



# | SHRI SANATAN MANDIR |

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# Culture 5

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topics:

1. Shlok: Om Bhurbuva (Gayatri mantra)
2. Introduction to Bhagvad Gita
3. Yoga and Ashtanga Yoga
4. Religions from India

# **Shlok**

## **(Culture 5)**

### **Om Bhuur-Bhuvah (Gayatri Mantra)**

**Om Bhuur-Bhuvah Svah**

**Tat-Savitur-Varennnyam |**

**Bhargo Devasya Dhiimahi**

**Dhiyo Yo Nah Pracodayaat ||**

Om, (that Divine Illumination which Pervades the) Bhu Loka  
(Physical Plane, Consciousness of the Physical Plane),  
Bhuvar Loka (Antariksha or Intermediate Space,  
Consciousness of the Prana) and Swar Loka (Swarga,  
Heaven, Consciousness of the Divine Mind),  
On that Savitur (Divine Illumination) which is the Most  
Adorable (Varenyam),  
and which is of the nature of Divine Effulgence (Bhargo  
Devasya), I meditate,  
May that Divine Intelligence (Dhiyah) Awaken (Pracodyat)  
our Spiritual Consciousness

4to40



## **Background of the Bhagavad Geeta.**

**Each chapter of the Geeta is a science or Yoga and ends saying that the Geeta is :**

## Point /Conterpoint

In the Geeta, Shri Krishna is inciting Arjuna to fight, to wage a war against his own cousins. Why do we regard 'The Bhagavad Geeta' as a Holy Scripture and 'The Song of God' when it appears to be a book about war and violence?

### THE THREE GUNAS OF PRAKRITI

PRAKRITI -- Everything in the universe that is not BRAHMAN. In other words, PRAKRITI refers to the physical plane -- all that is impermanent, transitory, limited, ever-changing, including the mineral, vegetable, animal kingdoms, the human being, and the etheric and astral planes. Everything that can be weighed and measured, everything that can be apprehended by the senses or scientific equipment (extensions of the senses), everything that has name and form, everything that can be a subject of thought and put into words, all this is PRAKRITI. In other words, everything that is not BRAHMAN, that is not PURE SPIRIT, PURE CONSCIOUSNESS, PURE BEING, PURE BLISS, is PRAKRITI. Everything that is subject to the world of opposites, such as heat and cold, praise and blame, happiness and suffering, good and bad, etc., everything that is not permanent and eternal, is PRAKRITI, or in an English equivalent terms NATURE or the PHYSICAL PLANE.

One of the principle exercises leading to higher consciousness is to be able to witness in a objective way, the field of PRAKRITI. The first exercise is to witness your own personality -- your mind, body, emotions --according to three qualities of motion. These three qualities of motion are:

RAJAS -- a high state of motion, expressed as speed, passion, heroic actions, ambition, zeal, aggression, creativity, destruction, fury, abandon, heat.

TAMAS -- a low state of motion, expressed as inertia, laziness, slow-wittedness, bigotry (thought that is stuck), foolishness, foggy thinking, crystallization, cold

SATTVA -- a moderate state of motion, expressed as harmony, peacefulness, nonaggressiveness, that which is sweet, healing, pleasant, non-harmful.

In adjectival terms these three qualities are called RAJASIK, TAMASIK and SATTVIK.

## **Key Concepts**

**Dharma**

**Karma**

**Nishkama Karma**

**The Three Gunas**

## **Verses**

### **The Soul is Indestructible.**

#### **Chapter 2,Verse 23**

Nainam chindati shastrani, Nainam Dahati Pavaka |  
Na chainam kleydayantyapaha, Na Shoshayati Marutaha ||

Weapons cannot cut or pierce the soul, Fire cannot burn it  
Water cannot drench it, nor does the wind dry it.

## **Reincarnation**

### **Chapter 2, Verse 22**

**vaasaamsi jiirnaani yathaa vihaaya, navaani grihnaati naro aparaani |  
tathaa shariiraani vihaaya jiirnaanyanyaani samyaati navaani dehii ||**

**Just as a person casts off worn out garments and puts on others that  
are new, even so, the embodies soul casts off worn out bodies and  
takes on others that are new.**

### **Chapter 2, Verse 27**

**jaatasya hi dhruvo mrityuh dhruvam janma mritasya cha |  
tasmaadaparihaarye arthe na tvam shochitumarhasi ||**

**Death is certain of that which is born. Birth is certain of that which is  
dead. Therefore, you should not lament over the inevitable.**



## **All Paths Lead To the Same God**

### **Chapter 7, Verse 21**

Yo Yo Yam Yam tanum bhaktaha sraddhasyaarchintumichite|  
Tasya tasyaachalaam shraddhaam taameva vidhadhaamyaham||

Whichever form the seeker chooses to worship me with faith, devotion and trust,  
I will surely stabilize that faith in him (appear to him in that form.)

