

"There is only One Primal Lord. It is known through the True Guru's Grace"

Maintaining the Practice of your Rehat



A guide for practicing Amritdhari & non-Amritdhari Sikhs

Maintaining a Vegetarian Diet
Making the right decision?
Struggling with your Rehat?
Bani Chart to help get you started
Top tips for your Rehat
Understanding your Daily Prayers
Understanding the meaning behind your Panj Kakkar
Maintaining your Panj Kakkar
The Four Cardinal Sins

"One who lives a life of discipline is what I adore and value most. Merely calling oneself a Sikh is not valuable to me."
(Guru Gobind Singh Ji)



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Dhan Guru Gobind Singh Ji, The Eternal Father of the Khalsa

"They are Sikhs who follow the discipline and teachings; I consider them to be my master and unto them, I am their slave."

(Guru Gobind Singh Ji)

Preface

With the Almighty Grace of Vaheguroo, a guidance booklet on "*Maintaining the Practice of your Rehat*" has been put together for both practising Amritdhari and non-Amritdhari Sikhs.

The aim of this booklet is to guide individuals, who are struggling with the practice of their *Rehat* or are facing hardships through their practices with ways in which they can balance and stabilise their academic or work life with the pressures they face daily. This booklet emphasises that we organise our time efficiently and understand the practices of our *Rehat* so we can deal with these hardships and not simply fall at the first hurdle when something goes wrong. *Rehat* is all about progression and the discipline of the mind and soul. Remaining disciplined within the practices of your *Rehat* will ultimately result in self-progression and protection from the Lord Himself.

This booklet covers a range of topics on how to maintain a vegetarian diet, with helping tips and advice on vegetarianism, ways to overcome the hardships that one may experience during the practice of their *Rehat*; as well as a 'top tips' section for further progression, to understand the daily permitted prayers, and to understand the underlying meaning behind the *Panj Kakkar* and how to maintain them. Additionally, this booklet covers the meanings behind each of the Daily *Baanis* we read for our *Nitnem* and how they play an important role in our everyday lives.

Furthermore, a *Baani* Chart has been formulated and formatted into a timetable, as an example for one to make use of. It is entirely up to the individual how they choose to design their timetable in order to suit their own lifestyle. Time gaps have been allocated for the daily *Nitnem* so that you can remain firm and consistent within the practice of your *Rehat* and organise your time and daily routine effectively. Consistent timing is extremely important; therefore blank cells have been left for one to allocate their own timings for their work or academic life. Additionally, a list of other *Baanis* has been given for one to extend their reading of other *Baanis* if they wish to do so.

We equally beg for forgiveness from *Dhan Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj* and the *Saadh Sangat* for any mistakes that have made throughout the publication of this booklet. Our only supplication to the Almighty Lord is to bless the entire Khalsa Panth with stability and strength in their practices and may we be worthy of having such a Great Beloved Father, *Dhan Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj*, who sacrificed so much for us to have what we enjoy and benefit from today.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank the beloved *Saadh Sangat* for their utmost support and input into this booklet, but above all, we would like to thank *Dhan Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji*, who has made this all happen.

Vaheguroo Ji Ka Khalsa Vaheguroo Ji Ki Fateh

The Khalsa belongs to Vaheguru. All victory belongs to Vaheguru!

Maintaining a Vegetarian Diet

Finding it hard to give up meat, fish, and eggs?

One of the basic codes of conducts for a practising Sikh is to maintain a strict vegetarian diet, which does not involve the consumption of meat, fish or eggs. This is purely due to the fact that they are considered as living organisms which share the five sensory organs as human beings. In comparison to an animal, a human is able to live without meat, fish and eggs, whereas certain animals cannot.

For example, if we look at a domestic feline (i.e. a cat), it cannot maintain a vegetarian diet, as it is unable to produce its own organic fatty acid within its own body and as it's contained within flesh or meat, a cat must eat flesh in order to survive, therefore it thrives on hunting.

Our consumption of meat, fish and eggs is seen as a way of survival, as is eating fruit and vegetables. However, it is something we do not essentially need in our diet in order to survive. We can actually live without this and maintain a healthy diet by just the consumption of a vegetarian diet. A strict vegetarian diet incorporates no meat products as sources of nutrition, for vegetarian food contains less fat and cholesterol and is high in fibre, which is something that is not found in meat products.

Many diseases, such as bird flu, swine flu and mad cow disease have all been linked to the consumption of meat. Vegetarian diets have shown that there have been decreased risks of diseases, such as diabetes, chronic heart disease and certain types of cancer diseases; consumption of meat can cause prostate cancer in men and breast and ovarian cancer in women. Consumption of meat has shown that one is likely to be at risk of these diseases later on in their life.

If you are trying to keep a vegetarian diet or are considering doing so, but are feeling somewhat nervous about it all then there are a few tips, which you can consider and attempt to follow.

- ♦ If you are already consuming meat, fish and eggs on a daily basis or perhaps 3-4 times a week, then make attempts to reduce your consumption to once a week.
- ♦ Abandon the idea that you have to consume meat, fish and eggs everyday.
- ♦ Build upon maintaining a diet, which has meat-free days each week. Until you are satisfied with the reduction in your diet then you can try to stop your consumption all together.
- ♦ It is advisable that you maintain a healthy diet by consuming alternative food products, such as grains, cereals, nuts, beans, soya/tofu, fruit and vegetables, which contain all kinds of protein, carbohydrates, fibre, vitamins and minerals.
- ♦ By eating a well balanced diet, it is possible to consume the vital amount of amino acids found in animal sources.
- ♦ Avoid foods which contain gelatine, which is extracted from the collagen inside animal skin, organs and bones.
- ♦ Check the ingredients of food products before you eat.



Although they may state *suitable for vegetarians* that is not always the scenario.

