

Grade: 8

Course: Virṣā (ਵਿਰਸਾ)

Lesson Number: 11

Unit Name: Singh Sabhā (ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ) Movement

Title: Social Situation of Singh Sabhā Movement

Standards

Standard 3: The Singh Sabhā Movement.

- Students identify the social situation when the Singh Sabhā began to re-assert the values of the *Gurū* (ਗੁਰੂ).
 - Students identify the various Sikh offshoots and the differences in their ideology with that of the *Khālsā* (ਖਾਲਸਾ). This section should include present-day groups that have diverted from the path. Linkages should be drawn between this period and present day.

Objectives

1. Students will analyze the social situation of the Singh Sabhā movement when it began to re-assert the values of the *Gurū* through reciprocal teaching. (Reciprocal teaching is a teaching strategy that involves four components: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting).

Prerequisites

- Lessons 8, 9 and 10.

Materials

- A copy of the reading and questions for each student (in Teacher Resources)
- Journals
- Pencils

Advanced Preparation

- Teachers should carefully look-over reading and questions.
- Teachers should feel free to ask additional questions to make sure students understand the dire situation of the Sikhs before the Singh Sabhā movement.
- Teachers can use questions from previous lessons to complete a quick review.
- Teachers can read more information on reciprocal teaching at:
<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/atrisk/at6lk38.htm>

Engagement (10 to 15 minutes)

- Ask students what was the importance of the Singh Sabhā movement based on their homework that they read at home, as well as the introduction in the last class? (They should say something about how it was a movement that tried to re-instill the values of the *Gurūs* because Sikhs were beginning to lose their identity by following many of the Hindū rites and rituals.)
- Correct students if they are incorrect or cannot remember.
- Have students briefly highlight information on the Nirāṅkāṛī (ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੀ), and Nāmdhārī (ਨਾਮਧਾਰੀ) movements.
- Specifically, you want to highlight how the Nirāṅkāṛī and Nāmdhārī movements began and how, though started with possibly good intentions, these were antithetical to Sikh thought.
- Complete the KWHL chart from Lesson 9 for these movements.

- Now let students know that they will continue to study the Singh Sabhā movement, but focus on how the situation was for the Sikhs before the Singh Sabhā movement.

Exploration (35-40 minutes)

- Each student should receive a reading.
- Students should form groups of four.
- Each student must read the entire reading silently.
- Then students, as a group, must complete each component of the reciprocal teaching.
- Students should develop:
 - A summary of the reading.
 - Have 3-5 questions to ask the group/class. These questions should go beyond factual questions to those involving high-level thinking.
 - Be ready to discuss any confusing points.
 - Finally be able to predict what will happen next. For example, they would predict the turn that the movement will take or how it will affect the Sikh Panth.
- Students record their points in their journals to share later with the class.
- Each group should assign a spokesperson for each component. This means that one student should be ready to read their summary from the group; another should be ready to read their questions etc.
- This process should take them about 20-30 minutes
- Ask groups to share what they have come up with and hold a class discussion. Let other classmates help with any confusing parts of the passage before you begin to clarify for the whole class.
- Focus discussion around understanding the need of the Singh Sabhā movement, the outcome of it, and bring it around to the situation of the Sikhs today.
- Use students' own personal experience to bring the topic to life, as far as the situation today of Sikhs practicing Sikhī is concerned.

Explanation/ Extension (5 to 10 minutes)

- There are additional thinking questions that you may ask the entire class and hold another discussion.
- Bring up the importance of education here and brainstorm a list of educational tools that students might recommend to get the correct message of Sikhī across. This would be in comparison to how they worked on trying to get contribution of Sikhs in the World Wars in their school curriculums. This would be specifically for the Sikh community.
- For homework teachers should have students write out answers to their questions in a 3-5 paragraph opinion essay based on Lesson 9 and Lesson 10.
- The criteria of the essay should be focused on developing an opinion around the material learnt. The opinion would be on whether or not the Singh Sabhā Movement was necessary. While it is up to the student to decide upon their personal opinion, the essay will need to have supporting evidence for the student's opinion from material learnt.
- Teachers should also notify students that more lessons will be taught around some details of the Singh Sabhā Movement.

Evaluation (On-Going)

- Teachers should collect homework assigned in this class and mark it for understanding of material taught in the two previous classes, as well as for student's strong opinion development around material.