### **Chapter 9, Verse 23**

Yepyanyadevatabhaktaha yajanteshraddhayanvitaaha|  
Tepi mameva kaunteya yajantyaviddhipurvakam||

Kaunteya (Arjuna) -Even those devotees who resort to the worship of other gods,  
with faith and devotion are worshipping Me alone, though indirectly.

## **The Magnificence of God –The Cosmic Being**

### **Chapter 11, Verse 12**

**divi suuryasahasrasya bhavedyugapadutthitaa |  
yadi bhashadrishii saa syaad bhahasastasya mahaatmanah ||**

**Even if the radiance of a thousand Suns, bursts forth all at once in the  
heavens, it would still hardly approach the splendor of the mighty  
Lord.**

## **Divinity Exists in Every Atom of Creation**

chapter 7 ,Verse 10

bijam maam sarvabhootanam viddhi partha sanatanam|  
buddhir buddhirmataam asmi  
teja tejasvinaam aham||

O, Partha (Arjuna) Know me to be the eternal seed of all beings. I am the intellect  
of the intelligent,the lustre of the radiant.

chapter 6, Verse 30

yo maam pashyati sarvatra,  
sarvam cha mayi pashyati|  
tasyaham na pranashyami sa cha me na pranasyati ||

To him who sees Me in everything and everything in Me, I am not lost to him nor  
is he lost to Me.

## Avatar

chapter 4, Verse 7 & Verse 8

yada yada hi dharmasya, glanir bhavati bhaarataha|  
abhyuthaanam adharmasya tadatmaanam srujaamyaham||

paritraanay sadhunaam, vinaashaya cha drushkrutaam|  
dharma staapanaathaya sambhavami yuge yuge||

O Arjuna, whenever Dharma or righteousness is in danger and Adharma or unrighteousness becomes rampant, then I manifest Myself.

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of Dharma, I incarnate Myself from time to time.

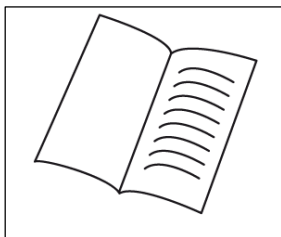
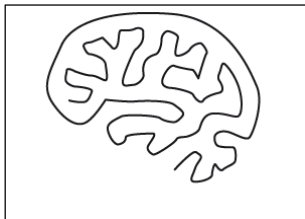
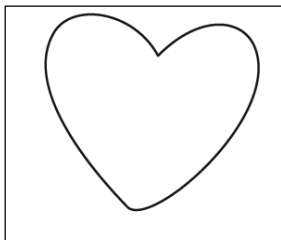
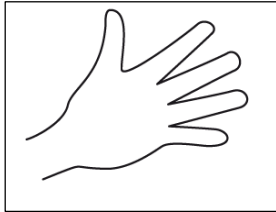
Chapter 10, Verse 41

Yadyadibhutimatsatvam shrimaduurjitameva va|  
Tattadevavagaccha tvam mama tejonshasambhavam||

Know that any and every being that manifests power, glory or radiance in an uncommon measure is born of a ray of My light and My Might.

Swami Vivekananda's interpretation: I am in every religion as the thread through a string of pearls. Wherever you see extraordinary holiness and extraordinary power raising and purifying humanity, know that I am there.

## The Four Pathways to God



The Bhagavad Gita mentions several different yogic disciplines. all with the same goal. A seeker may begin with the one most suited to his individual temperament.

KARMA YOGA, the technique of remaining in touch with the spiritual worlds while engaged in the actions of daily life.

JNANA YOGA, to have a direct experience of Spirit through refined discernment.

RAJA YOGA – Yoga through meditation

BHAKTI YOGA, devoted attention and love toward the One Life present everywhere.: these four yogas are considered to be inseparable.

Krishna's teaching in the Bhagavad Gita continually separates and then fuses together again these three modes of apprehension of the Spirit.

