

WHAT IS OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD?

God is regarded as our true mother and father and family.

"The Lord Himself is your mother, and He Himself is your father; He created the created beings, and revealed the world to them." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.921)

"God alone is my mother, father, child, relative and sibling, who created this Universe." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.1071)

WHY IS GOD DESCRIBED DIFFERENTLY IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS AND SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS?

God is described differently because people describe only according to their personal experience or from what they have heard from other people. Also God has an infinite nature and people have focused on different aspects of His nature.

"The Lord is limitless, but I can only describe Him within my limitations; what do I know, about what He is like?" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.612)

EXPERIENCE OF GOD

Sikhism teaches that through the practice of humility, selfless service, continual remembrance of God and His grace, our soul can experience merger with the great soul. This merger is the highest form of spiritual experience and is an experience beyond words.

"O Nanak, the wonder-struck soul blends with the Wonderful Lord; this state cannot be described." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.803)

CONCLUSION

In Sikhism, there is one God, present in all forms of His creation as well as transcendental beyond all times and spaces. A Sikh (student, learner) is asked to serve selflessly, to remember God in all action, thinking and speaking, and to turn towards Guru (God's manifestation in the light of the ten Masters and their Word), Dharma (righteous and pure way

of life), or Sangat (community of the Sikhs) in all concerns and situations within life. A Sikh who is ready to offer his life to the Guru, will, by the grace of the Guru, experience the realisation of the true self "sat nam," and the liberation from the cycles of death and reincarnation.

"Those who have meditated on the Name of God and always gave their best, Nanak, their faces will be radiant, and many will be liberated along with them." (Guru Granth Sahib, Jap, Slok).

What Is God?

INTRODUCTION

So, what is God? From the earliest times of human history people from all cultures and religious traditions have described a great being, commonly known in modern times as God. People have debated and argued over the nature of God and have even gone to war because of what they believe God has told them. Here we look at the teachings of the Spiritual Masters who have taught humanity about this beautiful supreme being.

MOOL MANTRA

The Sikh Holy Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, starts with the Mool Mantra (primary mind tuning chant) which describes the essential attributes of the one eternal being.

"One Universal Being who is the eternal Generator, Operator and Destroyer. Truth is Its identity. It is the Creator who lives within Its creation. Without fear. Without hatred. Timeless and without form. Beyond birth. Self-existent. Realised through Its own grace. True before time; True after time; True today and says Nanak, Forever True" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.1)

DEFINING GOD

God is considered beyond human understanding. Only a small amount of God's qualities and nature have been described in all the Holy scriptures. This is due to God's infinite nature.

"Using a limited number of words, we describe the unlimited True Lord." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.934)

"Your Glory is so great; I can describe only a tiny bit of it." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.984)

"You are Indescribable; how can I describe You? Those who subdue their minds, through the Word of the Guru's Shabad, are absorbed in You." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.160)

FORM AND FORMLESS

God in Sikhism is described as Nirgun-Sargun which means with and without attributes. This is possible because God is firstly distinct from His creation and this existence is without physical attributes.

"O Nanak, He Himself remains distinct, while yet pervading all." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.276)

"O supremely beautiful Enticer, O Beloved, You are among all, and yet distinct from all." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.534)

But God also exists simultaneously in his creation and all the forms of creation can be described as extensions of God.

"He Himself is formless, and also formed; the One Lord is without attributes, and also with attributes." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.250)

"You have thousands of eyes, and yet You have no eyes. You have thousands of forms, and yet You do not have even one. You have thousands of Lotus Feet, and yet You do not have even one foot. You have no nose, but you have thousands of noses. This Play of Yours entrances me." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.13)

WHO CREATED GOD?

God created Himself from nothing.

"He Himself created Himself. He is His Own Father, He is His Own Mother." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.250)

"He created Himself - at that time, there was no other. He consulted Himself for advice, and what He did came to pass." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.509)

IS GOD MALE OR FEMALE?

God in His formless states is neither male nor female.

"It is not male, and It is not female; how can anyone describe God?" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.685)

However, the Guru has selected the polarity of a husband for God and that of a bride for a human, to describe the merging of the soul with God.

"O Nanak, blessed is that fortunate bride, who is in love with her Husband Lord" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.19)

Within creation, God takes the form of both genders.

"You Yourself are the male, and You Yourself are the female. You Yourself are the chess-board, and You Yourself are the chessman. You Yourself are the bumble bee, the flower, the fruit and the tree." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.1020)

DOES GOD HATE?

God is beyond the human emotions of hate and anger. God is pure love and compassion.

"The Lord is Formless, beyond hate and vengeance; there is no one else like Him." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.1404)

"Meditate lovingly forever on the Lord, free of hate and vengeance, Formless and Fearless; lovingly savour the Word of the Guru's Shabad, and implant devotional worship of the Lord deep within." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.1400)

WHERE DOES GOD LIVE?

There is no place that God does not exist. God lives outside of his creation and also within.

"Allah is hidden in every heart; reflect upon this in your mind. The One Lord is within both Hindus and Muslims; Kabeer proclaims this out loud." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.483)

"Through and through, the Formless Lord is woven into each and every heart." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.518)

"Nanak offers this prayer to the One who pervades the water, the land and the air" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.64)

WHAT IS THE NAME OF GOD?

God is known by many names including Jehovah, Parmatama, Allah and Vaheguru. However, God has an unlimited number of names given by people from various spiritual traditions which describe His virtues and nature.

"You have so many Names, Lord, I do not know their limit. There is no other equal to You." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.877)