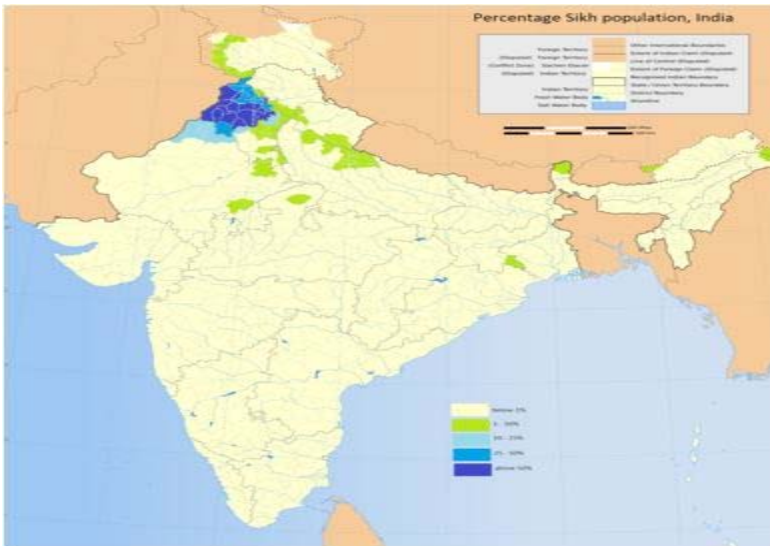


Sikhism

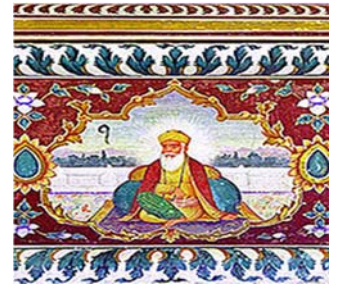


Origin/Founder: Sikhism (seek-ism) was founded in the Punjab region South Asia, which now falls into the present day states of India and Pakistan. The Sikh faith, founded by Guru Nanak, began around 1500 CE and blended elements of both Hinduism and Islam, the main religions in India.

History: Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru, completed the establishment of Amritsar as the capital of the Sikh

world, and compiled the first authorized book of Sikh scripture, the *Adi Granth*.

However, during Arjan's time Sikhism was seen as a threat by the state; in response, the sixth Guru, Hargobind, started to militarize the community so that they would be able to resist any oppression. The Sikhs fought a number of battles to preserve their faith; the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, recreated the Sikhs as a military group of men and women called the *Khalsa* in 1699, with the intention that the Sikhs should forever be able to defend their faith.



Symbols: The Khanda is the emblem of the Sikh faith, as it illustrates *Deg Tegh Fateh*, a Sikh slogan in the Punjabi language that represents the dual responsibility of the Khalsa: to provide food and protection for the needy and oppressed. The Khanda is made up of a double-edged *khanda* (sword) in the center, a *chakkar* (a circle), and two

single-edged swords, or *kirpan*, crossed at the bottom. They represent the dual characteristics of *Miri-Piri*, indicating the integration of both spiritual and temporal sovereignty together and not treating them as two separate and distinct entities.

Tenets: The faith's teachings emphasize principles of equality of all humans regardless of race, gender, or caste. There are three duties that a Sikh must carry out, and they can be summed up in three words: Pray, Work, Give.

- *Nam Japna* (Pray):
 - o Keeping God in mind at all times.
- *Kirt Karna* (Work):

- Earning an honest living. Since God is truth, a Sikh has to live honestly. This doesn't just mean avoiding crime; Sikhs avoid gambling, begging, or working in the alcohol or tobacco industries.
- *Vand Chhakna* (Give):
 - Literally, sharing one's earnings with others; this includes giving to charity and caring for others

Sikhs try to avoid the five vices (Lust, Covetousness and greed, Attachment to things of this world, Anger, Pride) that make people self-centered and build barriers against God in their lives. If a person can overcome these vices they are on the road to liberation.

Deity: Sikhism is a monotheistic religion, but they do not follow the God of Abraham like Islam. Sikhs refer to God as Waheguru, the one Supreme Being. There is only one God, who is without form or gender. Everyone has direct access to God and everyone is equal before God.

Afterlife: Sikhs believe that human beings spend their time in a cycle of birth, life, and rebirth. They share this belief with followers of other Indian religious traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The quality of each particular life depends on the law of Karma. The only way out of this cycle, which all faiths regard as painful, is to achieve a total knowledge of and union with God.

Scriptures: Guru Granth Sahib is a collection of hymns describing the qualities of God (There are 10 Gurus total). Gobind Singh was the last human Guru. Sikhs now treat their scriptures as their Guru.

Practices: The 5 Articles of Faith taken together symbolize that the Sikh who wears them has dedicated themselves to a life of devotion and submission to the Guru. They are 5 physical symbols worn by Sikhs who have been initiated into the Khalsa.

The 5 Articles of Faith are:

- *Kirpan* (sword)
- *Kachera* (cotton undergarments)
- *Kara* (steel bracelet)
- *Kangha* (wooden comb)
- *Kesh* (both men & women do not cut hair)