If in any circumstances you are becoming physically weak or feel that your health is at risk then you should consider consuming less meat in gradual steps rather than at once, as advised above. For those whose parents consume or encourage the consumption of meat, fish and eggs, a lot of the time your parents will cause chaos over this vegetarian diet and list a number of health problems that are apparently caused by not eating any form of meat or fish in your diet. They may not always show their full

support in your practices, but this is their way of showing concern for you, not to deliberately go against you.

Just remember, we do not necessarily need animal sources to survive. So as long as you stick with the points above, then you will be able to maintain a structured diet, which is healthy and free from any illnesses. It is up to the individual on how they maintain their diet and how they fulfil and replace their diet with alternative sources.

There are numerous references within the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, wherein the Gurus and Bhagats have discouraged the consumption of meat and fish.
Bhagat Kabeer Ji states within his *Baani*:

*"You kill living beings, and claim it to be a righteous action. Tell me, brother, what would you call an unrighteous action?
You call yourself the wisest; then who would you call a butcher?" [2]
(GGSJ: Ang 1102)*



"Do not say that the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran are false. Those who do not contemplate them are false.

*You say that the One Lord is in all, so why do you kill chickens?" [7]
(GGSJ: Ang 1350)*

Making the Right Decision?

These days we try to find as many excuses to not take *Amrit* and display a very unenthusiastic attitude towards taking *Amrit*. Even if someone suggests to us to consider taking *Amrit*, we take it in such a negative way that we accuse them of either forcing it upon us or provide them with the excuse that we are not ready to take *Amrit* at this moment in time.

It's rather contradictory because we always use the common phrase "*Life is too short*" and we must do this before we die, yet no-one ever speaks of *Amrit* in the same sentence as this. Remember, no-one can force you to take *Amrit*; if it is within one's karma, then it shall be.

However dear Gursikhs, if one does recommend to you to take *Amrit*, whether this is a friend, a *Sant* or a *katha vajik*, we shouldn't feel that they are pressurising us or forcing us in any way or form, but are serving a purpose, which will affect our destiny positively. God resides in all. If one does suggest to you to take *Amrit*, simply see this as God communicating that message to you through another. Whether you act upon that advice, is something that lies within your destiny.

At present, many of us do not fully understand the absolute importance of taking *Amrit* or the practice of *Rehat*. We see many of our youths taking *Amrit*, but sadly do not fulfil the practice of their *Rehat*. Due to some ignorance, some go to the extent of cutting their hair and removing their *Kakkar*. What has become of our Sikhs today? Why do we fail to understand the sacrifices that our Gurus made for us? There was no need for Guru Ji to take *Amrit*, but in all humility, even Guru Gobind Singh Ji asked to take *Amrit* from the *Panj Pyare* so that no-one could throw it back in Guru Ji's face and accuse Guru Ji for not taking *Amrit* himself.

We reflect on the story about Bhai Mahan Singh and the 'Forty Saved Ones' (*Chalee Mukte*) many times, but fail to see how this story actually relates to the situation we are faced with today. It is said that these 'Forty Saved Ones' deserted Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Before leaving, they wrote a disclaimer, which said that Guru Gobind Singh Ji was no longer their Guru and they were not his Sikhs. After some time at the Battle of *Majha*, Guru Gobind Singh Ji visited the scene of where the battle had taken place. With great affection and reverence, Guru Ji lifted the heads of the martyrs and kissed their foreheads and blessed each and every one of them. When the Guru reached Bhai Mahan Singh, he held him in his arms. Bhai Mahan Singh was asked if there was any dying wish that he would like to be fulfilled. Bhai Mahan Singh asked the Guru to tear the disclaimer and forgive him for what he wrote. The Guru blessed Bhai Mahan Singh and the remaining 39 Sikhs and tore the disclaimer into small pieces before they left for their heavenly abode.

As Sikhs, we are continually writing disclaimers to our Guru and have no remorse or any consideration for the huge, countless sacrifices that Guru Gobind Singh Ji made for us. We need to wake up and realise the harm we are doing not only to our faith, but to our Beloved Father, Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Guru Ji sacrificed his entire family and so much more for the *Khalsa Panth*, just so that we could have the riches we enjoy today! Nothing in this world remains forever, but the Guru's Love always will.



An Artist's impression of Guru Gobind Singh Ji with Bhai Mahan Singh, tearing up the disclaimer.

Struggling with the practice of keeping your Rehat?

'Peace and happiness shall fill your mind deep within; if you act according to the Truth and self-discipline.'
(GGSJ: Ang 591)

Taking *Amrit* is a huge step in life and involves a lot determination and discipline from the individual both externally and internally. The many challenges our youth face today is the seed of doubt and fear, which causes one to question whether they should take *Amrit* or not. Many of these setbacks are based upon the practise of *Rehat*, wherein one begins to question whether they will be able to balance their *Amritdhari* (a baptised Sikh) life with their social or academic life. We tend to dwell more upon the hardships of an *Amritdhari* life rather than focusing upon the joys of being part of the *Khalsa Panth*.

One of the other drawbacks that we all have when contemplating on whether we should take *Amrit* is that we will make mistakes and be distracted by all sorts of negativity around us. The reality is that it is an inevitable thing within humans; we are prone to making mistakes. God didn't create you so He could throw you away once you made a mistake; but what He wants is for you to learn from these mistakes and purify yourselves from sin and punishment. By beating yourself over a mistake you have made is not going to get you closer to God, but realising the mistake and doing something about it, is something that will move you forward in life. However, it is up to the individual to rectify those mistakes and learn from them. The Guru is the forgiver of all mistakes, as Gurbaani says,

'Like the child, innocently making many mistakes, his father teaches him, and tells him off, yet he hugs and embraces him close in his heart.'
(GGSJ: Ang 624)

The mind is a rather complex creation, which is hard to describe. It can wander in all directions, but it is up to the individual to restrain the mind and bring it under control, in order to face any negativity that one may encounter in the future and in their *Rehat*.

