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IN THIS ISSUE

SIKHISM AND
CHRISTIANITY

Terms like *guru*, *Granth* and *saint soldiers* are all familiar to Sikhs. They are a part of their religion. What is Sikhism? How did it begin? How does it relate to Christian faith? We will explore these questions in this April, 2012, issue of *The Pentecost*. We will also discuss the *nature of God*, the *nature of man* and the *meaning of salvation*. We are happy to announce the creation of a second website. Visit our new website at freedomandsocialorder.com. God bless you.

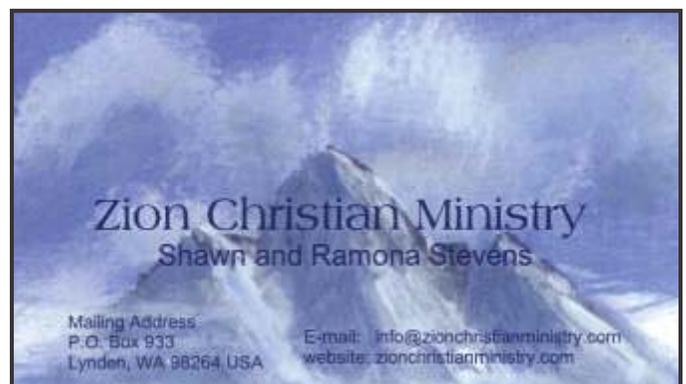
Shawn Stevens

Sikhism is more than a culture; it's a religion. However, is it true? Decide for yourself, as you read and compare it to Christianity. I pray that "... you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8.32).

Ramona Stevens

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SIKHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

The fifth largest religion of the world, with an estimated twenty-six million followers, is Sikhism. Where did it begin? What does it teach? How does it compare with Christian faith?

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak Dev who was born into a Hindu family, in India, in 1469. Nanak was very curious about religion, having exposure to Hinduism and Islam. He was disillusioned by religious division and began searching for truth. Somewhere around 1500, he is said to have had a vision in which he says God declared him to be God's chosen guru.

Nanak began gathering followers or "Sikhs" (devoted disciples) and he wrote the "Granth" (book), which has become the Sikh scriptures.

In some ways, Sikhism is a merging of Islamic and Hindu ideas, as well as giving rise to new thought. However, this must be said with reservation and qualification because Nanak said; "I am not a Hindu nor a Muslim. I accept neither the Veda nor the Quaran."¹

Nanak died in 1538 and the new guru was Guru Angad. There were ten gurus, in all, and the last guru said that the book, "Granth", would be the final, eternal guru. Sikhs would move away from the idea of having living, breathing gurus. Some of the other gurus are known for their contribution to Sikhism. The fifth guru, Arjun Dev (1581-1606), completed the "Granth Sahib," the Sikh sacred text. The ninth guru, Tegh Bahabur (1664-1675),

was a martyr for the Sikhs. He would not convert to Islam and endured torture and beheading.

What does Sikhism teach?

Sikhism teaches that there is one supreme God, who is impersonal, beyond human's knowing. It teaches the unity of God as well as the brotherhood of man and it rejects the worship of idols. Sikhism teaches that humans are spiritual beings with souls, flawed, but capable of merging with deity and becoming "saint soldiers." Nanak believed that divine light was within all people and that a person may obtain perfection by developing love for God. Sikhism teaches the need to overcome self-centeredness and illusions of the world. Nanak also rejected ascetic practices like fasting, begging and celibacy. Salvation to a Sikh is more of enlightenment than deliverance from iniquity; it is becoming deity-centered by realizing through good deeds and meditation. Salvation is thought of as reaching a spiritual state called "Gumnukh" in which a Sikh becomes absorbed into God.

Sikhism differs quite dramatically from what God's Word, the Bible, teaches about the nature of God and about salvation. Firstly, the Bible, as well as teaching God's transcendence, also teaches that He is a personal God Who desires fellowship with men and women.

