

Grade: 7

Course: Virsa (ਵਿਰਸਾ)

Lesson Number: 19

Unit Name: Gurū Khālsā Panth (ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ)

Title: Comparing Modern Day Practices to the Idea of the Gurū Khālsā Panth

Standards

Standard 2: Social Involvement

- Students identify their corporate responsibilities as described in the Sikh Rahit Maryādā (ਸਿਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ).
 - Students understand the leadership invested into the Gurū Khālsā Panth and the organizational structure of the Saṅgat (ਸੰਗਤ) and Akāl Takht (ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ), including the holding of Sarbat Khālsā (ਸਰਬਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ), and the issuing of *Matās* (ਮਤਾ) and *Gurmatās* (ਗੁਰਮਤਾ).
 - Students will be able to identify the organizational structure and roles through various activities, including interactive role-playing and situational games.

Objectives

1. Students will consider the leadership of the Gurū Khālsā Panth and the institution of the Sarbat Khālsā as it functions in the Sikh community today.
2. Students will compare their understanding of how these institutions worked in the 18th century with the role the Akāl Takht plays in contemporary Sikh society.

Prerequisites

- Students should be familiar with the institutions of the Gurū Khālsā Panth, Sarbat Khālsā and the Akāl Takht as they functioned in the 18th century. They should be exposed to this information in Lessons 16, 17 and 18.

Materials

- Second half of the information that was used in Lesson 16.

Advanced Preparation

- The teacher should be familiar with the way that the Akāl Takht functions in contemporary Sikh community. S/he should know some of the important recent *Hukamnāmās* (ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮਾ) issued by the Akāl Takht such as the Langar (ਲੰਗਰ) Hukamnāma, etc. (See Teacher Resources for an article that critically analyses the institutions of the Sarbat Khālsā and the Akāl Takht as they function today).

Engagement (10 minutes)

- Greet students and give them a couple of minutes to settle down and take out their notebooks.
- Use the power point presentation to review the following terms: Sarbat Khālsā, *Gurmatā* and Akāl Takht / Akāl Buṅgā.
- Ask students the following question: consider the practice of issuing *Hukamnāmās* from Akāl Takht today. Is this the same as the Sarbat Khālsā passing a *Gurmatā* in accordance with the ideas and principles of the Gurū Khālsā Panth? Why, or why not?
- Remind students of the recent *Hukamnāmās* issued by the Akāl Takht (included in notes in V-16-18-G-7).

- Ask students:
 - Who issued these *Hukamnāmās*?
 - How did they arrive at these decisions?
 - Briefly discuss the role of the Akāl Takht Jathedār (ਜਥੇਦਾਰ) (a more detailed discussion will follow after the exploration).

Exploration (25 minutes)

- Divide the class into two factions. One faction will prepare an argument for “the supremacy of the Akāl Takht” and the rights of the *Jathedār* to issue a *Hukamnāmā* while the other faction will argue for the integrity of the principles of the Gurū Khālsā Panth in the form of a debate.
- While the students are making up their arguments, the teacher should walk around to both groups and see how each group is progressing.
- The teacher should use the information included in the teacher resource to prompt each group and help them formulate their arguments.
- Give each faction three to five minutes to make their opening statement.
- After both sides have made their opening statement, each side will have a chance to rebut the other side’s argument. This should also take only five minutes.
- The debate will end with both sides making their concluding statements which should also be only three to five minutes.
- In the last five minutes, students should vote as to what side they agree on: Should the *Jathedār* of the Akāl Takht be allowed to issue a *Hukamnāmā* or should *Hukamnāmās* be issued by a meeting of the Sarbat Khālsā according to the principles of the Gurū Khālsā Panth?

Explanation/ Extension (15-20 minutes)

- Ask students: Should this debate be conducted officially in the Sikh community?
- What would be the advantages/ disadvantages of having this discussion in an official capacity?
- Let students know that such a debate is taking place in some circles. Use the power point presentation included in teacher resources to discuss the main points that have come out of this debate, namely:
 - What is the role of the Akāl Takht Jathedār in terms of holding a Sarbat Khālsā or issuing *Hukamnāmās*?
 - Should *Hukamnāmās* be revocable? If so then under which conditions?
 - Is there any method by which an edict can be issued in such a form and manner that no Sikh should feel the necessity of challenging it?
 - And if a decision or an edict divides the community, can some honourable way out be found to this?

Evaluation (On-going)

- Students should be evaluated for their participation in the debate which shows their understanding of the issue.
- Students should be encouraged to discuss this issue with their parents, friends and relatives; the teacher might want to take five minutes at the beginning of the next class in order to go over what the students found in their discussions with others.

Teacher Resources

- http://www.singhsabha.com/akal_takhat.htm