

What are the main differences between sikhism and buddhism essay sample

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Buddhism dates back to 530 BC and is thus 2500 years old. Sikhism is the youngest of the world religions. It's history dates back to the year 1469. Most of the world's religions believe in the existence of one Omnipotent reality, called by differing names. Buddhism however talks about self-origination and not the Supreme Reality (No creator, no God). The Sikhs worship only one Almighty God in his abstract form. They are not allowed to worship any idols, images or photographs.

This is a sentence from the Guru Granth Sahib and teaches Sikhs a bit about those who believe and do or believe in God; By forgetting the Supreme Lord, all the ailments cling to the man. The non-believers in the Omnipresent Lord suffer separation from Him, birth after birth. ' (Guru Arjan Dev, Majh, pg. 135) Buddhism is a monastic community known as the Sangha. Sikhism is a theistic path known as Guru Panth holding belief in the teachings of Guru Granth (Holy Scriptures) Siddharta Gautama, known as Buddha was an oral teacher; he left no written body of thought; Later followers codified the Buddha's beliefs and oral teachings some 500 years after his demise.

In comparison the revelations of the Sikh Holy Scriptures, Guru Granth Sahib were compiled and sealed during the lifetime of the Gurus by themselves. The fifth Guru, Arjan Sahib compiled the first edition and the Tenth master Guru Gobind Singh added the Hymns of the Ninth master to the final version known as the Adi Granth (The Dam Dami Bir).

The cornerstone of the Buddhist faith is divided into three categories: * Sila – Morality * Panna – Wisdom * Samadhi – Concentration The three pillars of the Sikh way of life are: * Naam Japna – Meditation on the One Absolute Truth *

Kirt Karni – Earning a livelihood through hard honest work * Vand Shakna – Sharing one's earnings with the needy (Spiritual/Temporal) Purpose of these pillars requires Sikhs to serve the creation of God with love (Sewa) in order to achieve salvation, requiring a fully participative approach to life. The community or organisation of Siddharth Gautama, is called Buddhism. He is the only founder. The founder of Sikhism is Guru Nanak Sahib. Sikhs have Ten Gurus – Masters – and they are believed to have the same soul although different bodies, and that it was the founder's spirit that passed into his nine successors for conveyance of his message in total.

Both Buddhists and Sikhs have their own shrines however the focal point of worship is different. Lay worship in Buddhism is primarily individual rather than congregational. Technically speaking Buddhists do not worship; they seek refuge in the Buddha in the hope of attaining similar status; that it is an act of respect and worship, is shown through the Stupa cult – (Stupa is a domelike sacred structure containing a relic). Sikhism practices individual and congregational modes of prayer.

Collective offering of prayers, Sangat, to accompaniment of musical instruments in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib is a regular part of a Sikh's way of life. Buddhists regard Gautama Buddha as an enlightened one; Sikhs regard Guru Nanak Sahib as a prophet. The total number of prayers and time is not fixed in Buddhism. Sikhs recite their prayers three times a day: a total number of five and average total time of 2 hours. Rebirth according to Buddhists is a process through which all humans reap good or evil consequences of their actions.

The quality of their deeds of body, their speech and thought in previous lives determines the circumstances of their rebirth i. e. The origination come from the impulsion of karma. Nothing is re-incarnated in Buddhism. The mechanics of rebirthing are different to Sikhism. Buddhists basically believe that ' to live is to suffer' however this passage from the Guru Granth Sahib states other: ' But rare is such a slave and serf of the Lord, who understands the Reality of the union with Him. He (the follower) has no pain, but all comforts and with his eyes, he sees only the One Lord. (Guru Arjan Dev, Kanra, pg. 1302)

Whilst there is belief in soul and higher soul in Sikhism there is no soul in Buddhism. The world is seen as a state of constant fluctuation – a state of impermanence- Anicca- For Buddhists everything in the concept and idea of reality is anicca. The two branches of Buddhism are: Theravada (Teaching of the Elders also known as Hinayana -Lesser vehicle) stresses importance on meditation and lays claims to being the closest to Buddha's original teachings. Mahayana (The Greater vehicle) found in China, Tibet and Korea) – stresses devotion and compassion.

They are divided into three distinct schools * Tibetan Buddhism or Lamaism – elaborate rituals, scriptures and monastic orders – led by Dalai Lama * Zen or Ch'an Buddhism – originated in China and Japan- path to enlightenment through meditation * Pure Land Buddhism – also originated in China and Japan. Devotees with true faith are believed to be reborn in paradise – The pure Land or Realm – Nirbanna or Nirvana. In addition to the idea of Nirbanna in Buddhism, in Sikhism the Gurus idea of Nirvana was eternall

bliss and the soul merges with God. He who is devoted towards the Lord in his mind, he gets eternal bliss and realises the Lord and state of Nirvana' (Guru Ram Das, Asa, pg. 444)

In the less strict school of Mahayana sect of Buddhism rituals are more important than in the Theravada. Prayer and chanting are common acts of devotion, as are offering of fruits, flowers and incense. During the festival of Ullambana, offerings are made to spirits of the dead and hungry ghosts - these are held with the belief that the gates to the other world are open so that departed spirits can return to earth for a brief time.

In keeping with the fundamental rules and commandments of Sikhism, a Sikh does not believe in any rituals and superstitions; Sikhs do not believe in the worship of images, tombs, graves and idols. Buddhists talk about forgiveness of each other without any involvement of God. Sikhism believes in the Grace of God- that God forgives and pardons humans for their wrong doings in repentance. Buddhism has no creator God - no personal god. The Bodhisattvas of Mahayana Buddhism resemble Catholic saints or Hindu gods, effectively being worshipped.