

## **SIKHISM — An Overview**

**Inception:** Guru Nanak (1469-1538 CE). Sikhism began in an effort to reconcile Hinduism and Islam.

**Adherents:** 23 Million [EBI Estimate]

**Primary Value Proposition:** Syncretism: Harmonizing the differing discrete traditions, discovering the underlying unity, and highlighting the overarching Truth.

### **The Word of (about and/or attributed to) God:**

- Be attuned to the Love of the Lord, whose Light pervades the entire Universe.
- God is omnipresent in all creation and visible everywhere to the spiritually awakened
- The Reality is immanent in the entire creation, but the creation as a whole fails to contain God fully.
- God is Karta Purakh, the Creator-Being. He created the spatial-temporal universe not from some pre-existing physical element, but from His/Her own Self.

**Core Beliefs:** The principal beliefs of Sikhism are faith and justice. Sikhism advocates the pursuit of salvation through disciplined, personal meditation on the name and the message of God. The essence of Sikh teaching is summed up by Guru Nanak in these words: "Realization of Truth is higher than all else. Higher still is truthful living". Sikh teaching emphasizes the principle of equality of all humans and rejects discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, and gender.

Nanak's gospel was one of unity, becoming one with God. His followers were known as Sikhs (disciples). His vision was a calling that included the message "There is no Muslim and there is no Hindu." Sikhism underscores the universality of God. It states that God is omnipresent and infinite. Sikhs believe that before creation, all that existed was God and His will or order. When God willed, the entire cosmos was created. From these beginnings, God nurtured the human perception of reality.

While a full understanding of God is beyond human beings, Nanak described God as not wholly unknowable. Nanak stressed that God must be seen from "the inward eye", or the "heart", of a human being: devotees must meditate to progress towards enlightenment. Revelation through meditation thus permits the existence of communication between God and human beings. Nanak also wrote that there are many worlds on which God has created life.

The sacred scripture of Sikhism is the Granth, a book of many poems. Although it has many authors, the Sikhs ascribe absolute authority to it. Sikhs begin each day with a recitation from the first two sentences of the Granth: "There is but one God, whose name is True, Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent, great and bountiful. The True One is, was, and also shall be."