhs

I shall be forever grateful to Dr W Owen Cole, as I have been on several occasions in my life, but especially when he returned the draft of this manuscript with many helpful comments and corrections, but most important of all, he said “You have not captured the spirituality of the Sikhs”.

Probably the most painful comment I could have received but also the most urgent to address. Owen, as ever, gave generously of his time. explaining carefully and simply how nothing was as simple as I wished to make it "“Is Guru Nanak a reformer ?” I asked and “ Surely he clashed with Islam ?” . That was when I learned about Emperor Akbar, who sat on the floor to eat Langar with the community surrounding the third guru. I knew that Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Guru had lost his head but not that it was in the course of protecting a group of Brahmins who were being forced to convert to Islam and that he did so at the behest of his young son who went on to become Guru Gobind Singh, founder of the Khalsa.

He concluded our discussion by giving me a copy of his latest book "“Understanding Sikhism.” (Dunedin Academic Press ISBN 1 –903765 – 15 –3) As the book opened with its description of the Harimandir Sahib I felt as though I was there .

“A Sikh sits at the water’s edge looking across the Sarovar (pool) towards the building in front of him, gleaming in the sun. No wonder the British called it the Golden Temple, but the Sikh name for it is the Harimandir Sahib. Some will use the name Darbar Sahib ”The Divine Court “ but this, strictly speaking, applies to the complex of buildings, at the centre of which is the Harimandir Sahib, the most famous gurdwara in the world.”

“The Harimandir Sahib is a Gurdwara, a place of worship. Strictly speaking it should not be called a temple because Sikhs do not have an order of priests or rituals that can in any way be called sacrificial. Inside it is a room in which a copy of the sacred scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, is installed. It is opened at about 3pm daily and not closed until 10pm. A relay of readers chants its contents and musicians known as ragis, sing them. The sound is amplified across the sarovar and broadcast by radio stations. The Sikhs who sit at the pool edge or in one of the many shaded porticoes may well be meditating upon the words that they hear.”

“Tradition, doubted by some later Sikh historians, tells of the foundation stone being laid by a Sufi, Mian Mir, at Guru Arjan’s request. The portrayal of Bala, the Hindu and Mardana, the Muslim disciple, (of Guru Nanak) conveys the Sikh message of openness. Hindu Mandirs or places of worship have one entrance, facing the rising sun; Guru Arjan’s structure had four entrances making it open to people of all four castes. Nowadays Sikhs speak of it being accessible to people from all four corners of the earth.”

The distinctive spirituality of the Sikh way was not hard to grasp intellectually,. I felt that through the pages of this book I saw it, but it is hard to describe. Where words fail me, I hope the reflective exercises and activities will take you and your pupils where words cannot.

My thanks to my colleague Julie Woodward for the inspiration for the series of lessons on ideal community.

It is for an appreciation of the spirituality of the Sikhs that the following religion neutral lessons prepare pupils.

During this period of time pupils will be invited to consider what their **ideal community** would be like. Having done so they will see links between what they imagined and what the inspiration of Guru Nanak through Guru Gobind Singh created in the Khalsa, The Guru Granth Sahib and the Gurdwara as they learn about them subsequently.

Religion neutral exercises and **participatory symbols** will enable pupils to enter through the imagination into an empathetic understanding of the ideals of the Sikh community. They will see how they are in tune with their own ideal community. However, an ideal is not helpful unless you try to live it you live it and through these lessons I hope pupils will find inspiration to enable them to become better citizens and parents.

The aim of this unit of work on Sikhism is, like the study of the other traditions, that **every child should be offered the chance to become a better human being** as a result of encountering the spiritual essence of that tradition.

The skilful teacher takes them from “learning about” towards the essential, **individual** spirituality that lies at the heart of the tradition -

and out again, towards the **universal** spirituality where the Sikh – or Jew or Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim - is no longer “nothing to do with me or anything else that I know”

Older pupils can extend this work towards a consideration of different models of society already in existence, from dictatorships to democracy, exploring important themes in citizenship.

Younger pupils could profit from considering an ideal neighbourhood or school

All pupils may also be encouraged to think about the embodiment and expression and reinforcement of the ideals of their community in the design or actual creation of a model of their ideal community centre.

The essence of Sikhism is based on **sewa**, service to others, a concept we will explore more fully in a religion neutral way at a later point.

The inspiration for this ideal comes from another, **Nam Simram**, which means **contemplation of the name**.

As the story of the founding of Sikhism unfolds through the experience of **Guru Nanak**, pupils will see how Nanak lived and worked among Hindus and Muslims, who played an important part in the establishment of this unique path to the awareness of the one God.

How can one express the unique contribution of the Guru to the human appreciation of God ?

How can one adequately convey in words what Nanak experienced and ever since, through his words guided others to ?

How can one clearly express his relationship to the other traditions among which he grew up, but felt he moved beyond? **What is it that is distinctive about Sikhism?**

“There is no Hindu. There is no Muslim” he said. following a profound religious experience during which he felt he entered the court of God.

The distinction between traditions caused by ritual and caste and gender are what he rejected, not the people, or their apprehension of God.

The writings of Hindus and Muslims are incorporated within the Sikh scriptures. He was accompanied by Hindu and Muslim disciples.

The result of Guru Nanak’s spiritual perceptions are not a blend of Hinduism and Islam.

What he saw and experienced was unique.

I have an image of him in my mind either looking upward, beyond the religious practices and cultural expressions of his day whether they be Hindu or Muslim, or looking inward and experiencing the truth of the oneness of God with humanity.

Having realised the absolute truth of this insight, he lived and acted on that awareness. His attitude towards humanity would be changed for ever .

Of course there can be no distinction between male and female, workman or priest, the spirit is the spirit. It is in this life that one realises this and it is realised through service to humanity.

How can it be right that a female only has identity through her husband and so must die when he dies ? How can her humanity, her essence, be different from the humanity or essence of a man ?

How can there be people, priests , who have special access to God ? Surely all humans have access to God within them through meditation, through realising their true nature?

Having realised this, how important then, that one devotes oneself to the service of others and does not withdraw from the world.

Pupils are more likely to respond personally to these ideals if a bridge is created between their own ideal community and the one envisaged by the gurus.

It is best if the context of this lesson is not set within Sikhism so that pupils look at the ideals without preconceptions

4.Lesson Recipe for creating an Ideal Community

This is what you need

- Circle of chairs
- Music for quiet reflection
- paper and pens for group work
- Keywords and definitions for leadership work

This is what you do.

1. Pupils come into quiet music suitable for meditation and sit in the circle
2. **Conduct a round** on “What makes you unhappy about what is going on our world at the moment.?” Each pupil in turn has the opportunity to contribute or pass. Pupils should not feel obliged to say something different. If everyone is unhappy about the same thing, it illustrates how strongly the group feels.

Pupils will raise issues about **natural** and **moral evil** .It will be helpful to give them these terms if they do not already know them.

- 3.**Conduct a second round** on what people feel are the *causes* of these issues.
4. Explore the role of humans in natural evil. How far does human selfishness make the consequences of natural disasters greater ?
 1. Does the class think that a perfect world is possible ?
 2. It will be important at this point to confront their feeling that perfection is not possible and begin to build up the idea of the importance of individual moral responsibility. It is also important to establish how important the role of a single person can be

6.Activity :Reflective exercise . (can be done to quiet music.)

Ask the pupils to close their eyes and become aware of their breathing. Push outside thoughts away. When everyone is still and silent ask them to imagine themselves looking out of the window at a beautiful blue sky.

From that sky, picture a single snowflake floating to the earth. As the snowflake comes nearer, you become aware of its intricacy and beauty. It falls on to the window pane and you are struck by how fragile and delicate it is. Suddenly the cat jumps on to the window sill anxious to be let in and the snowflake is crushed. You go to the door to let the cold and anxious cat in. The door is hard to open pushed shut by the weight of the snow. - How fragile is a single snowflake but think what they can do when they stick together !

When you are ready come back into the classroom.

Fade music

What do you think is the point of the story and why did we do that at this point in the lesson ?

Here is something else to think about . Imagine that there was to be a magic moment in the universe and you have been granted the power of uttering a single word within that moment and whatever it is that you choose to say it shall be. What would you say that could right all the evils of the world.

Give pupils a moment to think and then give ideas. Many chose peace we explore this for a moment .will that feed the hungry? The word I choose is *share* .We explore what the effect would be if everyone in the world did that single thing. I ask how hard would that be to do - if only we had the will and could conquer our selfishness and greed. However impossible the task of a peaceful world where everyone had their basic needs met seems .We should not give up living that way ourselves. Look what individuals like Martin Luther King achieved

Back to our ideal community.

7.Would it be possible to create a *family* in which moral evil things did not happen?

8.Would it be possible to create a *school* in which moral evil did not happen ?

9..Would it be possible to create a *neighbourhood* in which moral evil did not happen?

10.Introduce the lesson: Today we are going to imagine what a perfect world would be like .It is just the world that you inhabit at the moment .I will invite you to go over your morning again ,imagining what might be different . For some people who might be facing big challenges at the moment, this might be painful. If you do not wish to go through this please sit quietly and do not disturb the others.

(you will need to adapt the following visualisation to suit the age and experiences of the pupils.) You will be invited to share what you imagined in your visualisation but you do not have to share

Put on quiet music

Close your eyes and become aware of your breathing
Notice your breath slowing down. Push the words and thoughts in your mind to one side feel how peaceful it is.

- Imagine yourself waking up this morning.
- You don't realise it, but this is your perfect world.
- When would you realise that things were different ?
- Would it be while you are at home, getting ready for school?
- How would your family be different, how would you be different ?

- Would it be different on your journey to school ?
- What would be different?
- What do you see that might have changed ?.
- Who do you meet ?
- How are they different?
- How are you different?

- Imagine your arrival at school and the beginning of the day
- How would you know that things had changed?

When you are ready ,open your eyes and come back into the classroom.
Turn to your neighbours and share with them what had changed

Fade music

Do a round on what had changed

What sorts of things do the class think had changed for this fantasy to take place ?

