


SIKHISM

What is Sikhism?



- 500 years old
- Monotheistic religion
- Founded in Northwest India (Punjab region)
 - 20 million followers
 - 5th largest in the world
 - Also large communities in Canada, Great Britain, and US
- 2 views today:
 - Older view: religion incorporates the best of Hinduism and Islam
 - Recent view: own Sikh history, based on revelation of Guru Nanak

The Khanda



- Center features a double-edged sword
 - Represents the Creative Power of God, which controls the destiny of the whole creation
 - Supreme Power over life and death.
- One edge of the sword symbolizes Divine justice
- Other edge symbolizes freedom and authority governed by moral and spiritual values.
- In the middle is the chakra, symbolizing the all embracing Divine Manifestation
 - Without beginning or end, Timeless, Absolute

Is it a combination of religions?


HINDUISM	ISLAM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shares mysticism and devotionRejects caste systemAccepts karma & reincarnation, but practicing Sikhism will lead to releaseRejects ahimsa & vegetarianismNanak raised as a Hindu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strictly monotheisticRejects ceremonies and ritualsNanak's teacher was Muslim

Sikh Views on Religion

- Religion should be a uniting, rather than dividing, force
- All people – male and female, Brahmin and Sudra, Hindu and Muslim – are united as brothers and sisters in devotion to the one, same God:

"there is no Muslim, there is no Hindu; all are equal human beings because they are the children of the same Father, God." – Guru Nanak

The Founder of the Faith



- Guru Nanak (1469-1539 CE)
 - guru* means 'leader' to Sikhs (usually 'teacher')
- Hindu by birth and upbringing
- At age 30, he went into the forest and had a direct experience with God
 - God told him that he was a prophet of the true religion

Nanak's Response

- ☒ Nanak responded to God with a meditation called the *Japji*:

There is one God,
Eternal Truth is His Name;
Maker of all things
Fearing nothing and at enmity with nothing,
Timeless is His image;
Not begotten, being of His own Being:
By the grace of the Guru, known to men.

- ☒ God appointed Nanak his supreme guru
- ☒ Nanak renounced the world

Nanak's teaching



- ☒ Preached a unifying message
 - ☒ Hindus and Muslims are essentially united in common devotion to the same God
 - ☒ Wore mixed costumes of both religions
 - ☒ Followers became known as "sikhs" (=disciple)
- ☒ God is one
 - ☒ He exists in the human heart
 - ☒ God is so internal that Nanak rejected external ceremonies, images, idols, rituals, etc.
- ☒ Humans are souls in bodies
- ☒ Replaced rituals with devotional hymns (*kirtan*)

Beliefs



- ☒ One God (whom people call by many names)
- ☒ Equality of all human beings (reject caste distinctions)
- ☒ Karma and reincarnation
- ☒ Reject asceticism (no monastic life in Sikhism)
- ☒ The spirit of the guru (Nanak) continued for 200 years through a succession of ten human gurus

The Problem for Humans

- ☒ Karma
- ☒ Self-centeredness
- ☒ Not being connected to God
- ☒ Salvation (spiritual union with God):
 - ☒ Devotion to and union with God (He can forgive all sins)
 - ☒ Baptism is only path to peace and joy for eternity
 - ☒ Meditation, charity, hard work

Scripture

- ☒ The Adi Granth (The First Volume)
 - ☒ Aka the Guru Granth Sahib
- ☒ After the death of the last guru, worship focuses on the Adi Granth
 - ☒ Perpetual guru
 - ☒ The book is considered to contain the souls of the gurus
- ☒ To be honored and read daily
- ☒ Hymns recorded in it

The Khalsa



- ☒ The community of the faithful
 - ☒ Means "the pure"
- ☒ Baptism and initiation into the *Khalsa*
 - ☒ *Amrit* ceremony
 - ☒ Must be a "responsible" age (14-16)
 - ☒ *Khalsa* members take a new last name: *Singh* ("lion") for men, *Kaur* ("princess") for women
- ☒ *Khalsa* members wear the "Five K's" as symbols of their faith...



The Five K's



- ✦ **Kesh:** Long, uncut hair (both men and women)
 - ✦ Men wear a turban to cover their hair
- ✦ **Kangha:** a comb to keep the hair clean and presentable
- ✦ **Kara:** a steel bracelet worn on the right wrist as a reminder to think of God and do one's duty
- ✦ **Kachh:** undergarments as a reminder of chastity (outside of marriage) and purity
- ✦ **Kirpan:** a defensive sword symbolic of God's power and the Sikh duty to protect the weak and persecuted

Ceremonies and Customs

- ✦ Rituals, religious ceremonies or empty worship are unimportant
- ✦ Sikhs do not proselytize (convert)
 - ✦ Converts are welcomed, but no formal conversion ceremony
- ✦ Birth/Naming
 - ✦ The Gurū Granth Sāhib is opened randomly and the child is named using the first letter on the top left-hand corner of the left page
 - ✦ All boys are given the middle name or surname Singh, and all girls are given the middle name or surname Kaur

Continued...