## **Importance of Action**

**Chapter 2, Verse 47 karmanyevaadhikaara ste maa**

**phaleshu kadaachana |  
maa karmaphalaheturbhuu maatesangotsvakarmani ||**

**A person has the right towards action alone and not towards the fruit of action. Let not the fruit of action be the motive or cause for not doing your duty.**

**Chapter 5, Verse 10**

**brahmanyaadhaaya karmaani sangam tyaktvaa karoti yah |  
lipyate na sa paapena padmapatramivaambhasaa ||**

**He who offers all actions to God, without attachment, remains untouched by sin, just as a lotus leaf by water.**

**Chapter 3, Verse 9 yagyarthaatkarmano anyatra loko ayam**

**karmabandhanah |  
tadartham karma kaunteya muktasangah samaachara ||**

**Kaunteya (Arjuna), In this world all actions become causes of bondage, unless they are performed as an offering to God. Therefore, work for the sake of God, without personal attachments.**

## **The True Essence of Prayer - Rituals or Devotion?**

**Chapter 9, Verse 26**

**patram pushhpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyaa prayachhati |  
tadaham bhaktyupahritamashnaami prayataatmanah ||**

**I accept the offering of even a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, when it is  
offered with loving devotion.**

**Chapter 18, Verse 55**

**bhaktya maamabhijaanati yaavaanyaschaasmi tattvataha |  
tato maam tattvato nyaatva vishate tad-anantaram ||**

**One can understand Me as I am only by devotional contemplation.  
And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can  
enter into My truth.**

**Stillness of Mind –StithPrajna  
Yoga -Communion with the Divine**

**Chapter 2, Verse 67**

**indriyaanaam hi charataam yanmano anuvidhiyate |  
tadasya harati pragyaam vaayu rnaavam ivaambhasi ||**

**The mind, which follows in the wake of the wandering senses, carries  
away a man's discrimination just as a gale tosses a ship on the high  
seas.**

**Chapter 12, Verse 15 yasmaannodvijate loko**

**lokaannodvijate cha yah |  
harshhamarshhabhayodvegairmukto yah sa cha me priyah ||**

**He, by whom the world is not agitated and whom the world cannot  
agitate, he who remains calm in times of joy, anger, fear and anxiety,  
is dear to me.**



**The Heart of the Bhagavad Geeta-Chapter 12**  
**Qualities of a Devoted Bhakta**  
**My Beloved Bhakta**

*He who hates none, who is a friend of all, who is merciful to all, who has nothing of his own, who is free from egotism, who is even-minded in pain and pleasure, who is forbearing, who is always satisfied, who is ever devoted to yoga, whose self has become controlled, whose will is firm, whose mind and intellect are given unto Me- such a one is My beloved bhakta.*

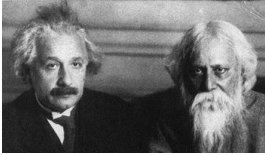
*He from whom comes no disturbance, who cannot be disturbed by others, who is free from joy, fear and anxiety- such a one is My beloved.*

*He who does not depend on anything, who is pure and active, who does not care whether good comes or evil, and never becomes miserable, who has given up all efforts for himself, who is the same in praise or in blame, silent and thoughtful, pleased with what little comes his way, homeless, having the whole world for his home, and steady in his mind such a one is My beloved bhakta.*

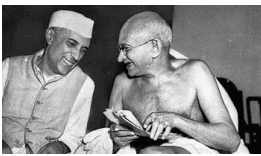
(Free translation of the Sanskrit verses by Swami Vivekananda in Raja-yoga.)



Quotations from famous personalities on the wisdom of the Bhagavad Geeta  
Source ([www.bhagavad-gita.us](http://www.bhagavad-gita.us))



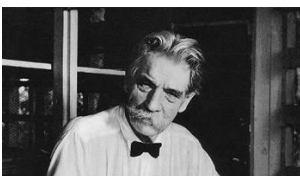
**Albert Einstein:** When I read the Bhagavad-Gita and reflect about how God created this universe everything else seems so superfluous.



**Mahatma Gandhi:** When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to Bhagavad-gita and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. Those who meditate on the Gita will derive fresh joy and new meanings from it every day.



**Henry David Thoreau:** In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad-gita, in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial.



