
Reflection On Religious Practice Event

Place and description

I attended Ontario Khalsa Darbar which is a Sikh Gurudwara located in Mississauga (ON). Gurudwara is a nice big building with white marble all over it and a big parking lot. I read from the notice board on entrance gates to cover the head first and remove the shoes before entering. Left to the Entrance gates there is a big room with big shoe racks and open wardrobe full of hankies. There were a lot of people going in Sikh Temple because it was weekend.

Gurudwara has a very big kitchen and eating palace which is called "Langar Hall". I found a gym, library and three big halls where they sit and listen to the hymns from their religious book "Sri Guru Granth Sahib". In the parking lot there was a very high Orange flag which is called "Nishan Sahib" and people were bowing down to flag when they pass from there. Main ceremony took place in big hall where people were sitting and listening to the 'Kirtan' Sermon and hymns. Occasion being celebrated In a big hall people were sitting quietly and listening to the "Granthis". Granthis are like priests of Sikh Gurudwara. First, Granthis read texts from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. After that they sang prayers and hymns which is called Kirtan. Then they talked about some historical incidents of Sikh faith. In Last, they did Ardaas (Prayer) which is the ending point when all of us stand up and started following Granthi. After that people started to leave the hall and they gathered to Langar Hall (eating palace). Food was typical Indian food which was very delicious and totally free. People volunteered and served food to the community.

Outline of Service Including Time Line

Granthis started reading from early morning. However, I went there at 8AM. People started gathering by 9. They completed Readings by 10AM. After that, they started talking about historical events and explained religious texts with praising of nature. Best thing I observed is that people listened to the sermon very carefully and it was very quiet and peaceful. Then three man with music instruments started singing hymns and then Ardaas took place. In the end five people took Guru Granth Sahib ji with very care and take it to another room. Followers see Guru Granth Sahib ji as their Guru and take care of it as just like a Special Person. It's all done by 11:45 AM. It was a regular worshipping day which took places on every day. They sang, chant and do prayers for goodwill of community and world. One Guy told me this over there.

Content Summary of Service

Granthis started with Asa-Di-Waar Text which is written by Guru Nank founder of Sikhism, then they go through various texts. They have used Waheguru word many time which means Wahe - wonderful, awe-inspiring. Gu - dark goopy attachment. Roo - a (liberating) ray of light (Khalsa). Then they ended the event by reading Ardaas. Some lines from Ardaas is "O True Father Wondrous Enlightener Waheguru in Thy presence has been placed prashaad / and, or langar, please accept this offering and bless it to be distributed to the holy congregation.

Whosoever partakes of it may they recite. Thy name Waheguru with each and every breath. Those beloved devotees who have prepared or contributed to prashand / and or langar, O Lord may they be blessed with peace, happiness and the gift of Thy name.)” 3 readily identifiable features Langar (food) which anyone can have from gurudwara. I observed people from any faith at any day of week can have free food from gurudwara. There are no restrictions and people over their love to serve. Same as like many Hindu temples’ where food is served day and night with no cost. People repeated “Waheguru” name so many times which they say is a process called Simran. It’s mantra which is same as in Buddhism and Hinduism. For example – followers say “Ram Ram” for many times in Hinduism. I saw many people with turbans and long beard. Sikhs are famously known for their turbans and beards. In other faiths people do not wear turbans, it is unique about Sikhism.

Listening to the Simran, Katha and kirtan which is very similar to hymns, sermon and preaching in Christianity. Sikhs has Granthi who is an expert and experienced Sikh in rituals and faith which is like priest in Christianity. 2 aspects that you couldn’t understand People who entered the Gurudwara must cover their heads which I do not understand. Many Sikhs were carrying dagger with them. I was curious about it then I researched and found that they must wear five things as to complete code which includes wooden comb, dagger or sword, particular undergarment, turban and steel bangle (Khalsa). Each one of them has deep meaning and cause. For instance, carrying a dagger is for personal safety, individual can use it for bad situations where as steel bangle is for identity and undergarment is for good health.

I read a lot of history books and I was very fascinated after reading about sikh wars. They were very brave people and fought for free will of people. Moreover, I never got a chance to experience it. I studied in catholic school. So, I know little bit about Christianity. My parents are secular and same goes for me. I have many hindu friends but very few Sikh. So, I know about Hinduism but nothing about Sikhism. I always wanted to know how sikh temple operates. I am thankful to this course professor for assigning such a nice assignment which gave me an opportunity to experience unity love and happiness.