

**Grade: 7**

**Course: Virṣā (ਵਿਰਸਾ)**

**Lesson Number: 15**

**Unit Name: Sikh Misals (ਸਿੱਖ ਮਿਸਲ)**

**Title: A Critical Examination of the Sikh Misals**

### Standards

#### **Standard 2: Sikh Misals**

- Students critically evaluate the fratricidal affects of the *Misal* period and their downfall.
  - Students should identify the reasons for the downfall of the Misals and how their actions did not follow Gurmat (ਗੁਰਮਤ) teachings.

### Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify the reasons for the downfall of the Sikh *Misals* in a large group discussion/ debate about the way that the Sikh *Misals* functioned in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### Prerequisites

- Students should be familiar with all of the Sikh *Misals* of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as outlined in Lesson 13 and 14.
- Students should have completed their homework from Lesson 14.

### Materials

- The article entitled “Brief History of Sikh *Misals*” from Lesson 13
- Map of Pañjab from Lesson 13
- An excerpt from *The Sikhs in History* (see Teacher Resources)
- Blackboard, or chart paper and writing materials

### Advanced Preparation

- The teacher should read the relevant sections from the recommended books cited in the Teacher Resources section in order to get a good understanding of the causes that resulted in the deterioration of the Sikh *Misals*.

### Engagement (15-20 minutes)

- Greet students and give them a couple of minutes to settle down and take out their notebooks.
- On the blackboard or chart paper, make a table with two columns. The title of this chart should be “Strengths and Weaknesses of the Sikh *Misal* System.” One column should be labeled “Strengths” and the other column should be labeled “Weaknesses”.
- Based on their readings and presentations ask students to think up as many strengths and weaknesses of the Misal system and volunteer their answers which should be recorded in the appropriate column of the chart or on the blackboard.

### Exploration (35 minutes)

- Distribute the section entitled “Demerits of the *Misal* System” from the article “Brief History of Sikh *Misals*” (pp 13 - 16). They should have this from Lesson 13.
- Read the article together as a class. The teacher should organize the reading of this text in such a way that each student gets the chance to read.
- As the students read the various sections, get them to highlight significant phrases, sentences and passages.
- After the students have read the section from “Brief History of Sikh *Misals*”, the teacher

should read the excerpt from *The Sikhs in History* included in Teacher Resources to the class.

- If there are any unfamiliar terms or ideas in the texts, the teacher should take a couple of minutes to explain and elaborate the necessary ideas.

#### **Explanation/ Extension (5-10 minutes)**

- Once all the texts have been read and important passages highlighted or pointed out, direct the students' attention to the blackboard and ask them if they want to erase, change or add anything to the chart.
- In the "strengths" column, students should include the following:
  - Ensured the survival of the Panth (ਪੰਥ) during foreign invasions.
  - The defeat of one *Misal* did not mean the defeat of the whole Panth.
  - The *Misals* increased the area of influence of the Sikhs in Hindostan.
  - Setting boundaries decreased the conflict between the *Misal* leaders.
  - Every soldier had the right to join any *Misal* s/he chose.
- In the "weaknesses" column, students should include the following points:
  - While conflict decreased with the creation of the *Misals* for a time, it also gave rise to jealousy and a desire to expand their territories arising in mutual discord and opposition.
  - Jealousy and infighting also led to the break-up of the organizational structure of the Sarbat *Khālsā* (ਸਰਬਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ) because some *Misals* stopped attending the bi-annual meetings.
  - Infighting destroyed the closeness and sense of purpose of the Panth as each *Misal* started to look out for itself.
  - Sikhs could not make themselves into a mighty and lasting power in India because, instead of paying attention to the larger political atmosphere, the *Misals* wasted their time in fighting with each other.
- When all changes have been made, get students to copy down the chart into their notebooks.

#### **Evaluation (On-going)**

- Get students to write a brief paragraph about the cause of the downfall of the Sikh *Misals* using information obtained from the reading and from the chart that was created in class.