**Dr. Albert Schweitzer:** The Bhagavad-Gita has a profound influence on the spirit of mankind by its devotion to God which is manifested by actions.



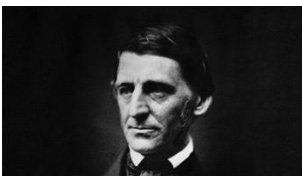
**Sri Aurobindo:** The Bhagavad-Gita is a true scripture of the human race a living creation rather than a book, with a new message for every age and a new meaning for every civilization.



**Carl Jung:** The idea that man is like unto an inverted tree seems to have been current in by gone ages. The link with Vedic conceptions is provided by Plato in his Timaeus in which it states..." behold we are not an earthly but a heavenly plant." This correlation can be discerned by what Krishna expresses in chapter 15 of Bhagavad- Gita.



**Herman Hesse:** The marvel of the Bhagavad-Gita is its truly beautiful revelation of life's wisdom which enables philosophy to blossom into religion.



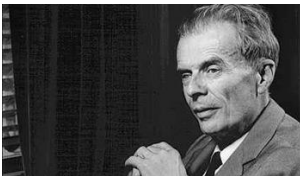
**Ralph Waldo Emerson:** I owed a magnificent day to the Bhagavad-gita. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us.



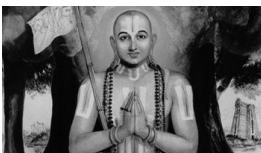
**Rudolph Steiner:** In order to approach a creation as sublime as the Bhagavad-Gita with full understanding it is necessary to attune our soul to it.



**Adi Shankara:** From a clear knowledge of the Bhagavad-Gita all the goals of human existence become fulfilled. Bhagavad-Gita is the manifest quintessence of all the teachings of the Vedic scriptures.

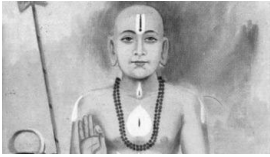


**Aldous Huxley:** The Bhagavad-Gita is the most systematic statement of spiritual evolution of endowing value to mankind. It is one of the most clear and comprehensive summaries of perennial philosophy ever revealed; hence its enduring value is subject not only to India but to all of humanity.



**Ramanuja:** The Bhagavad-Gita was spoken by Lord Krishna to reveal the science of devotion to God which is the essence of all spiritual knowledge. The Supreme Lord Krishna's primary purpose for descending and incarnating is relieve the world of any demoniac and negative, undesirable influences that are opposed to spiritual development, yet simultaneously it is His incomparable intention to be perpetually within reach of all humanity.

**Saraswati:** The Bhagavad-Gita is not separate from the Vaishnava philosophy and the Srimad Bhagavatam fully reveals the true import of this doctrine which is transmigration of the soul. On perusal of the first chapter of Bhagavad-Gita one may think that they are advised to engage in warfare. When the second chapter has been read it can be clearly understood that knowledge and the soul is the ultimate goal to be attained. On studying the third chapter it is apparent that acts of righteousness are also of high priority. If we continue and patiently take the time to complete the Bhagavad-Gita and try to ascertain the truth of its closing chapter we can see that the ultimate conclusion is to relinquish all the conceptualized ideas of religion which we possess and fully surrender directly unto the Supreme Lord.



Mahabharata has all the essential ingredients necessary to evolve and protect humanity and that within it the Bhagavad-Gita is the epitome of the Mahabharata just as ghee is the essence of milk and pollen is the essence of flowers.

Wilhielm von Humtbold (1767- 1835) (philosopher & Prussian Minister of Education) wrote to his friend, statesman Frederick von Gentz (1764 - 1832) in 1827: I read the Indian poem for the first time when I was in my country estate in Silesia and, while doing so, I felt a sense of overwhelming gratitude to God for having let me live to be acquainted with this work. It must be the most profound and sublime thing to be found in the world. Source: The Universal Gita: Western Images of the Bhagavad Gita a Bicentenary Survey - By Eric J. Sharpe

## **Frequently Asked Questions.**

**(Source: <http://deshika.wordpress.com/bhagavad-gita>) How**

### **old is the Geeta?**

Indian historical sources state that the Bhagavad Geeta was originally spoken in 3137 BC. This date can be established by astronomical references found within the Mahabharata, the larger, 100,000-verse book in which the Geeta is found. Other references as to its antiquity were corroborated in 1995 when satellite imagery discovered the dried-up course of the fabled Saraswati river, also mentioned in texts of the period.

