

Sikhism

**This gift is a special item for the 123 Gift For Me program compliments of
Paul Nisenbaum, the ePaymentGuru.**

www.ePaymentGuru.com

paul@ePaymentGuru.com

“Peace of mind eCommerce payment processing”

Be sure to look at other fine gifts at www.123GiftForMe.com

Sikhism

[Sri Swami Sivananda](#)

Introduction

Sikhism was founded in the fifteenth century by Sri Guru Nanak Dev, the first of Gurus born in Talwandi (now Nankana Sahib) in Seikhpura in the district of Lahore (in Pakistan). He made no attempt to build up a new religion. He tried to have a unifying religion to embrace both Hindus and Mohammedans. He insisted on the worship of one God, the Creator and the Supreme Ruler. Who is all and apart from Whom any thought of individual existence is only *Maya*.

Guru Nanak tried his level best to join the Hindus and the Musalmans in one league of love to God and service to man. The cardinal doctrines of Sikhism are the unity or oneness of God and the brotherhood of man.

Love to God and the teacher is the very basis and the very root of Sikhism. In its philosophy it is Hindu. It is reformatory in its nature. Sikhism is a movement essentially of Bhakti. Guru Nanak taught that one can obtain his emancipation through the name of Hari. Guru Gobind gave to the Sikhs their great military organisation. He was a great military organiser.

The word 'Sikh' simply means a disciple. It is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Shishya' or disciple. Sikhism enjoins that obedience to the Guru brings release from future birth, and the attainment of eternal bliss and immortality.

A Sikh is admitted to the privilege of the Community only when he received the *Pahul* (baptism). When he is baptised, he adopts the five *Kakas*—the 'Kes' (uncut hair), the 'Kachh' (short drawers), the 'Kara' (iron bangle), the 'Kirpan' (steel dagger) and the 'Kangha' (small comb worn in the hair).

The Sikhs are divided into many sub-sects viz. Udasis, Nirmalas and the Akalis. The Udasis are an ascetic order of the Nanakshahi Sikhs. The Nirmalas are celibates. They are also an ascetic order of the Nanakshahis. The Akalis are the most fanatical of all the Sikh sects. They wear a distinctive dress of blue and a black turban.

Granth Sahib (Holy Scripture of Sikhs)

Guru Nanak invented Gurumukhi language, which is the corrupt form of Hindi. It contains 53 alphabets. The whole Granth Sahib is in Gurumukhi language.

The sacred scriptures or Holy Granths are two. One was compiled by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjun Dev. The other is a collection of miscellaneous hymns of the tenth Guru, Guru Govind Singh and of translations of Sanskrit books made by various others under the orders of Guru Govind Singh. A part of the Granth contains an abstract of the Ramayana, and the Srimad Bhagavata.

The Holy Granth, popularly known as the Adi Granth, contains the hymns of the first five Gurus, with a few selections from the hymns of different contemporary saints. These were all collected, arranged and formed into a volume called "Guru Granth Sahib" by the fifth Guru.

The teachings of Guru Nanak are contained in the first book of the Adi-Granth. Nanak was succeeded by Angad, Amardas, Ram Das, Arjun, Har Gobind, Har Rai, Har Kishan, Tej Bahadur and Govind Singh, in turn. These are the ten Gurus or Preceptors of the Sikhs.

Amritsar in Punjab is the sacred city of the Sikhs, as Benares is to the Hindus. There is the famous Golden Temple in Amritsar, where the Adi Granth Sahib is kept and worshipped. This is the biggest and the most important Gurudwara of the Sikhs and has in its front the famous and most beautiful tank called the "Nectar Tank" or "Amrit Saras" from which the city derives its name. It is regarded with great reverence and devotion and is said to possess miraculous properties. All Sikhs believe that anyone who bathes in it with devotion is at once healed of all afflictions, physical, mental and moral.

Main Principles of Sikhism

The following are the main principles on which Sikhism is based:

- i) Belief in the One true God.
- ii) Implicit surrender of one's will to God.
- iii) The practice of righteousness and rectitude.
- iv) Fatherhood of God and universal brotherhood of man.
- v) No worship, but of the Lord God.
- vi) To work in good faith as a duty imposed by God, abandoning fear for a bad result and giving up hope of reward for a good result.

Teachings Of Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak is a great prophet of Peace. Guru Nanak's teaching breathes the purest spirit of devotion. He takes the view of the Upanishads that there is one Brahman. He declares that the creation is only Maya and all things come into being by Maya, the power of the Lord. He says that the Jiva or the individual soul is the same in essence as the Supreme. He admits the doctrines of Karma and reincarnation. He says that it is difficult to get a human birth and salvation can be attained in human birth only. Devotion to God is the essence of all teachings. Without Bhakti all search is vain. and fruitless.

Japji (Five Stages)

Japji is the great morning prayer of the Sikhs. It is the most sacred collection of the hymns of Guru Nanak. It is the foundation-stone on which the Sikh Scripture, the Holy Guru Granth is

built. The hymns were arranged in their present form by the fifth Guru, Sri Guru Arjun Deva. It contains the *Mula-Mantra*, 38 *Pauris* or steps or rungs of the ladder and a Sloka which forms the epilogue or conclusion. The Granth Sahib, the Scripture of the Sikhs, begins with Japji. The rest of the Granth Sahib is an exposition of the philosophical doctrines and teachings contained in the Japji. It shows the way for reaching God. *Sohila* is repeated at bed time.

In the Japji Guru Nanak has given a lucid, laconic and beautiful description of the stages through which the individual soul must pass, in order to attain eternal peace. There are five stages or Khandas viz., (1) Dharam Khand, (2) Gian Khand, (3) Sharan Khand, (4) Karam Khand and (5) Such Khand.

The first stage is Dharam Khand. This is the realm of Duty or Action. Everyone should perform his duties well. Everyone will be judged according to his deeds. His own deeds alone shall avail after his life on this earth.

The second stage is Gian Khand. This is the realm of Knowledge. Man's resolve to do his duty is strengthened now by the knowledge that it is by performing their duty that great souls like Rama and Krishna have attained the abode of everlasting peace.

The soul passes from the Gian Khand to Sharan Khand. This is the Realm of Ecstasy. In this region Dharma becomes natural and spontaneous. It becomes part and parcel of one's nature. It becomes an ingrained habit. There is holy rapture in this realm. There is nothing else but Beauty.

From Sharan Khand the soul passes to Karam Khand. This is the Realm of Power. He acquires power and spiritual strength on account of the character built in the previous three stages. He becomes invincible. His beauty is ineffable. Fear of death vanishes. He is freed from the round of births and deaths. There are God-intoxicated saints here who are in a state of supreme Bliss.

Then he passes on to the final realm, Such Khand, the Abode of Truth, which is near Karam Khand. Here reigns the Formless One. Here the aspirant becomes one with the Supreme Lord. He has attained Godhood. His will has merged in the Cosmic Will or the Divine Will.

The Mulamantra, or sacred prayer of Sikhs, affirms that there is but one God. His Name is true. He is the Creator. He is free from fear and enmity. He is beyond time. He is immortal, unborn, formless and self-existent. He can be realised by the Grace of the Guru. He existed before the beginning of the world. He existed before the beginning of the *Yugas*. He exists now, and says Nanak—He shall exist for ever.

This contains the essence of the Upanishads or Vedanta of the Hindus.

May the blessings of Sri Guru Nanak, the great Prophet of peace, be upon you all!

Last Updated: Sunday, 20-Feb-2005 23:43:24 EST
Mail Questions, Comments & Suggestions to : pannir@dlshq.org