

SPIRITUAL CROSSROADS: AMBEDKAR'S RADICAL VIEWS ON RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

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ABSTRACT

In addition to being a brilliant scholar and statesman, B.R. Ambedkar was also a visionary religious leader. He was also a great parliamentarian, a leading social reformer, the primary architect of the Indian Constitution, a man of practical sense, and a man of intellect. India's constitution was framed by Ambedkar, and the fight to eradicate caste is one of his two most notable projects and accomplishments that are most widely recognised today. What makes Ambedkar's political struggle truly remarkable with these two endeavours, is his insistence on a spiritualization of human life. Apart from emphasising the significance of religion, he opposed it. Although he was a devout man, he disapproved of religious hypocrisy. According to him, religion ought to influence people's lives morally, influencing their dispositions, behaviours, attitudes, and preferences, rather than the reverse. Having been through the harsh realities of the Hindu caste system, he spent his entire life criticising it. In search of a religious remedy for the untouchables, he abandoned Hinduism and adopted Buddhism. Dr Ambedkar also refused to accept Christianity, Sikhism, and Islam in favour of Buddhism for two main reasons: Firstly, Buddhism is a religion of ethics, morality, and learning; caste is not relevant in this system. secondly, its roots are in the Indian soil. From his understanding of the Dhamma, religion's central precept is to foster an environment conducive to each person's spiritual development. This paper seeks to examine Dr Ambedkar's religious philosophy and demonstrate how religion has exacerbated human division, on the other hand, it also aims to show, how he established the idea that spiritual and religious values can help individuals and humanity as a whole to solve modern problems.

KEY WORDS: *B.R Ambedkar, Spirituality, Religious Philosophy, Buddhism, Hinduism.*

INTRODUCTION

A brilliant son of India. In addition to demonstrating his skills as a renowned scholar, educator, legislator, administrator, leader, economist, and social reformer, Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956) also demonstrated his abilities as a great religious authority. Not only is he revered by Indians for creating the constitution, but he is also deeply ingrained in their hearts for his tireless efforts to uplift and defend the rights of India's untouchables, or Dalits¹, against the deeply ingrained hierarchical Hindu Caste System² and, more specifically, against the social apartheid that exists within the Hindu community(Bhat, 2022).

The towering persona of Ambedkar can be judged through the words of Ramchandra Guha (2010), when he wrote that;

“Wherever Dalits live or work, photographs of Ambedkar are ubiquitous: finely framed and loving garlanded, placed in prominent positions in hamlets, homes, shops, and offices. Meanwhile to due to pressure from Dalit groups statues of Ambedkar are put up at public places in towns and cities- at major road intersections, outside railway stations, in parks.... BR Ambedkar is worshipped in parts of India which he never visited and where he was completely unknown in his own lifetime. Wherever, there are Dalits- which means, pretty much, almost every district in India- Ambedkar is remembered and, and more importantly revered”(p. 296).

Ambedkar looked for a religion to support the secular state's efforts to uphold human rights and to promote social justice and equality. His native religion, Hinduism, which upheld the untouchability that accompanied the hierarchical varna system, did not provide this for him. Ultimately, he chose Buddhism as his religion of choice and as a possible moral basis for the Dalit liberation movement, which was his life's ultimate goal (Silva, 2021, pp. 1-2).Dr B. R. Ambedkar is a revolutionary, a social justice pioneer, and a genuine reformer whose contributions have greatly influenced India's social, political, and civic landscape and promoted the advancement of society overall and the Lower Class of Indian society specifically (Datta, 2019, p. 25).

Not only was Dr Ambedkar a prominent figure in Indian history and the man behind the constitution, but he was also a deep thinker on spiritual and religious issues. Ambedkar was directly exposed to the harsh reality of discrimination and untouchability as a child growing up in a marginalised community. In this investigation, we explore the spiritual and religious beliefs of Dr BR Ambedkar, emphasising his revolutionary viewpoints on social justice, Buddhism, and the pursuit of human dignity. The work will be divided into three parts: the first will deal with the proper research methodology, the study's objectives, and Ambedkar's philosophy on religion in general; the second will concentrate on Ambedkar's criticism of Hinduism and other religions in comparison to Buddhism; the third will discuss the reasons behind Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism and provide a concluding statement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Present study is based on only secondary sources of data, sources like, Books, Journals, Ambedkar's essay notes and books, and internet sources like compiled speeches and writings of BR Ambedkar. To describe the ideas of BR Ambedkar on religion researcher used the descriptive method of research. The study will also be based on the content analysis to examine Dr Ambedkar' writings, speeches, and letters to identify key arguments against religious practices. There will also be a Comparative Analysis, to compare Ambedkar's views on religious hypocrisy with historical and contemporary instances. And, to contrast his critique of Hinduism with critiques of other major religions to identify commonalities and differences.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine and explain the criticisms made by Dr B.R. Ambedkar regarding the role that religious practices play in societal division, with particular reference to the Hindu caste system.
2. To learn more about his inspiration for adopting Buddhism and how he saw these principles advancing both individual and societal well-being, especially in the context of ending caste-based discrimination and encouraging moral behaviour.

