



# SOJHĪ

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Vāhgurū jī kā Khālsā, Vāhgurū jī kī Phatah!

*These FAQs have been developed to provide a better understanding of the Sojhī curriculum. This is not intended as an academic paper and should not be read as one. Our attempt here is to provide a clearer understanding of issues or concerns that have arisen from users of the curriculum. We will continue to add to the FAQs over time and request that you send us any questions that you feel must be added to this.*

Gurū Nānak Sāhib reminds us:

ਭੁਲਣ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਅਭੁਲੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ ॥ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਮਨੁ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਲਾਗਾ ਤਿਸੈ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥ (ਮ੧, ੬੧)

*Everyone makes mistakes; only the Gurū and the Creator are flawless. One who instructs their mind with the Gurū's teachings comes to embrace love for Vāhgurū.*

Keeping this in mind we humbly submit that we have made typographical errors or have made poor choice of word usage in the curriculum, which consist of over 450 lesson plans and over 3,000 typed pages. We assure you though that with all of the lessons we have followed the principle of Sikh sovereignty, used Gurmat based inspiration and developed material in accordance with the Panthic Sikh Rahit Maryādā. In doing so, we have also taken an approach to help teachers provide the best available education to Sikh children through understanding child development, providing effective teaching tools and creating a standardization throughout the curriculum.

The Sojhī curriculums are draft curriculums that require constant changes for improvement. For that purpose we have maintained from the very beginning that teachers at schools who are using the curriculum must provide us with constructive feedback so that together we may make improvements for our future generations.

### 1. What guidelines were used in developing and reviewing the curriculum?

In developing and reviewing the curriculum five guiding principles were applied

- **Principles of Sikh Sovereignty** - As the Gurū wanted his Sikhs to be sovereign; the expectations in the standards indicate this principle. Sikhī is presented in a sovereign manner in all areas.
- **Accordance with Panthic Sikh Rahit Maryādā** - It is the policy of the project to uphold and avoid making any judgments not in-line with the Sikh Rahit Maryādā. While questions or topics have been considered for discussion, on all controversial issues Sikh Rahit Maryādā is upheld in letter and spirit.
- **Follow Gurmat based inspiration** - The materials presented are based on the spirit and letter of Gurbāṇī. The Gurū Granth Sāhib is the ultimate source of all materials. Importance is accorded to bāṇī of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib, the writing of Bhāī Gurdās and Bhāī Nand Lāl, Sikh historical traditions, and Panthic Sikh Rahit Maryādā. Sources that deviate from the principles found in these sources have been avoided.
- **Applicability to Gurmat and Pañjābī Schools** - Suggestions and ideas that lead to improvement with application of the plans in the Pañjābī/Gurmat school setting have been taken into consideration.
- **Improves Teaching Skills** - Suggestions aiding pedagogy and development have been considered.

### 2. What does the curriculum contain?

The curriculum contains lesson plans in Bolī (Language Arts) and Virsā (Sikh Heritage) for teachers and guidelines on Prabandh (school and classroom management) for both administrators and teachers.

### 3. Who developed the curriculum?

Both elementary and middle school curriculums were developed, reviewed, edited and designed by a team of 15 individuals. The team was made up of educators, child development specialists, subject matter experts and researchers.

### 4. Has Sojhī changed the Ardās (ਅਰਦਾਸ)?

No, Sojhī has not changed the Ardās! Sojhī had neither the intention nor the authority to change the Ardās. The Sikh Rahit Maryādā provides a model (ਨਮੂਨਾ) of the Ardās.

In Chapter III, Article IV of the Panthic Sikh Rahit Maryādā it states:

“ੜ(ੳ) ਅਰਦਾਸ ਇਹ ਹੈ”

ਇਹ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਦਾ ਨਮੂਨਾ ਹੈ । “ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮ ਭਗੌਤੀ” ਵਾਲੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਅਤੇ ‘ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ’ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਅੰਤਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਤੁਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ।

“3 (a) The Ardas text<sup>2</sup>”

This is a **model** of the Ardās. It may be adapted to different occasions and for different purposes.

