

Overview of Sikhism

Key Person, Date, Location

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469–1539) in what is now the Punjab region of Pakistan. He was followed by nine successive Gurus between 1504 and 1708. The main place of worship for Sikhs is the Golden Temple in Amritsar, India.

Key Writings

The central scripture of Sikhism is the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (“The Master Book,” also called the *Adi Granth*), first compiled in AD 1604. Sikhs worship this text and consider it their final and perpetual Guru. Other key writings include the *Dasam Granth*, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, and the *Sikh Reht Maryada*.

Who Is God?

Sikhism teaches belief in one omnipresent God, referred to as *Waheguru* (“Wondrous Teacher”), who is known only to the spiritually awakened through meditation. The faith also holds pantheistic elements, viewing the universe itself as part of God, leaving no clear distinction between Creator and creation. Representing God through pictures or idols is strictly forbidden.

Who Is Jesus?

Jesus is not specifically part of Sikh belief. The *Adi Granth* explicitly denies the Trinity and describes God as “beyond birth” and incarnation.

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is not part of Sikh theology.

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How to Be Saved

Sikhism teaches that bondage to the material realm and the “five evils”—ego, anger, greed, attachment, and lust—condemns the soul to 8.4 million reincarnations. Those who successfully overcome these evils through proper behavior and devotion are released from karma and the cycle of rebirth (*samsara*).

What Happens After Death?

Upon death, those who escape *samsara* are absorbed into God and lose their individuality, like a raindrop falling into the ocean. The *Adi Granth* both affirms and denies the existence of a literal heaven and hell, reflecting a nuanced view of the afterlife.

Other Facts, Beliefs, or Practices

Baptized Sikhs, known as *Khalsa*, are identified by their use of the “Five K’s”: the *kirpan* (a small ceremonial sword), *kes* (uncut hair), *kanga* (a small wooden comb), *kachera* (knee-length shorts), and *kara* (a steel bracelet). Adult males wear turbans and include “Singh” in their names. Sikhism emphasizes full equality between men and women. Worship and community gatherings take place in buildings called *gurdwaras*.