The Sikh Religious Award Study Work Book
For Grades (6-8) Youth

American Sikh Council

Formerly known as, World Sikh Council - America Region
The

American Sikh Council

Sikh Religious Award Book

By
Kirpal Singh Nijher

For
Any Scout

Who
In his/her

Chardi Kalaa
(The Perpetual Spirit of Ascendancy)

Aspires to be
a
Citizen of the World

Wishing

Sarbat Daa Bhalaa
(Prosperity of All)
Acknowledgements

This is to acknowledge all the effort, ideas and constructive input given by many individuals associated with the American Sikh Council, formerly known as World Sikh Council – America Region.

A special thanks to the members of the Boy Scout Task Force namely S. Kirpal Singh, Dr. Manohar Singh, for all their great contribution and constructive feedback in bringing this work to fruition.

Thanks to S. Kavneet Singh for his long term vision, planning and years of overall persistent effort to bring out the four workbooks from grades 1 - 12.

Thanks to the two young Sikh Eagle Scouts, S. Karanveer Singh and S. Sherveer Singh in taking time to read the draft, by giving constructive ideas, suggestions and finally making this a reality.

[Outside front cover – Sherveer Singh - Eagle Scout (2014), Hornaday Badge Award (2016) and Order of the Arrow (2016)]

Note: All the photographs used here have been used from the internet. Any copyright belongs to the owner of the photograph(s). This workbook is being solely used for educational and non-profit purposes.

Third Edition: 2019
# Table of Contents

1. Concept of God in Sikh way of life  
2. Sikh Morality – The Three Golden Rules  
3. Sikh Concept of Heaven or Liberation  
4. Who is Sikh  
5. Sikh UNIFORM and Sikh TURBAN  
6. Sikh attitude Towards Non-Sikhs  
7. Guru Nanak Sahib  
   - The Founder of the Sikh Way of Life  
8. Feeding the Hungry - A Truly Profitable Bargain  
10. The futility of Meaningless Rituals  
11. God is Everywhere and for Everyone  
13. Sikhism – Some interesting facts  
14. The Sikh Prayer  
15. The Sikh Emblem  
16. Fun Trivia  
17. Brief History of Sikh Scouts in America  
18. Instructions: How to use the Workbook  
19. Counselor’s requirements and responsibilities  
20. Sikh Religious Award Workbook-Certification  
21. Sikh Award Application Form
THE
SIKHS

Sikhs
at
The White House
Egg Roll
American Sikh Council, formerly known as World Sikh Council – America Region

Copyrighted material, please do not distribute without prior written permission

American Sikh Soldiers
An integral part of the US Defense Force
Glimpses of a Baisakhi Sikh Parade

American Sikh Council, formerly known as World Sikh Council – America Region
Copyrighted material, please do not distribute without prior written permission
Sikh Soldiers in Service of Humanity

American Sikh Council, formerly known as World Sikh Council – America Region
Copyrighted material, please do not distribute without prior written permission
A Canadian Sikh Police Officer
On
Duty

GATKAA – The Sikh Martial Art
Sikhs Soldiers in Mesopotamia (Egypt) during World War I
Marching with their spiritual guide
the Sacred Sikh Scripture
Sri Guru Granth Sahib
in
the lead
Concept of God
In Sikh way of life

"There is ONE God.
The Supreme Truth, the Creator, Omnipresent, without fear or enmity, A Timeless Reality, beyond birth or death, self-existent; (And is) Known by the Guru's Grace.”

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, 1)

It was the year 1469 CE, when with the advent of its founding spiritual master Guru Nanak Sahib the Sikh way of life got revealed in Punjab, South Asia. Wherein, as per his revelations Guru Nanak Sahib advocated a life-style of ‘simple and honest living comprising of a strong sense of Truthfulness, Morality, Trustworthiness, Humility, Dignity, Freedom, Liberty, Equality, Oneness of the entire Human family, and Justice for all.’ Furthermore he especially stressed on the spiritual message of belief in One God only and none else.

Guru Nanak Sahib was followed by his nine successors; Guru Gobind Singh Ji was the Tenth Guru. The finalized form of teachings of the Sikh Gurus is compiled in the sacred Sikh Scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS). In the year 1708 the Tenth Guru declared SGGS, as the present day and eternal Enlightener (Guru) for the Sikhs.

The Sikh religion's beliefs are extremely modern, scientific and devoid of any dogmatic practices. Sikhism is a purely monothestic faith. Thus with its belief in ONE God only and NONE else, it does not recognize any thing or anybody else as equal to God.

Furthermore, according to the (above mentioned) fundamental concept of God, any other being or power is not God who;

- Owes its existence to something other than its own self,
- Is subjected to birth or death,
- Has a life of a measurable time span,
- Possesses hate or sense of revenge,
- Has fear of someone else, or
- Is not omnipresent.
Questions:

1. How many Gods do the Sikhs believe in?
   Ans: ...

2. What is the name of the sacred Sikh Scripture?
   Ans: ...

3. According to Sikh beliefs, can any one of us be considered as God? If not, why not?
   Ans: ...

4. What is the meaning of the word Guru?
   Ans: ...

5. Who is the present day Guru of the Sikhs?
   Ans: ...
SIKH MORALITY
THE
THREE GOLDEN RULES

Below the ultimate Truth are all the endeavors to be divine; wherein, the highest amongst such endeavors is the attainment of a Truthful Character.” ... (SGGS Pg 62).

In life, it is the truthful character alone that results in truthful actions emanating from one’s truthful inner-self. In other words, merely talking about truth is not enough. Rather, one must develop the habit of doing truthful actions. These ideals are similar to those espoused by the Boy Scout oath; that states, “On my honor, I will do my best; To do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout law; To help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.”

According to Sikh teachings, for the development of one’s moral and truthful life, meaningless mechanical ritualistic practices of any kind are of no consequence. For example, people may think that they are already truthful within because they practice a bundle of rituals. Or, one may think that visiting “holy” places, bathing in “holy” water, performing some religious rituals or reciting “holy” words/prayers develops truthfulness. However, Sikh theology teaches that one must work to become truthful from within. It teaches that outward displays of ritualistic practices will not develop a truthful, ethical and moral lifestyle.
Therefore, instead of getting entangled in ritualistic practice, the Sikh way of life advocates the following Golden Rules:

1) **KIRAT KARO**: Earn your living through completely honest means.
2) **WAND CHHAKO**: Share your earnings with others by serving humanity through completely selfless service.
3) **NAAM JAPO**: Continuously stay focused upon Godly Virtues (like Truth, Honesty, Morality, Integrity etc.) in order to develop consciousness about their presence within oneself.

**Questions:**

1. What are the three Golden Rules of the Sikh Way of life?
   Ans: ...

2. What is the highest triumph in becoming truthful?
   Ans: ...

3. Is it good or bad to be mentally awake?
   Ans: ....

4. Name a mechanical ritual that you know or have witnessed.
   Ans: ...

5. According to Sikh Theology will practicing rituals develop truthfulness within?
   Ans: ...
Everyone claims that he/she is going to Heaven out there, but I do not even know, where (such a) heaven is! ||1||Pause|| ... (Such claimants) not having explored even the mystery of their inner-selves, speak of being able to reach that heaven, just by merely talking. ||1|| ... (O my mind,) As long as you hope for going to (such a) heaven; you will not be able to even dwell in the Almighty’s Feet. ||2|| ... (Understand) Heaven is not some sort of fort (out there) surrounded by a defensive wall, or a township with an embankment around it; I, for one, do not even know about any entrance to such a heaven. ||3|| ... Says Kabir, now what more can I say? Except, pronouncing that the real heaven is right here in the company of Saadh Sangat (the Godly-minded persons).||4||8||16|| --- (SGGS: Pg. 1161)

From the above-quoted sacred commandment from the Sikh Scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, it is very interesting to note that the Sikh view on the concept of ‘Heaven, or Liberation’ is at variance with the views of majority of other religions. The major contrast is that most religions consider the concepts of ‘Heaven, or Liberation’ to be a part of some unseen after-life realm. In contrast, Sikh theology believes Heaven or liberation to belong to this (very real) life.

According to Sikh beliefs, every human being is divinely blessed with five major passions in order to ensure the propagation of creation. These passions are: the attraction for the opposite gender, outrage against injustice, the desire for necessary possessions, a sense of rational attachments, and modest pride of achievements. All these passions should be exercised in moderation. If they get out of human control, they turn into the five major human afflictions or vices: Kaam (Irresponsible Lust), Karodh (uncontrollable anger), Lobh (unnecessary greed), Moh (Irrational attachments), and Hankaar (arrogant pride).

Unfortunately, most humans have a tendency to indulge and get eternally trapped in these vices. Any escape from this eternal prison of vices is recognized as the real LIBERATION (or Heaven) in the Sikh Way of thinking. In addition, Sikh theology teaches us to strive to achieve this liberation during our lives and not after death.
True liberation may seem easier to talk about than actually achieving it. It is in fact, an extremely difficult task. To achieve success, Sikh faith teaches us to strive for a disciplined life right now, since success is not a goal to be attained in some after-life.

To emphasize the urgency of achieving and enjoying our LIBERATION, the Sikh Guru Sahib has reminded us about the real objective of our Human life, revealing;

"O My Mind! You have received from God your human body, This alone is your opportunity to attain unto Him (Godliness)"

... (SGGS: Pg. 13)

Questions:

1. Out of the five vices outlined in the Sikh theology, name the two that you think are the worst.
   Ans: ...

2. According to Sikh theology, where is heaven?
   Ans: ...

3. Do you think that Sikh theology teaches that heaven is some beautiful place out there with magnificent gardens?
   Ans: ...

4. According to Sikh teachings, what is the best way to achieve liberation?
   Ans: ...

5. According to Sikh theology, do we know how the gate to heaven looks like?
   Ans: ...
WHO IS A SIKH?

The word ‘SIKH’ is a word from the PUNJABI language. Punjabi is the primary language of the PUNJAB region, which is located in South Asia Northwest section of modern day India and Pakistan. In Punjabi, the word ‘Sikh’ means ‘Student’. However, in the context of the question, ‘Who is a Sikh?’, it means a student of GURU NANAK.