There have been many men in history who have challenged the claim that men can know God. Philosophers, such as Plato, taught that God was beyond finding out. The medieval Catholic concept of God was that He was greatly transcendent (medieval mysticism is

an exception to this) and ineffable (too overwhelming to be communicated in words). This is not entirely untrue, but it is not the full picture of God's character. God is a personal God who loves humanity. One view is that this emphasis on transcendence traces back to the teachings of Augustine (354-430).² Regardless of where this view began, and acknowledging that God does in some ways veil Himself from sinful man, the fact still remains that God can be known, and desires to be known, by men and women. `

How does a person know God? The only way that we can come to know Him is through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. Once faith in Jesus Christ is established in the hearts of men and women, a new spirituality is opened up to them where they receive knowledge of God through revelation into God's word, the Bible, and through the experience of faith. The Bible teaches that God is Spirit. Spirit can only be understood by another spirit. That is why when God created man He gave him a spirit, a soul and a body. By God's Spirit communicating with human spirits, He makes Himself known, which is why the Apostle Paul tells us:

But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

1 Corinthians 2:9, 10

The senses of hearing, touch and smell are all ways in which our physical body takes in information. However, God is not restricted to these senses in order to communicate with our spirit. A touching story is that of Helen Keller. Although she was born blind, mute, and deaf, she learned to communicate with a teacher. The teacher would put Helen's hands on the teacher's throat and lips and Helen came to understand her speech. One day, the teacher made efforts to share with Helen spiritual truth about God. When she did this, Helen's face lit up and she communicated these words to her teacher; "Oh, I am so glad you told me His name, for He has often spoken to me!"³ God spoke to Helen, regardless of her inability to use natural senses. Although revelation from God may not always involve reading the pages of the Bible, all revelation that God gives to man will not disagree with what the Bible says.

Not only is it possible to know God, it is important to know God. Jesus said; "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:3). Knowing God is the essence of being a Christian. Jesus Christ is the only one who can reveal God, the Father, to us. Again, Jesus said; "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." (Matthew 11:27). Jesus also said; "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." (John 1:18). In today's world, men and women boast about many things. They may boast about material wealth, educational achievements or personal beauty, but none of these things impress the Lord. Instead, He wants men and women to boast, or glory, in the fact that they understand

and know Him. We read:

Thus says the LORD:

'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,

Let not the mighty man glory in his might,

Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;

But let him who glories glory in this,

That he understands and knows Me,

*That I am the LORD, exercising
lovingkindness, judgment, and
righteousness in the earth.*

For in these I delight,' says the LORD.

Jeremiah 9:23, 24

So we see that Christian faith differs greatly with Sikhism when Christian faith claims that not only can men and women know God, but that they must come to know Him.

An important starting point to gaining an understanding of God is to realize that there is only one God. The Bible states; “that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other.” (1 Kings 8:60). As one of the Ten Commandments, God commands that “You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Exodus 20:3). Again, God says:

'I am the LORD, and there is no other;

There is no God besides Me.

*I will gird you, though you have not known
Me,*

*That they may know from the rising of the
sun to its setting*

That there is none besides Me.

I am the LORD, and there is no other;'

Isaiah 45:5-6

Also, we read; “To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him.” (Deuteronomy 4:35).

As well as these Old Testament witnesses to the truth of there being only one God, the New Testament declares this also. We read; “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (John 17:3). Does not the Bible sometimes refer to other gods? Occasionally, yes. The Bible acknowledges the existence of angels, demons and other beings, but angels are angels by nature and demons are demons by nature. There is only one God by nature. The Bible teaches; “But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.” (Galatians 4:8). This is a reference to false deities, false gods, spirits or conceptions of God which are not God by nature. The Bible teaches that there is only one God by nature, and that God is a unity, or sometimes called a trinity.

To say that God is a unity is to say that He is a composite unit. It is a great mystery, and yet a reality, that even though there is one God, within the one God there is a plurality. God sometimes refers to Himself in plural terms, for example; “Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over

the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26). We also read; “Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' ---” (Genesis 3: 22). In the Bible, God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. There are numerous passages in the Bible where the three are mentioned together in the same passage, for example; “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (Matthew 28:19). Also, in 1 Peter 1:2, we read; “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” All three were present at Jesus' baptism; “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' ” (Matthew 3:16, 17). Some people try to explain the unity and plurality of God by offering illustrations such as that of an egg being one and, yet, consisting of three parts, a shell, a white and a yoke. Another example is that of water, which can exist as a solid, liquid or gas. These illustrations may help some, but they still fall short of describing the great mystery of the unity and the plurality of God.