### **Teacher Resources**

- Bainsarjī, Himādrī. The Khālsā and the Pañjāb: Studies in Sikh History, to the Nineteenth Century. New Dillī: Tulikā Books, 2002.
- Madrā, Amandīp Singh & Singh, Paramjit. The Rise of the Sikh Confederacies, Warrior Saints: Three Centuries of the Sikh Military Tradition. New Dillī: Timeless Books, 1999.
- Singh, Saṅgat. The Sikhs in History. New Dillī: Uncommon Books, 1999.
- Sikh Misals. Sikh Information. January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007. <http://www.info-sikh.com/PageMisal.html>
- Brief History of Sikh Misals. Sikh Missionary College. January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007. [www.rajkaregakhalsa.net/literature/General%20Sikhism/Brief%20History%20of%20Sikh%20Misals.pdf](http://www.rajkaregakhalsa.net/literature/General%20Sikhism/Brief%20History%20of%20Sikh%20Misals.pdf)
- Sikh Misals. Sikh-history. January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007. <http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhhist/events/misals.html>
- J.G. Bartholomew. Pañjāb. Imperial gazetteer of India. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907-1909. p 394

### **The Sikhs (ਸਿਖ) in History**

During the *Misal* (ਮਿਸਲ) period and the monarchy of Ranjīt Singh (ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ), no concerted effort was made to instil the teachings of the Gurūs (ਗੁਰੂ) in the people's mind or take care to keep those teachings in their pristine purity. After Navāb Kapūr Singh's (ਨਵਾਬ ਕਪੂਰ ਸਿੰਘ) death especially, the Brahminical subvertors had their heyday. This neglect proved very costly. The Sikh values were eroded and corroded in a subtle and not so subtle manner. Because of Sikh Sardars' (ਸਰਦਾਰ) carelessness, Brahminical ritualism took hold of the common man of all denominations—Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims alike. The Brahmins were aided and abetted by Udāsīs (ਉਦਾਸੀ) and Nirmalās (ਨਿਰਮਲਾ).

The Udāsīs had earlier, during the period of persecution of the Sikhs, managed the *Gurduārās* (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ) but did nothing to promote Sikhī. They were far from the Khālsā fold. Over time, they had relapsed into old Hindu practices and emerged as a monastic order. With the grant of *Jagīrs* (ਜਗੀਰ) (land grants) to Sikh *Gurduārās*, their outlook became all the more sinister. They did not encourage the participation of Sikh Saṅgat in the management of the *Gurduārās* and thus they progressively became like Hindu temples. They began to present ten Gurūs as *Avtārs* (ਅਵਤਾਰ) of Vishnū (ਵਿਸ਼ਨੂ) and Gurū Granth Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ) as the fifth Ved (ਵੇਦ).

Then there were Nirmalās who did provide teaching of Gurmukhī (ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ) alphabets and of the Sikh scriptures. Because of their Vedantic interpretation of the Sikh scriptures, their impact was not wholesome. They provided the groundswell in which the activities of Udāsīs and Brahmins could not be looked with disdain. The Nirmalās began to establish *Derās* (ਡੇਰਾ), hospices, wherein they began to practise Hindu rites for births and deaths, and provide guidance regarding Hindu *Sāhās* (ਸਾਹਾ) and *Nakshatra* (ਨਕਸ਼ਤਰ), auspicious or inauspicious days, and astrological fixtures. They ceased to provide correct leadership to the community. This went on during the period of Ranjīt Singh too.

*Excerpt from: The Sikhs in History. Saṅgat Singh. p 111-112*

**Evaluation of Sikh *Misal* Presentations**

<b>1. Knowledge and Accuracy of Information</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
○ The location on the map is correct					
○ Information is historically accurate					
<b>2. Comprehensiveness of Research</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
○ Includes leadership, location & size of Misal					
○ History of Misal is well explained					
<b>3. Delivery of Presentation</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
○ Eye contact is made					
○ Presentation is audible					
○ Group members look comfortable in front of the class					

**Total: \_\_/25**