Guru Nanak Sahib, the founding Guru of the Sikhs, was born in Punjab in the year 1469 (approximately 550 years ago). Because his teachings were very modern, scientific, and straightforward, many people in the surrounding regions and the regions to which his successor Gurus travelled were inspired to become his SIKHS (students).

Furthermore, Guru Nanak Sahib and the subsequent Sikh Gurus inscribed their teachings in writing. These writing are available in their unaltered form to every Sikh throughout the globe. Anyone who decides to lead his/her life in the Sikh Way, is a SIKH.

The key Sikh beliefs include belief in;

- One God only and no one else.
- One Human Family, without any division on any basis.
- Equality of all (including women.)
- Freedom, Liberty and Justice for all.
- Right to Freedom of Religion for all.
- Right to self-defense and to possess arms.
- Life style of Honesty, Morality, Humility, and Dignity.
- Life style of a Householder, rather than that of an absconder.

While, the key Sikh prohibitions are:

- Following any kind of superstitions.
- Practicing any kind of Karam-Kand; the meaningless rituals performed in the name of religion.
- Practicing any kind of Idol worship.
- Following any kind of division in the human family based upon any superficial criteria like race, color, gender, national origin, religion, caste, or any claim of being superior to others, etc.

Questions:

1. Do Sikhs think that they are superior to others?
   
   Ans: ...

2. What does the word ‘Sikh’ mean?
3. Who is a Sikh?
   Ans: ...

4. How old is the Sikh Way of life?
   Ans: ...

5. Do you personally know any Sikh?
   Ans: ...
Sikh uniform
And
The Sikh Turban

To help discipline the mind get freed from any inferior form of behavior and to achieve a sense of equality of all, the Sikh Divine Masters specified a uniform that every Sikh needs to start wearing as a first step towards a disciplined life.

This Sikh uniform mandates keeping the human body intact to its maximum extent as God handed it over to us. Sikh Gurus have asked their followers to stop deforming their human bodies through the unnecessary rituals of circumcision, and/or cutting or shaving of hair.

Furthermore, to keep the hair neat, and tidy, each and every Sikh male is required to wear a TURBAN. Every Sikh is also advised to always be willing to help the needy. The Turban functions as a Sikh uniform (like a police officer’s uniform) so that anyone who needs help may be able to approach a Sikh without hesitation. Female Sikhs can also wear TURBANS if they choose to do so; otherwise they have the option of wearing a SCARF (Chunee).

NOTE: In the US, Canada, and Europe, 99.9% of those who wear Turbans are Sikhs. However, majority of the general population in these countries are unaware of this fact and occasionally get confused and misperceive the TURBAN wearing SIKHS as Taliban or Osama followers (when they are absolutely not).
The earliest record of Sikhs arriving in the US is on April 6, 1899. There are around 700,000 Sikhs living in America currently. The oldest and the first Gurdwara Sahib (A Sikh House of Prayer/Learning), which is on the US historical register was established in 1912 in Stockton, California.

In summation, a practicing Sikh, who has made up his/her mind to follow the Sikh Way of life, is mandated to maintain the **five articles of faith** in addition to the **four cardinal prohibitions**.

The **five articles of faith** according to the **Sikh Code of conduct** are;

1. Kesh - the “Uncut Hair” symbolize acceptance of God’s Will.
2. Kanghaa - A “Small Comb” symbolizes cleanliness.
4. Karhha - A “Steel Bracelet” symbolizes one’s bond with God.
5. Kirpan - A “Sword” symbolizes right for self-defense and a willingness to defend Freedom, Liberty and Justice for all.  …(Sikh Code of Conduct)

The **four cardinal prohibitions** according to the **Sikh Code of conduct** are;

1. Do not disrespect (cut) hair.
2. Do not eat Halaal meat (the meat ritually partaken by the Muslims.)
3. Do not commit adultery.
4. Do not use Tobacco (or any other intoxicants like Marijuana, Opium, Alcohol, Poppy, Cocaine, etc) …..  (Sikh Code of Conduct)

**Questions:**

1. How do you recognize a Sikh?
   
   Ans: ...

2. How many Articles of Faith does a Sikh maintain?
   
   Ans: ...

3. Do the Sikhs wear their TURBANS as a fashion statement?
   
   Ans: ...

4. Do any Sikhs live in America?
   
   Ans: ...

5. Are the TURBAN-wearing Sikhs followers of Osama or the Taliban?
   
   Ans: ...
SIKH ATTITUDE
TOWARDS NON-SIKHS

O Friend! I have totally forgotten my jealousy of others since I found the Company of the Guru, the Enlightener. ||1||Pause|| ... Now, no one seems like an enemy, and no one is a stranger to me anymore. I get along with everyone. ||1|| Now, whatever God does, I accept as good (for His creation.) This is the sublime wisdom I have obtained from the Guru. ||2|| The One God is pervading in all. Gazing upon His creation and beholding Him present in everyone, Nanak blossoms forth in happiness. ||3||8||

... (SGGS: Pg.1299)

Over the generations, humans have created division amongst themselves based upon categories such as race, color, gender, nationality, religion, caste or culture, etc. According to Sikh theology, these divisions are based upon misperceptions that can be removed by coming in the company of righteous people. The Sikh Guru Sahib has highlighted this problem of division and provided a solution in the above Guru-Commandment. This order directs the students (Sikhs) to befriend everyone by feeling the presence of God in every human heart and to look upon all as friends (rather than strangers).

In practicing the Sikh way of life, the Guru's above-mentioned advice is followed, by opening the doors of all ‘GURDWARAS’ (Sikh Houses of Learning/Prayer) to everyone. All are welcome at the GURDWARA regardless of race, color, religion, gender, caste, etc. For example, the sacred Golden Gurdwara Sahib in Amritsar was built with doors facing in all the four directions to symbolize that ‘Sikh Houses of Prayer’ are open to all people, coming from all the four directions of the globe.

To further emphasize the idea of ‘EQUALITY of All’, everyone in a ‘Sikh House of Prayer’ sits on the floor to promote humility and equality. No special place, chair, or cushion (etc) is assigned for any “special person”. Moreover, in the Sikh faith there are no priests or clergy since everyone is considered as an equal as a brother or sister.
The Darbar Sahib - Golden Gurdwara Sahib
A Symbol of
Total Equality and Unity in Action

A glimpse of ...the Guru’s Free Kitchen, Langar,
Where all are equal

Most **Gurdwaras** (the Sikh Houses of prayer) also operate the Guru’s Free Community Kitchen (LANGAR), which, again, mandates everyone to sit and dine together sitting on the floor. Anyone who visits a GURDWARA is free to volunteer in the preparation and distribution of the LANGAR. Through the process of preparing food for others and humbly distributing the food, the sense of service to humanity (SEWA) is instilled in all who participate and partake in the langar.

In Sikh theology, the over-inflated human ego is considered a barrier to understanding Truth. By developing humility and providing selfless service, a Sikh hopes to develop a love for all and recognize the presence of God within.

Questions:

1. What is the name of a Sikh House of Prayer?
   Ans: ...

2. In the Sikh Way of life, what does Langar refer to?
   Ans: ...

3. Why do the Sikhs sit on the floor in their House of Prayer?
   Ans: ...

4. Is every Sikh a humble person? If not, why not?
   Ans: ...

5. Do the Sikhs have a clergy or priesthood?
   Ans: ...
Guru Nanak Sahib
The founder of the Sikh Way of Life

With the Advent of the True Divine Master Satguru Nanak;  
The fog of Divine Ignorance faded away,  
as the World got illuminated with his Divine Wisdom.  

(Bhai Gurdas)

Guru Nanak Sahib, the founding father of the Sikh Way of Life, was born on Baisakh 1, March 1469 CE, at Talwandi Rai Bhoe. Talwandi is now known as Nanakana Sahib; and although originally located in the Punjab region of Northwest India, is now a part of Pakistan (when India and Pakistan gained their independence and both countries were formed out of a mishmash of over more than 550 countries/kingdoms tied together by the British.)

Guru Nanak Sahib’s father, Mehta Kalyan Das (affectionately known as Mehta Kaloo) and mother, Mata Tripta Jee also had one daughter, Beebee Nanki, who was older than Guru Nanak Sahib by a few years. In Punjabi culture, the word ‘Beebee’ is used as a prefix to a name to address any respectable lady (especially a sister or a daughter of the Sikh Gurus). The words, “Jee,” “Sahib,” or “Sahiba,” are added as suffixes to names to address anyone with respect.

After achieving adulthood, Guru Nanak Sahib married Mata Sulakhani Jee and had two sons, Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das. Guru Nanak Sahib, in his Divine Message, advocated a lifestyle of a householder and considered anyone following the lifestyle of a religious recluse or hermit as an irresponsible person for running away from family and worldly responsibilities.

Although it was a rare practice at the time, Guru Nanak Sahib’s parents brought in two renowned scholars to tutor Guru Nanak at home in subjects such as mathematics, accounting, and business management, etc. One scholar was a Muslim, while the other was a Hindu. Although he was only a child, Guru Nanak was a very bright student. Both tutors were surprised to find their student, young Nanak, asking them profound questions about divinity and The Divine Creator. The tutors often found Guru Nanak’s questions to be difficult to answer and were amazed by his focus and intelligence.

As a result of his home schooling and his predilection for understanding Divinity, Guru Nanak Sahib quickly became well versed in the teachings of religions that were popular at that time in India. He became proficient in multiple languages in order to study these faiths (including Islam, Sufism, Hinduism, and Yogism, etc). As he learned about the prevalent religious practices of the time, Guru Nanak began to question the validity and usefulness of these practices.
One example of this was Guru Nanak’s reaction when he was asked to participate in the ‘Janeoo’ Ceremony. This ceremony occurs when a boy is entering adolescence (similar to the Jewish Bar Mitzvah). In the ‘Janeoo’ ceremony, a Hindu boy is made to wear a sacred thread (the Janeoo). This thread is made out of cotton, jute, or some other material depending upon the caste classification of the boy. Furthermore, the ceremony is not allowed for a girl of any caste, or for any boy who happens to belong to the untouchable Shudra (lowest) caste of the Hindu hierarchy.

