

Key Terms: Sikhism



Key Beliefs

Mool Mantra: The foundational Sikh prayer summarizing key beliefs about God, including God as eternal, creator, and without fear or hate (Guru Granth Sahib, GGS 1a).

God as Creator: God is both immanent (present within the universe) and transcendent (separate from creation).

Nature of Human Life: Life is an opportunity to unite with God through Sikh virtues like wisdom, truthful living, justice, humility, and patience.

Karma and Rebirth: Actions influence future lives; the ultimate goal is mukti (liberation from the cycle of rebirth), involving unity with God.

Five Khands: Stages of liberation: Dharam Khand (righteousness), Gian Khand (knowledge), Saram Khand (effort), Karam Khand (grace), Sach Khand (truth).

Barriers to Mukti: Illusion, self-centeredness, lust, anger, greed, worldly attachment, and pride.

Gurmukh vs. Manmukh: Living a God-centered life (gurmukh) rather than a self-centered one (manmukh); overcoming haumai (ego).

Beliefs About Human Life



Oneness of Humanity: Belief in equality and unity, including gender equality.

Equality in Sikhism: Expressed in the lives of the Gurus, the Guru Granth Sahib, and modern Sikh practices.

Sewa: Service to others, including physical (tan), mental (man), and material (dhan) contributions.

Sangat: The religious community providing spiritual support and promoting equality and service.

Worship and Service



Gurdwara: Sikh place of worship; key features include:

- **Palki:** Structure holding the Guru Granth Sahib.
- **Takht:** Raised platform symbolizing reverence for the scripture.

Role of Gurdwara: A community hub for worship, education, and service.

Prayer in the Home: Daily recitation and meditation on God's name (nam japna) (GGS 305:4).

Akhand Path: Continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib over several days, often during festivals or significant events.

Langar: Community kitchen offering free meals to all, symbolizing equality and sewa.

Festivals and Lifestyle



Vaisakhi: Celebrates the founding of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh.

Diwali: Marks Guru Hargobind's release from prison and freedom for 52 princes.

Gurpurbs: Birthdays and anniversaries of Sikh Gurus, particularly Guru Nanak's birthday; celebrated differently in India and Great Britain.

Historical Gurdwaras: Pilgrimage sites, such as the Golden Temple (Harimandir Sahib) in Amritsar, hold spiritual significance.

Birth and Naming Ceremonies: Involves choosing a name from the Guru Granth Sahib, signifying God's guidance.

Amrit Sanskar (Initiation Ceremony): Ritual to join the Khalsa; includes commitment to the five Ks:

- **Kesh** (uncut hair), **Kanga** (wooden comb), **Kara** (steel bracelet), **Kachera** (cotton shorts), **Kirpan** (ceremonial sword).

Singh and Kaur: Titles adopted by men and women, respectively, symbolizing equality and commitment to Sikh values.

