

Sikhism

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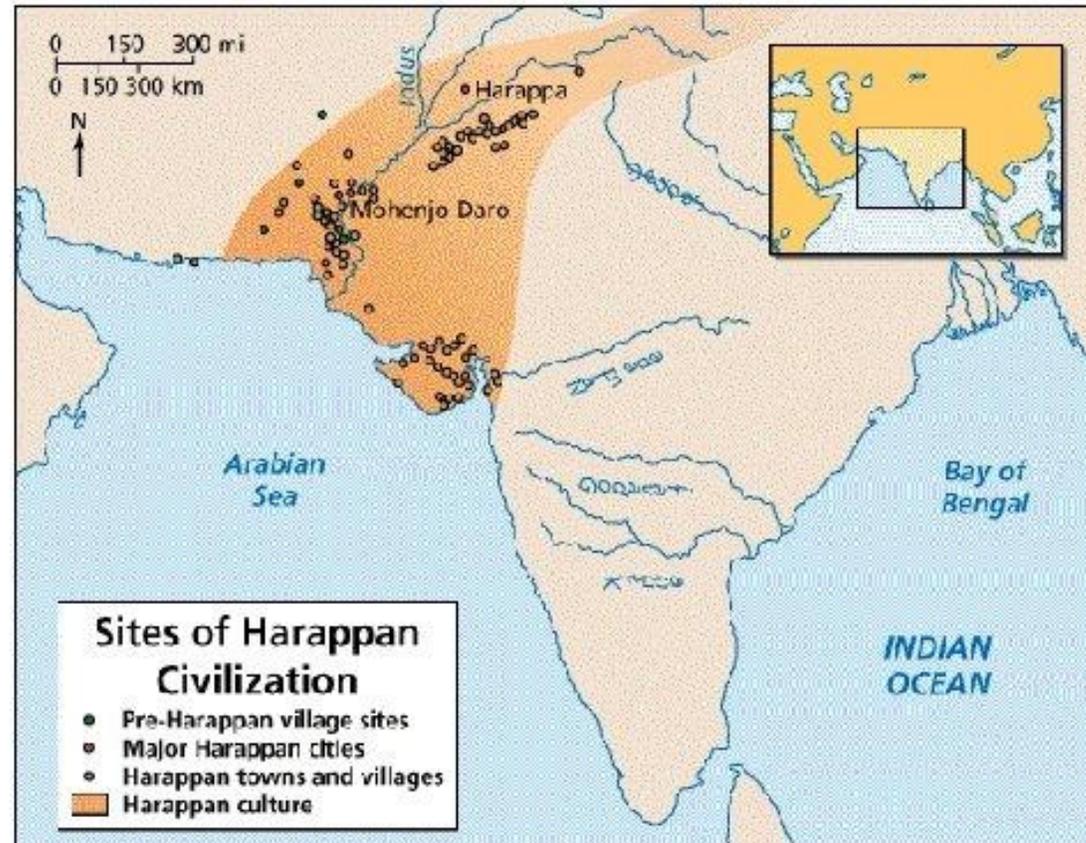
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India Before the Sikhs (1)

- India has been a both a hotbed and a mixing pot of religious fervor for most of human history.
- Brahmanism flourished in the second millennium before Christ and grew into modern Hinduism over the centuries.
- Jainism and then Buddhism arose in the northeast in the sixth and fifth centuries BC.
- From the west of the Indus River, Zoroastrianism and the ancient Greek philosophies shaped the religious world from Sindh to Gujarat.
- Five hundred years later, in the first century, Christians came from the lands of the setting sun.

