

Grade: 7

Course: Virṣā (ਵਿਰਸਾ)

Lesson Number: 17 – 18

Unit Name: Gurū Khālsā Panth (ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ)

Title: Making a Decision as Sarbat Khālsā (ਸਰਬਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ) 1 and 2

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, 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 learn how to come to a collective decision by participating in a mock Sarbat Khālsā and passing a Gurmatā on an issue concerning the Khālsā Panth.

Prerequisites

- Students should be familiar with the institutions of Akāl Takht, Sarbat Khālsā and Gurmatā from Lesson 16.

Materials

- Kaṛāh Prashād (ਕੜਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਦ) (the teacher can prepare this or assign this as a duty to one of the students in the class).

Advanced Preparation

- The teacher should spread this lesson over two days.
- The teacher might have to prepare the Kaṛāh Prashād (ਕੜਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਦ) before class begins.
- It is recommended that this lesson take place in the presence of Gurū Granth Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ) but if this is not possible, the teacher might want to arrange the classroom in a manner that resembles a Divān (ਦਿਵਾਨ) hall of a Gurduārā (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ). This can be accomplished by moving any furniture such as chairs or tables from the middle of the classroom and perhaps spreading a rug or some sheets on the floor.

Engagement (20-25 minutes)

Day 1

- Greet students and give them a couple of minutes to settle down on the floor.
- Tell students that they are going to participate in a Mock/Model Sarbat Khālsā and in order to do that you want to decide on a topic on which a consensus can be formed through a Sarbat Khālsā.
- Briefly review from the last class the method by which the Sarbat Khālsā arrives at a Gurmatā.
- Some possible topics for debate are:

- Should women be allowed to do Kīrtan (ਕੀਰਤਨ) at Harimandar Sāhib (ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ) (let students know that at the present moment, women are forbidden from performing Kīrtan Sevā (ਸੇਵਾ) at Darbār Sāhib)?
- Should 10% of all funds from all *Gurduārās* (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ) go toward the education and welfare of the children of *Shahīds* (ਸ਼ਹੀਦ)?
- Should the Sikh community seek to set up an independent nation-state and if so, where should this nation-state be located?
- If the teacher and students are comfortable with “restaging” history, the topic for debate in the mock Sarbat *Khālsā* can be historical topics such as:
 - How should the Sikh *Misals* (ਮਿਸਲ) be governed (i.e., should the *Misaldārs* – ਮਿਸਲਦਾਰ, be accountable to one person who has overall authority or should the misals be free to govern themselves)?
 - How should the 18th century *Misaldārs* deal with the approaching British?
- In order to arrive at a decision on a topic make groups of two to four students, depending on the number of students you have in your class.
- Ask them to discuss the importance of the topics above and pick a topic that they would like to debate on.
- If they cannot decide on a topic they can pick 2 topics per group and then a vote can be taken at the end. This is the majority decision-making process.
- Once a decision is made on which topic to debate, divide the class into two groups.
- If they want to pick a side they can or you can assign them to a side.

Day 2 (5-10min)

- Remind students that the meeting of the Sarbat *Khālsā* will begin with the Fatih (ਫਤਿਹ) and the recitation of the Ardās (ਅਰਦਾਸ). After the Ardās, one student will distribute the Kaṛāh Prashād and another student will proclaim, “This is a. Sarbat *Khālsā*. We are in the presence of Gurū Granth Sāhib, let us promise, in the presence of our Gurū, to forget all internal disputes and be united”. It is up to the teacher to decide if they want their students to repeat this statement in Pañjābī or English.

Exploration (35 minutes)

Day 1 (25-30 min)

- Split the two groups further into four groups each, and let them have a discussion on the chosen topic.
- They must look at the topic from all angles. Provide them with tools such as Mahān Kosh (ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼), Gurū Granth *Darpan* (ਦਰਪਨ), Sikh history books, if they wish to make certain references.
- Have each of the 2 groups write up a set of notes and come together to discuss how they want to go about presenting their side in the Model Sarbat *Khālsā*.

Day 2 (45 min)

- After the preliminary ceremonies, the students should all sit down on the floor and begin debating the issue.
- During the debate, the teacher is encouraged to allow students to come to an agreement on their own. In order to make the meeting interesting, the teacher “must” assign a couple of students the unpopular point of view (if you don’t do that then students will not appreciate the patience and perseverance required to come up with a consensus. As a matter of fact, it is quite possible that you will not have enough time to come up with a consensus...experiencing the process is more important than the end result), so that they have to be persuaded by the effective arguments of the other students, in order to come to a unanimous decision with

- regard to the *Gurmatā*.
- It is very likely that the group will not come to a consensus, but the teacher should inform students that is what they should aim for. Therefore, if you have assigned a number of students an unpopular point of view and the other team convinces them otherwise then they must show their agreement.
 - Remind students that this is definitely not about winning or losing, but about understanding the process and appreciating the challenge of it, while seeing the beauty in the possibility of such a thing.
 - Ten minutes before class ends, get students to come up with a unanimous decision about the issue if possible. This is desirable but not absolutely necessary. It is more important that the students understand and appreciate the process rather than reaching a consensus.
 - If there is time, the meeting can be adjourned with an Ardās (and a *Hukamnāmā* – ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮਾ, if the meeting is held in the presence of Gurū Granth Sāhib).

Explanation/ Extension (5-10 minutes)

Day 1

- Remind all students that they should be prepared for their next class.

Day 2

- Take five minutes at the end of class to ask students what they thought about the process of coming to a collective agreement.
- What problems did they encounter?
- What are the advantages of a unanimous agreement? What are the disadvantages?
- Is holding a Sarbat *Khālsā* and passing a *Gurmatā* or *Matā* unanimously a feasible alternative to popular Western decision making practices?

Evaluation (On-going)

- The teacher should pay special attention to participation of each student and see if they can successfully incorporate Sikh understanding.
- Encourage students to implement the idea of coming to a collective agreement when solving problems in their daily lives at home or school.
- Get them to think of situations where this process may be useful and report on incidents or examples where they have used the method of arriving at a unanimous agreement on a particular issue.

Teacher Resources

The following websites are good sources for general information on arriving at a *Gurmatā* (ਗੁਰਮਤਾ). The teacher may also want to reuse the notes from previous lessons about Gurū Khālsā Panth (ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ).

- Singh, Bhagat. Institution of Gurmatā. December 31st, 2006. <http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhhist/institutes/gurmatta.html>
- Method of Adopting a Gurmatā, The Panthic Weekly. February 26th, 2006, Khālsā Press. <http://www.panthic.org/news/132/ARTICLE/2270/2006-02-26.html>