

Diversity of World Religious Expression

Religions of India

Sikhism

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Sikhism - General

- Sikhism founded about 500 years ago in South Asian Region (India) Punjab.
- Sikhism was established by Shri Guru Nanak (1469 – 1539 CE)
- The main scripture is “Ädi Granth” (Guru Granth Sahib). It is regarded as the word of God and is revered as the living Guru of the faith.
- The main sect is Khälsä. The other sects are the Ram Raiyäs, the Mandhäris, and Nirankaris. The Khälsä sect has no living Guru but the Mandhäris and Nirankaris sects have living Gurus.
- The population of the Sikh community is about 25 million and the majority live in India. Small communities of Sikhs also exist in the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Malaysia, and East Africa.

Sikhism - Goal

- The goal of Sikhism lies in Moksha or salvation which is a union with God and release into God's love, and resulting in self transcendence, egolessness, and enduring bliss.
- In Sikhism, Moksha means release into God's love.
- It is the fulfillment of individuality in which man, freed of all limitations, becomes coextensive and cooperant and copresent with God.
- Man is not God but fulfilled in unitary, mystical consciousness with Him.
- God is the personal Lord and Creator.

Sikhism - Beliefs

- God is the sovereign one, the omnipotent, immortal and personal creator. He is a being beyond time, who is called Sat Nām for His name is Truth.
- Human form is the most superior form all life as it provides a unique opportunity to break the cycle of life and death to merge eternally with God. Human can follow the teachings of the true Guru, prepare oneself to understand and love God, and salvage oneself from the influence of the vices.
- Man grows spiritually by living truthfully, serving selflessly, and by repetition of the holy name and Guru Nanak's prayer - Japaji.
- Salvation lies in understanding the divine truth and its path lies in faith, love, purity, and devotion.
- The scriptural and ethical authority of the Ādi Granth is God's revelation.
- To know God, the Guru is essential as a guide, who is absorbed in love of the Real and is able to awaken the soul to its true and divine nature.

Sikhism - Beliefs

- The world is Mayä, a vain and transitory illusion. Only God is true as all else passes away.
- The ten Sikh Gurus are all true teachers which are: Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amardäs, Guru Rändäs, Guru Arjundev, Guru Har Govind, Guru Har Rái, Guru Har Kishan, Guru Tegh Bahädur, and Guru Govind Singh.
- Adopt the last name Singh, which means Lion, signifying courage.
- Adopt the five symbols (five K's):
 - Wear white soldier's short uniform (Kachha): signifies Purity
 - Keep Sword (Kirpan): signifies Bravery
 - Wear Iron Bracelet (Karä): signifies Morality
 - Never cut hair and beard (Kesha): signifies Renunciation
 - Keep Comb (Kangha) in hair: signifies Cleanliness

Path of Attainment - Sikhism

- To lead humans to the goal of Moksha, Sikhism follows a path of Jäpa and hymns. Through the chanting of the holy names or Sat Näm, the soul is cleansed of its impurity, the five vices – lust, anger, greed, attachment, and ego are conquered, and the wandering mind is stilled.
- This leads to a super conscious stillness. From here the soul enters the divine light and thus attains a state of divine bliss.
- Once this highest goal is attained, the devotee must devote his awareness to the good of others.
- The highest goal can be realized only by God's grace, and this is attained exclusively by following the true teacher (Sat Guru), and by repeating the holy names of the Lord guided by the Ädi Granth, the scripture.
- For Sikhs there is no deity worship and no symbol of divinity.