

### References from the Ardās

The following are phrases from the Ardās (ਅਰਦਾਸ) which mention certain Sikh individuals and events. With each phrase that makes a reference to a particular person(s) or event in Sikh history, the name of an individual and event is suggested. Note that there may be other Sikh martyrs and events that fit the description of the reference.

- Pañj Piāre (ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ)
  - Bhāi Dayā Singh (ਭਾਈ ਦਯਾ ਸਿੰਘ)
  - Bhāi Dharam Singh (ਭਾਈ ਧਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ)
  - Bhāi Himmat Singh (ਭਾਈ ਹਿੱਮਤ ਸਿੰਘ)
  - Bhāi Mohkam Singh (ਭਾਈ ਮੋਹਕਮ ਸਿੰਘ)
  - Bhāi Sāhib Singh (ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ)
- Cār Sāhibzāde (ਚਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦੇ)
  - Bābā Phatah Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਫਤਹ ਸਿੰਘ)
  - Bābā Jorāvar Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਜੋਰਾਵਰ ਸਿੰਘ)
  - Bābā Jujhār Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਜੁਝਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ)
  - Bābā Ajīt Singh (ਬਾਬਾ ਅਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ)
- Cālī Mukte (ਚਾਲੀ ਮੁਕਤੇ) led by Bhāi Mahā Singh (ਭਾਈ ਮਹਾ ਸਿੰਘ)
- Jinām nām japiā, vanḍ chakiā, deg calāi, teg vāhī, dekh ke anḍiṭh kītā, tinām piāriām, saciāriām dī kamāi dā dhiān dhar ke bolo jī Vāhigurū (ਜਿਨਾਂ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿਆ, ਵੰਡ ਛਕਿਆ, ਦੇਗ ਚਲਾਈ, ਤੇਗ ਵਾਹੀ, ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਅਣਡਿਠ ਕੀਤਾ, ਤਿਨਾਂ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ, ਸਚਿਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ।)

Ask students to give suggestions of martyrs in Sikh history who fit this description. A number of Sikhs can fit this description, including the women in Mīr Mannū's (ਮੀਰ ਮੰਨੂ) jails.

- Band band kaṭāe (ਬੰਦ ਬੰਦ ਕਟਾਏ)
  - Bhāi Manī Singh (ਭਾਈ ਮਨੀ ਸਿੰਘ)
- Khopriām luhāiām (ਖੋਪਰੀਆਂ ਲੁਹਾਈਆਂ)
  - Bhāi Tārū Singh (ਭਾਈ ਤਾਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ)
- Carkharīām te caṛe (ਚਰਖੜੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਚੜੇ)
  - Bhāi Subeg Singh (ਭਾਈ ਸੁਬੇਗ ਸਿੰਘ)
  - Bhāi Shāhbāz Singh (ਭਾਈ ਸ਼ਾਹਬਾਜ਼ ਸਿੰਘ)
- Āriām nāl cirāe gaye (ਆਰਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਚਿਰਾਏ ਗਏ)
  - Bhāi Matī Dās (ਭਾਈ ਮਤੀ ਦਾਸ)
- Gurduāriām dī sevā lāi kurbānīām kītīām, dharam nahī hāriā, Sikhī kesām suāsām nāl nibāhī, tinām dī kamāi dā dhiān dhar ke bolo jī Vāhigurū (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਲਈ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ, ਧਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਰਿਆ, ਸਿਖੀ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸੁਆਸਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਬਾਹੀ, ਤਿਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ।)

At this point, the students should be encouraged to remember the sacrifices at Nankāṇā Sāhib (ਨਨਕਾਣਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ) (1921) in which Sikhs were massacred for protesting against the *Mahant* (ਮਹੰਤ) control of the *Gurduārā*. They can also be reminded of the events that took place in 1984 at Akāl Takht (ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ).

- Pañj takhtām, sarbat Gurduāriām dā dhiān dhar ke bolo jī Vāhigurū (ਪੰਜ ਤਖਤਾਂ, ਸਰਬਤ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ।)

- Akāl Takht Sāhib (ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ)
- Kesgar Sāhib (ਕੇਸਗੜ ਸਾਹਿਬ)
- Damdamā Sāhib (ਦਮਦਮਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ)
- Patnā Sāhib (ਪਟਨਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ)
- Hajūr Sāhib (ਹਜੂਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ)

### **Note for the Teacher**

The ‘Sikh Prayer’ by Tejā Singh (ਤੇਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ) is in reference to the Ardās (ਅਰਦਾਸ) and the teacher should make this point clear to students prior to giving it out for homework. For the purposes of the curriculum we have transcribed Gurmukhī (ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ) words and replaced ‘God or lord’ with ‘Vāhigurū’ (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ). Minor edits have been made to the text to help teachers and students with an easier understanding.