11. Activity

Put class in groups, selected by teacher if you wish to create a balanced mix or at random .The group is to imagine that is forming an ideal community.

Come up with five ideals for the community

These are the sorts of things that would be helpful and which the pupils are likely to chose.

- No violence
- No crime
- Sharing of wealth and resources
- No discrimination
- Fulfilling work for everyone

Share as a class; whittle down to the crucial ones that will cause the most change

Imagine that you are really going to create this community. Over the next few lessons you will work out its principles

- How it will be led
- How it will be regulated and governed
- and design a building or complex to inspire refresh and support the community.

12. First how will it be led ?

Back in to groups

Look at these words

Dictatorship
Democracy
Hierarchy
Tyranny
Totalitarianism

It would be useful if pupils could look these words up on the internet or in a dictionary. You could give them the definitions along with the keywords and invite them to match them up. They could discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each one and decide whether they would want any of these as a model for their ideal community.

Older pupils could look at examples of these regimes in the modern world

13. Still in groups

Decide how *your* community will be led ,

- Will there be one leader who holds the post for always.?
- Will there be a group?
- Will there be a hierarchy?
- Will the person have another job or will it be full time?
- How will the community have a say in what happens ?
- How will the leader/s be chosen?

Why did you choose the kind of leadership you did ?What are you planning to avoid and what are you planning to create ? What qualifications does your leader have to have ?

Plenary

In the circle share the models of leadership the class have chosen and discuss how the style of leadership relates to achieving the ideals of the community. Make a summary of the main points that the class decided. What kind of ideal society and style of leadership is emerging ? Are they similar or different?

5:Joining the community - Designing a religion neutral initiation ceremony for the ideal community

This is what you need

Chairs in circle.

Reflective music

On board “special actions and symbols are very powerful, they enable those who choose to take part in them to feel changed”.

This is what you do

1. Class enter to music and sit in the circle

Re cap on previous lesson recall the ideals of the community and the style of leadership groups have chosen

2. Introduce today's topic

How do you join ? - Initiation

This discussion can be conducted as a whole class or within the groups creating the community.

- What value does initiation have ?
- What do you want it to achieve ?
- What ingredients does it need to have in order to achieve that ?
- Symbols – what is the point of these ?
- Clothes - what is the point of those ?
- Words - what is the value of this ?
- Food – what is the point of this aspect ?

- Does every member have to be initiated ?
What is the difference between those who do and those who do not ?

- Is there any sort of preparation, training test practical, physical spiritual. At what age ?
 - What is the difference between a rite of passage and a festival
(Reflect back to the Island, if appropriate).

3. Work in groups

Use bullet point questions above on overhead to guide and inspire creativity

Give out A3 paper and coloured felt tips A3 paper could be printed with the words **purpose symbols clothes words food**

What will the initiate feel and experience as a result of the ceremony which they might not otherwise have done.

Share the details of the ceremonies each group has designed back in the circle.

How does the initiation ceremony and the symbols that are part of it express the ideals of the community? How does it inspire members to keep to these ideals

5:Creating a centre for the ideal community

You could begin with special place circle or imagine the feelings you have there based on a previous lesson.

Or thinking about family gathering that class members enjoyed.

Circle discussion

- Today we are going to design the centre
- Why would we need one ?
- How essential on a scale of one to ten is it to the community ? Why ?
- Get to inspiration to carry on the ideals - and support to continue to do so. It is hard because we are always tempted to be selfish. Contact and support for all members of the community especially the elderly , mothers with young children or the housebound.

This is what you need

- Sugar paper, card or A3 paper
- Ask pupils to bring in from home or collect over a period of weeks yourself. Cereal boxes, food boxes match boxes, butter tubs, toilet roll tubes , kitchen roll tubes and wrapping paper rolls, plastic bottles, straws, newspaper. Pupils could cover their designs in papier mache to make it smooth.

You will also need

- Brushes, poster paints, glue, sellotape.

You could do it by giving each group a carrier bag with their ingredients or bringing them all in to the middle to share.

Need to put a time limit on the creation time and structure it carefully.

Groups could contribute decoration if they wish, glass beads, shells, foil shapes.

The Aim of building needs to be thought out very carefully by each group.

- What is it for ?
- What will happen there?
- What rooms, towers, spaces, gardens will it need ? kitchens, dining area, places for dancing, washing, talking and meeting, care for the elderly, teenagers, young parents during the day. How will people feel inside each aspect ?
- How will it inspire people to keep the rules you make - where will they be?

- How will they be reminded of them.

Give out paper for ideas. On the back groups a sketch based on materials available. Set a time limit for the planning .

Levelled writing ensures that the exercise is a participatory symbol in itself not just a pleasant activity.

Plenary/debrief

Each group brings it design to the circle and explains how the design of the centre fulfils the ideals of the community

6:Creating a Gurdwara

Having preceded the explicit study of Sikhism with several lessons on creating an **ideal community**, pupils are ready to make links between their own ideals and the ideals of Sikhism. In this lesson they create a special place, not knowing what it is they are doing and work out its meaning. **It is at this point that I relate this to Sikhism show pictures of and describe the Gurdwara.**

Throughout their RE course as a whole, in every tradition which we study, pupils are encouraged in all sorts of ways to reflect on the fact that their own behaviour contributes to the society in which they live. This happens whether it is within their class, their school, their family or their neighbourhood.

They are also reminded in many different ways that the actions of individuals can make a difference. This is another way in which religion neutral work, together with affective RE can develop the spirituality of all our pupils - and ourselves, as we are constantly reminded of the universal truths expressed in each tradition, truths which are so, whether one is a theist or not.

Teaching RE in this way is deeply satisfying because it is making a difference to the kind of people our pupils will grow up to be - regardless of their religious background. Working in this way is how every lesson, describing the beliefs and rituals of other people, is also about ourselves. This is why pupils and teachers find the lessons engaging and motivating.

In this example the engagement comes because of the way the information about the Sikh tradition is delivered. I have learned the hard way that simply *telling* pupils about another tradition is not interesting in itself, and if not carefully done can simply reinforce prejudice, confirming pupils' belief that these people are "very weird"

In this lesson, pupils created the Gurdwara according to my instructions, once seated in it, on the floor in a circle, they explored the symbolism of what they had made. I told them the story of Guru Nanak and the lesson concluded with the sharing of Langar to reinforce the learning about the Guru's desire to bring the diverse elements of Indian society together.

Using flash cards at the end of the lesson reinforced the vocabulary and put the experiential work into an academic framework and equipped them to find out the facts about the tradition for them selves.

I often leave my classes to find out facts and information for themselves as part of their homework. Coming after an experiential lesson the facts go into an intellectual and emotional framework which gives them meaning. Pupils find the information comes to life, it makes sense, they can start making connections, asking questions. So often research homework, right across the curriculum, remains as mere information. I have often watched my own two children looking things up, sighing with impatience and boredom and feeling no different once the job is done.

I have spent so much of my teaching career telling children things they did not want to know. I am sure that still happens, but far less so now. The secret for me has been constantly asking myself, when I plan a lesson or a scheme of work, how will seem to the pupils? What will it feel like to learn like this? It also helps to imagine you are teaching a class of Martians, newly arrived. What would they make of all this information?

The really crucial issue is, though, what do you want your pupils to know and understand at the end of it all? Do you really want them to know what the five k's mean? Why? what good will that do? It is quite literally useless information and that is why it will be forgotten as soon as the course is over and will have made no difference to the pupils' attitude towards Sikhs. If, however, it comes as part of a series of religion neutral exercises and participatory symbols, pupils will see the significance of the five K's for themselves. It is almost as though one has said to them "If you were in that situation, what would you do?" and they come up with a similar answer to that of the tradition they are studying.

My aims in teaching Sikhism are about looking at equality, community, fighting injustice, the five k's are symbols of that. If we look at the bigger picture when we plan our courses and *illustrate* them with the specifics instead of making the specifics the *aim*, we teach traditions as they arose.

The principles come first, the rituals, ceremonies, festivals are secondary. It is what is in a person's heart that makes them a Sikh, Hindu, Christian, Jew, Muslim or Buddhist, not what they do. Ironically, what they *do* is how the children will be examined which is why the facts are so important, but if, in your planning, you put the principles first, and these will be things with which our pupils can identify, and artefacts and rituals as illustrations of these, it will all make sense. It will also enable you to identify the universal spirituality behind each ritual and ceremony and be able to devise your own religion neutral exercises and participatory symbols.

Teaching it like this engages them in Guru Nanak's mission. He becomes a hero with whom they can all identify, from which they can all learn. Pupils see beyond the unusual symbols on the surface to the universal spirituality that links us all, to the universal quest to live in harmony with one another, connected to ourselves and to our community and perhaps to the other.

This Gurdwara is quickly made and is a lesson I did on a commute to lower school and in a non specialist room. You can read about it and see pictures of in the photographic tour in **Making RE Make Sense**. Future lessons can take place in it.

This is what you need

- Four to six large white sheets to cover the floor
- A cardboard box or small table to form the bed or plinth for the Guru Granth Sahib
- A large cushion to hold the Guru Granth Sahib
- A large suitable book to represent the Guru Granth Sahib
- Two pieces of attractive cloth to cover it
- A large attractive cloth to go over all of it
- Something to represent a whisk to move the air
- A large box could be cut out and covered in silver foil to form a canopy for the Granth
- Some passages from the holy book for pupils to read
- Fresh flowers to put in vases near the Granth
- Saris for the girls to wear if possible
- Examples of the five k's
- Naan bread or preferably chapatti
- Lentil dhal or vegetable curry (optional)
- Music from world CDs
- CD player.

This is what you do

1. Ask pupils to remove their shoes and leave them on the edge of the classroom with their bags
2. Explain what you want them to do .You may want to list it on the board or projector. The key to what the children are creating is a community place and everything in it will reflect that and so the way they create it will be important
3. Put on music to create atmosphere while they work
4. Move all the furniture to the sides
5. Spread the sheets as smoothly as possible. Pupils can sit in a circle on them.
6. At one end create the plinth and canopy for the Guru Granth Sahib(pupils must not sit with their back to it.
7. Add the flowers
8. In the centre of the room place the five k's and dishes of Langar
9. When the children have taken their places in a circle on the floor, fade the music to gain silence and leave the music to play gently in the background.
10. Take your own place on the floor and welcome pupils to this community place. This is a re creation of a real community centre . Let us begin to explore what kind of community it is .

