



Sikhs had been persecuted (harassed/mistreated) by their Mughal rulers during the reign of the ninth Guru – Guru Tegh Bahadur.



Guru Tegh Bahadur asked for the persecution to stop but was instead imprisoned and killed.



During the Spring Harvest Festival of Vaisakhi, crowds gathered to listen to the new Guru – Guru Gobind Singh.



The Guru emerged from the tent with his sword aloft and asked who would be prepared to die for their beliefs.



People in the crowd couldn't quite believe what they had heard and, as they were frightened, no one volunteered.



The Guru asked again 3 times but those gathered were too afraid.



Eventually, one man volunteered and entered the tent with the Guru



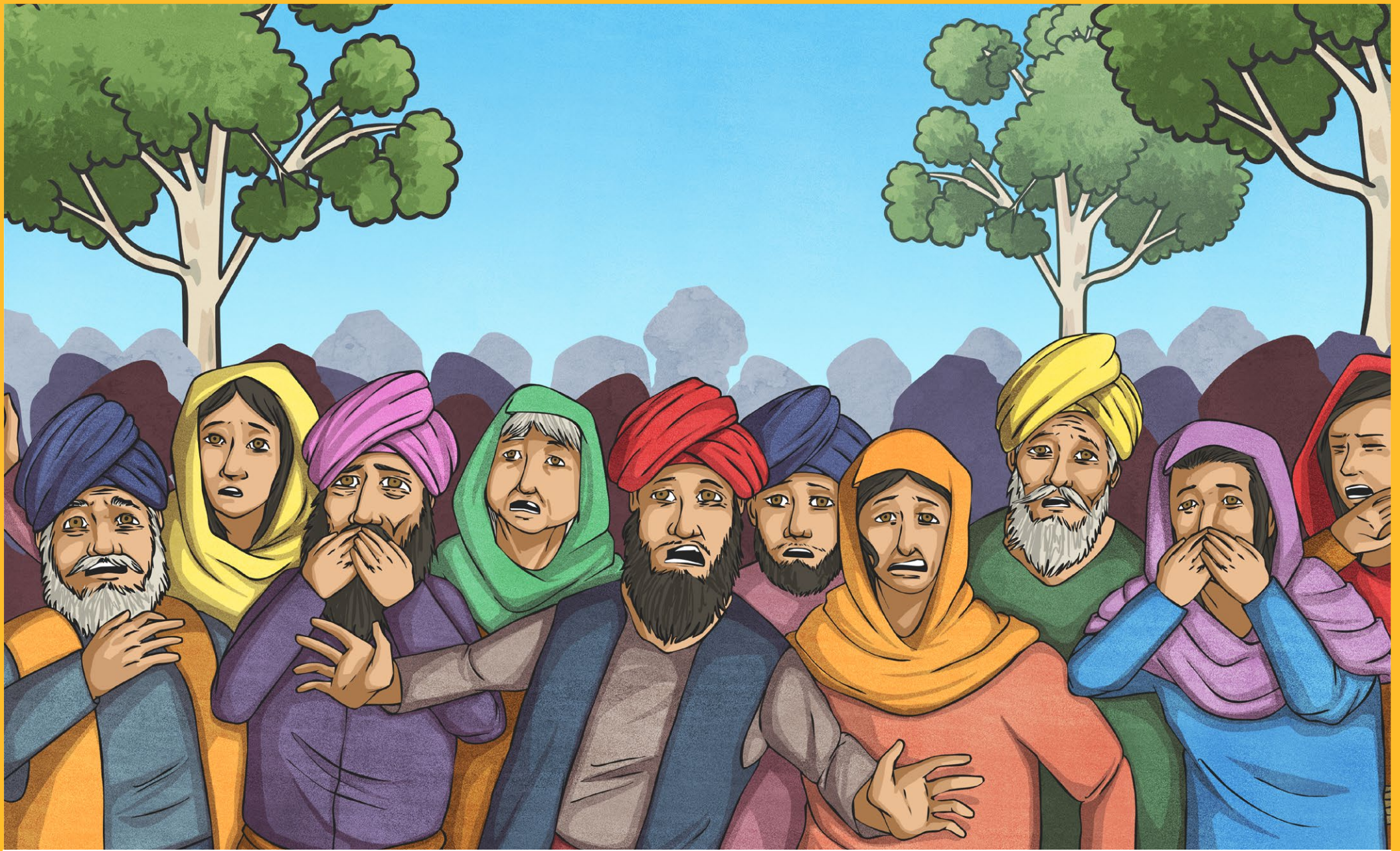
The Guru emerged with a bloodied sword and asked who else would volunteer to die for their beliefs.



