Middle/High School Sikh Religion Inquiry

How Do Religious Communities Respond to Challenges and Opportunities?

Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar, Punjab, India (Photo credit: Satjeet Kaur).

Supporting Questions

1. What is Sikhism?
2. How did Sikhs immigrate to America?
3. How did Sikhs contribute to American history?
4. Do Sikh views on pluralism align with *E Pluribus Unum*?

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Middle/High School Sikh Religion Inquiry

How Do Religious Communities Respond to Challenges and Opportunities?

C3 Framework Indicator	**D2.Rel.3.9-12.** Describe and analyze examples of how religious communities respond to challenges and opportunities over time in response to differing social, historical, and political contexts.
Staging the Question	Look at the following images over time of the first Sikh Gurdwara (house of worship) in the United States (Stockton, California). Have a class discussion using the following questions: How has the appearance of the Gurdwara evolved over time? What do you think are the factors which led to these changes?

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3	Supporting Question 4
What is Sikhism?	How did Sikhs immigrate to America?	How did Sikhs shape American history?	Do Sikh views on pluralism align with *E Pluribus Unum*?
Formative Performance Task	**Formative Performance Task**	**Formative Performance Task**	**Formative Performance Task**
Make a list of the important tenets of Sikhism.	Create a graphic that shows how Sikhs immigrated to America noting the contextual factors that impacted the community.	Write a paragraph about one of the case studies and how that example shaped an aspect of American history	Construct a claim with evidence about whether Sikh views on pluralism align with *E Pluribus Unum*.
Featured Sources	**Featured Sources**	**Featured Sources**	**Featured Sources**
Source A: Video, *United Shades of America*, W. Kamau Bell, Introduction to Sikhism segment **Source B**: Video, *United Shades of America*, W. Kamau Bell, Sikh turban segment **Source C**: Chapter about Sikhism from NCSS publication	**Source A**: Video, *United Shades of America*, W. Kamau Bell, Farming and immigration segment **Source B**: World Map of the Punjab and route to United States **Source C**: Excerpt, *Accommodation without Assimilation*, Margaret A. Gibson (1988) **Source D:** Speech, *A Century of Sikhs in California* (2011) by Bruce La Brack	**Source A**: Case Study, Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany **Source B**: Case Study, Dalip Singh Saund **Source C:** Case Study, AB1964 policy	**Source A**: Two scriptural excerpts **Source B**: Image of Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, Punjab, India **Source C**: Three short videos on the tradition of Langar in Sikhism

Summative Performance Task	**ARGUMENT** How do religious communities respond to challenges and opportunities? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that discusses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical and contemporary sources.
	EXTENSION Research recent challenges and opportunities Sikhs have faced in the United States and how the Sikh community is responding. Explore the work done by the Sikh Coalition www.sikhcoalition.org as a starting point for this research.
Taking Informed Action	**UNDERSTAND** Examine CNN's *United Shades of America* show on the Sikh community and its attempt to raise awareness about Sikhism. **ASSESS** Discuss how using popular media and pop culture may shape attitudes towards Sikhs. **ACT** Determine how you might help the Sikh community with their campaign.

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Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of Sikhism and the challenges and opportunities the Sikh community has faced over time. By investigating the compelling question "How do religious communities respond to challenges and opportunities?" students evaluate how the Sikh community has responded to different social, historical, and political changes as members immigrated and integrated into the United States. The formative performance tasks build on knowledge and skills through the course of the inquiry and helps students understand the basic tenets of the Sikh religion, the impact of immigration on the Sikh community, how Sikhs have contributed to American history, and whether Sikh values exemplify the concept of plurality in a diverse and changing democracy. Students create an evidence-based argument about the ways in which the Sikh community has responded to challenges and opportunities over time as they have interacted with new places, people and events.

Note: This inquiry is expected to take four to seven 40-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries in order to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question "How do religious communities respond to challenges and opportunities?" students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument supported by evidence while acknowledging competing perspectives.

Staging the Compelling Question

In staging the compelling question, "How do religious communities respond to challenges and opportunities?" teachers may prompt students by having them examine images over time of the first Sikh Gurdwara (house of worship) in the United States (Stockton, California). Then, teachers could facilitate a class discussion using the following questions: How has the appearance of the Gurdwara evolved over time? What do you think are the factors which led to these changes? Discuss why it is important to understand other religious practices and how religious communities have responded to challenges and opportunities over time.

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question—"***What is Sikhism***?"—has students understanding the fundamental beliefs and practices of the Sikh religion. The formative performance task asks students to list the important tenets of Sikhism. The featured sources for this question are two short video clips from CNN's show *United Shades of America* with W. Kamau Bell and an informational chapter about Sikhism from the National Council for the Social Studies. Featured Source A is a 4 minute and 40 second clip featuring an introduction to Sikhism. Featured Source B is also a video

clip (3 minutes 8 seconds) on the Sikh turban. Featured Source C is a short chapter about Sikhism from the National Council for the Social Studies bulletin, *Teaching About Religion in the Social Studies Classroom*.

Supporting Question 2

For the second supporting question—"***How did Sikhs immigrate to America***?"—students create a graphic that shows how Sikhs immigrated to America noting the contextual factors that impacted the community. Featured Source A is another short video segment from CNN's *United Shades of America* with W. Kamau Bell. The clip discusses farming and Sikh immigration to the United States. Featured Source B is a world map of Punjab, India, illustrating the route Sikhs took to the United States. Featured Source C is an excerpt from the book by Margaret Gibson, *Accommodation without Assimilation* (1988). Featured Source D is a speech by Bruce La Brack (2011) entitled, *A Century of Sikhs in California.*

Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question—"***How did Sikhs shape American history***?"—asks students to write a paragraph about one of the case studies focusing on how that example shaped an aspect of American history. Featured Sources A-C are case studies on the following: Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany, Dalip Singh Saund, and the AB1964 policy. Together, these sources focus on three unique and compelling stories of how the Sikh community has shaped American history.

Supporting Question 4

The fourth supporting question—"***Do Sikh views on pluralism align with E Pluribus Unum***?"—asks students to construct a claim with evidence that answers the supporting question. Featured Source A includes two scriptural excerpts from Sikhism's sacred texts. Featured Source B includes an image of Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar, Punjab, India. Featured Source C includes three short videos on the tradition of Langar in Sikhism.

Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined the foundational beliefs of Sikhism, how the Sikh community immigrated and integrated into the United States, how Sikhs shaped American history and whether Sikh views on pluralism align with *E Pluribus Unum*.

Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and their abilities to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students construct an evidence-based argument using multiple sources to answer the compelling question "How do religious communities respond to challenges and opportunities?" It is important to note that students' arguments could take a variety of forms, including a detailed outline, poster, or essay.

Students' arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- *Religious communities like Sikhs respond to challenges and opportunities by embracing their new environment. For example, America gave Sikhism a home away from home as Sikh migrants have settled here for over 150 years and many have remained in the farming industry in California where the environment has been very similar to Punjab, India.*

- *Religious communities like Sikhs respond to challenges and opportunities through interactions with other cultures. For example, America forced Sikhism to deal with challenges and opportunities as a diaspora community. Many settlers initially encountered racism especially with regards to their outward visible identity, which they feel is often misunderstood, but this has led to changes in policies which now benefit many minority communities, including Sikhs.*
- *Religious communities like Sikhs respond to challenges and opportunities with optimism and determination. For example, migration has given the Sikh community a need to become more proactive in sharing their beliefs and identity in America particularly due to the rise in hate crimes following 9/11.*

To extend their arguments, teachers may have students research recent challenges and opportunities Sikhs have faced in the United States and about how the Sikh community responded. The work of the organization, the Sikh Coalition, can be used to illustrate this.

Students have the opportunity to take Informed Action by drawing on their understandings of how religious communities evolve and change over time in response to differing social, historical, and political contexts. To *understand,* students can examine CNN's *United Shades of America* (USOA) episode on the Sikh community and its attempt to raise awareness about Sikhism. To *assess* the issue, students can discuss how using popular media and pop culture may raise awareness about Sikhs. To *act*, students can determine how they might help the Sikh community with their campaign.

