

Sikh religion



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The movie that I chose to do this report on is titled, ' Bend it Like Beckham.' It is about a Sikh girl who is being raised in England. This girl is confronted with a lot of issues pertaining to her culture and religion and how these both clash with the culture of England. She wants to do things that her fellow colleagues are doing, but is not allowed due to her parent's strict respect of their religion. In the following pages, I will first explain the significance of the man on the wall in the picture. Then I will move on to cultural issues and their significance with the marriage scenes. The last section will discuss the overall reason for Jess not being able to play soccer. Sikhism is a religion that was started by a man named Guru Nanak Dev around 500 years ago. He wanted to spread a simple message; " we are all one, created by the one creator of all creation." During this time India was being split up by differing religions. He simply took no sides, yet respected them all. This is who is in the picture that resides above the mantle. He is considered the first and most important of the ten Gurus. In researching the culture of the Sikhs, I found that they treat these Gurus as Christians would treat saints. (sikhs.org) As Catholics pray to certain saints for certain things, the Sikhs do the same with their Gurus. Whenever they feel they need the help or guidance of one of the Gurus, they simply pray to them. As well as praying to these Gurus, they also do three other things. The first is called Nam Japa. This means " To get up each day before sunrise, to clean the body, meditate on God's name and recite the Guru's hymns to clean the mind. Throughout the day, continuously remember God's name with every breath."(sikhnet) The second thing is called Dharam di Kirat Karni. Translated, this means, " To work and earn by the sweat of the brow, to live a family way of life, and practice truthfulness and honesty in all dealings."(sikhnet) The third and last

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thing expected of these followers is called, Vand Ke Chakna. This means, " To share the fruits of one's labor with others before considering one's self. Thus, to live as an inspiration and support to the entire community."(sikhnet)

During the wedding scenes, I noticed that in one of them they give each other bracelets or rings. At first, it struck me that these are probably what they use instead of wedding rings like we would use. I found that this is not true. They also use wedding rings around the finger to symbolize the bondage of marriage. These bracelets that are worn around the wrist are actually called a Kara. These are to represent, " A steel circle, worn on the wrist, signifying bondage to Truth and Freedom from every other entanglement."(sikhnet) With further research, I found that the name for marriage is Anand Karaj, which actually means, ' Blissful Union.' The second thing that I noticed was that the whole family gets together sometime before the wedding to celebrate. This is what is called the ' kurmai.' This is what we would refer to as an engagement ceremony. This is usually held at the Gurdwara which is the home of the groom. In this case though, the ceremony is held at the local Gurdwara which is the bride's home. (punjabilok. com)

This biggest reason why the parents do not agree with Jess playing soccer is due to the way that their culture views women and how they should behave. The traditional thing for a woman to do in this culture is to learn how to cook and take care of the home. It is very similar to ways of a family in the U. S. in the fifties. A woman in this culture is also expected to remain completely clothed and not to appear sexy. Although, after reviewing some of these websites where I attained most of my information, I noticed that there were a few ads for sikh dating services, and they referred to the women as ' sexy.'(punjabilok. com) This is probably due to the shift in culture caused by

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recent times. Also, sikh women are expected to date and marry a fellow sikh. This poses a problem to Jess when she falls for an Irish dude. This conflict was never resolved in the movie, but it is hinted at that they will soon be resolving it in the near future. All in all, I didn't find this movie particularly entertaining, but it was very interesting learning more about this culture. I found that I actually agree with a lot of their beliefs, but I don't see myself in a turban anytime soon; Maybe at Halloween, but that would be pushing it!