Early Civilizations in the Indus River Valley

The named derives from one of the two discovered cities - Harappa and Mohenjo Daro ("**Mound of the Dead**")



Early settlements date to 7000 BC

India Before the Sikhs (2)

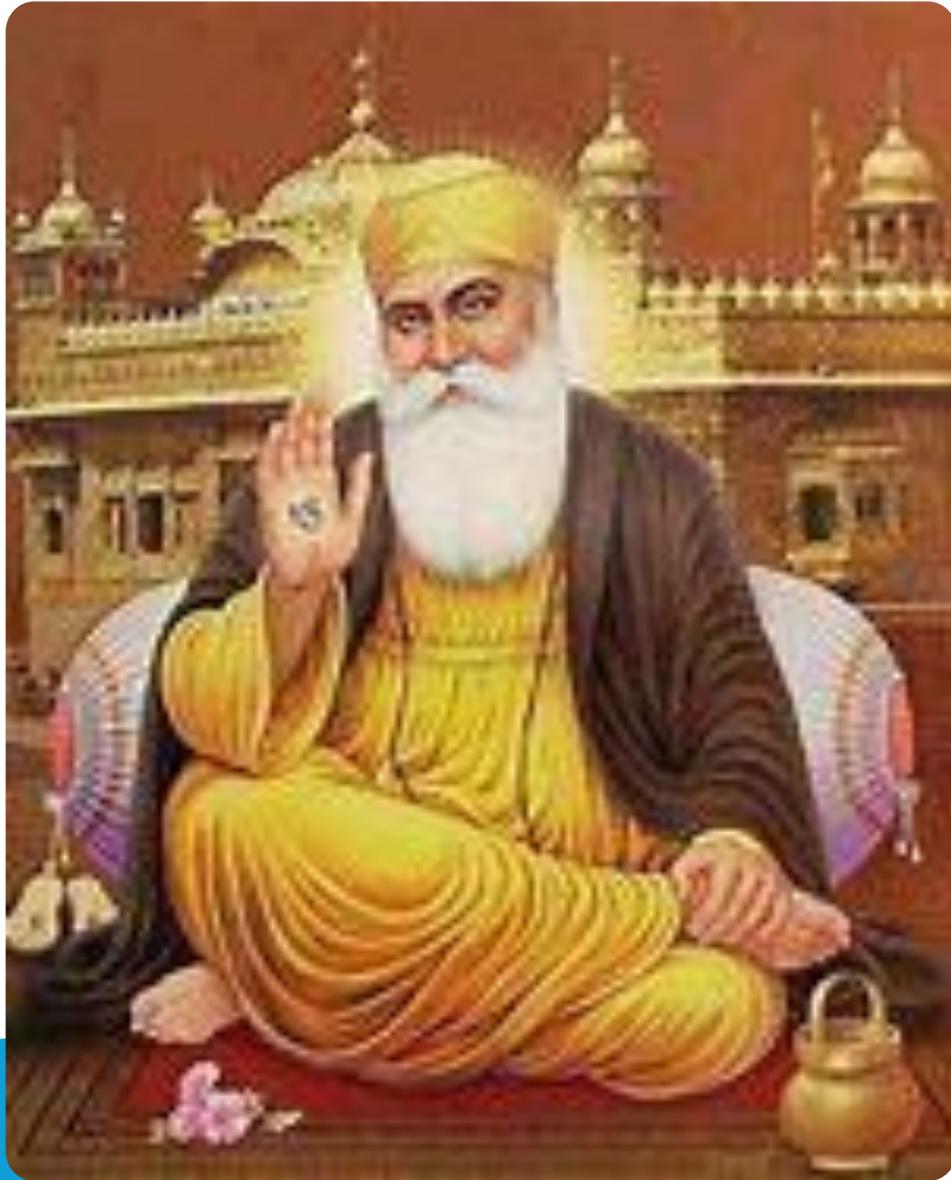
- From AD 700 to 1100, another contender for the allegiance of man, Islam, swept into India.
- Naval raids gave way to land attacks which developed into armies and battles.
- The Indians finally collapsed and for the next 600 years, the standard of the Prophet was raised from the Himalayas to Sri Lanka.
- Over time, millions of Hindus adopted the religion of their conquerors.