The fourth light of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Ram Das Ji explains:

'This mind does not hold still, even for an instant. Distracted by all sorts of distractions, it wanders around aimlessly in the ten directions.'
(GGSJ: Ang 170)

Even when doing *Simran*, one may encounter various negative thoughts and distractions, which diverts the mind from full concentration on the *Gurmantar*. These distractions and negative thoughts are acts of *Maya*, who cunningly dares to distract the individual and break them from meditating upon the Lord.

Don't agonize over this; it is a natural thing that takes place during meditation and we should simply let it take its course. The best way for individual to deal with this is to let these negative thoughts and distractions come and go; eventually they will disappear. So long as you can maintain focus, in due course the mind will develop full consciousness upon the Lord. The more we attempt to fight against it, the harder it will be to concentrate and further negative thoughts will draw nearer. Once *Maya* realises that the individual cannot be broken from their meditation and sees they are fully immersed in the Lord's Name, it will flee from that individual.

'All the pleasures of Maya are tasteless and dull. In the end they shall all fade away. Perfectly content and supremely acclaimed is the one, in whose heart the Lord abides.'
(GGSJ: Ang 44)

By immersing yourself with the *Shabad* found within Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and the chanting of *Naam Simran* (the remembrance of the Lord's Name- *Vaheguroo*), you will find it easier to refrain from making mistakes and experiencing any negativity. Whenever or wherever you get the opportunity to meditate upon the *Gurmantar*, grasp that opportunity.

'While you are standing and sitting, while sleeping and while awake, meditate on the Lord, all your life.'
(GGSJ: Ang 101)

Once the mind has been restrained, Bhagat Kabeer Ji says:

'Conquering the mind, one conquers the world, and then remains detached from corruption.'
(GGSJ: Ang 1103)

So putting the setbacks to one side, we need to look at what is *Rehat* and how we can try to fit it in our everyday life.

Firstly, Guru Gobind Singh Ji provided us all with a *Rehat Maryada*, which is a structural framework on how to live a spiritually uplifting and holy life combined with our lives as householders. These things are to be exercised on a regular basis, so that it becomes part of one's daily routine and acts as a provision for spiritual growth and self-discipline. It demands responsibility and faith, but is fashioned for a more fixed and spiritual way of life. The practice of *Rehat* allows one to remain stable, disciplined and above all to uphold the Truth. Guru Gobind Singh Ji has expressed that it is not merely the Sikh that I love or adore, but what is actually practised by that Sikh.

*'One who is in discipline is my disciple, then He's my Master and I am his disciple.
Without the discipline [practice of Rehat] one cannot call them a Sikh; without the discipline one suffers in the Lord's court.
Without the discipline one cannot be in peace, devoid of discipline Lord makes you poor'.
(Rehatnameh: Bhai Desa Singh Ji)*

Whether you are already *Amritdhari* or are simply practising your *Rehat* for when you are ready to take *Amrit* in the future, there are many ways in which we can look at the practise of *Rehat*. A more understanding way of looking at *Rehat* is similar to an academic lifestyle.

Firstly, we all have a set routine before going to school, college or work, whether this is through co-ordinated timing or a chronological order in the way you do something when you get up in the morning (i.e. what time you are going to get up, what time you are going to have your breakfast, etc). You should attempt to structure and program your routine in the same way as you do for school/college for your *Amritvela* (the spiritual and peaceful time in the early hours of the morning between 12-5am, where Sikhs are commanded to wake up and do their morning prayers) as well. It may be a challenge at first, but as they say "practice make perfect". Once you get into the routine it becomes much easier.

Obviously, there will be some days where you will feel slightly idle and can't be bothered to wake up... yup you just need that extra two hours sleep. Try to fight against these thoughts and see this as a test of your dedication and perseverance from your Guru; how dedicated are you towards your Guru? Those extra hours of sleep you feel that you need to catch up on will most likely turn into another five hours. Those hours will swiftly drift away and you won't realise where the time has gone. Remember we cannot change time, but we can change our self-being. Losing your *Amritvela* or not completing your *Nitnem* is like a day that has gone to complete waste.

*'The world is asleep in the three modes and doubt; it passes the night of its life sleeping.
Those humble individuals remain awake and conscious, within those minds, by the Guru's Grace, the Lord abides; they chant the Ambrosial Word of the Guru's Divine Revelation.'*
(GGSJ: Ang 920)



*'Kabeer, what are you doing sleeping? Wake up and sit up.
Attach yourself to the One, from whom you have been separated.'*
(GGSJ: Ang 1371)

Instead of beating yourself over the fact you got up late for your *Amritvela*, simply make amends and promise yourself to turn over a new leaf the next day and start again. Perform an *Ardaas* after completing your *Keertan Sohila* and ask Guru Ji to bless you with the ability to awake at the ambrosial hours of the morning. Don't simply fall at the first hurdle or see yourself as a failure. Prioritise your time well and set yourself realistic goals that are achievable and fit well within your daily schedule. You need to chalk out these aims and goals whilst you are on this journey and remain firm by them.

A great tip for getting up for your *Amritvela* is by eating less the night before and drinking at least two or more glasses of water before going to bed. This will stop you from feeling bloated and so exhausted that you struggle to get out of bed.

'Eat less and sleep less.'
(Sri Dasam Granth: Ang 709)

On having your *Ishnaan* (A spiritual act of washing and cleansing yourself with a prayer and water at the ambrosial hours of the morning), ensure the water is not too hot, but at lukewarm temperature. This reason for this is, by having a bath with hot water in the morning will cause one to experience drowsiness and tiredness, whereas a warm or cold bath will reduce the effects of this. As a result of this the nervous system is awakened by the contraction of your muscles and blood vessels.

Sant Baba Nand Singh, Nanaksar Kaleramwale said before taking your *Ishnaan*; ensure that the area you bathe in is clean and free of any dirt. So before taking a bath, make sure that you quickly rinse the bath/shower. This is not a ritualistic practice, but is maintaining and up keeping hygiene.