## **The Sikh Prayer**

### **Introduction**

The Sikh’s (ਸਿੱਖ) conception of Vāhigurū is personal. ‘Vāhigurū moves in humans like a fish in the water and lives with one as a spouse.’ He is in constant spiritual harmony with Vāhigurū through prayer. Therefore, prayer is much used in Sikhī (ਸਿੱਖੀ). The Scripture consists chiefly of prayers. No ceremony whether religious or political, is complete without prayer. Nay, most of the ceremonies and rituals contain nothing else. Before going on a journey, or opening a shop or occupying a new house, a Sikh opens the Gurū Granth Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ) and asks Vāhigurū’s blessing. If time and means permit, he also arranges for the singing of *Sabads* (ਸਬਦ) of thanks-giving but he will never omit a short prayer, which even the poorest can afford. No priest is required to address it. Anybody, man or woman, old or young, can lead in prayer. Even a boy or a girl may be seen conducting the morning or evening service and leading in prayer a big congregation consisting of the most learned and advanced in age. This is purposely encouraged, so that everybody may learn to shoulder his or her responsibilities without the help of a priestly class. The prayer varies in size and contents. Sometimes only a few words will do. A man starting on horseback, with one foot in the stirrup, may mutter to himself: “O Vāhigurū of plume! Help thy Humble servant” Or a few lines may be quoted from the Gurū Granth Sāhib by way of saying grace before or after meals.

As a piece of composition it is one of the rarities of literature. It is not the work of any one man or composed at any one time. The whole Sikh nation has been at work on it for centuries. The custom of offering prayers must have begun with the rise of Sikhī, but by the time of Gurū Arjan Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ), the fifth successor of Gurū Nānak Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ), when places of worship had become organized, it became an established rule for the purpose of praying together in congregations. According to the Dabistān-e-Mazāhab (ਦਬਿਸਤਾਨ-ਏ-ਮਜ਼ਾਹਬ) when anybody wanted a gift from heaven, he would come to such an assembly of Sikhs and ask them to pray for him. Familiar expressions of prayer began to accumulate until the time of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ), when a definite form was given to it. As it now stands it can be divided into three parts:

1. Six lines of verse by Gurū Gobind Singh invoking Vāhigurū and the first nine *Gurūs*.
2. From line 7 to 25 of rhythmic prose, composed by generations of Sikhs as the events of their history went on leaving their impressions on their minds. The community even now has not abdicated its right of molding this part of the prayer. It can refer in any suitable terms to the present day difficulties and sorrows of the panth e.g: in connection with the wearing of Kirpāns and the reforming of *Gurduārās* (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ).

3. The Prayers complete the composition which, except a few words here and there, depends entirely upon the individual who is praying.

The first seven lines and the last two lines can in no case be altered or omitted, in all other lines changes can be made—we can shorten, omit, add to, or do anything with them. Though everybody is required to be able to lead in prayer, not everybody can be expected to be original and to express him/herself in an assembly in a correct, concise and moving manner. Therefore, it is provided that the person offering the prayer should begin with a recitation and then get freer as they proceed. After the composition of the Gurū and the community, one has a chance to try one's free hand in expressing individual thoughts or the conjectured ideas of the whole congregation. The prayer is communal not only in the composition of its language, but also in the nature of its subject matter. The Sikh, while offering it, is made to realize that s/he is a part of the corporate body, called the Panth (ਪੰਥ) or *Khālṣā* (ਖਾਲਸਾ), whose past and present history is recounted with all its sacrifices, successes, glories and needs.

In order to understand why so much of the prayer is taken up with historical details, we must consider the meaning of the Sikh prayers. The *Gurūs* were very careful in imparting their teaching. They did not deliver lectures or write books and leave them to be understood by their Sikhs. They took as much care of the preparation of the disciple as of the lesson itself. They wanted to see that what they gave was capable of being digested and assimilated by him. Therefore, the teaching was in the disciple's own language and dialect, and was given in the form of a song or discourse. Further, it was not delivered at once, in one lifetime. The *Gurū* took in hand the training of a nation, and each one of them, at a time, gave as much instruction as was needful, passing it on to the next *Gurū* when the work of one generation was complete. In this way the whole course of training extended over ten generations.