Arab invasions of India, Africa, and Europe



Sikh History (1)

- The reigns of the Moghul Emperors Babur (1483-1530) and Akbar (1542-1605) were largely peaceful for Hindus and Muslims alike, but reigns of other Moghuls like Jahangir (1605-1627) saw persecutions. Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1538) lived in Punjab, in the western part of the Indian subcontinent.
- Nanak Dev was dissatisfied with Hinduism and Islam, and especially chronic conflict between the two, and began to seek religious truth.
- Sikhs deny that Nanak Dev simply combined elements of Hinduism and Islam in his teachings, but the religion he founded has profound similarities with both.



Sikh History (2)

- Early Mughal-Sikh Wars (1621–1658)
- Mughal–Sikh Wars (1621–1788)
- Hill States–Sikh Wars (1682–1812)
- Afghan–Sikh Wars (1748–1839)
- Katoch-Sikh War (1801)
- Gurkha-Sikh War (1809)
- Sino-Sikh War (1841–1842)

Sikh History (3)

- The height of Sikh temporal power came in 1799, when Maharaja (Great Ruler) Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) captured Lahore in Punjab and established the Sikh Empire.
- The empire grew with military victories over the derelict Mughal Empire in India and Afghan forces in Kashmir.
- Conflict between the growing power of the Sikhs and the British East Company, which dominated India, was inevitable.
- In two wars (1845-1846 and 1848-1849), the British defeated the Sikhs and ended independent Sikh political power. In deference to the renowned Sikh fighting skills, the British included Sikhs among the “martial races” in their empire.
- Sikhs fought for the British Empire during the Sepoy Rebellion (1857-1858), World Wars I and II, and in a host of other conflicts.
- Upon the partition and independence of India in 1947, Sikhs found their homeland divided between India and Pakistan.

Sikhs in India



Sikh History (4)

- A series of Sikh gurus followed him.
- The last was Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708). Gobind Singh compiled Sikh scriptures into the Sikh holy book, Adi Granth, commonly called the Guru Granth Sahib.
- Gobind Singh designated that after his death, the book itself would become the final, living, permanent guru (1708).
- The Dasam Granth is a secondary scripture.