Furthermore whilst having your *Ishnaan*, ensure that you contemplate upon the Lord's Name by chanting the *Gurmantar-Vaheguroo*. By remembering the Lord's Name during your *Ishnaan*, it doesn't make your daily baths a ritualistic practice. Not only do you physically cleanse your body, but you are also spiritually cleansing your soul at the same time.

As *Gurbaani* explains:

'O Siblings of Destiny, filth is washed away by bathing in the Pure Water of the Name.'
(GGSJ: Ang 57)

It is easy to call yourself a Sikh, but what a Sikh represents and how you act upon this is another thing. Our failure lies within ourselves, due to distractions from our environment. Our failure to maintain our *Rehat* automatically makes our *Rehat* a claimant because you're not doing out of love or dedication. Worshipping God is not a burden; in fact your prayer to God takes away a heavy burden and you are honouring yourself as a servant of God.



An Artist's impression of the fourth Light of Guru Nanak,
Guru Raam Daas Ji

Guru Raam Daas Ji, the fourth Light of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, beautifully explains that,

Mehla 4

'One who calls him or herself a Sikh of the True Guru, shall rise in the early hours of the morning and meditate upon the Lord's Name.

Upon rising early in the morning, he or she is to bathe and cleanse themselves in the pool of nectar.

Following the commandments of the Guru, he or she is ordered to chant the Lord's Name. All sins, faults and negativity shall be removed.

Then, at the rising of the sun, he or she is ordered to sing the praises of the Guru; where sitting or standing up, he or she is to meditate upon the Lord's Name.'

(GGSJ: Ang 305)

Each breath you take, each word you chant or speak of God, God is listening to you. Pray for protection and guidance of His commandments in this time of test. Don't sell your salvation for worldly things and attachment to *Maya*.

There is a famous English proverb, which says, '*Actions speak louder than words.*' It all lies in one's actions and how one finds motives for loving God and remaining faithful.

Remember *Rehat* is all about progression and moving forward, not backwards. In order to achieve something in life, one needs passion, determination and complete dedication. Attempting to avoid the major sins in life and living up to the expectations of your *Rehat* will therefore result in progression and protection from the Lord Himself. Do not simply see your *Rehat* as something you **have to do**, but see it and feel it as something you **want to do**.

Amritvela Nitnem (12:00am-5:00am)	Your own Daily routine with times can be allocated within the table (6:00am-5:00pm) below Allocate times in the shaded rows	Evening Nitnem (5:00-7:00pm)	Your own Daily routine with times can be allocated within the table (7:00pm +) below Allocate times in the shaded rows	Night Nitnem (depends on the individuals sleeping time)
Jap Ji Sahib Jaap Sahib Tav Prasaad Swaiyeh Chaupai Sahib Anand Sahib Naam Simran and Mool Mantar Ardaas	TIME	Sampooran Rehraas (incl. Sampooran Chaupai Sahib and Anand Sahib) Ardaas Aarti (Damdami Taksal or Nanaksar) or Aarti Aarta (Budha Dal) Naam Simran and Mool Mantar	ACTIVITY	Rakhia De Shabad (to find these Shabads, which are read before the Keertan Sohila, refer to a Damdami Taksal, Nanaksar or Budha Dal Gutka) Keertan Sohila Ardaas Naam Simran and Mool Mantar
Additional Baanis Shabad Hazaaareh Shabad Hazaaareh Patshahi: 10 Swaiyeh Deenan Patshahi: 10 Chandi Di Vaar Sukhmani Sahib Aasa Ki Vaar Basant Ki Vaar Ramkali Ki Vaar Slok Mahla 9 Akaal Ustat 33 Swaiyeh	TIME		ACTIVITY	

Top Tips

- Prioritise your time!!
- Make a timetable for yourself if necessary.
- Go to sleep at a reasonable time and stick to going to sleep at that time on a daily basis. The whole point is to get into a routine. Program yourself and time effectively.
- Have enough time to sleep so that you do not feel tired when getting up at *Amritvela*.
- Set a reasonable time to get up (i.e. 3-4am). Once you are used to getting up at a set time, gradually set yourself goals to try getting up earlier.
- Cut down on using MSN, Facebook, and MySpace etc. If you really need to go on any of these sites for whatever reason, then access them at a reasonable time so that it doesn't affect your timing or routine.



facebook

msn

- Ask for Guru Ji's blessing to wake you at the ambrosial hours of the morning when you are performing your *Ardaas*.
- Set aside some time (about half an hour, for example) to do your *Rehraas* in the evening (the homework or work excuse cannot be used then). This can only be achieved so long as you prioritise your time.
- Take time to think of ways to improve your *Rehat* (i.e. increasing your *Nitnem* with more *Baanis*, speaking to a friend or another *Gursikh*, who is in the same situation as you or one who can give you stable advice).
- If you cannot read *Gurmukhi*, listen to the audio of the *Nitnem* (available on the net), following a *Gutka*, which has the transliterations at the same time.
- For those who can read *Gurmukhi*, the best advisable *Gutka* to use would be one that has been printed by *Damdami Taksal*.
- Ensure maintenance of the *Panj Kakkar* at all times.
- Control all negative energy and look for something positive through the teachings of *Gurbaani*.
- Cause yourself to contemplate on the *Gurmantar* whenever and wherever you can, as Guru Arjan Dev Ji enlightens us with:

***'Whilst walking and sitting, sleeping and waking, contemplate within your heart the
Gur Mantra.'***
(GGSJ: Ang 1006)

- Try attending Sikh events where the *Sangat* congregation meets together; this can be beneficial to you for inspiration and sharing experiences.
- Read Sikh History on the Internet to increase your knowledge and love for Sikhi (see *'Useful Links'*)
- Follow your soul not the crowd!