11. We have taken off our shoes – what does this suggest?

12. We are sitting in a circle – what does that mean?

13. We are sitting on the floor – what is that about ?

14. Why is the floor covered with white cloths?

You should get answers relating to unity, equality ,sharing , specialness and purity. Make links to the buildings the pupils designed in their ideal community lesson.

15. What have we created at the end of the circle ? We have a special book. How do we know it is special. It is not resting on the ground .it has a special cover and flowers nearby. You may wish to share some of the words from the Guru Granth Sahib at this point. Pupils can unpack the meaning. At this point they will still be unaware that they are sitting in the recreation of a Gurdwara. If you have Sikhs in the class it might be a good idea to take them aside at the beginning of the lesson and ask them not to give the game away – discuss what treating a book in this way might mean. Relate it to their ideals and where they put them in their own community centres.

16. Look at the artefacts in the middle – what might these be -symbols of the community which we will learn about later.

17. Why do you think there is food? What might sharing it together mean ?

18. Let me tell you a story....

You could teach this story in an interactive way, involving the pupils in the re telling. You could prepare the scriptural quotations and information about the key words for pupils to read out during the story. You could also increase the interactive element of the story by putting some of the dialogue on card so that the pupils can read out points where the Guru answers his critics.

7: The story of Guru Nanak

On the 15th of April 1469 a little boy was born in the Pujab in India in a village 73 kilometres from Lahore. He was born to Raj Bular and his wife Tripta, brother to a little girl called Nanki who was five years old.

Raj Bular was landlord of the village. This little boy is going to be very important to our story. His name was Nanak and he grew up to become the founder of Sikhism, the newest of the world's six traditions.

Sikh means disciple
Guru means teacher

In order to understand how he came to do this we need to understand something of the world in which he lived.

Nanak was born in India in an area which was Hindu but which was ruled by the Moguls, great Rajas who were Muslims. They have left much beautiful art, such as the Taj Mahal, for us to enjoy. The conversion of this area to Islam was often done through force and violence, not something which most people associate with the love of God and the spiritual path.

Times were hard for everyone, except the upper classes. Not because of poverty but because of cruel leadership. The area had been invaded by Muslims who discriminated among their own followers and also the Hindus. There were many different sects and groupings who each had to pay heavy taxes. The rulers were mostly unjust and tyrannical lusting for wealth and power.

Slavery was permitted. The life of women was miserable. They did not have equal rights or education, their purpose in life was to marry husbands chosen for them and to bear children. In many communities it was customary for the widow to be burned alive on the funeral pyre of her husband. While it was made to seem like an act of devotion to her husband it saved families the trouble of supporting a useless female. Widows were not permitted to re marry.

Both Islam and Hinduism are deeply spiritual religions, but like many faiths, at certain times in their history, their beliefs have been taken over by material minded leaders, interpreting the scriptures for their own power and gain.

Hinduism is a religion without a founder going back to the times of animism and hunting magic. It developed into a wonderful and inspiring belief in one god, Brahman, the universal life force.

Hinduism teaches that the life force or Atman is within each human and the goal of life is to become aware of this through controlling the selfish desires of the body and realising that the material world is just an illusion, impermanent, ever changing and decaying. Hinduism teaches that it takes many lifetimes of re birth in order to learn this lesson and become one with Atman ending the cycle of rebirth.

Many Hindus could not understand the scriptures and had been taught that salvation from the pain and suffering of this life could only happen as the result of many long and expensive rituals which kept priests and rulers in positions of power. Hindus had to pay a pilgrimage tax when visiting holy places.

The Caste system

A rigid system of dividing society had arisen called the caste system. In the beginning this had been a way of seeing that everyone, whatever their job, had an important and valuable role in society. There were four groups to which everyone belonged.

Brahmins – these were the priests

They lived with few possessions. They were the spiritual leaders whose job it was to teach people about unselfishness and the dangers of greed. They were to show people the way to higher rebirth until they were not reborn again. They did this through teaching the scriptures and teaching about the importance of doing good.

Kshatriyas - were the rulers

These people were wealthy but they had a responsibility to govern their lands fairly, with justice and to look after everyone else. They should defend their people in times of war.

Sudras - were the labourers

These people might not have very much education or earn a great deal but they were vital in getting all the hard physical work done to help everyone else. It was the duty of the three castes to look after them and make sure they were treated fairly for all their hard work.

This started off as a very good idea but can you guess what actually happened over time ?

The caste system became very rigid, each group regarding the one below it as inferior. No one was allowed to mix with other castes socially or marry out of it.

By and large when you were born you were destined to follow in your father or mother's footsteps. The only way out was through reincarnation – being *born* into a higher caste as a result of your good deeds.

Worse still, a lower group was created formed of all those who did the humblest and dirtiest tasks. They were called **outcastes**. They became known as the **untouchables**

Guru Nanak

From a very early age Nanak's parents found him to be a thoughtful and spiritual boy. He thought constantly about the divine creator. He had been brought up as a Hindu – and came to believe that the way God was worshipped through rituals and ceremonies, sometimes without a sincere heart, was not right. He thought the inequalities in society through the caste system and the treatment of women was wrong.

At the age of eleven he was to go through the sacred ceremony which is the way Hindu boys are initiated. At that time it was also a symbol of the caste to which you belonged. As the teacher went to put it over his head, Nanak caught his wrist and demanded to know its purpose. He also asked if it would last. He argued against it. He is said to have spoken these words, speaking of wearing a different kind of thread. Can you see what he meant?

**“Woven from the cotton of compassion and the thread of contentment
With the knot of continence (self control) and the strength of truth
O teacher, if you have such a thread for the soul, then put that on
This will not break or be soiled, it will neither burn nor perish”.**

His father realised that it was useless trying to make him take part. He seemed so down that his father called a doctor. Nanak commented

**“When the doctor was called he began by feeling the pulse, the simpleton
does not realise that the pain is in the heart “**

Eventually, his father sent him to live with his sister and not wanting to be a burden he accepted the job she had found him as a storekeeper. He continued to meditate and pray constantly. One morning he failed to return from his daily bathing and meditating in a stream.

He was gone for three days and stories tell that he had a mystical experience. He was taken into the presence of the creator and given a bowl of **amrit** (nectar) from which to drink which would give him extraordinary powers and the knowledge that he was to return to his life and preach the Name of the True One.

When he returned he declared

“There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim”

and then he spoke what has become known as

The Mul Mantra

**There is but one supreme protector
The only true one
The creator,
All pervasive,
Without fear,**

**Without anger,
Eternal is his manifestation,
Free from birth and re birth,
Realised only by his grace.
At the beginning he was.
True through the ages,
At present he is.
O Nanak, and evermore shall remain so.**

This became the first prayer to be recited by Sikhs every morning.

After this Nanak made four great journeys – **Udasi** preaching his message, speaking against caste and empty rituals and prayer without sincerity and concentration.

Everywhere he went he composed poetry which became part of the **Adi Granth**, the Sikh scriptures.

**Mere talk cannot lead you to heaven,
righteous conduct can be your salvation**

Here are some stories from the Udasi

1) The story of the water

Nanak saw pilgrims in a river taking part in a ceremony. They were scooping water and throwing it towards the rising sun and chanting mantras. He asked them what they were doing. They replied that they were offering water to their ancestors to quench their thirst. At that Nanak began to do the same thing, they asked him what he was doing, he replied “watering my fields in Kartapur” The pilgrims laughed and began to make fun of him, asking how water could reach his fields. The Guru expressed great surprise and wondered how if the water he threw could not reach his fields which were not so far away, that their water could reach souls no longer on earth, and who, in any case, had no need of food or drink.

2) On another occasion he stood watching Puja (worship)

This was a ceremony of worship involving oil lamps, striking brass plates and ringing bells before images of the gods. At the end the teacher asked why he did not take part. Nanak replied that God could not be found in wooden sculptures made by men.

He described God in a great poem which contains these words

**You have thousands of eyes but no eye
Thousands of forms but no form
Thousands of feet but no foot
The same light is within everyone
The light of God
Whose glow illumines all.**

3) On another occasion he came to a village

The villagers gave him a hostile reception. As he left he uttered a blessing saying "may the village thrive ". Next day , another village was just the opposite and greeted his teaching with enthusiasm. When he left this one he said "May it become deserted"

His companions were shocked until Nanak explained that it would be best if the first village stayed as it was so the people did not spread their unpleasantness and that the others spread their friendship and good nature everywhere they went.

4) On the road they came to an inn offering free food and accommodation

It was owned by a man named Sajjan. He waited until the travellers , attracted by such an excellent offer were asleep and then robbed them of all they had. All night Nanak remained awake chanting and singing, much to Sajjan's annoyance. Finally Sajjan was so affected by the words that he begged Nanak for teaching and salvation

5) Nanak came to Mecca in Arabia, the centre of the Muslim world

One night he fell asleep with his feet pointed towards the Kaaba. In the morning he was told off for being disrespectful. He asked politely if the teacher could tell him where god was not, so that he could point his feet in that direction.

In 1522 he returned home to live as a householder again and set up a community kitchen to feed anyone who came to hear his teachings, serving anyone whatever religion or caste. He died after naming his successor in 1539.

The Ten Gurus

There followed eight more gurus who carried on the teachings of Guru Nanak. Their wisdom, poetry and teaching continued to be collected as inspiration to their followers. As the ideas spread, they met with a mixture of hostility and support . summarise the gurus , emperor akbar , the haromandir The ninth guru was imprisoned, tortured and beheaded. The tenth guru made dramatic changes which secured the future of Sikhism

Vocabulary/flash cards

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Sikh | disciple |
| Adi Granth | Sikh writings |
| Mool Mantra | prayer said each morning |
| Amrit | Nectar shared at initiation to express equality |
| Gurdwara | Meeting place for the Sikh community |
| Udasi | Journeys of Guru Nanak |

Guru Nanak is an important figure in world history because

.....
.....
.....