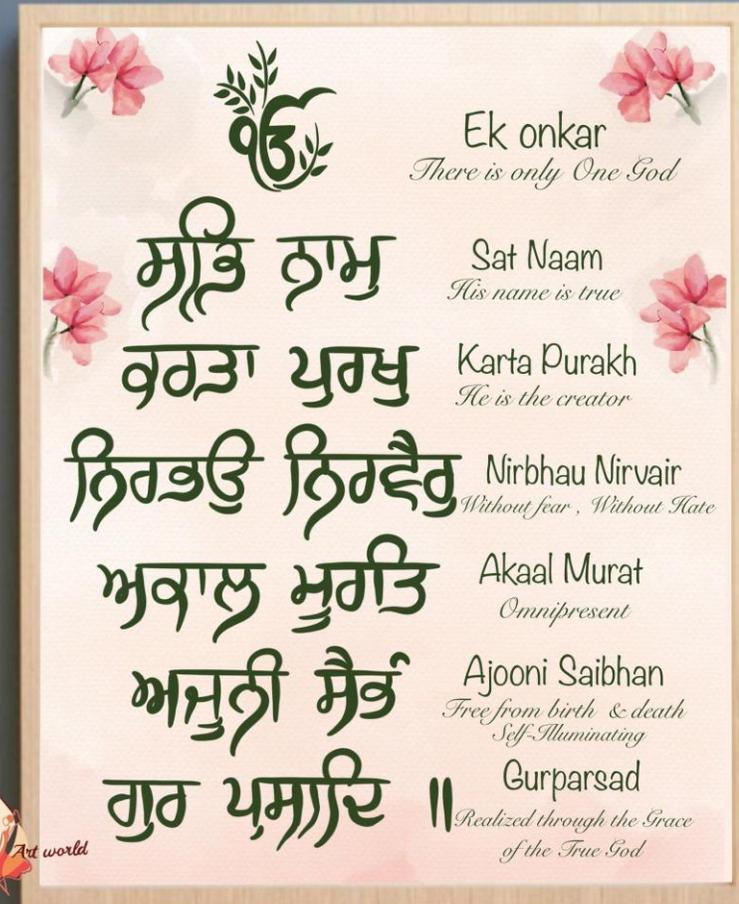
Scripture – Adi Granth



Sikhism Beliefs (1)

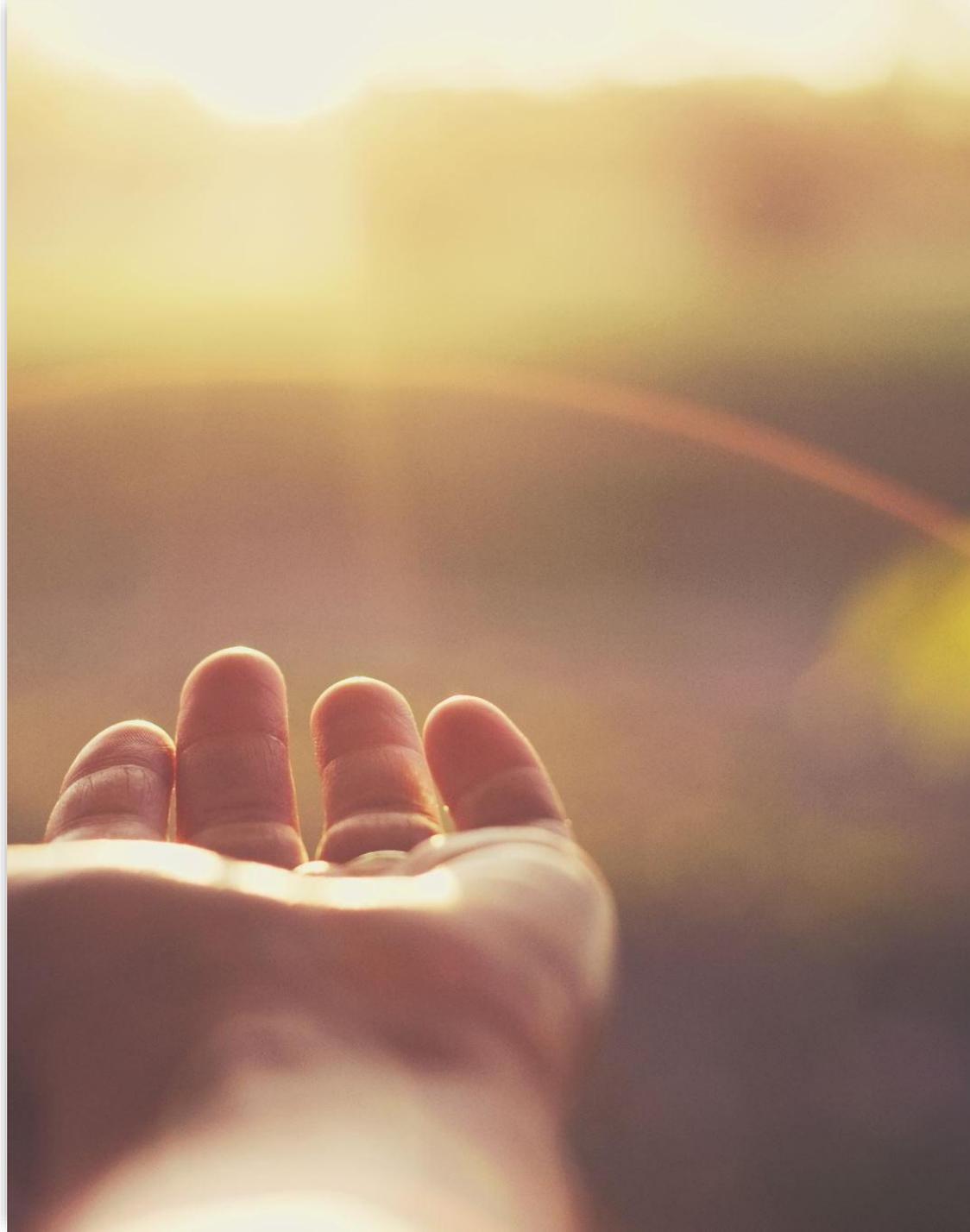
- There is one God and He is eternal and self-existent. His true name is Karta Purukh. Other names or concepts for God include Waheguru ('wondrous Teacher') nirankar ('shapeless'), akal ('timeless'), karta purakh ('the creator'), and agam agochar ('incomprehensible and invisible').
- God has two natures, a personal one (saguna) and an impersonal one (Nirguna).
- The former nature would be characterized as monotheistic, and the latter as panentheistic (the divine intersects the entire universe and is also beyond space and time).

