

SIKHISM

1. HISTORY

Sikhism emerged in the Punjab, North India, in the 15th century. At first it was a reform movement within Hinduism, as a response to the strong monotheism and absolutism of Islam, which had conquered and ruled the area for almost five centuries, and which had condemned the idolatry of Hinduism.

1.1 Early Pacifist and Missionary Era:

During the era of the first five gurus, Sikhism was basically a reform movement that sought to change Hinduism to monotheism.

- 1.1 NANAK (1469-1539: guru 1515-1539): The founder. Announced “there is no Hindu, no Muslim.” He visited Saudi Arabia and is still highly honored there.
- 1.2 ANGAD (1504-1552: guru 1539-1552): Adopted the Gurmukhi script, and introduced the *tangar* or common kitchen to serve the poor and needy—not only Sikhs.
- 1.3 AMAR DAS (1479-1574: guru 1552-1574) Sent missionaries throughout India.
- 1.4 RAM DAS (1534-1581: guru 1574-1581): Laid the foundation for the Golden Temple, instituted the title for religious ministries and for general funding of relief.
- 1.5 ARJUN (1563-1606: guru 1581-1606): Finished building the Golden Temple, compiled the Granth Sahib, and was the first martyr

1.2 Late Militant Era:

Due to persecution, first by the Mugals and then by the British, Sikhism was turned into a militant order.

- 1.21 HAR GOBIND (1595-1644: guru 1606-1644): Began organizing the Sikhs into a military order.
- 1.22 HAR RAI (1630-1661: guru 1644-1661): Continued the organization.
- 1.23 HAR KISHEN (1656-1664: guru 1661-1664): Died while serving cholera victims in Delhi, a story still widely told as an example of selfless ministry to others.
- 1.24 TEGH BAHADUR (1621-1675: guru 1664-1675): Wrote hymns, failed in attempting to establish a Sikh state in Anandpur, executed by Aurangzeb.
- 1.25 GOBIND SING (1666-1708: guru 1675-1798): The Dasam [Tenth] Granth. Instituted the 5 K's and the Khalsa. Declared there would be no more Gurus, and that the Adi Granth would become the Guru or Granth Sahib.

2. COMMUNITY DISTINCTIVES

2.1 The Five K's:

- 2.11 *kesh* – hair and beard unshorn.
- 2.12 *kangha* – a comb in the hair.
- 2.13 *kuchha* – a pair of shorts.

2.14 *kara* – a sharp steel bangle on the right wrist as a weapon.

2.15 *kirpan* – a knife carried on the person.

2.2 The *Kalsa*:

The military order to which Sikhs belong. The term ‘Singh’ used by most Sikhs means Lion.

2.3 The *Gurudwar* [House of the Gurus]:

The Golden Temple in Amritsar where the Granth Sahib is kept. It has four doorways to show that all four *varna* of castes are welcome. It is a symbolic rejection of the caste system.

2.4 The *Langar*: [Guru’s free Kitchen]

All must sit in the same row and partake of the same food without any discrimination.

2.5 The *Gurbani*: [Divine Word]

The *Gurbani* cannot be fully translated. It is most accurate in the original.

3. SIKH THEOLOGY

3.1 There is only One Supreme Being: He is formless. He alone is to be glorified. When he made himself manifest, he first formed himself into NAM (Divine Name)–the name that sustains all beings and the universe, and then he created nature. God is not a mental abstraction. He is the source of all life–physical and spiritual. Nothing is so perfect that it could or would exist apart from and independent of Nam [HIM]. God is Gracious and Compassionate.

3.2 God has revealed himself through the Gurus. God revealed himself in *Gurbani* [Divine Word], which itself is NAM. The Guru is a perfect Prophet or Messenger of God in whom the Light of God shines fully, visibly and completely. Guru is in union with the Divine. He ushers the devotees, the seekers of Truth, into a spiritual birth. Through him the Glory of the Lord is transmitted to humanity. On account of his Divine prerogative, the Guru, though human in form, is Divine in Spirit. God is in the Guru, and Guru is in God. The *jot* [Divine Light] that enshrined Guru Nanak’s body and the Primal Jot of God are, therefore, one and the same.

A seeker must go to a guru and take Pauhal or Amrit [baptism]. Without baptism a Sikh remains with Guru.

3.3 The Granth Sahib is the last Guru. This sacred book was written and compiled by the Gurus and is a new revelation given directly to them. It is the source of all authority and theology. It is wholly dedicated to the glory of God. It is largely a collection of *ragas* and hymns.

