

different people from different religions, classes and castes into the Sikh Holy Scripture. In addition to this, the central Sikh shrine in India was designed with four entrances, to show that people from all four corners of the world are welcome.

Useless Things

Sikh dharma does not have a formal priestly class. In India the priestly class was hereditary and took advantage of common people, by for example, charging money for performing a wedding. In addition to this, Sikhs place no faith in superstition, fasting or pilgrimage as rituals which seek inner transformation in merely outer actions. An outer pilgrimage has to go along with the desire for an inner journey and the open-mindedness to learn from new and unexpected experiences.

Finally, when meditating or praying, neither day, direction or location are as important as a real need for communication and desire for experience with the Unknown. A Sikh shall remember God always and everywhere.

Basic Meditations

Mool Mantra

Why not set aside 5 minutes every day to reap some of the benefits of meditation? Repeat the Mool Mantra (Root Chant), a few times in the morning in Gurmukhi or English. The Mool Mantra connects you to the primal source of the universe, which is God:

- **Ik Ouñkār** - There is only One God, who creates, sustains and destroys, and exists without change
- **Sat Nām** - God's name is Truth
- **Kartā Purakh** - God is the Creator, and resides within the Creation
- **Nirbhau** - God is Fearless
- **Nirvair** - God is without Enmity
- **Akāl Mūrat** - God is beyond time
- **Ajūnī** - God is unborn

- **Saibhañ** - God is self-existent
- **Gur Prasād** - God is realised by the Grace of the Guru

Naam Japna

Try some recitation on the virtues of God (Naam Japna), for about 5 minutes every day. Follow the procedure below and let the two words, 'Wahe' meaning wonderful and 'Guru' meaning God, over power any worries or thoughts in your mind. If you have problems in focusing your mind, then focus on the air coming in and out through your nose:

1. Close your eyes and sit somewhere quiet
2. Recite 'Wahe' mentally as you breathe in through your nose
3. Recite 'Guru' mentally as you breathe out through your nose

Summary

- Sikh dharma is a way of life in which Sikhs learn to expand their consciousness through experience with meditation, serving people and honest living
- Sikh dharma teaches people to practice equality by accepting the oneness of humanity and serving everyone unconditionally
- Sikh dharma is a non-dogmatic, rational way of life that does not believe in ritualistic pilgrimages, fasts or superstitions

More Information

Please visit ProjectNaad.com for other leaflets on a wide variety of topics related to the Sikh way of life and Sikh philosophy.



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Sikh Dharma Basics

Sikh Dharma

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Introduction

Sikh dharma encourages people to follow a simple lifestyle which benefits the individual, their families and their communities. This lifestyle includes:

- Meditation on God
- Sharing with the needy
- Earning an honest living

Meditation on God

We spend ages, trying to look good by weight training, aerobics and eating good food. Some of us also spend ages 'exercising' our minds with complex problems. This is great and we should all aspire for a healthy body and mind. Indeed, it is true to say, that we are feeding our mind and body plenty. But what about our soul? How many of us actually 'feed' our soul?

Surely if a human being consists of a mind, body and soul then we must look after all three? Daily meditation is therefore prescribed for everyone to satisfy the needs of the soul.

But most of us seem to get by, without doing any meditation. So why should we need to do any meditation? What are the problems that arise within people who don't feed their soul?

Well, the symptoms include a lack of satisfaction with anything, too much ego, too much sexual desire, too much greed, too much anger, and the list goes on. These are the symptoms of an unstable mind and a hungry soul. Satisfying this hunger provides contentment, peace of mind, healing of the body, an abundance of mental and physical energy, control of our passions, our pride, our anger and everything else that would make us feel complete. You only need to practice meditation to discover the benefits.

Sharing with the Needy

The second aspect of the Sikh life style is sharing with the needy, which can include giving to charity. The Sikh Gurus advised people to set aside up to one tenth of their earnings for the greater good of the community. Sikh dharma is very much, community based and encourages the development of community spirit. People are also encouraged to try and give one tenth of their time to God, by doing unpaid charity or community work.

"Working for the Lord, His humble servants look beautiful." (SGGSJ, p.191)

Earning a Honest Living

Most people do some form of work to earn a living. Sikh philosophy teaches,

"The Sikh of the Guru has no greed at all and he earns his livelihood by the labour of his hands." (Vaar 22, Pauri 11)

Sikh dharma is a way of life, designed for common people and so is often called, 'the religion of the householder'. The requirement of everyone to earn their bread, encourages the creation of a self reliant, self sufficient, hard working and prosperous community.

"Truth is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful living." (SGGSJ, p.62)

Founders of Sikh Dharma

Sikh dharma was formally constituted by a lineage of 10 Sikh spiritual masters starting with Guru Nanak Dev Ji and ending with a Saint-Soldier called Guru Gobind Singh Ji. After the 10th master, the Word of God called Guru Granth Sahib was given the eternal status of Guru.

Not the Only Way

Sikh dharma does not claim to be the only way to God. It accepts all religions to be divine in origin, and therefore routes to God. It is up to the individual to decide which path to follow.

This belief was shown in practice by the 9th Guru, who gave his life to protect the Hindu religion from persecution. He is the only prophet in the world to die for the beliefs of another group. He died for the basic right of people to practice or believe whatever they want, so long as it doesn't hurt anyone else.

Sikhs are enjoined to recognise, accept and promote religious, cultural and racial diversity. It is a factor which enhances the quality of life and helps in obtaining a better understanding of God and Its creation.

Oneness of God

Sikhs believe in the oneness of God. He is known by many names, including Jehovah, Ram, Allah, Waheguru and Parmesar. God does not belong to any one person or nation and nor does He love a certain group of people more than another group. God is the same everywhere and all people worship the same formless Lord. He is something which we can never fully understand, because He is beyond human comprehension.

Oneness of Humanity

As well as believing in the oneness of God, Sikhs also believe in the oneness of humanity.

Recognising humanity as one means that skin colour, race, caste, class, religion, gender, orientation of ones sexuality, nationality and any other division is not important. We are all the sons and daughters of God.

The Sikh Gurus gave this idea a concrete form, by incorporating divine revelation from many