### **What language is it written in?**

Sanskrit or ‘pure language’ is said by many scholars to be the ‘mother tongue’ of several European and Asian languages. Sanskrit words or their derivatives occur in Latin, Gaelic, Welsh, Greek, and in Old Russian. Sanskrit has 46 letters, 12 cases, and takes 12 years to learn properly.

### **Who translated it from Sanskrit?**

In November 1784, the first ever direct translation of a Sanskrit work into English was completed by Charles Wilkins. The book was the Bhagavad Geeta. Friedreich Max Mueller (1823-1900) the German Sanskritist spent most of his working life as professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford University. He served as chief editor of Sacred Books of the East. The Geeta was included in this famous collection. Since then, it has become one of the most widely read texts of the world.

### **Are there any existing copies of the Geeta?**

The Bhagavad Geeta was traditionally inscribed on leaves and none of these have survived. However the sacred culture of guru-disciple ensured a succession of hand-written versions of the text down through the centuries, and guaranteed that the pronunciation of the Sanskrit verses were preserved. The oldest existing handwritten copy of the Bhagavad Geeta is from 1488 and is kept in a museum in London.

### **Why does the world need yet another holy book?**

We can see that rival religious followers and their holy books seem to be the cause of much conflict in the world. An intelligent person might reasonably question how another holy book – with another set of followers – could possibly help the situation. Yet the Geeta itself is not a sectarian book for a particular tribe or race, at a particular time in history. Its metaphysical teachings are universal in nature, transcendental to the divisions of geography, ethnicity, language or time period. They are concerned only with the spirit, which knows no mundane identity, and the spirit’s eternal relationship with God. They cover how to attain enlightenment, become free from illusion, and how to restore peace and happiness to life. In this the Geeta is the essential information for all thinking people who value peace and prosperity in the world.

## **Eight limbs of Yoga –Ashtanga Yoga**

### **1.Yama = Ethical Constraints**

These are 5 in number

ahimsa = abstention from [violence](#) = non-violence to all beings

satya = abstention from lying = truth

asteya = abstention from [theft](#)

brahma charya = walking the path of Brahma-everything in moderation.

aparigraha = abstention from [possessions](#)

### **2. Niyama = Ethical [observances](#)**

These also are 5 in number:

Saucha = purity

Santosha = [contentment](#)

Tapas = austerities

Svadhyaya = [study](#)

Ishvarapranidhana = surrender to God

### **3. Asana - Postures of the body**

### **4. Pranayama - Control of prana or vital breath**

**5. Pratyahara - Abstraction;** "is that by which the senses do not come into contact with their objects and, as it were, follow the nature of the mind." - Vyasa

### **6. Dharana - Fixing the attention on a single object; [concentration](#)**

### **7. Dhyana - [Meditation](#)**

### **8. Samadhi - Super-conscious state or [trance](#)**

# Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism



## **Buddhism and the Story of Buddha**

According to this narrative, shortly after the birth of young prince Gautama, an astrologer named Asita visited the young prince's father—King Śuddhodana—and said that Siddhartha would either become a great king or renounce the material world to become a holy man, depending on whether he saw what life was like outside the palace walls.

Śuddhodana was determined to see his son become a king, so he prevented him from leaving the palace grounds. But at age 29, despite his father's efforts, Gautama ventured beyond the palace several times. He learned of the suffering of ordinary people, **encountering an old man, a sick man, a corpse and, finally, an ascetic holy man, apparently content and at peace with the world.** These experiences prompted Gautama to abandon royal life and take up a spiritual quest.

Gautama first went to study with famous religious teachers of the day, and mastered the meditative attainments they taught. But he found that they did not provide a permanent end to suffering, so he continued his quest. He next attempted an extreme asceticism. Gautama underwent prolonged fasting, breath-holding, and exposure to pain. He almost starved himself to death in the process. He realized that he had taken this kind of practice to its limit, and had not put an end to suffering. So in a **pivotal moment he accepted milk and rice from a village girl and changed his approach.** He devoted himself to anapanasati meditation, through which he discovered what Buddhists call the **Middle Way a path of moderation between the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification.**

Gautama was now determined to complete his spiritual quest. At the age of 35 he famously sat in meditation under a sacred fig tree — known as **the Bodhi tree — in the town of Bodh Gaya, India**, and vowed not to rise before achieving enlightenment. After many days, he finally destroyed the fetters of his mind, thereby liberating himself from the cycle of suffering and rebirth, and arose as a fully enlightened being. Soon thereafter, he attracted a band of followers and instituted a monastic order. Now, as the Buddha, he spent the rest of his life teaching the path of awakening he had discovered, traveling throughout the northeastern part of the Indian subcontinent, and died at the age of 80 (483 BCE) in Kushinagar, India.

