



CHICHESTER QUAKERS INTER FAITH PLANNING GROUP NEWSLETTER

September 2018

For this is the true ground of love and unity, not that such a man walks and does just as I do,
but because I feel the same Spirit and life in him...
- *Quaker faith & practice 27.13*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

INTER FAITH WEEK

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR



We hope to hold an evening, on 20.11.18, commencing at 7.0pm, in the Quaker Meeting House, Priors Road, Chichester on the theme "Love thy Neighbour".

A supper will be provided, after which members of various faiths will have an opportunity to speak briefly on what this theme means to them.

Afterwards there will be a discussion.

Please let the Convenor of the Inter faith Planning group know if you wish to attend : Bill McMellon, webellon@phonecoop.coop or, Tel. 01243 776364



Sikhism Today

Members of the Sikh Community of Crawley were welcomed by Friends for a talk and a shared lunch. The presentation was shared by Baljit Kang and Satinder Kaur.

Sikhism

Sikhism, is a monotheistic religion that originated in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent about the end of the 15th century. It is one of the youngest of the major world

religions, evolving from Hinduism, and the fifth-largest. In the early 21st century there were nearly 25 million Sikhs worldwide, the great majority of them living in Punjab, the Sikh homeland in northwest India, and about 2 million living in neighbouring Indian states, formerly part of the Punjab.

The fundamental beliefs of Sikhism, is contained in the sacred scripture Guru Granth Sahib, 10 messengers (or Gurus) each wrote part of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Granth Sahib is like the bible, it will not change and it is the culmination of the teachings of the Gurus. The text includes:

- hymns and teachings of the first 5 gurus of Sikhism, including those of the founder Nanak
- some writings of Kabir, a poet
- the writings of 20 selected Hindu and Muslims saints/mystics who affirmed the oneness of God and were deemed to know and practice true spirituality.

The text is brought in and out of the worship space via a ceremonial procession. It is draped in special materials and held on a special stand. The text is the central focus at weddings, birthdays and other special events.

There are five principles of Sikhism:-

1. Sikhism believes that there is only one god - each religion may have a different name for god and different paths, but not different destinations.
2. There are no statues, as god is within us. It is genderless therefore men and women are equal, with equal rights. It is from women that kings are born.
3. Everyone has direct access to god - in our own mind and hearts.
4. Live honestly and give to others. Aid is given to conflict and disaster areas around the world. The organisation Khalsa Aid has sent aid to areas where there is famine, earthquakes etc. Such help and support is based on the principle of whole human race is as one. This team is often the first on the scene with food, clothes, and sanitation in order to reduce suffering and maintain dignity.
5. Everyone is equal before God - the free kitchen (*see below*) upholds this principle of equality in the world, and the need to eliminate extreme poverty. The meal is a sharing, showing the principle of community. Food is prepared in company, and everyone sits together.

The 5 Ks. These 5 Ks date from the creation of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.

- Hair - do not cut your hair. Tradition has it that the wearing of a turban comes from when a man was beheaded by a Mughal emperor, his head was left in the street, because everyone was scared to pick it up. It was felt that this was cowardice so wearing a turban shows you are not hiding yourself. It is like a uniform. Ladies can also wear a turban.
- Wear a comb in your hair - hair must be combed every day
- Wear a bangle - if it slips down when you are doing something wrong, it reminds you
- Special underwear which is worn all the time
- Sword - reminder to be peaceful, and only used to protect others.

There is no alcohol and all food is vegetarian .

Belief in reincarnation and karma. What you do in this life affects the next life.

Langar is the free kitchen. You all sit together - rich, poor, or different religions; eating the same meal means you are all friends.

The father of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, in 1469 gave his son 200 rupees to spend and sent him on his travels. The Guru saw hungry and poor people so he gave them the money and returned to his father. His father was not pleased and gave him 200 more rupees and the Guru did the same again. So, the free kitchen of Sikhism started and has become a tradition from that day to this.

The Golden Temple of Amritsar is a Gurdwara located in the city of Amritsar, Punjab, India. It is the holiest Gurdwara and the most important pilgrimage site of Sikhism.

Here, there are 100,000 visitors often in one day and a free kitchen is provided. The Temple is cleaned every night - every part of it. All the food is donated.



Another recent example was when our Sikh community went into Crawley city centre and served free food and drink from 10.00 to 5.00. It was a successful event supported by the County Council and served to integrate the Sikh community into the wider community.

Originally in Crawley, there were only a few families, and they hired a small hall. Then 40 years ago bought an old factory which is in the corner of a car park, so looks nothing from the outside. But inside there is an explosion of colour and noise. On a Sunday everything is ready to start at 9.00 and the priest in the temple reads through the day from the Guru Granth Sahib scripture. There is a feeling of joy. Children are taught in our Sunday School which also includes Punjabi..

This interesting talk concluded with a reading of a chapter from Guru Granth Sahib, the religious scripture of Sikhism. This chapter is read when happiness and peace is wanted at an event - this chapter is always read at home or in the temple. Usually read in Punjab but was read in English to Friends.

We extend our grateful thanks to the members of the Crawley Sikh community for joining us today bringing with them their generosity, colour and sheer joy which they brought to the Friends' shared lunch- with- a- difference.