

'Sikhism is a religion of equality'

Here are a number of reasons why pilgrimage is important, along with some counter-arguments. Separate them into two categories, those that are for and those that are against the statement. Rank the two piles from which you think is the most significant reason to the least significant reason. Explain your most and least significant choices.

The langar, communal kitchen, is a symbol of equality and humility. Anyone is welcome to attend the gurdwara (and Harmandir Sahib) and receive a meal. This was set up by Guru Amar Das to reject the Hindu caste system and improve social cohesion.

We are conceived and born from women. Woman is our life-long friend and keeps the race going. Why should we despair her, the one who gives birth to great men?' GGS 473

Women are able to take up positions within the gurdwara. They can become a granthi where they will read the Guru Granth Sahib and conduct the service. Or they can be a ragi – someone who plays music in the gurdwara.

It is said that everyone shares the task of preparing, cooking, serving and cleaning in the langar. However, women tend to take up the role of cooking at the langar and this is their role in the home – to serve the husband and family.

Men generally take positions within the gurdwara. While the opportunity is there for women, there are still prejudices within the community, especially in India, that may encourage women to avoid the roles of granthi or ragi.

The Harmandir at Amritsar is a symbol of the rejection of the Hindu caste system and a symbol of equality. The four gates represent the rejection of the four castes and offer an invitation to all travellers from every direction.

The rejection of caste was originally for theological reasons as opposed to improving social divisions. 'Recognize the Lord's Light within all, and do not consider social class or status; there are no classes or castes in the world hereafter.' GGS 349

Sikhs have not succeeded in abolishing caste distinctions and as a result there are subgroups of Sikhs– Arora, Ramgarhia and Jat. While they would welcome each other at the langar, they generally marry within their groups.

Boys are generally favoured in Sikh families. It has been argued that boys get preferential treatment over girls and are awarded more freedom. Sex ratios in the Punjab region of India also suggest the practice of female infanticide (killing female babies).

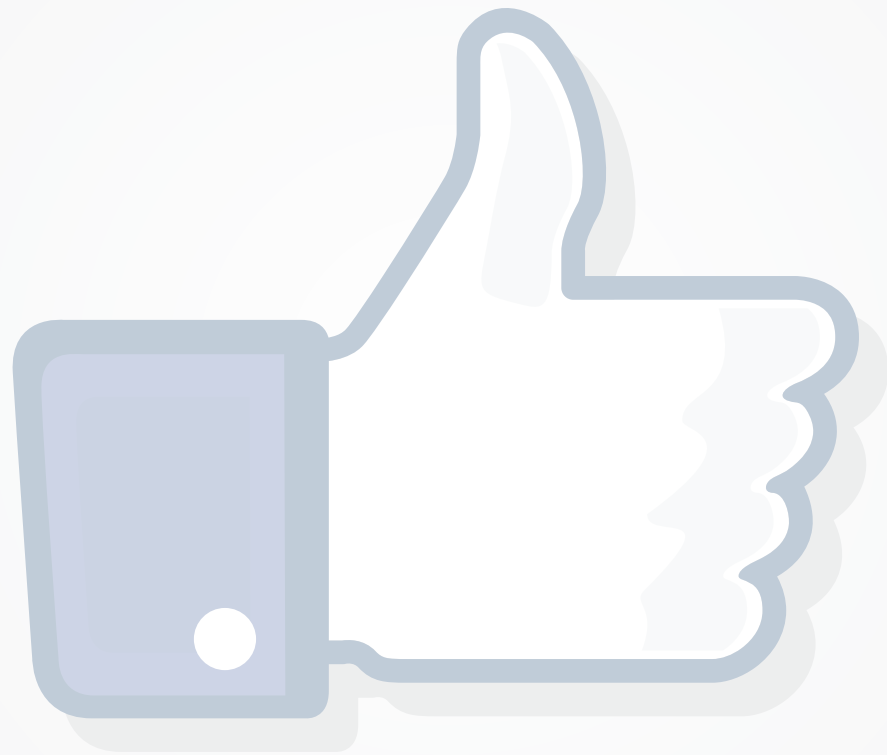
Read the article found at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/female-infanticide-affects-sex-ratio-in-punjab/article398285>. Complete a thinking hats activity once you have read it.

Research the subgroups of Sikhism to find others that have not been mentioned through this activity. A useful search term is 'different groups of Sikhs'. How and why are they different to one another? Think about key teachings, origins and practices.

