


[About the URI](#)
[World Religions](#)
[Stories](#)
[Activities](#)
[Buddhism](#)
[Christianity](#)
[Hinduism](#)
[Islam](#)
[Judaism](#)
[More...](#)

Sikhism



How did Sikhism begin?

The Sikh religion began about 500 years ago in the Punjab region of India. Today there are about twelve million Sikhs living in the Punjab region. It was started by a man called Guru Nanak. The title Guru means teacher. He was born at a time in India when Muslims and Hindus were living in the same region but did not get along at all. Some people felt left out of both religions. When Guru Nanak began preaching to others that there should be tolerance of other faiths, it made sense to some people. He taught people that the outward differences in people's religions were not important in God's eyes. After Guru Nanak's death the leadership of the Sikhs was passed down to nine more gurus. The tenth guru decided that it was important for the Sikhs to be able to defend their faith and he formed a brotherhood called the Khalsa of devoted Sikhs who are willing to defend the faith even at the expense of their lives. Men and women may join. If they do they take part in the Amrit ceremony held by five exemplary community members who represent the original "beloved Five" or first five who brave men who joined the Khalsa. There are five symbolic aspects of the dress of members of the Khalsa: uncut hair which symbolizes the belief in not disturbing nature anymore than necessary; a wooden comb for neatness; white shorts to wear under clothes for purity and modesty; a steel bangle for strength and eternity; and a short sword as a reminder to defend the truth and what is right.

Why are there no more Sikh gurus?

After the death of the tenth guru, it was decided that the Sikh Holy Book itself would serve as the Guru or teacher. It is called the Guru Granth Sahib. The hymns and writings in it serve as the teacher of the Sikhs.

What do Sikhs believe?



Sikhs believe in one God. They believe they should remember God in everything they do. This is called simran. Sikhs believe everyone is equal in God's eyes. For this reason Sikh men all are given the surname Singh which means lion and the women are given the surname Kaur which means princess. Sikhs believe that to worship is to live an honest life and care for others. Sikhs believe they should hold jobs which help others and society. This service to others is called sewa. In addition Sikhs believe in giving a tenth of what they earn to others. The work Sikhs do to help others is organized through the temples they belong to. They do not believe in drinking alcohol or smoking.

Where do Sikh's worship?

Sikhs worship in a temple or gurudwara. This word means "gateway of the guru." When entering a temple, Sikhs take off their shoes and cover their heads. They bow in front of the Holy Book or Guru Granth Sahib. Hymns and prayers are said and then the worshipers share karah prasad which is a food offering made of sugar, butter and flour.