Karta Purakh



Sikhism Beliefs (2)

- While Christians hold that man is morally evil, Sikhs insist that mankind is intrinsically good, with each person possessing a spark of divine light.
- Part of this natural goodness is that men and women are fully equal.
- God has no gender in Sikhism, and no roles in Sikhism are denied to women.



Sikhism

Beliefs (3)

- Sikhs affirm five principal vices (five thieves), including worldly attachment (*moh*), pride (*ahankar*), anger (*krodh*), lust (*kam*), and greed (*lobh*).
- Sikhs believe the concept of *maya*, in which worldly pleasures, but not worldly existence, are illusions. The idea that detachment from the world is a religious goal suggests Buddhist influence. The world is currently in an age of darkness (*kali yuga*).

5 Thieves

- 'Five thieves'
 - Similar to the 7 Deadly Sins of Christianity
 1. Kaam – Lust
 2. Krodh – Anger
 3. Lobh – Greed
 4. Moh – Attachment
 5. Hunkar – Egotism
- Expectation is to manage these 'thieves' rather than remove them completely

Sikhism Beliefs (4)

- Sikhs follow a process of liberation from worldly concerns, again like Hinduism and Buddhism.
- The first step in the process is to penetrate the wall of falsehood. Much of what people fight for on earth is meaningless in the long term (and even in the short one), and to understand this is to begin to overcome falsehood.
- Meditation ranks high in Sikhism, as does praising God and developing compassion through meditation.
- If a man is a good Sikh and faithful all his days, upon death his body will be cremated, and his soul will be absorbed into the divine essence (sach khand).

Distinctive Sikh Beliefs (1)

- Sikh army (Khalsa) – uncut hair (kesh), wooden comb (kangha), steel bracelet (kara), short sword (kirpan), and shorts (kachha). Men are given the surname Singh and women the surname Kaur.
 - Khalsa can also refer to the community of the faithful.
- Khalsa initiation ritual – the Nectar Ceremony (ammrit sancar) initiates ordinary Sikhs into the Khalsa Sikh community.
- Temple worship (gurdwara) – singing hymns (kirtan), meditation, readings from Granth Sahib.
- Diwali – festival of lights (like Hindu)

Sikh Accoutrements



kesh – Unshorn hair.



kanga – comb.



kachera – underwear.



kara – bracelet.



kirpan – sword.

Distinctive Sikh Beliefs (2)

- Daily prayers (Nitnem) – Sikh hymns to be read at least thrice daily.
- Five seats of authority (takhts) – geographical locations in India where religious and legal conflicts between Sikhs are adjudicated. Three sites are in **Indian Punjab** (Akal Takht Sahib, Keshgarh Sahib, Damdama Sahib), one in **south central India** (Hazur Sahib Nanded), and one in **eastern India** (Patna Sahib). The Golden Temple of Amritsar is collocated with Akak Tahkat Sahib in the Indian Punjab.
- Battle of Muktsar (1705) – memory of 40 Sikhs killed when fighting Mughal Empire.