AMBEDKAR'S ADVOCACY FOR THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGION

While answering the question that what is religion? in his work "Buddha and His Dhamma,"(1957), Ambedkar, identified three stage evolution of religion, he wrote,

"The conception of religion was never fixed, it varied time to time, because most of the phenomenon such as lightning, rain and floods, the occurrence of which the primitive man could not explain, any weird performance done to control the phenomenon was called magic. Religion therefore came to be identified with the magic. Then came the second stage in the evolution of religion, in this stage religion came to be identified with beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, prayers and sacrifices. But the pivotal point in the religions starts with the beliefs that there exists some power which causes these phenomena which primitive man did not know and could not understand.... Later this power came to be known as God or creator." (p. 272-273).

Ambedkar claims in "Philosophy of Hinduism" that religion is a necessary part of the human condition because it addresses the basic issues of life, such as birth and death, nutrition, and disease. (Dubey, 2020, p. 10833). Religion is fundamental to human existence and has a profound impact on all facets of human existence. Religion was a need in human life according to Dr Ambedkar, and he disagreed with those, particularly Marxist intellectuals, who denied it (Maheshwarappa&Basavaraju, 2018, p. 15061). He observed that man cannot live by bread alone. He has a mind which needs food for thought. Religion instils hope in man and drive him to activity. It was a conviction of Ambedkar, that religion shaped human society's structural elements as well as good character. He saw religion as an essential component of human life since it is essentially a valuing attitude that universalizes human will and emotions, rather than ideas (Bardia, 2009).

Ambedkar firmly believed that religious convictions could inspire individuals to put aside their own interests. As moral and dignified as they may be, they are not as willing to comply with secular values. He genuinely thought that only a religion with strong foundations could support an ethical society. Ambedkar opined that religion could not be eliminated or was necessary, he wrote;

"While I condemn a religion of rules, I must not be understood to hold the opinion that there is no necessity for a religion. On the contrary I agree with Burke when he says that "true religion is the foundation of society, the basis on which all true civil government rests, and both their sanctions." Consequently, when I urge that these

ancient rules of life be annulled, I am anxious that its place shall be taken by a Religion of Principles, which alone can lay claim to being a true religion." - B. R. Ambedkar.

Babasaheb's religious understanding can be divided into two main categories. Firstly, Ambedkar was a critic of organised religion, particularly Hinduism, which he considered to be an institutionalised system that frequently upheld discrimination and social injustices. This criticism also extended to Islam. He thought that religious organisations, with their dogmas and hierarchies, had a tendency to oppress marginalised communities and to concentrate power in the hands of a small number of people. Conversely, He acknowledged that religion had a significant influence on how people lived their lives and formed their beliefs and customs as individuals and as a community. He was aware of the ability of religion to uplift, inspire, and console people (The Buddhist World). Conversely, He also stressed the value of critical analysis, scientific temper, and logical thought. He pushed people to examine their religious practices and beliefs critically and to challenge them.

In his work "Buddha and the Future of His Religion" (1950), Ambedkar while emphasising the importance of good religion, wrote that,

1. "The Society must have sanction of law or sanction of morality. Religion in the sense of Morality, must therefore, remain the governing principle in every society."
2. "That religion as defined in the first Proposition must be in accord with the science and reason."
3. "It is not enough for religion to consist of a moral code, but its moral code must recognise fundamental tenets of Liberty, equality, and Fraternity."
4. "The religion must not sanctify or ennable poverty."