The foundations of Buddhist tradition and practice are the **Three Jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma (the teachings), and the Sangha (the community).** Taking "refuge in the triple gem" has traditionally been a declaration and commitment to being on the Buddhist path

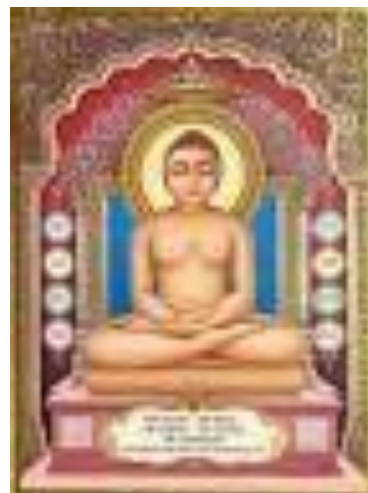
## Story of Ashoka

- During Ashoka's lifetime, the king's reputation changed. Early on, he was known for his cruelty, but later, for his great acts and edicts. He emphasized non-violence (Korom) and tolerance for other religions.
- The nobler phase of his reign followed Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism, which came after he had seen a far too bloody war in Kalinga, in c. 265.
- The **pillars of Ashoka** are many columns dispersed throughout the northern Indian inscribed with edicts by the Mauryan king Ashoka during his reign in the 3rd century BC.
- The most celebrated capital (the four-lion one at Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh)) erected by Emperor Ashoka circa 250 BC. also called the "Asoka Column" . Four lions are seated back to back. At present the Column remains in the same place whereas the Lion Capital is at the Sarnath Museum.
- Since he followed his dharma, the lion symbol is India's National Emblem and Ashoka Chakra (Dharma Chakra) is in center of Indian flag.



## Jainism and the Story of Mahavir

- Jainism is one of the oldest religions.
- It is based on the scriptures written by 24 tirthankars or leaders.
- It emphasizes non-violence, spiritual independence and equality of all living things.
- It not only spread in India but Hongkong, Japan, America, Belgium, Canada, and Singapore.
- **Mahavira** (599 BCE–527 BCE), also known as **Vardhamana**, was the twenty-fourth and last *tirthankara* of Jainism.
- He was born into a royal family in what is now Bihar, India.
- At the age of 30 he left his home in pursuit of spiritual awakening (Diksha).
- For the next 12 and half years he practiced intense meditation and severe penance, after which he achieved Kevala Jnana or enlightenment.
- He travelled all over India for the next 30 years to teach his philosophy which is based **on ahimsa (non-violence), satya (truthfulness), asteya (nonstealing), brahmacharya and aparigraha (non attachment).**
- Mahavira attained nirvana after his physical death at the age of 72. He was one of the most popular propagators of Jainism, and he is regarded as a reformer of Jainism rather than its founder.



# Sikhism

- **Founder of Sikhism is Guru Nanak**
- There is only one path of God
  - share with others
  - be honest
  - meditate the name of God
- There are 10 Gurus.
- **Their holy book is Guru Granth Sahib, which is considered the living Guru.**
- Their holy place is Harimandir Sahib (**Golden temple**) in Amritsar – Punjab.



The Five Ks are five Articles of Faith that Khalsa Sikhs wear at all times as commanded by the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, who so ordered it at the Vaisakhi Amrit Sanskar in 1699. **The Five Ks are: Keski (cloth to cover hair), a Kangha (small wooden comb), a Kara (steel or iron bracelet), a Kacchera (undergarment) and a Kirpan (short dagger).** The Five Ks are not just symbols, but articles of faith that collectively form the external identity and the Khalsa devotee's commitment to the Sikh rehni "Sikh way of life".

A Sikh who has taken Amrit dons all five Ks is known as Khalsa ("pure") or Amritdhari ("Amrit Sanskar participant"), while a Sikh who has not taken Amrit but follows all rules and keeps all five Ks is called a sahajdhari ("slow adopter").