



Understanding our Neighbours: An Introduction to Sikhism

Presentation to St. Paul's Presbyterian Church,
Oshawa

Tuesday, November 1, 2011

Presentation Overview

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Punjab, India



1. Sikh History

- Punjab, India
- 23 million Sikhs
- Guru Nanak, born 1469
- Guru Granth Sahib
- Muslim and Hindu beginnings
- *Ek Onkar: God is one.*



2. Key Terms and Definitions

- **Sikhism** comes from the word “Sikh”- Disciple
- Is a distinct and unique religion, not a sect of Hinduism or Islam
- **Guru** is made from two words: Gu (dispeller of ignorance) and ru (bringer of enlightenment)
- **Gurdwara** - House of worship (Sikh Temple)
- **Waheguru** – One of the Name of God/Almighty
- **Khalsa** - belonging to the divine, ‘Pure’
- **Guru Granth Sahib ji** - The Spiritual Scripture of Sikhs
- **Mool Mantar** – Basic Tenet(s)
 - There is but one God
 - True is his name
 - The Creator, without fear, without enmity
 - Timeless, Without birth i.e. unborn and Self illumined

3. Beliefs

- Origin of universe is from ONE eternal light source
- One god/creator - ALL humans created equal
- Men and Women have same rights
- Human life - a precious blessing
- All carry a spark of divine light: consequently no race, pigmentation, gender, is intrinsically superior to others
 - We are to behave as Role Models for those around us
- Freedom and Liberty for all
 - Protect yours and others rights

Beliefs, continued

- Truth, fearless, non-hateful spirit are important in attaining salvation
- Justice and liberty for all
- Only those who practice love obtain God
- Respect for all Religions
- Equality of all faiths, caste, creed, race, and all are welcome to the Gurdwara

4. The Ten Gurus

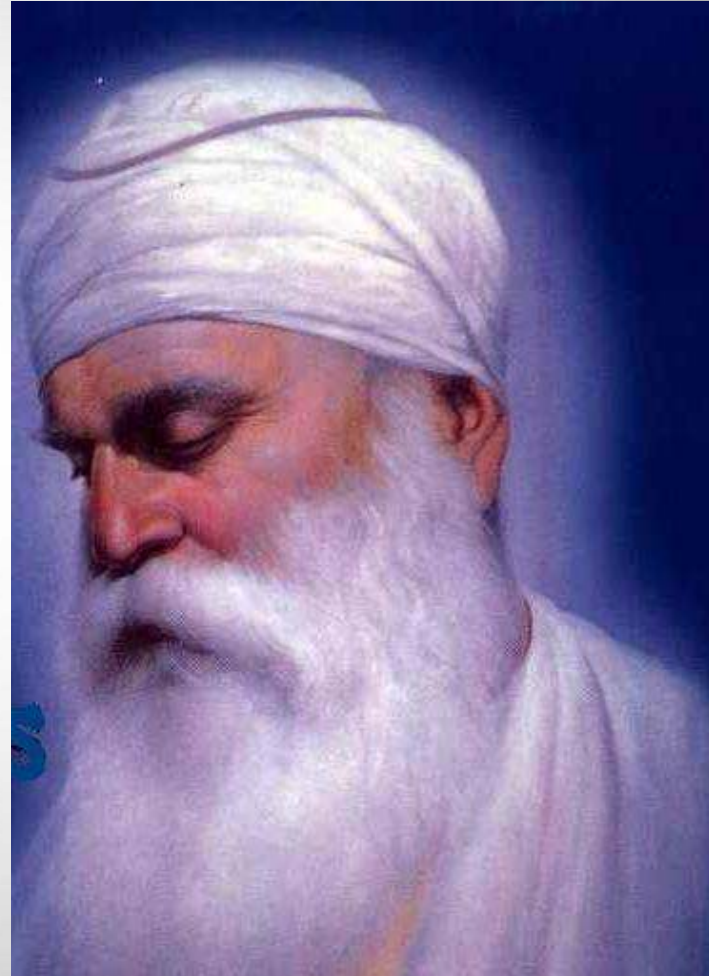
- Each one of the ten Gurus represents a divine attribute:

1. **Guru Nanak** – Humility
2. **Guru Angad** – Obedience
3. **Guru Amar Das** – Equality
4. **Guru Ram Das** – Service
5. **Guru Arjan** - Self-Sacrifice
6. **Guru Hargobind** – Justice
7. **Guru Har Rai** – Mercy
8. **Guru Harkrishan** – Purity
9. **Guru Tegh Bahadur** –
Tranquility
10. **Guru Gobind Singh** - Royal
Courage



Guru Nanak Dev (1469 - 1539)