Levelled essay

1. Describe the society into which Guru Nanak was born pointing out its problems
(Level three: facts)
2. Describe Nanak's religious experience and the Udasi
(Level three : facts. Level four: why, because)
3. Describe his return and what he believed,. Your account should explain how his beliefs affected individuals and society **(level five : affects of belief on a person, family or community. Level six : the variety of belief within a tradition)**
4. In what ways do you think Guru Nanak is important in world history?
(Level seven: critical analysis)

7: Stories of the Gurus

What follows is an overview of some of the important contributions of the nine Gurus. Who followed Guru Nanak. They give a sense of the growing community of men and women, the rise of significant meeting places and centres and the relationship of tolerance and harmony the Sikhs sought with Islam and Hinduism. The dramatic story of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, which follows, has a whole chapter to itself, in which the class can take part in a re enactment of the formation of the **Khalsa**.

Using these stories in class

They can simply **be read or told to the class**, or the class could take turns in reading about each one to the rest of the group.

Pupils could be given a Guru to **research** for homework in twos or threes and the results of their labours could be presented to the class. **Each group could prepare a PowerPoint presentation.**

I think it would be particularly effective if pupils were **able to speak in role as the Guru**, introducing themselves and describing their achievements.

As the achievement of each Guru is presented it will be important to link their lives and work to the ideal community that the pupils created and then discovered again in the lesson on creating the Gurdwara.

Guru Nanak, 1469- 1539

See his story in the previous chapter .

Guru Angad, born 1504. Guru 1539 -1552

The second Guru was chosen by Nanak because of his loyalty and obedience. His name was Lehna. Nanak changed it to **Angad**, which is thought to be a pun on the Punjabi word "Ang" meaning "**limb**" saying that Guru Angad was his limb.

He composed 62 couplets of what became the Sikh scriptures. The followers of the Sikh path were called the **Panth which literally means "the path"**. **Under his**

leadership, the Panth continued to be a religious movement open to everyone from all walks of society.

Guru Amar Das, born 1479. Guru 1552-1574

The third Guru. His home was near what later became the town of **Amritsar**. The Guru became a Sikh after hearing the daughter of Guru Angad singing one of the Guru's compositions.

This story shows the impact and power of singing the word in the Sikh tradition.

The Panth was growing. The Guru appointed **22Manjiis**. Both men and women. To preach and teach the practice of **Nam Simran**, which shows how large the new movement had become.

Guru Amar Das emphasised the practice of **langar strongly**. **The Muslim Emperor Akbar** visited him and sat with people of lesser status to take Langar

Guru Ram Das, born 1534. Guru 1574-1581

The fourth Guru established a number of towns, the most significant being near a hut where it was said Guru Nanak came to meditate by a pool known as the pool of nectar, **amrit**. It became the site of **Amritsar** and the **Harimandir Sahib**, the word Amritsar being a combination of Amrit and sar meaning pool. Tradition says that Guru Ram Das excavated the pool to create the Sarovar at Amritsar

Guru Arjan, born 1563. Guru 1581-1606

The Fifth Guru was the first to be born a Sikh. It was he who constructed the Ram Das Sarovar and the building of the Harimandir Sahib, which became the focus for Sikh spirituality the world over. Fifty years from the death of Nanak, the Panth was now a significant movement. In 1604, the Guru's other great contribution was completed, the compilation of the Adi Granth, the Sikh scripture.

This was a high point for the new era of peace and progress for the new community, having the interest of the Emperor Akbar with some suggesting that the foundation stone of the Harimandir was actually laid by the **Sufi Mian Mir** and culminating in the compilation of their own holy book.

The story does not end happily: Emperor Akbar's successor was jealous of the fifth Guru's power. He was charged with sedition and creating discord in the community. He was tortured and killed, becoming the first Sikh martyr

Guru Hargobind, born 1595. Guru 1606 – 1644

The sixth Guru became the leader of the Panth at age seven and was imprisoned by the Muslims. He wore two swords, one of **miri**, symbolising the kind of authority wielded by the Emperor and a second one representing **Piri**. Spiritual authority. From then on the concept of **miri piri**, became part of the concept of Guruship. From this time the Sikh place of worship acquired the name **Dharamsala** and he also created **Akai Takht**, the throne of the timeless one, which became the centre of temporal (of this earth) authority for the Sikhs.

Gur Har Rai, born 1630. Guru 1644 – 1661

The Seventh Guru. His reaffirmation of the sacredness of scripture is told in the following story. Emperor Aurangzeb has become suspicious of Sikh loyalty and had been told that the Adi Granth contained anti Islamic writing. The Guru sent his fourteen year old son Ram Rai to defend the case of the Granth. The boy explained the passages that had upset the Emperor as errors made in the copying. The Guru told his son that he would never be permitted to look upon his father's face again and the boy remained for the rest of his life at the Emperor's court.

Guru Har Krishnan, born 1656. Guru 1661- 1664

The eighth Guru died of smallpox having nursed victims until he himself became infected and died at the age of only eight. Even at such a young age he showed signs of being filled with the spirit of God and remains an inspiration to Sikh children.

Guru Tegh Bahadur, born 1621. Guru 1664 -1675

The ninth Guru lived at a time when the Emperor Aurangzeb was demolishing mandirs and building mosques in their stead. According to tradition, a group of Brahmins asked the Guru to help protect them from the Emperor's conversion attempts. Accounts spread that the Guru was collecting money and recruits to lead a revolt against the Emperor. He was summoned before the Emperor and ordered to convert or perform a miracle. When he refused he was beheaded.

Guru Gobind Singh born 1666. Guru 1675-1708

The tenth and last Guru created the Khalsa , the pure ones, and declared there were to be no more gurus. Instead the Adi Granth was installed as Guru for evermore.

8:Creating the Khalsa

Here is the story which tells how the Khalsa was formed .
You could read it to the class or give it to them read afterwards as part of their homework. An experiential acting out of it follows

Guru Gobind Singh

In the early hours before dawn on 22nd December 1666 a son was born to Mata Gujri, wife of the ninth guru, Teg Bahadur, who had been killed. His name was Gobind Das. At the same time in a distant village, a Muslim holy man looked at the sky and bowed his head toward the east. His disciples questioned him, asking why, against Muslim custom, he bowed in the direction of the rising sun ? He answered, telling them that in that direction there had been born a soul who would re establish morality and destroy evil in this land.

He travelled to Patna to visit the new born baby and lay before him two clay vessels, one containing milk, the other water . The baby touched both. The assembled Sikhs asked the meaning of this offering and the baby's gesture. He replied that the boy would be important to both Hindus and Muslims treating them both equally.

He took over from his father at only nine years old. He was a strong, active boy and a good scholar. He studied the scriptures of other religions, asking that they be translated so that Sikhs could read and learn from them.

He preached love and equality of all mankind.
He thought that the moral life, sharing and courage in personal conduct were important. He asked for people to perform good deeds, protect the weak and to resist tyranny and injustice.

Grant me this boon that I may never shirk from right action

**The Mandir and the mosque are the same, as are the puja and the Namaz.
All men are the same, but many do not realise this.**

He glorified the sword as a symbol for fighting tyranny and injustice

I bow with devotion to the holy sword

He seems to speak of the sword and god as one

**I bow to the wielder of the sword, The possessor of all weapons
The ultimate in knowledge
And the mother of all people.
He is the destroyer of evil and the punisher of the tyrant.**

The sword however was not meant for aggression or for creating injustice. It was the symbol for self respect to be used only in self defence and then only as a last resort.

The rulers of the hill states took exception to his teaching about equality of all men and his disregarding caste. His army was growing and he taught them military skill. He fought a great battle in 1688 at only 22 years old.

One day in 1699 Sikhs had gathered far and wide to pay homage to the Guru. He appeared in the middle of a service with a fierce look on his face and an unsheathed sword. He said that his sword thirsted for blood so would one of the Sikhs volunteer his head.

There was a stunned silence. No one moved .

On the third request , one man stepped forward. He was led to a tent nearby. A few minutes later the Guru appeared with his sword dripping blood and asked for another volunteer. Many began to leave but a second man stepped forward. He was led to the tent. Three more times the guru made his request and the congregation waited fearfully.

After a while, Gur Gobind Das appeared with all five men dressed in saffron robes and turbans. They were all carrying swords. He announced that they were the **Pianj Piarey**, the five beloved who were the end result of Nanak's revelation. They would form the heart of the faith which he christened

Khalsa

The pure, or god's own, a selfless, casteless and military brotherhood

He administered **Amrit** to them, recalling the experience of Nanak before god. The five men were from five different castes but had all drunk from the same bowl and were re named with the same surname

Singh - which means lion

All caste distinctions had been obliterated and the sharing of the name indicated that they were brothers

They were now required to wear the five symbols of the khalsa.

- 1Kesh** – uncut hair
- 2.kirpan** - sword
- 3. Kacch** – knee length loose fitting under trousers
- 4.Kanga** - a small comb
- 5.Kara** - a steel bangle

- They were commanded to worship the one god
- To protect and help the weak
- Resist the oppressor
- To consider all human beings equal regardless of caste or religion
- Women were also treated equally and admitted to the khalsa. They were called

Kaur - which means prince

When this was over, he asked the beloved to administer the Amrit to himself. He then changed his name from Gobind Das to Gobind Singh so that he became both the guru and the follower, expressing the equality he preached in his own life.

Terrible battles took place as the surrounding rulers tried to stop this belief in equality. In 1705 his two elder sons and all but five Sikhs were slaughtered. The remaining Sikhs commanded him to save himself to reform the khalsa. He fled in darkness. His enemies captured his wife and two younger sons. The little boys were nine and six. When they refused to convert, they too, were killed.

At the age of forty two he was struck by an assassin. Surviving the wound he pulled a bow before it was properly healed and died of the bleeding.

Before he died he accomplished two great things, the first was to create a new religion based on equality and respect for all humans whatever their religion, caste or sex. The second was to forbid that there would be any living successor to him and that hence forth the guru would be the Granth Sahib, the collection of writings. He declared that where there would be five meetings together there he would be.