- 3.4 The same heavenly Light is in every human being. No distinction is made between rich or poor, high or low caste, creed, color, race, gender, religion or nationality.
- 3.5 Karma and Samsara: Sikhism accepts the concepts of *karma* and *samsara*. There are 8.4 million lives on earth—half on land, and half in the water. All life is transient. It moves through the wheel of transmigration according to its *karma* or consequence of actions, good and evil. Rebirth to a lower form of life is a punishment of one's deeds. Human life is the crown of creation. Humans have the capacity of being conscious of their own being, and of attaining the highest pinnacle of spiritual advancement. It is only through the human existence that one can get salvation by meditation on Nam. Salvation cannot be attained through intellectual acrobatics and speculative ventures or ceaseless trances. Spiritual evolution is the ultimate goal of Sikhism.
- 3.6 Eternal Bliss. Sikhism seeks to release the human soul from the shackles of *maya*. It aims at a virtuous life which breaks the bonds of sufferings, and leads to the ultimate realization of a state of Eternal Bliss. There is no such thing as eternal damnation or hell. The Guru's grace erases the consequences of evil deeds, past and present.
Salvation—the way to God—is through meditation on NAM. A body is dead without life, and life is dead without NAM. Nam is the elixir of life without which life is meaningless and an accumulative waste. Without NAM there is no awakening, no peace of mind, no joy and no bliss.
- 3.7 Idols, caste, pilgrimage, penance, and asceticism are rejected as empty and useless. As one guru said, "Asceticism only makes one thin." It rejects all fasts, rituals, *yoga*, mortification of the body, self-torture, and renunciations.
- 3.8 The essence of Sikhism is to call on the name of God, the Lord. Meditation on Nam burns countless sins, and singing the glory of the Lord can redeem a repentant sinner, and break the cycle of *karma*. Moral life is not obeying a few commandments or performing some rituals. It is a spiritual question involving incredibly hard discipline. Most people believe in enjoying the material life, and find themselves physically spent and spiritually bankrupt. Sikhism calls for spiritual discipline and living.
- 3.9 Prasad and xaris. *Prasad* is 'God helps those who make the first move.' *Xaris* is God is gracious and forgiving to those who approach him.
- 3.10 Three major instructions in the Adi Granth.
- remembrance of the name of the Lord.
 - practice of godly qualities of life.
 - self-surrender to God.

4. SIKH ETHICS

4.1 Stress strong family ties and loyalties.

4.2 Stress a strong work ethic. Sikhs are very successful, and make up a high proportion of India's military officers, writers [Kushwant Singh, etc.], government officials, taxi drivers, mechanics and farmers. Punjab produces almost one half of India's agricultural goods.

4.3 Five cardinal virtues that overcome five basic vices:

- self-restraint over lust.
- contentment over greed.
- devotion to duty over worldly attraction.
- modesty over anger.
- toleration over anger.

4.4 Stress purity—and wear white as a symbol of this.

4.5 Seven major injunctions:

- remain a householder throughout life.
- work for the subsistence of the family.
- help the needy and serve the society according to one's aptitude.
- imbibe godly qualities and virtues.
- discard all evil forces and vices.
- have faith in One and only One God.
- attain spiritual heights with the aid of the Guru, and through the remembrance of the Name.

5. MODERN SIKHISM

5.1 There are continued efforts to establish an independent Khalistan in India.

5.2 Many are migrating to Canada and Southern California as agriculturalists.

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SIKHISM

Notes from DeBary et. al. Sources of Indian Tradition.

I. Islam and Hinduism: syncretistic movements and reactions.

(Using Wallace's models, analyse these)

1. 13th Century Sufism spread (Chishti and Suhrawadi and later Qadiri and Naqshbandi orders)
2. Bhakti movement in Punjab was strong coming from the south.
3. Kabir panthis: Kabir 1440-1518, used Bhakti vocabulary. Muslim.
4. Nanak 1469-1538- Hindu reformer, also Bhakti vocabulary
5. Dadupanthi - Dadu (1544-1603) Muslim reformer also bhakti influence.

II. Nanak: 1469-1539

1. Kshatriya, Hindu education, then Muslim aid. Hindu marriage. Job with Afghan govt. Became an ascetic possibly under a Muslim darwish's influence. Traveled from Ceylon to Mecca etc.
2. Not a theologian, but a bhakti.
3. Theology:
 - centers on one God and His worship rather than human salvation.
 - God defined chiefly negatively, but also stresses personal experience of Him. God is largely god of creation.
 - accepts transmigration and punishment for evil.
 - joyful submission to god's acts. A form of fatalism. God also of love and compassion.
 - avoid entanglement with maya by surrender and devotion to God.
 - Mediator is the guru, chiefly the Holy Spirit and then our gurus.
4. Drew in part from Kabir's iconoclasm
5. Teachings recorded in Adi Granth. God is within. External of religion are unimportant. Meditation the True Name is essential.
 - Rejected asceticism and his sons' quietist sect. Stressed on living the good life in this world. Appointed a successor as guru.

III. Successors:

- Angad (1539-1552) (Gurmukhi script based on moneylenders to write Nanak's life)
- Amar Das (1552-1574) Peaceful development, saintly lives
- Ram Das (1574-1581)
- Arjun (1581-1606)

*Angad elaborated the script, Gurmukhi and recorded Nanak's life. He stressed the langar or free kitchen

* ~~Angad~~ Amar Das self-conscious organization, rejected asceticism and stressed social character. Arranged festivals, funerals and marriages. Missionaries. Congregational worship.