II AMBEDKAR'S REVELATIONS: UNMASKING ISSUES ACROSS RELIGIONS³

Ambedkar's criticism of Hinduism, the dominant religion in India, is at the core of his spiritual and religious journey. Ambedkar questioned the validity of religious beliefs that uphold injustice and inequality. In his groundbreaking work "Annihilation of Caste," published in 1936, he criticised the hierarchy and orthodoxy that pervaded Hinduism and argued that the caste system needed to be destroyed in order to achieve social and spiritual freedom. Dr Ambedkar believed that liberty, equality, and fraternity—values considered essential to the smooth operation of democracy—were incompatible with the teachings of traditional Hinduism (Silva, 2021, p. 4).

Ambedkar's criticism of Hinduism is also a critique of the caste system, or *jati*, as it is known in practice. All the *Jati*'s, however, also fit into the fourfold Varna system's overall hierarchy. One of Hinduism's holiest texts, the Vedic-Brahmin *Manusmriti* (Laws of Manu), codifies Varna and gives it authority. Four Savarna, or castes, are described in the Varna system: Shudras (labourers and workers), Vaishyas (farmers and traders), Kshatriyas (warriors and administrators), and Brahmins (priests and intellectuals). Outcasts from the Hindu fold is those who do not belong to any varna (Avarna): these people are considered to pollute Hindu society. The Adivasi tribes of the subcontinent and the Untouchables, also known as Dalits (meaning "depressed" or "broken" people), are considered to be the lowest members of Hindu society and are therefore assigned the most "unclean" tasks, such as butchery, funeral pyre tending, waste removal, and so on. (McLaughlan, 2022).

The treatment he endured from early childhood until adulthood at the hands of certain Hindus, the Brahmins in particular, was the primary cause of his animosity and widespread criticism. Ambedkar endured the stigma of caste prejudice and humiliation at the hands of Hindu society's upper classes. In order to live in a free society, he eventually converted to Buddhism on October 14, 1956, after developing an Anti-Hindu social sentiment as a result of these cruel and painful experiences.

Ambedkar was always against both Hinduism and the Varna system because it represented injustice, cruelty, and inequality. He emphasizes that, "*to me, this Chaturvarna with its old labels is utterly repellent and my whole life being rebels against it.*" He further said that "*this Varna system is impracticable, harmful and has turned out to be a miserable failure.*" (Ambedkar, 1944, p. 42).

Following his lifelong observation of these injustices, Ambedkar fiercely denounced the Hindu caste system; his ensuing statement, which was published in 'Vividh Vritta' on October 20, 1935, reflects his rage. According to the article, Ambedkar made the following statements during his speech:

"I had the misfortune of being born with the 'Untouchable Hindu' stain; that was not in my hands. Nevertheless, I can shake off this degrading status and improve my condition. I do not have the slightest doubt that I will do that. Let me make it clear: I will not die as a person who calls himself a Hindu!"

What causes made Ambedkar to hate his own religion and to give such a big statement (Gopal, 2023; The Hindu, 14 April 2023).

I believe that Ambedkar's criticisms of the caste system in "Annihilation of Caste, (1936)" are really criticisms of Hinduism's Varna Vyavastha. His analysis divides caste into two categories. Initially, it separates men into distinct groups. Second, it ranks these communities according to social status, with one community higher than the other. Each finds pride and solace in the fact that it is higher than some other castes on the caste hierarchy (Ambedkar, 1936, p. 72; Hiwrale, 2020, p. 78-96).

On Christmas Day of 1927, he publicly set fire to a copy of the Manu Smriti, marking his first public act of disapproval towards the Hindu faith. Written in the period spanning 200 BCE to 300 CE. (Sarma, 1961, p. 269).

Dr Ambedkar went a step further to gain a comprehensive understanding of the creation and maintenance of the system, and he offered Buddhism as a means of ending the cruel practices. He claimed that the caste system is a social division of people of the same race rather than a line dividing racial groups. (Ambedkar, 1936, p. 49). Caste is a model of multiple hierarchies that is frequently subject to debate. Although hierarchy was sanctioned by religion, it was also reproduced by the dominant economic relations between dominance and power structures. (Gupta, 2000, p. 144).

While talking about the Hindu religion in his speech in (1936), he wrote;

"In the Hindu religion, one cannot have freedom of speech, a Hindu must surrender his freedom of speech. He must act according to the Vedas. If the Vedas do not support the actions, instructions must be sought from the Smritis, and if the Smritis fail to provide any such instructions, he must follow in the footsteps of the great men. He is not supposed to reason. Hence, so long as you are in the Hindu Religion, you cannot expect to have freedom of thought," (Ambedkar, 1936).

