

Workbook Understanding Sikhi

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From Understanding to Living

Why This Workbook? Why Now?

We live in an age of information overflow but a lack of true inner integration. With a single search, we can access countless translations, commentaries, and explanations of Gurbani, learning the meanings of words, collecting action points, listening to katha, attending classes, and taking notes. Yet even with all this knowledge, suffering often remains, anxiety continues, the mind stays restless, relationships still break, and peace can feel distant. This is because knowing about wisdom and living by wisdom are not the same. Many seekers spend their lives understanding spiritually at an intellectual level without fully absorbing it into their awareness and daily conduct. This workbook is created to help close that gap—to move from information to transformation, from understanding to living.

There is a moment—perhaps you’ve felt it—when you’re sitting in the Gurdwara, or in the quiet corner of your home, and the Gurmukhi flows past you like a river. The words are familiar. You may know the translation. You’ve read the literal meaning in books or on the internet.

But something stirs beneath the surface. A feeling. An intuition. A quiet whisper that says: there is more here than what the translation alone can capture.

That sacred intuition became the starting point of our journey. The spark was a simple two-minute katha video by AP Singh—brief, yet powerful enough to open a deeper way of seeing. From that moment, the path began unfolding, eventually becoming our first book, *Understanding Sikhi: A Journey to Inner Peace & Happiness*.

The Question That Changed Everything

Gurbani is beyond literal translation, how do we access it? How do we move from reading words to receiving wisdom? How do we transform scripture from something we study into something we “live”?

The answer, we realized, was already given to us by Guru Nanak Sahib Ji himself.

Naam Japna. Kirat Karna. Vand Chhakna.

These three pillars aren't just principles for living a good Sikh life—they're a complete methodology for spiritual transformation. And if they apply to every aspect of our existence, why shouldn't they apply to how we engage with Gurbani itself?

This realization became the architecture of our book.

Naam Japna: Diving Into Spiritual Meaning

Naam Japna—to meditate, to remember the Divine, to contemplate the Name (True Nature), to immerse ourselves in spiritual consciousness.

It is not simply repeating words while the mind wanders elsewhere. It is turning inward, staying present, and maintaining a living relationship with the Divine. Think of the difference between texting someone out of habit versus actually sitting with them, fully present and engaged. Naam Japna is the second one — intimate, alive, and real.

When we bring this spirit of Naam Japna to studying Gurbani, it changes how we read. We no longer just skim the surface of words. Instead we contemplate, we sit with each line and ask — “What is the spiritual essence here? What is Guru Sahib revealing about the nature of reality, the workings of the mind, the path to liberation? What does this mean for my mind, my suffering, my life right now?” This is spiritual absorption, where wisdom travels from the page into the heart and begins to actually change us from within.

Naam Japna is not a mechanical act. It is not the endless repetition of syllables tumbling from the lips while the mind wanders elsewhere — it is something far more intimate, far more alive than that. At its heart, Naam Japna is a **relationship** — a direct, breathing, moment-to-moment connection between you and the Divine. And like any real relationship, it is not sustained by words alone, but by presence, by honesty, by the willingness to simply *show up*. This is where **Ardaas** enters — the direct prayer, the personal conversation with the Divine that lives within you. In the middle of a crowded street, in the silence before sleep, in the quiet desperation of a difficult day — the door is always open. Ardaas is the voice of yourself speaking directly to the One it came from, and Naam Japna is the practice that keeps that line of communication clear, warm, and unbroken. To take the name of the Divine, then, is not simply to *say* — it is to **remember**, to *reach*, to turn inward and find that the Divine was never far away to begin with, but waiting, always, just beneath the noise of the world.

This is Naam Japna applied to learning: **“contemplation, depth, spiritual absorption”**.

Kirat Karna: Taking Action in Daily Life

“Kirat Karna”—to work honestly, to engage with the world, to put effort into meaningful action. Understanding Gurbani intellectually or spiritually is beautiful, but Guru Nanak Sahib Ji didn’t teach us to become philosophers lost in contemplation. He taught us to be “Gurmukhs”—people who live the wisdom, who embody the teachings, who put understanding into practice.

So for each salok in our book, we asked: “How does this translate into daily life? What specific actions can we take? How do we bridge the gap between understanding and doing?”

This became the “Take Action”—practical, implementable guidance for bringing each salok’s wisdom into your relationships, your work, your challenges, your choices. Not vague spiritual advice, but concrete practices you can begin today.

This is Kirat Karna applied to learning: **“implementation, practice, putting wisdom into action”**.

Vand Chhakna: Sharing the Gift of Knowledge

“Vand Chhakna”—to share what we have, to give generously, to recognize that abundance multiplies when distributed.

We often think of Vand Chhakna in terms of sharing food, sharing wealth, sharing resources. And yes, these are essential. But Guru Nanak Sahib Ji’s vision was far more expansive.

“What if we shared everything we have?”

Knowledge. Understanding. Insights. Realizations. The fruits of our spiritual labor.

When we keep wisdom to ourselves, it stagnates. When we share it, it grows—in us and in others. The act of giving creates space for receiving. The act of teaching deepens our own learning.

This became the “book itself”—our attempt at Vand Chhakna. Every insight we gained, every

spiritual meaning we contemplated, every action step we discovered—we wanted to share it all. Not to position ourselves as authorities, but to participate in the ancient Sikh tradition of “sangat”, of collective learning, of growing together.

This is Vand Chhakna applied to learning: **sharing, teaching, collective growth.**

The Vision: A Living Practice

“Understanding Sikhi: A Journey to Inner Peace & Happiness” was born from a simple but profound realization: “If Naam Japna, Kirat Karna, and Vand Chhakna are meant to be practiced daily, then our engagement with Gurbani should also be a daily practice—not a one-time reading, but a continuous cycle of contemplation, action, and sharing.”

