**SIKHISM**

There are 20 million Sikhs in the world, most of whom live in the Punjab province of India. The 2001 census recorded 336,000 [Sikhs in the UK.](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/history/britishsikhism.shtml)

Sikhism was [founded](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/history/history_1.shtml) in the 16th century in the Punjab district of what is now India and Pakistan. It was founded by [Guru Nanak](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/people/nanak.shtml)and is based on his teachings, and those of the 9 Sikh gurus who followed him.

The most important thing in Sikhism is the internal religious state of the individual.

* Sikhism is a [monotheistic religion](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/beliefs/beliefs.shtml)
* Sikhism stresses the importance of doing good actions rather than merely carrying out rituals
* Sikhs believe that the way to lead a good life is to:
	+ keep God in heart and mind at all times
	+ live honestly and work hard
	+ treat everyone equally
	+ be generous to the less fortunate
	+ serve others
* The Sikh place of worship is called a [Gurdwara](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/ritesrituals/gurdwara_1.shtml)
* The Sikh scripture is the Guru Granth Sahib, a book that Sikhs consider a living Guru

The [tenth Sikh Guru](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/people/gobindsingh.shtml) decreed that after his death the spiritual guide of the Sikhs would be the teachings contained in that book, so the Guru Granth Sahib now has the status of a Guru, and Sikhs show it the respect they would give to a human Guru.

The community of men and women who have been initiated into the Sikh faith is the [Khalsa](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/customs/fiveks.shtml). The Khalsa celebrated its 300th anniversary in 1999.

Guru Gobind Singh decreed that where Sikhs could not find answers in the Guru Granth Sahib, they should decide issues as a community, based on the principles of their scripture.