Let us look at each member of this Divine Unity in Scripture. God, the Father, is frequently in the Scriptures referred to as God, for example; “elect according to the

foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” (1 Peter 1:2). Jesus Christ, especially, referred to God as the Father, for example; “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” (John 6:27).

While the Scriptures refer to God, the Father, as being God, they also declare Jesus Christ, the Son, to be God. Truly, Jesus Christ is the most amazing person to have walked this earth. His teachings were the most profound ever spoken by a man. His actions and works were the most faultless ever witnessed. Many acknowledge Him as a good man, however, the Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ was more than just a man. The Scriptures repeatedly refer to Jesus as being God, for example; “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” (John 1:1, 2). The Word in these verses is a reference to Jesus. Paul says; “of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.” (Romans 9:5) and; “looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,” (Titus 2:13). The Disciple Thomas testified that Jesus was God by addressing Him as such; “And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' ” (John 20:28). When we read further, we see that Jesus did not rebuke this statement but accepted Thomas' worship. The Bible, records the Father addressing Jesus, the Son, as God, we read; “But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O

God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.” (Hebrews 1:8).

There are also divine actions or works that Christ has done, and shall do. Jesus created all things; “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” (John 1:3) and; “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” (Colossians 1:16). Jesus preserves all things; “who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,” (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus forgives sin; “When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven you.' ” (Mark 2:5). Jesus gives eternal life; “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” (John 10:28) and; “as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.” (John 17:2). Jesus has power to raise the dead. He said; “This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:39-40). Jesus receives prayer and it is right to pray to Him; “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:”(1 Corinthians 1:2)

and; “And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'” (Acts 7:59).

Only God may be worshiped (see Matthew 4:10), yet, Jesus' followers worshiped Him; “Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Truly You are the Son of God.' ” (Matthew 14:33) and; “And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.” (Matthew 28:9) and; “And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,” (Luke 24:52). Even the angels are commanded, by the Father, to worship Him; “But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' ” (Hebrews 1:6). One day, every knee shall bow to Jesus Christ; “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:10, 11). Jesus is called “Immanuel,” which means, “God with us.” (See Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23).

Some would ask, “Is not Jesus the son of God, and does that not make him someone other than God?” The words, “son” and “father,” are not best understood from our Western World View but, rather, from the Semitic backgrounds that these passages were written in. The Semitic concepts of “son” emphasizes “likeness or sameness of nature”⁴ Some will ask, “Are not Christians sons of God and, if so, isn't Christ the same as any Christian man?” Again, there is a difference. Jesus is the Son of God by His own right, but His followers are God's

sons by adoption. Jesus is by nature God.

Jesus is unique. Natural men and women begin their lives at birth. He, however, existed before His birth. He existed from all eternity. The Bible, referring to Jesus as the Word, teaches; “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1). Jesus Christ is the Word. Greek scholar, Spiros Zodhiates, says that the best translation of John 1:1 is “Before there was a beginning the Word had been”⁵ We also read; “Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.' ” (John 8:58). We read further; “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” (John 17:5).

While the Scriptures declare that the Father is God and that Jesus, the Son, is God, they also declare that the Holy Spirit is God. He is called the Holy Spirit because both His nature and acts are holy. We read in Acts; “But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.' ” (Acts 5:3-4). Lying to the Holy Spirit is not just lying to men, but is actually lying to God. In Scripture, He is sometimes called “the Spirit of God” (see 1 Corinthians 3:16). He is also called “The Spirit of the LORD” (see Isaiah 11:2). He is called “The Spirit of the Lord GOD” (see Isaiah 61:1) and He is called “the Spirit of the living God” (see 2 Corinthians 3.3).

Not only is the Holy Spirit God, He is a person. The Bible often refers to the Holy Spirit with personal pronouns such as He and Him, for example; “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” (John 16:14) (See also John 15: 26 and John 16:7). The Holy Spirit acts in ways that require personality, for example, the Holy Spirit speaks; “Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go near and overtake this chariot.' ” (Acts 8:29). The Holy Spirit searches all things; “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:10). The Holy Spirit uses the power of will:

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

The Holy Spirit intercedes; “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Romans 8:26). The Holy Spirit teaches; “But the

Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit leads; “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Romans 8:14). The Holy Spirit commissions; “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'” (Acts 13:2). From these references we see that the Holy Spirit is a person.