Understanding your Daily Prayers

*'Gurbaani is the jewel, the treasure of devotion.
Singing, hearing and acting upon it, one is enraptured.'
(GGSJ: Ang 376)*

As a practising Sikh, you know that you are permitted to recite a number of *Baania* (prayers), known as *Nitnem* ('Nit' meaning daily and 'Nem' meaning prayer), which are designed to personally relate and connect with the soul, bringing absolute peace and satisfaction to the soul. Throughout these prayers, the Gurus emphasise on the importance of meditation and the worship of God, which act as a spiritual discipline for a Sikh. The *Baania* symbolises the spiritual communication between the soul and the Lord.

Each *Baani* is written in consecutive *pauria* (steps or stanzas), which are symbolic, as they symbolise that the Guru is moving us up the ladder of spirituality and causing us to progress and to become spiritually stronger. Each *Baani* has an underlying meaning and will be explained in simple terms for all to understand how they relate to your life.

Morning Prayers (*Amritvela*; the ambrosial period of the morning, before sunrise):

Jap Ji Sahib: This is a composition by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji begins with the *Jap Ji*, which contains the *Mool Mantar* (the Divine Revelation given by God):

'There is the One Universal Creator Lord of all. His Name is the Eternal Truth. He is the Supreme Creator, whose light is embodied in all of His creation. He has no Fear, Neither does have hatred for anyone. He is Immortal, Beyond Birth, He is Self-Existent. He is realised through the Grace of the True Guru.'
(GGSJ: Ang 1)

The *Jap Ji Sahib* is a prayer designed for the whole of humanity, irrespective of one's religious beliefs. It describes the spiritual journey that the individual enters, known the *Panj Khand* (the five realms of spirituality), what is a righteous and truthful way of living and how to obliterate falsehood and sin. Furthermore, the Guru takes the individual along the path of realisation, understanding of the many cosmos and the realm of knowledge of the Divine Truth. The Guru speaks about karma; it is through righteous deeds that one can achieve complete union with the Lord and salvation, for one's karma determines what is going to happen next.

Jaap Sahib: This is a composition by Guru Gobind Singh Ji and is the first prayer in Sri Dasam Granth. The *Jaap Sahib* talks of the countless names that the Lord has, the praises and limitless qualities that He has. He is seen through the eyes of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who says He is the Ultimate Truth, without colour, gender, caste, creed and family lineage. He is the creator, preserver and destroyer of all His creation. There is no-one parallel to the Lord, for He is so profound and deep. The title *Jaap Sahib* is so unique, for when the word is broken into two syllables, it reads *Jaa* (which means 'go' in Punjabi) and *aap* (which means 'yourself' in Punjabi). The purpose of this is to reinforce the message that the individual must let go of their entire ego and let themselves become one with the *Shabad* or Truth.

TavPrasaad Svaiye: This is another composition of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, which has been taken from *Akaal Ustat*. This *Baani* is for the true believers of One God, which talks of many saints, gods and goddess who have failed to understand the worship and greatness of the Lord. Guru Gobind Singh Ji talks of the countless useless rituals, ceremonies, worshipping idols and dead people, empty recitation of religious books, which people falsely believe will bring them closer to God. The Guru has outlined that none of these practices will be of any avail, as they do not practice the Divine Truth.

Chaupae Sahib: This is another composition of Guru Gobind Singh Ji from *Treh Charittar*. This *Baani* is a personal prayer to seek the Lord's protection and to liberate the soul. The prayer is to destroy all fears that one may have and the destruction of sinful enemies and tyrants. The *Baani* discusses the foolish souls, which believe that the Lord is contained in a stone and worship them blindly thinking they will reach salvation. The Guru is emphasising that the worship of the One Formless Lord will liberate one from the cycle of births and deaths.

Anand Sahib: This is a composition of Guru Amar Das Ji. This *Baani* brings happiness, spiritual bliss and harmony to the mind and soul. The *Baani* talks of many cosmos, the truth about the mind and body and how the soul can be saved from the cycle of births and deaths.

Evening Prayers (recited after sunset):

Rehraas Sahib: This is a compilation of hymns by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Amar Das Ji (*Anand Sahib*), Guru Raam Das Ji, Guru Arjan Dev Ji and Guru Gobind Singh Ji (*Chaupae Sahib*). This *Baani* talks of the numerous gods and goddesses, angels and prophets, who all sing the praises of the Lord. Furthermore, the Gurus talk of the greatness of the Lord, who cannot be made greater by mere words. The Gurus praise those who have great love in their hearts for One Eternal Lord and who practice the truth, they are blessed and have great destinies. This prayer is also designed to thank the Lord and ask for forgiveness for any sins we may have committed during the day.

Keertan Sohila: This is collection of hymns by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Raam Das Ji and Guru Arjan Dev Ji. This prayer is read before going to bed, in order to bring peace to the mind and soul and to banish the fear of death, which will come to everyone. This prayer also eliminates any negative thoughts or any bad dreams that you may experience. It is also designed to guard your soul to protect it when it leaves the body at the time of death.



'The Word of the True Guru's Baani (The Divine Revelation from God) is the embodiment of the Truth; through Gurbaani, one becomes perfect.'

(GGSJ: Ang 304)

Top Tips!

- ♦ Ensure that the room you pray in is free from any noise, distractions and clutter
- ♦ When washing your hands, ensure that you wash the tap afterwards, so that the taps are cleansed from anyone who may have previously touched the taps with unclean hands
- ♦ Keep a separate towel to wipe your hands with before doing your prayers, instead of the normal one in the bathroom
- ♦ Ensure that *Gutke* are wrapped in clean *rumalleh* and that they are kept in a high and dirt-free position in the house
- ♦ Before *Rehraas*, have *Panj Ishnaan* (cleansing of your face, feet and hands)
- ♦ Wear a *Hazooria* around your neck to use if you need to wipe or touch any part of your body
- ♦ When holding a *Gutka* in your hand, do not touch your *Kachhera* or face

* NOTE: Additional Baanis may be read during the morning and evening-refer to the Baani Chart for more information.

