

Lesson 3

LO: to understand the significance of committing to become an Amritdhari Sikh

Making the decision whether or not to become an *Amritdhari* Sikh is a difficult one that means a deepening of one's commitment to Sikhism. Not all Sikhs decide to become *Amritdhari*, or see it as something they need to aspire to. Most commonly, Sikhs take part in the ceremony in their teens, but sometimes they are much older and sometimes younger.

Read the information about Amanpreet and Tanvir:

Amanpreet

Amanpreet is 15 and she lives in Northampton. She is taking her exams in June. She is a committed Sikh. No one in her close family is an *Amritdhari* Sikh.



It is a really exciting time in my life. I'm really enjoying the youth activities I do with my *sangat* (community). I really feel part of a massive Sikh family. I still managed to fit in my *sewa*, service, even with the work I'm doing for my exams. It is great to be able to help out with the work of the Midland Langar Seva Society giving out food to homeless people. I have been doing that for six months now.

Some of the other things are tough though. Wearing the five Ks is fine, although sometimes people ask me what seem to be daft questions like how will I look nice at prom if I don't get my hair cut.

I am managing to get up early to pray at the weekends but not in the week. Being a Sikh is really important to me but I'm at a really busy time of life right now.

I would like to go and talk to some of the women at the gurdwara about taking part in the *Amrit Sanskar*. I'm not sure how I will know if I'm ready.

Tanvir

Tanvir is 16 and he lives in Wolverhampton. He has just finished his exams and is starting to study his A levels. His mum and dad are both *Amritdhari* Sikhs.



What a relief to have finished my exams. It feels a bit like the rest of my life will start now. It is great to be able to have a bit more of a social life too and be back in the gurdwara football team. Mum and Dad mentioned that they would like me to take part in the big *Amrit Sanskar* that will happen in April at Baisakhi. My brother did it when he was 16 so I suppose it is my turn to do it. Being a Sikh is really important to me but I don't think about it very often. I take part in all the important things. I go on the Baisakhi procession. I even say my prayers, but not every day.

I have worn the five Ks for as long as I can remember but I know being an *Amritdhari* Sikh is much more than that.

I know I will do it at some time but the question is really about whether this is the right time. Maybe I need to learn to read the Guru Granth Sahib first. I've asked some people at the gurdwara to see if they know what it is best for me to do.

Underline anything you think is important in helping them to make a decision.

This is their advice from family and friends:

Can you keep the promises? Can you be someone who shows Sikhi (Sikhism) at its best?	A Sikh should only take Amrit when he or she is mature enough to understand the obligations that being a full member of the Khalsa demands.	Your rehat (spiritual discipline) can suffer at university so maybe you should take it before then.
It is about becoming part of a big family. All those who are Amritdhari are brothers and sisters. It isn't about giving up the world.	Amrit is a gift and I am so glad that I joined the Khalsa. Remember, though, that joining the Khalsa is not something that every Sikh does – can you make this commitment?	It is a challenge: getting up early to say prayers, not doing certain things and trying to live the best Sikh life – are you ready for that now?
Why don't you wait until you have settled down and know what you really want in life? Do you really feel able to make this decision now? You are only a teenager!	If you are seriously considering this then you are probably ready. It is about showing what is important in your life and that you are old enough to make that choice.	Remember you don't have to be perfect to take part in the Amrit Sanskar. I certainly wasn't, but it helped to focus me on what was important in my life.

Number them and draw a line like the one below and rank them where you think they should go!

Can you rank them from:
It is the right time



Not ready yet

Annotate the questions with your thoughts and answers...

Use the information to prepare points for a discussion about whether Amanpreet or Tanvir should take part in the Amrit Sanskar and become an Amritdhari Sikh.

Include points about:

- What it means to be an Amritdhari Sikh
- The vows and duties taken on by an Amritdhari Sikh
- All the benefits and challenges of becoming an Amritdhari Sikh at this point in their life. Is this the best time in life to take this step, and why?
- Your suggestion as to what they should do, and why.

Write a concluding statement. Include your thoughts on whether or not you think that Amanpreet and Tanvir are ready to commit to becoming Amritdhari Sikhs.