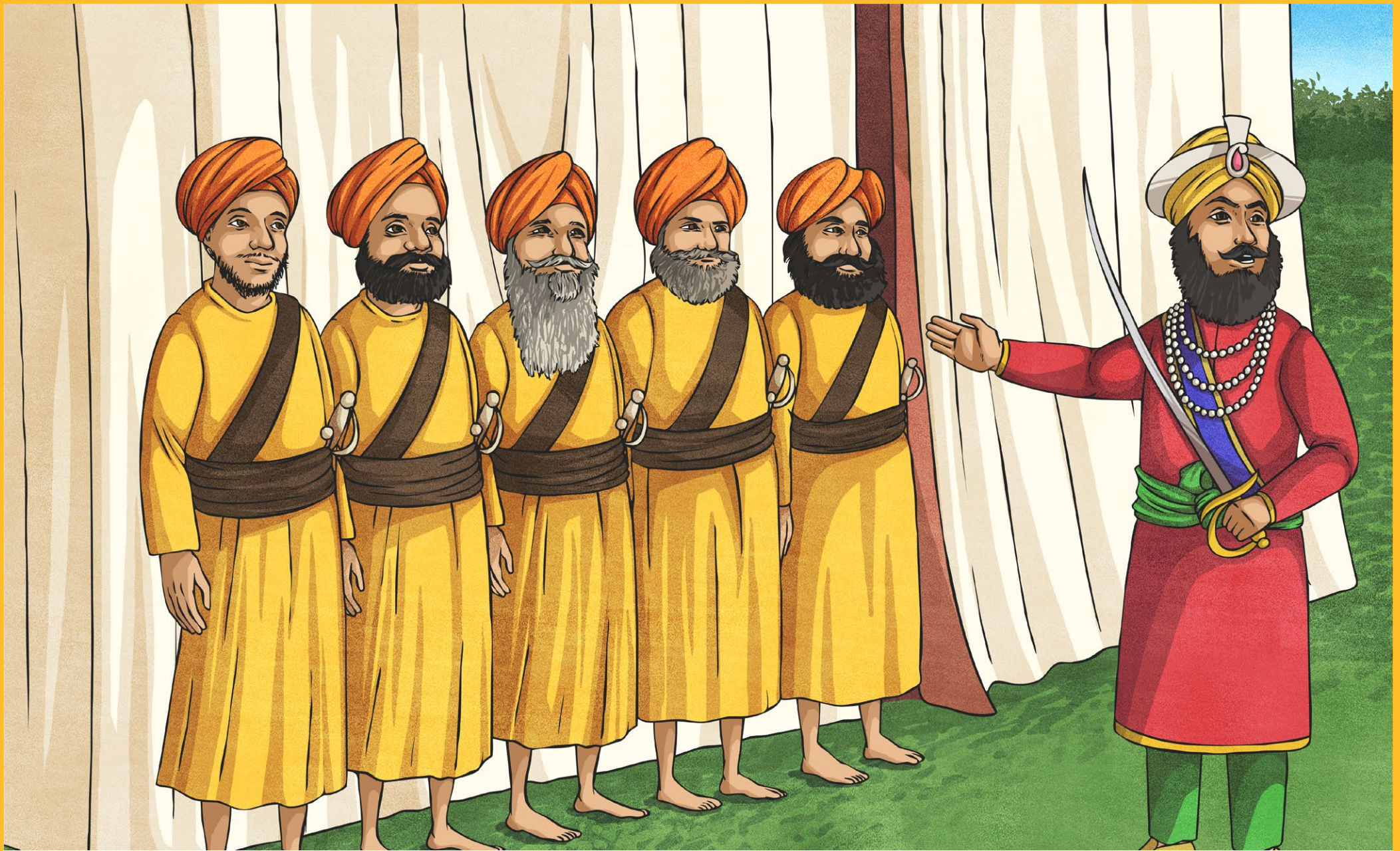
A second man plucked up the courage to go to the Guru. Again they entered the tent together and the Guru exited shortly after by himself and with blood on his sword.



The Guru repeated this another three times with three more volunteers.



The crowd had grown steadily more scared each time the Guru emerged and were on the verge of running away.



The Guru then emerged with all 5 men. They were alive! They were dressed in the same way. The Guru announced that these 5 men would be known as the Panj Pyare (pronounced p-a-n-j p-i-y-ar-i) and that their bravery should be an example to all Sikhs.



Guru Gobind Singh then took an iron bowl, in which he poured water and mixed sugar crystals with his sword. This mixture was considered holy and called 'Amrit'.



He sprinkled the Amrit on the head and eyes of the Panj Pyare, as a form of baptism, for them to enter the 'Khalsa', a new community of Sikhs who would be willing to defend their faith and others who were vulnerable.



He gave the bowl to the Panj Pyare to drink Amrit from.



They shared the same bowl as a sign that they were all equal in Sikhism.



One of the Panj Pyare then baptised Guru Gobind Singh into the Khalsa. This was again to highlight that all Sikhs were equal.



The Guru asked the Sikhs present to undertake the Amrit ceremony and join the Khalsa. In doing so, they would follow the rules (including the 5 Ks of Sikhism) and also change their existing surnames to Singh (lion) if they were male and Kaur (princess) if they were female.