However, the initial composition with "Pritham Bhagauti....." and the concluding phrases commencing "Nanak Nam" must not be altered.”

One typographical error was made in the text. “ਤੇਘਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਿਮਰਿਐ ਘਰ ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਆਵੈ ਧਾਇ।” should read “ਤੇਗਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਿਮਰਿਐ ਘਰ ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਆਵੈ ਧਾਇ।”

As with different written texts, there are different spellings. Similarly you may see some spelling difference in the curriculum that not everyone may be used to as well. Please read question on ‘*differences regarding spelling in the curriculum*’ for more details on this.

The Panthic Sikh Rahit Maryādā refers to the Ardās as a model, within which it says:

“ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨਨਕਾਣਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਗੁਰਧਾਮਾਂ ਦੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਛੋੜਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ, ਖੁਲੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਸੇਵਾ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਦਾ ਦਾਨ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਖਸ਼ੋ।”

The Sojhī curriculum is suggesting the following text:

“ਉਹਨਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਗੁਰਧਾਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਥ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਛੋੜਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ, ਖੁਲੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਸੇਵਾ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਦਾ ਦਾਨ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਖਸ਼ੋ।”

There is a typographical error in the print version of the curriculum which had ਉਹ instead of ਉਹਨਾਂ. This will be corrected. The generalization of *gurdwārās* we suggested, is in line with supplicating unobstructed visits, *sevā* and free management of **any and all *gurdwārās* around the world, not just confined to those in Pakistan.**

### 5. Are there differences regarding spellings in the curriculum?

Some differences in spelling will be visible in the curriculum. These differences are not solely based on Sikh Research Institute’s preference, but are prevalent in several texts at large. Some examples have been given below. The spelling in the curriculum is based on evidence of spellings available in the Gurū Granth Sāhib and documents by the contemporaries of the Gurūs. Further it must be noted that since there was no standardization of spellings for particular words among Sikhs, in an effort to create standardization in

teaching we have consistently used one spelling for any given word throughout the Sojhī curriculum. There may be typographical errors in some of the over 3,000 pages and we urge schools using the curriculum to notify us, so that we can correct these.

#### A brief explanation on the spellings are given below

##### ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ vs ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ (Vahigurū vs Vahgurū)

Both these spellings are present in the Gurū Granth Sāhib. Regarding the word *Vahgurū* and its variations, Kānh Singh Nābhā in his “ਗੁਰਮਤ ਮਾਰਤੰਡ” (Gurmat Mārtaṇḍ) says the following on page 818:

“ਇਸ ਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਅਨੇਕ ਉਚਾਰਣ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹਨ - ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ , ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ , ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ , ਵਾਹੁ ਗੁਰ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੁਦੇ-ਜੁਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ - ਵਾਹੁ, ਗੁਰ, ਗੁਰੂ, ਇਕੱਠਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ, ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਅਤੇ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ।

##### ਫਤਹਿ vs ਫਤਹ

Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib asked his Sikhs to greet each other with ‘ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹ.’ The word ਫਤਹ is available in different spellings. Some of the spellings are ਫਤਹ, ਫਤੇ, ਫਤਹਿ, ਫਤਹ, ਫਤੇ, ਫਤਹਿ. The letter ‘ਫ’ is available to us in the Gurū Granth Sāhib where as ‘ਫ਼’ was added through the Fārsī influence. While there are texts that use all different spelling, in the curriculum for consistency and to provide an example of a standardized spelling we have used ਫਤਹ or **Phatah**.

##### ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ (Gurū Teghbahādar Sāhib)

This spelling was taken from Bhāi Nand Lāl jī’s *Joti Bigās*. Bhāi Nand Lāl jī was a contemporary of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib who named all Ten Gurū Sāhibs (the Ten Nānaks). Since he was a contemporary of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib we feel that he is our best source. In an effort to standardize spellings for teaching purposes we have used this spelling throughout the curriculum. For consistency, in referring to all the Gurū Sāhibān we use the following format: “Gurū,” then the Gurū’s name as presented by Bhāi Nand Lāl and then “Sāhib”.