*Ram Das: completed amritsar and began golden temple.

*Arjun, stressed financial collections and compilation of Adi Granth. Compilation of teachings of Nanak and successors and Kabir and other bhaktis. More rejection of Islam than Hindusim. Killed after an abortive rebellion against Jahangir

- Hargobind (1606-1645) Began a military force and fought Mughals.

(7-8th) *Hao Rai 1644-1661 Hao Kishan 1664-1675*
? - Tegh Bahadur (1664-1675) martyred under Aurangzib.

- 1) - Bobind Singh (1675- 1708) Inaugurated the khalsa or brotherhood of fighting Sikhs. 5 signs hair and beard, dagger, bracelet, Used baptism into order. One caste in Sikhism. Added to scriptures to form Granth Sahib. Made khalsa the 1-successors to gurus, granth as the equivalent of the Name, s~~s~~ and stressed the corporate life of the brotherhood, as the elect.

IV. Later Sikhism: persecutions of Muslims drove it towards Hinduism.
-Ranjit, founder of Sikh kingdom of Panjab, used sati.

- Dyal Das 1783-1855 lead 1st reform, attack on idols (narankaris - formless)
- Sain Sahib - 1862 led reform against militarism (namdharis)
- Singh Sabha formed against missionaries impact to educate sikh children
- Khalsa Tract society as a religious literature movement.

V. DOCTRINES:

1. Absolute monotheism: worship of God for his own sake is supreme.

"They suppose that Maya, the mythical goddess,
Mysteriously conceived and gave birth to three deities:
Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

Brahma, it is said, is the one who creates

Vishnu the other that sustains it

And Siva, they say, is the destroyer

That controls and sits on judgement.

But no, in reality it is God,

Who directs the world according to His will

And no other.

The thing that astonishes the people most is

That while He sees them ever, they see Him not.

All Hail to Him. All Hail to Him.

Who is the Primal Being, Immaculate,

Without being and Ever Changless

The same from age to age." Guru Nanak Japji, translated.

"Meditate upon One God alone,

And the One alone do glorify.

Remember, ever remember, O man, the One,

And him alone do ever they heart enshrine.

Sing, yea,-sing the excellances of this One,

The excellances that have no end." Guru Arjan: Sukhmani 19:8

2. Universal commonality of man.

"There is no Hindu, no Musalman." Guru Nanak

"All men are the same, It is only through error, That we see them different."

Gobind Singh: Akal Ustat

Guru-ka-langar or kitchen instituted as a rite.

3. Rituals are ineffectual if not inspired by devotion and worship.

"I would bathe at the sacred places, If by doing so I could please Him,

But what use is this bathing If it pleaseth Him not that way?-

How can mere bathing help? When in the whole wide world that I see arou

Nothing can be gained without right action." Nanak: Japji

4. Normal social life is pleasing to God. Asceticism rejected as a path to salvation

"Take care of the body that you may meditate upon the Lord and apply it for
his services." Nanak

5. God's absolute reality or spiritual presence which mysteriously sustains
the universe is "Nam" and communion with it is to reach salvation. This
must go along with right deeds.

- As Nirgun or absolute other, God formed himself into Nam or Sargun, the
personal eternal self. He created a real world, not imaginary and delusive.

6. God manifests himself in Gurus, beginning with Nanak which are successive embodiments of the same Divine Spirit. In the interaction with people the guru becomes the embodiment of God and his voice to them. God never assumes an incarnate form as a human. God is the guru but not the bodily form.
7. By meditation one rises above the three gunas or modes of matter; time space and causality. Color and form disappear. Sense of past, present and future is lost. All boundaries and barriers are broken and the individual soul becomes one with the Supreme Soul the goal of religion.
8. 8. Transmigration. Salvation may take many lifetimes to accomplish.
9. Individual spiritual progress cannot be achieved apart from society. Sat Sangat, the Society of the Holy is the congregation.
 - Initiation is by Amrit, the Sikh baptism. This makes a man a member of a disciplined way of life with definite modes, symbolized by 5 K's
 - Keshas, unshorn hair, don't improve on God's work.
 - Kanga - comb to clean hair
 - Kara - bracelet, symbol of dedication to divine bridegroom
 - Kachha - underwear, chastity
 - Kirpan - sword or dagger of self defense
 - (Kutha - meat of an animal killed slowly is to be rejected, as is alcohol, tobacco and adultery)

Hesperis

1030 Mollewell Clagui

1197 Kakabya

1200 Mollewell Clagui

1210 - Stone D, nastur

1320 Tagblags - Dolhe S. H. H. H.

1336 Vijayagan

1367 Phalaris

1399 Trimeris in sericea (Tamaritana)

1420 - Zinnia - in the bed of Eastern river.

1440 Kulu

1469 Gum Bamb

THE SIKH VALUE SYSTEM