Battle of Muktsar

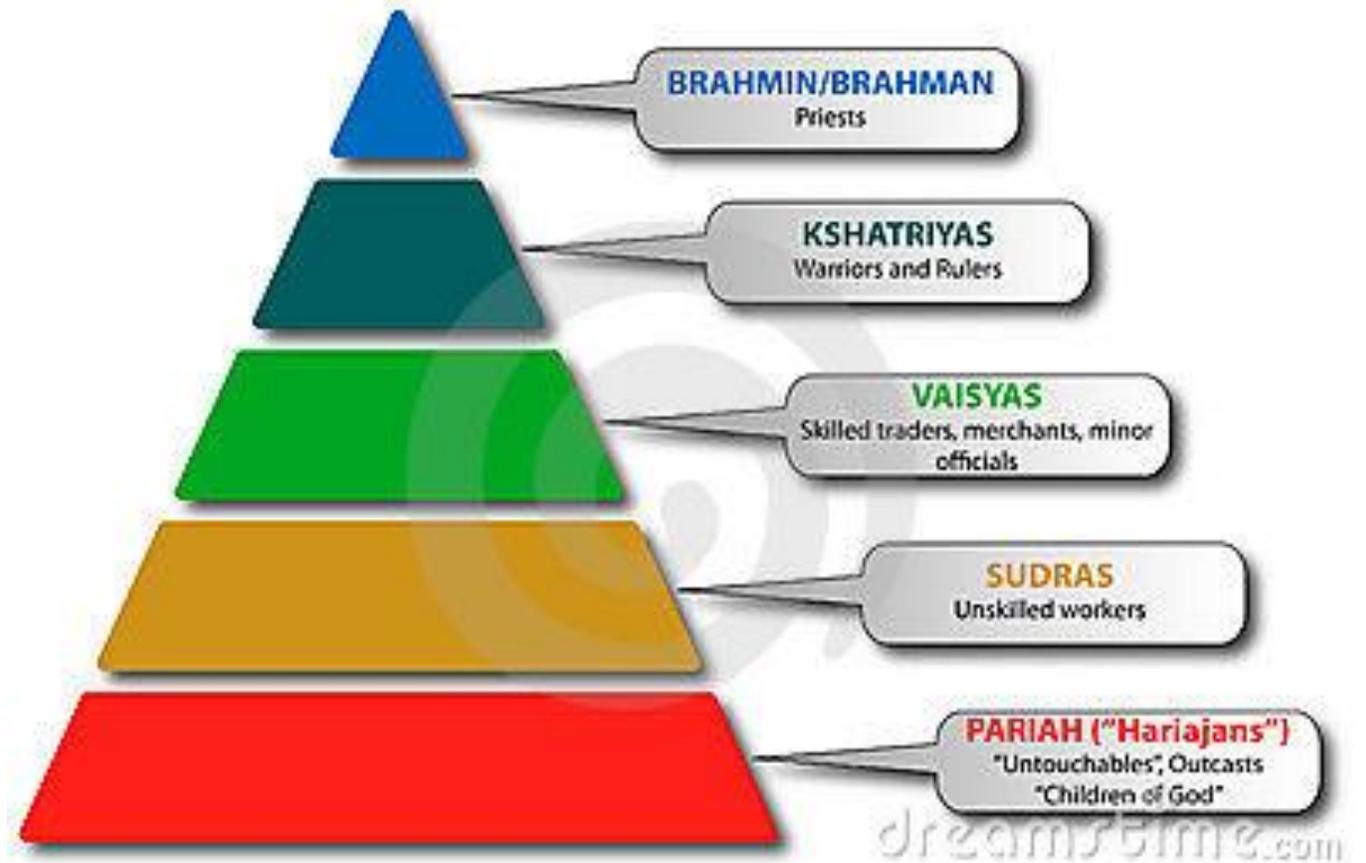


Sikhs and the Caste System

- Early Sikhs held to a caste system, including Khattris, Brahmins, Jats, Tarkans (carpenters), Lohars (blacksmiths), Nais (barbers), Chhimbas (cotton printers), Machhis (water carriers), Dhobis (washermen), Kumhars (potters), Telis (oil pressers), masons, goldsmiths, outcastes, and Muslims.[1]
- Modern Sikhs officially hold to a secular ideology though vestiges of the caste system remain.