#### Other spellings for contemporary words

In the contemporary Pañjābī language many words are pronounced differently depending on the region in which it is used. Where there is no evidence or standardization of a particular word, the choice of spelling has been left up to the developer. It **should not** be misconstrued as lack of knowledge on the part of the developer if the reader considers a different word to be more accurate.

#### Spelling of words in English

There is no standardization of spellings in English, just as there is no consistency and standardization in Gurmukhī. You will find that the word ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ is spelt multiple ways: Wahegurū , Wahigurū , Wahgurū , Vahegurū , Vahigurū , Vahgurū, Vaaheguroo, etc . Keeping in mind transcription and transliteration rules, a linguistic approach has been taken to create consistency. More information on this transcription style can be downloaded from [www.sikhri.org](http://www.sikhri.org).

#### 6. What are Dohre (ਦੋਹਰੇ)? And in what context are they mentioned in the curriculum?

It is a custom to sing (generally speaking) three couplets (*dohre*) after the completion of the Ardās. These couplets are not Gurbānī, but rather they are the explications of the Gurū’s order (*Gurū phurmān* – ਗੁਰੂ

ਫੁਰਮਾਣ) and a reminder of the Sikh inspirational memory (*Sikh yād* - ਸਿਖ ਯਾਦ). Sikh Rahit Maryādā does not mention any *dohrā*.

The first two couplets are of Giānī Giān Singh from his work called Panth Prakāsh published in the year 1880.

The two couplets taken from it are:

#### **Couplet #1**

ਆਗਿਆ ਭਈ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ ਤਬੈ ਚਲਾਯੋ ਪੰਥ।

ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨੀਓ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ।

āgiā bhaī akāl kī tabai calāyo panth.

sabh sikhan ko hukam hai gurū mānīo granth.

*As was ordained by the Timeless, thus was established the Path*

*To all Sikhs, let this be the order, recognize the Granth as your Gurū*

#### **Couplet #2**

ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਕੇ ਮਾਨੀਓ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ।

ਜੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੇ ਮਿਲਬੋ ਚਹੇ ਖੋਜ ਸਬਦ ਮੈਂ ਲੇਹ।

gurū granth ko mānīo pragaṭ gurām kī deh.

jo prabh ko milbo cahe khoj sabad maim leh.

*The reverend Gurū Granth is the visible body of the Gurūs*

*Whoever wished to meet Vāhgurū should do so searching in the Sabad.*

Alternately, another couplet has also been popular in place of the second couplet. This is:

ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਜੀ ਮਾਨੀਓ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ।

ਜਾ ਕਾ ਹਿਰਦਾ ਸੁਧ ਹੈ ਖੋਜ ਸਬਦ ਮਹਿ ਲੇਹ।

gurū granth jī mānīo pragaṭ gurām kī deh.

jā kā hirdā sudh hai khoj sabad mahi leh.

Note regarding couplet #2: We came across several versions of this couplet within varying editions of Panth Prakash and at large; the differences ranges in few to several word variations.

The first line of the first couplet affirms the Gurū's order that the inauguration of the Khālsā Panth was a direct result of the Will of Vāhgurū (ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ). The second line reminds all Sikhs to recognize the Gurū Granth Sāhib as their Gurū. This is an unyielding reminder of Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib's order in the year 1708 at Nander in which he passed on Gurūship jointly to Gurū Granth and the Gurū Panth.

The current day Panthic Sikh Rahit Maryādā also defines Gurū Panth as such

- “(ੳ) ‘ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ’: ਤਿਆਰ-ਬਰ-ਤਿਆਰ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਨੂੰ ‘ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ’ ਆਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਦਸਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਦਸਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅੰਤਮ ਸਰੂਪ ਬੰਨ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਿਆਈ ਸੌਂਪੀ।”
- “(a) *The Gurū Panth (Panth's status of Gurūhood) means the whole body of committed baptized Sikhs. This body was fostered by all the ten Gurūs and the tenth Gurū gave it its final shape and invested it with Gurūhood.*”

Sikh traditions (ਆਤਮਾ ਗੁੰਥ ਵਿਚ, ਸਰੀਰ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ) maintain Gurū Granth Sāhib to be the soul or divine light (*jot* – ਜੋਤ) of the Gurūs. The aforesaid dohre may be interpreted to mean that the Gurū Granth Sāhib is to be considered the body of the Gurūs and, thus, should be treated as a body. It dangerously brings us closer to becoming idol worshipers rather than keeping us away from it..