So we see from the Bible that God is a composite unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Sikhism does not acknowledge this fundamental truth.

Not only does God's Word differ with Sikhism on the nature of God, it also differs on the nature of man and salvation. Man is not merely a self-centered individual that needs enlightenment; man is a sinner who needs redemption and redemptive salvation.

God made man a three-part being. Man has a spirit, a soul and a body.

Some scholars dispute this and say that man is a two-part being, his only divisions being material and immaterial. Some have even argued that a man's soul is the totality of man. The reason for the controversy is that the Bible talks about the constitution of man in a progressive way. The earliest account of man's creation, in Genesis (King James Bible), says that God formed man out of the dust of the earth and breathed into man the breath of life and man “... became a living soul.” (Genesis 2:7). This

verse, in the King James translation, does seem to use the term “soul” for the totality of man. However, the Hebrew word for “soul” here is not the same as the Greek word for “soul” used elsewhere in the New Testament. In fact, many translations don't even use the term “soul” in Genesis 2:7. The New King James version says that man “... became a living being.” The Genesis passage does not show us a three-part division. Does that mean that man has only two components? No. The Bible does not end with the book of Genesis. It begins with Genesis and then continues on. The Bible is a book of progressive revelation. What do I mean by that? I mean that the Bible will first tell of something in a general way, and then later go into greater detail on the topic in other passages. Some passages of the Bible do talk about man as being divided into two parts (see Matthew 10:28, 1 Corinthians 6:20 and James 2:26). However, other passages talk about that immaterial part of man as having two divisions. This is not a contradiction; it is a case of the later scriptures going into greater detail on the issue. We read further; “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23) and; “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12). If the word of God is sharp and divides between soul and spirit, then we should acknowledge a distinction between soul and spirit in our theology, as well. What then are these three parts of a man's being?

Man has a body. This part of man requires little definition. It is the most self-evident part of his being. A body is simply the physical, corporal part of man. His body has five senses, sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. A man's body gives him contact with the physical world. Paul calls the body a vessel; "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us." (2 Corinthians 4:7). He also calls it a tent which cloths us, and he tells us that one day this clothing will be stripped away by death. He longs to be re-clothed with a resurrected body; "For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life." (2 Corinthians 5:4). Man's body gives him a world-consciousness. The body is like the outer sheath to the soul and spirit.

Man has a soul. The Bible does not specifically define the soul. However, it speaks much about it. I believe that this part of man is his mind, reasoning, intellect, discernment, emotions, memory and will. The will has been called "the foot of the soul"⁶ because it carries the soul in the direction that it acts. I believe that man's personality resides in the soul and that it is his very consciousness. The soul would then give man his self-consciousness.

The spirit is the inner-most part of a man. Again, the Bible does not give us a direct definition of the human spirit. I understand it to be that part of man which has communion with God and that all of man's spiritual capacities reside in his spirit. A man's spirit operates in both prayer to, and worship of, God. The following verses

show us the human spirit in operation. We read; "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers," (Romans 1:9) and; "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23-24). If man's soul gives him self-consciousness, then his spirit gives him God-consciousness.

In the beginning, the three-part man began living in harmony with God and with the world around him. What went wrong? Anyone looking at humanity today, or humanity throughout history, will see that man is not the holy and good being that he was created to be. One only has to look at one's own heart to make this observation. What went wrong? The Bible teaches that God, after putting man in a utopia, made one requirement of him, that he not eat a certain fruit. This small request was made so that man would have an option of obeying God, or rebelling against Him. God wanted man to obey Him, but He wanted it to be by man's own free will. A choice to obey God willingly was more precious to God than forced obedience. God did everything to make obedience easy. Man was created as good. He was placed in an ideal living place. His needs were provided for abundantly. He had activity to participate in. He had fellowship and friendship with God. There was just one regulation to obey. This small stipulation came with a heavy consequence, if not followed. God warned; "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:17).

After being tempted and deceived by a serpent, Eve did eat the fruit. She then offered it to Adam. Adam ate as well. He was not deceived. His sin was not a slip. It was an open revolt against God. Next, they would learn the horrors of death in its many faceted forms. They both became aware of their nakedness, and they hid. They were hiding from God. God called for them and we read further:

Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?'