Staging the Compelling Question

Featured Source	**Source A:** Pictures of Stockton, California Gurdwara over a period of time

[L] *Stockton Gurdwara (c. 1912)*

[R] *Stockton Gurdwara (c. 1929)*

Stockton Gurdwara Present Day c.2015

Accessed online: https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Stockton-Gurdwara.jpg

Supporting Question 1	
Featured Source	**Source A & B:** Video, *United Shades of America*, W. Kamau Bell, Introduction to Sikhism

Source: CNN's United Shades of America episode, "Sikhs in America"

USOA Video reference for Introduction to Sikhism: 3:47-8:33 (approximately 4 mins 43 seconds)
Access online (content courtesy of CNN): https://vimeo.com/353626143/c26f27df57

USOA Video reference for the Sikh Turban: 26:09-29:18 (approximately 3 mins 9 seconds)
Access online (content courtesy of CNN): https://vimeo.com/353627296/95fa5d6961

Supporting Question 1	
Featured Source	**Source C:** Chapter on "Teaching about Sikhism" by Pritpal Kaur Ahluwalia and John Camardella, *Teaching About Religion in the Social Studies Classroom* (2018), National Council for the Social Studies

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Teaching about Sikhism

PRITPAL KAUR AHLUWALIA AND JOHN CAMARDELLA

Sikhism is one of the world's major religions. There are approximately 27 million Sikhs worldwide, 76% of whom live in Punjab, a region of northern India that is divided between India and Pakistan. Eighty-three percent of all Sikhs live in India itself. Some of the largest Sikh populations outside the Indian subcontinent reside in the United Kingdom and Canada, where there are an estimated 500,000 Sikhs in each country. The World Religion Database at Boston University estimates there are about 280,000 Sikhs in the United States. Large Sikh populations can also be found in Malaysia and East Africa, and Sikh communities are growing in Australia, Thailand, and Italy.

Religion and religious identity are not monolithic, and the American Academy of Religion states that all religions are, "internally diverse, culturally embedded, and change over time."[1] For this lesson, we have adopted the 3B framework described in Chapter 1 of this book to help students learn how religious identity is formed and understood. Each of the three components–belief, behavior, and belonging–informs the other two in varying degrees across communities of the same religion. Students should understand that individuals and communities value these religious components differently.

To teach Sikhism through the 3B framework, we recommend a lesson that focuses on the introductory section below, followed by a set of comprehension questions and possible answers on which students can be assessed. The lesson is aimed at high school students between the 10th and 12th grades, but can be adapted for earlier grades.

INTRODUCTION TO SIKHISM[2]

WHAT IS SIKHISM?

Sikhism is a word used to refer to the religious tradition of the Sikhs, an estimated 27 million people worldwide. Sikhs however identify more with the concept of *dharam* (*dharam* means the righteous path of living and is associated with the classical Sanskrit noun *dharma* from the ancient, classical language of India). The word holds multiple meanings in various Indic traditions, but for Sikhs it refers to a sense of duty or living in the right way. The Sikh religious tradition is therefore often described as the "Sikh *dharam*." (The glossary on page 152 includes this and other definitions.)

The word "Sikh" means learner and "Guru" means teacher. The word Sikh originates from *shishya* in Sanskrit, meaning "disciple." In modern Punjabi (the language most associated with Sikhs, whose tradition emerged in northern India), *sikhna* means "to learn" and *sikhya* means "teaching" or "something which is learnt." Sikhs therefore also refer to their tradition as "Sikhi" or the "path of learning."

The word Guru holds great significance for Sikhs. Sikhs are guided in their learning by the Guru's wisdom or understanding, and aspire to live by the Guru's teachings. A popular understanding of the word Guru is one through whom spiritual darkness (*gu*) is dispelled by spiritual light (*ru*), an enlightener.

For Sikhs, the word "Guru" refers to Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh dharam and his nine human successors. The word "Guru" is also the title given to the Guru Granth Sahib, the volume of sacred scripture that is respected as the eternal guiding voice and living spirit of the Gurus, and which is literally revered as the body and physical presence of the human Gurus themselves. Sikhs believe that

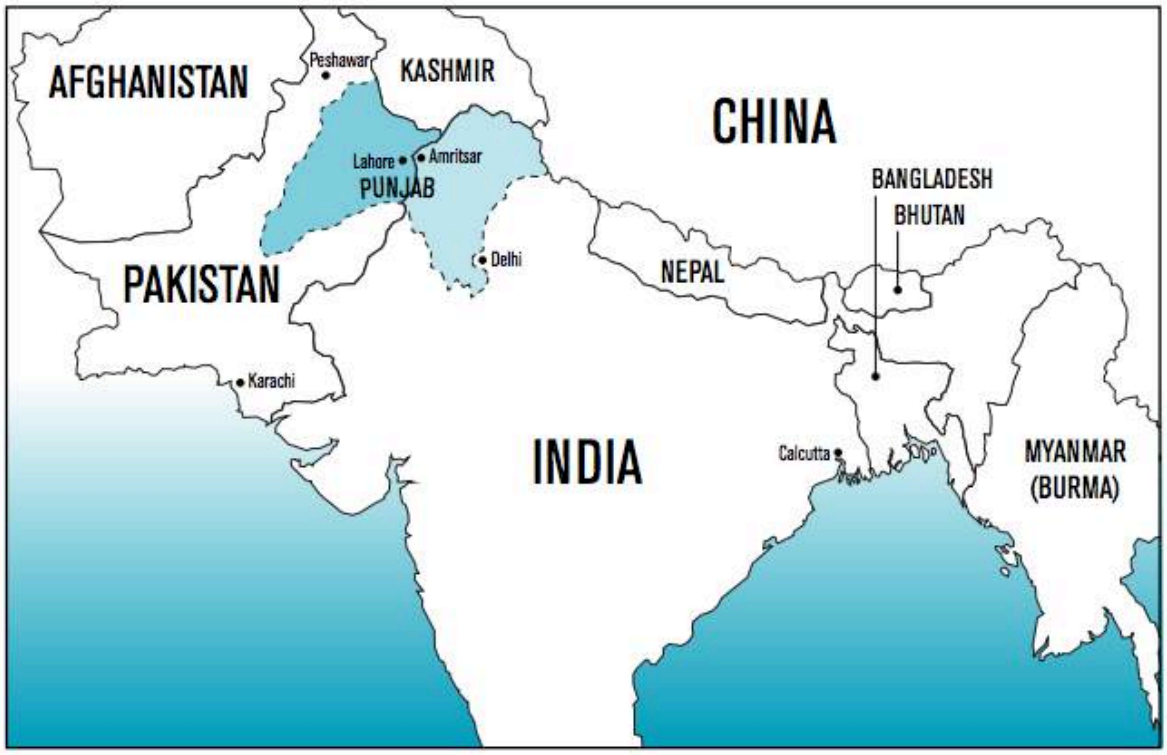
through its teachings, the Guru Granth Sahib has the ability to transform and enlighten them.

Thirdly there is also the notion of "Guru Panth"– the Guru dwelling in the body of disciples dedicated to the Guru's path. This means that because the spirit of the Guru is also present within the community of practicing Sikhs, collectively they can come to decisions concerning matters affecting their community with guidance and authority. Another use of the word Guru is when it occurs in scripture. In this sense it is often interpreted to mean the Eternal, Formless Guru, understood as God.

THE GENESIS OF THE SIKH DHARAM IN PUNJAB

The Punjab lies in the north-west of India, divided between present-day India and Pakistan. The Sikh dharam has had a close relationship with the land and culture of Punjab, since it was the birthplace of Guru Nanak, its founding Guru, and was the base for some of the subsequent Gurus.