Guru Nanak Sahib objected to the ceremony because he opposed the hollowness and divisiveness of its’ internal message. Instead of providing moral guidance to society, the ceremony promoted division based upon one’s gender or caste. Guru Nanak Sahib challenged the Pandit (Hindu priest) with the following words:

\[ \text{O Pandit, if you have a sacred thread for the soul that is made from the cotton of compassion, thread of contentment, twists of high moral character, and knots of modesty, then go ahead and put it on me.} \quad \text{(SGGS: Pg. 471)} \]

Questions:

1. When was Guru Nanak Sahib born?
   Ans: ...

2. What type of life did Guru Nanak advocate to his Sikhs?
   Ans: ...

3. Was Guru Nanak Sahib an educated or an uneducated person?
   Ans: ...

4. What is the Janeoo?
   Ans: ...

5. What was Guru Nanak’s objection to wearing the ‘Janeoo’?
   Ans: ...
FEEDING THE HUNGRY
A TRULY PROFITABLE BARGAIN

O Brother, in there, the splendor of Maya-the mammon is very deceptive and transitory. However in this very transient play of Maya, the man blinded by its deceptive splendor, having forgotten the Name (his connection with the Creator); lands nowhere; neither here nor there. ||1||Pause||

(O the Supreme Master) Everyone asks You for more and more money, and no one begs You for any less. Furthermore, no one ever cares to be thankful by appreciating the magnitude of the value of your bounties; and (struck by one's unsatisfiable hunger for Maya) no one has ever gotten contented, even after becoming filthy rich. ... It is You alone (O the True Master); who being Timeless are True for ever, whereas everyone, and everything else in Your creation are subject to destruction. ||3||

(O the Creator Master) Nanak requests to stick with those who are the poorest amongst the poor, and are the lowest among the lowest; for one, of what use is it to imitate the thankless filthy rich? ... May I never forget the downtrodden O Master, because it is there alone, where the lowly are cared for that the Blessings of Your Glance of Grace rains down. ||4||3||

One of the core principles of Sikh Theology is to share with others (WAND CHAKHNA). Even as a young child, Nanak felt the most happiness in his life when he helped the needy. According to his teachings, all human possessions are a gift from God, and are given to us to serve all of God’s creation, with a truthful heart. He believed that ‘helping other people at all times’ was a crucial part of his mission to serve God’s Manifest Spirit.

Nanak's father, Mehta Kalyan Das (Mehta Kaloo), however, was not happy with the way his son gave everything away. He felt that Nanak had learned a very bad habit in his childhood, extreme generosity. He believed that if young Nanak were given a practical lesson in saving money, then he would learn to be thrifty in life.

Mehta Kaloo, having provided his son the best formal education, wished for his son to learn the profession of trade. He believed this occupation would be a potentially profitable profession for Nanak and would lead to his financial independence. Mehta Kaloo gave Nanak sizeable amount of money to begin trading within the district. He thought that if
Nanak used his mind to make **profitable trade bargains**, then he would be trusted to go to more distant cities and countries for bigger ventures.

Thus, as per the plan Guru Nanak, accompanied by a couple of his advisor friends, left Talwandi (Guru Nanak Sahib’s birth place) in search of a truly profitable trade bargain. As he and his companions traveled about fifteen miles from Talwandi towards a hutment named Chuharhkhana (meaning a hamlet of poor Chuharhaa-scavengers), they came across a colony on its out skirts inhabited by a group of people, who were considered as outcastes even by the scavenger residents of Chuharhkhana.

This was a colony where the very poor of the poor, unemployed, weak, hungry, and half clothed destitute people of the ghetto were struggling to survive. Having been shunned by the general public they survived on scavenging the left-over food from here or there. ... They were the unfortunate people whom the caste system had chosen to brand as the untouchables outcastes of the society.

Having no jobs or any job prospects, because of the enforced class of the social structure, they were mostly forced to perform very repugnant menial work, that no one even those on the fringes of an economic survival would opt to choose.

Furthermore, to add insult to the injury these people were not allowed to come in contact with the general public. Considering them to be polluted, nobody will take any food or water from them. Also they were not allowed to even draw a bucket of water from a well by themselves. Thus stuck in such a destitute situation, they also suffered from rampant sickness. The society’s solution for such a group of people was to just push them out of sight to a place far away from them, so that they were out of their minds as well.

Pushing these destitute people out of sight as well as out of mind might had been a norm for the society, but for young Nanak it definitely was not an ignorable option. Therefore, seeing it firsthand Nanak was deeply moved by the deplorable situation of these destitute people. He felt pity for their appalling conditions. He felt pain and compassion for their poverty. Thus, assessing the complete situation Nanak felt that there could be no better **profitable bargain** than to help and feed these hungry and starving people.

Thus having found the profitable bargain of his choice, Guru Nanak directed his companion advisors to immediately help him to invest his money on the profitable bargain that he had just found. He told them that without any delay they need to leave the Chuharhkhana forest along with him in order to travel to the nearest city to fetch flour, rice, pulses, ghee (clarified butter), fruit, clothing and medicines etc for the inhabitants of the hamlet.

On their way to the city, his advisor friends not being comfortable with young Nanak’s choice, pleaded with him to not go for it. They reminded him to not forget the fact that he was out there to spend his money on the best available profitable bargain, and not to waste it on feeding or clothing some hungry or destitute people. Upon finding their pleadings to
be completely ineffective, they tried to scare young Nanak by questioning as to; what explanation will he give to his father, when he returns home? And, what profit will he show to his father for the money spent? ... However to their frustration nothing worked in changing Nanak’s decision.

Un-deterred by the counsel and questions of his advisor friends, young Nanak assured them very firmly that, he will tell his father, that by feeding and clothing the hungry and the destitute he (Nanak) has made the most profitable and gainful bargain. In such a bargain, the ultimate gain is the Grace of God, through which one receives the divine treasure of complete internal peace, satisfaction, tranquility, and sense of direction for life. Therefore, shouldn’t such a gain, qualify this bargain to be more precious than all the wealth in the world?

Not quite grasping what young Nanak had said, his friends went along with his decision, and traveled to the nearest city. From there they took food, clothing and other necessities to the naked, starving, and the sick. Reaching there, they encouraged the able bodied amongst the residents to join them in this service of cooking, providing clothing, and distributing food. Together, the group including young Nanak, his friends and the able bodied residents cooked and distributed the food, and towards the end they all sat together in the last batch, and shared the food as EQUAL brothers and sisters sitting together as members of ONE human family.

Thus having received “True bargain” Guru Nanak and his associates returned home to Talwandi. Guru Nanak knew that he would need to explain his reasoning for the “profitable trade bargain” to his father who would not be happy with his actions.

Guru Nanak sent his friends alone to the village and told them to reach their homes. Young Nanak wanted to sit alone outside the village to wait for his father there. While waiting calmly for his father, Guru Nanak contemplated the Word of God and listened to the message from The Divine Spirit.

When Mehta Kaloo Jee learned that Guru Nanak’s associates had returned home, he sent for them. He learned what Nanak had done and became very angry. He went searching for Nanak and found him sitting very calmly near the pond. Mehta Kaloo asked Nanak to explain why he had wasted all the money on feeding and clothing needy people instead of making some profitable bargain. Nanak replied, “The highest level of Goodwill is to give and help others in need without any desire for financial or material reward. Because, it is that virtue alone, that is the only true profitable trade bargain a person can make in life.”

Witnessing the sincerity and seriousness of Divine thought in his son’s voice, eyes, face and heart, Mehta Kaloo Jee felt completely disarmed. His anger converted into love and affection. Even though he didn’t quite grasp the situation, he very calmly and affectionately brought his son home.
In the following days, it was nothing but natural for the actions of young Nanak to become the talk of the town. Many laughed at this incidence, while some others were able to see the merit of the true bargain that young Nanak had struck. Those who were able to see its merits; got deeply inspired; and started emulating the true bargain, revealed by young Nanak. Thus a small spark of selfless inspiration became a lighthouse of love, affection, and help for the needy.

The final result of that small flame of ‘the true profitable bargain of feeding, clothing, and helping the poor’ that young Nanak Sahib lit in the outskirts of Choharakhana, got multiplied many folds, and ended up spreading all around the globe.

Today, this principle of ‘Guru’s True Bargain’ has become an integral part of the modern day Sikh Psyche. In the ‘Sikh Way of Life’ this belief is expressed in the form of the Sikh Institution of ‘LANGAR – The Guru’s Free Community Kitchen’. At present it is a part of every Sikh House of Prayer (Gurdwara Sahib), and provides millions of people (needy or not), from every walk of life, with free food every day. In the Langar, everyone sits to dine together as brothers and sisters, belonging to ONE big Human family, united through a sense of equality, and free from any type of division based upon class, caste, color, gender, or religious affiliation etc.

Questions:

1. What did Guru Nanak do when he saw the colony of hungry people?
   Ans: ...

2. Was Guru Nanak’s action of spending his money to feed the hungry a good idea, or a bad idea?
   Ans: ...

3. How did Mehta Kaloo react when he learned what his son had done with the money?
   Ans: ...

4. What lesson did Guru Nanak teach through his actions?
   Ans: ...

5. How is Guru Nanak’s idea of a ‘Truthful Trade Bargain’ practiced by his Sikhs?
   Ans: ...
Honest Living
Versus
Tyrannical Corruption

Guru Nanak was an intelligent and divinely oriented child and an independent-minded teenager. As an adult, Guru Nanak was married, had children and lived as an honest workingman and responsible married householder. While living this practical life, Guru Nanak demonstrated that one could be completely connected with the One True Creator Master of us all while upholding one's responsibilities. After many years, Guru Nanak received the Divine Call from within to start spreading his message for the benefit of humanity.