So he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.' And He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?' Then the man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.' And the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.' So the LORD God said to the serpent:

'Because you have done this,

You are cursed more than all cattle,

And more than every beast of the field;

On your belly you shall go,

And you shall eat dust

All the days of your life.

And I will put enmity

Between you and the woman,

And between your seed and her Seed;

He shall bruise your head,

And you shall bruise His heel.'

To the woman He said:

'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception;

In pain you shall bring forth children;

Your desire shall be for your husband,

And he shall rule over you.'

Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':

'Cursed is the ground for your sake;

In toil you shall eat of it

All the days of your life.

Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,

And you shall eat the herb of the field.

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread

Till you return to the ground,

For out of it you were taken;

For dust you are,

And to dust you shall return.'

Genesis 3:9-19

Man now had a new reality to live with. Death was now a part of him. What happened to him when he sinned? The penalty for sin is death. I believe that the first part of him that died was his spirit. That part of man which communed with God, died. That sweet communion, which Adam and Eve had had previously with God, ended. They were now incapable of it. I believe that death next spread to their souls affecting their minds, wills, emotions and passions. Their nature was once holy and now it was evil, naturally gravitating towards sin. Lastly, the process of death spread to their bodies. The Hebrew of "...you shall surely die." in Genesis 2:17 can be translated as "dying

you shall die.”⁷ Aging began and, eventually, led to death. So man now experiences three kinds of death. Spiritual death is death of the human spirit and the alienation of the soul from God. Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body. Eternal death is the punishment a soul receives after physical death. This is to be dreaded above all things. Sin and death didn't cease with Adam and Eve. The sin nature, that was now their reality, was passed on to their children, and then to their children's children, and so on, to all mankind. This sin nature was an inclination towards sin. We read:

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— ... Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Romans 5:12, 18, 19

We also read:

For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

What is sin? Sin is a breaking of God's laws. Sin is not only an action, but also a nature. The sin nature is a

state of being where a man is inclined towards committing sin. Paul says; “But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.” (Romans 7:8-9). Here, Paul says that sin produced “all manner of evil desire” within him. This is the sin nature at work, producing an evil desire, or an inclination towards committing sin. Jesus says; “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.” (Matthew 15:19,20) and; “Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.” (Matthew 7:17-18). Sin touches every man; “For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.” (Ecclesiastes 7:20). We read further; “But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.” (Galatians 3:22) and; “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8).

Actual sins are transgressions of the laws of God. We read that “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” (1 John 3:4). Sin is a violation of God's commands. It is a failure to live up to God's standards; “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23). Sin is moral evil. The Bible uses many different names for it. Sin is wickedness (see Genesis 6:5), disobedience (see Romans 5:19), iniquity (see Leviticus 26:40), every lawless deed (see Titus 2:14),

trespasses (see Ephesians 2:1) and unrighteousness (see 1 John 1:9). Guilt often accompanies sin, but not necessarily. People become hardened to sin to the point where their conscience does not bother them to the same degree as it did earlier in their lives. Our sin pollutes not only our personal life, but affects others who we come into contact with. Sin creates a darkened understanding. The Bible says about unrighteous men; “because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” (Romans 1:21) and; “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14). Sin expresses itself in evil and futile imaginations; “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” (Genesis 6:5) and degrading passions; “For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.” (Romans 1:26). Sin also produces a defiled mind and conscience; “To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.” (Titus 1:15).

So then, man experiences three forms of death as a penalty for sin.

The penalty for sin extends beyond this life. In fact, the greater part of it is after death. The Bible says; “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,” (Hebrews 9:27). The Bible teaches, further,

that there will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust. At that time, all humanity will be resurrected and stand before Christ's throne:

For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

John 5:22-29

Also see Act 24:15.

Jesus will judge each person and separate mankind into two groups, one group for blessing and another group for condemnation; “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth— those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” (John 5:26-29). For the believer, the resurrection will be a wonderful experience.

In the plan of God, a way was made for man's redemption from sin and death. Jesus Christ, God Himself, came to earth in the form of a man. Unlike other men, He was utterly sinless. Man deserved death for his sins. Man was already experiencing spiritual death. After three years of ministry, teaching about the kingdom of God and healing great numbers of people, Jesus Christ stepped forward for crucifixion and took the penalty for sin, which is death, in our place. Then He rose from the dead. Now a way was opened for man to be forgiven and healed. Man could repent and put faith in Christ and His sacrifice. What would happen if he did?