From that day in 1708 the scripture has been known as **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** (Lord, teacher and master)

The Sikhs continued to be persecuted but throughout all their most precious possession was the sacred Granth.

Maharajah Ranjit Singh (1780 –1839) created a Sikh kingdom. He did so in the name of the Khalsa reading from the scriptures at the beginning of each day

The book is opened at random at all religious ceremonies to take commands from it. It is always kept covered and at night the book is closed and covered with one or two layers of cloth. At all times it rests on a small bed and usually under a raised canopy. In homes where copies are kept the same procedure is followed.

Sikh beliefs and practices

The essence of being a Sikh is harmony, universal love and honest labour, moderation in living and complete faith in one god.

- A Sikh is required to pray three times a day

- A Sikh should attend congregation and listen to religious teaching
- A Sikh should worship the one god and abstain from gambling, drugs, tobacco and alcohol.
- A Sikh should take part in social service
- He should help out at the Gurdwara. This might be cooking, cleaning, cleaning the shoes or helping to repair the building.
- A Sikh should undergo initiation
- After taking Amrit a Sikh is called a child of Guru Gobind Singh
And therefore all Sikhs are brothers and sisters.
- A Sikh should only have sex with their husband or wife
- There is no priesthood. Any man or woman, knowing the procedures and able to read the Guru Granth Sahib may conduct a religious ceremony.

Lesson Recipe

This is what you need

- Materials for creating the Gurdwara, as before
- Warm milk and honey in a flask for Amrit
- Cup to drink it from
- Food for Langar (you could ask pupils to bring in sweets and crisps to share or have strips of pitta bread and some dip to pass round)
- Bowl for the Langar
- Five saffron coloured pieces of fabric - muslin is ideal
- If you can get it, a child's toy scimitar. Ones that are painted with a gold blade would be best rather than grey plastic
- A screen behind which the five beloved can be taken – two desks put end up on two other desks would suffice . cover them with material.
- The five ks or things to represent them if you do not have authentic artefacts
- Overhead pictures of modern Panj Piarey
- Indian Music
 - CD player

This is what you do

- 1.Pupils create the Gurdwara as before
 - 2.Sit in circle on the floor with shoes off
 - 3.In the middle lay out the Langar
- Put the five k's under a cover
lay the scimitar in the middle

4 Activity :.Ask children in twos or small groups to create a thought shower about all the uses they could think of for the scimitar - apart from killing someone. How many different things could it symbolise
The purpose of this activity is to help them to see the sword the chief symbol of Sikhism as something other than a weapon

Take feedback

The most useful answers could be written on paper in felt pen and placed in a circle around the Langar. Pupils will be unaware at this point why they are useful

5.Re enact the story of Guru Gobind Singh. Tell the class that they will be the characters in the story. They are the Sikh community who have arrived for this great gathering. You are going to go behind the screen and emerge in role as Guru Gobind Singh

Go behind the screen and emerge carrying the scimitar. Demand a person to satisfy the swords craving for blood.

Collect five pupils one by one and take them behind the screen.
Come back each time with a cloth stained with red food colouring which gets more and more red each time.

The pupils should emerge wearing the saffron cloth in a sash

They will sit in the centre of the Gurdwara and take Amrit.
Introduce the five K's

6. Tell the rest of the story of the guru and end the lesson with all the class sharing Amrit and Langar

De brief /plenary

What was Guru Gobind Singh's contribution to Sikhism

What do the class think would have happened to the Sikhs without his courage and cleverness in forming the Khalsa.

Vocabulary/flash cards

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Ten Gurus | founders of Sikhism |
| Panj Piarey | Five Beloved |
| Khalsa | The pure ones or god's own |
| Singh | lion name given to all Sikh males to show they are brothers |
| Kaur | Prince |
| Kesh | Uncut hair symbol of courage and faith. It made it impossible to deny being a Sikh if captured |
| Kirpan | Sword. symbol of fighting for justice and opposing tyranny |
| Kacch | loose under trousers, necessary for riding and fighting |
| Kanga | Comb. Symbol of the uncut hair |
| Kara | Steel bangle. Symbol of unity and purity like steel |

Cloze procedure/writing frame

After Guru Nanak there were nine more *gurus*. They inspired the growing number of Sikhs. Sikh means *disciple*. Each one composed scriptures and poetry which were added to the Adi Granth along with much that was good from the Hindu and Muslim scriptures. The Sikhs continued to be a *tolerant* and loving people fighting for *equality* and *freedom* from oppression. They tried to do this by peaceful means but *persecution* of them became worse. The ninth guru was *beheaded*. His son, Guru Gobind Das who was born in 1666 called the Sikh community together for a great *congregation*.

Suddenly he appeared in front of them waving a sword

Describe what happened next in your own words.(Explaining why you think he did this will give you level four:why,because .Explaining how he affected the Sikhs will give you level five.)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

that day he formed the *Khalsa* which means the *pure ones*. Men were given the surname *Singh* which means *lion* to show that they were all *brothers* Women were given the name *Kaur* which means *prince*. They all drank from a single cup of *Amrit* which meant

.....
He died in 1708 from an assassins' wound that had not healed properly. The day before he died he declared that he was to have no *human* successor. His successor was to be. (Explaining why he did this will improve the quality of your work .)

.....
.....

Levelled essay

1) Describe the life of Guru Gobind Singh. In this section discuss his decision to use violent resistance and his use of the symbolism of the sword (**level four: why, because**)

2. Describe what happened when he formed the Khalsa at the great congregation in 1699. why did he decide to this ? (**Doing this task well could take you up to level seven: critical analysis**)

3 In what ways was Guru Gobind Singh a great leader and thinker ? What difference did he make to the future of Sikhism ?

(level seven: critical analysis. Comparing his leadership to that of someone like Mahatma Gandhi would take your work to level eight.)

9: A religion-neutral exercise to help pupils understand Nam Simran and the Sikh goal of liberation

The information and inspiration for this chapter came from chapters 5, 6 and 7 of 'understanding Sikhism' by W Owen Cole. This will provide valuable help for anyone wishing to teach Sikhism at examination level or to gain a sense of the spirituality of the Sikhs, which goes beyond mere information, in order to teach meaningful and inspirational lessons to classes of any age.

This lesson belongs with the one which follows it on understanding *sewa* - service to humanity - which is the consequence of *Nam simran*. The lesson on *sewa* does not have separate tasks, as the understanding is encompassed in the tasks that follow this lesson.

The vocabulary is there for GCSE pupils. It need not be used.

If pupils have studied Buddhism and Hinduism, it would be interesting to discuss the differences and similarities between the ideas of Oneness, God, the self and liberation.

What is Nam Simran and the Sikh goal of liberation?

**"As fragrance dwells in a flower
and reflection in a mirror,
So does God dwell in every soul;
Seek him therefore, in thy self."**

Guru Nanak

Contemplation of the Name, **Nam simran** through **shabad**, the word, is how Sikhs realise, and become aware of, **Maya**, which for the Sikhs means *delusion*. It is

different from the Hindu concept of *illusion*, where the real world is seen as - in a sense - not real, because of its impermanence.

Guru Nanak saw the ordinary human perception of daily life as delusion because the apparent **duality** (I am separate from you and the rest of the universe) is not real. He called a person who lived under this delusion **manmukh**. It means a person who is self-centred, full of the importance of their own ego. A person following their own "**man**" has a false sense of self. It is not good because this path leads to unhappiness both for the individual and for society.

Man is not the same as the word we use to describe a male or sometimes human kind. It refers to a false sense of self inside a person.

"One who puts his trust in his own man is one befouled. It does not recognise the Word."

Guru Nanak

However, when this man becomes God-centred, it becomes a precious pearl.

Guru Nanak described it thus:

"The 'man' of the mammon (wealth) worshipper is like a mad elephant wandering about in a forest of delusion."

Maya in Sikhism refers not to illusion, for **Maya** is real, but to false values and that which is not true. **Maya** enables a person to forget the fact of death and our true eternal spiritual nature and pursue drink, drugs, money, the satisfaction of the flesh and the ego. Why is it delusion? Because you cannot take it with you.

Maya is what deludes us into judging those around us by the clothes they wear and the possessions they own. **Maya** is the delusion we feel when we judge that our family doesn't have the right kind of car to impress our friends.

The Guru says **Maya** has maddened man's mind. He has wasted his life in greed, but implanting Nam within saves man from it:

"Meditating on the Guru's word, one is ferried across the dreadful world ocean."

How does meditating on the name, Nam Simran, work? It works because through it one realises that duality is false - there is no 'self separate from the spirit of God, which is in all life. It affects the way we look at other people:

. Without Nam, no one is man's friend and comrade. A manmukh is suspicious of others, always suspecting a person's motives and doesn't trust easily. A manmukh judges others by their own self-centred view of the world.

As a man's desire so his state of mind becomes. (He becomes the kind of person that his greed creates. His actions will be motivated by what he can get out of it - what's in it for him.)

“As one's deeds are, so he is attuned”

(you are what you do).

“Seeking the true Guru, man finds the place of peace”

(no longer irritated and uncomfortable, restless and never satisfied).

“Meeting with the Sat Guru, he is blessed with right understanding and remains merged in the love of the true name”

(seeing life in the true way and no longer driven by insatiable greed and selfishness, a person discovers real and lasting happiness and peace of mind).

“Liberation lies in being focused on and trusting only in God and obeying the divine hukam”

(command or order).

The particular burden that that the human suffers from is **haumain**. It is made up of two words, I and mine. It is **self-centredness**, but is also a condition in which most of us live, an unenlightened state. For the Sikh view of life, while it might be possible to lead a moral life while subject to haumain, this attachment to worldly things will lead to rebirth - why do you think this might be?

The five passions

The Gurus speak of five evils or passions:

Kam lust

Krodh anger

Lobh covetousness

Moh attachment

Ahankar pride and arrogance

These contribute to **haumain** and the goal of liberation is to free oneself from them

The path of liberation

One who has come to see that truth is described as **gurmukh – one whose face is turned to the Guru**. A **gurmukh** is a person who is rid of **haumain** and a person in whose mind the man in the divine word, **Shabad**, abides.