After making the necessary arrangements for his family, Guru Nanak Sahib initially began his travels, in the westward direction towards present day Pakistan. He was accompanied by his childhood friend Bhai Mardana (a Muslim by birth). They both travelled to spread the message of the Love of God for all humanity.

Throughout their travels, Guru Nanak Sahib and Bhai Mardana visited numerous cities and towns to spread his moral message of the One Divine Spirit (The Light of Wisdom and The Peace of God's Soul-consciousness).

One town that they visited was Saidpur (currently in Pakistan). The city was under the command of a military governor named Zalam Khan, whose chief administrator was a very corrupt Hindu named Malik Bhago.

Near the city lived a very hardworking and honest carpenter named Bhai Lallo. In the Hindu social caste system, there are four strictly divisive castes; Brahmin (the high-status Priests), Kashatriya (the second-status people with a right to keep weapons), Vaishya (the traders and ordinary workers) and Shudar (the lowest untouchables). Bhai Lallo was from the lowest caste and was very poor. He lived as an outcast of society. However, Bhai Lallo had a very devout and spiritual soul-consciousness and lived a contented honest life.

When Guru Nanak decided to go to Saidpur, he chose to visit Bhai Lallo. When Guru Nanak arrived at his home, Lallo did not ask Guru Nanak his name. He believed the man standing in his presence was a great saint who deserved to be given hospitality.

After Guru Nanak told Bhai Lallo who he was, the humble carpenter felt honored and blessed. However, although honored for being in the presence of such a respected man, Lallo also believed that he could not entertain a man from a high caste, such as Guru Nanak. The Hindu social caste system promoted the idea that ‘HUMAN BEINGS ARE BORN UN-EQUAL’ and strictly prohibited any social relations between the castes. Being fearful of social laws and their strict and quite often a rigid enforcement, Lallo offered Guru Nanak food and a more sacred, separate kitchen space where Mardana could cook for the Guru.
In response, Guru Nanak smiled and conveyed his message to Bhai Lallo:

“Bhai Lallo, the whole earth is sacred. For me, every inch of this earth of God is pure for cooking. Why under the confusion of inequality created by the caste division you felt like creating a separate cooking place for me, or Bhai Mardana? Bhai Lallo, in God’s creation nobody is high, and nobody is low. You are inferior to none. I will take food prepared by your hands; because your hands are holier and purer than any of those arrogant Brahmins in Saidpur or anywhere else; who, stung by their so-called caste prides, think that somehow they are superior to others.

The hands of such Brahmins are the hands of vain idlers, cheaters, pretenders and sinful people who commit unthinkable crimes in the name of religion and hide behind the disguise and masks of their high caste.

Your hands, Lallo, are the hands of a man of deep virtue and honesty. You are a God-fearing laborer who earns his living by the sweat of his brow.

Your hands are pure and sacred in my eyes. Whatever your hands prepare, will be full of the milk of humanity and goodness.

Thus, your deeds, Lallo, and your honest life of labor and love have made you higher and nobler than any arrogant Brahmin on the earth.”

Guru Nanak and Mardana stayed with Bhai Lallo for three days. On the day when they were to leave, Lallo requested that they stay for a month. Guru Nanak accepted Lallo’s offer of hospitality.

Every day during Guru Nanak’s stay, he held spiritual discussions and lectures. Both Hindu and Muslim believers came to the home of Lallo, the humble carpenter, early in the morning and late in the evening to discuss religious beliefs, gain a deeper spiritual insight about the One True God, and listen to the teachings of Guru Nanak.

However, feeling threatened, the Brahmin priests of the town were becoming very angry and jealous of Guru Nanak’s growing popularity. They feared losing their control over society and publicly condemned Guru Nanak. They condemned Guru Nanak for living with a low-caste carpenter (while being born into a high-caste family) and for having a Muslim bard as his companion.

Guru Nanak, however, did not fear this public condemnation and continued to lead religious discussions on the Oneness of God and humanity.

During this time, Malik Bhago, the Chief Town administrator, was preparing for his son’s marriage. A large feast was being planned for the Brahmins and high-caste Hindus who
would attend the ceremony. Therefore, in order to avoid even a sight of the so-called lower caste people during the celebrations, Malik Bhago was also forcing all the sadhus and fakirs (religious ascetic beggars) who belonged to the low-castes of society to move away from the feast.

Guru Nanak learned of these actions; and when he was invited to the feast, he politely refused saying, “Why should I be invited to the feast of -Malik Bhago? That is for high-caste people. I am just an ordinary person and my place is with the lowly.”

Malik Bhago felt very insulted by Guru Nanak’s refusal to come to his feast. He sent policemen to force Guru Nanak to attend his “feast of gods”. Guru Nanak agreed to go with the police and meet with Malik Bhago.

On Guru Sahib’s arrival at his place, Malik Bhago asked “Why do you, a Kashatriya from such a high family, eat from the hands of a low-caste carpenter and refuse to take food from my ‘feast of gods’?”

Guru Nanak replied, “Because your feast is given from ill-gotten wealth; in which I see the blood of the poor whom you cheated, exploited and looted to acquire your large fortunes. This “feast of gods” is poison to any man of God. The food of Bhai Lallo has the milk of Humanity in it. It is as pure as his mind and soul. It is the bread earned by this noble soul through the sweat of his brow. It is the bread that gives peace to the mind and strength to the soul. What good is your high caste and that of these Brahmins, when all the evils which lower a man’s character always live within you, and your cohorts?”

“Wealth accumulated by cruelty toward other people is like sucking blood from their bodies. Therefore, your invitation to me was nothing but an offer to join in sharing your food prepared by the blood of the poor, compared to Bhai Lallo’s food that is as pure as milk. How could I accept your invitation?”

Hearing Guru Sahib’s fearless words, Malik Bhago became speechless and finally understood the following message of Guru Nanak:

If, one’s clothes get smeared with blood, then that garment is considered contaminated (and hence, not fit for saying a truthful prayer). Therefore those who suck blood of other humans (through cheating, robbing, and inflicting injustice etc), -how can their consciousness stay pure enough (for doing anything pure or truthful)?
Therefore, O Nanak, recapitulate God’s Name (Virtues) with pure heart-felt devotion; because, besides this, everything else is just pompous worldly show and the practice of false deeds. ||1|| … (SGGS: Pg 140)

Questions:

1. What do you understand about honest earning and hard work?
   Ans: ...

2. Did Guru Nanak support the caste system of the Hindus?
   Ans: ...

3. What was Bhai Lalo’s fear in entertaining Guru Nanak as his guest?
   Ans: ...

4. Why did Guru Nanak stay with Bhai Lallo instead of Malik Bhago?
   Ans: ...

5. Why was Malik Bhago upset with Guru Nanak?
   Ans: ...
THE FUTILITY OF MEANINGLESS RITUALS

To carry his universal message of ONE God and the Oneness of the entire Humanity, Guru Nanak Sahib traveled to different parts of the world on foot. Some of the well-known places that the Guru Sahib travelled to, were the major Hindu Centers of Hardwar, Banaras, Mathura, Puri, and Kurukshetar, etc. in India, the Islamic Centers of Mecca and Bagdad, in the Middle East and the Yogic centers, of Sumer Hills, Gorakh-matta (or Nanak Matta), towards Tibet and China. During majority of his journeys, his childhood friend, Bhai Mardana, accompanied Guru Nanak Sahib.

RITUAL OF ANCESTRAL WORSHIP AT HARDWAR;
One famous Hindu center that Guru Nanak visited was the city of Hardwar. According to the teachings of the Hindu Brahmins, one’s ancestors must be worshipped and honored. It is customary for every Hindu devotee to visit the Holy city of Hardwar to ‘offer water from the river Ganges to the Sun’. This is believed to cool down the perceived heat surrounding the souls of one’s past ancestors. The Hindus believe that many souls live in very close proximity to the sun and therefore, need the cooling water from the Ganges river.

The Brahmins teach their devotees to carry out this responsibility to one’s ancestors by completing a long list of rituals. Each devotee must, (a) take a bath before the ritual, (b) abstain from eating anything on the morning of the ritual, (c) face East towards the Sun while offering it water from the river Ganges (d) recite ‘Gaitri and other Vedic Mantras’ of the sacred Hindu scriptures during the ritual, and (e) offer ‘Argha’ (the sacred foods for gods).

When Guru Nanak Sahib paid a visit to Hardwar, this celebratory ritual was taking place. He decided to join the Hindu devotees in the river.

Guru Nanak, however, instead of facing Eastward, faced West instead, and started throwing water in the Westward direction. Obviously, this action attracted everyone’s attention and a conversation that occurred, went somewhat as follows:

People: “Young man, throw your water towards the East.”
Guru Ji: “Why are you throwing water towards the East?”
People: “We are quenching the thirst of our ancestors by offering water to the Sun.”
Guru Ji: “How far are your ancestors? How far is the Sun?”
People: “Millions of miles away is the Sun, as well as the abode of our late ancestors.”
Guru Ji: “That’s good.”
Guru Ji then, again, began throwing water towards the West.

A Pandit from the crowd (trying to correct the Guru): "O friend, you have gotten busy in your task again. We have told you why we are throwing water to the East. Can you explain why are you throwing water to the West?"

Guru Ji: "Dear friends, my village, my home, and my fields in Punjab are in this direction. It hasn’t rained over there for quite a while. Watching you, I decided to try to irrigate my fields with water from here and save my crops from drying up."

Hearing this, everyone in the crowd laughed and they began commenting on the absurdity of Guru Nanak’s actions.

Another learned man: "O dear friend, (with your, this futile effort) why are you getting your hands tired? This water is not going to reach your fields. Your fields are far away towards the West and, the river is flowing towards the East."

Guru Ji: "Do you mean that the water that I am sending to my fields located on this very Earth will not reach there? Then how can your water be sent to Sun and the abode of your late-ancestors when that is located millions of miles away?"

Hearing this, the crowd became speechless and was forced to rethink about their ritualistic act.