Understanding the meaning behind your Panj Kakkar

'How handsome is your turban and how sweet is your speech!'
(GGSJ: Ang 727)

The *Panj Kakkar* were designed to remind Sikhs that they are part of the *Khalsa Panth* brotherhood and the way in which a Sikh should live his/her life. They are not ritualistic items and should not be removed from the body at any time.

There is a simple reason for this. The external identity was not designed to make one think that by adopting this identity they will become intrinsically better, but it symbolises a physical way in which a Sikh is able to show obedience and commitment to the teachings of the Sikh Gurus in leading a spiritual and honest life. The '*Panj Kakkar*' serves this purpose, as a constant reminder of this commitment and devotion, which plays a continuous part in a Sikh's daily life.



The outer appearance also serves a purpose of reflection. When a Sikh looks in the mirror, it should reflect what the *Khalsa* represents; **purity**. It reinforces the concept of the internal commitment to the Truth and to the True Lord God, *Vaheguroo*.

The poet Sainapat, a court poet at the time of Guru Gobind Singh Ji writes in the "*Sri Gur Sobha*" that the Sikhs gathered around the Guru and asked him: "*What body will the Lord now take?*" The Guru answered:

"In the Khalsa will you see me; with the Khalsa is my sole concern; my physical form have I bestowed upon the Khalsa."

(*Sri Sarbloh Prakash Granth: Chapter 5, Verse 458*).

The following *Kakkar* that were bestowed by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699 are as follows:

Kes: Unshorn hair from any part of the body. The distinct appearance of a Sikh is the *Kes* (uncut hair), which plays a vital part in a Sikh's life, for it is a reflection of a Sikh's devotion to the Lord God, *Vaheguru*. Sikhs believe that when God created the human form He gave *Kes* for a particular reason; whatever reason that may be, Sikhs believe it is extremely important that we do not in any way interfere with the Lord's creation, thus preserve this identity. This also means not dying or colouring the *Kes*.

**"Maintain and look after your Kes. Do not remove or cut any hair."
(Gur Panth Prakash: Rattan Singh Bhangu)**

One reason why Sikhs believe that the *Kes* were given to us was that those who remember the Lord in meditation would reach a certain stage, where each cell would repeat His Name and it would no longer be needed to chant the Lord's Name via the mouth. Each hair would eventually act an individual tongue repeating His Name twenty four hours a day, providing total bliss to the mind body and soul.

The *Kes* are seen a symbol of strength and spirituality, which lies at the heart of the Sikh Dharma (way of life). *Kes* are considered as a gift from God, which are kept unshorn and as ordained by the Sikh Gurus. The *Kes* are tied up and covered with a *Keski* or *Dastar* (Sikh head covering worn by both male and females) at all times, which prevent the *Kes* from being exposed to dirt. The *Kes* should not be plaited. Guru Gobind Singh Ji clearly specified that *Kes* is one of the mandatory *Kakkars* because he knew that in time to come the *Kes* will not be entirely honoured or preserved by some Sikhs themselves, as is seen today.

**"Kara, Kirpan, Kachhera, Kangha are a must.
Without Kes, everything else has no value".
(Rehatnama Bhai Nand Lal Ji)**

Kangha: A wooden comb. Sikhs believe that keeping the hair clean and tidy is extremely important, therefore the *Kangha*; a small comb is used to do this. It is kept in place within the *Kes*, as it symbolises the discipline needed to maintain and develop the spiritual side to one's faith and nature. The *Kangha* in itself is symbolic, as it reminds Sikhs that just as we use the *Kangha* to comb out the knots within the *Kes*; meditating and chanting upon the Lord's Name removes ones anxieties and obstacles. The *Kangha* and *Kes* both evoke the meaning of one another.

Kara: An iron or steel bangle, which is worn on the wrist. The *Kara* symbolises many things. The main concept behind the *Kara* is that it acts as a handcuff. It is there to remind Sikhs of the commitment of upholding the Truth and that we should think before we act so that we do not commit any immoral mistakes. It also symbolises the spiritual bond that exists between God and the Sikh who wears it. The *Kara* signifies the oneness of God, who has no beginning or end, which is represented in the actual construction of the *Kara* itself. It also represents the concept of unity and equality which the Khalsa Panth represents, since all Sikhs are allowed to wear it, irrespective of their social status, colour or gender. Originally the *Kara* was used in battle and worn as protective armour for the arm and wrist.

Kirpan: A sword normally made from iron, which symbolises power and bravery. The literal meaning of *Kirpan* means the arm which guarantees that unjust actions would be blessed by the Lord and that unjust actions are not carried out against the weak and defenceless and for one to defend ones own honour. The *Kirpan* also symbolises both the spiritual and temporal way of living for a Sikh and to act accordingly when fighting for the Truth. The function of the *Kirpan* is not there to create fear or inflict any unnecessary violence upon others and should not be used irresponsibly. Furthermore, a *Kirpan* reminds a Sikh of the daily internal battle they have against fighting the *Panj Chor* (the five thieves of the body) and *Char Bujjar Karehat* (Four Cardinal Sins). The *Kirpan* acts as a source of defence and protecting the soul against these thieves, which act as a barrier on the path to salvation.

Kachhera: Long shorts, which are normally, knee length. This item of clothing was originally worn during battle and was seen as suitable and practical for going into battle; rather than the *Dhotee*, worn by Hindu men was seen as impractical. The *Kachhera* allowed easy movement and showed that Sikhs were prepared to take up arms to defend the Sikh Dharma and the Truth without having the fear of persecution. The *Kachhera* also symbolises purity and chastity; reminding Sikhs to refrain from pre-sexual relationships, adultery and fornication. The endless long cord used to fasten the *Kachhera* around the waist is symbolic in itself, as it demonstrates one's faithfulness to their partner and that a Sikh should control their sexual emotions by keeping it under restraint.