His or her life is dedicated to meditating on **Nam** and serving humanity in the form of the guru:

"The wisdom of God is the ship of good deeds that takes one across the world ocean."

"The gurmukh is the sacred pool of liberation. Manmukhs go on transmigrating and suffering the pangs of life and death. The gurmukh forsakes ego, whereas the manmukh burns himself continuously in the fire of egoism."

Bhai Gurdas

Mukti or **moksha** is the goal. It is about being released to a new spiritually healthy, wholesome and more blissful life. It is a state that can be enjoyed by practising Nam Simran in this life.

This state is **Jivan Mukht** - being liberated here and now. There is no Sikh eschatology.

"The Sikh Gurus did not discuss this. They were far more interested in the spiritual liberation of humanity than in speculation upon the cosmic future of the universe."

Owen Cole, 'Understanding the Sikhs'

Let us try to grasp all this through some religion-neutral exercises.

Lesson recipe for understanding the Sikh goal of liberation

This is what you need

- . Circle of chairs
- . Sikh ragas
- . Keywords on display (later in this chapter)
- . Printouts of the summary of Nam Simran from the beginning of this chapter

This is what you do

1. Introduce the lesson objective, which is to understand the Sikh view of liberation. Sikhs believe in the transmigration of souls. Link this with earlier lessons on Hinduism and Buddhism, if pupils have studied them. Emphasise that although what they will learn today is similar, it is also quite distinct from the other traditions.

With older pupils it would be helpful to explain the concepts by reading and discussing the introduction to this lesson. The religion-neutral exercises that follow will help it make sense.

The Sikh view of the world is based on the essential oneness of all things. They experience this through meditation, often to Ragas, as you may have heard when

you came in. This is rather like the Hindu Om ■

2. Activity: Reflective exercise; stilling the thoughts

- 1 Close your eyes and concentrate on your breathing.
- 2 Push your thoughts aside and concentrate on the music.
- 3 Feel the rhythmic vibration.

4 We will listen to this for a moment or so. When the music fades, open your eyes and come back into the classroom.

Debriefing the reflective exercise:

. How did that feel?

- You may get words such as relaxing, peaceful
- Explore why it was relaxing and peaceful
- Get to things like the absence of thoughts which are often worries, doubts anxieties, things we have to remember
- It is soothing because it is an opportunity to just 'be'
- What difference does the music make?

- Did anyone get a sense of forgetting they were in a classroom?

This activity helps us get a little glimpse into the **value of music in Sikhism**, especially when it is combined with **Nam Simran**, contemplation of the Name.

This is the main engine, as it were, that stimulates and motivates the Sikh community towards care for their fellow man.

Now we are going to do a reflective exercise that will help us to get a sense of how that might work. Sikhs contemplate God, so to help us understand this we are going to think about someone we love and think about how that makes us feel. As with all our exercises, you do not have to take part if you do not wish to.

3. Activity: A religion neutral exercise, to help us understand how Sikhs are affected by Nam Simran, contemplation of the name. Thinking about someone we care about

In this exercise I am going to invite you to think about someone you care about and who cares about you. As we go through the exercise, be aware of how it makes you feel.

- 1 Close your eyes and watch the breath
- 2 Think about your special person
- 3 Think about why they mean so much to you
- 4 Think about how their care for you makes you feel

5 Think about how they express their care and appreciation of you

6 Think about how you can express your care and appreciation of them

7 How would that make them feel?

When you are ready, open your eyes and come back to the classroom

Debriefing the reflective exercise:

- What kinds of feelings did it raise?

. Expect things like warmth and happiness. For some who are separated from loved ones, there may be sadness.

- Relate it to **Nam simran**: how does thinking about people we care for make us feel. How does this kind of thought process inspire people to be better humans beings?

4. Exploring key ideas in liberation

Let us explore some of the key ideas Sikhs have about what makes a person happy and fulfilled and what makes them restless and unhappy.

If you have prepared for this by reading the lesson introduction, then check that the class understand the concepts. You could do this using the terms on display or give pupils a card to read out that the class can then discuss. The aim is to check that they understand.

You can distribute the cards through

- rolled up words in balloons which are popped.
- Blottered under chairs
- Lucky dip
- Pass the parcel – inside boxes which are passed round to music. When the music stops the person with the box opens it and explains the term
- A box with the answer goes the other way to help out anyone who is stuck.
- Or put the terms on paper which the pupils write round

Explain **Maya**

Explain **duality**

Explain **manmukh**

Explain **man**

Explain **haumain**

The Sikh view of a person is that the spirit or soul is not separate from others' or from the spirit of God. Meditating on the name and on the scriptures enables them to become aware of that. **Guru Nanak believed that music and singing made it easier for humans to respond.** I hope that what we have done today will help you to understand why they find that.

Let us do another reflective exercise to help us think about what is the 'real' us, this self or man that Guru Nanak talks about.

5. Activity: Reflective exercise; who am I?

- 1 Close your eyes and watch the breath.
- 2 Think about yourself.
- 3 Describe yourself in your mind.
- 4 Did you think of the flesh, bones and blood?
- 5 Is that how you would describe yourself? Is that the *real you*?
- 6 Think of how the body is mostly atoms, mostly space, constantly changing.
- 7 Think of how much your body has changed since you woke up this morning.
- 8 Picture yourself as a baby.
- 9 Think of yourself as you are now.
- 10 Imagine yourself when you are old.
- 11 Is that the *real you*?
- 12 Imagine that your skin colour has changed, along with the colour, texture and style of your hair.
- 13 You look different, but *are you a different person*?
- 14 When you are ready, open your eyes and come back into the classroom.

Debriefing the reflective activity on who am I?

- What has this helped us understand?
- This has helped us understand man.
- How would we describe it?
- Is it good or bad?

Guru Nanak said it could be both. If it lived with the delusion that it was separate and important then it led to selfishness. He described it as being like a mad elephant in a forest running about crazed.

Nanak talked about **haumain** which is made up two words, I and mine: it is about self-centredness.

For the person whose man realised that this was a delusion, the man was like a beautiful pearl giving great happiness. How could that be?

Sikhs talk about five passions which lead us astray. These are:

Kam lusting after things

Krodh anger

Lobh covetousness, wanting something that does not belong to us

Moh attachment to worldly things, greed

Ahankar pride or arrogance

Those who recognised the foolishness of this path were called **gurmukh**, which means those whose faces were turned towards the Guru.

People who recognised the true reality about Maya ." received a sense of **liberation** and true happiness no longer running around like a mad elephant in the forest of delusion.

This next exercise will help us recognise the two sides of man.

6. Activity: Reflective exercise on the five passions

As we think through how each of the five passions have affected us in our lives, be aware of how the words and thoughts make you feel. Notice the contrast as you get

a glimpse of the **manmukh** in all of us and also he **gurmukh** when we do what we know is the right thing.

1 Put on quiet music.

2 Read the following, pausing after each one.

3 **Kam** is lust - think of a time when you wanted something a lot , so much that it made you unhappy, resentful.

Remember how it made you feel.

4 Think of a time when you were generous. Remember how that made you feel

5 **Krodh** is anger. Think of a time when you were really angry.

Think about how that felt. Perhaps you said or did something hurtful to someone else: how did that feel?

6 Think of a time when you controlled that anger and did not do or say the hurtful things you wanted to.

7 Think of a time when you were angry with someone and then saw it another way.'

8 **Lobh** is covetousness. Think of a time when you wanted something that belonged to someone else and felt envious of them.

9 Think of a time when you were made aware of how lucky you are for what You have.

10 **Moh** is attachment to worldly things. Think of a time when you found it hard to share or give away something that belonged to you. It might have been an object or your time perhaps, or something you found and did not hand in to be reclaimed.

11 Think of a time when someone was generous towards you.

12 Think of a time when you were generous and shared or gave something away. How did that feel?

13 **Ahankar** is pride or arrogance. Think of a time when you thought you were better than someone else. Think of a time when you were too proud to say sorry or admit you were wrong.

14 Think of a time when someone forgave you for something you had done.

15 Think of a time when you forgave someone' How did that feel?

16 The guru sums it up like this:

„Because of haumain (self-centredness) many have died.“

17 Think about how that is true in the world today

18 When you are ready, come back to the classroom'

Debriefing the reflective exercise on the five passions:

- What did you become aware of about the self? How does that help us understand **manmukh** and **gurmukh**?
- How does thinking about people who care about us help us understand **Nam Simran**?

7. Circle discussion

- If people could live this teaching, how would it create an ideal community?
- .How does it relate to **Jivan Mukti**?
- What hurts most, a broken leg or a broken heart?
- . How long does a broken leg take to heal?
- . How long does a broken heart take?
- . Which heals quickest and easiest?
- . What would you rather have, satisfaction of the body or the soul?

8. Plenary: True/false/ discussion exercise - from a Sikh point of view

Give pupils two pieces of coloured card each. One colour represents true and the other false. Read out each statement in turn. Pupils hold up a card to represent whether the statement is true or false. Sometimes it is neither. Follow up the statements with deeper questioning, eg what did the Guru really say? What did he mean?

- Only God is real
- .Maya is illusion
- The natural human condition is delusion
- The delusion is that there is one god
- . Nanak rejected duality
- . Duality is a two-edged sword

- . God is beyond description in words
- . God is the Name
- Guru Nanak said "**As fragrance dwells in a flower and reflection in a mirror so God dwells in every soul; seek him therefore in thyself.**"
- . The word for self is man
- . Man is bad
- A person governed by manmukh is like a mad tiger
- . Haumain is the Sikh goal of liberation
- A person who has conquered haumain is gurmukh
- 'The goal of liberation is Mukti
- . The way to achieve it is through leaving the world to meditate alone
- A person who achieves liberation in this life is Jivan Mukhti

Follow-up materials

Vocabulary/flashcards on Nam Simran and the Sikh goal of liberation

Nam The Name, word for God, who cannot be expressed or described in words

Ram God

Shabad The divine word: very powerful, it has the ability to affect the heart of a person and to awaken them to the truth

Maya Delusion: specifically the delusion that our individual selves are separate from the universal spirit in all beings. Self-centredness, greed and selfishness are the result of Maya.