Questions:

1. Why did the Hindu devotees throw water towards the East?
   Ans: ...

2. Why did Guru Nanak throw water towards the West at Hardwar?
   Ans: ...

3. Is it possible for us to cool down areas surrounding the Sun?
   Ans: ...

4. What is the name of the river that Hindus believe is holy?
   Ans: ...
5. Who travelled with Guru Nanak?

Ans: ...
GOD IS EVERYWHERE
And
FOR EVERYONE

Guru Nanak’s mission of spreading his message of Brotherhood/Sisterhood of all mankind led him to visit many different centers of religious study including the most famous Islamic city, Mecca. Guru Nanak’s main message was that all of us are children of the same ONE Creator. Therefore, he taught that God is equally accessible to everyone, regardless of religion, gender, color, or nationality, etc.

A famous Sikh Scholar, Bhai Gurdas Ji, has described Guru Nanak’s visit to Mecca in the following writings:

“ਵਾਲਾ ਹੋ ਮੈਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੀੜ ਕੇ ਗਿਆ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਨਾਲੇ। ਅਲਾਹ ਰੇਖੀ ਵਿਰਾਸ਼ ਬੁੰਡ ਕੁਸ਼ਕੇ ਮੂਹ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਾਂਤੀ। ਸੈਨ ਨਗਰੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਵਧਾਣ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਿਲਣ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ। ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਨੀਤੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਹੁਣ ਹੁਣ ਮੂਹ ਪਾਣੀ ਰਿੱਕ ਰਿੱਕ ਵੀਰਜੀ। ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਨੀਤੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਬਣਾਣ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਵਨਾਲੇ। ਸੈਨ ਨਗਰੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਬਣਾਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ। ਸੈਨ ਨਗਰੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਬਣਾਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ।}

ਧੁੱਲੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇਹਾਤ ਦੀ ਦੁਰਲੀ ਧੂੰ ਲਈ ਕੀਤੇ ਕੀਤੇ। ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਨੀਤੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਬਣਾਣ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ। ਧੁੱਲੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇਹਾਤ ਦੀ ਦੁਰਲੀ ਧੂੰ ਲਈ ਕੀਤੇ ਕੀਤੇ। ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਨੀਤੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਬਣਾਣ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ। ਸੈਨ ਨਗਰੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਬਣਾਣ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ। ਸੈਨ ਨਗਰੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਬਣਾਣ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ।}

… (Vaar Bhai Gurdas); meaning:

Then Baba (Guru Nanak) went to Mecca (the Islamic place of Reverence) dressed in blue (like other Muslim pilgrims), with a staff in hand, a book hanging under his armpit, a small water-filled pot (meant for cleansing before making a call for prayer) and a prayer mat in hand. Reaching there, he went and stayed in the Masjid (Mosque), where the pilgrims of Haj (the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca) go and rest.

At night when Baba (Guru Nanak Sahib) went to sleep, he stretched his legs towards Mehrab (the architectural hump in one particular wall of mosque that traditionally points towards the Kaabaa, the Central Mosque in Mecca (believed by Muslims to be the House of God).

Therein a Muslim guard or a zealous priest by the name Jeevan found the sleeping Baba’s legs pointed towards the Mehrab and deemed this a serious offence. He kicked the Baba shouting, “who is this infidel committing the sin of pointing his legs in the wrong direction towards Mehrab?”

Being enraged, Jeevan then dragged the Baba by his leg in order to point his legs away from the Mehrab. However, while dragging the Baba, Jeevan witnessed the biggest surprise of his
life. He, vividly experienced a vision in which it appeared as though Mecca was rotating in the same direction as the Baba’s legs.

Thus, hearing about such a miraculous incidence, and being unable to explain it away, the Kazis and the Mulas (the temporal and religious leaders of Islam) along with other people flocked around the Baba to question him about his spiritual being and the deeper secrets of people’s religious commitments. Realizing he was from India, they asked the Baba to open his book and answer the question, “Who is better?, a Hindu, or a Muslim?” The Baba replied,

“O my friends, devoid of virtuous character, both will end up wailing and crying; and both, such characterless Hindus or Muslims, will not get any honor in the Court of Divine Justice. Their flimsy claims that they are better than the others are nothing but very short-lived boasting, like the very temporary color of a safflower that does not remain intact when washed with plain water. … Thus both (Hindus as well as Muslims), with these claims, are doing nothing but slandering one another, disputing who is higher? Ram, the Hindu God, or Rahim, the Muslim God?

Thus, this is how (forgetting the basic fact that both names refer to the same God) the world is lost in the ways of Satan.”

Through his experiences at Mecca, Guru Nanak debunked two prevalent beliefs of the time:
1. Somehow God’s existence is confined exclusively to a particular religious place and nowhere else.
2. Someone’s particular God is better that everyone else’s

Guru Nanak taught that there is ONE God and He is present everywhere.

Questions;

1. What famous Islamic city did Guru Nanak visit?
   Ans: ...

2. According to Guru Nanak Sahib’s Teachings, how many Gods are there?
   Ans: ...

3. According to Guru Nanak, who is better; a Hindu or a Muslim?
   Ans: ...
4. According to Guru Nanak, is God contained to one location?
   Ans: ...

5. What is Mehrab?
   Ans: ...
EQUALITY
OF
WOMEN

(Sikh Women ... on the move)

During the times of the Sikh Gurus, vast majority of the prevalent religious beliefs promoted the subjugation of women. For example, some faiths declared that ‘a woman does not have a right to speak in any religious gathering’. Others mandated that the word of TWO women in a court of law to be the equivalent of ONE man’s testimony.

Furthermore, some faiths declared women ‘to be nothing more than a man’s property’ and hence, declared that ‘it is acceptable for a man to possess as many women as he wishes as long as he captures them by force (as a war-booty)’. Such cultural and religious thoughts also gave men the ‘permission to beat up their women in case of any defiance or disagreements.’

In some religious traditions a woman is declared to be crooked, arguing that ‘she has been created from the most crooked portion of a man’s rib’; and hence, if you try to straighten it, it will break, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked, so you take care of her’. Moreover, they say that she has been ‘enticing and misleading men from the day of her existence’ and hence, ‘should be considered untrustworthy, and nothing more than a man’s shoe’.

American Sikh Council, formerly known as World Sikh Council – America Region
Copyrighted material, please do not distribute without prior written permission
Women have been portrayed as ‘temptresses, an enticers, and seducers’. They are viewed as ‘being untrustworthy’ and thus, ‘advised to be kept veiled at all times and prohibited from venturing alone outside their homes’.

These attitudes towards women led to the custom of female infanticide and the abortion of female fetuses. Mistreatment of women was acceptable and, in fact, promoted before and during the time of the Sikh Gurus. The Hindu custom (in the Indian sub-continent) of ‘Satee’ was prevalent. During this time, Hindu priests, as well as her relatives and friends encouraged a Hindu widow, to commit the very public act of ‘Satee’ (self-immolation by throwing oneself on the funeral pyre of one’s deceased husband). This act was promoted amongst the general masses as the most sacred and glorified act to be performed by a widow. Widowed women were considered to be ill omens for the family and were blamed as being responsible for the deaths of their husbands. They were not allowed to get remarried or to go back to their parental homes. Thus, a widow was doomed to a life of complete destitution, slavery, social rejection, and loneliness. The Hindu priests promoted Satee as a better alternative than the life of a widow.

The Sikh Guru Sahibs worked very hard to get the ‘Satee’ custom completely abolished. They emphatically spoke against this custom and banned it from the practice of the Sikh religion. Today, the custom of ‘Satee’ rarely occurs, and its’ prevalence has greatly diminished.

Guru Nanak Sahib’s teachings regarding women strongly questioned the prevalent societal and religious norms of the era. Guru Nanak Sahib questioned, ‘WHY SHOULD A WOMAN BE CALLED INFERIOR?’ In his writings he states the following:

From woman, man is born; within woman, man is conceived; and to woman he is engaged and married. It is through woman that one’s relational friendships get established; and through woman, future generations come into existence. If one’s woman dies, he seeks another woman; for it is through woman alone that one’s new relationships get established. Therefore, WHY SHOULD SHE BE CALLED INFERIOR? She, who gives birth even to the kings.

It is through woman that another woman is born; and without woman none comes into existence. O Nanak, it is the Timeless Supreme Master alone, who (being beyond birth or death) is outside the pale of a woman. ... That (man or woman’s) voice, which praises the Supreme Master continually, is blessed and beautiful. O Nanak, such are the faces that radiate in the Court of the True Master. ||2|| ... (SGGS; Page 473)
The Sikh Guru Sahibs worked to change the religious and societal customs of the time. They empowered women by giving them a wider variety of social responsibilities. They invited women to join in the Sikh Congregations as equal partners, to actively participate in all religious, cultural, and social activities of the Gurdwaras (Sikh Houses of Prayer). Within the Gurdwaras, they made women in charge of the Langar (Guru’s Free Kitchen).
To give women a sense of EQUALITY, and to free them from the handicaps of veils, the Guru Sahibs asked women to NOT cover their faces (with veils). All Sikhs were also educated about the evils of female infanticide and the custom of ‘SATEE’. They advised widows to get remarried instead of spending the rest of their lives in misery, destitution, and loneliness. In addition, they opposed female infanticide so strongly that they advised all Sikhs to avoid social relationships with those who have committed female infanticide.

Moreover, the Sikh Gurus educated and trained many women to become full-fledged preachers, and encouraged them to teach the Sikh Way of life to the masses. The 3rd Guru, Guru Amardas Jee, established 22 religious centers and appointed women as the leaders of 8 of these centers. They encouraged the education of women as the norm, rather than as an exception. In addition, women were also trained in martial arts and were advised to carry weapons on their person.

Finally, with the creation of the Sikh brotherhood (the Khalsa) by the 10th Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Jee, the last barriers of caste and gender oppression were removed. During the ‘Khanday Dee Pahul’ ceremony (Sikh initiation ceremony), women participated alongside their Sikh brothers. The same rules that applied to men, applied to women also. They were instructed to follow the Khalsa way of life and were granted the same 5 K’s (Kesh, Kangha, Kirpan, Karha, and Kachhera).

