

Sikhism and Sharing

YEAR 5 | SUMMER 2

OVERVIEW

In Sikhism, the act of sharing holds great significance and is deeply rooted in the teachings of the Gurus. Sharing, or "Vand Chakna" in Punjabi, is a fundamental principle that emphasises the importance of selfless service and generosity towards others.

Sikhs believe in the equality of all human beings and strive to live a life of compassion and community. The concept of sharing is not only limited to material possessions but also encompasses sharing one's time, resources, and skills for the betterment of others.

Through acts of sharing and selfless service, Sikhs aim to create a more just and harmonious society. One of the prominent ways Sikhs practice sharing is through the institution of Langar, a community kitchen where free meals are provided to everyone, regardless of their social or economic background. This unit will explore the significance of sharing in Sikhism and how it shapes their beliefs, practices, and interactions within the community and the wider world.

Did you know?

Sikh gurdwaras worldwide serve approximately

100 million free meals annually

through langar services, providing food and nourishment to people of all backgrounds and faiths.

THE 5 K's

Kesh (Uncut hair)

Sikhs believe in maintaining uncut hair as a symbol of acceptance and respect for the way they are naturally created. It represents a connection to their faith and reminds them to embrace their unique identity.



Kangha (Wooden comb)

A small wooden comb that Sikhs use to keep their hair neat and tidy. It symbolises cleanliness, discipline, and the importance of taking care of oneself physically and spiritually.



Kara (Steel bracelet)

Worn by Sikhs on their wrist. It serves as a reminder of the eternal nature of God and the unbreakable bond between God and the individual. It represents strength, unity, and a sense of being connected to something greater.



Kirpan (Sword)

A ceremonial sword that represents courage, self-defense, and the responsibility to protect others. It is a symbol of the Sikh commitment to justice, righteousness, and standing up against oppression.



Kachera

Kachera is a special cotton undergarment that reminds Sikhs of the importance of modesty, self-control, and maintaining purity of thought and action.



KEY VOCABULARY



GURU

A spiritual teacher or guide, particularly referring to the ten Sikh Gurus.



GURDWARA

A Sikh place of worship.



GURU GRANTH SAHIB

The holy scripture of Sikhism, considered the eternal Guru.



Sewa/Sevā

Selfless service or voluntary work performed for the benefit of others.



LANGAR

The community kitchen in a Gurdwara where free meals are served to all, regardless of social status.



SEWADAR

A person who volunteers for seva or selfless service in the Gurdwara or community.



SANGAT

The Sikh congregation that comes together for worship and community activities.



VAND CHAKNA

The concept of sharing and distributing resources with others, emphasizing equality and generosity.



KAR SEWA

Voluntary service involving physical labor, often performed for the construction or maintenance of Gurdwaras.



“ *One who performs selfless service, without thought of reward, shall attain his Lord and Master.*

Guru Granth Sahib 286

In Sikhism, the concept of seva holds great importance. Seva, which means selfless service, is an integral part of the Sikh faith and encourages individuals to help others without expecting anything in return. It is a way for Sikhs to demonstrate their love, compassion, and commitment to making a positive difference in the world.

- Seva is a voluntary act of service performed by Sikhs to help those in need, regardless of their background or beliefs.
- Sikh seva can take various forms, such as serving food in langars (community kitchens), cleaning public spaces, assisting in charitable activities, and helping the elderly or sick.
- Langar seva is a particularly significant form of seva in Sikhism. It involves preparing and serving free meals to everyone, irrespective of their social status or religion, promoting equality and sharing.
- Sikhs engage in seva to practice humility, gratitude, and to fulfill their responsibility towards the community and humanity.
- Seva is not limited to adults; even young Sikhs can actively participate in seva activities and contribute to their communities.
- Through seva, Sikhs aim to create a more compassionate and caring society where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.
- Seva is considered a way to connect with the divine and express devotion to God by serving and helping others.
- Sikh gurdwaras (places of worship) often have dedicated seva teams and encourage community members to engage in various seva activities.
- Seva teaches important values like empathy, kindness, and the joy of giving, fostering a sense of unity and responsibility among Sikhs.
- By participating in seva, Sikhs learn the importance of sharing their time, resources, and skills to make a positive impact on individuals, families, and communities in need.
- Remember, seva is not just for Sikhs; people from all walks of life can practice acts of selfless service and make a difference in the lives of others.



In Sikhism, langar is a unique and integral practice that reflects the principles of equality, sharing, and community. Langar refers to the free community kitchen found in Sikh gurdwaras (places of worship) where everyone, regardless of their background or social status, is welcomed to share a meal together.

- Langar is a tradition in Sikhism where free meals are served to all visitors in the gurdwara.
- It promotes the idea of equality, as everyone sits together on the floor in a langar hall, irrespective of their social or economic background.
- The food served in langar is vegetarian, prepared with love and devotion by volunteers known as sewadars.
- Langar meals typically consist of roti (bread), daal (lentils), sabzi (vegetable dish), and kheer (sweet rice pudding), among other items.
- Langar is open to everyone, regardless of their faith, gender, age, or nationality. It symbolizes the Sikh belief in the equality of all human beings.
- Langar also serves as a reminder to Sikhs that they should share their blessings with those who are less fortunate.

Langar is not only a way to address hunger but also a symbol of Sikh values and the spirit of selfless service. It teaches to appreciate the importance of equality, sharing, and compassion in our lives and encourages us to extend a helping hand to those in need.



Issues for analysis and evaluation

Key arguments/debates

Some would argue that actions are more important in Sikhism than beliefs. Others would argue that Sikhism is a religion firmly based on strong beliefs. Some would argue that actions express the relationship between belief and practice in Sikhism.

Key questions

Can it be argued that seva is the most important teaching in Sikhism?
Is performing seva practical for Sikhs today?

ROTI



DAAL



SABZI



SHARE Charity – Sikh explanations for schools



BBC Bitesize - Sewa



BBC Bitesize - Langar



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