Duality The belief that there is separateness in the universe, that humans beings are separate rather than incarnate forms of the one Being.

Manmukh A person who is guided by self-centredness and the thoughts and desires of their own mind.

Man Self-centredness

Gurmukh A person whose face is set towards the Guru, the opposite of manmukh.

Liberation The state of being free from Maya and seeing life as it really is, a state of true happiness, fulfillment and satisfaction.

Hukam Command or order

Haumain Being in a state of self-centredness or self-reliance.

Five evils or passions

Kam (lust)

Krodh (anger)

Lobh (covetousness)

Ahankar (pride, arrogance)

Moh attachment to worldly things

Sewa Service to humanity

Mukti/Moksha The state of liberation from haumain and Maya can be achieved in this present life

Jivan Mukti Liberation during the present life

Jivan Mukh A person who is liberated

Cloze procedure/writing frame on Nam Simran and the Sikh goal of liberation

This sheet enables you to write up to Level 6.

- Level 3: facts.

- Level 4: why, because.
- Level 5: the effects of religion on a person, family or community.
- Level 6: the variety of belief within a tradition.

Guru Nanak taught that most human beings lived in a state of M _ _ _
 d _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ . The delusion was that the true state of the universe was
 d _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ .

This is what he meant :

.....

A person who lives under this delusion is suffering from h _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ which means
 s _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ .

They are m _ _ _ _ _ _ _ , Guru Nanak believed that such people could not be truly
 happy because they were like a crazy e _ _ _ _ _ _ _ in a f _ _ _ _ _ _ _ . A person who
 is manmukh is:

.....

The Guru taught that in fact:

"As f _ _ _ _ _ _ _ dwells in a flower
 And r _ _ _ _ _ _ _ in a m _ _ _ _ _
 so does God dwell in every s - - _ _
 Seek him therefore in thy s _ _ _ ."

The path to liberation is through Nam Simran which means:

.....

Through Nam Simran a person realises:

.....

A very important way of achieving this is through s ___ service to others. This means:

.....

A person who is freed from the delusion of Maya and sees the world as it really is, is G_____. This person is truly happy because:

.....

They may achieve I- - _____ - mukt, in this life. They would be called J _____, which means free or liberated soul. This means that they are free from:

.....

**Self Gurmuk delusion soul sewa liberation reflection fragrance duality
Mirror manmukh forest haumain Jivan Mukh Self-centred ness elephant**

Levelled essay on Nam Simran and the Sikh concept of liberation

The first two questions enable you to write up to level 6. Level 3: facts. Level 4: why, because. Level 5: the effects of religion on a person, family or community. Level 6: the variety of belief within a tradition.

- Question 3 enables you to write up to level 7: critical analysis.

- The last question enables you to write up to level 8: development through history and comparison between the traditions.
- Using quotations to illustrate your work will improve it.
- Showing evidence of further reading and research will improve your work. Remember to acknowledge your sources.
- .Remember to use specialist vocabulary wherever possible.

10: Exploring Sewa – selfless service

Since this lesson was first written around 2004, the advent of social media - and austerity - means that there are plenty of examples of the Sikh community practising Sewa , not just in Langar and the warm welcome all visitors are given to

the Gurdwara, but in feeding the homeless and providing food parcels to those who are struggling in Britain's cities

Khalsa Aid is an international relief organisation responding to crises anywhere in the world . **This is how they practice sewa - selfless service "Recognising the whole human race as one "**

Doing this lesson before looking at the work of this charity will bring the topic alive.

This is what you need

- A3 paper
- Coloured felt tips
- A3 posters with scriptural quotations used in the lesson for central display
- A3 paper with different jobs printed down the middle for activity on practising sewa
- Music for working to
- Empty tissue box
- A4 sheets of plain paper for final activity

This what you do

1 Class come in to music and sit in the circle

In a display in the middle are copies of the scriptural quotations used in the lesson on A3, so that all the pupils can see them . They will read them as they settle. On the board is the definition of sewa and the bullet points listed below.

2 Fade the music and introduce the lesson. This is what we are going to learn about today. Relate to the quotations and sayings everywhere.

The concept of **Sewa**, service to humanity, is central to the Sikh view of life. Sewa is the consequence of **Nam Simran** and the right response to **non duality**

This lesson will help us all think about what a life of service might mean for all human beings, whatever their religious belief.

Service is the highest ideal

Service is not humiliation

Service is a way of becoming enabled

Service is not slavery

Service is a way of **expressing** and **discovering** freedom

From **manmukh** and becoming **gurmukh**

Service is a way of Mukti

Service is a way of solving the world's Problems

Service is the opposite of selfishness

Service is the only **reasonable** way to live

The opposite brings destruction through war and damage to the environment

“Truth is high, but higher still is truthful living”

Service is the opposite of renunciation and asceticism, which the Guru
condemned

Put the following on the screen

“Not the ascetic way ,

But a life of truth and love

Amid the world's temptations

Is the secret of spiritual life.”

“Put away thy pride.

The essence of religion is humility,

Service , sympathy.

Not the yogi's garb and ashes,

Not the shaven head.

Not long prayers,

Not recitation and torture....”

Guru Nanak

2. Activity:

Create a thought shower of jobs with the class in which service to humanity is built in , for example:

Fire person, police service, nurses, doctors, lawyers, teachers, charity workers, paramedics, MPs.

Discussion :

Does doing one of these jobs automatically mean that one is living a life of service? How could you do one of these jobs and *not* be practising sewa. Let the class think it through.

- Being late
- Not turning up
- Going sick all the time
- Being unreliable
- Being drunk
- Taking bribes
- Stealing from the organisation
- Turning the other way or walking past in a crisis

How does a person perform these jobs *as real act of service*, not just doing the job they were paid for ?

- Going beyond the call of duty
- Making an effort and putting oneself out to help
- Being brave and rescuing others
- Being 100% reliable
- Volunteering
- Being prepared to do extra or stay late to help
- Being kind and compassionate and warm toward the people you deal with

Conclusion: What have we learned about sewa – selfless service?

It is not inbuilt in your job but is about your *attitude* to whatever you do

- Which kind of person enjoys their job the most ?
- Which person has the most job satisfaction?
- How do you know that ?

3. Activity: What does sewa mean?

Here is another list of jobs. That *do not* have service automatically built in built in . Before you start work you might like to add to the list the jobs that you are thinking of doing when you leave school.

- Businessman
- Rock star
- Computer technician
- Footballer
- Comedian
- Shop assistant
- Street cleaner
- Mortgage broker
- Insurance salesperson
- Factory worker
- Shelf stacker
- Stock controller

Write in one colour how a person full of **haumain**, a **manmukh** might do these jobs

Write in another colour how a person who is living a life of **service**, might do these jobs

Share by inviting the class to move around and look at each list

Debriefing the activity on what sewa means.

1. Is sewa just about being a Sikh?
2. Which kind of person would you hope to find doing these jobs?
3. Why?
4. What happens when a person is **manmukh**? We all suffer!
5. Share examples of what happened when someone did not do their job properly.
6. Share examples of a time when someone really made an effort to help you or your family.

Do you have to be a Sikh to do that ?

How far do we follow this in our own lives ?

This next activity may make us think about how good we are at it .

4.Activity on equality and status.

1.put this on the screen. You might also like to have it printed on A3 so the pupils can work in groups with felt tips writing on what they think each part means .

2. What do the class think this teaching from Guru Nanak is about?

“Among the low let my caste be the meanest.

Of the lowly, let me the lowliest be.

Let such be the men I know.

With such men let me keep company.

Why should I try to emulate the great?

Where the fallen have protected been

Is your grade and your goodness seen”

Guru Nanak

3..What do the class consider to be the lowliest job?

4. Cleaner ?

5. If you were a cleaner how would it make you feel?

6. 5. Create a thought shower as a class of all the jobs that exist within a school.

7. Eg teachers, secretaries, cleaners, site supervisor, head teacher, year heads, learning support assistants, T.As lab technicians, cooks lunch time supervisors – there are many more
8. Who is paid the most? Head teacher
9. Who is paid the least ? The cleaner
10. What would happen if we had no Head teacher for a month ? Would the school be able to continue running?
11. What would happen if the school were not cleaned for a month? Would it be able to continue running then ? how long could it continue ? what it would it be like after say, just two days?
12. What does it say about the value we put on jobs and the kind of service we receive?
13. Do we treat our cleaners with respect?
14. Do we make sure that we do not make life difficult for them by dropping litter and creating graffiti?
15. Do we speak to them ? Do we thank them for what they do ?
16. Do we make sure that we put our food and litter in the bin at lunchtime or “do we say “The dinner ladies can clean it up – its *their* job”
17. If you were a cleaner or lunchtime supervisor in a school, how would you want to be treated?
18. If we leave a mess deliberately , what are we saying about their value as human beings?

19. How would we feel if it was our parents?
20. Do we leave for our parents to clean up because it is their job?
21. In what sense is cleaning a *real example of sewa*? It can be neither pleasant or rewarding some of the time .

Reflective exercise on the effect of sewa on our own lives

1. Close eyes and watch the breath
2. What job do you do now? - Pupil, son, daughter, paid work?
3. Who do you depend on ?
4. How do others serve you ?

Pause

5. Who do you serve?
6. What duties, obligations and opportunities do you have to perform sewa in your life ?
7. How can you do it better?
8. How can you express appreciation to those who serve you?
9. How would that make them feel?
10. How would that make you feel?

When you are ready come back into the classroom

Under each chair are two pieces of paper.

- Take a moment to write down a form of sewa you can perform between now and next lesson. This will be totally confidential and private.
- When you have finished, fold the paper in four and put your name on the outside so that it can be given back to you while remaining totally private.
- Place it in this empty tissue box, which we will seal.
- Next lesson we will distribute them and you can see if you managed it .
- On the second piece of paper write what you will take away from the lesson today . Fold the paper and leave it in the middle

Plenary/debrief

Worship is worthship. It is about expressing gratitude and appreciation to the divine being. How does service connect with the idea of the one divine spirit in all things?