Guru Gobind Singh's encouragement to women to carry and wield weapons symbolized his belief that women should be fearlessly involved in society as leaders, warriors, and equals of men.

Questions:

1. What is the Hindu practice of widows burning on their husband’s funeral pyre called?
   Ans: …

2. Did the Sikh Gurus support female infanticide?
   Ans: …

3. Did the Sikh Gurus believe that women were equal to men?
   Ans: …

4. Did the Sikh Gurus give women leadership roles?
   Ans: …

5. Can Sikh women carry weapons? Do Sikh women wear veils?
   Ans: …
SIKHISM
SOME INTERESTING FACTS:

Who are the Sikhs?

SOME COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS:

MISCONCEPTION 1: --- Sikhs are Muslims because they wear a Turban, and grow a Beard.
FACT: --- Turbans are worn in many countries as a part of cultural attire. However, a Turban is required to be worn by a Sikh and it is a religious article of faith.

MISCONCEPTION 2: --- Sikhism is a blend of Hinduism and Islam.
FACT: --- Sikhism is not a blend of Hinduism and Islam. It has its own Scripture, Gurus (The Divine Masters), and Houses of Prayer called Gurdwaras. Sikhism is a distinct separate faith with a unique ideology, and is not a branch or a hybrid or a sect of any other religion.

SIKHS IN AMERICA:
Sikhs came to America more than 125 years ago,

- Sikhs first arrived in the 1890s at the West Coast, and later to East Coast.
- The first (official record) Sikh landed in San Francisco, California on April 6, 1899.
- The first Gurdwara Sahib (House of Prayer) was built in Stockton, California in 1912. This is also documented on the US Historical Register.
- The first Sikh soldier to serve in the US Army was Bhagat Singh Thind - who joined the US armed forces in the year 1918. He was also the pioneer and unsung hero for citizenship and property rights for all Asians in America.
- The early Sikh settlers worked in farming and lumber industries.
- Sikhs also provided representation in the Federal Government.
- The first Sikh US Congressman was Dalip Singh Saund. Starting in 1957, he served three terms in the House of Representatives.
- The father of Fiber optics, the backbone of the modern day Internet is a Sikh by the name of Narinder Singh Kapany, who lives (92 years old in 2019) in San Francisco, California.

SIKHISM IS THE FIFTH LARGEST RELIGION IN THE WORLD.

1. Christianity: 2.2 Billion.
2. Islam 1.4 Billion.
3. Hinduism: 900 Million
4. Buddhism 396 Million
5. Sikhism 25 Million
CORE SIKH BELIEFS;

- **ONE GOD:**
  - Loves and sustains all Humanity.

- **ALL ARE EQUAL IN THE EYES OF GOD:**
  - Respect for all genders, religions, races.

- **EARN AN HONEST LIVING:**
  - Sikhs are supposed to work and live, ethically and honestly.

- **SHARE WITH OTHERS:**
  - Share your time, money, etc. with others.

- **REMEMBER GOD:**
  - Sikhs should remember Divine virtues of God throughout the Day.

- **DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE FOLLOWING:**
  - Fasting, superstitions, ritualism, caste system.

- **SIKHISM PROHIBITS:**
  - Smoking, drinking alcohol, or taking any intoxicants.

THE FIVE K’S:

- **UNCUT HAIR** (Kesh) --- Spirituality.
- **THE SWORD** (Kirpan) --- For Protection of self and others.
- **IRON BRACELET** (Karhaa) --- Good deeds.
- **LONG BREECHES** (Kachhera) --- self-discipline.
- **COMB** (Kangha) --- Cleanliness.

THE SIKH TURBAN:

- 99% of the people wearing TURBANS in the USA are SIKHS.
- It is a religious obligation for the SIKHS.
- Sikhs can always be recognized and are duty bound to offer help.
- Under no circumstances can the TURBAN be forcibly removed.

GURUS, THE SIKH SPIRITUAL GUIDES:

- Historic - 10 Sikh Gurus.
  - **Guru Nanak Sahib.** 1469 - 1539
  - **Guru Angad Sahib.** 1539 - 1552
  - **Guru Amardas Sahib.** 1552 - 1574
  - **Guru Ramdas Sahib.** 1574 - 1581
  - **Guru Arjan Sahib.** 1581 - 1606
  - **Guru Hargobind Sahib.** 1606 - 1644
  - **Guru Har Rai Sahib.** 1644 - 1661
  - **Guru Harkrishan Sahib.** 1661 - 1664
  - **Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib.** 1664 - 1675
  - **Guru Gobind Singh Sahib.** 1675 - 1708
• Mission.
  o Love for God.
  o Social justice for humanity.
  o Freedom from superstition and rituals.
• Their IDEALS and TEACHINGS were preserved through writing and actions.

GURU, THE PRESENT DAY SPIRITUAL GUIDE:
• Guru Granth Sahib (The Divine Sikh Scripture).
• Guru Panth (The Community of Initiated Sikhs.)

GURU GRANTH SAHIB:
• A compilation of 1430 pages written in divine poetry.
• Considered the Living Guru of the Sikhs.
• Teaches you how to be kind, tell the truth, and love and respect everyone.
• Sikh services consist of reading and singing from the scripture.

GURDWARA: --- THE SIKH HOUSE OF PRAYER.
• For Learning the Sikh Way of Life.
• Everyone Welcome.
• Service typically held on weekends.
• Community Kitchen for all (Langar).

MOST SIKHS SPEAK PUNJABI:
• Over 80 Million people speak Punjabi.
• Punjabi is written from Left to Right.
• Punjabi alphabet contains 35 letters + 12 vowel sound symbols.

SIKHS CAN BE FOUND IN ALMOST EVERY PROFESSION,
• Arts: Artists, Actors, and Filmmakers.
• Industry: Farmers, Businessmen, and Industrialists.
• Professionals: Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Scientists, and Administrators.
• Players: Basketball, Soccer, Cricket, Football, Baseball
• Politicians: Local, National, and International.
• Military: Army, Navy, and Air force etc.
THE SIKH PRAYER

O! The ONE Creator
(Of us all)

You are our Master, and our prayer is unto You.
Our bodies and Souls are Your Gifts, Your Bounties.

You are our Mother, as well as our Father, and we are your children.
In Your Grace lies whole of our Joy.

(You being infinite in every aspect)
No one can know Your limits, O Master,
Because You, the Maker of our Destiny, are the Highest of the high.

Everything in Your Creation is strung on the Thread of Your Grace.
Thus, all that You created is moving along under Your Command.

How high? Or how big You are! You alone know Your state and extent.
Nanak, Your slave, is forever a sacrifice unto You. ||8||4||

(SGGS: Page 268.)
THE SIKH EMBLEM

KHANDA

KHANDA: is one of the most important symbols of Sikhism that appears on most of the Sikh flags. This Insignia is a combination of four hand-to-hand combat weapons that were commonly used by the Sikhs in their earlier struggles against the tyrannical rulers. Symbolically, they represent the following principles of human inter-reactions.

- The central **double-edged sword** symbolizes the Marvel of UNITY of God’s CREATION and DESTRUCTION acting in unison.
- The endless **CIRCULAR CHAKAR** symbolizes the eternity of God’s Creation.
- The outside **pair of TWO SWORDS** represents the Divine Gift of PIRI-MIRI; The Concept of SPIRITUAL and TEMPORAL Sovereignty of thought of the **Sant-Sipahi** --- the Saint-Soldier as the ultimate perfect human being.
FUN TRIVIA

While reading this, did you wonder, - about the script that you were not able to read? Did it look confusing and impossible to read? - And, if so, then are you the Scout who wants to take the challenge to learn to read and write it? --- If Yes, then let us have fun with your new Venture.

Quick INTRODUCTION: --- A while ago, the script that you thought impossible to read, is called ‘Gurmukhi’ or ‘Punjabi’ script. --- Believe it or not, it is a VERY SIMPLE AND EASY script to read and write . The reason?

1. In this script all the words are spelt exactly the way they are spoken, and are spoken exactly the way they are spelt; no ifs, no buts.
2. Unlike English, in the Punjabi Script there are:
   - NO silent letters. -- (Like the silent H in the word Honest).
   - NO lower case, or upper case, or capital letters.
   - NO complex letter combinations.
   - NO complex rules, wherein same letter or vowel could give a different sound depending upon the word or local traditions. For example two different sounds from the same letter combination “Ch” in the words Church and Chicago (shouldn’t it be spelt Shicago?), and two different sound from the same letter and vowel combination “oo” in words like “cool” and “cook” (shouldn’t they be spelt as Kool and Kuk?).
3. In Punjabi script all the letters and vowel symbols, without exception, always carry their consistent sounds. .. Therefore once you learn the sounds that the letters and the vowel symbols make, you are all set for ever. There is no more dispute as to how a word should be spelt or spoken.

Thus having all this knowledge in our bag, let us move to the next step of having fun learning Punjabi.

Learning of the Punjabi Script:

1. Compared to 26 letters (19 Consonant letters + 5 vowels) in the English Script; the Gurmukhi or Punjabi script has 40 Consonant letters + 11 vowel symbols. That is what makes the Punjabi script capable of inscribing nearly 500 distinct sounds, compared to the very restricted ability of the English script.
2. To inscribe any particular word in the Punjabi Script; the process is very simple. It consists of the following simple steps.
   a. First, split the word into its distinct consonant sounds.
   b. Then keeping in mind that;
      Each distinct sound = Consonant + a vowel symbol
   c. Select the desired Consonant and vowel symbol for each of the desired consonant sound.
   d. Write the selected letters and vowel symbols in succession. And you will have the WORD written in the Punjabi script. That’s it!
Therefore before we attempt to write any word in the Punjabi Script, let us get a bit familiar with its ALPHABET and VOWEL SYMBOLS.