Punjab has been a home to Vedic culture and modern day Hinduism since 2000 BCE. As Punjab was a "gateway" over land from the west into India, it also gave rise to many invasions and Muslim settlers. The earliest Muslim settlers were Arabs, who came in the 7th century CE. In 1526, Babur, a Muslim descendant of the Mongol Genghis Khan, invaded India and founded the Mughal empire. The rise and fall of the Mughal dynasty ran almost in parallel with the duration of the ten Sikh Gurushipss. Islamic thought, culture, and governance came to pervade daily life as the Hindu majority was ruled by Muslims, and a number of Hindus converted to Islam. The Mughal Emperor Akbar who reigned from 1556-1605, showed an openness to India's broad religious traditions, and it was under his rule that the Sikh community took shape under the early Sikh Gurus. However, Akbar's successors, Emperors Jehangir (1605-1627) and Aurangzeb (1658-1707), introduced an era of great oppression against Sikhs.



The Punjab, divided between India and Pakistan.

GURU NANAK

Guru Nanak was born in 1469 in present-day Pakistan, into a Hindu family in the town of Nankana Sahib. He worked in Sultanpur in his late twenties, and tradition recounts how, when he was bathing in the river Bein, he disappeared for three days, was mystically transported to God's presence, and there sipped the nectar of Naam–God's Name. Through this he received a revelation of the Truth and became conscious of a mission to awaken others. When he emerged from the river, he described God in the following words, which became the central message for Sikh belief and teachings and the opening verse of the Guru Granth Sahib:

God is One — all is His creation,

Eternal Truth by Name,

the Supreme Creator,

free from fear, free from vengeance,

image of the Timeless Being,

beyond the cycle of births and deaths,

realized through the Guru's divine grace.

Thus meditate on Him (God).

God was True before the dawn of time,

true throughout the ages.

True now,

and says Nanak, forever True.

Guru Nanak's message was a call against "falsehood" and the "famine of truth." His verses reflected the political and social circumstances of the Punjab during his time. They spoke out against the lack of compassion he witnessed during the brutal invasion of Emperor Babur (who reigned from 1526-1530); they spoke out against women being treated as inferior to men and urged that women be cherished as divine equals; they spoke out against the elite priestly classes and the caste system, stating that God could be reached by anyone; and they spoke out against empty rituals which promised to bring people closer to God.

Guru Nanak also proclaimed that "there is no Hindu; there is no Muslim," suggesting that he was living in a time of insincerity and hypocrisy when people were not being "true" to their faith. Without inner substance, outward identity or labels were meaningless. Sikhs believe that in God's eyes, it is not one's label, but what one has made of life, spiritually and morally, that counts.

Guru Nanak set off on four long journeys to encourage people to walk the path of Truth. In a period of over twenty-four years, he went Eastwards, visiting cities sacred to the Hindus such as Hardwar, Ayodhya, Benares, and Bihar. He then went Southwards to Sri Lanka, returning via Gujarat and Rajasthan, and later journeyed Northwards into the Himalayas as far as Tibet. He then went Westwards towards the Middle East, to Mecca and Medina, the sacred cities of Islam, returning through Iran, Iraq, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan.

There are many historical accounts associated with these journeys, which Guru Nanak made with his childhood friends, a Muslim musician named Bhai Mardana and a Hindu named Bhai Bala. With each interaction there was a call for integrity and truth, by teaching through practical example, with humility and a love for humanity.

After his years of traveling, Guru Nanak returned to settle in the Punjab with his family in Kartarpur (literally meaning the town of God, the Creator). Guru Nanak discarded the robes of a wandering holy man and put on those of an everyday householder, establishing that spirituality should be cultivated in everyday life. Kartarpur became a *dharamsaal*–a place from where to learn and practice *dharam*, or righteous living. Guru Nanak's threefold motto was *Naam japo, kirat karo, wand ke chakko*–remember God through prayer and repeat God's Name (Naam), work honestly, and share with others. These were the building blocks for Sikh life and the beginnings of a Sikh community.

Guru Nanak's life teachings had attracted both Hindu and Muslim followers. It is a Sikh belief that, when Guru Nanak departed from the world in 1539, Hindus and Muslims wanted to conduct a funeral according to their respective customs. In the end they found only flowers under the shroud covering the body and divided the shroud in two. The Hindus cremated their half of the shroud, and the Muslims buried the other half. Both memorial sites are in close proximity to one another in Kartarpur, a short distance from what has become the border that divides India from Pakistan.

The attitude of Sikhs towards others stems from the teaching of Ik Oankar (the message that there is only One God the Creator). Sikhs believe that every human being, regardless of which path they follow, must be treated equally because God is present within them. Many paths have been created by God to reach Him and they must all be respected as equally valid. Sikhs do not actively proselytize but remember the sentiment behind Guru Nanak's teachings to Hindus and Muslims: if you are a Hindu be a good Hindu; if you are a Muslim be a good Muslim. If people practice their religion truthfully and with integrity, the outward label is not significant.

The philosophy behind the attitudes of Sikhs to other faiths is further illustrated in teachings from subsequent Gurus. The foundation stone of the Harmandir Sahib (the Golden Temple) in Amritsar, was laid by a Muslim Saint at the invitation of the fifth Guru (Guru Arjan). It was also designed with four entrances, indicating that Sikhs welcome people from all walks of life. The tradition of Langar–free vegetarian food distributed from all Gurudwaras (Sikh places of worship)–is one of serving all people without discrimination. A verse by Guru Gobind Singh teaches the need for Sikhs to "recognize the entire human race as one large family." As such, Sikhs find that they have a strong foundation for understanding and respecting other traditions.

Glossary of Sikh Terms

Amrit: holy water (lit. nectar of immortality).

Bhai: Used as a term of respect (lit. brother).

Chaur sahib: A fan waved over the Guru Granth Sahib to signify eminence and respect.

Dastaar: turban.

Dharam: righteous path of living.

Dharamsaal: place of worship.

Gurmukhi: the name of the script in which the Guru Granth Sahib is written (literally, from the mouth of the Guru).

Guru: an enlightened teacher. The term can refer to the ten human Gurus, the Guru Granth Sahib (the eternal sacred scripture), or, in a scriptural usage, the True Guru, sometimes interpreted to be God.

Guru Granth Sahib: the sacred scripture of the Sikhs revered as the living, eternal Guru.

Gurudwara: Sikh place of worship, the home of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Harmandir Sahib: popularly known as the Golden Temple, the first Sikh Gurudwara built by three of the Gurus themselves in Amritsar, Punjab, India.

Ji: a term of respect added at the end of a name.

Kakaar: One of the five articles of faith for the Khalsa, beginning with the letter K.

Kanga: a small wooden comb.

Kara: a steel bracelet.

Kashera: undergarment (shorts).

Kes: uncut hair.

Kirpan: small sword.

Khalsa: refers to the community of initiated Sikhs (pl.) or a member of this community (sing.)

Mughal Empire: the Muslim dynasty from Central Asia that ruled the Indian subcontinent during the times of the Gurus.

Naam: God's Name.

Panth: the collective community of Sikhs.

Punjab: An area in Northern India that has been partitioned since 1947 between India and Pakistan.

Punjabi: the language spoken in Punjab.

Sikh: a learner.

Vaisakhi: a spring festival commemorated in remembrance of the creation of the Khalsa.

Sikh Historical Timeline

1469	Guru Nanak is born.
1539	Guru Angad becomes the second Guru.
1552	Guru Amar Das becomes the third Guru.
1574	Guru Ram Das becomes the fourth Guru.
1581	Guru Arjan Dev becomes the fifth Guru.
1604	First installation of the scripture in Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar, Punjab.
1606	Guru Arjan gives his life under Mughal oppression. Guru Hargobind becomes the sixth Guru.
1644	Guru Har Rai becomes the seventh Guru.
1661	Guru Har Krishan becomes the eighth Guru.
1664	Guru Tegh Bahadur becomes the ninth Guru.
1675	Guru Tegh Bahadur gives his life under Mughal oppression. Gobind Rai (later Gobind Singh) becomes the tenth Guru.
1699	Guru Gobind Singh creates the Khalsa.
1708	The line of human Gurus ends with the passing of Guru Gobind Singh. The sacred scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, becomes the perpetual and eternal Guru.
1708-1716	Leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur, who established Sikh rule in the Punjab.
1746-1767	Oppression of Sikhs by Mughal and Afghan rulers; Sikhs form an armed resistance.
1783	Sikh army under Baghel Singh enters Delhi, and then withdraws under an agreement with the Mughal Emperor.
1799-1839	Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who establishes the Sikh Empire based in Punjab.
1845-6	First Anglo-Sikh war.
1848-9	Second Anglo-Sikh war.
1849	British annexation of Punjab.
1907	First Gurudwara in Canada.
1912	First Gurudwara in USA.