11 : Re enacting a Sikh wedding

This is a rite of passage that can be re enacted with the entire class. It can be as simple or elaborate as you wish. It could be an occasion for tasting some Indian food during **Karra Prasad** with plenty of sweets on the way. Children could bring in sweets, crisps and fruit to share.

A Sikh wedding is called **Anand Kaarj**, an act of bliss. Sikh marriages are very important for the whole community because they are about the linking of two families. This gives you the opportunity to involve everyone in the class.

What you need:

- Gurdwara set as before;
- Red shalwa , kameez and dupatta trimmed with gold
- Turban for the groom
- Jacket for groom
- Two rings
- CD player
- CD of Indian music
- Sword
- Scarf for Laavan
- Wedding garlands
- Parcels for gifts.
- Copper coins for gifts
- Sweets, crisps,
- Squash
- Plastic cups
- Indian food (optional)

This is what you do

Class enter to Indian music and sit in the circle. Key words are on the board. Introduce the lesson by discussing **Anand Kaarj**, marriage as an act of bliss. Explore the meaning of this with the class. Focus on the importance of the relationship, the responsibilities of marriage. The nature and depth of the discussion will depend on the age and maturity of the class.

- What is bliss ?
- What is needed to create bliss in marriage ?
- What destroys bliss?
- What would we look for in a partner ?
- Give each pupil a piece of paper and ask them to write down four qualities they would want in a life partner.
- Fold them up and put them in a container in the centre of the room.
- Pass the container and read them out in turn while another pupil writes them on the board.

- Ask the class to rank them
- Notice the similarities. What is it that we want as humans from marriage
- In my classes of largely white secular pupils tend to give faithfulness, generosity, kindness . Good looking is not a priority with older pupils.
- You could at this point explore whether others can recognise this sometimes more easily than we ourselves and begin to consider the advantages of arranged marriages .This is especially important in classes where that is the norm in the family.
- **Using the keywords** introduce and explore the role of the family in Sikh marriage. Is marriage a purely private and personal affair ? You may wish to make links with Jewish marriage where the wedding takes place under a Huppah, a canopy. The roof represents the privacy of marriage and the open sides, the fact that marriage affects the community.
- **Using key words** explore the symbolism of the marriage ceremony. **Laavan** circling the holy Granth. Why do the class think this is done. How do actions like these affect the people who take part. Once again reinforcing the point that ritual and liturgy (although it would not be appropriate to use these words in connection with Sikhism) are very powerful because they enable the people who take part to feel changed.

Preparing for the re enactment

1. Choose the principal figures , the bride and groom and their parents, then the brothers and sisters of the bride and groom and , finally, the special friends of the bride and groom. Everyone should have a part. By this the time the children will understand why.
2. It could also be good to have a small parcel for each child to give as a symbolic gift so that everyone has a part to play. Explore the meaning of this. Pupils could be invited to bring in a small box that they have wrapped up. They could have copper coins to give as the monetary gift given to the bride and groom after the marriage

It is helpful if pupils have learned something about Sikh weddings before the re enactment. You could explain the following at this point if it has not already been covered in the re enactment.

3. Sikh marriages are usually arranged but the meaning of the word arranged is rather looser than non Sikhs might think. The boy and girl may choose their partner from a number of young people that the family think might make a suitable match. Some families permit more freedom in the choosing than others.

It is customary for young people to be of a similar educational and social background. They should not be of the same family or have the same surname. The young people only marry if they both agree and this decision is usually taken after several meetings.

4. Ask the pupils to confirm that the bride and groom are not related, that they do not have the same surname. Ask the bride and groom to confirm that they agree to this marriage as a way of helping everyone remember these criteria

5. Pupils then divide into the two families across the room from each other for the betrothal. Each pupil could have a gift and a sweet to exchange during the betrothal.

Re enacting the betrothal

6. First the families agree on the marriage. Both sets of parents say the following as appropriate

“Your son is our son and our daughter is your daughter”
“your daughter is our daughter and our son is your son”

The betrothal ceremony takes place either in the boy’s home or in the Gurdwara . For this lesson it is helpful to imagine that the classroom is the boy’s home.

7. The bride’s family can cross the classroom carrying gifts and sweets. The groom’s mouth will be sweetened by a **laddoo** by the bride’s father. The bride’s family will give the groom’s family gifts. The bride and groom exchange rings. This is called **Kurmaayee** which means the meeting of the parents. It shows how important the union of the two families is.

8. Later the boy’s mother visits the girl’s house and brings lots of presents for her future daughter in law. She places a gold ring on the girl’s finger. All the groom’s family can cross the floor to visit the brides’ family bringing gifts. And sharing sweets or crisps.

De brief/plenary

9. The class return to the circle to discuss the symbolism of what has happened. Explore the importance of the joining of the families. How will that affect the young couple? Always someone there to help and to help look after the children. This is also the time to prepare for the re enactment of the wedding next lesson. Talk the children through what will happen in the Gurdwara and reinforce the key words.

Next lesson

Re enactment of the wedding

The Wedding

The wedding may take place either at the Gurdwara or at the bride’s house. To contrast with the previous lesson and to create a sense of occasion it would be good to turn the classroom into a Gurdwara.

1. The pupils create the Gurdwara as described in the lesson recipe “creating a Gurdwara” with white sheets, setting out the symbolic Guru Granth Sahib

The parents of the bride are the hosts.

2.They should take their places, sitting on the floor in the Gurdwara. The bride and her female relatives and friends wait outside the room.

3.When the bridegroom arrives with his parents relatives and friends **Milnee** (the meeting) is performed. This is when the fathers and nearest relatives especially uncles greet each other and exchange gifts.

4.Refreshments are served. Pupils could have squash at this point.

5.After this the bridegroom, usually carrying a sword and saffron coloured scarf leads the wedding party into the **darbar sahib** (the congregation hall) He sits in front of the Guru Granth and waits for the bride

6.The bride enters the hall with her sisters or sisters in law and any other near relatives or friends.

7.She will wear a red **Salwar, Kameez** and **dupatta** which are usually richly embroidered in gold. Music plays though out this time and she will be led by the females to sit next to the groom and listen to the music.

8.The priest will then give a brief talk about two bodies becoming one soul. And explain to them their obligations and duties. It would be helpful if the teacher prepares a brief talk summarising the issues explored in the first lesson with the class. This will reinforce the learning .They show their acceptance of these duties by bowing before the Holy Granth

9.By doing this they have formally accepted each other in the presence of the congregation. The brides father then hands over one end of the groom's saffron scarf to the bride .This shows that the father is giving his daughter away.

1. The most important part of the service comes next ,the **laavan**. This means the putting or joining together. A marriage verse is read called a **Laav**. Then the ragis begin to sing the verse. The bride and groom stand and walk gently round the Granth they bow and sit. The second verse is read and they walk another circle. Then the four verses are read and they complete four more circles. The final hymn **Anand** is sung and the **Ardas** (prayer) is said.

2. after this the **Karrah Prashad** (sacred food)is served and the guests come to congratulate the bride and groom and give them money or presents. Finally everyone leaves for a reception in a hotel, restaurant or hall.

Vocabulary /flashcards

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Anand kaarj | the wedding ceremony,an act of bliss |
| Kurmaayee ceremony | the meeting of the parents, a formal engagement |
| Milnee | the meeting of the relatives |
| Darbar Sahib | the congregation hall at the Gurdwara |
| Raagis | Sikh musicians of the holy word |
| Granthi | Person who is trained in reading the holy word |
| Laavan | circling the Holy Granth |
| Laav | Marriage verse read from the Holy Granth |
| Anand | Final hymn |
| Ardas | Prayer |
| Karraah Prashad | Sacred food served at the end of the ceremony |

Cloze procedure /writing frame

A Sikh wedding is called *Anand Karaaj* which means *an act of bliss*. A Sikh wedding is not a private affair between two individuals but a joining of two families. The two families meet formally at a special ceremony called *Kurmayee*. Usually at the *bridegroom's* house. This is the meeting of the parents and is the time of the formal *engagement*. *Rings* and presents are exchanged and the couple promise to marry. The parents accept their future in law as their own child.

The wedding ceremony takes place either at the bride's home or at the *Gurdwara*. The bride's family arrive first and await the arrival of the bridegroom's family and friends. When they arrive *Milnee* is performed. The male relatives especially exchange gifts for example the maternal uncle of the bride exchanges gifts with the maternal uncle of the bridegroom. Everyone then hugs each other showing mutual *respect and affection*.

Now it is time for the ceremony. The bridegroom leads everyone into the Darbar Sahib where the holy Granth is present. He sits in front of the Holy Granth and waits for the bride. She is led in by her female relatives and friends. She wears a red *shalwar, kameez* and *Dupatta* richly embroidered in gold. She sits next to the room and they listen to the music played by the *Raagis*.

The priest gives the bride and groom a brief talk about the *duties and obligations* of marriage and what it means when "*two bodies become one soul*" the bride and the groom show their acceptance of this by *bowing towards the Holy Granth*.

The bride's father takes one end of the *scarf* held by the groom and gives it to his daughter showing that he has *given his daughter away*.

The *Granthi* reads a marriage verse called a *laav*. The *Raagis* begin to sing and the bride and groom walk round the Holy Granth once a second verse is read and they walk round again. Then four verses are read and they walk four times round. The ceremony finishes with the final hymn called *anand* and the prayer called *Ardas*. *Karresh Prashad* is served while the guests flock to the bride and groom to bless and congratulate them and give them gifts. After this everyone leaves for a reception in a nearby hotel, restaurant or hall.

Levelled essay

1. Describe what happens at a Sikh wedding. (**level three : facts.**)
2. Describe how the symbolism of the ceremony affects Sikh community .
(**level four why ,because .Level five : the affect of religion on a person, family or community . Level six: variety of belief within a tradition**)
3. Describe how the marriage ceremony may affect the couple and help them in their future life together. (**levels five to six**)
- 4.. The permanence of marriage is important in religious traditions “ in your answer show how this is reflected in the symbolism of the ceremonies and rituals. You can also discuss different attitudes to divorce among the traditions. (**This will enable you to answer up to level eight. Development through history and comparison with other**