'Pilgrimage to Amritsar should not be a priority'

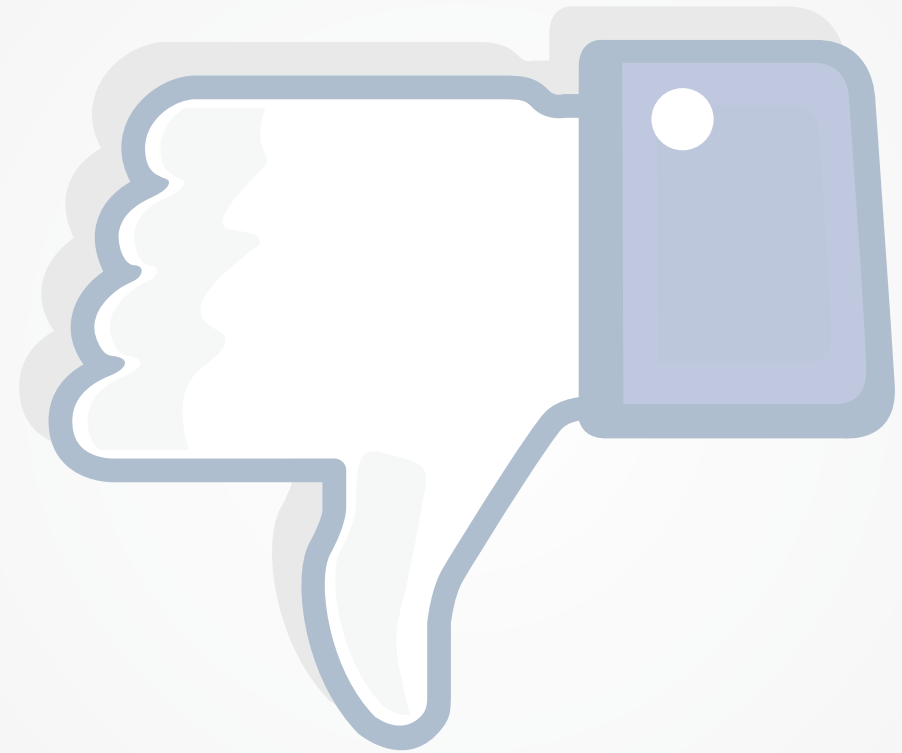
AGREE



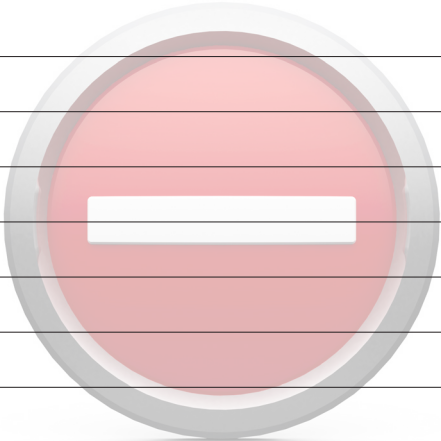

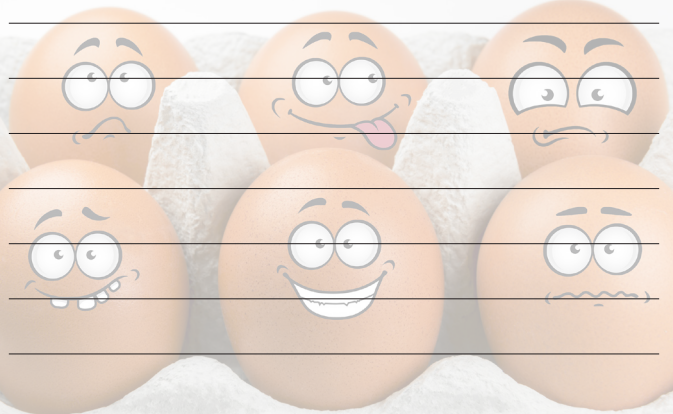

REASONS PILGRIMAGE SHOULD NOT BE A PRIORITY



DISAGREE

REASONS PILGRIMAGE SHOULD BE A PRIORITY



<p>What does the article teach me that I did not know before?</p>	<p>What are the positives of the article's subject?</p>	<p>What are the negatives of the article's subject?</p>
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<p>What were/are the alternatives to dilemmas raised through the article?</p>	<p>What do I feel about the subject of the article? Explain your answer.</p>	<p>What interesting questions can I think of, relating to this topic?</p>
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