When a man repents of his self-rule and puts faith in Jesus Christ, he experiences spiritual re-birth. He is, as Jesus said, born again. Jesus said; “... 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” (John 3:3). Paul said; “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,” (Colossians 2:13). Being born-again comes

through God's word; “ Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,” (1 Peter 1:22-23). The Bible talks about three kinds of life. One type of life is Bios. This is natural physical life. Also, the Bible tells of Psuche. This is psychological life or soulish life. Lastly, the Bible tells of Zoe life. This is spiritual life. This is what is imparted to man at new birth.⁸ A man receives life when he receives Jesus because Jesus is life. Jesus repeatedly taught that He was life. He would use metaphors, saying; “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:48). He also said to a Samaritan woman that He gives “living water” (see John 4:10,13-14). These are both metaphorical ways of saying that Jesus gives spiritual life to those who receive Him. John says of Jesus that “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:4). Jesus' zoe life comes and resides in men and women, and transforms them from natural men and women to spiritual men and women. There is no zoe life apart from Jesus Christ. It cannot be found by merely practicing religious tradition. Faith in Jesus is key to experiencing spiritual life; “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” (John 5:24). We also read; “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” (1 John 5:11-12).

So, from this study, we see two very different pictures of spirituality. Sikhism acknowledges that there is one God. However, it does not recognize that God is a unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Sikhism paints God as being impersonal. The Bible shows us that God is personal, that He loves man and wants man to know Him. Not only can man know God, he must come to know God for him to be saved, for this is the essence of salvation. Man must come into a relationship with God, otherwise he is lost. Sikhism does not acknowledge this and this is too much of an omission. Why is man not automatically in relationship with God, knowing Him? Man is a fallen creature. Man is a combination of spirit, soul and body. Man has sinned and all three components of an unsaved man are experiencing death in all three areas. There is hope for man, for God has stepped forward and made a way for man to be saved. Jesus came to Earth and died for us, for our sins and then He rose from the dead. Because of this, it is possible for man to be forgiven and reconciled to God. Repentance and faith in Jesus Christ bring this reconciliation about. Sikhism does not acknowledge these things and yet this is the very purpose for faith, to gain reconciliation with God and to follow God. Friend, if you are a Sikh who is reading this, let this be the turning point for you. Open your heart to Jesus Christ and call out to Him. He loves you and longs to have relationship with you.

I offer this prayer for you:

Lord Jesus Christ, Author of Salvation, I come to you on behalf of this precious soul and, if they do not know You, I pray that You

will aid them now in seeing their spiritual need and in calling on Your holy name. May they see that all of their good deeds and good intentions are not of the same value as Your precious blood that was shed for them on a cruel cross. You paid the price, the only price that is acceptable to Father God. Then You rose from the dead. You have the power to grant new life, new birth, and You have the power to form a new heart within them. As they acknowledge these things, and as they call out to You now, cause them to understand Your great love for them. Help them to respond to Your call and Your pull with faith and commitment. Help them to turn their lives over to Your full control and Your full lordship. As they call out for Your forgiveness, help them to make a solid and determined decision to follow You and Your plan for their life. As they call out to You now, meet them in this moment and make him or her a new creation. Lord, as they cry out to You, putting their faith in You, make all things new within them and may they say in truth "Christ lives in me." Amen.

Shawn Stevens



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Scripture is also taken from The King James Bible.

ENDNOTES :

1 Nanak, quoted in Richard Wolff, *The Popular Encyclopedia of World Religions* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 2007), 182.

2 L. Thomas Holdcroft, *The Doctrine Of God* (Oakland: Western Book Co., 1978), 6.

3 Spiros Zodhiates, *Was Christ God?* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1994), 12.

4 Loraine Bottner, *Studies In Theology* (U.S.A.: Reformed Publishing Co., 1975), 152-153.

5 Spiros Zodhiates, *Was Christ God?* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1994), 43.

6 John Bunyan, *The Greatness Of The Soul* (Swengel: Reiner Pub., 1974), 12.

7 Henry Clarence Theissen, *Lectures In Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 183.

8 Albert Zehr, *Experiencing Christ As Our Life* (Milner: A-Z Life Publications), 7.

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