In other ways too, the *Gurūs* took care to see that no effect of their teaching was lost upon the disciple. The different morning and evening services were fixed according to the mood or the atmosphere of the time. The philosophical Japu jī (ਜਪੁ ਜੀ) is to be read in the morning and the *Sohilā* (ਸੋਹਿਲਾ), which breathes the spirit of calmness and resignation is fixed for the night. If we look into the nature of the compositions, we shall find that the difference is just suited to the difference between our mood of the morning and that of the evening. The passions, which are the dominant in the evening, leave the field in the morning for the contemplative part of the soul. The mind has been tranquillized by the calm sleep. It is fresh and clear, and can dwell on the difficult problems of human life discussed in the Japujī. On the other hand, our whole being is irritated and overstrung by the nervous excitement of the day, and reaches by night time the culminating point of its human vitality; and as we sit in bed, preparing for sleep, we can no longer bear the strain of hard thinking. Therefore, a short musical piece is all that has to be recited before we give ourselves up to sleep. The thoughts contained in the poem are further made easy by being woven in the form of imaginative figures. Our imagination at that time is very active, so the abstract ideas are presented to us clothed in images. Notice how the difficult idea of the oneness of Vāhigurū amidst the diversity of Vāhigurū's manifestations is made clear to us by being compared to the oneness of the sun in spite of the divisions of time and season. Look at the figure of pride approaching the door of her spouse, while oil is being poured on it by the friends of the family in her welcome. It is really the human soul yearning to meet Vāhigurū after waiting day and night to receive a call from Vāhigurū. Again, how beautifully the diversity of Vāhigurū's presence, diffused in the face of nature, is presented in the form of the stars and planets moving around to perform Ārtī (ਆਰਤੀ). There are enough instances to show what pains the *Gurūs* have taken to suit their teaching to the mood of the disciple's mind.

In the case of the prayer, the same care has been taken. The Sikh has to bring himself/herself into a prayerful mood before he addresses himself to Vāhigurū, when he actually prays. We stand face to face with Vāhigurū, but before we enter into the innermost tabernacle of Vāhigurū and reach that consummation, we have to traverse the ground of moral struggle and spiritual preparation. We have to realize what the communion with Vāhigurū has meant for those who have loved him. What sufferings and sacrifices they had to undergo to be able to meet with Vāhigurū. We have to refresh ourselves with the sweet faith of those immortals and fortify our minds with their patient strength and resignation. Prayer does not mean a mere physiological union with Vāhigurū but an undisturbed rest or harmony with Vāhigurū. It means an active yearning of the soul to feel one with Vāhigurū who is always active and patient, who is always hopeful. Prayer should, therefore, refresh our spirit and make us ready to be in Vāhigurū's will. This can be done if we first commune ourselves with the Vāhigurū revealed in History, and reverently watch the organic growth of Divinity in mankind. To do this we have to feel ourselves a part of that congregation of Vāhigurū-like beings who represent the best in man. We should steep ourselves in association of those in whose company we feel the presence of Vāhigurū.

The Sikh prayer was composed to begin with an invocation to Vāhigurū and then different souls are invoked in the order of precedence. The highest ideal of 'Vāhigurū(ness) or perfection' according to the Sikhs was realized in Gurū Nānak Sāhib and his nine successors. Therefore, they are mentioned next. Then the five beloved ones, who for their sacrifice were invested with collective Gurūship by the last Gurū, followed by the Gurū's sons, who bravely met martyrdom and, though young, kept up the brave tradition of their forefathers; then other great men and women who wore arms and practiced charity, and in the face of unspeakable suffering kept their faith unsullied. This part of the prayer is the work of the whole community, past and present and is vigorous in style and language. How many hearts in these long centuries it has soothed in affliction and strengthened in difficulties. It bears the stamp of all that is the best and most moving in Sikhī. It is the crystallization of the Sikh nation's history. It is the living monument of its greatness, which generations of Sikhs will repeat to themselves to keep alive the fire in their hearts.