While describing the debate between the two stalwarts, Gandhi and Ambedkar, D. R. Nagaraj (2010), in his work talks about the Ambedkar's famous debate with Gandhi on the issue of Caste System and Hinduism (Nagaraj, 2010., p. 370), According to this work, Babasaheb Articulated in the first issue of the *Harijan*,

"The outcaste is a by-product of the caste system. There will be outcastes as there are castes. Nothing can emancipate the outcastes except the destruction of the caste-system. Nothing can help to save Hindus and ensure their survival in the coming struggle except the purging of this odious and vicious dogma..." (p. 3).

This brief statement was made in the context of differing from Gandhi, and this has served as a manifesto of the Dalit movement over the last two decades (p. 370). Babasaheb had always opposed to treat the question of untouchability as a religious question; though, he accepted the primacy of religion in the matter (Nagaraj, 2010., p. 384). This was the main cause of the Ambedkar's Hate towards the Hindu Religion.

UNDERSTANDING AND CRITIQUE OF OTHER RELIGIONS

While criticising the tenets of Islam, in his book "Pakistan or the Partition of India" first published in 1940, he writes-

"The brotherhood of Islam is not the universal brotherhood of man. It is a brotherhood of Muslims for Muslims only. There is a fraternity, but its benefit is confined to those within that corporation. For those who are outside the corporation, there is nothing but contempt and enmity." (p. 181-206).

Ambedkar believed that the caste system, child marriage, and the treatment of women as second-class citizens were all aspects of the social evils found in both Hinduism and Islam. In the Muslim community, child marriage is also common. Muslim law does not establish a minimum age for marriage and affirms a girl's freedom to marry whenever she wants. Ambedkar goes on to further criticise Islam by pointing out that a Muslim can marry up to four wives concurrently under Mahomedan law. The Mahomedans are divided as well; they identify as belonging to two primary social groups: (1) Ashraf, also known as Sharaf, and (2) Ajlaf⁴. There are castes with comparable social hierarchy to those found among Hindus within these groups. This was one more reason why

Ambedkar declined to choose Islam as a means of emigrating from Hinduism. There is consequently a stagnation in the Muslim community's social and political lives. (Ambedkar, p. 181-186).

He believed that the Dalits' conversion to Christianity⁵ would denationalise them as a people with no indigenous roots in Indian society and would solidify colonial dominance over India. This demonstrates unequivocally that he opposed colonialism and Western dominance on a political and moral level by refusing to convert to Christianity. (Silva, 2021, p. 6).

He stated that while Christianity promoted equality, it was ineffective in the current political environment and that, in his opinion, Christianity itself had no bearing on any social movement. As they depart, believing they have freed a person from oppression, the missionaries consider conversion in the name of equality. While criticising the other religions Ambedkar in his work "Buddha and Future of His Religion" (1950) wrote;

"All throughout the Bible, Jesus insist that he is the son of God and that those who wish to enter the Kingdom of God will fail, if they do not recognise him as the Son of God. Mohammed went a step further, like Jesus he also claimed that he was the messenger of God on earth. But he further insisted that he was the last messenger. Krishna went a step beyond these two, he refused to be satisfied with merely being the messenger of God, He claimed that he was "*Parameshwar*" or as his followers describe him "*Devadhideva*" God of Gods. Buddha never arrogated to himself such status."

"Another distinction that He claimed between these religions was that, both Jesus and Mohammed claimed that what they taught was infallible and beyond question. Same was with the Krishna as he was God of Gods. The Buddha claimed no such Infallibility, for what he taught. Being based on reason and experience the followers of Buddha were free to modify or even abandon any of his teachings if it was found that at a given time and in given circumstances they do not apply." (Ambedkar, 1950).

For some time, Dr Ambedkar was also, attracted to the doctrine of a casteless society officially accepted and advocated by Sikhism⁶. He allegedly spoke with Sikh leaders in 1936 to discuss the prospect of converting a large number of Dalits to Sikhism. It failed because of the stance adopted by the Sikh leadership from the upper caste, who believed that a widespread conversion of Dalits to Sikhism would threaten their dominance and authority. (Silva, 2021, p. 6). Later, Ambedkar also rejected this religion after he came through some castepractices crept into this community as well.