Maintaining your Panj Kakkar

'The teachings of the Guru are finer than the hair itself; the Sikh should always follow them.'
(Vaar Bhai Gurdass Ji: Ang 4)

Below are instructions and advice given on how to maintain your *Kakkar* properly, as many of you have probably wondered about how you should maintain them correctly and appropriately.

Kes: For those who are considering growing their *Kes* they should cover the *Kes* with a *Patka* or *Keski* (at least 2-3 metres long) to begin with. Once the *Kes* have grown to shoulder length, then it would be a good idea to start tying a *Dastaar* (which should be at least a minimum length of 5 metres, if not longer), as the *Kes* will be easier to tie up. Wearing a *Dastaar* was encouraged by the Sikh Gurus themselves and we should make the effort to start tying one daily. *Dastaar* colours may vary, but normally blue, orange, white or black colours are acceptable.

The *Maryada* from the *Budha Dal Purathan Rehat Maryada* for tying a *Dhumalla* should be in a cross legged position and have a *Hazooria* (a robe of honour) covering your knees so that your *Dastaar* does not come into contact with your *Kachhera*. For those who do tie a *Dhumallah*, the *Salok Dhumalleh Da* can be read whilst tying your *Dhumalla* (refer to a *Budha Dal Gutka*).

When removing your *Dastaar* make sure that you remove it turn by turn and not remove it like a hat, for this is regarded as being disrespectful and defies the meaning of a *Dastaar*.

*"If a Sikh removes the Dastaar like a hat
He shall suffer seven painful rebirths."
(Rehatnama)*

To learn how to tie a *Dastaar/Keski* you can visit www.sikhnet.com/pages/tyingturbans to watch various turban tying videos.



Whenever combing your *Kes*, ensure that all your *Kes* are gathered into a bunch and kept in a safe place at all times. Unwanted *Kes* should be burned. Sikhs should not throw away their *Kes*, for it is a gift from God and it is considered to be part of our body. This is not a ritualistic practice, for one must look at it in this way; if a limb is removed for whatever reason (i.e. a severe accident, which requires the cutting of one's limb for survival) then the limb isn't thrown into a bin, but is reduced to ashes to prevent any form of bacteria.

The *Kes* should be washed at least 2-3 times a week, if not everyday, for cleanliness is highly important for a Sikh. If you start to experience dandruff or dryness of the scalp, the best thing is to either find a suitable shampoo for your hair or massaging oil into your hair and leaving it in for a few hours before washing it out. The recommended oil to use before washing your *Kes* is either coconut or mustard oil; this oil eliminates dryness of the scalp, dandruff and keeps the hair nourished. Suitable hair oil may be

The *Kes* should be covered with a *Keski* or *Dastaar* to prevent any dirt on the *Kes*. The *Keski* or *Dastaar* should also be cleaned weekly or fortnightly; however the *Keski* that is worn to bed should be washed weekly.

Kangha: The *Kangha* should be cleaned everyday with water and soap to remove any dead skin that may have entered the teeth of the *Kangha*. If the teeth of the *Kangha* break or if the *Kangha* itself gets damaged then the *Kangha* should be replaced with a brand new one and the old one should be burned as well. Always keep more than one *Kangha*. If your *Kangha* accidentally falls out your *Kes* whilst you are asleep, replace the *Kangha* straight away and do an *Ardaas* to Guru Ji to ask for forgiveness. Those who follow the *Prathan Rehat Maryada of Nihang Singhs* will normally keep two in their *Kes*. This evokes discipline and dedication in one's *Rehat*.

"Comb the hair [Kes] twice a day, covering it with a turban [Dastaar/Keski] that is to be tied turn by turn."

(Tankhanama: Bhai Nand Lal Ji, p.57)

Kachhera: The *Kachhera* should be washed and cleaned daily and not left after a few days. If your *Kachhera* happens to rip or tear, then the *Kachhera* should be discarded the same way as the *Kes* and *Kangha*. The *Kachhera* must not be taken off whilst having a bath or shower, neither should it be taken off at once, but by taking out one leg, a clean *Kachhera* should be put on. Once one leg is in the clean *Kachhera*, then the old one may be removed and the new be put on fully.

"Whether the washed Kachhera is wet or dry it should be put on. When removing the Kachhera only one leg should be removed and put into the new Kachhera."

(Rehatnama: Bhai Chaupaa Singh Ji)

The *Kachhera* should not be flung over the shoulder as it could come into contact with your beard and *Kes*, for this is prohibited. When changing your *Kachhera*, ensure that your head is covered. Do not change it with your head uncovered.

"The sign of true chastity is the Kachhera; you must continually wear this..."

(Bhai Gurdas Ji, Var. 41, Pauri 15)

If for whatever reason your *Kachhera* is made unclean or stained, whether this may be by a menstrual bleeding, nocturnal emission (ejaculation of semen) or urine then you should change your *Kachhera* after having a bath. Do not wear the same *Kachhera* that has been removed until it has been washed. In addition the *Kachhera* should be washed by the individual themselves; just in the same way you comb your *Kes* yourselves and maintain the other *Kakkar* yourselves, so should the *Kachhera* be treated in the same way. The *Kachhera* is no different to the other *Kakkar*.

Kirpan: The *Kirpan* should not be removed from the body, unless you are going abroad, where you have to remove your *Kirpan* because of enforced travelling laws. In any other circumstances, the *Panj Pyare* should be consulted for advice. The utmost respect should be shown to any form of *Shastar* worn.

"The mark of a Khalsa is one who holds a Kirpan in their hand, by the wearing of which millions of sins are abolished."