- Sikhs reject the concept that any religion, including itself, conveys absolute truth.
- Adherents experience God through recitations and music (kirtan).

Sikh Caste System

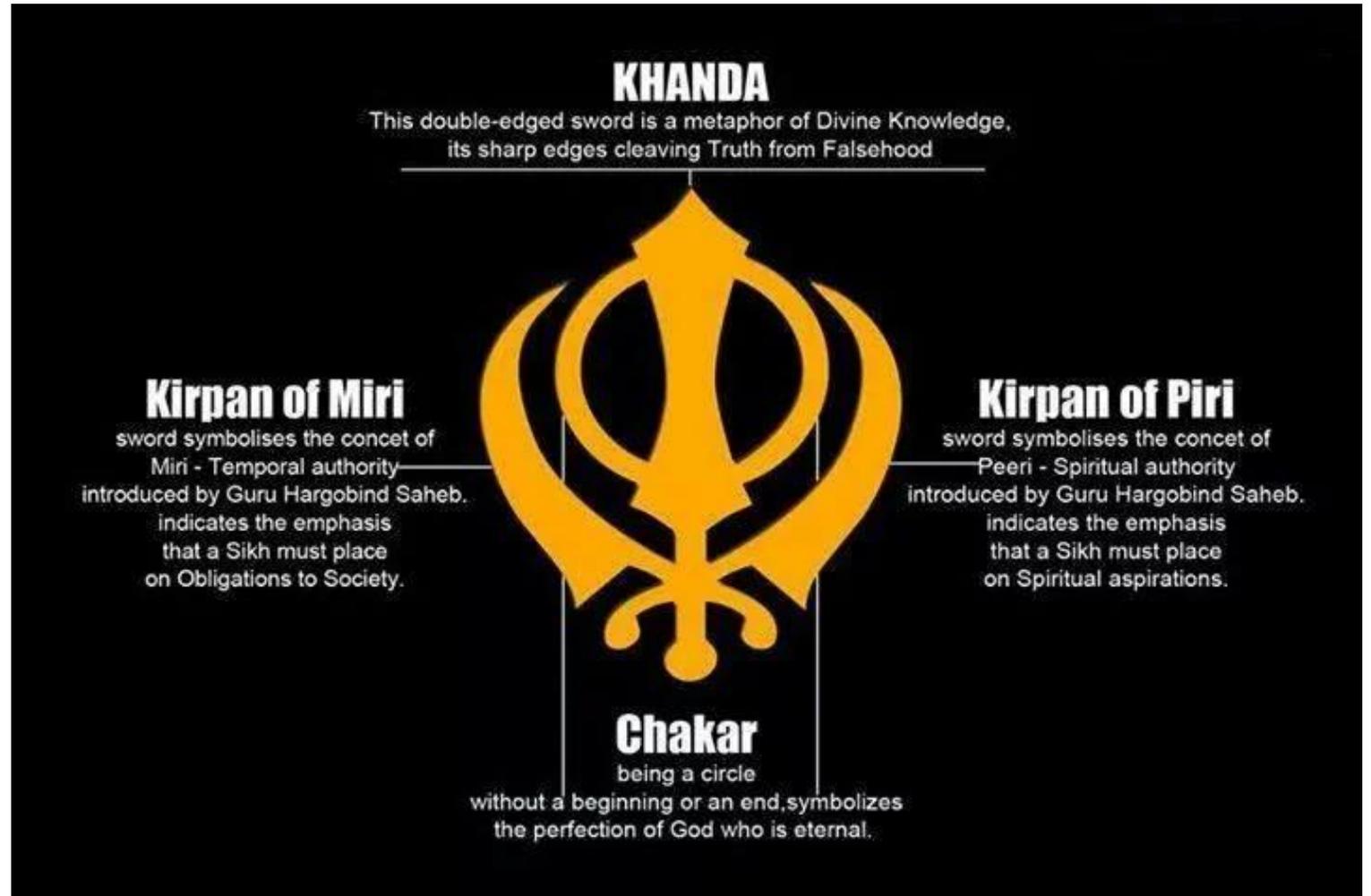
- All gurus spoke out against caste
- Guru nanak openly associated with lower castes.
- He spoke out against the elevated position of brahmins.
- He emphasized eating together



