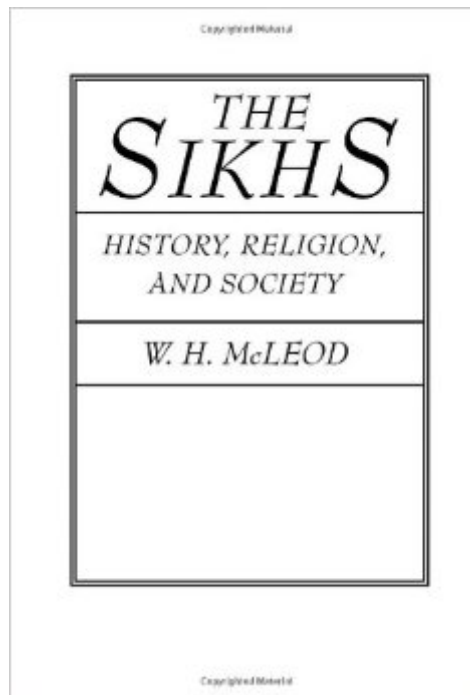


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The Sikhs: History, Religion, And Society



Synopsis

The Sikhs, a colorful and controversial people about whom little is generally known, have been the subject of much hypothetical speculation. Their non-conformist behavior, except to their own traditions, and their fierce independence, even to demanding autonomy, have recently attracted world-wide attention. Hew McLeod, internationally known scholar of Sikh studies, provides a just and accurate description in his introduction to this religious community from northern India now numbering about sixteen million people, exploring their history, doctrine, and literature. The Sikhs begins by giving an overview of the people's history, then covers the origins of the Sikh tradition, dwelling on controversies surrounding the life and doctrine of the first Master, Guru Nanak (1469-1539). The book surveys the subsequent life of the community with emphasis on the founding of the Khalsa, the order that gives to Sikhs the insignia by which they are best known. The remaining sections concern Sikh doctrine, the problem of who should be regarded as a Sikh, and a survey of Sikh literature. Finally, the book considers the present life of the community—its dispersion around the world to Asia, Australasia, North America, Africa, and Europe, and its involvement in the current trials of the Punjab. Sikh culture is believed to have been settled and unchanging from the time of the Gurus onwards. The Sikhs, a major new work by a leading authority, reveals that this is a very misleading view. McLeod treats a variety of questions sympathetically and in so doing he establishes a new understanding for students of religion and for all those interested in current events in India.

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