After bringing before their vision the mighty deeds of their forefathers, they think of their present conditions, their *Gurduārās*, their associations, their choirs moving nightly around the *Gurduārās*, their banners, their mansions, which remind them of their past glory, and call blessings on them. Then begins the prayer (occasion or reason for which prayer is being held). Here one is quite free to express oneself. In the last but one line the Sikh prays for the advancement of Vāhigurū among humans; but this missionary work is to be carried on with due regard to others' right and sentiments, for in the next line the Sikh prays for the good of all humankind, without distinction of caste or creed. This prayer comes down from the days of the conflict with the Mughals, in which the Sikhs suffered martyrdoms that are enumerated in it. Yet nowhere is shown any sign of bitterness or revenge, there is no reproach on curse on the enemy; only ones sufferings are enumerated, which are taken as sacrifices made by the community.

### The Prayer

1. Having first remembered Vāhigurū the Almighty, think of Gurū Nānak.
2. Then of Aṅgad Gur (ਅੰਗਦ ਗੁਰ) and Amardās (ਅਮਰਦਾਸ), and Rāmdās (ਰਾਮਦਾਸ), may they help us!
3. Remember Gurū Arjan (ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ), Gurū Harigobind (ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ) and the holy Gurū Harirāi (ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਰਾਇ).
4. Let us think of holy Harikrishan (ਹਰਿਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ) whose sight dispels all sorrows.
5. Let us remember Teghbahādar (ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ਬਹਾਦਰ) and the nine treasures shall come hastening to our homes.

6. May they all assist us every where!
7. May the tenth King holy Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib, the lord of hosts and protector of the faith, assist us everywhere!
8. Turn your thoughts, O, Khālsā (ਖਾਲਸਾ), to the teachings of Gurū Granth Sāhib and call on Vāhigurū. (Awesome Wisdom!)
9. The five Beloved Ones, Guru's four sons, the forty Freed Ones and other righteous steadfast and long suffering souls: think of their deeds and call on Vāhigurū. (Awesome Wisdom!)
10. Those men and women who, keeping the Nām (ਨਾਮ) in their hearts, shared their earnings with others; who piled the sword and practiced charity; who saw other's faults, but overlooked them: think of their deeds and call on Vāhigurū. (Awesome Wisdom!)
11. Those who for their religion allowed themselves to be cut up limb by limb, had their scalps scraped off, were broken on the wheel, were sawn or flayed alive: think of their sweet resignation and call on Vāhigurū. (Awesome Wisdom!)
12. Those who to purge the *Gurduārās* of longstanding perversions, suffered themselves to be ruthlessly beaten, imprisoned, shot, cut up or burnt alive, but did not lose Faith, and practiced Sikhī till their last breath and hair: think of their patient faith and call on Vāhigurū. (Awesome Wisdom!)
13. Think of all the *Gurduārās*, thrones of religious and political authority and other places hallowed by the touch of the Gurū's feet and call on Vāhigurū. (Awesome Wisdom!)
14. Now the whole Khālsā (ਖਾਲਸਾ) offers their prayer.
15. Let the whole Khālsā bring to their mind (remembrance of) the Nām, Vāhigurū (Awesome Wisdom!).
16. And as they think of Vāhigurū, may they feel completely blessed.
17. May Vāhigurū's protection and grace extend to all the bodies of the Khālsā, wherever they are.
18. May the Vāhigurū's glory be fulfilled and His dispensations prevail.
19. May victory attend our charity and our alms.
20. May Vāhigurū's sword help us.
21. May the Khālsā always triumph.
22. May the Sikh choirs, banners, mansions abide for ever and ever.
23. May the Kingdom of justice come.
24. May the Sikhs be united in love.
25. May the hearts of the Sikhs be humble, but their wisdom exalted—their wisdom in the keeping of the Lord, O Khālsā. Say the Vāhigurū. (Awesome Wisdom!)
26. O true King! O beloved Father (mother)! In these ambrosial hours of the morning we have sung your sweet hymns, heard your life giving Word, and have discoursed on your manifold blessings. May these things find a loving place in our hearts and serve to draw our souls towards Thee. (This section is an example)
27. Save us, O Father, from lust, wrath, greed, undue attachment and pride: and keeping us always attached to Thy feet.
28. Grant the Sikhs the gift of Sikhī. The gift of your name, the gift of faith, the gift of confidence in you, and the gift of reading and understanding your Holy Word.
29. O kind Father, loving Father through thy mercy we have spent the night in peace and happiness: May Your grace extend to our labors of the day too, so that we may, according to your will, do what is right.
30. Give us light, give us understanding, so that we may know what pleases You.
31. We offer this prayer in your presence, O Awesome Wisdom.
32. Forgive our shortcomings. Help us in keeping ourselves pure.
33. Bring us into the fellowship of only those people of love in whose company, we may remember Your name.