GUIDE · SIKHISM

A guide for people of the Sikh tradition.

Sikh teaching already puts weight on how a person lives toward others: kirat karni (honest work), vand chakna (sharing), and seva (selfless service), with the langar kitchen open to everyone as the daily practice. The Gurus also speak of deeds being weighed before God and of mercy and compassion as true wealth. Sikhs understand this within naam japna, remembrance of God, so these themes sit beside the guide's idea rather than matching it exactly.



In your own tradition

> “Their names are various and endless, And they are judged according to their acts. True is God, and true is His court. There the elect are accepted and honoured.”
>
> GURU NANAK, JAPJI, STANZA XXXIV · MAX ARTHUR MACAULIFFE, THE SIKH RELIGION, VOL. 1, OXFORD: CLARENDON PRESS, 1909 · READ IT IN CONTEXT

> “Compassion is wealth, want of compassion useless. The sword is for warriors, justice for monarchs.”
>
> GURU NANAK'S REPLY TO MIAN MITHA, IN MACAULIFFE'S LIFE OF GURU NANAK · MAX ARTHUR MACAULIFFE, THE SIKH RELIGION, VOL. 1, OXFORD: CLARENDON PRESS, 1909 · READ IT IN CONTEXT

> “Becoming a shopkeeper I take a scale and try to weigh my actions in my heart.”
>
> GURU NANAK'S HYMN BEFORE LEAVING HOME, IN MACAULIFFE'S LIFE OF GURU NANAK · MAX ARTHUR MACAULIFFE, THE SIKH RELIGION, VOL. 1, OXFORD: CLARENDON PRESS, 1909 · READ IT IN CONTEXT

> “Lalo's bread had been obtained by honest labour and was pure, while Malik Bhago's had been obtained by bribery and oppression”
>
> MACAULIFFE'S TELLING OF THE GURU NANAK, LALO AND MALIK BHAGO STORY AT SAIYIDPUR (NARRATIVE TRADITION, NOT SCRIPTURE) · MAX ARTHUR MACAULIFFE, THE SIKH RELIGION, VOL. 1, OXFORD: CLARENDON PRESS, 1909 · READ IT IN CONTEXT

Five things to do this week

- [ ] **Eat or serve at a langar**
  Visit a nearby gurdwara and sit in the pangat (the shared line) to eat, or ask to help cook, serve, or wash dishes. Everyone eats the same food at the same level.
- [ ] **Do one seva nobody will notice**
  Pick a small act of service this week, such as straightening shoes at a gurdwara or carrying a neighbor's groceries, and do it without telling anyone.
- [ ] **Practice vand chakna with a stranger**
  Share a portion of what you earned, whether money, a meal, or time, with someone outside your circle who cannot repay you.
- [ ] **Review your earnings through kirat karni**
  Ask whether your work this week was honest and fair to others. Name one place to make it cleaner.
- [ ] **Sit with naam japna each morning**
  Spend a few quiet minutes repeating Waheguru or reading a few lines of the Japji, then ask how that remembrance shapes the day's dealings with others.

Questions to bring to your own teacher

- How do seva, vand chakna, and kirat karni fit together in a day, and which one is hardest to practice well?
- How does the Sikh teaching on karma and divine grace work together when we think about our deeds being weighed?
- What does a gurdwara or sangat expect of someone doing seva quietly, with no recognition?

What this guide is not claiming. Sikhs hold a range of views on how to read karma, grace, and the afterlife, and Macauliffe's 1909 English is a historical translation that modern Sikh translators render differently. This guide does not say Sikhism teaches that life is a test set by a higher intelligence. I am not a scholar of your tradition, and no tradition or its leaders have endorsed this site. Ask your own teachers and community what these passages mean to them.

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