TEN GURUS

The ten Sikh Guruships spanned from 1469-1708. One way that Sikhs picture the Guruships is as light. The Gurus embodied God's Divine light or message, which was passed from Guru to Guru. Sikhs believe that God's light is also latent within all human beings and the Guru teaches Sikhs how to kindle this light and connect with God.

After Guru Nanak, each successive Guru was a former disciple selected on the basis of merit. Each Guru indicated their successor themselves before they passed on. In the later Guruships, the lineage progressed in a family, but the model of selection based on merit prevailed. Some became Gurus at an early age, some later, serving as a reminder to Sikhs that true wisdom is not bound by age. The Gurus were based in different towns and regions within and beyond the Punjab, living family lives among people rather than in isolation. The Gurus, their sons, and their families provided male role models for the community, but the Gurus also advocated for equality between men and women. Their wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters played crucial roles throughout the Guruships. When Guru Amar Das (the third Guru) appointed and trained 146 devotees to travel to various parts of India to share Sikh teachings and unify the Sikh community, 52 of them were women. Women continue to lead and take an active role in Sikh congregations worldwide today.

GURU GRANTH SAHIB

During their own lifetimes, the Gurus compiled their compositions together with those of revered Saints from Hindu and Muslim traditions into a unique interfaith scripture. A special phonetic script was also devised by the second Guru, called *Gurmukhi* (literally meaning from the mouth of the Guru) which was very close to the alphabet of Punjabi–the commonly spoken language in Northern India.

The Gurus encouraged literacy, and the phonetic script meant that the scripture could be read and accessed by the masses, regardless of what language the particular composition was written in. The compositions were also meticulously organized

according to musical genre or *raag*, each being expressive of a certain mood or state of mind. The singing of these verses (*Kirtan*) forms an essential part of Sikh worship. A special numbering system also ensured that no additions or changes could be made to the "authenticated" text. The *Guru Granth Sahib* is 1430 pages (referred to as Ang or limbs of the Guru). Each corresponding page of every copy is identical.

In 1604, Guru Arjan ceremoniously enthroned the first compilation of the sacred scripture in the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar, Punjab, India. It was placed under a canopy and "robed" in beautiful fabrics, while an attendant waved a *chaur sahib* (often translated as a fan or fly whisk) over it, as was done for emperors and empresses to signify their royalty and eminence. Traditional accounts describe how Guru Arjan bowed in front of the sacred scripture in reverence. The Guru also slept on the floor from that day forth as a sign of humility and as an indication that the scripture was being accorded the status of a Guru, even during the times of the human Gurus.

CREATION OF THE KHALSA

During the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur (the ninth Guru), widespread religious oppression under the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb escalated. A group of Hindu Pandits from Kashmir approached the Guru for help. Learning of their plight, the Guru stood up to the Mughal authorities and made the supreme sacrifice. He willingly offered his life to spare the Hindu Pandits, even though he was the leader of a different religion. He resisted conversion and was subsequently beheaded in 1675 in Delhi, where the Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib now stands. Sikhs recall the Guru's sacrifice as a lesson to uphold the freedom and dignity of all people to practice their respective faiths without fear of persecution.

The public execution of a respected and loved figure created shock and fear in the population. When the Guru's son, the young Gobind Rai (who became Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru) came to learn of this, he decided he would create a community of Sikhs who were fearless and courageous in the face of adversity. The Sikh way of life started by Guru Nanak had been nurtured for 230 years by nine successive human Gurus. In 1699, it was given its final form by Guru Gobind Singh who created the Khalsa on Vaisakhi day (a spring festival).

The Khalsa is the community of initiated Sikhs. The initiation ceremony involves instilling God's Name (Naam) within devotees through holy water (Amrit – literally meaning the "nectar of immortality"). Initiation continues today and is administered by five initiated practicing Sikhs in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib.

The creation of the Khalsa in 1699 on Vaisakhi is important to Sikhs because it was then that Sikhs were given their distinct outward identity. They were also blessed with the names of Singh (meaning Lion, for men) and Kaur (meaning Princess, for women) signifying that they were all equals in a casteless fraternity. Guru Gobind Singh uplifted the politically downtrodden. He created an army of Saint-Soldiers who would not be afraid to stand up against oppression. Even though Sikhs do not live in the same political climate today, they still honor the notion that they have a responsibility to stand up against injustice.

The Khalsa were blessed with five gifts from the Guru to keep constantly on their person. These are called the five Kakaars and Dastaar. The following section explains these articles of faith, which are cherished by initiated Sikhs.[3] Some of these are also maintained by non-initiated Sikhs.

KES

Associated values: wisdom, saintliness, sovereignty, and endurance

Kes is uncut hair. This practice is also observed by many Sikhs who have not been formally initiated. Throughout history and across cultures, hair has been associated with wisdom and spirituality. For Sikhs the uncut hair affirms an acceptance of God's will as Creator, and the cherishing of a God-given gift. In Sikh history, during times of intense religious persecution, the kes became a powerful marker of Sikh identity, commitment, loyalty and endurance.

Comprehension Questions

Suggested answers are in italics.

1. Look at the translation of the opening verse of the Guru Granth Sahib. What is the key Sikh belief about God as described by Guru Nanak? *The notion of One God, the Creator.*
2. How do Sikhs understand the word "Guru"? *Teacher, guide, enlightener (from spiritual darkness to spiritual light).*
3. Why do Sikhs describe their sacred scripture as the Guru Granth Sahib? *They consider the scripture to be a living, eternal Guru, not just a scripture.*
4. Belonging to the Khalsa inspires certain behaviors. Choose one of the five *kakaars* or the *dastaar* and explain how you think it inspires action in the individual wearing it. Suggested answers are presented on pages 154–156.
5. How does the Khalsa identity instill a sense of belonging? *It instills a sense of outward identity and casteless fraternity.*

KANGA

Associated values: clarity, order, introspection, and detachment

The kanga is a small wooden comb which is used twice daily to comb and keep the hair tidy. The process of detangling the hair is seen as encouraging people to remove tangles from their lives, promoting clarity, introspection, order and detachment.

KIRPAN

Associated values: blessings, benevolence, dignity, and courage

The kirpan is associated with the words kirpa (blessings and benevolence) and aan (honor and dignity). The kirpan is a curved blade, kept in a sheath which is secured in a gatra (cloth sash). Crossing over one's heart, this sash holds the kirpan in place. The gatra regulates the wearing of the kirpan, securing it in qualities such as mercy and compassion. The kirpan upholds noble values and is a constant reminder of one's duty to defend the weak and oppressed. The kirpan is categorically not to be used for aggression, and the right to carry the kirpan by an initiated Sikh carries with it the unflinching responsibility of never misusing it. The kirpan is also used to bless food, thus extending its association with blessings and benevolence.

KARA

Associated values: allegiance, self-awareness, and ethical conduct

The kara is an iron or steel wristlet worn on the right arm. It is commonly worn by those born into the Sikh dharam, as well as by initiated Sikhs. The kara signifies a Sikh's allegiance, bond, and commitment to the Guru; it is a visible reminder that the Guru has taken the arm of a Sikh to carry him or her through life. It also serves as a constant reminder to be noble and ethical in one's thoughts and actions.

KASHERA

Associated values: self-restraint, self-respect, and respecting others

The kashera is a specially designed undergarment, which closes securely with a drawstring and is changed and washed each day. By wearing the kashera a Sikh is taking an honorable vow of respect towards the opposite sex. Fidelity to one's spouse is

Photographic representation showing the Five Kakaars (Ks) of an Initiated Sikh

Image courtesy of Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha.

sacred and Sikhs are prohibited from engaging in sexual relations outside wedlock. The kashera thus encourages a culture of self-restraint, self-respect and respect for others.