(Sri Dasam Granth Sahib Ji: Ang 42)

When having a bath or shower, the *gatra* (the strap for your *Kirpan*) should be stably wrapped around the head. The *gatra* should also be cleaned weekly, as it gathers dirt when exposed outside and when one is asleep.

Those who follow the *Prathan Rehat Maryada of Nihang Singhs* will keep an additional five *shastars* in their *Dhumalla*, otherwise known as *Dhumalleh Shastar*. This evokes the concept of remaining disciplined spiritually and physically.

Kara: The Kara should not be removed in any circumstance, for it is seen as a religious symbol for Sikhs to wear. If one wears a Sarbloh (iron) Kara, they may experience some rusting of the Kara. The Kara can be washed with lemon juice or washing liquid, which will stop the rusting from happening (this can also be done to a Kirpan made from Sarbloh).

If you do not have any of the Panj Kakkar, a local Gurdwara will provide you with them. It would also be a good idea to practice wearing them for however long you feel necessary before taking Amrit. However, you must treat and show respect to the Panj Kakkar as outlined above

Char Bujjar Kurehit **(The Four Cardinal Sins)**

As Sikhs, there are Four Cardinal Sins that we should refrain from, for they demoralise the character of a Sikh. The Four Cardinal Sins are a way of maintaining discipline and to uphold a respectful and modest way of living at all times. A true Sikh is one who abides and accepts not only the teachings of the Sikh Gurus, but lives in accordance to the Sikh Rehat Maryada, as written within the Rehatnama:

"The most important principle is to forever remember and abide by the Rehat given the 5 Singhs' (the Panj Pyare) at the initiation ceremony (the Amrit Sanchar)."
(Rehatnama: Bhai Daya Singh Ji)

The following Four Cardinal Sins are as follows:

- **Hujamat:** maintaining uncut hair and not removing any hair from any part of the body
- **Hookah:** to not consume any form of intoxicant (i.e. tobacco, alcohol, drugs, etc)
- **Halal:** to not consume meat that has been sacrificed in the Halal (Muslim tradition) or Kosher (Jewish tradition) fashion, rather maintain a vegetarian diet.
- **Haram:** to not commit adultery, for this is seen as immoral and degradation of the individual's character

*"Meat, opium, drugs and tobacco;
Cannabis, wearing hats, another's woman and alcohol,
He who never even gazes at these evil sins,
Recognize them as my disciplined Singh (Sikh)."*
(Rehatnama: Bhai Desa Singh Ji)

Useful Links

Sikh History and other links dedicated to the promotion of the Sikh faith

<http://www.sikhchannel.tv>
<http://www.sikiwiki.org>
<http://www.sikhism101.com>
<http://www.sikhism.com>
<http://www.proudtobesikh.com>
<http://www.allaboutsikhs.com>
<http://sikh-heritage.co.uk>
<http://www.sikhnet.com>
<http://www.mrsikhnet.com>
<http://sikhee.com>
<http://www.budhadal.com>
<http://www.harianbela.org>
<http://www.nihangsingh.org>
<http://www.damdmitaksaal.org>
<http://www.sikhs.org>
<http://www.sikhismguide.org>
<http://www.realsikhism.com>
<http://www.srigurugranth sahib.org>
<http://www.sriganth.org>
<http://www.searchsikhism.com>
<http://www.sikhphilosophy.net>
<http://www.whychosesikhism.com>
<http://www.sikhsangat.com/index.php/forum/34-sikh-sakhian/>
<http://videos.gurudwara.net/>
[Show Sikh Videos Category List.aspx?CATID=2](http://ShowSikhVideosCategoryList.aspx?CATID=2)
<http://www.gurmatstudies.com/sikhhistory.htm>
<http://www.fateh.sikhnet.com/s/SikhStories>
<http://www.sikhguidance.co.uk>
<http://www.sikhsangat.com>
<http://www.nanaksarkaleran.org>
<http://www.unitedsikhs.org>
<http://www.rajkaregakhalsa.net>

30 Reasons to become a Vegetarian

(Type in PETA in Google)

Earthlings' documentary of how animals are treated within farms

<http://www.documentarywire.com/earthlings>

Ingredients list: foods which you may be surprised contain extract from animals

<http://www.khalsapanth.co.uk/food1.html>

101 Rehats given to Sikhs by the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh Ji and other Gursikhs of that time period

<http://www.sikhitothemax.com/rehat.asp>

Other Useful Links

Read *Gurbaani* and Translations

www.Sikhitothemax.com

Q & A Board about Sikhi

www.Sikhism101.com

Learn How to read and write *Gurbaani*

www.LearnGurbani.com

Learn about Sikhi

www.Sikhi.com

Live Chats with Sikhs to answer your burning questions

www.Talksikhi.com

Kirtan

www.Akj.org
www.keertan.org
www.keertan.net
www.gurmatsangeet.org
www.sikhroots.com
www.sikhsangeet.com

Katha

www.damdmitaksaal.org
www.katha.net
www.sikhee.com (Kirtan and Katha)
www.gurmatveechar.com (Kirtan and Katha)
www.nihangsingh.org/Audio.html (Kirtan and Katha)

Amazing Sikhi Events across the UK

Khalsa Camp- A one week event of learning and experiencing Sikhi that occurs once every year

www.khalsacamp.com

Sikhi Camp- Another week event where Sikhs meet in sangat to experience Sikhi and learn more about their faith

www.Sikhicamp.org

The S.I.K.H Camp- Another week of taking a chance and trying something new; for the youth to experience and understand spirituality, identity, gaining knowledge and humility

www.thesikhcamp.com



Dhan Mata Sahib Kaur, The Eternal Mother of the Khalsa

"Those whom the Lord attaches to the hem of His robe, are the True Ones at His door.

Blessed are the mothers who gave birth to them, and fruitful is their coming into this world."

(GGSJ: Ang 488)



*Dedicated to the countless Shaheeds of the Khalsa Panth,
who are living examples of the Guru's rehat.*