III

WHY BUDDHISM?

Although Ambedkar's interest in Buddhism⁷ dates back to 1908 when his teacher, K. A. Keluskar, gave him a copy of the life of the Buddha, he was eventually persuaded that Buddhism was the religion that most closely matched his conception of religion after conducting a thorough comparative analysis of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. Buddhism did not believe in a god and instead accepted the law of cause and effect as the fundamental principle of the universe, in contrast to Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, and other major religions.

Buddha thus emphasised the importance of reason in contrast to superstition or faith as a way of looking at the world. Buddha gave his disciples complete freedom to disagree with him if they so desired, and he did not see himself as God or his prophet. Buddha also rejected the idea that souls exist. Above all, Buddhism placed a strong emphasis on the importance of morality and the bonds between people. Ambedkar believed that Buddhism was entirely compatible with the principles of democracy and science. (Devasthali, 2019).

Ambedkar adopted Buddhism so that Dalits could confidently reap the benefits of contemporary development and feel more equal. Rejecting Hinduism also entails rejecting the gloomy social psychology that the Dalits were made to endure. While describing the Ambedkar's ambition to choose Buddhism, Wankhede (2023), wrote that; there were three major reasons behind this:

1. "Adopting the neo-Buddhist identity is not just a conversion ploy to create a minority religion but it is the reclamation of the Dalit community's glorious past, its intellectual legacies, and the lost ethical vision.
2. Second, distinct from the Brahmanical, social ideology, which is antithetical to the modern egalitarian virtues, Ambedkar thought that the teachings of Buddha would supplement the liberal

democratic ideals. He hoped that Buddhism will help an individual to escape the caste fixity and motivate them to enjoy the benefits of modernity as a free intellectual being.

3. Third, with Buddhism, Ambedkar also revitalized India's cultural past and made it relevant in the modern times. Contrary to the left Marxists anathema towards the application of religion in modern times, Ambedkar looked at religion as a necessary moral component that provide meaning to human existence." (Buddha and Future of His Religion)

In his article entitled "Buddha and the Future of His Religion" (1950), Ambedkar, summarized his thoughts on Buddhism as follows:

"Firstly, the society must have either the sanction of law or sanction of morality to hold it together without the society is sure to go to pieces. Secondly, Religion, if it is to function must be in accordance with reason, which is another name for science. Thirdly, it is not enough for religion to consist of a moral code, but its moral code must recon the fundamental the fundamental tenets of liberty equality and fraternity. And fourthly, that religion must not sanctify or ennable poverty." (Ambedkar, 1950).

According to Ambedkar, Buddhism fulfilled these requirements and so among the existing religions Buddhism was the only religion which the world could have.

Buddhism is presented by Ambedkar as a religion of principles that is dedicated to intellectual freedom, in contrast to his critique of Hinduism as a religion of rules. (Edelglass, 2022, p. 640). In the preface of "Buddha and His Dhamma," he states that the only religion a modern man who understands science can have is the religion of the Buddha. (Buddha and His Dhamma, xxv). Buddhism, in this account is scientific because the Buddha makes no use of miracles to teach the Dhamma (Buddha and His Dhamma, 235).

Unlike other faiths based on assertions of divine power or paranormal disclosure, the Buddha imparts knowledge through logical reasoning, highlighting the opinions of a single individual that are subject to questioning. His message was based on the common human experience of life in the world, and he never claimed to be infallible in conveying it. He declared that anyone could test it, challenge it, and discover what truths it held. (Buddha and His Dhamma, 121).

Ambedkar also put forth the importance of Dhamma in Buddhism and how it differs from the Hindu idea of Dharma. While describing the question that how Dhamma⁸ Differs from the Religion (Dharma), in his work 'Buddha and His Dhamma,' Ambedkar wrote that,

"Religion it is said is a personal and one must keep it to oneself. One must not let it play its part in the public life. Contrary to this- Dhamma is a social. It is fundamentally and essentially so. Dhamma is Righteousness, which means right relation between man and man in all spheres of life.... Further according to Buddha, Dhamma consists of Prajna and Karuna. Prajna is understanding. The Buddha made Prajna one of the two-cornerstones of his Dhamma because he did not wish to leave any room for superstitions. Kruna is Love. Because, without it, society can neither live nor grow, that is why the Buddha made it the second cornerstone of his Dhamma." (pp. 274-275).