DASTAAR

Associated values: divinity, holiness, sovereignty, wisdom, and accomplishment

The dastaar or turban, is an integral part of Sikh identity, in addition to the five kakaars. It is worn by Sikh males, and some females. It covers, protects and crowns the head–the center of wisdom. The dastaar safeguards the uncut hair of a Sikh, which is tied in a topknot underneath. It is not put on or taken off like a hat or cap, but tied anew daily. To ask for it to be removed inconsiderately in public is demeaning and disrespectful to the wearer. In cultures the world over, the turban has signified divinity, holiness, sovereignty, wisdom and accomplishment–all qualities that are embedded in the wearing of the Sikh turban.

When a young boy transitions from wearing a patka (a cloth which is tied to cover the topknot), to a dastaar, a ceremony called the dastaar-bandi takes place, in which a respected member of the community or family will tie the dastaar on him in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib.

AUTHORITY VESTED IN GURU GRANTH AND GURU PANTH

Through the creation of the Khalsa in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh established Guru Panth, or the "Guru's community"—indicating that the presence of the Guru would still dwell amongst the community of practicing disciples. He also declared that after him, spiritual authority would rest in the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scripture (from 1708-forever).

WHO IS A SIKH? A LIVELY DEBATE

There is an active debate in the Sikh community over the questions "who is a Sikh?" and "who constitutes the Panth?" This debate is similar to those that are taking place within the communities of other world religions. The 3B Framework mentioned earlier in this chapter, which focuses on belief, behavior, and belonging, offers a useful context for understanding this debate.

In the view of many Sikhs, having a belief in one God, the ten Gurus, and the Guru Granth Sahib makes a person a Sikh. Some members of the community question whether one can be a considered a member of the Panth without having undertaken the initiation that was mentioned above in the description of the Khalsa. This is a significant question because the number of Sikhs who are or have been initiated is currently a minority within the larger community. Some Sikhs acknowledge that they do not belong to the Khalsa, but see initiation as an ideal to which to aspire at some point in their lives. Others believe that initiation is essential as an entry point, because they hope that belonging to the Khalsa will inspire the necessary beliefs and behaviors. Some other Sikhs express the viewpoint that some initiates can outwardly belong to the Khalsa, but inwardly remain far from being a Sikh by demonstrating poor behavior or by not living up to the teachings of the Gurus in everyday life. From their perspective, behavior that conforms to Sikh beliefs is an essential criterion for determining whether a person is a Sikh.

As in many other religious traditions, a sense of identity and a feeling of belonging to the community play a very important role. For many, being born into a Sikh family and knowing about Sikh beliefs and the Sikh heritage is central to their sense of belonging. For others, having a family connection to the Punjab, or to the Punjabi language and culture, is the basis of their Sikh identity.

These issues all sustain lively debates within the Sikh community. Ultimately, however, Gurudwaras are welcoming to all and inclusive in nature. Sikhs believe that each individual's journey is unique and that we are all learners on the path toward leading a truthful life.

NOTES

1. American Academy of Religion, *Guidelines for Teaching About Religion in K-12 Schools in the United States* (Atlanta: American Academy of Religion, 2010), i. These Guidelines are reproduced in Appendix 2 of this book.
2. This section includes adaptations from Gopinder Kaur et. al., *Edexcel AS Religious Studies: Student Book* (mixed media product: United Kingdom, Edexcel, 2008).
3. Adapted from the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha pamphlet, "The Five Kakaars and Dastaar."

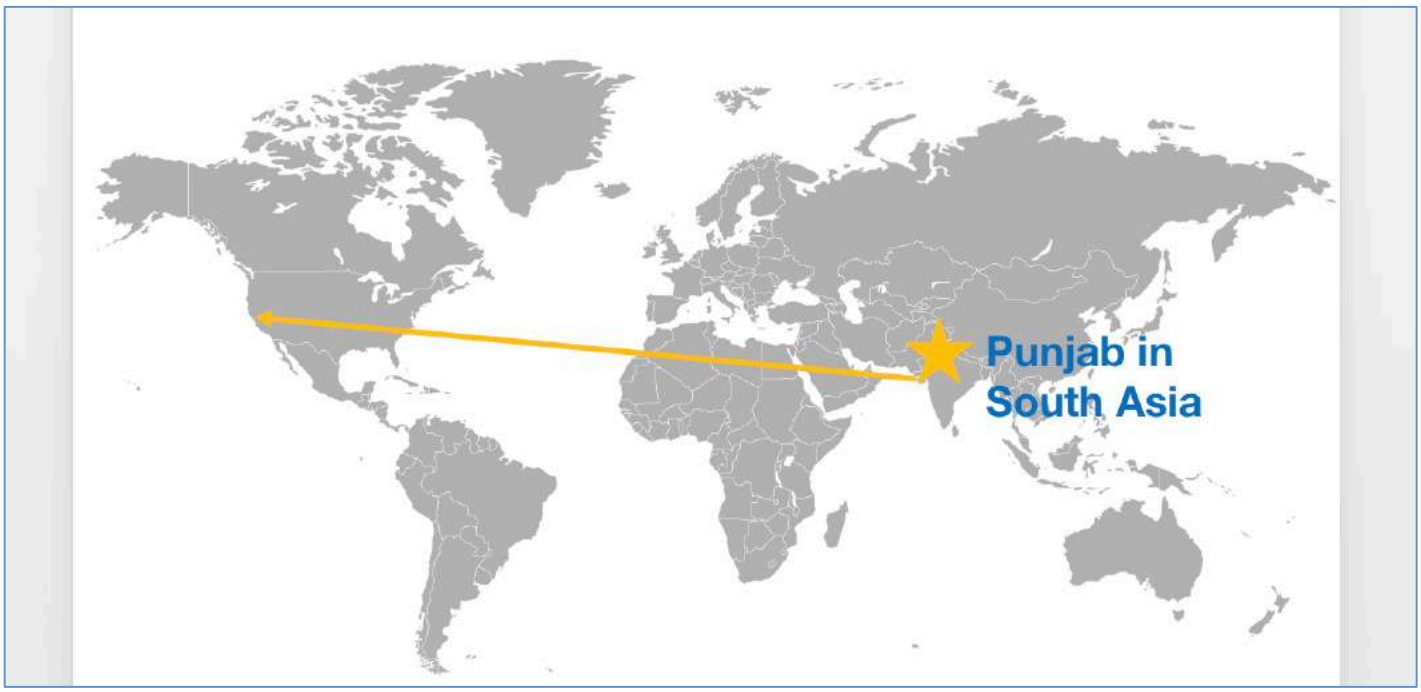
Citation: This chapter on Teaching About Sikhism by Pritpal Kaur Ahluwalia and John Camardella is featured in the National Council for the Social Studies Bulletin 117 on *Teaching About Religion in the Social Studies Classroom* (Edited by Charles Haynes) pages 149-156.

Supporting Question 2	
Featured Source	**Source A:** Video, *United Shades of America*, W. Kamau Bell, Farming and immigration segment

Source: CNN's United Shades of America episode, "Sikhs in America"

Farming and initial immigration segment, 17:45-19:42 (approximately 1 minute, 57 seconds)
Access online (content courtesy of CNN): https://vimeo.com/353627855/cfddb57f00

Supporting Question 2	
Featured Source	**Source B:** World Map of Punjab, India and immigration route to United States



World map courtesy of the Sikh Coalition

Using the world map, locate Punjab, India and California, United States. Approximate the distance between these two places.

This was the immigration path for the initial periods of immigration of Sikhs to Northern California, which occurred in the late 1800s/early 1900s before the Partition of India (1947), which split Punjab between India and Pakistan. The Partition subsequently led to the mass migration of Sikhs into the India part of Punjab and contributed towards Sikh migration to other parts of the world from the 1960s onwards.

Supporting Question 2

Featured Source	**Source C:** Excerpt, *Accommodation without Assimilation*, Margaret A. Gibson (1988)

Fewer than seven hundred Indians entered the United States during the nineteenth century. Between 1900 and 1920, however, nearly seven thousand Indians arrived. Most were illiterate farmers and agricultural laborers from Punjab Province on British India's northwest frontier. By 1907, some five thousand Indian migrants, most of them Punjabi Sikhs, had reached the west coast of Canada and, within a few years, an equal number had arrived in California.