Various writings, on the other hand, show us that for a vision of the Gurū, a Sikh is to seek the presence of the Khālsā. For example, Bhāī Prahlād Singh, in his rahitnāmā states: (note the similarity of the couplet with the one we sing today)

ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮਾਨੀਅਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ।

ਜੋ ਸਿਖ ਮੋ ਮਿਲਬੇ ਚਹਿਹ ਖੋਜ ਇਨਹੁ ਮਹਿ ਲੇਹੁ।

gurū khālsā mānīahi pargaṭ gurū kī deh.

jo sikh mo milbe cahih khoj inhu mahi lehu.

*Recognize the Gurū Khālsā as the body of our beloved Gurūs*

*Those Sikhs that seek the acquaintance of the Gurū, search within them.*

However, we have to understand the context in which Giānī Giān Singh wrote the couplet that we sing today in our Gurduārās and homes. The late 1880's were a beginning of a re-awakening within the Sikh community. It was the time in Sikh history when many individuals were claiming themselves to be the Gurū of the Sikhs or at least were demanding special reverence for being direct descendents of the Gurūs. In addition, the Hindū Brahminical practice of idol worship had entered the Gurduārās. In fact, there were idols installed in the Harimandar Sāhib and the worshipping of idols of Gurū Nanak and other Hindū deities was becoming common practice among the masses. Giānī Giān Singh, a prolific writer and kīrtanīā (ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆ), thought it necessary to send the message to the Sikh Panth that revelations of the Gurū (*bāṇī*) were to be considered the sole bestower of liberation and the object of reverence and not any individual body (ਦੇਹਧਾਰੀ - *dehḍhārī*) or any idol. It was a short-term solution to a specific contemporary problem and it worked – to some extent. Today there is no popular worship of idols in our Gurduārās. However, we have lost the focus on the vision of the Tenth Master. Our focus must once again come back to the holistic Gurū – the Gurū Granth and the Gurū Panth. As per the Tenth Master's command:

ਆਤਮਾ ਗੁੰਥ ਵਿਚ, ਸਰੀਰ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ।

*The soul resides in the Granth, the body is that of the Panth.*

The second line of Giānī Giān Singh's second couplet is also misinterpreted and misquoted. In the different editions of Panth Prakāsh the line is variably written as:

ਜਾ ਕਾ ਹਿਰਦਾ ਸੁਧ ਹੈ ਖੋਜ ਸਬਦ ਮਹਿ ਲੇਹ।

jā kā hirdā sudh hai khoj sabad mahi leh.

*Those that wish to purify their souls, delve into the Sabad.*

Alternately, (read commonly in our Gurduārās and homes today):

ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੋ ਮਿਲਬੇ ਚਹੇ ਖੋਜ ਸਬਦ ਮੈਂ ਲੇਹ।

jo prabh ko milbo cahe khoj sabad mairm leh.

*Those that seek to meet with Vāhgurū, delve into the Sabad*

Both of these lines, however, have the same message. The goal of every Sikh is to attain a state of oneness with the Almighty Soul. It is only through the exploration and acceptance of the Sabad that this state of divine union is possible. The key word in these lines is *khoj* – ਖੋਜ – *discover, investigate*. Today, we see

undue stress on recitation and repetition of *bāṇī*, specific *sabads* or even specific words from *bāṇī* as a means to solve our spiritual ills. Although the recitation of Gurbāṇī is necessary, it is the understanding, and further the imbuing of the message of the Sabad into our daily lives that is the goal of all Sikhs.

In Sojhī, we made this info available for the teachers so they can explain to grade 7 students the variations between the dohre. For more detailed version on understanding the *Dohre* please see attached lesson plans.

