

Sep/04

IMMIGRATION DIRECTORATES' INSTRUCTIONS

**CHAPTER 5
SECTION 6**

ANNEX T

**MINISTERS OF RELIGION, MISSIONARIES
AND MEMBERS OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS**

MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

Brief notes follow on 6 major religions whose members often wish to send full-time workers to the United Kingdom. They are not the only religions which may be considered under paragraph 170 of the Immigration Rules. More detailed information about these and other faiths may be obtained from files held in INPD and General Registry, from PMD Training Section or from Home Office Information & Library Services.

1.1. Bibliography

- * Aspects of Britain: Religion (HMSO 1992);
- * Chambers Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions (1992);
- * Hutchinson Encyclopedia of Living Faiths, Edited R.C. Zaehner (4th Edition 1988).

2. BUDDHISM

Buddhists follow the teachings of the Buddha, who was born in Nepal in the 6th Century B.C. They do not recognise a God or godhead but seek to attain inner and outer peace and right living through study and meditation. Buddhism is most prevalent in Asia, but there are about 100,000 Buddhists in the United Kingdom, including many Western converts.

2.1. Places of worship

There are at least 20 monasteries or sanghas in the United Kingdom and a number of temples including the Kagyo Samye Ling Tibetan Centre in Dumfriesshire and the Thai Buddhapadipa Temple in Wimbledon.

2.2. **Religious functionaries**

There is no ordained priesthood but Buddhist monks and nuns commit themselves to a monastic way of life.

3. **CHRISTIANITY**

Christians worship one God, made man in Jesus Christ. There are many different Christian denominations and traditions represented in the United Kingdom, including the Church of England, the established church. Many recent immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean have a Christian background and there are a number of black-led churches here which have links with denominations originating there.

3.1. **Places of worship**

Most Christians consider regular public worship important, usually in purpose-built churches, although 'house churches' may meet in private houses, schools or other buildings. The newer black-led churches often use premises belonging to other denominations. The usual day for worship is Sunday, the day of Christ's resurrection.

3.2. **Religious functionaries**

Most mainstream churches have a full-time ordained ministry known as priests, ministers or pastors. Full-time Salvation Army workers are called Officers. Except in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches both men and women may be ordained. Some denominations, including some churches of African and Caribbean origin, do not have an ordained ministry and a lay person may take this role.

Christianity is a missionary religion and Christian organisations send missionaries, both ordained and lay, to all parts of the world. This includes the United Kingdom where, despite its long Christian tradition, only a small minority are now regular churchgoers.

Within the Catholic tradition there are many orders of monks and nuns. Many of these have links with communities overseas.

4. **HINDUISM**

Hinduism is a very ancient and complex religion which is the major religion of India. Broadly, Hindus believe that there is one eternal creative force which is formless and without gender and which is everywhere. This force may be referred to as "It" or the "Great Force", or "God". Hindus have a special name (a name having no gender) for God which is, "Om". Although essentially formless, God may manifest itself in any form at any time at any place (and on any world) in order to accomplish a purpose. Hinduism

teaches that there have been many incarnations on earth of God (eg; Lord Krishna and Jesus) and Hindus may worship any of them. Some Hindu denominations believe that God, being omnipotent, has no need to take a form and can accomplish anything without assuming a physical body. Hindus believe that when a person dies the same spirit will be born again as a child elsewhere. Reincarnation will continue through many lives until the soul has purified itself to reach God (this process is known as "Karma").

There are about 300,000 Hindus in the United Kingdom, most Gujaratis or Punjabis from India or East Africa.

4.1. **Places of worship**

There are no set forms or times of worship, much of which takes place in the home. However, many Hindus meet regularly for worship and to celebrate festivals. There are over 150 Hindu temples or Mandirs in Britain.

4.2. **Religious functionaries**

A guru or teacher leads individuals in their spiritual life. Hinduism is not a missionary religion and believes that there are many ways to God (eg; accepting Jesus as one of the many incarnations of God). There is also a monastic tradition in Hinduism, monasteries being known as Ashrams.

5. **ISLAM**

Muslims believe in one God, Allah, revealed by the prophet Mohammed in the 7th Century. The teachings of Islam are contained in its sacred book, the Koran (Quran). There are between one and two million Muslims in the United Kingdom, most of them of Bangladeshi or Pakistani origin. Both the Sunni and Shia traditions within Islam are represented in the United Kingdom.

5.1. **Places of worship**

There are about 600 mosques in Britain. These offer educational and welfare services to the Muslim community as well as being places of worship. The largest is the Central Mosque at Regents Park, which has a congregation of over 5,000 during festivals. The regular day of worship is Friday.

5.2. **Religious functionaries**

There is no ordained ministry as such and the Imams or Maulvis who lead congregations receive variable amounts of training. Some may be highly educated scholars; others may have a combination of knowledge of the Koran and practical experience.

6. JUDAISM

Jews believe in one God, whose law is contained in the Torah, the 5 books of Moses. There has been a Jewish community in Britain for hundreds of years and it now numbers about 300,000, of whom over half live in London. Most belong to the Orthodox tradition and some to the Reform movement or the Liberal and Progressive movement.

6.1. Places of worship

There are about 350 Jewish congregations in the United Kingdom with synagogues in most large cities. Services are held on Saturdays, the Jewish Sabbath.

6.2. Religious functionaries

Rabbis provide leadership in the Jewish community and also conduct worship. Ministers may be in charge of a synagogue and conduct services. They are licensed to preach by the Chief Rabbi.

Readers or cantors also take part in leading worship.

6.3. The Advisory Committee for the Admission of Jewish Ecclesiastical Officers

This consists of representatives from various Jewish groups and is responsible for assessing the suitability of overseas nationals for work of this kind. Most applications are made through this body.

7. SIKHISM

Sikhism arose from a reformist movement in Hinduism in the 16th Century led by Guru Nanak. His teachings and those of other gurus are contained in the Sikh holy book, the Granth. Although Sikhs are a minority in India they are the largest religious group among Indians in Britain. There are now about 300,000 Sikhs in the United Kingdom, mainly from the Punjab or East Africa.

7.1. Places of worship

There are over 160 Sikh temples or gurdwaras in Britain, which also cater for the educational, social welfare and cultural needs of their community. Worship normally takes place on Sundays and at festivals.

7.2. Religious functionaries

There are no ordained priests but most gurdwaras employ a granthi to take care of the building and conduct prayers. Kirtani and other musicians may also be employed at larger temples to assist in leading worship. *Please note: Kirtani musicians should not be treated as ministers of religion. They may qualify for permit-free employment if coming for a single specified event (see Chapter 17, "Entertainers"), but otherwise will require a work permit.*