The majority of those coming to the United States took up farm work in the Central and Imperial Valleys of California, where, in spite of their small numbers, they were viewed as the newest Asian threat. Most troublesome were the laws prohibiting Asian immigrants from owning land and from becoming naturalized American citizens.

Due to a landmark decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1923, Indians were legally prohibited from owning or leasing farmland in California because the Alien Land Laws of 1913 and 1920 now unquestionably applied to them as well. The Supreme Court decision, furthermore, made clear that the 1917 Immigration Law, which had barred from immigration those ineligible for citizenship, applied also to Indians. The law was specifically designed to restrict entry into the United States of unskilled Asian laborers.

Immigration from India, which had slowed to a trickle following the outbreak of World War I and the passage of the 1917 Immigration Act, came to an official halt after 1923. The overall population of Indians actually declined sharply during this period. Many Indians returned home voluntarily. Others died or were deported.

Of the Punjabis who remained in California, the large majority, even those who had held professional and technical posts in India, were unable to find economic opportunities apart from farm work.

The Immigration Act of 1946 brought some relief by legalizing Indian immigration and by permitting Indians the right to become naturalized citizens. The new law made it possible, at least in principle, for married men to reunite with their wives and children still in India and for bachelors to choose brides in accordance with traditional Indian marriage patterns.

The 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act repealed the national origins quota system and removed other racist features of earlier laws, thus ending more than eighty years of exclusionary policy toward Asia.

Citation: Adapted from *Accommodation Without Assimilation: Sikh Immigrants in an American High School* by Margaret A. Gibson. Cornell University Press (1988). Pages 38-42.

Supporting Question 2

Featured Source	**Source D:** Speech, *A Century of Sikhs in California* (2011) by Bruce La Brack

I would like to take a few minutes to discuss the crucial role that the Stockton, California, Sikh Temple played in Sikh life in the first half century of the 20th century. The Sikhs of California will be celebrating their Centenary of the founding of the Stockton Sikh Temple in 2012.

Just as it is difficult to overestimate the role that gurdwaras play in the contemporary social and political life of the Sikh majority, it has been so since the formation of the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society in 1912, and the building of the first gurdwara in the United States in Stockton, California, in 1915. Since that time, the socio-political concerns that face the Sikh community have been inextricably intertwined with religious issues. The Stockton gurdwara gave a focal point to Punjabi life on the West Coast; it served as a combination church, dining hall, rest home, employment information center, meeting place, political forum, and sanctuary where Punjabi culture and language were understood. The Stockton facility was a hub of social, religious, and political life for all Sikhs and many other Punjabis in California between 1915 and the late 1970s. It performed the same vital role that other contemporary Sikh worship centers worldwide continue to perform, however, the Stockton gurdwara remained the only Sikh worship center in the United States until 1947.

Thereafter, additional gurdwaras began to be built throughout the United States, including the second gurdwara acquired in California at El Centro in 1948.

As of 2010, Sikhs have founded nearly fifty gurdwaras in California. In the last quarter of the 20th century, the agricultural population center for Sikhs in Northern California shifted to Yuba City, symbolized by the establishment of new Sikh gurdwara in 1969 at Tierra Buena Road, and the subsequent building of several additional gurdwaras in the area.

Incidentally, in November 2010, the Yuba City Sikhs celebrated the thirty-first Nagar Kirtan and Sikh Day Parade. It drew at least 80,000 participants, perhaps as many as 50,000 being Sikhs. With fifty floats stretching almost four-and-a-half miles, it is one of the largest such events in the United States.

Citation: https://www.sikhcoalition.org/get-involved/resources-for-educators/middle-high-school-resources/stockton-california-story-sikh-immigration/

Supporting Question 3	
Featured Source	**Source A:** Case Study, Dr. Narinder Kapany

What does lasers, fiber optic communications, biomedical instrumentation, solar energy, pollution monitoring and lastly, the Internet all have in common? These inventions would not have been possible without Dr. Narinder Kapany's scientific contributions to the world of physics. Recognized as the "Father of Fiber Optics" on a global scale, Kapany's research in the 1950's led to the development of fiber optics and he was the first person to demonstrate the transmission of an image through a bundle of glass fibers.

Furthermore, these fibers are responsible for the transmission of higher bandwidths of information over great distances, in which their applications over the past few decades have revolutionized countless industries, including medical, communications, entertainment, networking and business to name a few. Without Kapany's groundbreaking gifts to science, none of this technology would have been invented and the very nature of our world would be dramatically different today.

"Dr. Kapany's early pioneering contributions are definitely the key to the success and development of the Internet," says Dr. Waguih Ishak, vice-president and director, West Coast Research, Corning Inc.

This scientific genius hailing from Punjab, India was recognized as one of seven 'Unsung Heroes' by Fortune magazine in their 'Businessman of the Century' issue in 1999.

Kapany is indeed a man of numerous talents and accomplishments. Throughout his life and career, he has been a scientist, inventor, entrepreneur, business executive, academic scholar, professor, mentor, philanthropist, art collector and an artist himself.

He's been the recipient of countless awards and recognitions, including 'The Excellence 2000 Award' from the USA Pan-

Asian American Chamber of Commerce in 1998 and the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, which was bestowed by the Indian government and presented by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2004. In addition, Kapany holds over 100 patents and was a member of the National Inventors Council.

"In any discovery or invention, many people play a role and it would be wrong to say only one person did all the work. However, some people play a crucial role and show the way for further research. In the case of fiber optics, Kapany played such a critical role. There were others, who had realized that glass cylinders or fibers could be used to transmit light, but Kapany was more successful than anybody else in solving the problems involved, and scientifically demonstrating the same," says Shivanand Kanavi, a physicist-turned author, who documented Kapany's scientific contributions to the world in his book 'Sand to Silicon.' Between 1955 – 1965, Kapany was the lead researcher in the subject and published several papers on fiber optics.

The Scientist and Inventor

Born in Moga, Punjab and raised in Dehradun, Uttarakhand; Kapany had an affinity for science from a young age. It started when he was given a small Kodak camera from his father and was determined to understand its inner workings. Moreover, in his early studies, he was told by a professor that light can only travel in a straight line. Kapany thought to himself, "No, that doesn't sound right" and took it as a challenge to prove his professor wrong. After obtaining his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Agra, he says "there wasn't enough to learn in India at that time so I left for Imperial College in London." Transitioning from university in India to London was not a difficult feat for Kapany, as he says "I was young and ready to conquer the world!"

His knowledge on technology started in India while working in an ordinance factory, where he learned how to design and manufacture optical instruments. Wanting to learn more about technology at a higher level, Kapany's intended goal was to finish his degree at The Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine in London and then head back to India to start his own business. The idea of having his own business and being an entrepreneur was something instilled in him from a young age.

While completing his studies, he received a scholarship from The Royal Society of Engineering to do further research into fiber optics. After 18-months and several published articles, Kapany had successfully completed his objective of demonstrating the transmission of light and images through glass fibers. Upon the completion of his work, Kapany presented his findings to his professor and at that point was ready to head back to India.

Highly impressed with Kapany's research, his professor convinced both the University of London's senate to approve Kapany for entry into the PhD program and for Kapany to stay in London to start writing his thesis. "At the time, I was totally unimpressed with the concept of having a PhD. Now I realize that I was totally wrong in that thought," he adds.

After earning his PhD, Kapany presented his first publication on fiber optics at a conference in Florence, Italy. Soon thereafter, he was approached by a professor from the University of Rochester, who convinced him to travel to the United States and become a professor at this university, as opposed to travelling back to India. That is when Kapany's life began in the United States, where he has been for the last 58 years making a home for his family and himself in California's Bay Area. After Rochester, Kapany continued his research and teaching at the Illinois Institute of Technology, then he moved his family west to California.