Just as we don’t eat once and consider ourselves nourished for life, we don’t read Gurbani once and consider ourselves transformed. The wisdom needs to be:

”Contemplated” (Naam Japna) — again and again, discovering new depths each time

“Applied” (Kirat Karna) — in the ever-changing circumstances of our lives

“Shared” (Vand Chhakna) — so that our understanding benefits others and deepens through dialogue

This book is our offering to that vision.

More Than Translation

When you open these pages, you’ll find the Gurmukhi—the sacred original that carries vibrations beyond meaning. You’ll find transliteration—so the sounds can live on your tongue even if you’re still learning the script. You’ll find literal translations—the foundation we all need. But you’ll also find what lives beneath and beyond: the spiritual meanings that honor your intuition that there’s more here. The action steps that transform philosophy into practice. The shared wisdom that invites you into a conversation spanning centuries.

This is Gurbani as Guru Nanak Sahib Ji intended it: not as scripture to be preserved in glass cases, but as “living wisdom to be contemplated daily, practiced constantly, and shared generously”.

The Journey Within These Pages

Each salok in this workbook follows a deliberate architecture of awakening:

1. **The Foundation: Salok, Transliteration & Literal Meaning** - We begin where most resources end—with the basic translation. But we acknowledge its limitation: literal meanings, while accurate, often remain abstract, disconnected from the texture of daily life.
2. **The Mirror: Questions About Your Inner World** - Here, the work deepens. You'll encounter questions about your habits that turn the salok's lens toward your own consciousness—your relationships, your patterns, your pain, your joy. These aren't rhetorical questions. They're excavations. They ask you to identify “right now, in your actual life”, where this wisdom is already operating, where you're resisting it, where you're blind to it.
3. **The Laboratory: Creating Your Own Interpretation** - This is where transformation accelerates. You're given the spiritual meanings of key words—the building blocks—and then invited to construct your own understanding. Not to parrot what scholars have said. Not to copy what your teacher explained. But to wrestle with the salok yourself, to let it speak “through” you.

Why does this matter?

Because when you interpret Gurbani for yourself, something sacred happens: the wisdom stops being external and becomes internal. The salok stops being Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's words and becomes “your realization”. This builds not just understanding, but confidence—the confidence to engage with all of Gurbani, not just Salok Mehla 9, as a living dialogue rather than a distant scripture.

1. **The Practice: Expanded Action Examples** - Those sharp, concise action lines you've seen before. Here, they unfold into practical, applicable steps. These are not vague spiritual ideas. They're specific practices you can implement today—in your workplace, in your family, in your solitude, in your struggles.
2. **The Integration: Discussion Questions** - Finally, we bring it all together through scenarios and situations. How does this salok apply when you're consumed by ambition? When grief overwhelms you? When does success intoxicate you? These questions are designed for honest exploration—whether you're working through them in a group, with a partner, or in the raw honesty of your own journal.

What Makes This Different?

This workbook operates on a radical premise: “You already have everything you need to understand Gurbani. You simply need the right questions to unlock it” We’re not here to give you more information. We’re here to activate the wisdom that’s already dormant within you. The saloks aren’t teaching you something foreign—they’re reminding you of what you’ve forgotten, revealing what you’ve overlooked, awakening what’s been asleep.

The Root of Suffering

As you move through these pages, you’ll begin to see patterns. You’ll notice how your mind creates suffering. You’ll identify the root causes of your pain—not in abstract philosophical terms, but in the concrete mechanics of your daily thoughts, reactions, and choices.

You may begin to see that much of our pain does not come only from life itself, but from the mind’s way of reacting to it. The mind holds on to the past, fears the future, and often creates suffering around things that have not even happened—and may never happen. At times, it does not just make pain heavier; it invents it.

We suffer not only because of what happens, but because the mind keeps replaying, imagining, resisting, and worrying. Peace is lost not because it is forgotten, but because the mind keeps searching for trouble in the wrong places. When the saloks are truly absorbed, they do not just explain this—they help quiet the mind and dissolve the suffering.

An Invitation to Honesty

This workbook demands something rare and precious: “your complete honesty.”

There’s no value in performing spirituality here. No benefit in writing spiritual interpretation what sounds good or what you think you “should” believe. The discussion questions, the personal interpretations, the self-inquiry—all of it only works if you’re willing to be ruthlessly truthful with yourself.

This is for those who want real change, not comfortable concepts.

This is for those who are tired of knowing and ready for becoming.

This is for those who sense that Gurbani isn’t meant to be studied but “lived”.

How to Use This Workbook

Move slowly. Don't rush to complete it. Each salok is a universe. Spend days with one if needed. Return to questions that disturb you—they're often the ones pointing toward your deepest growth.

Write messily. Cross things out. Contradict yourself. Let your understanding evolve across the pages.

Discuss openly. If you're working with others, create a space of trust where vulnerability is honored and judgment is absent.

Most importantly: "Look for the salok in your life before you look for it on the page." Where is this wisdom already operating around you? In nature? In a child's laughter? In your own breath? In the way light falls through a window?

Gurbani isn't confined to the Guru Granth Sahib. It's the living truth of existence itself. The saloks are simply pointing you toward what's always been here.

The Promise

If you engage with this workbook fully—not as a student completing an assignment, but as a seeker hungry for truth—something will shift.

You won't just understand Salok Mehla 9.

You'll begin to see through Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's eyes.

You'll start to recognize the divine play in ordinary moments.

You'll find that peace isn't something to achieve but something to remember.

This is your journey from understanding to awareness.

From knowledge to wisdom.

From reading about inner peace to *being* in inner peace.

The saloks are waiting.

But more importantly, are you ready?