# **The Story of the Baisakhi and the formation of the Khalsa**

During the gathering of Sikhs for the harvest festival, Guru Gobind left his tent, stood up and asked for silence.

He asked for all of the Sikhs present to listen to what he had to say. He asked for them to be brave, to love and obey God. He explained that this must be the most important thing in their lives and as such they should be willing to give up their families, friends, homes and money in order to serve God. He said that this sometimes meant they would also have to give up their lives.

All of the Sikhs present, cheered and Guru Gobind asked them again, ‘Are you willing to give up your lives for God? Is there anyone who will come forward and die for God?’.

There followed a great silence, many of the people gathered looked very scared. Then out of the crowd one man named Dayaram stepped forward. ‘I am willing to die for God’, he said. So, Guru Gobind and Dayaram went into the tent. A little while later, the Guru returned alone. In his hand he carried a sword which was dripping with blood. The people gathered wondered what could have happened. Then the Guru asked, ‘Is there a second man willing to die for God?’. Another man stepped forward and went into the tent. This was followed by a third, fourth and fifth man. Each one volunteered, entered into Guru Gobind’s tent and after each one the Guru emerged with a sword dripping with blood. The crowd were silent. They had seen how brave these men had been. They had died for their love of God.

Suddenly the Guru emerged from the tent and with him stood the five men, dressed in yellow robes, wearing turbans and carrying long swords.

‘From now on, these men will be known as the five beloved ones’, the Guru announced, ‘This is because they love God, and God loves them’.

The Guru and his wife then baptised the men with sweet water called Amrit. Many other people there came forward and were baptised too. From then on after baptism, Sikh men take on the name ‘Singh’ meaning ‘lion’ and Sikh women the name ‘Kaur’ meaning ‘princess’. The Guru then announced, ‘So that everyone knows that we are Sikh, we will never cut our hair and keep it tidy with a comb (kangha). We will wear an iron band around our wrists (kara). We will carry a small sword called a kirpan. We will always wear suitable clothing for horse-riding – kacchera, so that we are ready to ride and to defend our faith’.