



**Viewing the Other: From Hostility to
Hospitality**
World Religions Share their Wisdom
Study Unit 7: Sikhism

The Elijah Interfaith Institute

Where Is Wisdom Found

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SOURCES FOR DISCUSSION

Orientation: Below are three clusters of texts taken from the Sikh tradition. Each cluster addresses some aspect of the attitude to the other, and of the tensions of hostility and hospitality in relation to the other. Depending on time and interest, choose one or more of the following topics for group study and discussion. The questions for discussion following each cluster of texts are helpful suggestions, but they need not limit the direction your discussion takes.

Theme One:

Religious Diversity Under One God

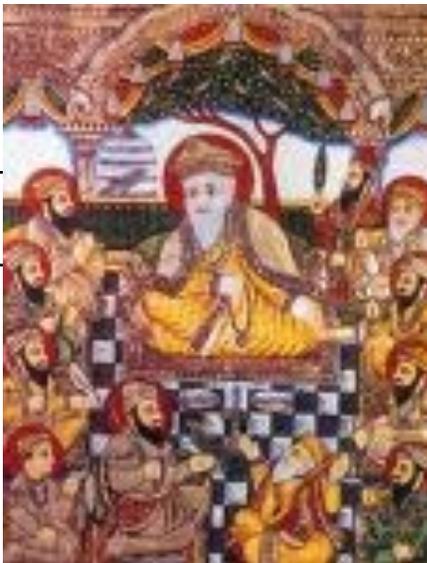
1. First, Allah created the Light; then, by His Creative Power, He made all mortal beings. From the One Light, the entire universe welled up. So who is good, and who is bad? people, O Siblings of Destiny, do not wander deluded by doubt.. The Creation is in the Creator, and the Creator is in the Creation, totally pervading and permeating all places The clay is the same, but the Fashioner has fashioned it in various ways. There is nothing wrong with the pot of clay - there is nothing wrong with the Potter. The One True Lord abides in all; by His making, everything is made. Whoever realizes the Hukam of His Command, knows the One Lord. He alone is said to be the Lord's slave. The Lord Allah is Unseen; He cannot be seen. The Guru has blessed me with this sweet molasses. Says Kabir, my anxiety and fear have been taken away; I see the Immaculate Lord pervading everywhere.

The Creation is in the
Creator, and the Creator is in
the Creation, totally
pervading and permeating
all places

(Guru Granth Sahib, Kabir, p. 1349-50)

2. Some utters his name as Rama, Other as Khuda;
 Some serve the Lord of universe others Allah.
 Gracious Lord Almighty,
 Compassionate show grace.
 Some bathe at Hindu holy spots,
 Others perform Haj;
 Some perform Puja, others bow their heads in Namaz
 Some study Vedas, others the Koran;
 Some wear blue other white
 Some are called Muhammadans, others Hindus.
 Some seek Bihisht other Swarga
 Saith Nanak: whoever the Divine Will realizes,
 The Lord's mystery has understood

(Guru Granth Sahib M. 5, p. 885)



3. If you would be a Muslim true
 Let your life these rules pursue.
 Let your mosque be the abode of kindness
 In it spread your prayer-mat of faith,
 And as you read the Koran think of righteous acts.
 Let modesty be your circumcision—your troth with
 God.
 And gentle acts the fasts you keep.
 Let the reward of good deeds be your kaaba
 And truth should be your preceptor.
 Let the Kalima be your acts of mercy
 And as you tell the beads of the rosary
 Dwell upon the Lord's commandments.
 Says Nanak: The Lord will preserve your honour.

(Guru Granth Sahib, M 1,p. 141)

4. Do not say that the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran are false. Those who do not contemplate them are false.

(Guru Granth Sahib, Kabir, p. 1350)

5. Religion does not consist in patched coat, a yogi's staff or in ashes smeared over

the body.

Religion does not consist in ear-rings worn, or a shaven head or in blowing the horns.

Religion does not consist of mere words;

He who looks on all men as equal is religious.

Religion does not consist in wandering to tombs or places of cremation, or sitting in postures of contemplation.

It does not consist in wandering to foreign lands or in bathing at sacred places.

Abide pure amid the impurities of the world, thus you shalt find the way of religion.

(Guru Granth Sahib M. 1.)

For Discussion

1. In what ways could these sources influence one's attitudes and guide one's practices?
2. What are values and practices that promote mutual trust and harmony among people? Are these the same regardless of religious affiliation?
3. The term 'siblings of destiny' is used to describe all of humanity. What is the significance of the term? How might thinking of those of other religions in such terms influence one's behaviour towards them?
4. What are the true ingredients of religion which need to be inculcated in life?
5. Do all religious people share an equal role in making the world a better place? How does the universality reflected in these sources challenge religious particularity?