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ... (The Punjabi Alphabet)

Please Note that written below each letter is the name of each letter; wherein the BOLD CAPITAL letters represent the English equivalent consonant sound. -- For example; the first letter in the second row is the equivalent of the letter K of the English script. However to understand, as to which letter of the Punjabi script this letter is? … It is called Kakaa, and so on.
It is interesting to note that; the 40 letters of the Punjabi alphabet are arranged in 8 different rows with 5 letters in each row. The scientific beauty of this arrangement is that as we read and speak these letters, we find that each of the letters in a particular row are spoken in the same part of the mouth, while each of the different rows are spoken in different parts of the mouth. Thus in a very nice progressive way, the letters in each of those rows are spoken in the following manner:

1st Row: -- (ਅ ਆ ਤ ਮ ਦ) in the front part of the mouth.
2nd Row: -- (ਚ ਧ ਜ ਣ ਤ) above the throat in the back of the mouth with open lips.
3rd Row; -- (ਚ ਹ ਨ ਟ ਡ) in the middle part of the mouth with open lips.
4th Row; -- (ਰ ਠ ਡ ਢ ਤ) more towards front, tongue touching pallet behind the front teeth.
5th Row; -- (ਰ ਜ ਢ ਧ ਤ) Tongue inbetween the teeth while the lips are open.
6th Row; -- (ਘ ਚ ਛ ਜ ਝ) Complete front; Lips closing for each letter.
7th Row; -- (ਨ ਜ ਦ ਨ ਢ) Front half of the mouth.
8th Row; -- (ਸ ਭ ਫ ਸ ਟਿਲਰ) Different parts depending upon the letter's original row.

For exact pronunciation of the letters please CLICK on the link below.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zhjm5Wikhgo
http://www.learnpunjabi.org/intro1.asp

INSTRUCTION# 1:
DO NOT RUSH. Memorize the script and the vowel symbols given below by heart. Because once you are able to memorize just this ONE and A Half page, containing the Punjabi Alphabet and Vowel symbols, you will be able to read and write the Punjabi Script. -- It is that simple.

However if you choose to rush and do not memorise, then you will always struggle with it.

INSTRUCTION# 2:
Do not, please do not try to write any word into Punjabi Script from its English Spellings. While writing or reading in Punjabi Script, simply write the way you speak, and speak the way you read.

Now let us get into action.
The Punjabi Vowel Symbols

The 11 Vowel Symbols used to modify the sounds of each consonant are:

\[ \text{w} \quad \text{i} \quad \text{I} \quad \text{u} \quad \text{U} \quad \text{y} \quad \text{Y} \quad \text{o} \quad \text{O} \quad \text{M} \quad \text{N} \]

Don’t get scared or confused by just looking at the Vowel symbols. Rest assured that they are very scientific and easy to understand. To start become familiar with their shapes.

Furthermore, suffice it to know that each of these symbols have different names; and each one of them have ONE particular place (on left, right, bottom or top of a letter) as listed below:

- “Kanna- ( harms)’ always goes on the right side of the letter,
- “Siharee- ( harms)’ always on the left side of the letter,
- “Biharee- ( harmed)’ always on the right,
- “Onkurh- ( harmed)’ and “Du-lankarh- ( harmed)’ always on the bottom, and
- (Lavan- ( harmed), Du-Lavan- ( harmed), Horha- ( harmed), Kanorha- ( harmed), Tipee- ( harmed), and Bindee- ( harmed)’ always on the top.

As explained earlier; each distinct sound = a Consonant + a vowel symbol. Which means that in Punjabi script, the sound of each letter is changed by attaching a ‘Vowel symbol’ - to the letter.

Therefore, in the example below, the consonant letter “क” (Ka-kaa) has been picked to explain the concept. ... In the chart below, the 1st column lists the “Sounds” that can be made with just one consonant (k, in this chart). The 2nd column shows the letter with the Vowel symbol and its location (left, right, bottom or top of the letter), the 3rd column shows the Vowel symbol by itself and its name. The 4th column displays the use of those sounds in some English words.

You will notice that in the example below, the first row starts with the letter “क” (Ka-kaa) by itself, free of any vowel symbol. Such a letter, called “Muktaa” provides an additional sound option from each consonant. Thus with such an arrangement each consonant is capable of inscribing 12 different sounds, as listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Letter+Symbol</th>
<th>Vowel Symbol and its Name</th>
<th>Vowel Symbol sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

American Sikh Council, formerly known as World Sikh Council – America Region
Copyrighted material, please do not distribute without prior written permission
The Chart below explains the application of each of the vowel symbols in each word. Moreover it also demonstrates the desired steps that one needs to be take for transforming any of the ENGLISH word from its English origin to a PUNJABI equivalent. As explained earlier; to find a Punjabi equivalent the starting step always is to split the word into its sound bites based upon its pronunciation, and not necessarily its spellings.

**Progression from English >>> Punjabi Spelling:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Spelling</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Punjabi Spelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>$K + P$</td>
<td>$\text{C} + \text{P}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>$K + T$</td>
<td>$\text{C} + \text{T}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurd</td>
<td>$K + r + d$</td>
<td>$\text{C} + \text{R} + \text{D}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appl: Vowel Symbol \( \text{'a'} \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Spelling</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Punjabi Spelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>$K + a + r$</td>
<td>$\text{C} + \text{A} + \text{R}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber</td>
<td>$B + a + r + b + r$</td>
<td>$\text{B} + \text{A} + \text{R} + \text{B} + \text{R}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star</td>
<td>$S + t a + a + r$</td>
<td>$\text{S} + \text{T} + \text{A} + \text{A} + \text{R}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Kiss

Kiss  = Ki + ss  
= ḍi + m  
= विम

### Kid

Kid  = Ki + d  
= ḍi + ṣ  
= विछ

### Chris

Chris  = K+r i + ss  
= ṣ + ḍi + m  
= विचिम

### Keep

Keep  = K ee + p  
= ḍī + ṣ  
= वीर

### Creed

Creed  = K + r ee + d  
= ṣ + ḍī + ṣ  
= वीडीर

### Greedy

Greedy  = G + r ee + d ee  
= ṣ + ḍī + ṭी  
= गलीडीर

### Cook

Cook  = K u + k  
= ṣ + ṭ  
= त्रव

### Crook

Crook  = K+r u + k  
= ṭ + ṭ + ṭ  
= त्रववर

### Ukraine

Ukraine  = U u+k +r a.e +n  
= X u+ ṭ +r y+ n  
= पुआवलेर

### Coup

Coup  = K oo + p  
= ṭ + ṭ  
= तुप

### Cool

Cool  = K oo + l  
= ṭ + l  
= तुल

### Spooky

Spooky  = S+p oo+k ee  
= ṭ + ṭ + ṭी  
= मुपवीरी

### Kate

Kate  = K a.e + t  
= ṭ + ṭ  
= तेट

### Crate

Crate  = K + r a.e + t  
= ṭ + ṭ + ṭ  
= तेटवर

### Cable

Cable  = K a.e + b + l  
= ṭ + ṭ + l  
= तेलवल

### Cat

Cat  = K ai + t  
= ṭ + ṭ  
= तेट

### Chemical

Chemical  = K ai + m ee + k+l  
= ṭ + भी + ṭ + म  
= तेभीवल

### Stephanie

Stephanie  = S + t ai + ph +n ee  
= स + ट भ + ह + भी  
= मटैवली

### Coke

Coke  = K o.e + k  
= ṭ + ṭ  
= तेव

### Coach

Coach  = K o.e + ch  
= ṭ + च  
= तेवर

### Smoke

Smoke  = S + m o.e +k  
= म + म + ṭ  
= मोव
Appl: Vowel Symbol  ‘ॉ’
Cotton = K au + t + n = ख‘ + ट + न = खटट
Comical = K au + m ee +k +l = ख‘ + मई + ख + ल = खमीबल
Brought = B + r au +t = ब‘ + र‘ + ट = बरट

(Pronunciations with nasal sounds)
Appl: Vowel Symbol  ‘ॊ’
Skunk = S + k un + k = स + ख‘ + ख = सखब
Second = S ai + k un + d = स‘ + ख‘ + ढ = सखब

Appl: Vowel Symbol  ‘ॊ’
Crank = K + r ai n + k = ख + र‘ + ख = खडब
Center = S ai n + t + r = स‘ + ट + ढ = सटब

Appl: ‘ृृृ’
Onasis = O u + n ai + s i +z = ओ‘ + नई + स‘ + ज = ओन्नैज
Oozing = Oo + z i n + g = ओ‘ + ज‘ + ज + ज = ओजिज
Opaque = O +p a.e +k = ओ‘ + प‘ + ख = ओपख

Appl: ‘ृृ’
Apple = A ai +p +l = आ‘ + प + ल = आपल

Appl: ‘ृृ’
Oxford = A au + k +s + f o+r+d = आ‘ + ख + स + फ‘ + ओ + ढ = ऑक्सफोर्ड
Auditor = A au+ d ee + t +r = आ‘ + आ‘ + ट + ढ = ऑडिटर

Appl: ‘ष्ट’
Instead = I +n+s+t ai + d = इ‘ + ए + स‘ + ट + ख = इन्सटेड

Appl: ‘ष्ट’
Eardrop = Ee+a+r+d+r au+p = ई‘ + ए‘ + आ‘ + ढ‘ + ए‘ + ए‘ = ईएडब्राउंड
United = U u+n aa+ e ee+t+d = उ‘ + ए‘ + ए‘ + ए‘ + ए‘ + ए‘ = उएडब्राउंड
Cycle = S aa+ ee + k+l = स‘ + ए‘ + ए‘ + ख + ल = सखब
Appl: ‘ᵉ’

Aprons = A a.e+ p +r+n+z = ए प र न ज = एपजान
Apex = A a.e +p ai + k + s = ए प अ + क = एपकाज

English Alphabet in Punjabi Script:

ए धी नी धी ठी ठी नी ठी बन्ध नी बृह बन नी बृह बृह नी बृह बृह नी बृह बृह नी बृह बृह नी बृह बृह नी बृह बृह नी

Exercise:

Write the following words in the Punjabi Script.