- ✦ Marriage
 - ✦ Ceremony is performed in the company of the Gurū Granth Sāhib; around which the couple circles four times
 - ✦ Husband and wife are considered "a single soul in two bodies"
 - ✦ No divorce (you can do it in a civil court but it's not condoned)
- ✦ Death
 - ✦ Cremation


The Golden Temple





- ✦ Found in Amritsar
- ✦ Houses the Adi Granth
- ✦ Must remove shoes, wash feet, and cover head before entering
- ✦ Service includes insights of 10 gurus, reading scripture, and hymns



The Gurdwara – the Sikh temple



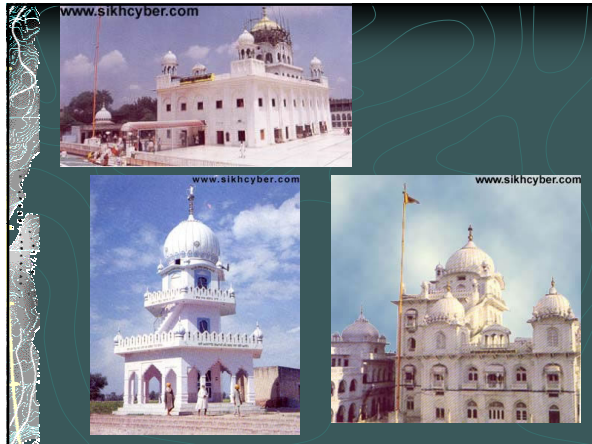
- ✦ "Door to the Guru"
- ✦ "**Granthi**" (priest) - caretaker of the Gurdwara and the Adi Granth as well as spiritual leader of the community

The Gurdwara – the Sikh temple

- ✦ Contains a kitchen and dining hall
- ✦ Prayer hall for singing of *Kirtan* (hymns) from the holy book
- ✦ Open daily (in India) with continuous reading and singing from Adi Granth, serving food to all who come
- ✦ Following worship, all partake in the *Langar*, sitting (on the floor) and eating a meal together (equality)



Sikh Holy Days and Ceremonies

- ✦ *Vaisakhi*: April 13th, anniversary of founding of the *Khalsa*
- ✦ Guru Nanak's birthday (November)
- ✦ Baby naming
- ✦ *Amrit*/Baptism (Initiation into *Khalsa*)
- ✦ Marriage (*Anand Karaj*): takes place in the *Gurdwara* with the community before the *Guru Granth*
- ✦ Death: cremation of body



The Sikh Way of Life



- ✦ Meditation and personal prayer morning and evening
- ✦ Honest and hard work
- ✦ Charity
- ✦ Service to humanity, God, and guru
- ✦ Strong family values
- ✦ Strong identity with the Sikh community
- ✦ *Khalsa* members abstain from smoking, drinking and illicit drugs

Sikhism on the Web:



- ✦ The Sikhism Home Page:
<http://www.sikhs.org/topics.htm>
- ✦ The SikhNetwork: a virtual worldwide Sikh community (includes areas for on-line discussion and live chats with Sikhs from around the world)
<http://www.sikhnet.com/>

Development of the faith



- ✦ 2nd guru (Angad Dev) developed written form of *Punjabi* language for recording hymns
- ✦ 3rd guru (Amar Das) instituted the community kitchen (*Langar*) to feed all in need
- ✦ 4th guru (Ram Das) built the Sikh holy city of *Amritsar* (in *Punjab*)
- ✦ 5th guru (Arjun Dev) built the *Golden Temple* in *Amritsar* as the center of the Sikh world; also compiled hymns of the earlier gurus, creating the Sikh holy book: *Adi Granth*

Martyrdom and Defense



- ✦ 5th guru was martyred, 6th guru (Har Gobind) began a tradition of training Sikhs in martial arts to protect those persecuted for their religion (Sikh, Hindu or otherwise)
- ✦ 7th guru (Har Rai) best known for opening hospitals and offering free medical treatment to those in need
- ✦ 8th guru (Har Krishan) was just a child but continued caring for the sick (died at age 8)
- ✦ 9th guru (Tegh Bahadur) worked to combat religious persecution, ultimately became the 2nd Sikh martyr

The 10th Guru – Gobind Singh



- ✦ Wrote hymns and completed the compilation of the *Adi Granth*
- ✦ In 1699, Initiated the Sikh *Khalsa* (“brotherhood”) as a military defense force
- ✦ Declared the end of the line of human gurus, transferring guruship to the *Khalsa* community and the holy book, now known as “*Guru Granth Sahib*”
- ✦ Died 1708