### 7. What is the Sikh Pledge of Allegiance?

The Sikh Pledge of Allegiance was created to help students feel a sense of belonging and faithfulness to the Sikh faith. It provides a focus for Sikh children to promise their solidarity to Sikhī. Because, there was nothing available for Sikh children to show their promise of loyalty (pledge of allegiance), Sojhī developed a draft of Sikh Pledge of Allegiance. Just, as with the rest of the curriculum, users are specifically notified that they may choose to teach the Pledge or choose not to. Sojhī has provided it as a recommended option as nothing was available in the Panth. It must be noted that each word in the Sikh Pledge of Allegiance was carefully chosen and is reflected in accordance with Sikh Rahit Maryādā and provides commonly used Sikh vocabulary as well as their English equivalents to help with easier understanding of the message. It states:

I pledge allegiance to the Nishān Sāhib,  
and to the Kaum – the Sikh Nation –  
for which it stands.  
With faith in the Akāl, Vāhgurū beyond Time and Death.  
Allegiance to the Ten Gurūs,  
And loyalty to the Gurū Granth and Gurū Panth.  
Fidelity to the Khālsā through the Khande-dī-pāhul  
and committed to Glory of Vāhgurū and Justice for all.

### 8. What is the Khālsā Anthem? Is it the same as the Sikh National Anthem?

In the Sojhī Elementary school curriculum, Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib’s savayā “*jāgat jot japai nis bāsūr*” (ਜਾਗਤ ਜੋਤ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ) is identified as “Khālsā Anthem.” This Sabad best describes what the Khālsā should be like and describes the characteristics and behavior traits. Though there is no mention of a Sikh National Anthem in the Sikh Rahit Maryādā, many people consider “*deh shivā bar mohi ihai...*” (ਦੇਹ ਸਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ ...) as such which has been popularized over the years. It was intentional on the part of Sojhī, not to use “Sikh National Anthem” as a title to avoid confusion. The word “anthem” in the English language means “song.” “ਜਾਗਤ ਜੋਤ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ,” is showcased to take an important look at the qualities of what the Khālsā is and what we inspire our children to ideally become. Schools may choose to call it the “Khālsā Anthem” or may simply describe it as Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib’s Bāṇī.

### 9. Has the Sojhī curriculum called Gurū Granth Sāhib ji a “book”?

Sojhī maintains Gurū Granth Sāhib as the eternal Gurū of the Sikhs. In the second grade curriculum there is a lesson on Gurū Arjan Sāhib and Ādi Granth. During the engagement session, we have asked teachers to pass out a poem so that students can read it to their partners while the partner writes it out. We have specified for the teachers that the focus is not on understanding the poem. The poem says “*the book itself is not my King*”, but in fact the “*resonate song of praise teaching me the values of my day.*” implying that the message of praise of the Divine is what one must learn from. It ends with “*Not the book, but what is contained there in brings me to the Gurū’s feet again. Before the Gurū Granth Sāhib I stand with*

*prayerful heart and folded hands. To Gurbāṇī-is my Teacher now. To the essence of the Ten Masters I bow*". During the exploration of the lesson topic, there is one statement telling children that the literal meaning of the word "Granth" is "book." The curriculum is not saying that Gurū Granth Sāhib is a "book." Granth literally means anthology and for the Sikhs, it is not merely an anthology, but the Gurū who we submit to, and hence, we refer to it as Gurū Granth Sāhib. Further in the explanation/extension section we ask teachers to "Tell them (children) that Gurū Arjan Sāhib did a very important thing and put all the Bāṇī together and then Gurū Gobind Singh Sāhib added some more Bāṇī and instated it as our Gurū." It is important to note that in order to teach young children, easy language needs to be used to give them context and to help them better understand and that is what we have done in the curriculum. It must also be noted for the readers that at different age groups there are different lessons highlighting Gurū Granth Sāhib.

**10. Who can I contact if I have any further questions on the Sojhī curriculum?**

You can contact us at [sojhi@sikhri.org](mailto:sojhi@sikhri.org) at anytime for any further questions on the curriculum.