Cub =
Bridge =
Farm =
Sikh =
Turban =

Done =
Church =
Button =
Trunk =
Hung =

Taunt =
Land =
Junk =
Punk =
Rug =

Gum =
Dummy =

American Sikh Council, formerly known as World Sikh Council – America Region
Copyrighted material, please do not distribute without prior written permission
None =
Kamal =
Ramdas =

Chris =
Kiran =
Meet =
Harjeet =
Sarabjeet =

Bob =
Hot =
Kaur =
Tom =
John =

Spot =
King =
Stump =
Kirpaan =
Guru =

CONGRATULATIONS
Now
you are ready
to tackle any Punjabi/Gurmukhi word.
Now, go and surprise someone.
Brief History
of
Sikh Scouts in America

Boy and Girls of the Sikh Faith have been involved in Scouting for a very long time. Scouts of the Sikh Faith have immersed themselves in Scouting across America in varying degrees. Most Sikh Scouts have always joined Dens and Troops of various non-Sikh religious denominations and have had a positive experience.

Starting in late 2006, S.Kavneet Singh started to work on national Sikh Scouting initiative and then in 2012 along-with S.Kirpal Singh as representatives of the American Sikh Council (formerly known as World Sikh Council – America Region) started to work on preparing the Sikh Religious Award workbooks. After years of laying the ground work and persistence finally in early November 2013 the first workbook was approved by the Boy Scouts of America. In April 2014 the second workbook got approved along with the four Sikh Emblems/Medallions for Cubs and Scouts (for any gender). The final two workbooks for the Grades 1-3 and 4-5 were completed and approved in October 2014.

The first two Sikh Scouts to receive the Sikh Emblems/Medallions after completing the Sikh Religious Awards workbooks were Karanveer Singh an Eagle Scout and Sherveer Singh a Life Scout with Troop 48, Berlin, New Jersey. They received this honor at the Sikh Sabha Gurdwara, Lawrenceville, New Jersey on July 20, 2014 and later received the Religious Square Knot at their Troop’s Court of Honor held on December 10, 2014, Berlin, New Jersey.

Ten Sikhs including two of the above Scouts participated for the first time in the National Scout Jamboree 2013 at the Bechtel Summit, Mt.Hope, West Virginia. The Sikh contingent put up a Sikh Faith and Beliefs exhibit which ran for ten days in July 2013. Thousands of brochures were distributed while interfacing with Scouts from all across the nation. Over 1,500 turbans were tied on those Scouts wanting to experience what it feels to wear a turban. The entire Summit was filled with Scouts proudly wearing colorful turbans while running, playing and doing their various activities. There were nearly 45,000 Scouts and Adult leaders present.

Sixteen Sikhs including two from New Jersey and another Sikh Scout from Texas participated for the second time in the National Scout Jamboree 2017 at the Bechtel Summit, Glen Jean, West Virginia. The Sikh contingent again put up a Sikh Faith and Beliefs exhibit which ran for ten days in July 2017. Over 20,000 brochures were distributed while interfacing with Scouts from all across the nation. Simultaneously over 2,300 turbans were tied and we ran out of material after five days. Many Scouts retied their turbans for the second and third time over the event and most kept them all day and as souvenirs. There were over 53,000 Scouts and Adult leaders present. On July 24, 2017 Karanveer Singh was selected to do the opening prayer just before
President Trump spoke around 6 pm. Karanveer Singh did the Sikh Ardas (Supplication prayer) in Gurmukhi and then in English in front of an audience of over 50,000.


**Fun Fact:** The first and only comprehensive, solution oriented book written about the “Bullying of Sikh American Children – Through the Eyes of a Sikh American High School Student” is by a Sikh American Eagle Scout – Karanveer Singh [his photograph is on page 418 of the Boy Scout Handbook, 2016 - 2018 edition]. [www.bullyingsikhamericanschildren.org](http://www.bullyingsikhamericanschildren.org)

The American Sikh Council representatives led by Kavneet Singh have exhibited at over two dozen mini- and national Scout Jamborees across the nation and taught over 110,000 Scouts about the Sikh heritage as of early 2019, which has brought a sea change within the 5 million strong Scouting community across the US.

The first all Sikh Troop 600 was formed in 2009 in San Jose, California. The Troop has had between 20 – 35 boys at any time and produced around 10 Eagle Scouts as of July 2014; which is a significant achievement.

Those Scouts of the Sikh Faith who are now adults have done remarkably well in life by studying hard and have turned out to be Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers and other kinds of top notch professionals serving their local communities and also giving back to society as great citizens.

The Sikh Faith and Scouting have shared common values which fit perfectly and it behooves all Sikhs to be part of Scouting. Scouts should immerse themselves by learning everything they can from the exceptional Adult leaders, the hands on experience doing and learning from the over 130 merit badges, enjoying the great outdoors of our amazing nation, learning to work in teams, to excelling in leadership and much, much more.

The Sikh Gurus taught the Sikhs various physical activities to keep the mind and body active. Among the various activities, horse riding, archery, wrestling and martial arts including ‘Gatka’ the art of sword fighting are part of the Sikh heritage. All the spiritual/mental and physical discipline was taught so that every Sikh would be ‘Thyar per Thyar’ meaning ‘always be prepared’ to do your duty to yourself and others. The Boy Scouts of America have the exact same motto – ‘Be prepared’ which means you are always in a state of readiness in mind and body to do your DUTY! A perfect fit!
Instructions:  
How to use  
The Workbook for the Scout

1. The Scout is expected to read a chapter a week and then answer the questions at the end of the chapter.
2. The time frame to comfortably finish the book is about 12 weeks. There is no specific time of completion.
3. The Scout can confer with his/her parent and/or counselor to ask questions or advice.
4. Once all the activities are complete the Scout must have a Board of Review. This requires the Counselor, along with minimum two other adults from the Gurdwara (or outside) to ask questions of the relevance of what he/she has learnt and how it applies to their daily lives as a Scout and/or a Sikh.
5. Once the Board of Review is complete, the parent and then the counselor sign off in the ‘workbook’.
6. The parent or counselor can get in contact with American Sikh Council (ASC) sikhscoutsusa@gmail.com contact@americansikhcouncil.org and send in a copy of the certification and application pages so that ASC can mail in the ‘Sikh Award Medallion’ with a ‘Certificate’.
7. The Scout (if a Sikh) will be presented the ‘Sikh Award Medallion’ with the ‘Certificate’ at the Gurdwara by getting the Cubs and Adult Leaders from his Den (if possible) to join the sangat (congregation) and be honored in everyone’s presence. The Sikh Scout must be in his uniform and wear a ‘dastaar’ when receiving the emblem in the Gurdwara.
8. The Scout should request and get the Religious Square Knot upon completion and earning the SRA emblem, which will be then presented to him/her at the Troop Court of Honor.
**Instructions:**
Counselor’s requirements and responsibilities


- The Counselor **must** be a Saabat Surat (with uncut hair) Sikh and must believe and abide by the ‘panth parvanit’ Sikh Rehait Maryada (Sikh Rules of Moral Conduct - [http://sgpc.net/Sikh%20Reht%20Maryada%28Eng%291.pdf](http://sgpc.net/Sikh%20Reht%20Maryada%28Eng%291.pdf))

- The Counselor must have the maturity to understand the level of the child (Scout) and be able to relate appropriately.

- Anyone who is a paid employee of any religious Sikh institution cannot be a Counselor.

- The Counselor should have enough knowledge that he/she is able to communicate, either speak or listen patiently to the child (Scout) while guiding him/her through the ‘workbook’.

- The Counselor should be sensitive to the child (Scout) because each one comes from a different background with varying levels of observance to Sikh Rehait Maryada.

- The Counselor must not be disparaging towards the Scout and be respectful even if the Scout’s views may differ.

- Once all the activities are complete the Scout must have a Board of Review which requires the Counselor along with minimum two other adults from the Gurdwara to ask what the Scout has learnt (15-30 minutes) from the workbook and how it applies to his/her daily life as a Scout.

- The parent or counselor can get in contact with American Sikh Council (ASC) [sikhscoutsusa@gmail.com](mailto:sikhscoutsusa@gmail.com) [contact@americansikhcouncil.org](mailto:contact@americansikhcouncil.org) and send in a copy of the ‘certification and Sikh Religious Award application pages’ so that ASC can mail in the ‘Sikh Award Medallion’ with a ‘Certificate’ which should be presented in the presence of the Scouts from the Troop and the sangat (congregation) at the Gurdwara by any of the responsible Gurdwara Trustee or Committee members.

- **All counselors must be approved by ASC, so please get in touch with ASC and we will arrange for one.**
Sikh Religious Award Workbook Grades 6 - 8
Certification

Scout Name: ____________________________________________

Troop: _______________________________________________

Council: ______________________________________________

Date Applied: __________________________________________

Scout’s Signature: _______________ Date: __________

Parent’s Signature: _______________ Date: __________

Counselor’s Signature: _______________ Date: __________

Counselor’s Name: ____________________________________________

Counselor’s Address ____________________________________________

______________________________________________________

Counselor’s Tel: ____________________________________________

Counselor’s Email: ____________________________________________
Sikh Award Application Form
Submit one application per order

Shipping Address: Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery
Name _______________________________________________________
Address ______________________________________________________
City_________________________ State______________ Zip__________
Day Contact___________________________ Email_____________________

Candidate Information:
Name_________________________________ Grade____________
Home Address___________________________________________________
City_________________________ State______________ Zip__________
Gurdwara Associated____________________________________________

Gurdwara Information:
Name of Gurdwara____________________________________________
Address_______________________________________________________
City_________________________ State______________ Zip__________
Counselor’s Name:_________________________ Tel________________
Counselor’s Email:_____________________________________________

Certificate of Eligibility by Counselor:
I certify that the candidate has successfully completed the requirements of the
program and presented his/her work for final approval.

Signature________________________________ Date______________

American Sikh Council, formerly known as World Sikh Council – America Region
Copyrighted material, please do not distribute without prior written permission