

Key concepts

- Guru Nanak’s first words after enlightenment were ‘There is neither Hindu nor Mussulman so whose path shall I follow? I shall follow God’s path. God is neither Hindu nor Mussulman and the path I follow is God’s.’
- Sikhs believe that all those that believe in One God, irrespective of their faith are devotees of God, whether he is a Sikh, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, or a Muslim. Where does the name Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Christian come from? Sikhs call these sources of inspiration and they believe that there is no need for anyone to try to convert people to replace their sources of inspiration.
- Guru Nanak taught his followers to focus on meditation of God instead of glorifying a religion. Bhai Gurdas narrates one instance when Hindus and Muslims asked Guru Nanak about who was greater among them. Priests from both Hinduism and Islam got together and began discussing religion. They asked Guru Nanak who was the greater, the Hindu or the Muslim. Guru Nanak replied that without good deeds both will have to weep and wail. Just being a Hindu or a Muslim does not guarantee acceptance into the kingdom of God. Guru Nanak stated that religion is just a medium to reach God.
- Guru Gobind Singh declared: ‘He is in the temple as in the mosque. In the Hindu worship as in the Muslim prayer.’ The Sikh attitude towards other religions and their followers flows from this basic belief. Guru Nanak kept a Muslim with him all his life and visited the holy places of other religions. Guru Arjan included the Hymns of many Hindu and Muslim saints in the Guru Granth Sahib.
- Sikhism discredits no religion. According to Sikhism, all religions originated with good intentions and are like different roads leading to the same destination.
- The Guru Granth Sahib does not preach Sikhism or tell people to convert to Sikhism, but gives information about God and His creations. In addition, the Guru Granth Sahib shows everyone a straight path to attain salvation regardless of their background or religion.
- Sikhism makes no claim of exclusivity in dogma. In speaking of the road to salvation, the Gurus spoke of the universality of the human condition.



Key quotes

*‘One God created all men;
All men are made of the same clay;
Recognise the Lord’s light within all, and do not consider social class or status;
There are no classes or castes in the world hereafter.’* – (Guru Granth Sahib p. 349)

*‘God pervades all persons unseen;
He is the same in the Hindu as well as in the Muslim.’* – (Guru Granth Sahib p. 483)

‘Call everyone exalted; no one seems lowly; The One Lord has fashioned everyone. God is the One Light pervades all creation.’ – (Guru Granth Sahib p. 62)

*‘Hindus and Muslims are one!
The same Lord is the creator and nourisher of all. Recognise no distinctions between them.*

*The temple and the mosque are the same,
So are puja and namaz.*

People are all one.’ – (Guru Gobind Singh, Dasam Granth 28)

Key words

Guru Nanak	Hindu	Mussulman	Inspiration	Bhai Gurdas
Temple	Mosque	Guru Arjan	Salvation	Universality
Dogma	Exclusivity	Convert	Hymns	Saints
Guru Granth Sahib	Medium			

Issues for analysis and evaluation

Key arguments/debates

Some would argue that Sikhism is clearly a pluralistic tradition. Others would argue that this is not always shown in Sikh relationships with some religions. Some would argue that there is a difference between belief and practice.

Key questions

What is the difference between diversity and pluralism?

To what extent has pluralism been a central part of Sikhism?

What do Sikhs believe about different religions? How does this affect the Sikh attitude towards conversion?