

Key concepts

- Two of the three pillars of Sikhism – the other being Naam Japo (remembrance of God by repeating and focusing the mind on his name).

Kirat Karo

- To work and earn one's living through hard work, to live a family way of life and practise truthfulness and honesty in all dealings. It creates a more caring and strong community.
- To carry out good deeds and earn an honest and pure livelihood by exercising God given skills, abilities and talents for the benefit and improvement of the individual, family and society at large.
- To work with determination and focus and not to be lazy and waste time and to do this work without personal gain but with the motivation of dedicating the work to God. This is earning a livelihood without deceit or cheating. Honest earning keeps the mind pure.
- It is strongly advocated to do work and earn an honest living, and as well not to be a burden on anyone or on the society.
- The Sikh faith rejects renunciation - detachment from home, family or work, and strongly advocates the house-holder's life.
- Kirat Karo and Naam Japo represent the practical and spiritual aspects of Sikhism.

Vand Chhako

- It means to share what you have and to consume it together as a community.
- It can also mean to share wealth with others in the community, to give to charity, to take part in the langar and to generally help those in the community who need help.
- A Sikh is expected to contribute at least 10% of their wealth/ income to the needy people of the world or to a worthy cause.
- It is an action which leads to good karma and is an important step on the path of spiritual development and the pursuit of grace.
- It can also mean living as an inspiration and a support to the entire community.



Key quotes

'Those who understand the Lord's Court, never suffer separation from him. The True Guru has imparted this understanding. They practice truth, self-restraint and good deeds; their comings and goings are ended.' (GGS – p1234)

'Deep within the hearts of His GurSikhs, the True Guru is pervading. The Guru is pleased with those who long for His Sikhs. As the True Guru directs them, they do their work and chant their prayers. The True Lord accepts the service of His GurSikhs.' (GGS – p317)

'I have enshrined the Lord's Feet within my heart. Contemplating my Lord and Master, my True Guru, all my affairs have been resolved. The merits of giving donations to charity and devotional worship come from the Kirtan of the Praises of the Transcendent Lord; this is the true essence of wisdom.' (GGS – p718)

'The Gurus of the Sikhs inspire the Sikhs of the Guru to serve. Serving the holy congregation they receive the fruit of happiness. Sweeping and spreading the sitting mats they bathe in the dust of the holy congregation. They bring unused pitchers and fill them with water. They bring sacred food and distribute it among others and eat.' (Bhai Gurdas, Vaars, page 20).

Key words

renunciation	honesty	truthfulness	karma	pillar
spiritual	Naam Japo	householder	wealth	langar
charity	Kirat Karo	burden	community	grace
Vand Chhako				

Issues for analysis and evaluation

Key arguments/debates

Some would argue that materialism is more important in Sikhism than spirituality.

Others would argue that spiritual development is the main focus of Sikhism.

Some would argue that the material expresses the spiritual.

Key questions

To what extent can Kirat Karo and Vand Chhako be regarded as pillars of Sikhism?

Can one of the pillars be regarded as more important than the other?