

# SIKHS ARE NOT HINDUS

## Comparative Study of Hindu Traditions and Sikh Religion (Uniqueness of Sikh Scripture, Sikh Identity & Sikh Ideology)

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This is in reference to the recent controversy raised by Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh Chief, K.S. Sudershan that **Sikhs are Hindus** which was published in many of the newspapers published in Punjab and outside on January 30-31, 2003. He blames that Britishers deliberately distorted the meaning of word “dharma” as they did not have any synonymous word in the dictionary. It is an interesting observation of Sudershan who seems to be totally ignorant about the Sikh identity and Sikh history prior to Britishers arrival in India. If Sikh religion has no separate identity then he has to explain the following historical facts:

- History of Guru Period (Sri Chand , Mohan, Prithi , and Ram Rai transgressed Sikh beliefs in early Sikh history and were isolated)
- Sikh Scripture delineating independent Sikh identity. 3<sup>rd</sup> Guru on pg. 360 GGS is very clear “although the Six Hindu systems are prevalent everywhere but the Guru system is profound and unequalled”.
- Martyrdom of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Guru to uphold religious freedom
- Testimony of Moshan Fani (Muslim Chronicle, 1645)
- Execution of Banda and 740 Sikhs in New Delhi (not even one desecrated while given the choice to do, 1715-16)
- First sikh ghalughara in 18<sup>th</sup> century when governor Yahiya Khan issued proclamation killing all Sikhs
- Why prices on Sikh heads were fixed by Mughals?
- Misal Raj
- History of Maharaha Ranjit Singh period (His government was know as Sarkar-i-Khalsa; he issued coins in the name of the Guru and all his princes were addressed as Khalsa. He was made to appear at Akal Takhat and was granted Tankhah.)

Sikhism	Vaisnism	Vedantism	Nathism
1. Spiritual experience is that God is Love-Ocean of virtues. A dynamic experience.	Sach Chit Anand – Blissful and Quiet.	Sach Chit Ananad – Blissful and Quietist	Blissful Isolation Quietist
2. World Real-Arena of spiritual growth.	Maya	Mithya (Illusion)	Real but a place of misery.
3. Life Affirming	Life-Negating	World does not exist.	Death to the world.
4. Monotheism	Pantheism	Monotheism	Pantheism
5. God interested in the world. He is milk to child, eyes to blind, riches to poor and Helper of the weak. This means combination between spiritual and empirical life of man.	Dichotomy between spiritual and empirical life of man. Hence monasticism & Sanyas.	World an illusion – activity delusion. Sanyas	Yogi vows to withdraw from the world.
6. Householder’s life with full social responsibility.	Celibacy and Sanyas	Celibacy and Sanyas	Vow of celibacy and never to work
7. Equality of man and woman. Women in charge of missionary	Woman not fit for Vaishnava path.	Woman a hurdle in spiritual Path.	Vow of celibacy. Naths do not

districts.

8. Equality and brotherhood of man.	Hierarchical caste – Sudras not fit for Bhakti	Accepts caste	even eat with Nath woman. Accepts caste. Low castes not admitted.
9. Man’s spiritual assessment of his virtuous deeds. By our deeds we are near or away from God. Higher than Truth is truthful living.	All morality is supernal-moral. To do only one’s caste duty or ritual acts.	No deeds ritual acts for man of low intellect.	Vows never to work
10. Work and sharing essential	Sanyas	Sanyas	Vows never to work
11. Methodology of remembering God and of virtuous deeds and social responsibility.	Ritualistic, formal, or emotional dancing, meditational.	Meditational. Also value of ritualism accepted.	Hath Yoga and Kundalini Yoga
12. Use of force accepted if other means fail	Sex-methodology accepted. Ahimsa.	Ahimsa	Sex-Methodology also accepted
13. Goal is to be the instrument of Gods Will.	Merger in Brahman	Realization of I am Brahman	Vow of Ahimsa, blood sacrifices done. Merger in Siva
14. Jivan Mukta active and accepts social responsibility. IN the above context Guru Nanak did three things. He created a panth and appointed a successor to continue the mission. He identified the social problems of caste and that of the political oppression. Rejected Ahimsa as an inviolable rule. Finally Panth was created and Guru Granth was appointed as Guru in pursuance of the doctrine of Miri and Piri.	Individual salvation. Ritual duties performed.	No interest in the world. Unconscious of the world.	Individual Salvation. No interest in the world – A place of misery.

### **Sikhism: A Religion of Numina(Naam) and not Phenomena**

Guru Gobind Singh himself directed the sikhs to follow **guru granth** and no other book nor any human being. Numinous experience is inherent in Frie’s Ahndung (longing), Schleiermachar’s Feeling, Kant’s Things in Themselves (noumena) and Kapur Singh’s Antithesis of phenomena. It stands for the holy minus its moral factor and without any rational aspect. It is irreducible to any other factor. Numinous consciousness involves shaking fear of repulsion and an element of powerful fascination. It can only be understood by “ideograms” i.e. not through logic, but only symbolically. The core of religious experience is inherent in the awareness of non-moral holiness as a category of value. The numinous experience is the core and base of Sikh religion and its ingredients i.e. religiously sensitive mind in relation to his/her apprehension of himself/herself and universe around him/her. The ultimate reality is not comprehensible through the sensory motor perceptions and speculations. Sikhism is a religion of Naam (neumina), which is asserted through 30,000 hymns of Sikh scripture through revealed statements, literary similes

and allusions. Naam is God, and God is Naam, and the practice of religion revolves around the Naam. Sikh religious thought cannot be interpreted through any phenomenal process. Guru Granth is a unique scripture and Sikhism has its own identity as follows:

1. Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Scripture is purely monotheistic. It accepts only one God and rejects all other deities, spirits, angels, etc. Only God is immortal. All other deities are mortal and prone to death.
2. The religion of Guru Granth Sahib, being free from inhibitions of any kind regarding the way of life and its adaptability in all the religions of the world vouches its universality. It is not a religion of the chosen people (like Judaism), but instead, it is the religion of the entire humanity. It raises above all the regional barriers.
3. It rejects all ritualism, formalism, and symbolism. It has no belief in any sacrament.
4. It focuses all its attention on the enfoldment of discipline for the attainment of the unity of the soul with God. The emphasis has been laid on the adoption of godly qualities by the seeker.
5. It repudiates the prevalent theories of Creation and scans the universe as the work of the Creator, whose existence pulsates everywhere in His Creation. The extent and expanse of the Creation of the Infinite Lord cannot be delimited.
6. It lays great emphasis on honest and sincere labor. Its religion is the religion of workers and householders. Therefore it decries the renunciation and all types of ascetic practices.
7. It advocates the equality of all human beings, irrespective of birth and sex. The woman is in no way inferior to man. It rejects all distinctions of caste and color.
8. The State has to play its part in the provision of food, shelter, and clothing to the members of the society. There can be no devotion, if the individual is not carefree about his requirements.
9. It presents a balanced combination of action, devotion, and knowledge. Whereas the body has to work for the well-being of family and society while the mind has to remain in tune with the Lord. Service is, thus, the motto of an adherent of Guru Granth Sahib. His best service toward the Guru and the Lord is the remembrance to the Name.
10. The religion of Guru Granth Sahib is most practical. The devotee overbrims with love and devotion. The whole world appears as a family to him. The earth is an abode of Dharma for him.
11. Breaks dichotomy between spiritual and empirical lives.
12. Rejects Ascetism.
13. Rejects Varnasharm Dharma which incorporates basic caste system.
14. Rejects Ahsma.
15. God Never incarnates. He is Un-Incarnated and Transcendent.

### **World-View and Guru Granth**

Both the surveys of Maxwebster and Schwitzer bring out that all Indian religions are life-negating and suggest withdrawal from life. This is quite true of Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnavism, Vedanta and even the Sant Tradition. All these Hindu systems as indicated above, involve withdrawal from life, and denial of social responsibility. Evidently, systems that recommend Ahimsa, asceticism, monasticism, Sanyasa, celibacy or withdrawal from life, reject every kind of social involvement, much less social responsibility, as an unwanted bondage. S. K. Mitra, who has surveyed the ethics of all Hindu systems, says “that the common feature of all doctrines of the ideal life, or Moksha, is the conception of ideal as strictly moral idea.” It is so, because all these systems accept a clear dichotomy between the spiritual path and the empirical path, and, thus life-negation is a natural and logical consequence of all these religious systems and their world-view. But Sikhism, as the hymns

and lives of the Gurus express and demonstrate very clearly, has a world-view of life-affirmation, since in the Sikh ideology there is an inalienable combination between the spiritual life and the empirical life of man. For, whatever is within the domain of God, is also within the sphere of operation of the Godman. In short, Sikhism is a whole-life religion with a world-view entirely opposed to that of other Indian religions.

**Guru Granth as a New Scripture with New Ideology with New Religious Experience**  
Vedas and Upanishads are without doubt the scriptures of all Hindu systems. But Sikhism completely denies their authority, and Guru Nanak even calls some of their injunctions to be wrong. The Sikh Gurus were so clear and particular about the independent and separate identity of their religious system and the complete originality and newness of its character, that they took very significant stage which no other religious leader in the world had done. They specifically compiled and authenticated the Sikh Scripture. Secondly, since the time of its compilation in 1604 A.D., it is the complete repository of and the final authority on the Sikh ideology and its doctrines. Since the Gurus called it revealed Bani, it has been regarded as the Shabad having the sanction of God. The Tenth Master took two important steps in this regard. First, he introduced the Nash doctrine, thereby making a complete and final break with all other Indian ideologies. Neither the Vedas and Upanishads, nor any other religious systems is given any sanction or accepted as authentic. We all know that the Bani of Bhagats in the Guru Granth is a selection. It is accepted only to the extent it is in consonance with the doctrines of the Gurus. And even where differences seem to be suggested, the Gurus have made adequate comments and clarifications. The Bani of Bhagats outside the Granth Sahib is not given any authenticity. Secondly, he made the Sikh Scripture not only as the exclusive vehicle of the Guru's message, but also gave it the status of the Guru, Guide or Teacher of the Sikhs. The creation and sanction of Guru Granth as the sole scripture of the Sikhs reveals that the Gurus were very clear and conscious of its independent and separate character, and wanted their ideology to remain as such

without chance of any addition, alteration, or any departure from its authenticity or contents.  
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