Additional Sources—Theme One

1. All the human beings are the offspring of the same singular Supreme Being, the Creator of all.

- (Guru Granth Sahib M. 5, p. 611-12)
2. Thy light is present in all human beings
Thy effulgence illuminates the whole universe!
(Guru Granth Sahib M. 1, p. 663)
3. He Himself enjoins us to serve Him, and He Himself blesses us with forgiveness.. He Himself is the father and mother of all; He Himself cares for us.
(Guru Granth Sahib M. 3, p. 653)
4. He Himself creates, O Nanak; He establishes the various creatures.
How can anyone be called bad? We have only One Lord and Master.
(Guru Granth Sahib M. 2, p. 1238)
5. Farid, the Creator is in the Creation, and the Creation abides in God.
Whom can we call bad? There is none without Him.
(Guru Granth Sahib, Farid, p. 1381)
6. Does not call that the Hindu Vedas and the Semitic scriptures are false,
In fact those who do not contemplate upon them are false.
(Guru Granth Sahib, Kabir, p. 1350)
7. Each of the four Vedas has expressed some truth.
Those studying and expounding them realize
what is appropriate action from inappropriate.
(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 1, p.471)
8. There is but one God whom all worship.
All people are similar and similar souls abide in them.
All shrines and worship are the same.
Hindu and Muslim worship is fundamentally the same.
9. All mankind is one though it appears variously.
Geographical diversities create the differences.
All humans are made similarly.
And all are made of the same elements.
God of all is the same and similar are their scriptures.
Similar are the forms and preachings of all religions.
(Guru Gobind Singh, Akal Ustat
16)

Theme Two – Exclusiveness and Hostility

All people are similar and similar souls abide in them.

1. The Qazi tells lies and eats filth;
The Brahmin kills and then takes cleansing baths.
The Yogi is blind, and does not know the Way.
The three of them devise their own destruction.

(Guru Granth Sahib M. 1, p. 662)

2. The kings are tigers, and their officials are dogs;
They go out and awaken the sleeping people to harass them.
The public servants inflict wounds with their nails.
The dogs lick up the blood that is spilled.
But there, in the Court of the Lord, all beings will be judged.
Those who have violated the people's trust will be disgraced;
their noses will be cut off.

(Guru Granth Sahib M. 1, p. 1288)

3. Nanak, to usurp another's rights is forbidden
As is the flesh of swine to the Muslim
Or the flesh of the cow to the Hindus.
Your Guru the mentor will stand by you.



If you covet not another's goods
But reject it as carrion.
The idle prattler goes not to the paradise
Only righteous activity releases one from life's bondage.
Forbidden food remains forbidden even when flavoured
with spices.
Nanak, that which is false is forever false.

(Guru Nanak,

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 141).

4. Guru Gobind Singh wrote to Emperor Aurangzeb "When all other means have failed it is permissible to draw the sword."

(Zafarnama)

5. Listen O people my mission of life is to protect the righteous and destroy the tyrants.

(Guru Gobind Singh)

6. As to get water out of well, a water bag is needed to be pulled from the neck. The serpent with the jewel in its crest does not part away from it happily; the musk is got only by hunting a deer; the sesame oil is extracted by crushing the seeds; the kernel is got by breaking the coconut shell; the iron is brought to shape by hitting it over the sledge; similarly to reform the wicked use of force is required

(Bhai Gurdas, Var 34:13)

7. Lord these boons of Thee I ask, Let me never shun a righteous task.
Let me be fearless when I go to battle, give me faith that victory will be mine.

Give me power to sing thy praise, and when comes the time to end my life,
Let me fall in mighty strife.

(Guru Gobind Singh)

8. Once upon the time the Maratha saint Samrath Ramdas asked Guru Hargobind, the sixth Sikh Guru, What is the purpose of keeping arms as it seems to me against the tradition of Guru Nanak. Guru replied “He was internally a hermit and externally a prince, Arms mean protection to the poor and destruction to the tyrant.” The Maratha saint retorted it appeals to my mind.

10. Death would not be called bad, O people, if one knew how to truly die
The death of brave heroes is blessed, if it is approved by God.

(Guru Granth Sahib M. 1, p. 579)

For Discussion

1. In the first set of sources , the impression was given that Sikhism does not believe in usurping the rights of other, stands for tolerance and morality in all spheres of public life. Sikhism also enjoins upon the people to resist corrupt leaders and invaders. Is there a contradiction between these two sets of sources or do they represent a reasonable response to a less than ideal reality?

2. How do the Sikhs justify the use of force for a just cause ? Does resistance against injustice amount to fighting for justice? Who can judge that the cause is just ?

*Arms mean protection to the poor and
destruction to the tyrant*

3. Do similar polarities and tensions exist in the sources of other religious traditions? What would be the criteria in light of which we would prefer one position over another?

4. In case of violation of human rights, atrocities against the people and invasion of one’s country what should be the attitude of the people ?

Additional Sources—Theme Two

1. There are four *Ashrams* of the Hindus and four schools of law of the Muslims... The religious leaders of both the communities i.e. the *Ulamas* and the Brahmins had come to cultivate a spirit of ill-will, distrust and envy to each other, which in turn had fanned the communal rivalries and sectarian animosities, resultantly true spirit of religion had disappeared

(Bhai Gurdas, Var 1:21)

“When all other means have failed it is permissible to draw the sword.”

2. Those who live in dishonor;
Everything they eat is impure.
(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 1, p. 142)

3. To take what rightfully belongs to another, is like a Muslim eating pork, or a Hindu eating beef. Our Guru, our Spiritual Guide, stands by us, if we do not eat those carcasses.
(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 1, p. 142)

One who does not frighten anyone, and who is not afraid of anyone else
Says Nanak, listen, mind: call him spiritually enlightened.
(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 9, p. 1427)

4. Bringing the marriage party of sin, Babar has invaded from Kabul, demanding forcibly accession of Indian territory as a gift, O Lalo.
Modesty and righteousness both have vanished, and falsehood struts around like a leader, O Lalo.
The Qazis and the Brahmins have lost their roles, and Satan now conducts the marriage rites, O Lalo.
The Muslim women read the Koran, and in their misery, they call upon God, O Lalo.
The Hindu women of high social status, and others of lowly status as well, are put into the same category, O Lalo.

(Guru Granth Sahib M. 1,p. 722)

Theme Three – Hostility Transformed to Hospitality

1. According to the Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak set on his mission with a radical call that There is no Hindu and there is no Musalmaan. It means irrespective of religious affiliations, all are equals.

(Janamsakhis)

2. Since I found the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy
No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger.
get along with everyone.

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 5, p. 1299)

3. One who is not affected by pleasure or pain,
who looks upon friend and enemy alike says
Nanak, listen, mind: know that such a person
liberated.

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 9, p. 1427)



4. Contemplate not evil of others.
Thus, O brother, friend, shall not suffering touch you.

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 5, p.386)

5. Farid, return thou good for evil; In thy heart; Bear no revenge.
Thus will thy body be free of maladies, and thy life has all blessings.

(Guru Granth Sahib, Farid, p.1382)

6. What may we dub evil or good,
When creation is Thine own?

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 5, p. 383)

7. The True Guru wishes everyone well; how can anything bad happen to Him?

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 4, p. 302)

8. Those who hate the One who has no hatred - according to the true justice of Dharma, they shall perish.

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 4, p. 306)

9. Why waste your life in hatred, vengeance and conflict?

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 3, p. 1176)

10. Since I found the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy
No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger. I get along with everyone.

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 5, p. 1299)

11. Farid, do not turn around and strike those who strike you.
Kiss their feet, and return to your own home.

(Guru Granth Sahib , Farid, p. 1378)

12. One who is not affected by pleasure or pain, who looks upon friend and enemy alike says Nanak, listen, mind: know that such a person is liberated.

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 9, p. 1427)

13. One who looks upon all without any discrimination, and knows them to be one and the same, he alone is known as an Enlightened one (Yogi).

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 1, p. 730)

14. One who is Enlightened, friend and foe are the same to him.

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 5, p. 272)

15. Enemy and friend are all the same to me.

(Guru Granth Sahib, M. 5, p. 1147)

For Discussion

1. Is it realistic to see all people the same or are we inclined to favour those who are like us?
2. What similarities do you see between these sources and those in other religions? Is there a unique aspect to them?

3. The Sikh Gurus wanted to usher in an era of goodwill and peace but found themselves enshrouded in conflict. What role can religion play in weakening conflict and ushering in peace?
4. How mutual trust can be created among antagonistic elements in society?



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Sikh sources selected by Balwant Singh.

Study Unit content prepared by Barry Levy, Vanessa Sasson, Joel Linsider, Maria Reis Habito, and Alon Goshen-Gottstein, with editing by Peta Jones Pellach (2010).

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Elijah Interfaith Institute
Caspi 10
Jerusalem, 93554 ISRAEL
admin@elijah-interfaith.org
www.elijah-interfaith.org