Kapany is a distinguished fellow of numerous scientific societies, including the British Royal Academy of Engineering, the Optical Society of America and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

A Man of Different Hats

As Kapany always had the entrepreneurial spirit, it was no surprise that he established his first business in 1960 known as 'Optics Technology Inc.' He served as the Chairman of the Board, President and Director of Research for this company and says "We came up with phenomenal new products and took the company public in 1967, then I sold it in 1973." Following this, he founded several other businesses, which focused on science, innovation and technology, including his most recent endeavor 'K2 Optronics.' He reflects back on the high-tech businesses and says "they were all well established and successful. They have all been sold now, so I'm a free man," he jokes.

Reflecting over his years as an entrepreneur and business executive, Kapany offers advice for aspiring young entrepreneurs: "I think persistence is extremely important, and be able to forget the mistakes you've made. I mean you can't carry them with you all the time – learn to do better. Other important things for entrepreneurs are mentors – you need very high-quality mentors. I have had a number in India, England and America. Lastly, the quality of people you work with, they inherently make you that much better."

Another few hats donned by Kapany is that of scholar, author and educator. He has published over 150 scientific papers, written four books on entrepreneurship and opto-electronics and taught at numerous reputable institutions in the State of California, including University of California, Berkeley; Stanford University; and the University of California, Santa Cruz.

As an art enthusiast, Kapany himself dabbled in the artistry world and created 'dynoptic' sculptures in the late 1960's. It started when one of Kapany's employees, who was using a fiber drawing machine that Kapany had invented, had an accident and ended up bending the glass rod. The employee threw it in the trash and when Kapany saw the bent glass rod, he thought to himself, "My god, this is art. So, I took it home and ended up adding several other pieces to it." He went on to create 50 dynoptic sculptures and was approached by Frank Oppenheimer (American physicist, professor and founder of Exploratorium), who obtained Kapany's permission to display his art project at the Exploratorium, museum of science, life and human perception, in San Francisco in 1972.

When asked 'Throughout your life, you have worn many different hats from scientist and inventor to entrepreneur and philanthropist, why do you think it's important for individuals to not categorize themselves and to try different avenues in life?"

He explains that it is "exceedingly important" for individuals to wear different hats in their lifetime. "When you look at the span of human life, individuals peak at different particular areas, some peak in science, others at art, but look at Leonardo Da Vinci, he peaked in these fields and beyond. Human beings are not just one person, but capable of doing a number of things."

He goes on to discuss his artistic endeavors, in particular his sculpture work that spanned 50 diverse sculptures, some even quite large in size, he fondly recalls. Kapany's first exhibit, just so happened to be showcased after the conclusion of a Da Vinci exhibit, a feat in itself, and a number of museums went on to showcase Kapany's work in the 1970/80's.

The Sikh Foundation and Philanthropy

Further notable undertakings include Kapany's many philanthropic contributions to the areas of education and art. In 1967, he created 'The Sikh Foundation,' a non-profit and non-political charitable organization dedicated to promoting the culture, heritage and future of Sikhism. "I wanted to provide a platform for our children and other Americans to learn and find out what Sikhism is about."

It was naturally inherent for Kapany to create The Sikh Foundation because his family has been involved with charity and philanthropy work for decades, as it's important for them to give back to local and global communities. He remembers his father fondly, and says while living in Dehradun, his father, along with a few friends, created the Guru Nanak Public School to provide free education for children. The school was very popular and what started out as a primary school,

soon evolved to a middle and high school to eventually two colleges, one for men and the other for women. His father remained part of the school's evolution and even at the age of 94, stayed on as an honorary manager of the two colleges.

The Sikh Foundation strives to foster awareness and greater ties between Sikhs and Americans in the 21st century, says Kapany and over the last few decades, the Foundation has been involved in a number of initiatives for academic courses and conferences to Sikh art exhibitions and the renovation/conservation of historical Sikh monuments.

Most recently, the Foundation worked with UNESCO to restore the mosque, which Guru Hargobind ji had built in the 1600's for local Muslims in Punjab. Kapany explains the mosque was "in a decrepit state," and the Foundation, along with UNESCO, renovated the mosque, and "gave it back to local Muslim leaders in the area to foster cross religious and ethnic ties."

In keeping with his philanthropic mandate, Kapany has endowed a chair of Sikh Studies, under the name of his mother Kundan Kaur Kapany, at UC Santa Barbara and a chair of Opto-Electronics, and most recently a chair of entrepreneurship, at UC Santa Cruz. Moreover, Kapany has avidly collected Sikh art and artefacts over the last few decades and in 1999, he donated $500,000 US and 100 Sikh artefacts from his personal collection to the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco.

"People didn't realize there is such a thing as Sikh art, and there is a prodigious amount of this work that the world didn't realize existed," says Kapany. "It's a treat to have this collection and to share the beauty of our culture, not only with our community and youth, but with the world at large."

Family, Reflection and Legacy

Kapany has been married to his lovely wife Satinder since 1954. They were married in London at the Shepherd's Bush Gurdwara, now known as Central Gurdwara (Khalsa Jatha), which was donated by Maharaja Bhupindra Singh of Patiala, says Kapany adding "this was the only Gurdwara that existed in those days, and it was the only temple in all of Europe and the United States."

They have two children; their son Rajinder is a high-tech executive, while their daughter Kiran is a lawyer. Kapany also has four grandchildren, three of whom are at university and the youngest will be heading to university next year. You can hear the pride in his voice, as he discusses his family, especially his grandchildren, who he is very fond of.

Over Kapany's rich life across three continents, he has met a number of remarkable individuals from dignitaries to revolutionaries, and he shares some of his favorite encounters with me, starting off with Mahatma Gandhi, whom he met as a young boy and says it was a "fascination experience." He went on to meet Jawaharlal Nehru and other prominent Indians, including his personal friends Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala and now his son Maharaja Amarinder Singh.

In England, he witnessed Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1953 and since this time, he has met her husband Prince Philip and son Prince Charles. He is fairly active in American social circles, and fondly remembers encounters with former President Bill Clinton and his wife Hilary, former Secretary of State. He continues to travel to India every year and during one of his recent trips, he had drinks with renowned novelist and journalist Khushwant Singh.

Kapany is now 85 years old but is still extremely active and in his spare time, he is still involved in a number of business and charity endeavors, including the Sikh Foundation, but "most importantly, is to travel and have fun around the world," he adds.

As our interview was coming to an end, we wanted to know, 'What would you like your legacy to be for decades to come?'

"That's a very good question, I don't think I have focused on that," he said with a laugh. Then he took some time to answer, "The important thing is to be a man of the world, that's what I have tried to be, and to a small extent succeeded, but I like to do things for people.

I want to help people develop themselves and other aspects of their lives. I used to teach entrepreneur courses at the University of California in the 1970/80's, and my pupils are now CEOs and Presidents of their own companies – I enjoy that. They now come over and buy me lunch, and tell me about all the wonderful things they are doing and that's great." We both confer that it's amazing to see how life comes around in full circle.

Conclusion

Dr. Narinder Kapany, a name that should be synonymous with other great contributors to technology and science like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, gave the world fiber optics. A brilliant yet humble visionary, who has countless life lessons to offer and an infectious laugh that brings a beaming smile to anyone within earshot.

His dedication and commitment to his research and fellow man has helped shape the very nature of our world today. Without his efforts, the world would have been dull with shades of black, grey and white; instead we see it in a myriad of colors and waves. If you are told to believe something, even though it doesn't sit right with you, don't take it for its face value. Go out and try to disprove it. You just may in fact be responsible for the next great invention to affect our lives and change our world for the better.

Accessed online: https://thepositiveindian.wordpress.com/2015/04/16/dr-narinder-kapany-the-man-who-bent-light/

Supporting Question 3	
Featured Source	**Source B:** Case Study, Dalip Singh Saund

Video: 4 minutes 21 seconds
Video accessed online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2i4O4Bmi2H8&feature=youtu.be

Abstract: This trailer for the short film, ***Dalip Singh Saund: His Life, His Legacy***, tells the inspiring story of an ethical and passionate man who rises above prejudice and racism during one of this nation's most challenging times. He served the people of Riverside and the Imperial Valley in California from 1957 to 1963. Saund was the first Asian, the first Indian and the first Sikh to be elected to the United States Congress.