- Founder of the Sikhism based on Equality & justice for all



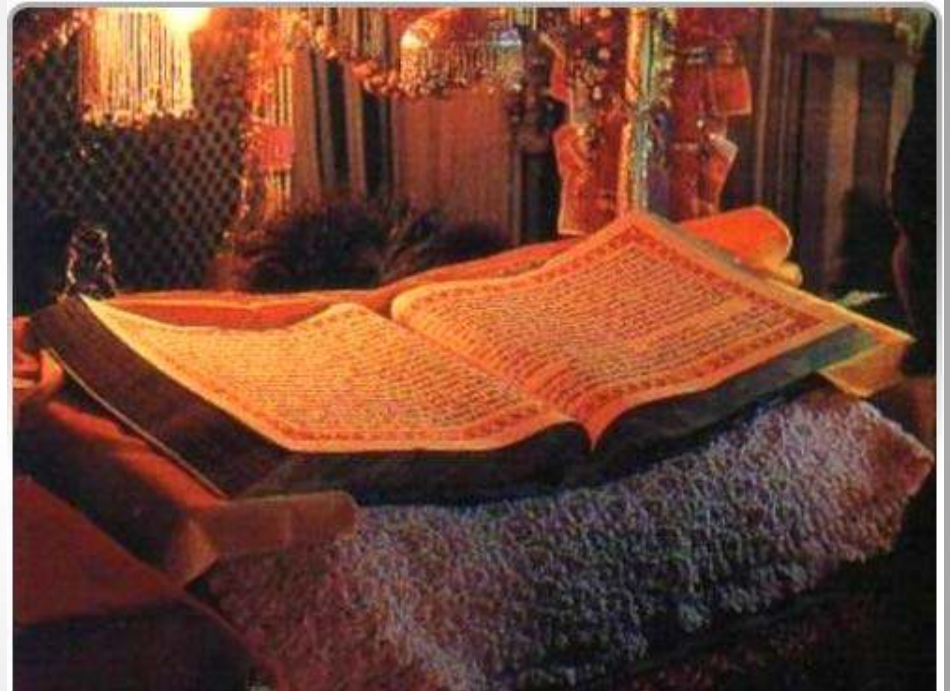
Guru Gobind Singh (1666 – 1708)

- Father Martyred to protect the Right of Freedom of Religion
- Created the Sikh Nation: Khalsa – legion of the pure with Saint/Soldier qualities to protect anyone from oppression and injustice
- Amrit - Baptism Ceremony in 1699
- Prescribed the 5 Articles of Faith
- Declared Guru Granth Sahib as the eternal Guru and ultimate spiritual authority for the Sikhs.



Guru Granth Sahib

- Compiled by the Sikh Guru's themselves
- Guru Granth Sahib revered as living Master
- Any member, male or female, of the congregation can read from Guru Granth Sahib
- All religious activity of the Sikhs are focused upon and revolves around the Spiritual Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib.
- Contains teachings of the Gurus and also other Muslim and Hindu saints



5. Values and Practices

- Sarbat da bhalla : Welfare unto all
- Seva: Daily selfless service to humanity
 - Service to god through selfless service to humanity and Gods creation.
- Vand Chakna: sharing with the needy
- Kirat Karniyee: Honest Labor
 - Honest earnings by hard work
 - Do not become burden on the society
- Daily Prayers & Meditation

Values and Practices, continued

- No magic: antidote for evil is to remember God (recite His name)
- No rituals.
- No superstitions.
- No statues or idol worship
- Sikh men and women keep uncut hair
- Dress code given by tenth Guru: Guru Gobind Singh, as a form of identity and uniqueness (the five K's)
- Color of turban is personal preference

6. One Race

- The Hymns of Muslim, Hindu and so-called 'lower caste' saints were incorporated into Guru Granth Sahib alongside Sikh Gurus Hymns without any kind of distinction.
- The tradition of Langar (wherein everyone sit together and share a meal after services regardless of social class or whether they are rich or poor) expresses the ideals of equality, sharing and the Oneness of all humankind



7. The Five K's: Discipline and Spirituality

- **Kesh:** uncut hair. Sikhs do not cut hair or beards to demonstrate their Love and obedience to their faith.
- **Kanga:** wooden comb to keep uncut hair neat and clean
- **Kara:** bracelet, made of steel worn on dominant hand : a reminder of noble actions, a symbol of eternity
- **Kachera:** cotton underwear. Standard, Naturally Comfortable, dignified attire reflective of modesty and control. A sign of a soldier; ever ready; dignified and highly mobile.
- **Kirpaan:** ceremonial knife symbolizing freedom, liberty and justice. Never to be used as an offensive weapon.



8. The Turban: Identity and Responsibility

- Covers long, uncut hair
- Approx. 5 metres of cloth wrapped neatly around the head every time it is put on
- Symbolizes discipline, integrity, humility, and spirituality
- Religious requirement - must be worn at all times in public



9. Equality – The Rights of Women

- Spiritual scripture (Guru Granth Sahib) mandate women must be respected and treated as equal to man
- Sikh Gurus rejected the old myth of females being inferior to men.
- Sikh followers are instructed not to associate with those who discriminate against Women
- Sikh Women can do everything
- Both men and women are considered capable of reaching the highest levels of spirituality

10. The Gurdwara

- Any place with the Guru Granth Sahib installed
- Kirtan
- Katha
- Langar
- Sewa
- Protocols



11. The Golden Temple

- Harmandir Sahib (also known as Golden Temple): It has four entrances: symbolizing people of any faith, any race are welcomed and encouraged to attend the services.
- This concept underscores the peaceful co-existence with all other religions and people. Daily prayer ends with asking God for the good of all humanity



The Golden Temple



12. Sikhs in Canada

- Over 100 years (1887)
- 400,00 (2004)
- 800,000 (2011)
- BC, Ontario
- WWI, WWII
- Immigration



13. Closing

- The one who earns an honest living, gives to the underprivileged, (Nanak says), he realizes the true path
- The universe has been created and destroyed many times before, at His will
- There is no enemy and no alien, we are friends to everyone.

Thank you