Religion and Politics

- Miri and Piri describe the social/political and religious aspects of Sikh life, respectively. The “two swords” of Miri and Piri indicate the secular and religious authority of the Guru. Service to others is also emphasized, including tan (labor), man (mental work), and dhan (financial support). Sikhs do not seek to convert others to their religion.

Sikh Sword



Sikhism Today

- About 25-30 million people follow Sikhism today.
- It is the majority religion in Punjab and has a large diaspora in Canada.
- Sikhs have remained under 2% of India's population, but Sikhs have the lowest fertility rate of any major religion in India, only 1.5%, which is well below replacement.
- Unless this changes, or there is a massive influx of converts, Sikh numbers are poised to fall.

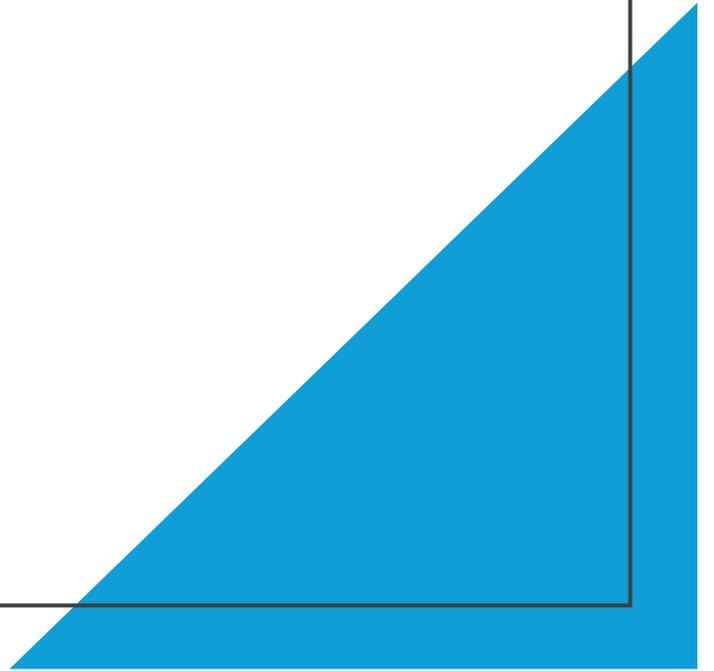
Khalistan

- A Sikh separatist movement wants an independent Sikh state in Punjab (Khalistan). It was suppressed in 1984 by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (1917-1984). Gandhi was assassinated and as a result, riots rocked the region. Thousands of Sikhs died.
- The Khalistan movement persists
- The government of India assassinated Sikh Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar for pushing for Khalistan.[2] Sikhs in the US have also been threatened.



Conclusion

- Discussion



References

- H. Wayne House, Charts of World Religions, Zondervan, 2006