Ambedkar also see deep affinities between Buddhism and the democratic values advanced by the French Revolution. (Silva, 2021, p. 2). In an All-India Radio Broadcast on 3 October 1954, he declared,

"Positively My Social philosophy, may be said to be enshrined in three words: Liberty Equality and Fraternity. Let no one, however, say that I have borrowed my philosophy from the French-Revolution. I have not. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my Master, the Buddha. In his philosophy liberty and equality had a place.... He gave the highest place to fraternity as the only real safeguard against the denial of liberty, equality, or fraternity which was another name for brotherhood or humanity, which was again another name for religion." (Keer, 1974, p. 456; Silva, 2021, p. 2).

DISCUSSION OR CONCLUSION

The depth of Dr Ambedkar's knowledge and his dedication to social justice are profoundly reflected in his views on religion and spirituality. His viewpoint is revealed as a nuanced investigation that highlights the vital necessity of equality, reason, and moral behaviour in the context of spirituality and religious practice. Ambedkar believed that spirituality was not a separate endeavour but rather was closely related to more general concerns about social justice, human dignity, and individual freedom. Moreover, Ambedkar did not reject spirituality

when he adopted Buddhism as a substitute for Hinduism; rather, it was a calculated step in the direction of a more ethical and egalitarian religious system. He believed that the principles of Buddhism matched his ideal of a just society advancing equality, liberty, and brotherhood. In order to create a world where religious practices are in line with the values of justice and equality, Ambedkar's legacy continues to inspire people who aim to combine spirituality with the pursuit of social harmony and individual freedom.

NOTES

1. The term "Dalit" is used to describe any individual belonging to one of the many social groups that have historically been marginalised in Hindu society. Although members of schedule castes frequently prefer the term Dalit, the official designation schedule caste is currently the most commonly used term in India for people in these groups.
2. Hindus are divided into four major groups according to "the Hindu Caste System": Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Many people think that the Hindu God of Creation, Brahma, is where the groupings first came from. Approximately 3,000 castes and 25,000 subcastes were created from the main castes, each based on a particular occupation. The Achhoots, also known as the Dalits or Untouchables, were not part of the Hindu caste system. Throughout his entire life, Ambedkar opposed and was against this system.
3. "Religion" refers to an individual's systematised or institutionalised set of religious attitudes, practices, and beliefs, including worshipping God or other supernatural beings. Conversely, "spirituality" means experiencing a sense of oneness with something greater than yourself and approaching daily life with reverence and sacredness (Brady, 2020). If we were to define religion and spirituality, we would say that religion is a system of practices and beliefs that purports to help a person establish a proper relationship with God, and spirituality is an emphasis on spiritual matters rather than material or earthly matters. (Sirswal, 2016, p. 6).
4. Better-class Mahomedans, known as "Ashraf," include Saiads, Sheikhs, Pathans, Moghul, Mallik, Mirza. And "Ajlaf"- Lower-class Mahomedans, on the other hand, are raising Sheikhs and other originally Hindu people in Darzi, Jolaha, Rangrez, Barhi, Bhalhiara, Laheri, Mohifarosh, Mallah, Naliya, Nikari, Abdal, Bako, Bediya, Bhal, and so on, for more detail on this division see, "Pakistan or the Partition of India" by BR Ambedkar (2021).
5. The core of "Christianity" is the life and work of Jesus Christ. The Bible is a holy book that recounts the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. In the middle of the first century CE, Christianity emerged in Judea, initially from the teachings of Jesus and then through the writings and missionary activities of Paul of Tarsus.
6. "Sikhism" is the fifth most popular religion in the world. The Sikh word signifies "learned" or "truth-seeker." For the Sikh ethnoreligious group, it is an Indian religion and philosophy that dates back to the end of the 15th century CE in the Punjab region of India. One of the newest religions in the world, the Sikh faith was established in Punjab, North India, over 500 years ago (in 1469) by Guru Nanak Dev ji. (Culture and Religion- Sikhism).
7. The nontheistic religious movement known as "Buddhism" is based on Siddhartha Gautam's teachings. With about 376 million adherents worldwide, Siddhartha Gautam, also known as the Buddha (meaning "the awakened one" in Sanskrit), is revered for his life philosophy and the right way to live. This definition is taken from a 2017 article by Laurens de Rooij, this definition is taken from the *Laurens de Rooij's* article published in 2017.

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