Teacher Resources

Singh Sabhā Movement (ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ)

The Singh Sabhā movement from about 1873 to the 1920's will go down in history as the greatest socio-religious reform movement of the Sikhs. It came at a time when Sikhī (ਸਿਖੀ) was in danger of losing its distinctive identity. Had it not been for the efforts of the Singh Sabhā movement, Sikhī could have been absorbed into Hinduism as one of its sects which had happened to other religions such as Buddhism and Jainism in India. A contemporary observer noted: "Just as we do not see any Buddhists in the country except in images, in the same fashion the Sikhs—who are not everywhere distinctive in their turbans and their other religious forms like wrist bangles and swords—will be seen only in pictures in museums. Their own sons and grandsons, clad in coats and trousers and sporting mushroom-like caps, would go to see them in museums and say, in their pidgin Pañjābī (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ): Look that is the picture of a Sikh (ਸਿਖ)—the tribe that inhabited this country once upon a time. Efforts of those who wish to resist the onslaught of Christianity are feeble and will prove abortive, like a leper without hands and feet trying to save a boy falling off a rooftop" - *Khālsā Akhbār of Lāhaur* (ਖਾਲਸਾ ਅਖਬਾਰ, ਲਾਹੌਰ), May 25, 1894, from the pen of its editor Giānī Dīṭ Singh (ਗਿਆਨੀ ਦਿਤ ਸਿੰਘ).

This was the state of affairs before the coming of the Singh Sabhā. The Sikhs had lost their identity to rites and rituals, dogmas and superstitions to the point that the socio-religious fabric of the community had been damaged beyond recognition.

The Census of 1855 listed Sikhs as Hindūs (not until 1871 were they considered separate). The number of Sikhs embracing other faiths was beginning to increase steadily; especially, towards the Christian faith. Sikhs were shocked when Dalīp Singh (ਦਲੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ) and Rājā Harnām Singh (ਰਾਜਾ ਹਰਨਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ) of Kapūrthālā (ਕਪੂਰਥਲਾ) converted to Christianity. The low-caste Sikhs were more vulnerable to the Christian influence because of employment opportunities and better social status. "Before the movement had got well under way, the powerful Singh Sabhā editor, Giānī Dīṭ Singh, who met the raging polemics against the Sikhs with extraordinary literary and scholarly resource and who was one of the leading lights of the reformation, had to withdraw himself from the Sikh congregation at the time of the distribution of karahprashad (Kaṛāh Prashād – ਕੜਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ). The reason was that he came of a so-called low-caste family (*Cūṛā* - ਚੂੜਾ)." (Origins of Singh Sabhā - Harbans Singh)

The Sikhs were divided into two sections at this time. One regarded Sikhī as a distinct faith and the others thought it to be an offshoot, or a branch of Hindūism. Those that saw it as an offshoot or a branch of Hindūism also did not think it was necessary to follow the code of conduct (*Rahit* - ਰਹਿਤ) prescribed by Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ). This was because of propaganda in certain areas that the religious symbols of the Sikhs had lost their significance. The Singh Sabhā played a significant role in the socio-religious rebirth of the Sikh community. It helped in making Sikhs aware of their great spiritual and cultural heritage, of their being the "*Khālsā*. It brought them back to being an independent community, bound together by faith in the teachings of their *Gurūs*, distinct social laws, customs and language. The keynote of the Singh Sabhā was, "Back to the Gurū Granth Sahib" (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ).

Source: The Sikh Review January 2006 issue. 'The Singh Sabhā Movement' by Dr.G.S. Dhillon Ph.D.

Thinking/Discussion Questions:

1. What was the state of the Sikh affairs in general before the Singh Sabhā movement?
2. How does the quote about Sikhs being a forgotten tribe, only spoken about in museums, makes you feel? Taking into account what you know about Sikh history during the time of the *Gurūs* how would you react to the quote?
3. Have you ever felt the need to convert or leave Sikhī (move away from Sikh beliefs)? Why? Or why not?
4. Do you believe we are going through a similar time now with so many young Sikhs giving up their identity and older Sikhs following rituals that are not in line with Sikh thoughts? Or do you think the opposite is true and we are benefiting from the Singh Sabhā movement even today? Highlight experiences that you have had to support your answers.

Answer to Question 1:

Students should say something about how the Sikhs were becoming more superstitious and following rituals. Many of them were converting to other faiths and losing their distinct identity.

Answers to Questions 2-4:

This will vary based on the student's experience. Please be open to all answers and guide discussion accordingly.

What I Know	What I Want to Find Out	How I Can Learn More	What I Have Learned

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