Supporting Question 3	
Featured Source	**Source C:** Case Study, AB1964 Policy

In 2012, California Governor Jerry Brown signed AB1964, or the California Workplace Religious Freedom Act (WRFA), into law. AB1964 prohibits religion-based segregation in the workplace and strengthens the legal standard for religious accommodations in favor of employees and job applicants. AB1964, which went into effect in January 2013, provides workers in California the nation's strongest protections against religious discrimination. The following article highlights the Sikh lobby in Northern California for this legislation.

This is what unity looks like: AB1964

When we talk about Asian Americans, we're including a set of the American people whose background represents over half of the world's population and approximately 50 countries.

Accordingly, this group contains significant diversity -- but often a sense of shared experience can bring these communities together. California Assembly member Mariko Yamada was able to relate her experience as a Japanese American to the discrimination faced by Sikh Americans, and champion equal employment opportunity through the introduction of AB 1964, a bill now being considered by the California legislature.

Yamada represents the 8th Assembly District of California, including 10 cities in Solano and Yolo counties. She grew up in the shadow of discrimination -- during the second world war, the US government imprisoned Yamada's family in the Manzanar War Relocation Center, one of 10 Japanese American internment camps, and forced the family to start their lives over again upon their release. They then relocated to an African American community in the Five Points

neighborhood in Denver in the 1960s. According to Yamada, who trained as a social worker, “it was with this prism of racism and poverty that I found my calling to stand up for social justice.”

Yamada saw parallels between the experiences of Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor and the experiences of Arabs, Muslims, Sikhs, and South Asians after 9/11. In both cases, law-abiding individuals from minority communities became targets of violence and discrimination due to their appearance.

Several years ago, one of Yamada’s Sikh friends was surrounded by security guards with guns drawn when he reported for jury duty. Last spring, two elderly Sikh grandfathers in Elk Grove, outside Sacramento, were shot and killed in what is believed to be a hate crime. And late last year, Trilochan Singh Oberoi, a Sikh man from Folsom, settled an employment discrimination lawsuit against the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). In 2005, the CDCR refused to hire Oberoi as a correctional officer unless he shaved his beard. Despite a ruling by the State Personnel Board that this policy was discriminatory, and despite decisions by the US Army and Federal Protective Service to allow Sikhs to serve, the CDCR refused to hire Oberoi. After years of litigation, the case settled for almost $300,000 -- but the CDCR did not change its discriminatory policy.

The Oberoi case is one of many such cases, according to Amar Shergill of the American Sikh Political Action Committee.

“As a Sikh trial attorney, I have personally dealt with cases involving employment discrimination against Sikhs," he said. "These cases involve a horrible social burden but they are made worse by current laws that encourage litigation, burdening our state finances and our court system."

After the Oberoi case, Yamada was motivated to propose a law in the State of California, called the Workplace Religious Freedom Act of 2012, to address the workplace discrimination faced by Sikhs and other religious minorities. The bill number for this legislation, AB 1964, commemorates the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, one of the crowning achievements of the civil rights movement.

According to AB 1964 supporters, the legal standard for religious accommodations under California law has been ambiguously tethered to the weaker federal standard -- a standard that is so low that it allows employers to discriminate with impunity. AB 1964 is designed to eliminate this ambiguity by clarifying that employers can deny a request for religious accommodation only if it imposes a “significant difficulty or expense” on the employer. AB 1964 also clarifies that an employer cannot segregate someone because they happen to wear a religious head covering, and employees may keep a beard in accordance with their religion. However, religious accommodations would not be required if they interfere with the civil rights of others or prevent religious observers from complying with health or safety requirements. After being passed earlier this summer by the California Assembly with an overwhelming 63 to 6 vote, AB 1964 is now being considered by the California Senate.

The California Sikh community, and in particular, the Sikhs of Sacramento, have worked diligently in support of AB 1964. Some of them have personally experienced workplace discrimination and have rallied around Yamada’s efforts.

"Sikhs in the Sacramento region have a long tradition of supporting political causes and engaging with the community," explained Darshan Mundy, Public Relations Officer for the Sacramento Sikh Temple. "It was these relationships that gave rise to a personal discussion with Assembly member Mariko Yamada and Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg regarding the issue of employment discrimination against Sikhs. We are thankful that they recognized the importance of the matter and that Assembly member Yamada agreed to author the bill."

The Sikh Coalition, the largest Sikh civil rights organization in the United States, believes that the grassroots movement in support of AB 1964, driven by the Sikh community, is a source of hope and inspiration. According to Simran Kaur, the group's Advocacy Manager, "If AB 1964 becomes law, it will prove that minority communities are an integral part of American society, with the power to create positive change for all people through civic engagement and the legislative process."

Yamada sees the campaign for AB 1964 as an example of Asian Americans building coalitions across diverse communities for the common good. "The collaboration and sense of unity among diverse organizations in support of AB 1964, regardless of race and religion, is inspiring," she said. "What this bill underscores for every community is the importance of civic engagement and coalition building."

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This piece was co-written by Winty Singh, a resident of California and Volunteer Advocate for the Sikh Coalition. He was born in India, raised in Canada, and has lived in the United States for the past several years. Winty spends his spare time writing, playing ice hockey, and entertaining his pet terror Cosmo.

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Accessed online:
https://hyphenmagazine.com/blog/2012/08/what-unity-looks-ab-1964

Supporting Question 4

Featured Source	**Source A:** Two scriptural excerpts

'Ik Oankar'
God is One, All is His Creation
Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru.

'*Maanas ki jaat sabae ekae paechanbo*'
Recognize the entire human race as one large family
Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru.

The Sikh attitude towards others stems from the teaching of Ik Oankar (the message that there is only One God the Creator, who is present within creation). This is also the opening and central message of the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh sacred scripture, which is revered as the eternal and living Guru of the Sikhs. Sikhs believe that every human being, regardless of which path they follow, must be treated equally because God is present within them. Many paths have been created by God to reach Him and they must all be respected as equally valid. Sikhs do not actively proselytize but remember the sentiment behind Guru Nanak's teachings – if people practice their religion truthfully and with integrity, the outward label is not significant.

Another verse by Guru Gobind Singh teaches the need for Sikhs to "recognize the entire human race as one large family." As such, Sikhs find that they have a strong foundation for understanding and respecting other traditions.

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Citation: Excerpted from *Teaching About Sikhism* by Pritpal Kaur Ahluwalia and John Camardella, featured in the National Council for the Social Studies Bulletin 117 on *Teaching About Religion in the Social Studies Classroom* (Edited by Charles Haynes) pages 149-156.

Supporting Question 4	
Featured Source	**Source B:** Image of Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, Punjab, India

Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar, Punjab, India (Photo credit: Satjeet Kaur)

The Gurdwara

The philosophy behind the Sikh attitude toward other faiths is further illustrated through the Gurdwara, the Sikh house of worship. Gurdwaras define Sikhs as a distinct and separate independent community, but they have also always had an open-door policy signifying the oneness of God and epitomizing the equality of humanity. In addition to Sikhs, they welcome people of any faith tradition or background. The foundation stone of Harmandir Sahib (popularly known as the Golden Temple) in Amritsar, was laid by a Muslim saint at the invitation of the fifth Guru (Guru Arjan). It was also designed with four entrances, indicating that Sikhs welcome people from all walks of life.

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Supporting Question 4	
Featured Source	**Source C:** Three short videos on the tradition of Langar in Sikhism

LANGAR

The tradition of Langar–free vegetarian food distributed from all Gurdwaras (Sikh houses of worship)–is one of serving all people without discrimination. In Langar, everyone sits on the same level, emphasizing equality for all. Langar is served without discrimination, which reinforces the spirit of serving humanity with equality further.

These three short videos show ways in which the tradition of Langar is being expressed by different Sikh communities around the world.

Video A (1 minute 39 seconds)

- Langar at Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar, Punjab, India

Found online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrLNMZ1nF3E

Video B (1 minute 54 seconds)

- Langar served to the homeless in London, United Kingdom

Found online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZmYx5DYGzc

Video C (1 minute 29 seconds)

- Langar served in an interfaith setting at the Parliament of World Religions, Salt Lake City, USA (2015)

Found online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXIUheDgAXw