ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ

A Complete Guide to

Sikhism

Dr JAGRAJ SINGH

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"There is only one God, He is infinite, his existence cannot be denied, He is enlightener and gracious" (GGS, p1).

"ਏਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹੰਮ ਬਾਰਕ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰਹਾਈ"।।

"He is our common father, we are all His children and he takes care of us all."

--Ibid, p. 611, Guru Nanak

Deh shiva bar mohay ihay

O, Lord these boons of thee I ask,

Shub karman tay kabhoon na taroon

I should never shun a righteous task,

Na daroon arson jab jae laroon

I should be fearless when I go to battle,

Nischay kar apni jeet karoon

Grant me conviction that victory will be mine with dead certainty,

Ar Sikh haun apnay he mann ko

As a Sikh may my mind be enshrined with your teachings,

Ih laalach haun gun tau uchroon

And my highest ambition should be to sing your praises,

Jab av kee audh nidhan banay

When the hour of reckoning comes

At he ran mah tab joojh maroon

I should die fighting for a righteous cause in the thick of battlefield.

--Chandi Charitar, Guru Gobind Singh

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By

Dr. Jagraj Singh

Jagraj 2006@yahoo.com

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Preface

The reason for writing this book is to disseminate information about the Sikhs and Sikhism in the world beyond the Indian subcontinent, where Sikhism took its birth in the 15th century. The lack of information about the Sikhs and their religion (Sikhism) led to the arrest, harrasment, beating of innocent Sikhs and damage to their properties and burning of their shrines (Gurdwaras) in the United States of America after the unfortunate incident of September 11, 2001. And in the after-math of racial hatred the only person shot dead was a Sikh, Sardar Balbir Singh in Phoenix (Arizona) while attending his gas station. The Sikhs were considered to be Taliban Muslims of Afghanistan by the majority of the Americans, because of their beard and turban.

So far no attempt had been made to undertake a structured study of Sikhism to aquaint the people in the outside world about the details of this latest world faith and its followers, the Sikhs. It had become necessary firstly, since the Sikhs now live in the farthest corners of the world (about more than120 countries), a need exists for the people of those countries to know something of the history, traditions and religious practices and beliefs of the new arrivals in their midst. Secondly, it is a well known fact that the Hindus are highly intolerant of the non-confirminfg faiths, there have been persistent attempts on their part to over turn the Sikh history and theology particularly after the Sikhs lost their rule. Before the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, the radical Hindus of the Punjab were very active in this regard. With the de-colnization of the Indian subcontinent (Hindustan) in 1947 A.D; and the division, destruction and denial of their state back to the Sikhs by the British, they (Sikhs) for the first time in history came under the tutelage of a reviving Hinduism. Immediately after gaining independence the Government of India dominated by radical Hindus undertook the task of distorting the Sikh history, theology and undermining Sikhism and even declaring Sikhism as a sect of Hinduism. Hence it had become utterly necessary to document a structured study of Sikhism to tell the outside world about its separate entity and expose the lies of its enemies.

The glory of Sikh religion is its universality which cannot brook sectarian or narrow loyalties in any shape or form. It was intended by its founders to become the heritage, not of any particular group of people, but of the whole mankind. Guru Nanak was the Guru not of the Sikhs alone, but of the whole mankind. He desired that his message should go to every nook and corner of the world in the same way as it had gone through him during his own sojourn in life.

I have been very keen to produce a book on Sikhism in Enliglish, to begin with, which should give a faithful interpretation of the Sikh principles for the English knowing people. I feel that the present generation needs badly Guru Nanak's message in which discerning men will find solace for their restless souls and torch to enlighten them, "*Gur darsan udhray sansaarar, je ko la-ay bhao piara"* i.e, "Through Guru's philosophy whole world can be saved if the same was accepted with devotion and love (GGS,p.361).

In view of this claim of the Guru to save the whole mankind, it becomes a duty to share the message with all and I feel confidant that it will serve to elevate them socially, morally and spiritually.

Though every care has been taken, mistake, if any in typing or otherwise is highly regretted for which I may be pardoned. I shall be grateful to receive suggestions.

Dr. Jagraj Singh
Sri Hargobindpur
District Gurdaspur, Punjab, India

Presently:
C/O
6438 Bright Bay CT
Appolo Beach-FL-33572, USA
Phone: 813-645-4171
Email: Jagraj2006 @ yahoo.com

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Chapter 1

SIKHISM: ORIGIN

SIKHISM, AN INTRODUCTION

Sikhism is a major religion of India and fifth largest faith in the world. Its followers are called "Sikhs". Presently it has about twentythree million adherents in the entire world, out of which about fifteen million live in "Punjab", a region in the north-west of India that has long served to connect South Asia with Middle East and Central Asia. About six million Sikhs live outside Punjab in India and at least two million live in the rest of the world. Of these about half a million Sikhs are located in the United Kingdom, another half million are in North America out of which around three hundred fifty thousand are residing in Canada and about one hundred fifty thousand in the United States of America. They are present in substantial numbers in East Africa, Singapore, Malaisya, Australia, Newzeland, Germany, Norway and other Asian, African and European countries. To say it in another way, they are found all over the world. Wherever they have gone, they have built their own religious places of worship, `the Gurdwaras', which in addition to being place of worship, also serve as centres of the Sikh culture.

Presently Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism are the major religions of the world, with Sikhism being in the fifth place followed by Judaism in the sixth with a following of about fourteen million. However, Sikhism is the youngest among all of them. There are many other faiths which have more followers than Sikhism, but usually they are not counted among the world religions. The basic principles of Sikh philosophy and its contributions towards social services and sacrifices for human rights and religious freedom of common people have raised its status to that of a unique universal world religion.
Sikhism took its birth in the fifteenth century in Punjab, among two already well established religions of Hinduism and Islam. Punjab at that time was under Islamic rule, with Hinduism as dominant religion. Religion in both communities was limited only to ritualistic practices, rather than inner illumination. The religious leaders of both communities, Qazis and Brahmins, themselves did not by and large practiced what they pleached. There was a great cultural decadence in all facets of the society. The Islamic rulers also were very unjust and oppressive in their governance.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539 A.D.) founded Sikhism as revealed to him by 'The Supreme Eternal Reality'-- *Akal Purkh* (God), in 1496 AD, at Sultanpur Lodhi in Punjab. He declared oneness of God and universal brotherhood of man. He laid down the complete ideology of Sikhism, which matured under his nine successors. He preached in the vernacular of the people of the Punjab and composed sacred religious hymns in the language of the local people, in preference to Sanskrit, which till then was the traditional medium for religious poetry or philosophy. However, Sanskrit was neither spoken nor understood by the common people of the Punjab. The vernacular of the region at that time was only a dialect and did not have its own script for its real pronunciation and expressions. Guru Nanak developed the script for local vernacular, which was designated 'Gurmukhi' by his successor, Guru Angad Dev. Thus Guru Nanak gave to the Sikhs a script for their spoken language which was different from Hindus (Sanskrit--Vedas) and Muslims (Arabic-Quran). He denounced the divisive Hindu caste system, polytheism, henotheism, idolatry, superstition,

renunciation, asceticism, celibacy, hypocrisy and ritualism to appease the deities. He proclaimed oneness of God and oneness of man and said, *Ek pita ekas ke ham barik toon mera gurhai* i.e, "We are all children of the same father and he takes care of us all" (GGS, p.611). Of Islam's specialists in jurisprudence, he said, "The qazi sits to administer justice. He turns his beads and mutters the name of God (Khuda). He gives justice only if his palm is greased (GGS, p 951). The hungry Mullah he accused of turning his home into mosque (GGS, p. 1245), to which the pious poor would come bringing donations. Guru Nanak also up-braidid the rulers of his time and said, *"Rajey sheenh mukadam kutey ja-ey jagain baithey sutey"*(GGS, p.1288). He was highly critical of Jogis and Siddhas who led an escapist life of renunciation.He praised the householder's life, who served the society.

People subdued under rigors of caste system, the oppressive alien rule and religious bigotry, could not be expected to take over the social responsibilities and adjust to the liberation offered by the new society over-night. The infant Sikh society had to be nurtured for some time to prevent its relapse into the parent societies. So he introduced the system of succession to carry his mission forward. The message of Nanak was transmitted through his nine successors. The Sikh Gurus were:

1. Guru Nanak, born in 1469 and died in 1539.
2. Guru Angad, born in 1504 (Guru 1539 - 52).
3. Guru Amar Dass born in 1479 (Guru 1552 -74).
4. Guru Ram Dass, born in 1534 (Guru 1574 - 81).
5. Guru Arjan Dev, born in 1563 (Guru 1581 - 1606).
6. Guru Hargobind, born in 1595 (Guru 1606 - 44).
7. Guru Har Rai, born in 1630 (Guru 1644 - 61).
8. Guru Har Krishan, born in 1656 (Guru 1661 - 64).
9. Guru Teg Bahadur, born in 1621 (Guru 1664 - 75).
10. Guru Gobind Singh, born in 1666 (Guru 1675 - 1708).

The holy scripture of Sikhism (Aad Granth now Guru Granth Sahib), the world seat of Sikhism (Gurdwara Darbar Sahib/ Golden Temple) in Amritsar were created by the fifth Guru Arjan Dev in 1604 AD, thereby establishing separate religious identity of Sikhism. Till then the spread of Sikhism had been carried out through word of mouth by the Sikh Gurus and it had no separate religious existence distinct from Hinduism and Islam. Because of its principles, Sikhism was acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. The erosion of their faiths surprised the religious leaders of both Hinduism (Brahmins/Pandits) and those of Islam (The Qazis/Mullas). Therefore, they regarded it as threat to their respective faiths. The Muslim administration, in addition, perceived it as threat to its political power. The

tensions that followed between the Sikhs, Hindus and the Muslim government resulted in the execution of Guru Arjan Dev at Lahore and the consequent move of the Sikh center from Amritsar to Kiratpur in the Shivalik hills in the 1630s. Guru Arjan Dev was succeeded by five more Gurus. Sikhism developed, matured and became established to work its way in the world at the end of two centuries under the guidance of its ten Gurus. It was formally consecrated by its tenth Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day 1699 AD at Anandpur Sahib in the Shivalik foot-hills in the Punjab, through his Sikh initiation ceremony-`*Amritpaan*. On this day Guru Gobind Singh gave finishing touch to Sikhism. He laid down distinct Sikh religious code of conduct *(Sikh Rehatmaryada)* and gave the Sikhs a distinct corporate identity. He called the initiated Sikhs 'Khalsa', who now represent and spearhead the tasks of Sikh religion and are recognizable throughout the world as bearded and turbaned Sikhs, supporting the articles of their fath. Before his departure from this mortal world in 1708 AD, Guru Gobind Singh abolished the personal human Guruship and transferred the authority from individual leaders to the scriptures and the community itself. He vested the Eternal Guruship into the holy Sikh scripture, *"Granth Sahib"* and granted it the status of Eternal Guru of the Sikhs, which since then is known as *"Guru Granth Sahib"* (GGS) and is the symbolic head of Sikhism. He vested the temporal leadership into the community itself under the patronage of Guru Granth Sahib and named it *"Guru Khalsa Panth".* Thus from the moment of its initiation by Guru Nanak to its ritual consecration by Guru Gobind Singh, a period of barely 200 years, Sikhism not only aquired its distinctive church and institutions, songs and scriptures, signs and symbols, but also, an unmistakable form or stance.

Sikhism is a revealed religion based on a definitive revelation like Semitic religions of the West and therefore, it can be clearly distinguished from the earlier Indian religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc, which have an anonymous mysticism as their source of validity. It is not simply a set of views or doctrines, but a way of life according to a definite model, `The Guru', for which the Sikh Gurus gave lessons for over a period of two hundred years and themselves, led the life of that model. Those who perfected it came to be known as Sikhs (literally meaning, the learned). *"Sikhi* Sikhia Gur Veechar"* i.e "Sikhism is the teaching of the Guru (Gurmat) (GGS, Ml, p.465)". "The Guru is the Sikh and Sikh is the Guru" (GGS, p. 444) Guru Gobimd Singh called his Khalsa, "Guru Khalsa".

The philosophy of Sikhism is different from the philosophy of all the previously existing religions of the world. It envisages that a true Sikh loves all humanity, earns his livelihood by all fair means, shares his earnings with the deprived and strives for the realization of God by abiding His Will and seeking Grace. It believes in a revealed scripture, *"Guru Granth Sahib"* as embodiment of ten Gurus. It believes in a life of prayer and service of humanity *(Sewa* and *Simran).* It expounds *Antrang Bhagti,* which is purely devotional and rejects *Behrang Bhagti,* which is ritualistic. It is essentially a religion of devotion whereas the body has to work for the welfare of the family and society, the mind has to remain in tune with the Lord, "*Nama kahay Tilochna mukh tay Ram small, hath paon kar kaam sab cheet niranjan naal"* (GGS, p.1375). Its approach to life is realistic therefore it is most modern, practical and rational among all the world religions. Basically it is anti-ritualistic and has no ordained priestly class. It is highly critical of all intermediaries exploiting the masses in the name of religion. It does not foster blind faith. It is a life affirming religion and there is an integral combination between empirical and spiritual life of man. It does not accept any dichotomy in life whether it is 'personal and social', 'spiritual or material', 'faith and reason' or any other such differentiation. It believes in now

and here and does not believe in the other worldliness. It has a positive attitude towards world and emphasizes that normal family life *(Grahisti Jiwan),* lived with virtuous conduct leads to salvation, *"Hasandian, khawandian, pehnandian, khelandian, vichchay hovay mukat"* ("Salvation is not incompatible with laughing, eating, playing and dressing well" (GGS, p.522). It preaches, *"Naam japo* (remember God), *Kirat Karo* (work honestly), *Wand Ke Chhako* (share the fruits of your labour with your fellowbeings). Unlike Yogis, Siddhas and Sadhus (ascetics) who had developed an escapist attitude towards life and had no worthwhile interest in the problems of the society, Sikhism is a religion of workers and householders and preaches dignity of labour, *"Udham karaindian jio toon kamawandian sukh bunch, dhiaindian toon Prabhu mil* Nanak *Utri chint"*(GGS, p.522). It forbids renunciation and all types of ascetic practices and accepts householder's life as the forum of all spiritual activities and growth. It denounces a life of escapeism. It treats this world as field of action and regards its renunciation like a soldier running away from the battlefield.

Sikhism like all major religions of the world has some basic theological concepts which are supreme and inviolate. Belief in the existence of God is the basic theological concept of Sikhism. It is a monotheistic faith and strictly forbids polytheism and henotheism. It proclaims that there is one Supreme Eternal Reality not of any particular religion, but of all mankind, under whatever name He is remembered: God, Rama, Allah, Jehova, *Waheguru* etc, all mean the same. Sikhism does not believe in the Hindu theory of trinity *(Trimurti)* of God: Brahma (The creator) Vishnu (The sustainer), Shiva (The destroyer). In Sikhism, *Ishta* or the choosen ideal is God Himself and none of His incarnations or substitutes. It proclaims fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, *"Ek pita ekas ke ham barik toon mera gurhaaee"* --GGS, p.611**.** It says, God is *nirgun as* well *sargun, " Nirgun aap sargun bhi uhi-He* is absolute as also Personal Reality" --Ibid, Gauri Sukhmani M5. Dualism of God in heaven and men on earth has no meaning in Sikh thought. It is a faith concerned with the realization of God within us now and here. He (God) resides in every heart and the so called diversity is an illusion: "*Kahey ray ban khojan jaee, sarb viapee soda alepa tohi sang samaee, Pushap madh jaisay baas bast hai, mukar mein jaisay chhaee, taisay he har basay nirantar ghat he khojo bhaee"*- "Why goeth thou to the forest in search of *God.* He liveth in all and is yet distinct. He abideth with thee also. As fragrance dwells in a flower or reflection in a mirror so doth He (God) dwells inside everything, seek Him, therefore, in thy-self" - Ibid, Dhanasri, M9. Whoever, through grace, becomes aware of the inner activity of the immanent God as Guru, and responds to that voice in obedience to God's command *(hukam),* attains spiritual liberation while in body. At death the soul *(atma* or *jot)* will live in the divine presence, never to be reincarnated.

Sikhism believes that this universe is God's creation and it operates under His order *(hukam).* Unlike Vedanta (Hinduism), it believes in the reality of God and reality of the world and does not dismiss world out of hand as mere *Maya* or illusion. Guru Nanak says, *" Sachcha aap sachcha darbar "*- "God is a reality (exists) and his creation is a reality - Ibid, M1, Jaji, pauri 34,). It regards the world as house of God and He lives in there. *"Ih jag sachchay ki hat Kotharee sachhchay ka vich vaas*".

Sikhism does not agree with the view of Hinduism and Buddhism that human body was impure and must be subjected to ascetic practices, tortuous exercises or to rigorous penances so that its desires were killed and emancipation of the soul attained. On the contrary it regards the human body as "the temple of the God *(Brahm Jot* -Supreme Soul-

Ram)" worthy of adoration and reverence. According to Gurbani, Ram (God) resides in human body and the human soul-"*atma"* and "The Supreme Soul-Ram /*"Parmatma"* are fundamentally same, *"Atam mein Ram, Ram mein Atam"*--Ibid, Rag Bhairon M1.

Sikhism does not believe that life is sinful in origion or tht it was evil and source of suffering inherent in it. On the contrary it believes thjat having emerged from a 'pure source' was, pure in essence', "*Aap satt kia sabh satt, tis prabh tay sagli utpat*" (GGS, p.294). It explicitly rejects the authority of the Vedas and their Brahmin interpreters. It believes in the doctrine of karma, transmigration, salvation-(Mukti), Surg (Heaven), Narak (Hell), Hukam (Raza) and Grace, but according to its own philosophy. It preaches a life of truth, right actions and controlled desire, "Truth is highest virtue, by higher still is truthful living"-"*Sachch oray sab ko oper sachch aachar"* (GGS, p.62). It strongly denounces renunciation, asceticism and ritualism. It condemns the escapist life of jogis, siddhas and sadhus and their way of living on alms (*Bikasha-Bhikhia*). It believes in sharing all social responsibilities by leading householder's life (Grahisti jiwan), earning one's living through hard work and sharing it with the needy and less fortunate, "*Ghaal kha-ay kichh hathon day Nanak rah pachhanay say*" (GGS, p.1245).It believes in Ahimsa (Ahinsa), but according to its own philosophy, as Guru Gobind Singh says, "It is righteous to use sword, when all peaceful means fail"--, "*Choon kar az haman heelte dar guzashat, halal ast burden ba shamsheer dast*" Zafarnama (Guru Gobind Singh). Among Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and radical saints, Ahinsa is deemed to be a cardinal virtue and meat eating s a prohibition, but according to Guru Nanak, only fools argue whether to eat meat or not, who knows where the sin lies, being a vegetarian or non-vegetarian", "*Maas maas kar moorakh jhagrein, gian dhian nahin janay, kaun saag kaun maas kahavay kis meh paap smanay*-(GGS, p.1289). He further says, "Every food grain that we eat ha slife in it, *_Jetay danay ann kay jian bajh na koay*". He further adds, "Water is the source of life, which assits growth of all living beings, -"*Pehla paani jeev hai jit haria sabh koay*" (GGS, Var Asa M1, p.472).

The use of alcohol (*Sharab*) and all other intoxicants is strictly prohibited in Sikhism. Gurbani says, "By drinling which intellect departs, madness enters the brain, man distinguishes not between mine and thine and is buffeted by his Master. By drinking with which the Lord is forgotten and the mortal receives punishment at His court. Drink thou not, at all the false wine, as far as it lies in thy power,"—"*Jit peetay mat door ho-ay baral pavay vich aa-ay*—GGS, p.554. The use of tobacco in any form is a taboo in Sikhism.

Sikhism believes in equality of all human beings. It forbids discrimination. on the basis of caste, creed, class, religion and gender and guarantees equal rights/opportunities to all. It strongly denounces the divisive Hindu caste system *(Varan Ashram Dharma),* which limits one's right to worship, learning (education) and choose a profession. It grants everyone the right to become a fighter and a priest. Guru Gobind Singh in Dasam Granth says, -"*Maanas kee jaat sabay ekay pehchanbo"*-"Treat all mankind alike". It preaches a secularism, which respects other people's right to be different. It does not believe in imposing its values on others. It is not a religion of chosen people, but instead it is the religion of entire humanity. It rises above regional barriers, "The Guru wishes the well- being of all the creation" (GGS, Var Gujri ki M4, p.30). Democracy an important aspect of modem society is the guiding rule of the Khalsa, which entrusts all decisions to the elected Sikhs *(Sangat /Panches / Sarbat Khalsa).* Mythology, hypocrisy and ritualism have no place in Sikhism. It lays on the practice of religious life of inner illumination and not on formalism or ritualism. It does believe in the Hindu conept of pollution and ritual purification. It does not believe in vegetarianism, sacredness of cow, sacredness of fire (Havan) and sacrifices.

Instead it initiates a moral code distinct from the Hindu ethics among its followers. It strictly forbids idol *(Moorti*) worship, stone (*Saligram*) worship, grave and tomb worship, picture worship, pilgrimage to the sacred rivers and tanks, worship of sun, moon, earth, trees etc. it also strictly forbids fasting (*Varat*) and observanc of *Sharads.* It does not believe in notion of auspicious and in-auspicious days, magic, occult powers, superstitions, good aand bad omens, *Jantras, Mantras, Tantras* and ritual practices to appease the deities. Woman, who was given the most inferior place in the Hinduism, is elevated to the highest hierarchy of human beings in Sikhism and she symbolizes "the principle of eternal creation". Guru Nanak says, *"So kion manda akhiay jit jamein rajaan"-"*How we can call them evil who give birth to kings--Ibid, p.473?" It strictly forbids veiling of women, their seclusuion from society, slander, burning of widows on the pyre of their dead husbands *(Sati)* and female infanticide. Marriage in Sikhism is called *'Anand Karaj'*, "A blue print for blissful union". It is not regarded as a contract, but an act of socio-spiritual union of two souls, "They are not said to be husband and wife, who sit together. Rather they alone are called husband and wife who have one soul in two bodies" (GGS, p.788). Celibacy in Hinduism is regarded as a means to achieve bliss, but Sikhism does not subscribe to this view. Guru Nanak says, "If one were to be saved by celibacy, then the eunuchs should attain the highest bliss!" (GGS, p.324). "Those who call them celibates do not know the way and so they leave their homes in search of God, \(GGS, p.469). Adultry is a taboo in Sikhism, "*Jaisay sang bisier sion haiy ray taiso he ih par greh"* i.e; "As is the companionship of a venomous serpent, so is the ravishing of another's wife" (GGS, Asa M5, p.403). It is not irreligious to aquire wealth in Sikhism provided it is acquired through honest and fair means and is used not only to derive personal comfort for oneself or one's family but also to give comfort to society also. "For a religious man, it is not unholy to get wealth, provided he spends it in God's way and gives and lives in comfort" (Ibid, Sarang ki var iv). *"Daulat Guzran* '- 'Wealth is a necessity of life' (Guru Hargobind-Gurbilas Patshahi chhevin). However, Sikhism is definitely against the exploitive collection of wealth. Guru Nanak says, *"Hak praya* Nanaka *os sooar os ga-ay, Gur Peer hami taan bharay je murdar na kha-ay"* GGS, p. 141-- "To rob another person of his / her due share is like eating pork for a Muslim and beef for a Hindu". It teaches morality. Guru Nanak says, "*Je ratt lagay kapray jama ho-ay paleet, jo ratt peeveh mansan tin kio nirmal cheet"* -"Cloth is reckoned impure if stained with blood, how may mind of such persons be deemed pure, who suck blood of men (GGS, p.140)?" Sikhism preaches spirituality and inculcates love for God, truthful living, universal brotherhood, peaceful co-existence, loyalty, gratitude for all the favours received, justice, impartiality, honesty, humility, forgiveness, charitableness, self-control, courage, contentment, tolerance and all other moral and domestic virtues known to any holiest man in this world. It stands for promoting education *(Parrhaee)* among masses. It lays great emphasis on the attainment of knowledge (both, spiritual and temporal) as it dispels the darkness of ignorance. Guru Nanak says, "When sun rises; the moon is not seen, where knowledge appears ignorance is dispelled (GGS, Suhi Ml, p.791).

Sikhism is a religion of hope and optimism with traditions of ever-rising spirits *(Chardi* Kala-active optimism). Pessimism *(Dhendi-Kala)* has no place in Sikh thought. Sikh discipline is a conscious effort to live in harmony with nature and carry out the altruistic divine will. It aims at authentic religious life and demands deeper penetration of one's own religion in thought, devotion and action. It does not believe in religious conversion (Proselytization) through bait or force, but any body, who likes its ideals, is welcome to embrace it. The glory of Sikhism is its universality which cannot brook

sectarianism or narrow loyalties in any shape or form. It is thus a universal religion having an appeal for all and is most practical in its application. It aims to destroy barriers and to unite all mankind. In Sri Rag the Guru Says, *"Satgur aisa janien jo sabhsay day mila-ay jio"* i.e; "The true Guru is one who unites all".

The essence of Sikh faith then is harmony, universal love, truthful living, universal brotherhood, peaceful co-existence, tolerance, humility, honest labour, complete faith in one Almighty (God) and to resist and fight against social injustice, all kinds of oppression and exploitation. It is the zenith of eastern spirituality and it is the only indigenous revolutionary philosophy of Indian subcontinent, which took birth in `Punjab'. Thus Sikhism and Sikhs form a unique religion and a unique society, which and who can be clearly distinguished from other religions and political societies of the world.

*Sikhi: Punjabi word meaning Sikhism.

ORIGIN OF SIKHISM

Sikhism took its birth in Punjab in the Indian subcontinent among the two already well established religions of Hinduism and Islam towards the fag end of the 15 century. It was founded by Guru Nanak in 1496 A.D; at Sultanpur Lodhi (Punjab) as revealed to him by *Akal Purkh* (God). At that time there was great all round decadence in the society. The religion in both the communities, Hinduism and Islam was limited only to ritual practices rather than inner illumination. The religious leaders of both the communities did not themselves practice what they preached. They aligned themselves together with each other and exploited the masses. The officials were corrupt and the rulers were oppressive and unjust in their governance. The religious leaders legitimized the unjust and oppressive rule. Guru Nanak has mentioned the then prevailing conditions in the society and the government in his *Asa dee var, Manjh ki var* and *Babar Bani*, in the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Nanak preached: "There is only one God. He is infinit and gracious. This universe is His creation and He is Immanent in His creation. To realize Him, love His creation. He is the father as well as mother of all of us and we are all His children and He takes care of us all. Being His children, we are all equal (Brothers/ Sisters). By birth, no one is high or low, good or bad". He believed that no man-of-God or a follower of any faith could claim the sole arbiter between man and God. Everyone has the right to meet Him without any intercession from a prophet or a saviour. Every person, who loves His creation, can experience and realize Him. In His court, one is judged by one's deeds alone; the Name (Allah, Ram, God etc) by a devotee, to remember Him, is completely inconsequential. His monotheistic creed, supported by a set of humanitarian principles of conduct and presented with humility and conviction, made a deep impact on the Hindustani population, then suffering under the Muslim conquerors and the ritualized religious observances of Hinduism. He laid the fundamentals of Sikhism: "*Naam japo* (contemplate-remember God in mind, words and actions), *Kirat Karo* (work hard honestly), *Wand Ke Chhako* (share your earnings with the needy). He founded its basic institutions of *Sangat, Pangat* and *Langar* in order to remove caste and class differences. Oneness of God was preached by many before Nanak, but not so the oneness of *man- "Ek Pita Ekas Ke Ham Baarik Toon Mera Gurhai"* (GGS, p611)--we are all children of the same God who takes care of us all, there by rejecting the

3000 years old caste system in the Indian subcontinent.

He preached in the native language of the Punjab and gave his Bani in Punjabi instead of Sanskrit, which till then was the traditional medium of religious poetry or philosophy and was neither spoken nor understood by common mass of people. He laid down the complete ideology of Sikhism and created the script for the Punjabi language, which till then was only a dialect without any script of its own.

In addition to the rejection of the divisive Hindu caste system, he denounced polytheism, idolatry, superstition and ritualism to appease the deities. He also laid the principle for Sikh way of life-truthful living and said, *"*sc aury sB ko aupr sc Acwru-*Sachch oray sabh ko oper such achaar" i.e, "Truth* is highest virtue but higher still is truthful living" (GGS, p62). Apart from the caste system, which restricted one's right to spiritual pursuits, education and selection of occupation, there were several other restraints in earlier Indian religious systems Viz: Ahimsa, vegetarianism, renunciation, asceticism and celibacy, which were considered essential in the practice of Hindu religion. He rejected all these logically and recommended a householder's life with emphasis on noble deeds, dignity *of labour, service of humanity and sharing full social* responsibility.

People subdued under the rigors of the divisive caste sytem and the oppressive alien rule could not be expected to take over the social responsibilities and adjust to the liberation offered by the new society overnight. The infant society had to be nurtured for sometime to prevent its relapse into the parent societies. So he introduced the system of succession to carry his mission forward. He was, succeeded by nine Gurus. All the Sikh Gurus lived between 1469 and 1708 AD, in the part of Indian subcontinent now called the Indian Punjab and the Pakistani Punjab, which was one country-Punjab, before its partition by the British in 1947.

EVOLUTION OF SIKHISM—1469-1699 A.D.

Guru Nanak laid the foundation stone of the first Sikh township with casteless society in 1504 A.D; and named it Kartarpur, on the western bank of River Ravi in Shakargarh tehsil in Punjab (now in Pakistan). He established here the first Sikh place of worship and the basic Sikh institutions of *Sangat, Pangat* and *Langar.* He taught his followers the fundamentals of Sikhism: "*Naam Japo, Kirt karo, wand kay chhako".* He preached his message throughout the Indian subcontinent, Middle East, Afghanistan, Tibet, parts of China and Sri Lanka. After completing, his missionary travels in 1522, he setteled at Kartarpur alongwith his family and led the householder's life, farming his fields, holding religious sermons, guiding the Sikhs and creating religious literature. Before his departure from this mortal world in 1539, he nominated Guru Angad as his successor to carry his message forward.

Second Nanak, Guru Angad was a zealous preacher. He moved his headquarter from Kartarpur to his native village Khadoor and developed it as the center of Sikh culture and civilization in the Punjab, which lay utterly ruined due to centuries of foreign raids. He strengthened the unifying institutions of *Sangat, Pangat* and *Langar* set up by the

first Guru. He named the script for Punjabi language, developed by his predecessor, as Gurmukhi and took steps to popularize it. He prepared Primers of Gurmukhi alphabets, made copies of the hymns of Guru Nanak in Gurmukhi and distributed them among the masses, thereby breaking the monopoly of Brahmin over learning by encouraging all sorts of people to learn Gurmukhi and reading religious literature. He chose Amar Dass as his successor.

Third Nanak, Guru Amar Dass settled at Goindwal on the western bank of river Beas not far away from Khadoor and developed it as the next center of Sikh culture. He divided the area where Sikhs lived into 22 regions called *Manjis* or bishopries (religious districts) equivalent to the number of provinces in the Moghul Empire at that time. Devoted Sikhs which included even women were appointed as Guru's agents and missionaries in the respective regions. They were expected to visit Guru's headquarter at Goindwal twice a year on the occasions of Diwali and Vaisakhi, to meet the Guru to discuss the problems of the Sikhs in their respective regions. He enthusiastically pursued and promoted the *langar* making it obligatory for every visitor, Hindu, or Muslim, to partake of the common repast before seeing him. All had to sit in a line and eat together. He introduced distinctly Sikh ceremonies for the events of birth, marriage and death. He proclaimed the sanctity of human life and and forbade the practice of *sati* or immolation of widows at the funeral pyre of their dead husbands. He prohibited the Sikhs from consulting astrologers and palmists, saying that the belief in good and bad omens is due to superstition and ignorance. He established *a Baoli* (well with eighty four steps), where people could reach the water in the well and fill their buckets as equals. He aquired land in the center of Sikh heartland on the main trade route between Delhi and Afghanistan (Central Asia and Middle-East), for building a new township, to be developed as world seat of Sikh religion, culture and civilization.

Fourth Nanak, Guru Ram Dass dug the tank *(Sarovar)* on the land aquried by Guru Amar Dass. He named the tank *Amrit-sarovar* and around it found the new township, which developed and appropriately came to be called Chak Ram Dass, now the city of Amritsar, which was soon throbbing with a new life. Merchants and artisans of 52 trades came from distant places to settle here. Trade flourished. Pilgrims arrived in large numbers. The town, which lay in the heart of the *majha* area—country between Ravi and Beas / Satlej rivers grew to be biggest centre of trade in the north India and became religious capital of the Sikhs. He codified the rules for the Sikh way of life. He composed *'Lawan*; the hymn recited at every Sikh wedding.

The fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev compiled the holy Sikh Scripture *'Aad Granth'* (now, Guru Granth Sahib) as the revealed and final doctrinal authority of Sikhism in 1604 AD, and installed it with reverence in the building (now Gurdwara Darbar Sahib), built by him in the middle of the *Amritsarovar,* establishing the world seat of Sikhism. He was the first Sikh Guru to declare the separate existence of the Sikhs by recording in the holy Sikh Scripture, *Granth* Sahib *on* page 1136 in Rag Bhairon. Guru Arjan was a great organizer of Sikh faith. He organized the finances of the Sikh church on more systematic lines. He deputed sincere and zealous Sikhs in all important towns and cities to collect and transmit to headquarters the offerings of the faithful. These missionaries were known as *'Masands'* and through them a large number of people became Sikhs. He organized the system of *'Daswandh'* in Sikhism. The *'Masands'* assembled at the headquartes of the Guru at Amritsar annually on the occasion Vaisakhi and deposited the offerings made by the Sikhs.

'Gurdwara Darbar Sahib' at Amritsar, and the Sikh Scripture, 'Aad Granth' gave,

Sikhism the shape of a regular church with distinct physical identity. Till then Sikhism was preached by the Gurus only by word of mouth, therefore religious leaders of both Hinduism (Brahmins / Pandits) and Islam (Qazis / Mullas) did not take its notice. Because of its principles Sikhism was acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. The mass acceptance of Sikhism by common people made Sikhs a potentially visible, social and political force. The religious leaders of both Islam and Hinduism began to consider Sikhism challenge to their respective faiths. The Muslims in addition felt threat to their political power. The tensions that followed resulted in the execution of Guru Arjan Dev at Lahore on June 05, 1606 AD.

Hargobind son of Guru Arjan Dev succeeded him as the sixth Guru of the Sikhs. His career marks a turning point in the Sikh history. Seeing how peaceful resistance to oppression had proved abortive, he took the seat of his father with two swords girded round his waist one symbolizing spiritual power and the other temporal authority. He gave the Sikhs lessons in obedience, self-sacrifice and other national virtues and turned the saints into soldiers *(Sant-Sipahi).* He built Akal Takhat Amritsar, as counterpart to the imperial Delhi Throne in 1609. He propounded the doctrine of *Miri Piri / (Bhagti and Shakti)* revealed by Guru Nanak and cleared the ground for building national character of the Sikhs. He was arrested and interned in Gwalior jail on the orders of Emperor Jehangir, but had to be released at the intervention of Sufi saint Hazrat Mian Mir and thereafter Jahangir and Guru Hargobind be-friended with each other, but the provincial Moghul-Muslim Government at Lahore continued to maintain its hostile attitude towards Guru Hargobind and the Sikh faith. Four attempts were made to kill or capture him, but each time the Sikhs defeated the provincial Moghul forces of Lahore. To avoid further confrontation in 1635 A.D; Guru Hargobind moved the Sikh headquarters from Amritsar to Kiratpur, which he had founded in 1626 A.D; in the Shivalik foot hills out of the jurisdiction of the province of Lahore.

Sikhism developed and matured under the guidance of its ten living human Gurus over a period of about two hundred years. It was formally consecrated in its present day form by the 10th Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day 1699, at Anandpur Sahib. On this day he granted Sikhism its distinct religious code of conduct in the form of "*Sikh Rehat Maryada",* which gave Sikhism its corporate identity distinct from Hinduism and Islam.

Before departing from this mortal world shortly after mid night on October 7, 1708, Guru Gobind Singh told the Sikhs that, the community in its organized form of Panth was to guide itself by the teachings of the Gurus as enshrined in the Holy Granth and also by the collective sense of the community. In this way he passed the spiritual authority of the Sikhs to the Holy Sikh Scripture, "Aad Granth" and called it "Guru Granth". He passed on the temporal authority of the Sikhs to Khalsa and called it "Guru Khalsa Panth", who could neither be killed nor eliminated.

Thus from the moment of its founding by Guru Nanak in 1496 to its ritual consecrationn by the tenth master, Guru Gobind Singh in 1699, Sikhs were able to develop their dialect into written language (Punjabi) having Gurmukhi script, their Holy Scripture (Pothi Sahib / Granth --Guru Granth Sahib), their place of worship (Gurdwara) and evolve a comprehensive philosophy embracing social, economic cultural political, and military aspects with the objective of creating a more disciplined organization of Saint-Soldiers.

THE SIKH REVOLUTION

Sikhism is the only indigenous revolutionary philosophy of the Indian subcontinent that took birth in Punjab in the Indus Valley. It was formally consecrated by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth successor of Guru Nanak, at Anandpur Sahib, on the Vaisakhi day 1699 A.D; by administring *Khanday Batay Dee Pahul* (Amrit) from the same iron bowl to the initiates, thereby abolishing of the divisive Hindu Caste System among its followers, which had divided the society and rendered it powerless (*balheen*). On this day he also laid down distinct religious code of coduct (Sikh Rehat Maryada) for the initiated Sikhs. He named the initiated Sikhs, `Khalsa' literally meaning sovereign. Sikh initiation (baptism) was made open to all men / women, rich or poor, peasants or labourers, the learned or illetrate alike irrespective of gender, race, creed and caste. Any five initiated Sikhs *(Panj Piaray)* could baptize others so that no particular priestly class was allowed to be created. There was to be no special class to have monopoly of Divine Knowledge or religious rights and ceremonies. Socially no invidious distinctions were to be made between man and man. Amrit revolutionized the outlook of the initiated men who had hitherto been regarded as *Malechh* **(**unclean) and polluted from birth were changed into exceptionally new warriors. People divided as Hindus, Muslims, low and high castes were united as one brotherhood taught to live together and eat together in mutual love. They were trained to defend themselves together against the state repression. The Khalsa, as a combined body of the Sikhs, was made the supreme authority amongst the Sikhs in all matters. No leader, however, great, could challenge the authority of the Khalsa Panth. The guidance of the community lay with their collective wisdom and decisions.

The Hindu hill Rajas around Anandpur Sahib, had been quite willing to pay lip sympathy to the ideal of casteless society preached by Guru Nanak, but they were not willing to soil their lips by drinking Amrit out of the same bowl along with the Shudras and accept the '*Naash* doctrine' of Sikhism as Guru Gobind Singh wanted them to do. They took it as a threat to their Varn Ashram Dharma, whose entire fabric was based on the caste system. They walked away from the ceremony and vowed to destroy Guru Gobind Singh and his newly created "Khalsa Panth"--"The Sovereign Sikh Nation". Guru Gobind Singh accepted the challenge and defeated them in all the battles they fought with him.

Guru Gobind Singh inspired the Sikhs with the desire of being socially free and nationally independent. During the course of his conversation with Bhai Nand Lal he said:

"Jin kee jaat got kul nahin,
Sardari(Sirdari) na bhaie kidahin,
Tin he ko Sardar (Sirdar) banaoon
Tabey Gobind Singh naam kahaoon"

And he further said:

"In gareeb Sikhan ko dioon patshai
Yaad karen hamri guriae"

(Tankhah Nama, Bhai Nand Lal)

Guru Gobind Singh expressed his conviction thus:

"Know kisi ko raj na day hai
Jo lay hai nij bal say lay hai
Raj bina nahin Dharam chalay hai
Daharm bina sab dalay malay hai"

Guru Gobind Singh left this mortal world in 1708. The political position of the Sikhs at that time was that of guerillas. The Sikhs under Banda Singh (1708-1715 AD), declared the independence of the `Sikh Nation' in 1709 A.D; and occupied vast areas of the Punjab between Delhi and Lahore, destroyed Sirhind, killed its Governor Wazid Khan, who was responsible for slaughtering Guru Gobind Singh's younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh and appointed Sardar Baj Singh as its governor. The Sikhs established the capital of the emerging Sikh State at Mukhlis Garh in the Shivalik foot hills and renamed it as Lohgarh. Banda Singh issued orders under the royal seal, minted Sikh coins, started the Sikh Calendar and introduced land reforms granting propriety rights to the tenants of land in the areas under the Sikh occupation. Banda Singh was captured alive along with about eight hundred Sikhs on December 17, 1715 AD in village Gurdas Nangal about four miles away from the town of Gurdaspur (Punjab). They were taken to Lahore and then to Delhi along with Banda Singh in an iron cage with fetters, on an elephant back. The procession reached Delhi on February 27, 1716. The Sikhs were offered the choice between acceptance of Islam or death, all chose the latter, not even a single one agreed to apostate. When all attempts to win Banda Singh failed. He was executed on June 9, 1716AD.

After the death of Banda Singh, the Muslim Government of Hindustan vowed to eliminate the Sikh nation from the face of the earth. The Sikhs left their homes and hearths took refuge in jungles and the mountains of the Punjab and the desert area of the Punjab adjoining Rajputana. The Mughal rulers and their Hindu collaborators perpetrated atrocities on the Sikhs and their families. Thousands of Sikh men, women and children were arrested imprisoned, tortured and massacred. For many years just being a Sikh was a crime punishable with death, but the Sikhs refused to yield and continued their struggle for survival and independence. The more violent the methods were adopted to suppress the Sikhs, more firm in their faith they became. Two most mighty Empires of Asia at that time, the Mughal Empire of Hindustan in Delhi and the Pathan Empire of Aghanistan from Kabul under Ahmad Shah Abdali, simultaneously vowed to destroy the Sikhs root and branch as both of them considered the Sikhs as their arch religious and political enemies. They adopted every possible measure to subjugate and exterminate the Sikhs from the face of the earth but the Sikhs refused to submit and continued their struggle for survival and independence. Against all odds they managed to maintain the organization, which the Guru had built up. They were determined to create a land for themselves where they would be free to practice their religion and not be persecuted for their beliefs. After a gruesome, hard and determined struggle of about fifty years, they over came all oppression, destroyed the Muslim rule and domination in their homeland by 1765 AD, and earned a place under the sun and emerged as sovereigns of Punjab. The Sikh leaders (Sardars) established small confedracies in the form of *Misals* throughout the length and breadth of the Punjab between Afghanistan in the west and Jamna (Yamuna) River (upto Delhi) in the east, Korakoram mountain range in the north and plains of Sindh in the south. Thus entire Sikh homeland came under the Sikh rule in *1765.*

In 1799 AD; all the Sikh Misals on the western side of the river Satlej consolidated themselves under the leadership of Ranjit Singh and formally established Sikh Kingdom based on Sikh traditions, values and principles under the supremacy of Akal Takhat Amritsar with Lahore as their Capital.The Sikh government was named "Sarkare Khalsa". The Sikhs for the first time in the history of this region reversed the tide of attacks from Cenrtal Asia and Middle East since the Aryans had discovered the route through thee hills to loot or rule the Punjab and Hinduatan. They subjugated the turbulent Afghans (Pathans) and entered into many international agreements with the adjoining countries. The revolution started by Guru Nanak reached its zenith.

WORLD SEAT OF SIKHISM

Gurdwara Darbar Sahib* Amritsar, also known as Har Mandar** in Punjab and India, and Golden Temple in the western world, is the world seat of Sikhism as the Kabba in Mecca for Muslims, Vatican in Rome for Christians and Varanasi in India for Hindus. It is a living symbol of spiritual and historical traditions of the Sikhs. It emerged as the new edifice on the Indian subcontinent's religious landscape in the seventeenth century, when, in 1604 AD the first volume of Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib---Holy Sikh scripture) was placed here with reverence by Guru Arjan Dev, in the building which had been completed by him three years earlier, making it, the world seat of Sikhism. Guru Arjan Dev also clearly declared the independent position of Sikhism by writing in the Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib), in Rag Bhairon, on page 1136 that:

> "I do not keep the Hindu fast ***(vrat)*** or observe the Muslim Ramzan,
> I serve only the One Supreme Being who alone is my refuge,
> I serve the One Master who ministers justice to both Hindus and Muslims,
> I have broken with the Hindus and Muslims,
> I neither worship wih the Hindu nor like the Muslim go to Mecca,
> I serve Him alone and no other,
> I do not pray to idols nor say the Muslim prayer
> Taking the formless One in my mind I make obeisance there to the Supreme Being, for we are neither Hindus nor Mussalman".

The foundation stone of the building was, laid by the Muslim Divine Hazrat Mian Mir, at the Guru's request in 1589 and the building was completed in 1601AD. The glistening shrine stands in the midst of a square tank of each side about 150 meters with some 18meters Parikarma (path) on all four sides. A causeway about 60 meters long has to be covered to reach the shrine which itself is 12 meters square and rests upon a 20 meter square platform.

The basic architectural concept of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden temple) was that of Guru Arjan Dev himself. Instead of building the shrine on a high plinth, as was the Hindu custom, Guru Arjan Dev had it built on a level lower than the surrounding land, the worshippers have to go down the steps to enter it and the head of the devotee automatically bows down with humility, while entering it, to have a glimpse. And, unlike the Hindu temples, which

had only one entrance Guru Arjan Dev had Gurdwara Darbar Sahib open on all four sides denoting that it was open:

To all the four *Varnas* of *Varn Ashram Dharma*,
To the followers of all religions of the world from all directions
To all people irrespective of their caste, creed, gender and nationality,
To all economic sections of the society, rich and poor alike,

The architectural features were intended to be symbolic of the new faith (Sikhism), which required the humble to be humblest and whose doors were open to all who wished to enter.

It is the destination of all the Sikhs visiting Amritsar.

*Darbar Sahib: Literal meaning: divine court.
**Harimandir: Literal meaning: abode of God.

EMBLEM OF SIKHISM

The Sikh national Emblem was created by the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) after its constitution in the early twentieth century, when it depicted the Sikh doctrine "*Deg Teg Fateh"* in the form of Emblem (logo). Since then it is seen inscribed on the Sikh national flag/ letter heads and the stamps of various Sikh organizations. The doctrine is first found in written form in Persian, on the seal of Banda Singh Bahadur (1708-1716), stamped on his letters. The seal bore the inscription:

*"Deg-O-Teg 0 Fateh-Nusrat-I -Bedrang Yafat -Az Nanak--Guru Gobind Singh"*i.e, "The kettle (*Deg)*- (The Sikh symbol of economy, the means to feed all and sundry on an egalitarian base), sword (*Teg)*-(The Sikh symbol of power, to protect the weak and hapless and smite the oppressor), victory and unending patronage are obtained from Gurus Nanak-- Gobind Singh ". After Banda Singh this inscription was adopted by the Sikh Misals and then by Sikh rulers for their coins also. Now the official seal of Akal Takhat bears this inscription.



Deg Teg Fateh

The circle in the emblem of Sikhism represents the *Deg* (caldron) used to prepare food, *Guru ka Langar* initiated by the founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak to remove caste barriers, teach people equality and humility before each other and to feed all and sundry on an egalitarian base so that no body sleeps empty stomach.

The two swords on the outside represent the *Miri--Piri (Bhagti and Shakti)* doctrine of Sikhism, *revealed by Guru Nanak and* put into practice by his sixth successor, Guru

Hargobind indicating the integration of spiritual and temporal powers together and not treating them as two separate and distinct entities.

In the center is the *Khanda***,** the double-edged sword, used by the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh to prepare *Amrit* to initiate the Sikhs. *Khanda* has cutting edge on both sides indicative of two swords fused together representing *Bhagti and Shakti* (spiritual and temporal powers), giving birth to "The Khalsa", who is a saint-soldier (*Sant-Sipahi),* the saint meaning scholarly in knowledge of Gurbani and soldier meaning martial in spirit.

To summarize, the Sikh national Emblem, reminds the Sikhs that they are warriors, they should take *Pahul (Amrit),* become 'Khalsa' i.e, The ultimate form of the Sikh, keep *Guru Ka Langar* going so that no body sleeps hungry, protect the weak and hapless, fight injustice and oppression, wherever it takes place, the victory will be theirs: *'Deg-Teg-Fateh'.*

FUNDAMENTALS OF SIKHISM

Naam Japo

In the theology of Sikhism, *Naam Japna* means contemplation or remembrance of God. According to the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, man should remember God in mind, words and actions, "*Oothat bethat sovat dhiaiay, marg chap haray har gai-ay"* (GGS, p.386). Lack of spirituality breeds Haumai, which makes people self-centered *(Manmukh)* and encourages a feeling of alienation and detachment from society. Life without *Naam is* barren and meaningless. *Naam* alone brings true peace of mind.

Kirt Karo

Sikhism strongly denounces renunciation and asceticism i.e; a life of escapeism. Every Sikh must be a householder *(Grahisti)* and work hard honestly to earn his living, *"Ghaal kha-ay--"* (GGS, p.1245).

Wand ke Chhako

Every Sikh should share his earnings with others out of love and compassion for them**,,** *"kha-ay, kichh hathon de, Nanak rah pchhane se***"** ie; "He who eats what he has earned by his own labour and shares with the needy and less fortunate, Nanak, he it is who knows the true path" (GGS, p.1245)

PLIGHT OF HINDUS, HINDUSTAN AND THE

PUNJAB BEFORE THE BIRTH OF SIKHISM

At the time of the birth of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, in the fifteenth century,

there was Muslim rule in Punjab and major portions of Hindustan. The rulers committed social, religious, political and economic tyrannies and the priestly class-Qazis and Brahmins legitimized the oppressive rule. More over, the Qazis and Brahmins did not practice what they preached. The religion in both communities consisted of only externalities rather than inner illumination. In society in general, corruption, treachery and debauchery reigned supreme. This is how Guru Nanak describes the political condition of the people in Asa-Dee-Vaar: "Sin is the king, Greed the minister, Falsehood the minister and Lust the deputy to take counsel with; they sit and confer together. The blind subjects out of ignorance, pay homage like dead men. They were so cowed down in spirit that they mimicked the Mohammedan fashion and wore blue dress in order to please the ruling class" (GGS Asa-di-Var.16). "Even their language had been changed, i. e, the Kashatriyas who were to guard and protect the society and fight against enemies left their profession of fighting and shifted to the caste of traders and agriculturists and started speaking the language of the *Malechhas, "Khatrian to dharma chhodia malechh bhakhia gahee"* (GGS, p.663).

Most of the Muslim rulers came as invaders they just looted the Indian subcontinent and went back (Mehmood Ghaznavi, Mohamad Gauri, Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali). The Pathans and Mughal rulers mostly acted as alien rulers. They created an elite group then aligned with the Hindu elite and both exploited the masses and lead decadent lives. Ordinary Hindus were living under inhuman conditions and were facing to worst type of repression. When asked to describe the status of a Hindu, the Qazi in the court of Allauddin Khilji said, "They are payers of tribute and when the revenue officer demands silver from them, they should without question and with all humility and respect tender gold. If the tax collector needs a spittoon, the Hindu should open his mouth without hesitation" (Guru Nanak and His Times by AC Bannerjee). Such was the plight of the Hindus. Centuries of foreign invasions, misrule and persecution had produced deep demoralization, degradation, hypocrisy, weakness of mind and abject servility towards the ruling class had entered the Hindu character.

The divisive doctrine of Varn Ashram Dharma, which forms the bedrock of Hinduism, had divided the Hindu community into innumerable watertight compartments under which, a great majority of them (Shudras) were treated as untouchables. The condition of Hindu women was even worst. The Hindus themselves treated them as animals. Tulsi Dass in his Hindu epic Ram Chrit Manas Says, "*Dhor-ganwar, Shudar, Pashu, Nari, yeh sab tarin ke adhikar,"* i.e, "The stupid, the untouchables, animals and the woman deserve reprimand".

Since the Muslim invaders and rulers used to pick up young Hindu girls to stock their herms or to sell them for slavery in the market like animals in their native countries like Persia (Iran) and Afghanistan (Gazni). The Hindus took recourse to female infanticide, and those who were lucky to escape infanticide, used to be given away in marriage early. Widows were not allowed to re-marry and quite often, were forced to immolate on the funeral pyre of their husbands.

Thus there was great cultural, social, economic decadence and religious confusion in this part of the world. Guru Nanak founded Sikhism to fill this vacuum of cultural, social, economic decadence and religious confusion.

SIKHISM VERSUS OTHER RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS

- Sikhism is a prophetic religion based on a definitive revelation like Semitic religions of the west, where as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism have an anonymous mysticism as their source of validity.

- Sikhism believes in reality (existence) of the God and reality of the world, "*Schcha aap sachcha Darbar"*-GGS, Ml, Japji, pauri 34. Hinduism believes in God, but regards the world as *Maya* (illusion). Buddhism and Jainism do not believe in the existence of God and regard the world as misery or a suffering

- Sikhism is strictly monotheistic. It does not believe in polytheism or hentheism. It neither believes in the Hindu Trinity of God, Brahma (The Creator), Vishnu (The sustainer) and Shiva (The destroyer) nor in the Christian theory of Trinity of God. Buddhism and Jainism do not believe in God at all.

- In Islam, the Almighty has been named, *'Allah'* and it says, *"La illah ill Allah* Mohamad Ur *Rasul Allah"-"There* is no God but Allah and Mohamad is the prophet". According to Sikhism Almighty has no particular name. Guru Nanak has simply has called Him "*Naam".* Guru Gobind Singh says, "I salute Him who has no name i.e, "*Namastang anamay"* (Jaap Sahib). Sikh Gurus freely used Hindu names such as Hari, Gopal and Rama etc as well as Allah, Khuda and Sahib from Islam. They simply used them for convenience as synonyms for `God' as Sikhism believes in oneness of God and oneness of man.

- Sikism believes in now and here and does not believe in the concept of after life and thereby rejects the existence of heaven and hell (Christianity), *Dozakh* and *Bahishat* (Islam) and *Narak-Surag* (Hinduism). As per Sikh thought, heaven and hell are not places for living here-after, they are part of spiritual topography of man and do not exist otherwise. They refer to good and evil stages of life respectively and can be lived here in our earthly existence. According to Gurbani, Truthful living in the noble fear of God is heaven. Having no faith in God and leading an unethical life is hell" (GGS, p.24).

- Sikhism strictly forbids idol, picture, grave and tomb worship. Hinduism believes in idolotry.

- Sikhism does not believe in incarnations (*Avtars*) of God. Hinduism believes in incarnations of God.

- Sikhism strongly denounces rirualism whereas Hinduism believes in ritualism.

- Sikhism strictly forbids Idol, picture, grave, tomb. Hinduism believes in Idolatry.

- Sikhism is a whole life system because it does not accept any dichotomy in life, whether it is 'personal and social', 'spiritual and material,' 'faith and reason,' or any other such differentiation. It involves an integral combination between spiritual and empirical life of man. This constitutes the foundation of *Miri-Piri (Bhagti and Shakti)* doctrine of Sikhism. Other Indian religions: Vedanta (Hinduism), Radical saints, Buddhism, Jainism

etc; consider spiritual path and empirical (worldly) paths, separate and distinct and there is a clear dichotomy between the empirical and spiritual life of man. Hence they are dichotomous systems. They address devotion (Bhagti) and force (Shakti) as separate entities.

- Sikhism unlike Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism takes a more positive view of the human body. Man, the acme of God's creation is not merely a handful of dust, but repository and medium of the message of the lord. The body is not an unclean vessel, a seat of worms, but `Temple of God' worthy of adoration and reverence. Anything unnatural or tortuous has no excuse for acceptance. Standing on one leg, living on roots, practicing contemplation in different postures, undergoing self suppression in a hard way and doing penances were too weak to avail man in the path of realization, but they are considered necessary in other eastern religious systems for the purification of the body and attainment of enlightenment. Buddhism and Jainism stand for *Moksha /Nirvana* through penance. Gurbani denounces any such practices, "Nanak *so prabh simri-ay tis dehi ko paal"* i.e "The Lord should be meditated on by serving the body first"--GGS, Rag Bihagra, M5.

- Sikhism believes in *Ahimsa (Ahinsa),* but according to its own philosophy. It does not believe in Ahimsa that stood as a bar against the religious man or a religious society trying to confront socio-political aggression. A society that has to accept the social responsibility of confronting injustice cannot remain wedded to the hurdle of Ahimsa. According to Sikhism it is righteous to use sword, when all other peaceful means fail, *"Choon Kar Az Haman Heelte Dar Guzashat, Halal Ast Burdan Ba Shamsheer Dast"* (Zafarnama, Guru Gobind Singh). In Vedanta (Hinduism including radical saints) and other eastern religions (Jainism, Buddhism) Ahimsa is deemed to be a cardinal virtue and meat eating is a prohibition. Guru Nanak says, "Only fools argue whether to eat meat or not. Who can define what is meat and what is not meat or who knows where the sin lies, being a vegetarian or non-vegetarian?"--GGS, p.1289. And that "every food grain that we eat has life in it," (GGS, p.472). He further adds, "Water is the source of all life, which assists the growth of all living beings human beings"--GGS, Var Asa, Ml, p.472) hence there is nothing unnatural or ungodly in eating flesh.

- Among all ancient Indian religious systems salvation *(Mukti /Moksha /Nirvana)* means deliverance from the cycle of life and re-birth (Samsara) and individual salvation is their ideal. Sikhism denounces this concept. Enlightement not redemption is the Sikh concept of salvation. In Sikhism there is nothing like private or personal salvation.t is universal religion catering for the spiritual well being of society as a whole, "*Aap mukat mukat karay sansar Nanak tis jan ko sada namaskar*" (Ibid). Hinduism, Buddhism, Sufism, Christianity seek personal salvation catering to the needs of individuals. They are not concerned about evils of society and barbarities of the rulers of the time. For Sikhs *'Mukti' is* replacement of ignorance by spiritual enlightenment, now and here and not after death. Gurbani says, "*Moo-ay ho-ay ko mukat deo gay, mukat na janay koela"* i.e, "O, God who will see that salvation, which you will grant me after death"--GGS, p. 1292.

- Sikhism believes in shouldering full social responsibility and rejects a life of escapeism. It denounces asceticism and renunciation (Sanyasa / Bhikshuhood) for achieving salvation as propagated and practiced by Hinduism, radical saints, Buddhism and Jainism. Sikhism propagates the life of a householder, "Nanak *satgur poora bhetiay, poori hovay jugat,*

hasandian, khelandian, penandian, khavandian vichay hovay mukat"--GGS, p522. Guru Nanak says, "He knows the way who earns his living and shares his earning with others" *i.e "Ghaal kha-ay kichh hathon day* Nanak *rah pachhanay say"*--GGS, p.1245.

- Sikhism does not believe in celibacy (Brahmacharya) as a means to achieve bliss, but condemns it in strongest terms. According to Gurbani, "If one was to be saved by celibacy, then the eunuchs should attain the highest bliss"--GGS, p.469. Celibacy before marriage is a part of Sikh ethics, but it is mandatory for a Sikh to get married. In Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Christianity, celibacy (Brahmacharya) is the rule for achieving bliss.

- Sikhism believes in ethical equality of woman with man. Before the birth of Sikhism the plight of woman in the Indian subcontinent was highly deplorable. She had most inferior position in the society. In Hinduism Manu the Hindu law-giver has attributed all that is good and great to males and on the contrary, assigned all that is bad and obnoxious to females. Tulsi Dass in his Ram Chrit Manas says, "*Dhor gamvar, shudar, pashu, nari, yeh sab tarin kay adhikari"*. In Buddhism a male Bhikshu is not supposed to touch and rescue a drowning woman even if she was his mother. Dighambra Jains believe that a woman cannot reach Kavalya and has to achieve first male incarnation. In catholic Christianity, a woman is not ordained as a priest. In Islam also woman is denied ethical equality with man. In Sikhism the position of woman has been raised to an exalted status and she is regarded as principle of eternal creation, "From woman is our birth; in woman's womb are we shaped. To woman are we engaged; to woman are we wedded. The woman is our friend and form woman is the family. If one woman dies, we seek another, through the woman are the bonds of the world. Why call the woman evil who gives birth to Kings? "*So kion manda akhi-ay jit jamein rajaan.* From woman is the man, without the woman there is none--GGS, Var Asa M1, p.473.

- Sikhism believes in universal brotherhood and equality of all human beings. It strongly denounces the divisive Hindu caste system. Guru Nanak says, "*Ek pita ekas kay ham barik toon mera gurhai"* i.e; "We are all children of the same God who takes care of us all--GGS, p.611. Guru Gobind Singh says, "*Manans kee jaat sabay ekay pehchannb" "*Treat all mankind alike". All other Indian religions, except Buddhism observe caste system and '*Varan Ashram Dharma'* forms the bedrock of Hinduism. Buddhism did away with ceremonies of Hindus set aside the Brahmanical priesthood, abolished sacrifices and dethroned the Gods of the Hindus. Buddhism and Jainism stand for '*Moksha' or 'Nirvan'* thourgh penance. Jainism on one hand condemns sacrifices, denies divine origion of the Vedas, rejects the Hindu doctrine of immunity from punishment through alms-giving and invocation of Gods and attaches no importance to the spirits of the dead. On the other hand, it recognizes the priestly institutions of the Brahmins, adheres rigidly to the Hindu caste system and has rules connected with purification, weddings, death, inheritance, the worship of Gods closely analogous to those of Hindus. The Jains rever cow and consider killing of any living creature an unpardonable sin.

- Sikhism does not believe in the *mon-varat* (fast of speech) of Hinduism. It believes in constructive dialogue during our stay in this world, *"Jab lag dunia rahi-ay* Nanak *kuchh kahi-ay kuchh suni-ay*--GGS, p.611.

- There is no priestly class in Sikhism any initiated Sikh, male or female, can perform the Sikh religious service. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam all have priestly class.

THE SIKH HOMELAND--PUNJAB

Punjab is the name of the land mass situated in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent. It has its natural boundries with Korakorrum mountain range in the north, Hindu Kush and Sulemanki mountain ranges in the west, Jamna River (Delhi) in the east and Thar Desert in the south. During the Sikh rule it shared its boundries with the British India in the East, Afghanistan in the West, Tibet in the North and Baluchistan-Sindh in the South. It joins the South Asia with the Turkish Middle East and the Central Asia.

Physically and geographically the Sikh homeland formed the most important part of the Indian subcontinent. The `Punjab' with `Sikhs' as rulers and Sikhism as their religion, was the only tri-religious state, which placed it apart from other parts of the Indian subcontinent, with Hinduism and Islam as the two dominant religions. It divided the Muslim and Hindu worlds and acted as a transitional zone between them. The Sikh homeland, Punjab was an independent country under Sikh rule from 1767 to 1849. During this period the Sikhs entered into many international agreements with Mughal and Afghan rulers of Hindustan, Dalai Lama of Tibet and the British. The Punjab was annexed by the British in 1849 A.D, and merged with rest of the Indian subcontinent already under their control for administrative purposes and made a part of Hindustan (India).

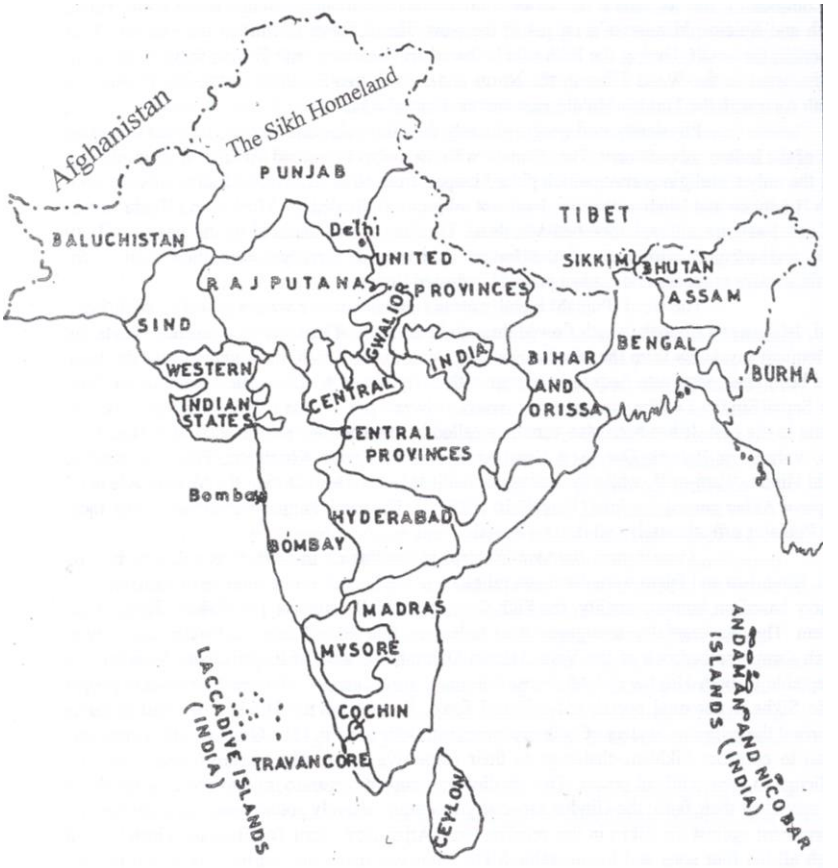
The word ‘Punjab’ literally means the land of five waters (rivers), Satlej Beas, Ravi, Jehlum and Chenab, which flowed through it. Because of its location it has been target of frequent attacks from Middle-East and the Central Asia and as a result, both, its boundries and the name have been changing quite frequently almost with every invasion. The earliest name of this land was Sindhu Des, while Aryans (Rig Veda) called it Sapta Sindhu i.e; the land of seven rivers between river Indus (Sindhu), in the west and Jamna in the east. It has been also variously called by the invading people Taka Des, Vaheek or Baheek Des, Arat Des, Pentopotamia, Sindhu Khashtana, Panchana Sindhu, Hafat Hindu, 'Panj-nad', while the natives called it 'Mother-Des'. During the Muslim rule here, Emperor Akbar named this land `Punjab' in 1590 AD. The name Punjab has persisted since then. The Punjabis affectionately call it, ‘Des Punjab’.

Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in the Punjab in 1496 as revealed to him by God. Hinduism and Islam were dominant religions in the Punjab at that time. In order to create a society based on human equality, the Sikh Gurus powerfully attacked the divisive Hindu caste system. They successfully disengaged their followers, ‘the Sikhs’ from the Hindu caste system which forms the bedrock of the Brahmanical religion, “Varn Ashram Dharma”. Because of its principles, Sikhism was acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. The mass acceptance of Sikhism by common people made Sikhs a potential social and political force. Erosion of the Hindu and Muslim faiths surprised the religious leaders of both communities. Both of them (The Qazis and the Brahmins) began to consider Sikhism challenge to their respective faiths. The Muslims in addition felt challenge to their political

power. The Muslim government therefore tried to suppress the Sikhs and spread of their faith, the Hindus especially Brahmins actively collaborated with the Muslim government against the Sikhs in this resolve. Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Teg Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh all his four sons and innumerable Sikhs embraced martydom during this period in their struggle against injustice and oppression.

After the demise of Guru Gobind Singh in 1708, the Sikhs declared the war of independence of the "Sikh Nation" in 1709 AD and launched an open armed struggle against the oppressive Muslim rule in order to uproot it from their motherland-'Punjab'. Lahore had been official capital of Mughals in Punjab from where the crusade against the Sikhs used to be played and planned by the Mughal governors. Inspite of the indescribable persecution by the Islamic Moghul and later Afghan governments, the Sikhs refused to submit and continued their struggle for independnce. After a hard and determined struggle of about fifty years they destroyed the Muslim rule and domination in their motherland by 1765 and estlablished small confedracies in the form of *Misals,* thereby establishing Sikh rule between Afghanistan and Delhi and thus they earned a place under the sun for themselves. The Sikh Nation jointly ruled the entire `Sikh homeland', `Punjab' from 1765 to 1799 A.D.

Map of the Punjab under Sikh rule and British India- 1846



The total number of the *Sikh Misals* ruling the entire Punjab was twelve. In 1799 A.D; eleven Sikh *Misals* controlling the areas west of the Sutlej River jointly established "Theocratic Sikh Empire / Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab," based on Sikh principles, values and Khalsa traditions under the supremacy of Akal Takhat, with Ranjit Singh as its ruler. Ranjit Singh was formally installed as Maharaja on the Vaiskhi day 1801 A.D. Lahore became the capital of the Sikh Empire. The government of the "Sikh Kingdom" was named "Sarkare Khalsa", which was secular in character with Hindus and Muslims as ministers holding important portfolios along with the Sikhs. The limits of the `Sikh Empire' came to extend between Hindu Kush and Sulemanki mountain ranges in the west, River Sutlej in the east, Korakorum mountain range in the north and Thar Desert in the south. It shared its borders with Afghanistan in the west, princely Sikh States in the east, Tibet in the north and Sindh-Baluchistan in the south.

After the creation of the "Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab" by the eleven Sikh *Misals* in the Sikh homeland, the 'Phoolkian *Misal',* which constituted the 12th Sikh *Misal* and controlled most of the areas in the *Malwa* region of the Punjab, between Sutlej and Jamna Rivers, severed its ties with 'Dal Khalsa' (The Sikh National Army) and the 'Akal Takhat' in Amritsar and discarded the Sikh traditions of *Sarbat Khalsa* and *Gurmatta* and isolated itself from the main stream Sikh politics. It divided the area under its control among its constituents into small princely Sikh States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Khaithal etc. The ruler of the non-Phoolkian Sikh state of Faridkot in this region, who did not owe allegiance to any *Misal,* followed the foot steps of the Phoolkian *Misal.* Some of the areas in this region remained under the control of Karor Singhia *Misal,* which had its origion in the Majha area of the Punjab and ruled the Sikh State of Kalsia, between river Sutlej and Delhi in a narrow strip along the hills of the Punjab, with its headquarters at Chhichhrauli.

The Sikhs built up a commanding position on the North Western frontier, checking for the first time the inflow of invaders who had incessantly swept through the passes in the hills to loot or rule the Indian subcontinent since the earliest Aryan groups had discovered the route about 2000 to 3,000 BC. The Sikhs for the first time in the history of this region reversed the tide of the attacks and subjugated the turbulent Afghans (Pathans) and recovered from them the Kohi-Noor diamond and the doors of the Hindu temple of Som Nath, which had been carried away to Ghazni in Afghanistan by Ahmad Shah Abdali. During the Sikh rule in the Punjab, "Sarkare Khalsa" entered into many international agreements with other governments including various kings of Afghanistan, Dalai Lama of Tibet, China and the British. Thus the Sikhs put the "Sikh Nation" and the "Sikh Empire" on the map of the world. The British started hostilities against the Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab in 1846 A.D and in 1848, after corrupting the secular civil government of "The Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab", in which neoconvert Hindus held impotant positions of the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief, they declared war against the Sikhs with the help of the *Poorbiah* (Eastern) Hindus and Muslims from the entire British India already under their control. The Sikhs fought very bravely, but were ultimately defeated because of the treachery of their civil government dominated by the neoconvert, opportunist Hindus. `The Sikh Democratic Republic of Punjab' was totally, annexed by the British from the Sikhs in March 1849. During the Anglo-Sikh wars the Phoolkian states and so also the ruler of the Sikh State of Faridkot (Pahara Singh), co-operated with the British against the 'Sarkare Khalsa' of the "Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab", for which they were duly rewarded and remained autonomous. The Kalsia State was the only Sikh State

beyond river Sutlej, ruled by Karor Singhia Misal whose founder was a Mujhail. The British annexed it in 1848, after leveling baseless charges.

After its annexation the British merged the "Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab" with rest of the British India, already under their control, for administrative purposes and thus it became part of Hindustan (India). Kashmir, which was a province of Punjab, was sold out to Gulab Singh Dogra, governor of the province of Jammu and Kashmir, who had treacherously bargained with the British and betrayed the Sikhs. In addition to this North-West Frontier Province was carved out of the "Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab".

The Sikhs were the last defenders of liberty in India and most difficult power to fall to the British. After annexation of the "Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab", the British adopted dual policy towards the Sikhs. The loyal to the crown were rewarded, while those who had opposed the British in the Anglo-Sikh wars were ruthlessly suppressed.

The final phase of struggle for the Independence of India started in the beginning of the 20th century. It is worth mentioning here that the Sikhs were on the top in the struggle for the movement of Indian independence, followed by Bengalis. It is for anybody to verify the number of persons hanged, exiled or jailed or fined during the struggle for the Indian independence against the British rule in India. At the time of the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 the British refused to hand over the country of the Sikhs back to them because of their grave annoyance with the Sikhs for their bitter opposition to the British rule in India and abroad. In order to punish both the Sikhs and the Bengalis, the British at the time of decolnozation of the Indian subcontinent divided both Punjab and Bengal, there by creating West Paskistan (now Pakistan) and East Pakistan (now Bangla Des). They penalized and killed the Sikhs politically by denying them back their independent country, which they had annexed from them in 1849.

In order to justify their denial, the British introduced the politics of numbers and the notion of the majority, neither property nor being martial mattered and in the matter of numbers the Sikhs were barely 12-13 percent of the population of Punjab and about two percent of the population of Hindustan and were no where in majority except in a small pocket around Amritsar. Leave aside the transfer of Lahore, the capital of the Sikh kingdom, which formed the nerve center of the Punjabi Sikh culture and Punjabi press, one fails to understand how the areas in the district of Lahore like Chunian, Dipalpur and Kanganwal etc in which the Sikhs gained suzrenity, during the Moghul rule in 1733 were transferred to Pakistan. This raises suspicion on the accuracy of the census, which was made the basis of the division of the Sikh homeland in 1947. The Sikhs were denied the right of self-deternination regarding, the future governance of their state, where as all other states in the Indian subcontinent were given this privilege, Bhutan is a living example, it neither joined India nor Pakistan! Kashmir is still burning because of this clause.

The British created the state of Israel for the Jews with a population of 10 percent in 1948 in Palestine, but had denied the Sikhs a separate state in 1947, constituting 12--13 percent of population of their motherland! The Sikhhomeland was handed over to India and Pakistan after its division against the wishes of the 'Sikh Nation'. It was repetition of transfer of Norway to Sweden in 1814 AD. Since then we find Indian Punjab and the Pakistani Punjab and no Sikh State on the map of the world.

As soon as the boundry line was drawn bloody riots broke out and the non-Muslims, of which about 70% were Sikhs, were forced by the Muslims to leave the western segment and migrate to the Indian segment or other parts of the world. Presently the Sikhs donot have an independent country of their own and majority of them live in the truncated Indian segment of Punjab in which they constitute 60.2 % of the total population. Now they are found settled in almost all countries of the world.

The Sikhs were denied their country where their Gurus were born, Sikhism flourished, they have their religious and historical shrines (Gurdwaras), paid 40 % of the land revenue, were running more than 200 self-dependent educational institutions and before the arrival of the British were the rulers of this land.

Sikhism and the Sikhs fullfil all the globally defined norms and parameters of a religion and nation, all that they lack is their own independent country, which they lost to the British in 1849.

Location, Boundries and Geography:

Punjab is located in the north west of the Indian subciontinent. During the Sikh rule it shared its boundries with Afghanistan in the west, Tibet in the north, Baluchistan - Sindh in the south and the British India in the east. It connected the Middle East and Central Asia on one hand with South Asia on the other. It enjoyed its natural boundries under the Sikh rule with Korakorum mountain range in the north, Thar Dersert in the south, Hindu Kush and Sulemanki mountain ranges in the west and Jamna River in the east.

Majha (The area between River Beas / Satlej and River Ravi), Sandal Bar between Ravi and Chenab river, Pothohar (The areas beyond Chenab River upto the border of the Punjab with Afghanistan) Doaba (The areas between Beas and Sutlej Rivers), Malwa (The areas between Sutlej and River Ghaggar), Haryana (The areas between Ghaggar and Jamna Rivers), and Pahar (The hill tracts of the Punjab including Jammu and Kashmir) were indigineously recognized regions within the Sikh ruled Punjab, which have somewhat different ecologies and populations have different psychologies and constitutions.

Area:

The undivided Punjab, before 1947 had an area of 138, 105 square miles. The present day Sikh dominated Punjab in which they constitute about 60.2 % of its total population is a part of Hindu India, sharing its western border with Pakistan. It has an area of 50,255 square kilometers and is $1/5^{th}$ of the prepartition Punjab.

Terrain:

Terrain is largely plain, sloping from the sub-Himalayas in the north towards the Thar Desert in the south. At the end of the seventeenth century when the Sikhs rose to power, the region fell into three divisions-The Punjab plains, the Punjab hills and a large tract of broken country between them. The three areas were part of the same Punjabi region but differed greatly in communications and accessibility. It was easy to move in the plains, difficult in hills, while the belt of the country in between, with low hills and jungle gave excellent

shelter to bands of marauders in times of distress. Here they could avoid capture and organize brigandage and revolt.

Climate:

Punjab witnesses extremes of weather conditions. Summer 48C to 35C, Winter 14C to OC. The rains of July, August and September (Monsoon) mark the end of extreme heat of May and June and return of spring in March and April marks the end of extreme cold of Decamber and January. The most temperate weeks come in February-March and OctoberNovember.

Natural resources and economy:

The present day Indian Punjab is a farm country, one of the world's most heavily irrigated regions. 80% of its population is dependent on agriculture and 80% of Punjab farmers are Sikhs. Punjab survives only on economics of its agriculture it neither has, mineral resources nor heavy industry. It has its land, its rivers, and hard working farmers, with just about two percent of India's total cultivable land Punjab has been contributing 50% of country's total out put of food grains. Diary farming and poultry farming are also contributing their own share. Major crops are wheat, rice, sugar cane, cotton, Potatoes, maize and pulses. Sunflower, mustard and sesame seeds are grown as oil seeds. Kinnow-oranges, grapes, mango, Litchee are grown in some pockets. Punjab has developed a good system for marketing agricultural produce by its farmers but lacks in food processing.

Communications:

Punjab is the first state in India to link its all villages with metalled roads, after the green revolution in mid sixties. It has a good railway network and all its cities are connected by rail. All its major cities have rail link with the Indian capital New Delhi. It has two international airports, one at Amritsar and the other at Mohali. It has domestic airports at Bathinda, Pathankot and Ludhiana.

Population and character of population:

Presently total population of the present Indian Punjab is about 25 million, out of which 70% lives in villages. 80% population of the Punjab is constituted by farmers, out of whom 80% are Sikhs. The Sikhs constitute about 60.2% of its population, the rest about 40% are Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Thus Punjab stands apart from other parts of the Indian subcontinent with Hinduism and Islam as two major religions.

Language:

Punjabi is the spoken language of all Punjabis including those in Pakistan, but it is sacred to the Sikhs, because their scriptures are in Punjabi. Like the name of the Punjab, its language has been variously and contemptuously been called by different names by the invading people, who tried to force their own culture especially the language upon them. It has been variously called Sindh Saagri, Harappan, Taki or Takri, Apabhramsha, Prakrit, Sauraseni, Jatki, Zabane Jattaan, Hindvi, Desi, Sant Bhasha, Lahori and finally Punjabi, when Emperor Akbar named this region as Punjab in 1590, the name which has persisted since then.

Countries of the Sikh homeland: The Sikh homeland under Sikh rule had in it:

1. Sikh Empire / Sikh Kingdom / The Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab under, "Sarkare Khalsa" having natural boundries with Korakorram mountain range in the north, Hindu Kush and Sulemanki mountain ranges in west and Thar Desert in the south, sharing its borders with Afghanistan in the west, princely states of the Punjab in the east, Tibet in the north and Baluchistan-Sindh in the south. Lahore was the capital of the "Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab".

2. The princely States of Patiala, Nabha, Faridkot, Malerkotla, Kaithal, Jind, Kalsia etc; were located between river Sutlej in the west, River Jamna (Delhi) in the east.

AMRITSAR, 'THEOPOLITICAL CAPITAL OF THE SIKHS AND SIKHISM'

Amritsar is the holiest of the Sikh places, the biggest centre of Sikh politics and strongest defence post on the north-western frontier of India. It lies at a distance of 264 miles in the northwest of Delhi**.** In the evolution of the Sikh community it has from the beginning of its existence played a key role, and subsequently enshrines numerous hallowed memories for the Sikhs.

Guru Ram Dass, the fourth Guru of the Sikhs laid the foundation stone of the present city of Amritsar in 1574 A.D, on a piece of land selected by Guru Nanak and aquired by the 3rd Nanak, Guru Amar Dass. Guru Ram Dass excavated the famous Sarovar (tank), which he named Amrit-Sarovar (Lit: The pool of elixir of life). Initially, the township was appropriately called-Ram Dasspur or the town of Guru Ram Dass, which ultimately came to be known as Amritsar, after the name of Amritsarovar.

Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, compiled and placed the first volume of the Aad Granth (now Guru Granth Sahib) in 1604 A.D in the building, which he had completed three years earlier in the midst of Amrit-Sarovar, making it first religious center of the Sikhs for all times to come. He called it Harimandir (now popularly called Golden Temple). Guru Arjan Dev also clearly declared the independent position of Sikhism by writing in the Aad Granth on page 1136. Aad Granth became the way of Sikh life and all religious observances of the Sikhs. The Gurbani (contents of Aad Granth) containing spiritual knowledge became the object of the highest reverence for the Sikhs. Thus Amritsar became the spiritual capital of Sikhism.

The growing popularity of Sikhism among Hindus and the Muslims led to the execution of Guru Arjan Dev at the hands of the intolerant, oppressive and bigoted Islamic government of Hindustan, who wished to stop the spread of the Sikh faith. Hargobind the only son of Guru Arjan Dev succeeded him as the 6th Guru of the Sikhs. Seeing how peaceful resistance to oppression had proved abortive, Guru Hargobind recognized recourse to sword as a lawful alternative. He took the seat of his father with two swords girded round his waist, one symbolizing spiritual power and the other temporal authority. He built Akal Takhat as counter part to the imperial Delhi throne, where he held his court and instead of chanting hymns of peace, the congregation (Sangat) heard ballads extolling feats of heroism instead of listening to religious discourses, discussed plans of military conquests. Here the Guru received envoys, settled disputes and administered justice. Ever since then, The Akal Takhat has remained the seat of supreme temporal authority of the Sikhism.

With Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Harimandir) as supreme seat of spiritual authority and Akal Takhat as the supreme seat of temporal authority of the Sikhism Amritsar became Religio-Political Capital of the Sikhs and it became a rallying point for the Sikhs, which resulted in great heart burning among the *meenas* (Pirthi Chand elder brother of Guru Arjan Dev and his progeny, the rival claiments to Guruship). The *Meenas*, orthodox Hindus, especially Brahmins and the provincial Moghul government at Lahore forged an alliance to contain the growing Sikh power. In order to kill or capture Guru Hargobind, the provincial Moghul forces of Lahore repeatedly attacked Guru Hargobind, but were defeated by the Sikhs each time. In order to avoid further confrontation Guru Hargobind shifted his headquarter from Amritsar to Kiratpur in the Shivalik foot hills, out of the Jurisriction of the Lahore government. Thereafter, the administration of the 'world seat of Sikhism', 'Gurdwara Darbar Sahib' passed into the hands of the *Meenas*. Henceforth all the Sikh Gurus maintained their headquarters in the Shivalik foot hills.

Sikhism was formally consecrated by Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaiskhi day 1699 at Anandpur Sahib in the Shivalik foot hills. By that time the *Meenas* had virtually relapsed into Hinduism, became irrelevant for the Moghul government and instead suffered persecution, because of their previous Sikh connection. Under those adverse circumstances they vacated Amritsar, left Majha area, crossed the river Sutlej and settled in the sandy desert region of the Punjab called 'Malwa', where they founded the town of Guru Harsahai. Guru Gobind Singh appointed, Bhai Mani Singh as Sewadar of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. He took over the charge of the shrine in the month of June, 1699 and started regular service. Thereafter, Amritsar became the nerve centre of all Sikh activities. Being the Religio-Political Capital of the Sikhs and Sikhism, it has been the target of attacks of contemporary governments inimical to the Sikhs, all of whom wanted to make Sikhism as their hand made religion.

Guru Gobind Singh left this mortal world in 1708 A.D. The Sikhs declared the war of independence of the Sikh Nation in 1709 against the oppressive and bigoted Muslim rule, under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur and occupied vast areas of the Punjab between Lahore and Delhi. Banda Singh was captured alive and executed in Delhi by the Moghul Government of Hindustan in 1716, after which two most powerful nations of Asia at that time, the Moghul Emperor of Hindustan from Dehli and Ahmad Shah Abdali King of Afghanistan from Kabul vowed to wipe out the Sikhs from the face of the earth. The Sikhs left their homes and hearths and escaped to the safety of jungles, mountains of the Punjab and desert of the adjoining Rajputana, refused to submit and continued their struggle for the independence of the Sikh Nation. They re-organized themselves and first Sarbat Khalsa meeting was held at Akal Takhat Amritsar under the leadership of Jathedar Darbara on the Vaisakhi day in 1726. Thereafter Amritsar became the headquarters of Dal Khalsa, Buddha Dal, Taruna Dal and then 12 Misals.

The Khalsa soon brought down the Moghul Government to its knees and suzrenity of the Sikhs over the Parganas of Patti, Jhabal, Dipalpur and Kangalwal etc, with Amritsar as their headquarter in the territory of the Province of Lahore was accepted by the Mughal government in the Sarbat Khalsa meeting held at Akal Takhat Amritsar in 1733 by conferring the title of Nawab on the Sikh leader Sardar Kapur Singh Faizalpuria (Singhpuria).The biannual meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa on the occasions of Diwali and Vaisakhi festivals were held at Akal Takhat Amritsar, where all vital decisions were discussed and passed bearing on the problems facing the Sikh Nation.

Moghul government unilaterally cancelled the agreement in 1735, and drove Sikhs out of

Amritsar and reoccupied Gurdwara Darbar Sahib. Bhai Mani Singh the custodian of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib was arrested and cut to a limb in Lahore in 1738. Sardar Shahbeg Singh the broker of peace agreement between the Sikhs and Moghul government was captured along with his young son Sardar Shahbaz Singh, on false charges of passing government secrets to the Sikhs, They were asked to accept Islam or face death. Both refused to accept Islam and were crushed on the wheel in Lahore publically.

In view of the central role which Amritsar was playing in the Sikh resistance to the Mughals and after them the Afghans, the enemy attached the maximum importance to the devastation of Amritsar as a precondition of total destruction of the Panth. What was a survival struggle for the Panth was also a survival struggle for the city of Amritsar as the Panth derived its sustenance mainly from Amritsar. During this period, to be a Sikh was a crime punishable with death, but the Sikhs refused to submit and continued their struggle for the independence of the Sikh Nation. Ultimately, they successfully destroyed the Muslim rule and domination in their motherland, the Punjab in 1765 and established small socialistic confedracies in the form of *Misals*. Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Hrimandir-Golden Temple) was bown up with gun powder and destroyed by the Afghan invaders thrice in 1757,1762 and 1764, but it was soon rebuilt by the Sikhs every time. It was finally built in its present structure during the period of Sikh *Misals* in 1765. Khalsa completed the construction of Amrit Sarowar, the building of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, the bridge and the Darshani Deori by 1776. The Parikarma and the residential places (Bungas) around the tank were completed by 1784.

Amritsar was the common city of entire Khalsa Panth. The leaders of various Sikh Misals built their own localities called katras there, which they named after their own or after the name of the Misal. When they came to Amritsar various Sardars lived and behaved as brothers to one another.

In 1798 Shah Zaman the king of Afghanistan and grand son of Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded Punjab for the second time to avenge his defeat at the hands of Khalsa forces in 1796. Sardarni Sada Kaur, mother-in-law of Ranjit Singh called Sarbat Khalsa, at Akal Takhat Amritsar. Ranjit Singh was unanimously elected leader and given the command of the *Dal Khalsa*. The Afghans were routed in the battle, which ensued there-after. All the Sikh Misals on the western side of river Satlej in the Punjab with Ranjit Singh as their leader announced the establishment of ‘Independent Theocratic Sikh State of the Punjab’, based on the Sikh principles, values and traditions of Sarbat Khalsa, Panj Piaray and Gurmatta, under the supremacy of Akal Takhat in 1799 A.D. Ranjit Singh moved his seat of power from Gujrat to Lahore. He was formally installed as Maharaja of `The Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab' in 1801. Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Harimandir--Golden Temple) was gold plated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1805. Gobindgarh forte was constructed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809. City was walled by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1825 and it had twelve gates. Maharaja Ranjit Singh built his palace in the Garden, called Ram Bagh in the north of the city five hundred yards from Darwaza Ram Bagh. The construction of the palace was completed in 1831. The degree of attention which Maharaja and his Sardars bestowed upon Amritsar soon elevated it to first position among all the cities in the kingdom. He made it the greatest centre of trade and industry in the entire state. The city served as second capital of the Sikh Kingdom and as head office of the governor of the Majha tract.

The city of Amritsar came under the British rule in 1849, after the annexation of Punjab by the British. The British were shrewed enough to realize, quite early in their period of rule, the

importance of keeping Amritsar under their firm control. They conducted the administration of the Golden Temple through a British appointed custodian entitled *'Sarbrah'*. The *Mahants* whose duty was to discharge religious functions at the place were placated by special favours, such as conferment of land proprietary rights, and were protected against their detractors. They established Civil Hospital here in a building outside Ram Bagh in early 1850s. Municipality was set up in 1858. Railway station was constructed in 1859. Railway service started between Lahore and Amritsar in 1862. Town Hall was completed in 1870. Building of Government School in the neighbourhood of town hall was completed in 1873. Hall Gate was constructed in 1873 by breaking the wall around the city to connect the Town Hall with Railway Station and the Civil Lines. Singh Sabha, which gave modem orientation to the Sikh community, was founded by the Sarbat Khalsa in 1873, in Amritsar. The buildings of District Courts and Treasury were constructed in 1876. Work on the Victoria Jubillee Hospital (now Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital) started in 1891. Singh Sabha established Khalsa College in 1892. City was electrified in1913. Jallian-wala Bagh tragedy took place in Amritsar in 1919.

Sarbat Khalsa at Akal Takhat Amritsar established, Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and Sharomani Akali Dal in 1920 with the object of freeing the Sikh shrines (Gurdwaras) from the control of corrupt *Mahants* and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) from the British control. After a prolonged struggle of five years, the Sikhs forced the British to legally recognize SGPC and Sikh Gurdarwa Act was enacted in 1925. All the peaceful agitations popularly called *morchas* by the Sikhs, for fulfilment of this purpose were planned, launched and spearheaded by the Sikhs under Sharomani Akali Dal from Akal Takhat, Amritsar.

At the time of the decolonozation of the Indian subcontinent by the British in 1947, the Sikh homeland was divided into two parts. The eastern segment 38% was attached to Hindu India and the western part 62% was made over to the newly created Islamic State of Pakistan. The Sikhs and Hindus in the western segment were forced to migrate either to the eastern segment or other parts of the world. The city of Amritsar witnessed large scale violence and carnage. The partition of the Punjab and its close proximity to Indo-Pak border and then continuous strained relations between the newly created states of India and Pakistan were serious setbacks to the development of the city. Even during this period of wide-spread feelings of social insecurity, Amritsar was able to perform deeds of rare courage and heroism. After India gained its independence several states were re-organized on linguistic basis on the recommendations of the States Re-organization Commission (1956). But Punjab's demand in this respect, persistently voiced over by the Sikhs since the time the country had attained freedom was totally disregarded. There were sharp reactions to this act of denial of justice to the state, resulting in several peaceful agitations popularly called *morchas* by the Sikhs in Punjabi. Ultimately the struggle met with success in 1966, when the government of India carved out a Punjabi speaking state out of the already truncated Punjab. However, this reorganization of the Punjab was done by the central government more on communal, rather than linguistic basis and large tracts of Punjabi speaking areas were kept out of the Punjab. All the *morchas* on this issue were also planned, launched and spearheaded by Sharomani Akali Dal, the supreme representative body of the Sikhs from Akal Takhat Amritsar. Guru Nanak Dev University was established here in 1969.

On June 26, 1975, the entire country was placed under emergency and all civil liberties were denied to its citizens by the then government of India headed by Mrs Indira Gandhi inorder to curb a popular agitation launched by a veteran socialist leader, Jayaprakash Narayan, which threatened to bring down her government. The Sikhs under Sharomani Akali Dal launched incessant agitation

(morcha) from Akal Takhat Amritsar against the imposition of emergency and in the pocess nearly forty five thousand Sikhs courted arrest for its withdrawal and thereby restoration of civil liberties. No other political party in India dared to oppose the government action. Most Akali leaders spent the emergency years in jail. The elections that followed in March 1977, after lifting the emergency, Mrs Gandhi's Congress Party was routed and an alliance of different parties under the name of Janta Party formed a government at the Centre and Sharomani Akali Dal headed by Sardar Parkash Singh Badal formed government in the Punjab. Akali-Janta Government barely lasted for two years and the coalition heading the central government collapsed due to ideological differences between its various factions. Fresh elections to Parliament were announced in 1980. Congress Party won the elections and Mrs Indira Gandhi came to power with a vengeance against the Sikhs, who had opposed her emergency. She made up her mind to teach the Sikhs a lesson. She dissolved the Punjab State Legislative Assembly and called for new elections. Congress Party routed the Akali-Janta combine and Darbara Singh was elected chief minister of the Punjab State. Thereafter, chaotic conditions were engineered by the central government in the Punjab through various mechanisations. Darbara Singh government was dismissed on October 6, 1983 and the State of Punjab brought under President's Rule. The Akalis started agitation ***(morcha)*** from Akal Takhat Amritsar, based on their Anandpur Sahib Resolution (1973) demanding more financial powers to the states and a separate Sikh Civil law like the Hindus and Muslims in that country. The central government did not care to find out an amicable solution to the problem. The law and order situation in the state deteriorated everyday, but it was allowed to proceed to its worst possible position.

Indian army on the instructions of the government of India occupied Punjab on June 3, 1984, imposed curfew and promogulated an undeclared marshal law and snapped communication with the outside world. On June 5, the government of India invaded Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) and Akal Takhat along with 120 other Gurdwaras throughout the length and breadth of Punjab, with its full military might, resulting in the killing of charismatic Sikh leader Sant Jernail Singh Bhindranwale, Bhai Amrik Singh president of all India Sikh students fedration, general Shahbeg Singh, hero of Bangla Desh war along with thousands of innocent Sikhs, destruction of Akal Takhat, damaging the building of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) with innumerable bullet marks, destroying the buildings around Parikarma of the shrine, burning Sikh reference library, damaging Darshani Deori housing Tosha Khana thereby burning of Chanani studded with jewels presented to Maharaja Ranjit Singh by.Nizam of Hydrabad and setting ablaze Langar hall, Guru Ram Dass Serai, and Teja Singh Samundri Hall-the meeting place of Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak committee. Sikh soldiers rebelled. Several of them were killed and several thousand arrested and court marshled. Sikh leaders including the president of SGPC, the president of Sharomani Akali Dal and other established political leaders were arrested for waging war against the central government. There was great turmoil in the Sikh state. The government of India entered into an agreement with the Sikhs, popularly known as, "Rajiv Longowal accord" on 24th July 1985, which has yet to see the light of the day. The Sikhs have rebuilt the Akal Takhat and repaired the damage to the building of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, but the Sikh demands are still unresolved.

CHAPTER 2

PRACTICAL SIKHISM

WHO IS A SIKH?

The Sikh religious code of conduct (Sikh *Rahit Maryada),* defines a 'Sikh' as `any person who believes in 'One Immortal Being'(God), in the ten Gurus; in the Guru Granth Sahib and other writings of the Gurus and their teaching, the Khalsa initiation ***(Amritpaan)*** ceremony and who does not believe in the doctrinal system of any other religion.

"Sikh" in Punjabi, literally means learned and "*Asikh"* means not learned. Guru Gobind Singh in his prayer to the Supreme Eternal Realty (God) says, "*Sikh ubhar Asikh sanghaaro",* i.e*, "'"* O Lord increase the number of the learned (*Sikh)* people and eliminate the non- learned - not knowledgable (As*ikh*)- Chaupai, Guru Gobind Singh.

The word Sikh is purely Punjabi in origion and is derived from '*Sikhna' meaning* to learnviz: "*Sach tapar janiay ja Sikh sachi lay*" (GGS, Var Asa M1). It was patronized by the founders of the Sikh faith for the adherents of the Sikh religion (Sikhism-Sikhi-ਸਿਖੀ), *"Sikhi sikhia gur veechar"* i.e, "Sikhism is the teaching of the Guru" (GGS, M1, p.465).

SIGNS OF SIKH IDENTITY

Sikhs express their religious identity in leaving the hair on their body unshorn, in wearing articles of the Sikh faith (by initiated--baptized Sikhs), in adopting a common suffix 'Singh' for male and 'Kaur' for female names, in avoiding tobacco, Halal meat, in shunning idolatry, ritualism and in abjuring any connection with Hinduism, Islam, Christianity or any other religion. All Sikh men wear turban in Sikh style to cover the unshorn hair on their head. Turban is an essential and complimentary adjunct to unshorn hair. Sikh women wear dupatta to cover their head. Because of their smart turbans, unshorn hair with flowing or well-set or rolled beards Sikh men can be easily identified among large crowds. They are highly conscious and committed to assert their identity through their dress and appearance and of course through their mother tongue, Punjabi. It stands for their willingness to be identified and held accountable so that their character and actions meet the standards set by the founders of the faith. Like all other religious communities of the world apostates and renegades are found in Sikhism too.

BEING A SIKH

One may be Sikh:

1. By birth**:** being born of Sikh parents or
2. By conversion**:** who has embraced Sikhism through conversion from some other religion.

Among the Sikhs there can be:

- Initiated Sikh: *Amrit Dhari* Sikh--'Khalsa'.
- Not initiated Sikh *(Non Amritdhari* Sikh):--A Sikh by birth i.e, born of Sikh parents, but is not Amritdhari.

- Apostate Sikh:-- *Patit or Kurehtia* Sikh. If an initiated Sikh *(Amritdhari* Sikh) commits any religious offence *(kurehat)***,** he / she loses membership in the Khalsa and is known as *Patit or Kurehtia* Sikh. To get his / her membership back into the Khalsa he / she has to appear before the Panj Piaras *(Panj Piaray)*, admit his / her religious offence, accept the religious punishment *(Tankhah),* undergo it and get himself / herself re-initiated.

SIKH WAY OF LIFE

The Sikh way of life known as 'Gurmat' was demonstrated by the Sikh Gurus. They supervised the theoratical and practical aspects of Sikhism and guided their followers. Guru Ram Dass prescribed the daily routine of the Sikhs (GGS, p.305), while Guru Gobind Singh completed the form.

THE BIRTH OF THE KHALSA 1699 A.D.

After being founded by Guru Nanak in 1496; Sikhism developed and matured under the guidance of its ten Gurus over a period of about two hundred years. Tenth Nanak, Gobind Singh, felt that the teachings of Sikhism had taken firm roots among the Sikhs and they did not need the guidance of a living Guru after him, so he decided to put full responsibility on the shoulders of the Sikhs themselves. In the year 1699 A.D; he sent messages all over the region that there would be a speciall celebration on the occasion of Vaisakhi day at Anandpur Sahib. The Sikhs gathered there in large numbers on this day. On this historic occasion he welcomed the Sikhs and praised them for their devotion. He called forth five representatives of the Sikh faith whose adoption was tried at the altar of death and formally consecrated Sikhism by administering them '*Kanday Batay Dee Pahul' (Amrit).*The Guru jointly called the five newly initiated Sikhs, '*Panj Piaray'* and named them Khalsa*. He described the Khalsa as his ownself, "*Khalsa mero roop hai khasa"*. On this day he laid down the distinct Sikh religious code of conduct *(Sikh Rehat Maryada,* which consists of Bani-(The Sikh doctrine, as enshrined in the holy Sikh scriptures) and Bana i.e, The articles of Sikh faith, "The five K's (Kes, Kangha, Kara, Kachhehra and Kirpan), Dastaar (Turban) for men amd dupatta for women as head covering along with practices (Dos and dont's), customs and ceremonies etc; of Sikhism. He also instructed all Sikh men / women to adopt 'Singh' and 'Kaur' respectively as compulsory ending (suffix) with their respective names, thereby granting the Sikhs a distinct corporate identity. He gave them Sikh greetings: "*Waheguru jee ka Khalsa, Waheguru jee kee fateh"*. The verbal instructions were recorded by various contemporary Sikh writers in the form of '*Rehatnamas'.* He explained the Sikhs that all their entanglements of caste or lineage, communal outlook, occupations or professions, superstitions and ritualism, which had

dwarfed their vision and killed their self respect had been broken and if they again behaved in old way would suffer as they had so far been doing. He strictly advised them to maintain their separate identity and said:

Jab lag Khalsa rahey naira --As long as Khalsa strictly maintains its separate identity
Tab lag tej dion mein saara--, I will lend Him, my full support,
*Jab ih gahey `Bipran' kee reet***-- when he adopts the Brahmanical culture,-
*Tab na karoon in kee parteet***",-then I shall not believe Him"

(Sarbloh Granth, Patshahi Dasveen)

To prove that Khalsa were competent and qualified enough to guide and lead the nation as Nanak had been doing in ten generations, the tenth Nanak, till then Guru Gobind Rai himself took Amrit from the five Sikhs *(Panj Piaray)* whom he had himself initiated (baptized). After taking *Amrit,* the Guru became Gobind Singh. Guru thus passed the Guruship of temporal affairs of the community not to another individual but to the corporate body of the Sikhs, and named it '*Guru Khalsa Panth,* who could neither be killed nor eliminated. Guru became first member of this body and said, **"**-*Inhe kee kirpa ke sajey ham hain hahin mo so gareeb karor parey"* (Dasam Granth, p 380). He described the Khalsa as '*Akal Purkh kee fauj'* i.e, `Army of God'and said, "Raj karega Khalsa aaqi rahe na koay".

Amritpaan in Sikhism symbolizes a rebirth, by which the initiated are considered as having freed themselves of their previous family origion-caste or lineage *(Kulnash)* to become the family of Gobind Singh; of having renounced their earlier creeds--communal outlook *(Dharamnash)* for the creed of the Khalsa; of having renounced their previous occupations or professions *(Kirtnash)* for that of soldering; of having given up superstition *(Bharamnash),* of having given up all rituals *(Karamnash)* and develop catholicity and universality of outlook, "*Manas kee jaat sabey ekey pehchanbo* i.e; "Treat all mankind alike" (Akal ustat--Guru Gobind Singh).

Khalsa Sikhs now represent and spearhead the tasks of Sikh religion and are recognizable throughout the world as bearded and turbaned Sikhs, supporting the articles of their faith, who could never hide under cowardice.

Sikhism is the highest evolution of the Indian thought and is the only indigenous religious revolutionary philosophy, which took birth in the Punjab. The ultimate goal of all ideologies is to create a perfect man. Sikh religion is the only one, which has been successful in achieving this goal by creating a new man in the form of Khalsa. The Khalsa is a concept of perfect man. This is a balanced physical, mental and spiritual development. Khalsa is a saint soldier. The soldier symbolizes the physical development and discipline, while saint is represented by mental (knowledge-scholarship) and spiritual (moral-ethical) development and discipline.

The Khalsa commandments:

Pooja Akal kee--Worship only God
Paricha Shabad Ka---Believe only in Gurbani
Deedaar Khalsay Ka-- keep the company of the Khalsa.
Who is Khalsa? And how high his rank is?
Guru Gobind Singh says:

- *"Atam ras jih jaanhi, so hai Khalas Dev*
  Prabhu mae, mo mae, taas meh ranchak nahin nahin na bhev
  (Dasam Granth).

- ***"****Khalsa mero roop hai khaas"*-Khalsa is my own-self
  (Sarbloh Granth).

Only after studying Guru Granth Sahib and Bani of Guru Gobind Singh: Jaap Sahib, Sawayye, Shabad Hazare, Akal Ustat and Bachittar Natak etc we come to understand how high Khalsa is rated? The sacred message, which Guru Gobind Singh has given to the humanity, becomes clear from his this swayya:

"Dhan jio teh ko jag mein, mukh thein har chit mein yudh veechaarai" - "Blessed is he in this world, who cherishes war in his heart but at the same time does not forget God".
*****Khalsa, a Persian word, pronounced as Khalisa Persian, literally meaning sovereign.

********Bipran kee Reet*

********Bipran kee Reet* means Brahmanical culture, which in Brahminism (Hinduism) is practiced through Brahmanical language (Sanskrit), caste system, idolatary, polytheism, renunciaatin, asceticism, celibacy, along with appearance through Mundan (Hajamat-Shave), dress (dhoti, topi (cap) and langoti, supporting tilak by men, Bindi and Sandhoor by women, wearing of janeu by men belief in ritual practices like worship of fire (Havan), idols (Moortis), pictures and tombs (Samadhis), worship (Pooja) by way of Aarti, clapping of hands, ringing of bells, burning of incense (Dhoop0, offering food for the deity (naibed), lighting lamp (jot0 jagaoni0 with clarified butter (desi ghio) with the holiness of lamps, keeping kumbh (new earthen ptcher full of water with its mouth covered with red cloth, a coconut in wrapped in red cloth, brekking of coconut on ceremonial occasions, belief in horoscopes, astrology, jantra, mantra and tantras, Stak Patak (Birth death impurity and ritualpurification), good and bad omens, auspicious and inauspicious days, dates and months, going to tiraths and River Ganges for a holy bath, observing varat on the occasions of Naurats, Karva Chauth, Pooran Mashi, Chadas and Masia etc, observing Shradhs, performing Devi's jagratas, wearing of Rakhri (Rakhi), celebration of Holi and Dussehra festivals etc. For details kindly refer to chapter viii: Ritualism and its rejection in Sikhism. Observance of all such Brahmanical practices is strictly prohibited in Sikhism.

SIKH REHAT MARYADA

(SIKH DHARM ACHAAR SHASTAR)

OR

SIKH RELIGIOUS CODE OF CONDUCT

Like all other major world religions, Sikhism too has its own religious code of conduct, which is called 'the Sikh *Rehatmaryada',* which is based on commandments of Guru Granth Sahib and commandments of Guru Gobind Singh as recorded by Bhai Nanad Lal and some other writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A religious committee constituted at Akal Takhat, finalized a draft of *'The Sikh Rehat Maryada'* and released it for the Sikh nation, which was published in a booklet form by the Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 1945 A.D, regulates individual and corporate Sikh life. The Sikh religious code of conduct consists of: *Sroop* (Bana) and *Rehni* (as per Bani) .

Roop (appearance):

A Sikh is a saint-soldier *(Sant-Sipahi).* Saint *(Sant)* means that he is scholarly in his knowledge of Gurbani (*Bani*) and leads his life according to the teachings of the Gurus as enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib, while soldier *(Sipahi)* denotes that he is a fearless warrior and maintains the Sikh uniform *(Bana- the five K's--Kes, Kangha, Kachhehra, Kara and Kirpan)- "Saabat soorat dastaar sira* and follows all the instructions of Guru Gobind Singh issued at the time of *Amritpaan sanskaar.* Guru Gobind Singh has issued a very strict warning in this regard:

- *Jab lag Khalsa rahay naira tab lag tej deoon mein saara-- As* long as Khalsa strictly maintains its separate identity, I will lend Him, my full support,
  *Jab eh gahein bipran kee reet**,--When he adoptsthe Brahmanical ways,
  mein na karoon in kee parteet—Then I shall not not believe him""
  (Sarb Loh Granth, Patshahi Dasween)

Guru Gobind Singh further says:

- *"Rehni rahay soi Sikh mera, oh sahib mein os da chera"* i.e, "Only the follower of rehat is my Sikh, he is my sahib (master) and I am his disciple".

- *Rehat piari mohi ko Sikh piari mohi ko Sikh piara nahin* i.e, "I love Rehat and not the Sikh i.e I love the law and not the follower of law".

- *"Bina sastra kesam naroo bhed jano, gahey kaan ta ko kitay lay sidhano" ,* - Without weapon (sword) a man with kesas (unshorn hair) on the head is like a sheep, ready to be led by the ear into slaughterhouse any time by whosoever may wish to do so.

- *"Bina kes tegham deo na deedaray"* ie, "Don't show me your face without unshorn

hair and sword".

Rehni-(way of life):

The Sikh way of life was demonstrated by the Sikh Gurus. They supervised theoretical and practical aspects of Sikhism and guided the `Sikhs'. Guru Ram Dass prescribed the daily routine of the Sikh; Guru Gobind Singh completed the form of Sikhism by creation of the Khalsa Panth. He gave his Sikhs an outer uniform, "The five K's" and an inner uniform of "courage, meditation and sacrifice". Sikh way of life includes:

- The inner values of Sikhism as per Gurbani (contents of Aad Granth).
- Practices of Sikhism (dos and don'ts of Sikhism),
- Rites / social ceremonies, customs and traditions etc of Sikhism.

INNER VALUES OF SIKHISM

As per Gurbani a Sikh should posses following qualities:

- *"Augun sab mita-ay ke par upkar Karen"* (GGS, p.218*). A* Sikh should be free from all vices and do good to others. He should look different from others due to his inner qualities (Bani) and not, because of his outer looks only (Bana).

- *"Aatam ras jih jaan he so hai-ay khalas dev prabhu mae mo mae taas meh ranchak nahin bhev"* (Sarb Loh Granth)

- " *Alp ahar sulp see nindra daya chhama tan preet*
  Seel santokh sada nirbahithio, havbho tregun ateet
  Kaam, karodh, lobh, hath, moh na mann sion liavay
  Tab he atam tat ko darse parm purkh keh pavay" (Ram Kali Patshi 10).

- *"Jeh karni tahay poori mat, karni bajhon ghatay ghat"* i.e *"*A Sikh should mean what he says, any person who does not possess this quality cannot be called a Sikh" --GGS, p.25)

- *"Eo Gurmukh aap niwari-ay sab raj srishat ka lay"* -- "God shall himself honour such a Gurmukh Sikh and he can rule the whole world"--Ibid, p. 648.

Gurbani further says:

- Those who maintain only the outer appearance of a Sikh but do not posses inner values of Sikhism are not Sikhs. They are called *Bhekhi* (ByKI) Sikhs (Sikhs in disguise--hypocrites):

  "Rehat avar kichh avar kamavat, mann nahin paret mukho gand laavat, jaananhaar prabhu parbu parbeen, bahir bhekh na kahoon bheen" i.e, "Man professes one thing and practices quite another, in his heart there is no love but in his speech he talks tall. The

wise Lord who is inner-knower is not pleased with the outward uniform (Ibid, p. 269*).*

- *"Jin kay bheetar antra, jaisay pasoo taisay uh nara" i.e,* "Those who donot mean what they say, they are as good as animals" (ibid, p.1163).

- *"Kartoot pasoo kee maanas jaat lok pachara karay din raat" i.e, "*They only *look humans but by actions they are animals" (Ibid, p.267). and while commenting on them, Guru Nanak says*:

  "Nanak se nar asal khar, je bin gun garbh karan" i.e, *"* Nanak, those persons who have not adopted good qualities, but are full of ego, they are in reality, donkeys and not human being--Ibid, p.1246.

THE ARTICLES OF SIKH FAITH

All initiated (Khalsa) Sikhs should support the articles of Sikh faith, commonly known as 5K's and these are:

Kes ---the unshorn hair
Kangha ----small comb for the topknot (Joora)
Kara ---a steel wrist bangle
Kirpan ---steel sword
Kachhehra or Kachha- (Punjabi name for breeches)

"Nishane Sikhi een panj harf, kaaf, Hargiz na bashad een panj muaaf
Kara, Kardho, Kachh, Kangha Bidaan, Bila Kes hech ast jumla nishan".

(Bhai Nand Lal Goya, Dasam Granth)

Meaning:

There are symbols of five letters *Kaaf* (Five K's) in Sikhism, which cannot be exempted. These are*, "Kara, Kirpan, Kachha and Kangha",* but these are meaningless in the absence of *Kes.*

In addition:

They should wear turban *(Dastaar)* to cover the unshorn hair on their head. Every Sikh male name should have 'Singh' and Sikh female name 'Kaur' as compulsory ending of the name.

The five symbols of Sikh faith, give an identity to the organized form of Sikhism. These are national uniform of the Sikhs. These symbolize the fact that the Sikh has been baptized.

Addressing the Khalsa after completing the *Amrit Paan Sanskar*–(Baptismal ceremony) at Anandpur Sahib Guru Gobind Singh said:

"Khalsa mero roop hae khas,
Khalse mein hoop karoon niwas"

Meaning:

Khalsa is my ownself and I dwell within the Khalsa.

To maitain separate identity from Muslims and to prevent the extinction of the distinct Sikh way of life and relapse of Sikhism into Brahminism (Hinduism) Guru Gobind Singh warned the Khalsa, extorting:

"Jab lag Khalsa rahay niara, tab lag tej dioon mein saara,
Jab eh gahen bipran kee reet, mein na karoon in kee parteet".

Meaning:

"As long as Khalsa strictly maintains its separate identity, I will lend him my full support, when He adopts the Brahmanical culture, I shall not believe Him".

THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE ARTICLES

OF FAITH OF SIKHISM

Kes and Turban:

Before the birth of Sikhism, the Arabic and Turkish Muslim invaders took pride in supporting beard and turban. They did not like the slave Hindus to keep beard, long hair, support turban and look like them. Therefore the Muslim rulers after the occupation of Hindustan (now India) issued orders that the Hindis (now called Hindus) keep the beard and head shaved and wear a prescribed cap (*Topi)* instead of turban. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism and thereafter all his nine successors maintained unshorn hair and supported turbans in defiance of the Muslim imperial order.

At the time of formal consecration of Sikism in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh made *Kes*-and turban as part of the Sikh dress. Both Kes and turban in Sikhism represent freedom, liberty, justice and peaceful co-existence. Sikhs keep unshorn hair and wear turban as a distinctive identifying marks. It symbolizes their commitment living the Sikh values of humanity, service and leadership in both public and private lives. It stands for their willingness to be identified and held accountable so that their character and actions meet the standards set by the founders of their faith. Sikhism regards both shave *(Hajamat)* and cap *(Topi-)* as signs of slavery.

Kirpan: Every Sikh (Khalsa) is a saint-soldier and weapons are life and soul of the soldier. *Kirpan*-in Sikhism signifies two fundamental tenets of Sikhism namely that it is the basic responsibility of a Sikh to confront and resist injustice, and that asceticism, monasticism or escapeism of any kind is wrong. Thus *Kirpan*, on one hand is a constant reminder to the Sikh of his duty, and on the other hand, is a standing guard against reversion to pacifism and otherworldliness.

Kachhehra or Kachha: The Hindus wore either *Langoti* or *Dhoti* to cover their loin. *Langoti* kept the person half naked and a person wearing *a Dhoti* cannot discharge the duties of a soldier. Guru Gobind Singh discarded both and made *Kachehra* a part of *Sikh Rehat,* which is a smart battle dress.

Kara: It is a sign of solemn pledge for adhering to the tenets of Sikhism.

Kangha: *Kangha* in the topknot *(Joora)* is meant for combing the hair. It signifies negation of filthy living of Sadhus with matted hair.

PRACTICES OF SIKHISM

It includes both, what to practice and what not to practice in Sikhism

Do's of Sikhism
Rehat of Sikhism

- A Sikh should believe in Guru Granth Sahib (the holy Sikh scripture), the word and teachings of ten Gurus, the tenth Guru's *Pahul---Amritpaan* (initiation---Baptism).

- A Sikh should get up early in the morning, take a bath and recite morning banis: ---*Jap Ji Sahib*, *Jaap Sahib* and *Tavparsad Swaiyay Patshahi 10*. After day's work he should recite *Rehras* in the evening and Sohila while retiring into the bed. He should offer Ardas twice a day, one in the morning and once in the evening after reciting Path.

- A Sikh should offer *Daswandh* (tithe) of his her income for the promotion of and welfare of the Sikh Nation.

- A Sikh should participate in community service-(*Sewa*).

- A Sikh must visit a Gurdwara as frequently as he / she can.

- A Sikh must always use 'Singh' as compulsory ending with the name of a male and 'Kaur' with the name of a female. The word 'Sardar' should be used as a prefix for every Sikh male and 'Sardarni' for every Sikh female.

- A Sikh should faithfully obey Hukamnamas of Akal Takhat and decisions of Sarbat Khalsa.

- A Sikh must learn reading, writing, and speaking Punjabi language and Gurmukhi script. This is most important thing for a Sikh, as every Sikh needs to be able to read the Guru Granth Sahib and understand Gurbani.

- A Sikh should acquire maximum knowledge of Sikh history and Sikh philosophy.

Impart knowledge to his/her children and remain conscious of the perseverance of Sikh identity.

- A Sikh should perform ceremonies as per authentic Sikh rites (as approved by Akal Takhat Sahib).

- A Sikh should participate in the welfare of the Sikh motherland---Punjab.

- A Sikh should participate in the propagation of Sikhism, take *Khanday Batay Dee Pahul* as early as possible and maintain all articles of faith and follow all the tenets of Sikhism very strictly

- A Sikh should always greet another Sikh with the Sikh Salutation: -
"Waheguru Jee Ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki fateh.

Don'ts of Sikhism

The acts, which an initiated Sikh must abstain from, are known as Kurehats (prohibitions). There are four *Bajjar Kurehats* (major prohibitions):

- Thou shall not remove hair from any part of his / her body.

- Thou shall not use tobacco in any form, chewing or smoking.

- Thou shall not eat *Halal* (kosher meat that is meat prepared in Muslim way), Sikhs should eat only *Jhatka* meat.

- Thou shall not indulge in adultery.

Besides these *Bajjar Kurehats* there are some other *Kurehats* too, which Sikhs should observe strictly. These include:

- Thou shall not dye thy hair.

- Thou shall not worship idols, pictures, graves, tombs etc.

- Thou shall not have any dealing with *Kuri Maar* (those who commit female infanticide), *Chhuri Maar* (those who kill animals in Muslim way), and *Nari Maar* (those who smoke).

- Thou shall not have any dealing with enemies of Guru *Ghar* (the house of the Guru).

- Thou shall not perform any ceremony, which violates any of the Sikh principles.

Thou shall not wear a cap:
Harf hai kaat as teen panj kaaaf, Bida Nand bawarn goyam khilaf,
Huqqa, Hajamat, Halal-o-haram, Ba cheeshe Hina kard roo siyah faam.
(Dasam Granth, p 1428).

Meaning: There are five contemptible actions against which Nand Lal says, and they are smoking, shaving, flesh of an animal killed in semiticway, illegitimate possession or doing anything evil (haram) aand dyeing hair with myrtle (mehndi) or any other dye.

--Dasm Granth, 1428

Doing *a Kurehat* makes a Sikh *Patit* (apostate). One who commits any of the four *Bajjar Kurehats* looses his / her membership among the Khalsa and has to get himself/ herself reinitiated after confessing his / her religious offence in Sangat and then accepting religious punishment *(Tankha).* In case of other *Kurehats* the offender is awarded only religious punishment.

SIKH NAMES

In order to abolish the divisive Hindu caste system and establish equality, Guru Gobind Singh at the time of the formal cosecrstion of Sikhism on the Vaisakhi day 1699 instructed the followers of Sikhism to drop their last names, which in India indicate one's caste and take the last common name 'Singh' for males and Kaur for 'females' as compulsory suffix for their respective names. All Sikh men therefore take last name 'Singh' and women take last common name 'Kaur' to show their acceptance of equality of all people regardless of caste / religion or the country, they come from. Hence every Sikh male name ends with the word "Singh" and every Sikh female name ends with the word "Kaur". Both, Singh and 'Kaur" are Sikh and Punjabi words and don't exist either in Hinduism or Hindi or Sanskrit dictionaries till date. The word 'Sardar' is used as prefix for every Sikh male name and Sardarni for every Sikh female name. For instance the full official Sikh nomenclature is: 'Sardar Jassa Singh' of 'Sardarni Beant Kaur'.

In Hinduism the word 'Sinh' is used for male names in some parts of India by Rajputs since ancient days, but for quite sometime, the Hindus have started pronouncing and spelling their names in English as 'Singh' to misguide the outside world. Every Sikh is a Singh, but all persons who spell their names in English as Singh, may not be Sikhs.

SIKH GREETINGS – SIKH SALUTATIONS

Whenever and wherever the Sikhs meet they greet each other with folded hands by saying:

"Waheguru jee ka Khalsa
Waheguru jee kee Fateh"
(Guru Gobind Singh)

Meaning:

Hail the Khalsa who belogs to God. Hail the God to whom belongs the victory.

Or they may simply greet each other with folded hands by saying:

Sat Sri Akaal

Meaning: "Truth and God are immortal"

SIKH JAIKARA--SIKH SLOGAN

A joint loud Huzza:

"Jo Bole so nihal
Sat Sri Akaal"

Meaning:

"Those who say truth and God are immortal shall feel bliss".

SIKH DRESS

Sikh Male Dress

It is laid down in Sikh Rehatmaryada (Sikh code of conduct) that for a Sikh there is no restriction on dress except that he must wear a Kachhehra (knee long breeches) and Dastaar (turban).

Traditionally the Sikh men wear turban in the special Sikh style particular to the Sikhs only, to cover their unshorn hair on their head along with a knee long shirt called *Kameez* and a *Pyjama* or a *chadur* to cover their legs to save them from the burning heat of sun in summer and biting cold during the winter season in Punjab over an underwear *Kachha* or *Kachhehra***,** but for the past few decades after the globalization of Sikhism, the western shirt and pants have to some extent replaced the traditional dress (Chooridar pyjama and Kameez) of the males. However, their national, ceremonial dress consists of a long coatdress called achkin (ਐਚਕਿਨ), Chooridar pyjama (ਚੂੜੀਦਾਰ ਪਜਾਮਾ) and striking turban tied in smart Sikh style with an impressive flowing, well-set or rolled beard.

Sikh female dress:

Traditionally the Sikh women wear *Salwar* (baggy trousers), *Kameez* (long shirt) and *Chunni* also called *Dupatta as* head gear to cover the long hair on their head. In Sikhism uncovered head is regarded as a mark of disrespect. Sikh women use Dupatta for covering the head and not for veiling the face. Veiling of face is strictly prohibited in Sikhism. A Sikh woman may or may not use a small turban (Keski under Dupatta**.** This dress *(Salwar***,** *Kameez and Dupatta) is* called Punjabi dress and is particular with the Sikh state of Punjab and is the best presentable dress for Sikh women and most suitable for leading the Sikh way of life. For the past few decades, after the gobalization of Sikhism, like their male counter parts the Sikh women freely wear western dress (western shirt and Pants), along with long hair. The Sikhs are highly conscious and committed to assert their identity through their dress and appearance.

Turban or Dastaar `the Sikh male head gear'

Turban called *"Dastaar"* by the Sikhs is an integral part of a Sikh being. It is a popular male headgear for Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims in Hindustan, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. The Sikhs have however institutionalized turban and it has become an identification mark for them. It is an inseparable part of the traditional Sikh dress. Since the birth of Sikhism, Sikhs around the world have worn turban as a distinctive identifying mark. It stands for their willingness to be identified and held accountable so that their character and actions meet the standards set by the founders of their faith. The Sikh style of tying turban is entirely different from Hindus and Muslims and makes them easily distinguishable from those communities. A Sikh with *a "Dastaar" is* conspicuous among the crowds of thousands.

Importace of turban in Sikhism:

The turban is a religious obligation for the Sikhs, *"Naapak paak kar hadoor hadeesa, sabat soorat dastaar sira" (GGS,* Maru M5 p1084). In this hymn the Guru is advising the Muslims to lead a life by doing noble acts. While giving this advice, Guru Arjan Dev has directed them to keep their body as the same is given by God and not to interfere with any part of the same. According to him, a true Muslim can obtain God even if he maintains all his parts of the body without effecting any change therein. If the Guru is advising such a thing to Muslims, his message also applies to the Sikhs. For a Sikh, *Dastaar is* a part and parcel of his religion. It is representative of the religious identity and national cohesion for the Sikh Nation. It is laid down in Sikh *Rehatmaryada* that "for a Sikh there is no restriction on dress except that he must wear a *Kachhehra* (knee long breeches) and *Dastaar* (turban). A Sikh woman may or may not use turban". Turban is not an optional piece of clothing but it is an essential and integral part of the Sikh's religious belief and their way of life. A boy is given turban as soon as he is old enough to tie it. He is taught to wear it by his father. When the boy is young he covers his head with a piece of cloth called *Patka*.

Religiously, naked head is treated as a mark of disrespect in Sikhism. A Sikh cannot appear in public without a Dastar. Even at home a Sikh has an obligation to cover his head even while at rest or in bed. It is an obligation and not an option.

Culturally *Dastaar* has a specific, status in Sikhism. It is a symbol of respect and leadership. Removal of the turban of a person means insulting him. A Sikh touching the *Dastaar* of another Sikh with the intention of removing, shaking or disturbing, becomes guilty of a serious breach of Sikh discipline and is liable to disciplinary action. For Sikhs turban is a symbol of dignity and stands for freedom, liberty and justice.

History of turban in Sikhism

Turban is regarded as a mark of respect and priviledge of the ruling class in that part of the world (Punjab). During the Muslim rule in Hindustan, Hindus were forbidden to grow long hair and wear turban, they were also forbidden to ride a horse, to sit on a raised seat, and to keep any weapons. For the sake of identification from the Muslims (the ruling class) the slave Hindus were required to wear a cap *(Topi)* and keep the head and beard shaved *(Hajamat).* In defiance of the imperial orders all Sikh Gurus maintained unshorn hair on head wore turban and grew long unshaved beard. Wearing of turban was, made religious obligation for the Sikhs by Guru Arjan Dev

by writing in the holy Sikh Scripture- Guru Granth Sahib, *"Napak paak kar hadoor hadeesa, sabat soorat dastaar sira"* (GGS, Maru M5, p1084). Guru Hargobind wore turban with a crown, girded two swords around his waist, sat on Akal Takhat, rode horse, kept hawks and advised the Sikhs to keep long onshore hair. All Sikh Gurus after Guru Hargobind maintained this tradition. According to Tankhahnama by Bhai Nand Lal, Guru Gobind Singh had told him that a Sikh should comb his hair twice daily and then wrap his turban properly folded. Sikhism regards wearing of Cap *(Topi)* and practicing Shaving (Hajamat) as signs of slavery.

Colour of the turban

Mostly Sikhs wear a turban of matching colour with their suite, but certain colours of the Sikh turban are sure indicators to certain happenings or events, for example the white means a saintly person leading an exemplary life and is usually worn by the elderly people. Black indicates mourning and protest. The Sikhs started wearing black turbans as a mark of protest against their persecution by the British, during the British rule in the Indian subcontinent. Blue signifies a mind as broad as the sky, with no place for prejudice and it is worn by the members of the Sikh political party-Sharomani Akali Dal. *Basanti* coloured turban is worn by the bride groom on the wedding day. It is the battle colour of the Sikhs and is depicted in their national flag ---Nishan Sahib**.**

Length of the turban:

The standard length and breadth of the Sikh turban is five meters long and one meter wide usually of muslin cloth. It is tied daily.

Sikh style of tying turban:

Sikh style of tying turban is specific to Sikhs and is well known internationally. It gives an instant recognition of a person being Sikh.

Beard in Sikhism:

A Sikh may have a flowing, well set, forward or backward rolled beard. The practice of setting the beard in various styles started during the Sikh rule in the Punjab.

SIKH FOOD HABITS

Sikhs are very fond of good eating. The historical experience has made them survivors and hospitable, also generous and with a zest for life. This is expressed in their old saying, *"Khada Peeta Lahey Da Baaki Ahmad Shahey Da"*--- What is consumed has worth, what remains is for the Ahmad Shah, the Afghan invader who invaded and plundered the Sikh country, Punjab and India about a dozen times in the eighteenth century.

In daily life the Sikhs in Punjab eat *roti*, the whole-wheat pancake, usually with daal, saag or some other home-grown vegetables or *amb da achaar* (mango pickle) along with *lassi* or water to drink. *Karela* (bitter gourd) and okra are their favourite vegetables. They are fond of cooking with butter. *Kheer* (rice cooked with milk and sugar), *Karah*

parshad (soft pudding made from wheat flour, butter, sugar and water) and *Zarda* (yellow coloured sweet rice) are favourite sweet dishes of the Sikhs.

Their *Lassi, Saron Da Saag, Makai Dee Roti, Tari Wala Murga* (Chicken curry) and *Daal Makhni* hold an eternal fascination for the outside world. The hospitality of the Sikhs is unmatched. They believe in honest living through hard labor and sharing the fruits of this labor with others without expecting any returns. They are very fond of milk and butter otherwise they have very frugal eating habits.

Laddoos, jalebies and *khoay dey peray* are among their favourite sweet meats. *Pakoras* are their usual saline snacks. There is no taboo regarding eatables in Sikhism, except that which brings pain to body and evil thought to mind, "*Baba hor khana khushi khuar jit khadey tan peeriay man mein chaley vikaar" (GGS, p16).* Basically all Sikhs are non-vegetarian. Just as people from other religions choose to be vegetarian, some Sikhs choose not to eat meat at all, but this is a personal choice not the rule. All Sikhs do not eat meat prepared by '*Halal'* (Kosher meat) i.e, the Muslim method of killing animals. Sikhs only eat meat prepared by *Jhatka* method in which the animal is killed by a single blow of sword. This is, followed by them very strictly. Tobacco is a Tabo in Sikhism. Initiated Sikhs do not consume any intoxicant, including alcohol.

Common Beverages of the Sikhs

The common beverages of the Sikhs and Punjabis include:

1) Milk

2) *Lassi* (Butter milk)

3) *Kachchi Lassi* (Water mixed with milk and sugar),

4) Country *Sharbats: Rooh Afza Sharbat, Badam da Sharbat, Lichee da Sharbat* etc

5) *Shardai* (A cooling drink made by bruising almonds, popy seeds and cardamom with a pestal and mortar).

6) *Rao- Gannay da Ras* (Sugar cane juice)

7) *Rao- tay Lassi* mix (Sugar cane juice mixed with butter milk)

8) *Sattoo,* Prepared from roasted barley, raw sugar *(Shakar)* and water

9) *Kaanji* (made form black carrots and rye mustard)

MEAT EATING IN SIKHISM

In Sikhism there is no prohibition on eating any kind of meat provided it comes from healthy animal and has been prepared by, '*Jhatka'* method. According to Sikh *Rehat Maryada* (Sikh religious code of conduct), published by SGPC, Amritsar, a Sikh is not allowed to eat '*Halaal'* (Kosher) meat (prepared according to Muslim rites). A Sikh should eat only, '*Jhatka'* meat. Before the birth of Sikhism various sects of Hinduism and the radical saints prohibited eating meat. Bhagat Kabir's views in this regard have been included in the holy Sikh scrpituture Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Nanak told them saying:

- *"Maas kar moorakh jhagre giaan dhiaan nahee jaanay kaun maas kaun saag kahavay kis meh paap samaanay*--" i.e; "Only fools argue whether to eat meat or not. Who can define what is meat and what is not meat, who knows where the sin lies, being a vegetarian or non-vegetarian (GGS, P.1289-90).

- *Jetay daanay ann kay jeean baaj na koay, pehla panee jeev hai jit haria sab koay"* (Ibid, Asa M1, p 472)-Every food grain has life, water is the source of all life. It assists the growth of human beings, animals and vegetables. There is life in vegetables. Every thing is alive because of water.

  In nature living beings feed on living beings. Hence there is nothing unnatural or ungodly in eating flesh. Gurbani tells us that the claim of vegetarians to be superior or holier than non vegetarians does not stand the test of logic:

- *Masshu nimmay maashu jammay ham maas kay bhaanday, Gian dhian kachh soojhay nahin chatur kahavay paanday*-- (Ibid, 1289-90).

- *Pehlaan mason nimmian maasay under vaas,*
  jeeo paa-ay maas mohay miliaa hadd chamm tan maas
  Maasahu baahar kadhia mam-maa maas giraas.
  Mohu masay ka jeebh masay kee maasiy under saas,
  Vadda hoaa veeaahiaa ghar lai aya maas,
  maashu hee maas oopjai maasahu sabo saak
  Satgur miliay hukam bhoojeeay taan ko aavay raas
  Aap chhutay nah chooteeay Nanak *bachan binaas--(*Ibid, p, M1)

According to Sikhism to deprive some one of his / her right or rob of his / her share or charging interest rates in excess than the prevailing rates or not paying for one's hard labour is just like drinking the human blood and that is an unpardonable sin- *Je ratt laggay kapray jama hoay paleet jo ratt peevah mansaa tin ko nirmal cheet"* (Ibid, Ml, p 140).

The food offered in Guru Ka Langar is always vegetarian as it is meant for the persons of all faiths.

CHAPTER 3

RITES/CEREMONIES AND CUSTOMS OF SIKHISM

A CYCLE OF SIKH LIFE

Rites / Cermonies and Customs of Sikhism

All religions and societies have their rites, customs and ceremonies for all occasions. Sikhism too has its own customs and ceremonies related with various phases of life. Sikh ceremonies are not rituals or occasions for display of affluence and ego, but acts of thanks giving and prayers suited to the occasion. All Sikh cermonies are simple, but significant and are held in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. They are devotional in substance and congregational in character. The concerned Sikh household either arranges for an Akhand Path or Sehaj Path followed by Kirtan and Ardas or just the Kirtan and Ardas depending on the circumstances. At every occasion, the Sikh household thanks God for all His blessings and bounties. At all ceremonies they invite their friends and relatives to join the celebrations. All Sikh religious ceremonies start in the morning and are over by afternoon.

Birth

On birth of a child, either boy or a girl, Ardas (the Sikh Prayer) is offered as thanks giving and to seek God's benevolence for the child. The parents of the child try to bring the child to a Gurdwara as early as possible (depending upon the health of the mother / child, weather and other circumstances). There is no time limit.

NAMING THE CHILD

The date for the function is, fixed by the parents of the newly born baby. Relatives and friends are informed about the date and venue. The parents along with the child visit Gurdwara pay their obeisance and offer Ardas, the *'Granthi'* then reads *"Hukam"* (The Holy Sermon---a random reading from the Guru Granth Sahib). The first letter of the first word of the reading becomes the initial letter of the child's name. For example if first letter is "S" and the baby is a boy then he may be named Surjit Singh or Surinder Singh or any other name beginning with letter "S". If the new born baby is a girl her name would like wise begin with letter "S" and end with "Kaur" in place of "Singh", for instance Surjit Kaur or Surinder Kaur or any other name beginning with letter "S" Sikhs may select a name for the child before hand at home and then offer *Ardas* (Sikh prayer) before Guru Granth Sahib to seek blessings/ approval of Waheguru. Suffix "Singh" (for males) and "Kaur" for female is a must for a Sikh. The ceremony ends with distribution of Karah Parshad and placing of the *Rumala* on Guru Granth Sahib.

INITIATION

There is no age limit for formal initiation into Sikhism, but it is considered appropriate for a Sikh to get initiated before marriage, that is before starting the life of a householder (*Grahisti Jiwan).*

MARRIAGE

Marriage is obligatory for a Sikh. Sikhism rejects renunciation of the world. A Sikh must live the life of a householder *(Grahisti)* and not a celibate. In Sikhism marriage is a sacrament--a sacred relation, a holy union made sacred in accordance with Divine Will and not a civil or social contract. Its highest and most ideal purpose is to fuse two souls into one so that they become spiritually inseparable. It is called *Anand Karaj* (blissful union). Legal sanction was accorded to it in October 1909, when the Anand Marriage Act (the Sikh Marriage Act) was promulgated in the Sikh State (Punjab). Marriage in Sikhism is described as an act of socio-spiritual union of two souls, which is accorded religious sanction and is consciously embraced by the boy and the girl in the solemn presence of the Guru Granth Sahib. Gurbani says, "*Dhan pir eh na aakkheean bahan ikathe ho-ay. Ek jot do-ay moortee dhan pir kaheeay soay*-They are not said to be husband and wife, who sit together, rather they alone are called husband and wife, who have one soul (fused in thought) in two bodies"-(GGS, p788).

Sikh marriage involves not just the couple getting married, but their families and because of this the choice of the marriage partner is generally made with the advice and assistance of the families concerned. The boys and girls can choose partner of their choice, but the most important thing about the partners is that the bride and groom should both be Sikhs. A Sikh should not marry some one who is not a Sikh. In case of a non-Sikh deciding to marry a Sikh, must get himself / herself initiated into the Sikh faith before marriage only then the marriage will be accorded religious sanction. The majority of Sikh marriages are arranged by the parents though this is changing now especially in the cosmopolitan cities. In Sikh society it is considered highly improper for a young man or woman to take initiative for his or her marriage. With the spread of education now a days the boy and the girl are given a chance to see and talk to each other unlike the old days when the newly weds saw each other after the marriage. The initative for the proposal usually comes from the girl's side, usually through an intermediary. In olden days the intermediary was generally a '*Mirasi'* or a *'Nai'* but now a days he is usually a common friend of both the families or sometimes, may be through an advertisement in the news papers. As soon as the choice of the marriage partners is complete, the parents of the boy and the girl meet to signify mutual consent to the match and discuss details of the ceremony. Then engagement ceremony (Betrothal called *Mangani* in Punjabi) is performed and the date for the wedding is fixed. On this day Ardas is performed and the bridegroom is presented with a *Kirpan***,** a *Kara* and some sweets by the bride's parents. Then it is reciprocated for the bride at her house by the groom's parents. Sikhs donot bother about matching the horoscopes of the bride and the bridegroom or the influence of the planets on the marriage, they just fix the date of marriage to suite their convenience.

The Sikh marrige as per Sikh Rehat Maryada--(Sikh religious code of conduct): Pre-requisits for the ceremony:

Religion of the bride/ groom:

The bride and the groom should both be Sikhs. A Sikh should not marry some one who is not a Sikh. In case of a non-Sikh deciding to marry a Sikh, must get himself / herself initiated into Sikh faith before marriage only then the marriage will be accorded religious sanction

Age:

Child marrige is strictly prohibited in Sikhism. Both partners entering into marriage alliance should be adults.

Place or site for solemnization of the Sikh marriage:

Wedding can be solemnized at the bride's home or a Gurdwara or any other designated place, but not a hotel. Where ever the ceremony takes place Guru Granth must be present. Any ***Amrit Dhari*** **Sikh**, male or female can perform the ceremony.

Minimum or maximum number of persons required to attend/ witness, the ceremony:

It has not been specified any where in the *Sikh Rehat Maryada*. The absolute necessity is the presence of the bride, bridegroom, their parents / guardians, Guru Granth Sahib and the officiant (*Granthi*). The presence of Rages is not necessary.

Dress code for the bride:

Traditionally the bride wears a red coloured Punjabi Sikh suite with a red dupatta for the ceremony. The suite and dupatta have usually golden embroidery on them.

Dress code for the bridegroom:

There is no prohibition is this regard. Usually he wears a traditional ceremonial Sikh dress (*Achkin and Chooridar Pajama*), but he may wear simple Punjabi or western dress along with Basanti (yellow) coloured turban. He carries a 2.5 meters long *Safa* (stole/ scarf) of the same colour either on his shoulder or hand for the solemnization of Lawan. He also carries a full-length sword in his hand.

The ceremonial:

The main marriage ceremony is divided into following parts: Arrival of *Baraat*- (bridegroom party), Welcome hymn and *Ardas*, *Milni* (formal introduction), Breakfast, *Anand Karaj*, Lunch and *Doli*.

Arrival of Baraat:

The ceremonial for the marriage begins with arrival of the Baraat. The bridegroom and his parents accompanied by relatives and friends arrive at the place of marriage. The bride's parents,

relatives, their friends await there at the entrance to the premesis. They receive the marriage at the entrence of the venue. Welcome hymn (Shabad) '*Ham ghar sajan aaye'--(Ibid,* Suhi Ml, p 764) is sung by the bride's party followed by the Sikh prayer *(Ardas).*

Milni: After Ardas Milni (formal introduction) takes place. Essentially it is between the father of the bridegroom and the father of the bride. But, in some cases it is extended to include some corresponding male relatives of the couple-to-be, for example grandfather, uncles and brothers. The meeting partners garland each other. The relations of the bride generally give some gifts to the relations of the bridegroom at the time of the `Milni'. The Barat is then escorted inside the wedding venue.

Breakfast: After the milni the Barat is taken to a specilly organized hall for breakfast.

Anand Karaj:

After breakfast everybody goes to the hall where the marriage ceremony is to take place. The bride and the bridegroom along with their relatives and friends form a congregation in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib. The relatives and friends of the bride's family also join the congregation. The bridegroom and bride come and sit in front of the Guru Granth Sahib after paying their obeisance. The Sikh marriage ceremony then starts, the main steps, however are:

Step 1. Ragis sing shabad " *"Keeta loriay kam----"* (Ibid, M5, p 91)

Step 2. *Ardas*-An Ardas is then offered wherein only, the bride, the bridegroom and their parents are requested to stand and participate.

Step 3. *Hukamnama*-A *'Hukamnama'* is then read from Guru Granth Sahib,

Step 4. The father of the bride, is then asked by the ragis to advance the hand of his daughter to hold one end of the *'Safa',* which the bridegroom is already holding. The bride's father proceeds to a position behind the couple and places in the hand of his daughter one end of the *'Safa',* signifying that now she has left her father's care to join her husband's family. When the bride is holding *the 'Safa'* the ragis sing another hymn; *"Habay saak kooravay dithay tao palay tainday lagi-----"* (Ibid, M5, p963).

Step 5. The advice: The officiant then explains to the couple the concept and significance of the Sikh marriage and their duties in life, they are about to enter.

Advice for the bridegroom:

"Nijj nari kay saath nehon tum nit din barrio par nari kee sej bhool supnay hon na jaio" i.e, "He should be faithful, benevolent and responsible.He should not even dream to establish conjugal relationship

(Dasam Granth, Guru Gobind Singh)

Step *6. Lawan:* Actual ceremony is four *Lawan* (Wedding hymns) from Guru Granth Sahib (Rag Suhi, M4, p 773-774), written by the fourth Sikh Guru, Ram Dass, which has four

verses, each explaining something about marriage, and circumambulation of Guru Granth Sahib. Each Lav (Wedding Hymn) is first read by the Granthi / Officiant, the Ragis then recite it to music. As they commence, the couple bows to Guru Granth Sahib, get up and walk slowly (clock wise) with the bridegroom leading around Guru Granth Sahib. By the time they return to their place, the recital has been completed, they pay obeisance to the Guru Granth Sahib and sit down. Then the second, third and fourth Lavs are repeated similarly, first read by the Granthi and then recited by the Ragis as the couple walk around Guru Granth Sahib.

Step 7. Post *lawan:* Anand is recited (Six pauris of Anand Sahib ie; Ram Kali M3, pauris l-5 and 40), just after lawan followed by two hymns, first *'Viaah hoaa mere babla----'* GGS, Sri Rag M4, p78-79) and second *"Poori asa ji meri mansa----"* (GGS, Rag Wadhans M5, p 576 -577). The shabads are followed by, Salok, '*Pawn Guru pani pita'* (GGS, Jap ji, p 8). Finally Ardas is offered in which whole congregation stands up and joins in. Ardas is followed by *Hukamnama* and thereafter Karah Parshad is distributed to all, the felicitations and greetings are exchanged. The service concludes after the distribution of *'Karah parshad'*.

Lunch:

After all the ceremonies every one moves to a different hall where meals are served by the parents of the bride. After this the *Doli* – (fare well to the bride from her parent's house) is seen off, which is very sentimental, with this the celebration is complete.

After marriage:

If one spouse dies, the other is free to marry again. Remarriage of a widow or widower is encouraged in Sikhism, "*Bhand Moay Bhand Bhalie***"-** (GGS, Asa Ml, p.473).

Divorce

If the marriage reaches at the verge of break down, both the families make great efforts to try to solve the problems. If this is not possible, Sikh couple can divorce each other, there is no special ceremony or requirement, a civil divorce is recognized. Divorced Sikhs may marry again in the Gurdwara. Generally, grounds like, cruelty, change of religion, suffering from an incurable disease and in some cases incompatibility of temperaments are accepted by courts for the purpose of divorce.

Death ceremony--Funeral Rites

In case of the death of a Sikh, as soon as people----relatives and friends, gather for the funeral, it is customary to bathe the body, dress and place it on a plank or container. After this *Ardas* is offered for the peace of the departed soul and then it is carried on the shoulders of relatives and friends or in a vehicle to the place of cremation. People form a procession and sing hymns from Guru Granth Sahib as they carry the body to the cremation ground. The Sikhs do not burry the dead body but they consign to flames-with wood, electric or gas crematorium. The main *'Bani'* (Hymn) recited at Sikh Funeral is *Sohila* which Sikhs also say every night before going to sleep. *Ardas* is offered, this seeks blessings for the departed soul. The nearest relation (usually the eldest son) to the diseased lights the funeral pyre. After the cremation, they visit the Gurdwara, "The hymn Ram kali, *Sadd"* (GGS, p. 923) is read, *Anand* is recited and then *Ardas* is offered and *Karah Parshad* is distributed.

Last Rites--Bhog and Antim Ardas

The period of mourning lasts for ten days. On the day of cremation, *Sehaj Path* of Guru Granth is begun. This complete reading of the scripture is done by the relatives and friends of the family; sometimes *Pathis* are engaged in case of need. The *Path* of "Guru Granth Sahib" should be completed within nine days. During this period the relatives and friends come for condolence and listen to Gurbani. On the tenth day, the relatives and friends of the family gather for the "*Bhog"* ceremony and offer *Antam* (last) *Ardas* to seek blessings and peace for the departed soul. Then after *Hukam, Karah Parshad* is distributed. After this a small ceremony called *Dastar-Bandi* is held if the diseased was a male. The eldest male member of the family is declared as new head of the family and given a turban ceremoniously. This is a token of his new responsibility for looking after the family and estate of the departed person. He is now regarded as the new chief of the family, responsible for the care of the children and other dependents of the family. Then *Guru Ka Langar is* served and gifts made to charity.

Lamentation, keening or wailing is not permissible in Sikhism, "*Mat mein pichhay koi rovsee, so mei mool na bhaia"* (Ibid, p.923). Death is the inevitable conclusion of birth. It should therefore bring no surprise. After physical death according to Sikhism, the "Soul-*Jiv-atma***"** of a person leaves one's body and becomes part of the "Supreme Soul" *(Paramatma /* God/ *Akal Purkh*). Union with Almighty must be a matter of joy (and not sorrow).

When ashes are collected, they should be disposed of (immersed) by throwing them into running water or sea or thrown into a pit and the ground over them leveled. In Sikhism it is forbidden to erect monuments over the remains of the dead. Observance of *varheena* and Sharadhs is also forbidden.

Sikh Marriage Act

Punjab was the only country in the entire world, which was under the Sikh rule and acted as a buffer between the Hindu and Muslim worlds. It was annexed by the British in 1849 A.D. During the Sikh rule in the Punjab, there was neither any written constitution nor any written legal code and it was governed by unwritten hereditary / customary laws. After its annexation, the British merged Punjab with rest of the Indian subcontinent (Hindustan) already under their control and enforced here written constitution having civil and criminal procedures. The Sikhs in their independent country (Punjab) solemnized their marriages (*Anand Karaj*) according to the Sikh rites called "*Lawan" as* enshrined in their Holy Book, "Guru Granth Sahib"-Rag Suhi pp. 773-774, but the Sikh marriage ceremony did not figure in the British Legal System. The Hindus of the Punjab in collaboration with their co-religionists from other parts of the Hindustan cleverly started describing Sikhism as a sect of Hinduism and contended in the courts of law that since Sikh Anand Marriage did not figure in the legal system, therefore, the marriages solemnized in the Sikh way were constitutionally illegal and hence were not acceptable in the courts of law and the children born out of such wedlocks were illegal / illegitimate. They wanted the Sikhs to solemnize their marriages according to the Hindu Vedic rites. Under the circumstances the Sikhs sought enactment of Sikh Marriage Act from the British government inorder to maintain and prove their separate existence and remove legal hurdles in the courts of law. They represented their case through Crown Prince Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, who, at that time was a member of the Punjab

Legislative Council. He prepared a draft of the Sikh marriage Act called ‘Anand Marriage Act' and sent it to the Imperial Council. However, during this period on account of completion of his term, Crown Prince Ripudaman Singh was replaced by the British with Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia, who presented the Anand Marriage Bill before the Imperial Legislative Council on 27 August 1909 A.D; council meeting was presided over by Viceroy Minto. After discussion the Bill was reffered to select committee and Mr Sinha, Sir Herbert Rosley, Mr Merck and Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia were nominated as its members. The bill was passed on 22 October 1909 and became an act, inspite of its bitter opposition by Pujaris, Mahants and Hindus.

References

Sikh Dharam te Sikhi, ikk yatharthak vishleshan (Punjabi) by Dr Maan Singh Nirankari p.140-141.

SIKH INITIATION-BAPTISMAL CEREMONY—

AMRITPAAN SANSKAR

The Sikh baptismal ceremony is called Amrit-paan Sanskar and is held in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. Any five initiated (Baptized) Sikhs, male or female can together perform the ceremony. They are called Panj Piaras *(Panj Piaray).* Panj Piaras *(Panj Piaray)* all' wearing the articles of Sikh faith sit in front of Guru Granth Sahib. One of them explains the principles of Sikhism to those who want to be initiated. After the candidates attired with the articles of Sikh faith have signified their acceptance, he offers Ardas. Then all the Panj Piaras sit in *Veer Aasan* round the iron vessel containing fresh water and *Patasas*. They recite the five Banis: Japji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, Ten Sawayyas, Chaupai, and Anand Sahib. Each one of them offers one of the five Baxus, jointly holding the steel vessel (Bata). The reciter stirs the water with a double-edged sword *(Khanda),* which he holds in his right hand. After recitation is over, the Panj Piaras stand up, holding the steel vessel jointly with their hands. Then each candidate receives five handfuls *(Chuley)* of Amrit into his cupped hands, which he drinks. Amrit is sprinkled five times over his face (eye region) and five times on his hair, while he shouts Sikh greetings:

"Waheguru jee ka Khalsa,
Waheguru jee kee fateh "

The Amrit that remains in the Bata (the steel vessel), is sipped by all the candidates. The Panj Piaras repeat the beginning stanza of the holy Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib, five times, this is then repeated by the candidates. Then one of the Panj Piaras explains the Sikh religious code of conduct *`The Sikh Rehatmaryada'.* Hence forth, the candidates are to regard themselves as children of Guru Gobind Singh and Mata Sahib Kaur. Their home is Anandpur Sahib. They must wear the five K's, the *Kes* (unshorn hair and unshaved beard), the *Kachh* (drawers reaching only to knees), the *Kara* (iron bangle), the *Kirpan* (sword) and *Kangha* (comb). They should wear *Dastar* (turban) on the head, to keep the long hair covered. They are to abstain from following misdeeds:

- Removing hair from any part of the body,
- Eating Halal**,** (meat prepared according to the Muslim method-Kosher meat),

- Adultery,
- Using tobacco in any form,
- Worship of Idols, pictures, graves and tombs etc.

One of the Panj Piaras then offers Ardas and reads Hukum from Guru Granth Sahib. Those who adopt Sikhism for the first time receive a new name, ending with 'Singh' for a male and 'Kaur' for a female. Karah Parshad is then distributed. If an initiated Sikh commits any religious misconduct --- *Kurahit,* he has to be re-initiated after due confession and penance.

Amrtitpaan in Sikhism is not just a formal ceremony of conversion and attempt to make a Sikh appear different from the Hindus and Muslims. It symbolizes a rebirth by which the initiated are considered as having freed themselves of their previous family origion, caste or lineage *(Kulnash),* of having renounced their creeds--communal outlook *(Dharamnash),* of having renounced their previous occupations or professions *(Kirtnash), of* having given up superstition *(Bharamnash),* of having given up rituals *(Karamnash)* and develop catholicity and universality of outlook. By taking Amrit every one aquires equal status in the Sikh brotherhood. It is a total trasnsformation of man from a secular being to a spiritual man, leading him to gradual progress and ultimate transformatiom into a divine man. There is spiritual, moral, social and cultural transformation of the whole being of the person who accepts this baptism. One has to prepare oneself for entering the life of an Amritdhari, who is an embodiment of all the virtues constituting the life of a Gur-Sikh.

CHAPTER 4

SCRIPTURES OF SIKHISM

GURU GRANTH SAHIB

(The Holy Sikh Scripture)

Guru Granth Sahib is the Holy Scripture of the Sikh faith. Guru Arjan Dev the 5th Sikh Guru, compiled it as the revealed and final doctrinal authority of Sikhism in the beginning of the seventeenth century. He started the compilation in 1601 and completed it in 1604 A.D. He called it *'Pothi Sahib'/ 'Granth'*. It was, recensed by Guru Gobind Singh in 1706 AD, when he entered the Gurbani of the 9th Guru, Guru Teg Bahadur, at Talwandi Sabo, now called Damdama Sahib. It was installed as Guru Eternal on October 5, 1708 by Guru Gobind Singh and since then it is called **'**Guru Granth Sahib'.

The Sikhs believe Guru Granth Sahib as the 'living' embodiment of ten Gurus and it is the only focus of Sikh faith. Guru Granth Sahib is treated with the same respect as the human Gurus received. In addition to the hymns of the Sikh Gurus it contains the writings and hymns of saints and preachers with different religious backgrounds, whose philosophy conformed to the spirit of Sikhism. Many verses composed by Gurus are either a contradiction or clarification of a similar verse of a Bhagat or an answer to the questions raised by Bhagats in their compositions. From Sheikh Farid (born 1173) to Guru Teg Bahadur (died 1675), the glaxy of writers covers full five centuries of India's spiritual thought.

Guru Granth Sahib is a literary classic and a spiritual treasure. It throws light on the path leading to the highest goal of spirituality. It contains the eternal truth, proclaims God, and shows the way of His realization. It lays down moral and ethical rules for the development of the soul and religious commandments for the progress of morality and attainment of salvation. In it philosophy is propounded through the songs of love and devotion. The message of love, truth, contentment, humility, fatherhood of God, brotherhood of man, restraint of passions, mercy on living beings, purity of mind and body, search for the self and Higher Soul, equality of man and equality of man and woman, service to others, liberalism in the matter of food and clothing, and references to the political, economic and social life of the people of Hindustan during the fifteenth century and sixteenth century constitute the main contents of Guru Granth Sahib. It is a guide to Sikh way of life. Its goal is of the ideal man, who attains perfection by linking himself with God. References to *Vedas* (Hindu) and *Katebas* (Semitic) scriptures are also found in it. Guru Granth Sahib rejects all types of *Karam Kanda* (ritualism: Fasting, pilgrimage, penance and ritual sacrifice) and all formalism for spiritual attainment. It lays stress on selfless action performed in the best interest of the society. It condemns asceticism, which has the effect of negativism. It lays stress on the dynamic attitude towards life. It supports normal family life *(Grahisti jiwan)* and social commitment. It recommends leading of a pure life whilst fighting temptations and imperfection of this world. It is the only scripture where each and every conceivable aspect of human life has been addressed, discussed and analysed. Mythological references are only illustrative and donot indicate any Guru's belief in mythological personages or their actions.

In its present lithographed diction, Guru Granth Sahib contains about 5894 Hymns and

Verses mainly in Punjabi, Hindi, Braj, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Sindhi, Lehndi, Dhaki, Bengali and Marathi, in Gurmukhi script on 1430 pages, composed and arranged in well-known 31 Ragas i.e; tunes / musical settings *(Gurmat Sangeet),* except for the initial seven and last seventy seven pages. It is a treasure of Indian languages and musical Ragas. Ragmala at the end mentions the families of eighty four Ragas and Raginies.

Guru Granth Sahib is the only scripture in the world, which mentions with respect Ram, Gobind, Hari, Allah, Rahim, Karim etc, (names for God) used by different religions and which includes writings of holy people barn in other religions (Hinduism, Islam) in addition to the Sikh Gurus. It is the only source of Sikh philosophy that has been written and authenticated by the Gurus themselves and whose authenticity has never been questioned. It is the only scripture, which traveled through the generations without the change of a single letter. It is final and unalterable scripture.

The author of Guru Granth Sahib is God Himself. He revealed the religious truth to the Sikh Gurus and ordained them to spread it to mankind all over the globe. Guru Nanak did not claim divinity, only that he was a messenger of God, "*Jaisay mein aavay khasam kee bani, Taisra kari gian vay Lalo"* ie "As the word of the `Master' comes to me so I make known to thee" (GGS, Tilang Ml, p.72). Guru Nanak bestowed the Guruship to the Shabad (Divine Word) in his Bani, ***"****Shabad Guru Surat Dun Chela"* ie, "Shabad is Guru, conscience and intention towards it make one its disciple" (Ibid, Ml, p.943). Thereafter, all the Gurus of the House of Nanak taught the same principle, i.e *Shabad (Bani i.e, The Divine Word)* is the Guru. Guru Amar Dass said, "Waho waho bani nirankaar hai tis jevad avar na koay i.e; Praise be to the Bani of the Formless, Whom none can equal" (Ibid, p .515). Guru Ram Dass says, ***"****Bani Guru, Guru Hai Bani Vich Bani Amrit Spray, Gurbani Kahay Sewak Jan Maanay Partakh Guru Nistaray"* ie, "Bani is the Guru and Guru is the Bani and it contains the elixer of life. If the devotee obeys what Bani teaches us, the Guru confers His grace on him" (Ibid, M4, p.982). Guru Arjan says, "*Dhur kee bani aaee tin saglee chint mitaaee* i.e; Bani has come from God, it effaces all worries and axieties" (Ibid, M5, p.628). He further adds, "*Pothi Parmesher Ka Than"* ie, The Book is the Abode of God" (Ibid, M5, p.1226).

It is believed that he, who attentively reads, sings, listens and acts upon the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib, attains bliss and is brought into direct personal contact with the Guru-'God' (Ibid, p376). Therefore, Guru Granth Sahib is treated to be the presence of the Guru himself in the Sangat. It is the presiding deity in every Gurdwara or Sikh place of worship and every visitor there bows before it in reverence before assuming his / her seat. When moved, it is accompanied by five initiated Sikhs.

NB:

- Sikhs have the original scripture and it is not subject to textual analysis by any one. It is the eternal Guru of the Khalsa (Sikhs).
  (SGPC Amritsar, Jan 5, 1996)

- In Sikh scriptures, the word `Guru' has been used to denote at least three different senses. First, it has been used for God Himself, secondly, the word has been referred to as teacher-Guru and finally it is used for the Holy Sikh scripture, "Guru Granth Sahib".

- Translation of Guru Granth Sahib cannot be installed in a Gurdwara.

History of Guru Granth Sahib

The Bani was recorded in books *(Pothis)* from the time of Guru Nanak and passed on from one Guru to another and finally when Guru Arjan received it form Guru Ram Dass as an ancestral treasure, he said, "*Pio Daday da Khol Ditha Khazana, Taan Meray Man Bhaia Nidhana* (GGS, M5, p186) i.e, As the inherited ancestral treasure (Gurbani of ancestors- Gurus) was opened and viewed, then my mind was illuminated with the treasure (Gurbani)". In this ancestral treasure he added his own Bani, the Bani of the Bhagats and Bhatts (Minstrels). The first edition of the *'Granth'* as we know it today, was compiled by Guru Arjan and he called it '*Pothi Sahib/Granth'* (now Guru Granth Sahib). He started the preparation of the Granth in 1601 AD. The scribe was Bhai Gurdas, an uncle *(Mama*-mWmw*)* of Guru Arjan Dev. The first (original) volume signed and sealed by Guru Arjan was installed in Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Harmandar---Golden Temple) on August 16, 1604 AD, with Baba Buddha as first Granthi. Hence-forth, Guru Arjan and his successors always took a lower seat for themselves than the Granth, whenever the two happened to be together.

Sikhism because of its principles and vigorous preaching by the Gurus was acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. The mass acceptance of the Sikh faith by the common people made Sikhs a potential force. The erosion of the Muslim and Hindu faiths surprised the leaders of both --- Qazis and Brahmins. Both of them began to consider Sikhism a challenge to their respective faiths, the Muslims in addition felt challenge to their political power.The Muslim government therefore tried to suppress Sikhs and spread of their faith, the upper caste Hindus actively collaborated with them in this resolve. The tensions that followed between the Sikhs and the provincial administration at Lahore resulted in the execution of Guru Arjan. Guru Arjan's only son Hargobind succeeded him as the 6th Guru of the Sikhs. Guru Hargobind got many copies of Aad Granth prepared for the propagation of Bani. Maximum number of copies was prepared during the period of Guru Har Rai.

The combination of provincial Mughal officials, *Minas* (The rival claimants to Guruship i.e, Pirthi Chard, brother of Guru Arjan and his progeny) and upper caste Hindus forced Guru Hargobind to leave Amritsar. He moved the headquarters of Sikhism from Amritsar to Kiratpur, in the Shivalik foot hills, in May, 1635 AD. The *Minas* gained control of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, which remained in their occupation for over six decades till 1699 A.D. During this period the *Minas* in collaboration with the upper caste Hindus created havoc with Sikh theology. The minas had employed two Brahmins named Hari Das and Keso Dass for corrupting and denaturalizing Sikh Scriptures. They introduced mythological stories into them. Meharban himself wrote *Janam Sakhi* of Guru Nanak. The *Minas* composed their own Granth, in which they included the compositions of the first four Gurus besides their own but excluded the compositions of Bhagats, as they were from low castes. The *Minas* installed their own Granth at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Har Mandar---Golden Temple) in place of Guru Arjan's *Granth,* which was taken away by Dhir Ma1(grandson of Guru Hargobind) to Kartarpur (in Bist Doab) in 1644 AD. The original manuscript is still in the possession of Sodhis at Kartarpur and is now known as *Kartarpuri Bir*. Due to the hostile attitude of the provincial government neither Guru Har Rai nor Guru Harkishen ever visited Amritsar. Guru Teg Bahadur, during his visit to Amritsar was not allowed to enter Gurdwara Darbar Sahib by the *Minas.*

Guru Gobind Singh formally consecrated Sikhism, on the Vaisakhi day 1699 A.D; and abolished caste system in Sikhism by asking all initiates to drink '*Amrit'* from the same vessel. The Hindu hill Rajas around Anandpur Sahib, who had been willing to accept the teachings of equality as preached by Guru Nanak, were not willing to drink Amrit from the same vessel (Communion

bowl) along with the Shudras (low castes), as Guru Gobind Singh wished them to do. They took it as a threat to their *varn Ashram Dharma* i.e Hinduism, whose very foundation is based on the caste system. They vowed to destroy Guru Gobind Singh and his newly consecrated Sikhism in the form of **'**Khalsa**'**. At first they tried on their own, but having failed, they sought the help of Moghul Emperor at Delhi and also the provincial Muslim governor of Lahore. The joint forces of Hindustan from Delhi, provincial forces of the Punjab from Lahore and the forces of the Hindu Hill Rajas of the Punjab, attacked Guru Gobind Singh, who entrenched himself inside the forte at Anandpur. Having failed to capture the forte and dislodge the Sikhs, they laid a seige to the forte. The seige also proved a failure and the joint forces were unable to kill, capture or force Guru Gobind Singh into submission. The besiegers entered into an agreement with Guru Gobind Singh to provide him and his forces, a safe passage if he left Anandpur and settled at 'Kangar' in the `Malwa' region of the Punjab. The Guru along with the Sikh forces left Anandpur in the darkness of the night between 4th and 5th Decamber 1704. Guru Gobind Singh and his Sikh forces had hardly covered a few miles when forgetting all promises and solemn pledges, the joint Moghul and Hindu hill Raja forces attacked them from the rear. The hostile forces continued in hot pursuite of the Guru and his Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh successfully defeated the pursuing forces at Muktsar and then retired to Talwandi Sabo (now Damdama Sahib) in Bathinda district. In his journey from Anandpur to Talwandi Sabo, the entire valuable literature including the Bir of *Granth Sahib* were washed away in the flooded Sirsa Rivulet, all his four sons, mother and many Sikhs embraced martyrdom. At Talwandi Sabo he wanted to have a *'Path'* (Recitation) of Aad Granth for the peace of the departed souls. He sent five Sikhs to Kartarpur to bring the original volume of Aad Granth, which was lying there in the possession of the descendants of Dhirmal, but the request was turned down with sarcastic remarks, that if he was the Guru, he should produce the Granth himself. The Sikhs returned to Talwandi Sabo and narrated the whole story to Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh was *Hafiz* of *Aad Granth Sahib*. He dictated the whole volume from his memory, which was jointly caligraphed by Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh, turn by turn. In this volume he entered the Bani of his father, ninth Guru (Guru Teg Bahadur). The present volume prepared and recensed by Guru Gobind Singh is known as *Damdame wali Bir or Damdami Bir*. When Guru Gobind Singh was preparing to leave for *Deccan* (South) to meet Emperor Aurangzeb, the Sikhs requested him to make arrangements to avoid a recurrence. Guru Gobind Singh appointed Baba Deep Singh to make copies of Aad Granth and teach meanings of Gurbani to Sikhs, thus making Dam Dama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo) the Sikh seat of learning and he called it *Guru Ki Kanshi* as a counter part to Hindu seat of learning in Kanshi (Banaras). Four more copies of the Granth were, made by Baba Deep Singh, which still exist today. Later on numerous copies of *Damdami Bir* were prepared by devout Sikhs. The volume signed and sealed by Guru Gobind Singh was taken to Kabul by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1762 A.D; and became untraceable thereafter.

Guru Gobind Singh made Granth Sahib his successor when he departed from the world. He told the Sikhs not to grieve as even if they would not see him in physical manifestation, he would remain ever present among them. Finding his end near Guru Gobind Singh ended the human Guru-ship and vested it with the Sikh scriptures, *Pothi Sahib / Granth* and accorded it the status of Guru Granth and since then it is revered as 'Guru Granth Sahib'.

There are several documents, which attest the fact of succession having been passed on by Guru Gobind Singh to Guru Granth Sahib. For instance, Bhai Nand Lal, who was present by the

side of Guru Gobind Singh when he breathed his last at Nander (Hazoor Sahib) in his *Rehatnama* thus records Guru Gobind Singh's last words in his Punjabi verse:

He who would wish to see the Guru,
Let him come and see the Granth.
He who would wish to speak to him,
Let him read and reflect upon what says the Granth.
He who would wish to hear his word,
He should with all his heart read the Granth,
Or listen to the Granth being read.

After Guru Gobind Singh, the Granth Sahib became the Guru and received divine honours. It is for the Sikhs the perpetual authority, spiritual as well as historical. They live their religion in response to it.

First lithographed edition of Guru Granth Sahib was prepared in 1904 A.D.

DASAM GRANTH

Dasam Granth is the second holy book of the Sikhs. The languages used in the Granth are Punjabi, Persian, Hindi and Braj. The contents of this Granth are:

I . Jaap

2. Bachitar Natak (Autobiography of Guru Gobind Singh)

3. Akaal Ustat

4. Chandi Charitar

5. Chandi di Var

6. Gian Parbodh

7. Chaubis Avtar (24 incarnations of Vishnu)

8. Brahm Avtar

9. Rudar Avtar

10. Shabad Hazare

11. Swaiyyae

12. Khalsa Mehma

13. Shastar Nama Mala

14. Charitropakhyan

15. Zafar Nama (Epistle of victory-a letter written to Emperor Aurangzeb)

16. Hikayat

History of Dasam Granth:

Entire literature belonging to Guru Gobind Singh was lost in the flooded Sirsa River during the march from Anandpur Sahib. After the demise of Guru Gobind Singh, Bhai Mani Singh on the instructions of Mata Sundri assumed the charge as care taker (*sewadar*) of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar in 1721 A.D. During his this tenure as sewadar of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib he is said to have collected the available hymns of the Bani of Guru Gobind Singh and also translation of some ancient Hindu Sanskrit Granths, with great efforts and compiled them together into one volume, about 26 years after the death of Guru Gobind Singh (scholars differ on this point). This Granth came to be known as 'Dasam Granth' also called Daswein Patshah da Granth. The authenticity regarding some of the contents of this Granth ascribed to Guru Gobind Singh has remained a matter of controversy in the Sikh world since its compilation.

Writing of Bhai Gurdas & Bhai Nand Lal

N.B: As per Sikh religious code of conduct (*Sikh Rehat Maryada*) only Holy hymns from Guru Granth Sahib, Hymns of Guru Gobind Singh, compositions of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal which form part of the canon of the Sikh faith can be recited in Gurdwaras.

GUTKA IN SIKHISM

Gutka is a hand book of Banis (hymns) of *Nitnem* (daily devotional routine) and some other Banis of the Sikhs. All Sikhs have usually more than one *Gutka* in their homes. They recite *Path* (recitation of hymns) from these *Gutkas.* Like Guru Granth Sahib the Sikhs give special respect to G*utka* because it consists of *Shabad* (the word). It is usually kept on a high shelf wraped in a fine piece of cloth (*Rumala*) separate from other things, even the books.

Gutka is not a work of any Sikh Guru. As Sikh history goes *Gutka was* made by Bhai Mani Singh during his custodianship of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Amritsar in the eighteenth century when the Sikhs were facing worst type of persecution in their history at the time of oppressive Muslim government and had left their homes and hearths to the safety of jungles, mountains and deserts. He felt that it was not possible for the Sikhs to carry the full volume of Guru Granth Sahib with them under those adverse circumstances and thus recitation or listening to Gurbani was not possible in their daily life. He took Hymns and verses of Gurbani from Guru Granth Sahib and made *Gutkas* for daily morning and evening *Banis* to be recited by every Sikh.

CHAPTER 5

INSTITUTIONS OF SIKHISM

GURDWARA

The Sikh place of worship

Gurdwara is the Sikh place of worship, prayer and piety. It is the center of Sikh life. It is indestructible symbol of Sikh faith. Gurdwara emerged as the new edifice on the Indian subcontinent's religious landscape in the seventeenth century, when in 1604 AD, Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, in Amritsar, placed with reverence the first volume of Aad Granth in the building, which had been completed by him three years earlier. Till then Sikh place of worship was popularly called Dharamsal. First Dharamsal was established by Guru Nanak at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan).

The term Gurdwara is a combination of two Punjabi words; Guru and Dwara, literally meaning, Guru's door, but in Sikh theology it means, the Guru's house i.e, the house of the divine. It is the Sikh center of spiritual, social and educational activities. Usually there are four parts of the complex: The main hall for worship, *Langar* (The Community kitchen), Serai also called Saran (inn i.e, residential area) and the school. All major Gurdwaras have all these facilities, but, in small Gurdwaras, one or more of these facilities may not be available. Every Gurdwara, besides religious worship, is expected to provide food and lodging to visitors/ travelers, free of cost. Hence, a Serai /- Saran (Inn i.e, Hostel), is usually attached to most of the Gurdwaras. A school to teach Punjabi language, Gurmukhi script, Sikh history, philosophy along with modern science and other languages is part of major / big Gurdwaras. Every Gurdwara has a *Jora Ghar* (shoe house) outside the main complex for depositing the shoes, as shoes are not allowed inside the main Gurdwara complex and the visitor has to go bare foot after washing his / her hands and feet.

The main structure in the Gurdwara is a big hall, where Guru Granth Sahib wrapped in fine Rumalas is seated over a small bed ***(****Manji Sahib/also called Peerah Sahib)* with nice bedding on a raised platform in a *Palki* (palanquin) with *Chandoa/ Chanani*, hanging from the ceiling of the hall. The place where Guru Granth Sahib rests is the most decorated part of the Gurdwara. Except when it is being read, it is kept covered. The Granthi waves *Chaur* over Guru Granth Sahib. *Chanani and Chaur* are symbols of royalty and their presence is not functional Guru is *Sachcha Padshah* (True king).

In a Gurdwara there are no images, altar or pulpit, the object of Sikh reverence is the scripture (Guru Granth Sahib) itself, and the Sikhs bow before it, walk around it and if they wish, find a space in the hall, sit cross legged on the floor in a position facing Guru Granth Sahib to listen the Ragis (religious musicians) proclaim verses from its sacred pages. A Sikh is supposed to join Sangat (congregation) in the Gurdwara as frequently as possible.

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How to attend Gurdwara?

Any one, Sikh or non- Sikh, may visit Gurdwara, attend congregation and dine in *Guru Ka Langar* (the community kitchen) but proper protocol has to be maintained. Carrying of tobacco, alcohol or any other intoxicant is strictly prohibited inside a Gurdwara. A head covering is mandatory inside a Gurdwara. Those men who are not wearing turban *(Dastar)* they should cover the head with a piece of clothe. Women should cover the head with the *Dupatta* or any scarf. This is a mark of respect to the Guru Granth Sahib. No shoes are worn in a Gurdwara, as Sikhs treat shoes ceremoniously unclean. Before entering the inner premises of a Gurdwara every one has to take off one's shoes. Every Gurdwara has a *Jora Ghar* (room for depositing shoes) outside the inner premises, also there is provision of clean water for-washing hands and feet. Visitors / devotees go inside the Gurdwara bare foot after washing their feet and hands at the entrance. After washing one's hands and feet one goes directly to the main hall and bows before Guru Granth Sahib, makes obeisance (offering) and offers prayer. The devotee's offering is invariably monetary, the amount determined by the individual. At times particularly in rural areas, the offering is in kind for example, grain, fruit, vegetables or confectionery etc. Offering is not obligatory, one can make obeisance even without offering any cash or kind. After paying obeisance and offering prayer, one can join the Sangat(congregation), find a place in the hall, sit cross legged on the floor in a position facing the Guru Granth Sahib to listen the Ragis (religious musicians) proclaim verses from the sacred pages of Guru Granth Sahib.

Religious services at Gurdwara:

Generally, a Gurdwara remains open to every visitor through out the day, so that worshippers can offer prayers at any time convenient to them. However, in Punjab and India two services are held daily in every Gurdwara, one in the morning and one in the evening.

Each day early in the morning before sunrise Guru Granth Sahib is brought in the Gurdwara hall from its resting place. All present stand up with bowed heads and folded hands, as a mark of respect. In the Gurdwara hall, Guru Granth Sahib is placed on the *Manji Sahib* with nice bedding resting on a raised platform. Guru Granth sahib is covered with fine Rumalas. Then Ardas is offered.

The morning services begin with the opening (Parkash-exposition) of Guru Granth Sahib. After this *Hukum* (The order i.e, command) from Guru Granth Sahib is read. It is followed by, *Asa Dee Var*. For the rest of the day the *Ragis* perform *Kirtan* or a Sikh scholar may perform *Katha* i.e, religious discourse. In a Gurdwara, only hymns from Guru Granth Sahib, Dasam Granth or verses written by Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal can be sung.

In the evening Guru Granth Sahib is closed (unless continuous uninterrupted recitation of Guru Granth Sahib ---Akhand Path is going on), after *Rehras, Keertan Sohila* and *Ardas, Karah Parshad* is distributed and then Guru Granth Sahib is ceremoniously wrapped in *Rumalas* and taken to its special place for the night.

Days of service or worship in a Gurdwara

In Punjab and in India, Sikhs do not have a special day of worship; they can do this on any day and all days of the week. Outside Punjab and outside India, most Sikhs visit the Gurdwara on the rest day of the particular country they live, for example in Muslim countries it takes place on

Fridays, while in other countries such as Britain, Canada and United States of America, the main service is held on Sunday.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GURDWARA AND MANDIR (TEMPLE)

Gurdwara

The Sikh place of worship is known as Gurdwara. In a Gurdwara there are no Images, Statues, Idols, Altar or Pulpit, the object of Sikh reverence is The Sikh Scripture---Guru Granth Sahib, and it is universal.

The Sikh worship in the Gurdwara is congregational, therefore the main structure in the Gurdwara is a big hall where Guru Granth Sahib wrapped in fine Rumalas is seated over a small bed *(Peerah Sahib)* with nice bedding on a raised platform under a chandoa hanging from the ceiling of the hall. The Sikhs bow before Guru Granth Sahib and if they wish find a space in the hall, sit cross legged on the floor in a position facing Guru Granth Sahib to listen the *Ragis* proclaim verses from its sacred pages.

The Gurdwara building is built on a level ground and there is no prohibition on the number and direction of doors and windows in any direction.

Mandir (Temple)

The Hindu place of worship is known as *Mandir* (Temple), *Devi- dwara or Shivdwara*. The objects of worship are Idols or Statues of different Hindu deities. Different Mandirs have statues of different deities and there is no universality.

The Hindu worship is not congregational like the Sikhs / the Christians / the Muslims and is mainly personal. The main structure of the temple where the image of the deity is installed is therefore based on the principle of having a *small garbha griha.* There is a passage for circumambulation of the *garbha griha.* This is the heart of the temple and the dome or the spire is normally above the *garbha griha.* Passage around the idol is an essential part of the structure of the temple as circumambulation after prayers is very necessary. There is a small passage called *antrala* (Vestibule), which connects the *Garbha Griha* to *Mandapa* or the pillard hall where devotees gather for worship. The entrace porch is called *Ardh-mandapa.*

The Hindu temple is built on a raised platform with stairs and has only one door, which is used both for entrance and exist purposes.

TAKHATS IN SIKHISM

(The Seats of Temporal Authority in Sikhism)

Takhat, literally meaning: throne or the seat of authority or the ceremonial chair for the king, but in Sikh theology, it means the seat of temporal authority. There are five Sikh Takhats:

- Akal Takhat
- Takhat Patna Sahib
- Takhat Kesgarh Sahib
- Takhat Hazoor Sahib
- Takhat Damdama Sahib

Akal Takhat

The Supreme seat of Temporal Authority of Sikhism

Akal Takhat literal meaning: throne of the immortal--Almighty-God- (Eternal Throne). It is the seat of supreme temporal (Worldly /secular) authority in Sikhism. It was established in Amritsar by Guru Hargobind, as counter part to the imperial throne in Delhi, when the Sikh religion made a formal bid to proclaim its basic commitment to politics and social problems. It is situated in the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden temple) complex. The Guru established it, because he thought that secular (Temporal) matters should not be considered in the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), which is meant purely for worship of God (spirituality). Before Guru Hargobind's accession to Gur Gaddi, Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Amritsar was the place where Guru Arjan Dev used to sit and give spiritual guidance to the Sikhs. With Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom and changed circumstances the dire need of such a place was felt where Sikhs should assemble in the presence of the Guru and discuss their secular affairs. Since they were faced with an intolerant and oppressive government they required a place where they should be able to hold deliberations for their self-preservation. So, the Guru ordered in 1609 A.D, the construction of Akal Takhat at a distance of about one hundred yards from Gurdwara Darbar Sahib opposite the *Darshani Deori* (gate way). The building of Akal Takhat comprises of a high throne of an altitude three times as high as was permitted to any authority by the Mughal sovereigns of Hindustan and it is higher than the Mughal Throne balcony in the Red fort at Delhi. Thus, Guru Har Gobind, by establishing the Akal Takhat and building this high throne openly repudiated the Mughal sovereignty over Hindustan and proclaimed the Sikh claim to a co-equal sovereign status. Here the Guru held his court, received envoys settled disputes, administered justice and decided matters of military strategy and policy. The congregation (Sangat) heard extolling feats of heroism instead of listening to religious discourses.

The building of Aka1 Takhat opposite to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden temple) has a great significance. The Gurdwara Darbar Sahib stands for spiritual guidance and the Akal Takhat for dispensing justice and temporal activity (Sikh politics). The two are complementary to each other. During the day Guru Granth Sahib is kept in the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib and the same is kept for the night in a room called *'Kotha Sahib'* in Akal Takhat.

The new entrants to Sikh faith were baptized or initiated here, a practice still in vogue. During the 18th century A.D; when Sikhs had to take shelter in the forests, they used to have their special gatherings at Akal Takhat, which became a rallying point. On the occasions of Vaisakhi and Diwali, the Sikhs used to have their general gatherings at Akal Takhat and the Sarbat Khalsa (the whole Sikh nation) used to discuss their plans in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, before these were adopted as Gurmatas (the decree of the Guru). It was from here that Guru Hargobind issued Hukamnamas to Sikhs during his stay here. Traditionally all Sikh warriors seek blessings here before going to battle or launching a *'Morcha'* (political agitation) for a Sikh cause. Presently, the Sikh *Sewadars* (care takers-Sikh high priests) issue Hukamnamas on the matters concerning the Sikh nation from here, which are binding on all Sikhs.The Sikhs (Dal Khalsa-The Sikh army) with Ranjit Singh as their leader under the supremacy of Akal Takhat founded the mighty Sikh kingdom and put the Sikh nation and the Sikh Democratic Republic of Punjab, on the map of the world. Inspite of his being ruler of the Sikh state Ranjit Singh was awarded punishment twice by the Sewadar (priest) of Akal Takhat Akali Phoola Singh, for violating the principles of Sikhism, once for marrying a Muslim woman who refused to embrace Sikhism and then for dyeing his beard. Both times the Sikh Monarch presented himself at the Akal Takhat and accepted the punishment like a humble Sikh.

Akal Takhat Sahib is the only *takhat* established by the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib. Neither he nor any one of the succeeding Gurus established any other *takhat* during his life time. Akal Takhat was established to look after the temporal affairs of the Panth. After the loss of Sikh rule in the 19th century, all Sikh political movements by the Akalis (the Sikh political party) have been launched and directed from here. Ever since its founding Akal Takhat has remained, the supreme seat of temporal authority of the Sikhs. When ever, any important issue arises the Sikh nation holds a meeting of the Sikh nation (Sarbat Khalsa), takes decisions here on matters of war and peace and settles disputes between the various Sikh groups. The decision taken by the Sarbat Khalsa (Sikh nation) at Akal Takhat in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib is called Gurmatta (the decree of the Guru) and is issued as Hukamnama to the Sikh nation by the Sewadar (the high priest-care taker) of the Akal Takhat under the seal of Akal Takhat, the decision is binding on all the Sikhs.

In order to cater to the political and religious matters relating to the Sikhs in different regions of the Indian subcontinent, the Panth has added four more *Takhats*. But none of these takhats despite their being connected with the life of the Guru Gobind Singh, was established as *takhat* by the Guru himself.. These *Takhats* are: Takhat Patna Sahib in the east, Takhat Damdama Sahib in the west, Takhat Hazoor Sahib in the south and Takhat Kesgarh Sahib in the north. They are regional high courts of the Sikh religion, which deal with the temporal affairs of the Sikhs. The Supreme Authority (Supreme Court) in the temporal affairs of the Sikhs is Akal Takhat Amritsar, where an appeal can be filed and vital decisions concerning 'the Sikh religion' and 'The Sikh Nation' are taken. The ruling of Akal Takhat is binding on all the Sikhs.

Only renowned, neutral and catholic Sikhs with a track record of selfless community service are selected and appointed, as Sewadars (Care takers- Jathedars) of these five Takhats by the Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) Amritsar.

Takhat Patna Sahib

The second seat of authority in Sikhism is called "Takhat Patna Sahib". Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib lived with his family here. Here was born Guru Gobind Singh. Here are preserved the relics of Guru Gobind Singh including his cradle, weapons and proclamations.

Takhat Kesgarh Sahib

The third seat of authority is called, "Takhat Kesgarh Sahib". It is situated at Anandpur Sahib, in the state of Punjab. The town of Aanadpur Sahib was founded by Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day of 1684 AD, but the Takhat there owes its importance to the creation of 'The Khalsa' by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 AD. The shrine contains the historic double- edged sword 'Khanda' with which the Guru stirred the Amrit. It has number of weapons of Guru Gobind Singh. During the annual Hola Mohalla festival, mock battles between groups of Sikhs are held here.

Takhat Hazoor Sahib

The fourth seat of authority in Sikhism is 'Takhat Hazoor Sahib'. It is the place where Guru Gobind Singh passed away in 1708 AD, and is situated at Nander in Maharashrtra state of India. Maharaja Ranjit Singh built the shrine and provided a gold dome and costly decorations. The Takhat puts on display the weapons of Guru Gobind Singh and other relics on Sikh festivals.

Takhat Damdama Sahib

The fifth seat of authority in Sikhism is called 'Takhat Damdama Sahib'. It is situated in village Talwandi Sabo in district Bathinda (Punjab). This place owes its importance to the literary work of Guru Gobind Singh done during his stay here in 1706 AD. Here he re-edited Aad Granth and entered the Bani of his father, ninth Guru Teg Bahadur. He appointed Baba Deep Singh to make copies of Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) and teach meanings of Gurbani to Sikhs, and called it *Guru Kee Kanshi*, the Sikh seat of learning as counter part of Hindu seat of learning, Kanshi (Benaras). Guru Gobind Singh stayed here for over nine months, before leaving for Deccan (south).

BASIC INSTITUTIONS OF SIKHISM

When Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in the fifteenth century, the whole Indian society was divided into caste and class and was full of hatred towards each other and there was great cultural decadence and religious confusion all round. The Hindu and Muslim elite had formed a separate group and both committed social, political and economic tyrannies against the common man. The priestly class Qazis and Brahmins justified the oppressive rule. The Hindu had divided the society into four groups and the lowest in the hierarchy were called the Shudras or the untouchables who were treated worst than animals. The plight of women was no better. According

to the Hindu ideology, "*Dhor-ganwar, Shudar, Pashu, Nari yeh sabh taaran ke adhikari,* i.e, the stupid people, the Shudras (the untouchable), the animals and the women deserve reprimand. The Hindu addressed the non-Hindus as Malechhas-the 'unclean'. The Muslims called non-Muslims as '*Kafirs '* (non-believers) and observed that the Muslim society was to be enlarged and strengthened progressively through the policy of "enforcement of Islamic laws through the sword"-- *"as-shara tahat-us-saif"* *.

Guru Nanak founded Sikhism as revealed to him by God, to fill this vacuum of cultural decadence and religious confusion. Since he viewed the caste system as the greatest obstacle in the way of developing an egalitarian society, he established the community of the Sikhs outside the boundry of the caste society. He laid the foundation stone of the first Sikh village on the western bank of River Ravi and named it Kartarpur, literally meaning the abode of God. He laid down the fundamentals of Sikhism and founded its basic institutions based on equality, social justice and tolerance. To break off the caste barriers between the high low and untouchables and the stigma of fraternizing with the Muslims, he founded here the basic institutions of *Sangat, Pangat* and *Langar* in Sikhism.

Sangat

Sangat is the first and foremost basic institution of Sikhism founded by Guru Nanak inorder to abolish caste, establish equality and propagate love and affection among people. Literally: Sangat means association / company. Theologically, the gathering of the Sikhs for the practice of Naam Bani is called Sangat:

- "*Satsangat kaisi janien jithay eko Naam vakhani-ay* i.e;How do you come to know the society of saints? It is where the Name of One Lord is mentioned*" (GGS,* Sri Rag Ml, p.72).
- *"Satsangat sai har teri jit har keerat har sun-nay* i.e; God, that alone is true holy congregation wherein is listened Thy praise" (Ibid, p.l135).

- "*Sadh sang har keertan gai-ay, ih asthan Guru to pai-ay* i.e; In the holy company sing the praise of God. This state is found from the Guru*"* (Ibid, p.385).

- *"Ikk Sikh do-ay sadh sang panjin Parmeshar*-When alone one is a Sikh. When they are two, it amounts to congregation of holy. And when there is a congregation of five Sikhs God dwells there**"** (Bhai Gurdas Var XIII:19).

Satsangat is the spiritual school of the Sikhs, "*Satsangat Satgur chatsal hai jit har gun sikha* i.e; The holy congregation is the True Guru's school where the mortal learns the Lord's merits*"* (Ibid, p.1316). By attending Satsangat one swims across the worldly-ocean, *"MerayMadho jee satsangat milay so taria*-i.e; O my venerable Lord, whoever has joined holy company, is saved*"* (Ibid, p.495). In Sangat one dispels enmity and inculcates mutual love and affection:

Bisar Gai Sab Taat Prai
Jab Te Sadh Sangat Mohe Paaee
Na Koi Beri Nahi Begana

Sagal Sang Ham Ko Ban Aai
There is no enemy, no stranger, we live in harmony with every human being--Ibid, p.1299.

In this way under the influence of sangat the sleeping mind wakes up. One comes to realize one's weaknesses and with the grace of sangat comes to overpower them, *"Sadh sang man sovatjagay, tab Prabh* Nanak *meethay lagay* i.e; In the holy company, the sleeping self is awakened then the Lord becomes sweet*"* (Ibid, p.386).The praise of sangat recorded in Gurbani is as under:

- *Vich sangat her prabh vartda bujhauh sabad vichar*--Ibid, p.1314.

- *Satgur bajhau sangat n hoi bin sabadey par n paey koee*--ibid, p.1068).

- *Jin her jan sat gur sangat pai,*
  Tin dhur mastak likhia likhas.
  Dhan dhan satsangat jit her ras paia
  Mil jan Nanak naam pragas--Ibid, p.10.

The institution of 'Sangat' established by Guru Nanak was given the status of the '*Guru Khalsa Panth'* by Guru Gobind Singh. In the theology of Sikhism the words: *Sangat, Satsangat* and *Sadhsangat* are synonymous.

Pangat

The second basic institution of Sikhism established by Guru Nanak is Pangat lit: row, which in Sikh theology means sitting together in a row as equals. It was also meant to abolish caste, remove untouchability, establish equality, inculcate love and teach humility before each other. After meditation he asked people to sit in a row and eat together, irrespective of their social background or economic status.

Langar

The third basic institution established by Guru Nanak to remove caste, establish equality, teach sharing with the needy and inculcate love among people is *Langar***,** the sacred food, cooked in community kitchen, *(Langar Khana)* and served free of cost in the Langar Hall attached to the Sikh place of worship (Gurdwara). It enjoins all to work and provide for the whole human family. All who visit Gurdwara sit down together in a row (Pangat) and partake of the simple food offered with loving care as equals, regardless of distinction of caste, creed, colour, country or status in life. Only vegetarian food is served in *Guru Ka Langar* so that it could cater to the people of all faiths.

The institutions established by Guru Nanak brought Hindus, Muslims, Brahmins and Shudras (untouchables) to a common social level.

References

* Some in sights into Sikhism (GNDU) p. 40

CHAPTER 6

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES OF SIKHISM

Spiritual practices of Sikhism consist of:

- Nitnem / The daily devotional routine for a Sikh
- Path (recitation of Gurbani)
- *Katha* (exposition of Gurbani)
- *Kirtan* (singing hymns of Gurbani in *Gurmat* sangeet)
- *Ardas* (Sikh prayer)

NITNEM FOR A SIKH

The Daily Devotional Routine

As per 'Sikh *Rehatmaryada'* (the Sikh religious code of conduct) published by the SGPC, a Sikh must recite five *Banis* every day. Morning *Banis* are: --- Jap Ji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, Tav Parsad Swayyas, Chaupai and Anand Sahib. Several Sikhs recite Sukhmani Sahib, Asa Dee War and some other *Banis* in addition to the prescribed morning *Banis*. In the evening a Sikh must recite Sodar Rehras and then Sohila before retiring into the bed. He should offer *Ardas* after the recitation of *Banis* both in the morning and in the evening.

Morning Banis--Jap Ji Sahib

Composed by Guru Nanak, is recorded as the opening hymn in the Guru Granth Sahib. It is considered as the gist of Sikh philosophy. Jap ji Sahib depicts the Sikh concept of God. How the distance between man and God can be eliminated? How can a person enter the kingdom of God? It describes the spiritual journey of the seeker through various stages. Japji Sahib is a poetic narration of Guru's observation, understanding and analysis of cosmos and the Divine Truth in the course of His communion with God. It is recorded on pages 1-8 of Guru Granth Sahib and it takes about twenty minutes to recite it.

Jaap Sahib

Jaap Sahib is a composition of Guru Gobind Singh. In this long hymn attributes and nature of God have been described. The theme of the hymn is the praise and description of God. It takes about twenty five minutes to recite it.

Swayyas

Ten Swayyas (Tav Parsad) form part of Nitnem. It is a part of Guru Gobind Singh's classic composition '*Akal Ustat'* meaning the praise of God. In this hymn the Guru dwells on the vanity of worldly pomp, power, valour, pilgrimages, rituals, charities, yoga and idol worship. This is a short hymn of ten stanzas. In the last line of ninth stanza the Guru declares, "Only, those who love sincerely

and honestly realize God". In the tenth Swayya, worship of stones and dead persons etc, is strictly prohibited.

Evening Banis-- Sodar Rehras Sahib

Sodar literally means, that door and Rehras comes from the Persian word, ***Raherast*** i.e; correct path. Reh means path and Ras means correct. Sodar Rehras collectively means the correct path to that door-"The door of God's house," as it is implied in the very first sentence of the hymn, when it says:

"How wondrous is Thy portal, how wondrous is Thy abode, Oh Lord from where Thou look after all Thy creation"?

The theme of the hymn is the description of the house of God and the mode to enter it. It says all creation is singing the praise of the Almighty who created it.

It consists of hymns of five different Gurus, Guru Nanak Dev, Guru Ram Dass, Guru Arjun Dev, Guru Amar Dass and Guru Gobind Singh. Rehras as recorded in Guru Granth Sahib contains hymns only of Guru Nanak Dev, Guru Amar Dass and Guru Ram Dass and Guru Arjan. The compositions of Guru Gobind Singh were included in Rehras in the late nineteenth century. The tradition was, later accepted by the supreme Sikh religious body, the Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak committee. All *Gutkas* published by the SGPC now include Guru Gobind Singh's three hymns as part of Rehras.

Bed Time Bani--Sohila

Literally, means song of praise. The Hymn underlines the pang of parting of human beings from God, and the bliss to be achieved when one unites with Him again. It breathes the spirit of calmness and resignation. It's first three stanzas were written by, Guru Nanak, the fourth by Guru Ram Dass and fifth by Guru Arjan. It is to be recited before retiring into bed. It is also recited at the time of funeral ceremony in Sikhism.

Sikh Community Banis:

The Sikh community prayer is performed in a Gurdwara or in a house where the community gathers to say collective prayers in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. According to the tradition, Sikh community prayers are sung or recited in the morning and in the evening. The reciters are known as Keertanias and the congregation is known as *Sangat*.

Asa Dee Var

The morning Sikh community *Bani* is Asa Dee Var. The main theme of this hymn is:

The Almighty has created this world and He is watching every phenomenon. The one idea that predominates this work is how a man can elevate himself from his low state to a Godly one and thus prepare himself for union with God. The Guru can show the path of selfrealization. It is severely critical of the Hindu's ambivalence of his pretence of orthodoxy on the one hand and sycophantic imitations of Muslim customs to please the ruling class on the other.

The evening Keertan must end with Rehras, Anand Sahib followed by *ardas* as prescribed for individual prayers.

CORPORATE WORSHIP (DIVAN)

Corporate Sikh worship in the Gurdwara is called *divan*. Its form is simple.The presiding deity in the Gurdwara is Guru Granth Sahib with Granthi Singh in attendance, the singing of hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib by ragis, *Katha* and addresses to the *sangat* in attendance. The Sikh worshiper hopes to be nourished by God's word. Bowing to the Holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib is an outward sign of praising God whose word it contains. *Divan* always concludes with recitation of:

- Six verses of The Anand Sahib, recited by the ragis, (GGS Anand M3), then
- Salok: "*Pawan Guru Pani pita mata dhart mahat, divas raat doay daee daia khelay sagal jagat---Nanak tay mukh ujlay kaytee chhuttee Naal***"** (Ibid, Japj i, M 1), is recited. Then every body present in the sangat stand up and:
- Shabad: *"Too thakur tum pae ardas, jio pind sab teri raas------- Tumri gat mit tum he jaani Nanak Dass sada kurbani"* (Sukhmani M5), is recited
- Ardas is then offered by a member of the congregation.
- Dohira of Guru Gobind Singh:

"*Agya bhaee Akal kee tabay chalaio Panth, Sabh Sikhan ko hukam hai Guru manyo Granth. Guru Granth ji manio pargat Guran ki Deh jo prabh ko mil bochahin khoj shabd mein leh. Raj karega Khalsa aakee rahay na koay, khoar hoay sab milein gay bachay sharan jo hoay,"* is jointly recited by the congregation loudly. It is followed by loud jaikara:
Bole so nihaal sat Sri Akaal, Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh

- Hukamnama is read by the Granthi Singh
- Karah Parshad is distributed
- Langar is served to every body in the langar hall and then congregation disperses.

Path (ਪਾਠ):

In Sikhism recitation of Gurbani is called Path. Path of Guru Granth Sahib is arranged by a family on the occasions of birth, death, opening a business and on other social occasions. It may be Akhand Path or Sehaj Path.

Akhand Path:

Akhand Path is continuous un-interupted recitation of Guru Granth Sahib from the beginning to the last word, by relay readers. It is said that Buddha Dal started the tradition of Akhand Path and fixed about 48 hours to complete a Path, during the period of the persecurion of the Sikhs by Zakriya Khan. Since then this tradition has been adopted by the

Sikhs and Akhand Paths are organized at all the important Sikh ceremonies.

Sehaj Path:

Recitation of Guru Granth Sahib from the beginning to the last word, over not a specified time is called Sehaj Path.

Bhog:

In Sikh religious literature it refers, to the ceremony marking the conclusion of the Sikh service i.e, reading of Guru Granth Sahib, followed generally by singing of hymns *(Keertan)*, recitation of Anand Sahib and always by an ardas and distribution of Karah Parshad.

There is no ordained priestly class in Sikhism. Any Amritdhari Sikh can conduct the Sikh service, but usually a paid Amritdhari Sikh known as Granthi, is assigned the responsibility of conducting service. Although Sikhism does not invest the Granthi with any particular status, but he commands a great respect in the society and is addressed as Bhai jee.

KEERTAN / SHABAD KEERTAN

Keertan is the name for Sikh mode of worship, in which music is a catalyzing aid to numinous experience. Keertan literally means to sing the Keerat (praise of the Almighty). Keertan is divine music. "Keertan is the invaluable jewel, which is full of bliss and manifold virtues) (Ibid, p.449. It enables the individual to attend and participate in the congregation to take advantage of the divine environment leading to temporal and social understanding and happiness. It helps to elevate the mind to full spiritual heights and attempt to bring and repose to it. "Keertan has the potency to resume man from the clutches of time, "*Jo Jan karay keertan Gopal tis ko poh na sakay jam kaal"* (Ibid Gaund M5, p.867). "He who sings and he who hears the disciplined singing of God's praises, his nescience disappears. i.e, "*Jo Jo kathay sunay har keertan taa kee durmat naas."* (Ibid, Kanra M5, p 1300)

Keertan is different from music in general. Music in general leads to sensual feelings where as Keertan leads one's soul nearer to the feeling of having a glimpse of the formless Almighty.The significance of Keertan in Sikhism can be gauged from the fact that the entire Guru Granth Sahib is set to music and is structured on the basis of Indian classical Raga *(Gurmat Sangeet)* in which the portions are supposed to be sung. The Guru says, "*Gun Govind gawhu sab har jan rag rattan rasna alaap*i.e; Sing God's praises through the excellent peerless system of musicology and approved melodies" (Ibid, Bilawal Rag, M5, p.82I).

For a Sikh Keertan is part of his daily life. In Gurdwaras and Sikh congregations, the Sikhs sing hymns from Guru Granth sahib or Dasam Garanth or writings of Bhai Nand Lal and Bhai Gurdas. No other hymn or verse is allowed to be sung in a Gurdwara.

Keertan is generally accompanied with harmonium and Tablas (drums) but sometimes with the other instruments like rebec (Rabab), Sitar, Siranda, Sarangi, guitar etc, but general practice is that of harmonium and tabla (drums) only.

Nagar Keertan

One day before Gurpurab a procession is organized through the streets of village/ town lead by *Panj Piaras* and the *Palki* of Guru Granth Sahib followed by teams of *Ragis* singing hymns, brass bands playing different tunes, groups of Sikh devotees singing shabads in chorus. On the way at halting places called '*Praos' Dhadis* sing ballads and the *Kaveeshars* (poets) recite their poems (*Kavitas*) suitable to the occasion. Depending on the size of the Village / town it may start before noon or in the after noon and ends in the evening. This is called *Nagar Keertan. Nagar Keertan* starts from the Gurdwara and culminate in the Gurdwara.

Parbhat pheri or Chaunki

On all the three days of Gurpurb celebrations Sikh devotees sing shabads in chorus with *dholak/ dholki* and *Chimta* through the streets of the village / town early in the morning. *Parbhat Pheri* starts from the Gurdwara during early hours in the morning and culminates in the Gurdwara with sunrise.

ARDAS (SIKH SUPPLICATION)

Ardas is an integral part of Sikh religion. It is a concise and stright communion with God. It is the prayer offered by the Sikhs before or after any function or activity or occasion, happy or sad.

Literal meaning: *'Ardas'* is derived from the Persian word *Arz* meaning supplication and *Dast* meaning hands. In other words, a supplication to a higher power not supported by a written prayer.

Ardas is addressed to the supreme- being, all those present stand with folded hands and closed eyes facing Guru Granth Sahib. The person leading *in Ardas* says the prayer where as the congregation listens to it and joins in at certain intervals to say, *"Waheguru."*

The text of *Ardas* is divided into three parts. The first part appears as a prologue to *Chandi Dee Var* composed by Guru Gobind Singh invoking blessings of the Sword, God and then ten Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib in the order of precedence and must be rendered without any additions or deletions. The second part is composed by Sikh scholars and must also be recited as prescribed. It recounts the events of Sikh history. It reminds the listener of the great sacrifices made by the Sikh martyrs for the protection of the Sikh religion. The third part consists of thanks giving and can be modified according to the nature of the occasion. The reciter then mentions the purpose and the occasion for offering the prayer. Then he invokes the Lord's blessings for the success of the function, the project undertaken or to be undertaken; peace progress health and welfare of an individual / family. *Ardas*, after completion of a task, is an expression of grateful thanks to the Lord for the success granted in the execution of the task. Last but not the least, in the *Ardas*, a humble appeal is made:

O Lord, save us from lust, wrath, greed, undue attachment and conceit. Let there be peace all around. O Father, grant success to everyone in his / her efforts. Bestow the bliss of Holy Name on us all and keep us in the company of persons devoted to thy-self. O God, give us humility in behaviour

and nobility in thought. Forgive us for our shortcomings and acts of omission and commission. May your Holy Name be ever in ascendance and may peace and progress come to the entire mankind.

The Sikh has to bring himself into prayerful mood before he addresses himself to God. Therefore the Sikhs offer following prelude to Ardas:

Tu Thakur Tum Peh Ardas-Lord! Thou art our Master, we pray to thee
Jio Pind Sab Teri Raas-Our soul and body were given by grace of thee
*Tum Maat Pita Hum Barik Tere-*We art thy children, father and mother are thee
Tumri Kirpa Mein Sookh Ghanere-With thy grace we enjoy great comforts of life
Koi Na Jane Tumra Ant-No body can know how great are thee
Ooche Te Oocha Bhagwant-You are highest of the high
Sagal Smagri Tumre Sutar Dhari-Whole creation obeys thy command and listens to thee
*Tum Te Hoe So Agya Kari-*Whoever is created, he abides to thee
Tumri Gat Mit Tum He Jani-Only you know about your doings
Nanak Dass *Sada Kurbani-* Nanak**,** thy pupil sacrifices his all to thee

Full text of the Sikh National Prayer (Ardas)

(Punjabi version)

Ik Oankar Waheguru jee kee Fateh
Sri Bhagauti jee sahai
Var Sri Bhaghauti jee kee patshahi dasveen

Pritham Bhagauti simer kay, Guru Nanak *laee dhia-ay, phir,* Angad *tay* Gur Amar Dass, Ram Dassay *horin saha-ay, Arjan,* Hargobind *noon, Simro Sri* Har Rai, Sri Har Kishen *dhiai-ay Jis dith-ay sab dukh Ja-ay,* Teg Bahadur *simriay ghar nau nidh avay dha-ay, sab thain hoi saha-ay. Daswen patshah* Guru Gobind Singh Sahib! *Sabh thain hoay saha-ay. Dsan patshahian dee jot* Guru Granth Sahib *Jee day path deedar da dhian dhar kay* Khalsa *jee sahib bolo jee:*
Waheguru!

Panjan Piariaan, chauhan Sahibzadian, chali Muktiaan, Hathiaan, Japiaan, Tapiaan, jina Naam japia, vand kay chhakia, Deg chalai, Teg wahi, dekh kay andith keeta, tina piarian sachiarian dee kamai da dhian dhar kay Khalsa jee sahib bolo jee:
Waheguru!

Jina Singhaan dharam het sees ditay, band band katwa-ay, khoprian lohaian, charkhrian tay charay, tan aarian naal chira-ay, ubaldian degan vich baithay, Gurdwarian dee sewa laee kurbanian dittian, dharam nahin haria, Sikhi Sidak kesan soasan naal nibhaia, teray bhanay noon mitha karkay mania, tinan dee kamaee da dhian dhar kay Khalsa *jee sahib bolo Jee:*
Waheguru!

Mir Mannu de raj smay Jina maiaan beebiaan Lahore atay Patti day jail khaniaan under swa, swa man day peesnay, peesay, khanni khanni roti tay guzara keeta, bachiaan day totay karwa kay jholian vich pva-ay, Sikhi sidak nahin haria, teray bhanay noon mitha kar kay mania, tina maian beebian atay Bhujhangian dee kamai da dhhian dhar kay Khalsa *jee sahib*

bolo Jee:
Wahaguru!

Panjaan Takhtan, sarbat Gurdwarian da dhian dhar kay Khalsa *jee sahib bolo jee:*
Wahaguru!

Prithmein sarbat Khalsa *jee kee Ardas hat jee, sarbat* Khalsa *jee ko* Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru *chit aavay, chit awan ka sadka sarb sukh hovay. jahan, jahan* Khalsa *jee sahib, tahan, tahan rachhia rehat, Deg Teg Fateh, Birdh kee paij, Panth kee jeet, Sri Sahib jee saha-ay,* Khalsa *jee kay bol baalay,* Khalsa *jee sahib, bolo Jee:*
Waheguru!

Sikhan noon Sikhi daan, Kes dan, Rehat dan, Bibek dan, Visah daan, Bharosa daan, Daanan sir daan, Naam dan, Sri Amritsar jee day darshan ishnan, Chaunkian, Jhande, Bungay jugo jug atal, dharam ka jaikar, Khalsa *jee sahib bolo Jee:*
Waheguru! !

Sikhan da man neevan, mat uchchi, mat pat da rakha aap Waheguru!

Hey Akalpurkh *apnay Panth day sada sahai dataar jio!* Sri Nankana Sahib *tay hor Gurdwarian, Gurdhaman day, jina ton Panth noon vichhoria gia hai, khulay darshan-deedar tay sewa sanbhal da daan* Khalsa *jee noon bakhsho,*
Hey nimanian day maan, nitanian day taan, niotian dee ot, nigattian dee gat, nipattian dee pat, Sachay Pita, Waheguru! Aap jee *day hazoor----------*dee Ardas hae jee, bani parhdian anek parkar than bhulan hoian hon gian, akhkhar wadha ghata bhul chuk muaf karni, Aggay ton shudh bani paran bal bakhshna, sarbat day kaaraj raas karanay, sayie piray mail jina milian tera Naam chit aaway:.*

Nanak *Naam chardi kala, Teray bhanay sarbat da bhala*
Jo bole so nihal
Sat Sri Akal
Waheguru jee ka Khalsa, Waheguru jee kee Fateh.

Leading in Ardas

No priest is required to address it. Anybody, man or woman, old or young, fully conversant with the text of Ardas and able to express himself / herself in a correct, coincise and moving manner in the congregation (Sangat), can lead in Ardas. In Sikhism Ardas is performed in standing position with folded hands:

- *"Aapay janay karay aap aapay aanay raas Tisay agay Nanka khalay keechay ardas*-The Lord Himself knows, Himself does and Himself sets it right. So stand before Him and make a supplication, O, Nanak.*" (GGS, p 1093).*

- "*Doay kar jor karo ardasTudh bhavay to anhay raas*-By joining both the hands, I make supplication. As it may please Thee, doest Thou embellishest me*"* (Ibid, p. 736-37).

Importance of Ardas in Sikhism

The Sikh's conception of God is personal. He moves in him like a fish in the water, and lives with him like a wife with her husband. He is in constant communion with him through prayer. Therefore prayer is much used in Sikhism. No ceremony, either religious or secular is complete without prayer. The Sikh Scripture chiefly consists of prayers:

- *"Keeta loriay kam so harp eh aakhiay* i.e; *If we want to do any thing let us address God about it" (GGS,* Var Sri Rag, M 4, p91).

- *"Birthi kaday na javee jan kee ardas—The prayer of God's slave never goes in vain. Nanak says all strength is of the Perfect Lord, who is the treasure of all merits"* (Ibid, p.819).

- "*Teenay taap nivaran haara, dukh hanta such raasTaan ko bigan na ko-oo lagay, ja kee prabh aagay ardas i.e;* The Lord is the remover of all three fevers. He is the destroyer of suffering, store of peace. No obstacle comes in his way, who prays before the Lord" (Ibid, p.714).

- *"Ja ko mushkal at banay, dhoee koay na day,Laagoo hoay dushmana sak bhee bhaj khalay, Sabho bhajay aasra, chookay sabh bisrao, Chit aaway os parbrahm, laggay na tatti vao*-i.e; He who is trapped with great difficulty and to whom none offers any asylum; when friends turn into enemies and even the relations flee away, when all the support gives way and all help has ended; if he then remembers the Supreme Lord, he shall have a permanent kingdom.*"* (ibid, Sri Rag, M5, p.70).

- Guru Arjan says, *"Bigan na ko-oo lagta Gur peh Ardas"* ie, "By praying to the God, no obstacle be falls the devotee" (Ibid, M5, p.816-17).

- **"***Ardas bina jo kaaj sidhave, Gobind Singh veh Sikh na bhave*-Guru Gobind Singh says, "He does not approve embarking upon a mission by a Sikh without offering Ardaas *"* (Tankhah Nama Bhai Nand Lal).

History of Ardas in Sikhism

Ardas is not work of any one man or any one time. The first part of Ardas appears as a prologue to *Chandi Dee Var* written by Guru Gobind Singh invoking blessings of the Sword, the God and the Gurus. The bulk of the remaining Ardas was incorporated by Bhai Mani Singh when he was in-charge of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Amritsar during the early eighteenth century. Further additions continue to be authorized by edicts issued by Akal Takhat whenever a major religious event happens affecting the Sikhs.

English translation of Ardas (Supplication)

The Sikh National Prayer

Ikoankar

All victory is of the Waheguru (God).
May the respected sword (God in the form of the destroyer of evil doers) help us!
Var (Ode) of the respected sword, (recited by) the tenth master.
Having first remembered God the Almighty; think of Guru Nanak Then of Angad Guru Amar Dass and Ram Dass: May they help us! Remember Arjan, Hargobind and the holy Guru Har Rai.
Let us think of the holy Har Kishen, whose sight dispels all sorrow.
Let us remember Guru Teg Bahadur; prosperity shall come hastening to our homes, May they all help us everywhere.

May the tenth king the holy Guru Gobind Singh, the lord of hosts and protector of the faith assist us every where.

Think and meditate upon the Divine Light granted by the ten masters (ten Gurus) contained in the Respected Guru Granth Sahib and turn your thoughts to the Divine Teachings and get the pleasure by the sight of Guru Granth Sahib;

Khalsa Jee Sahib hail-- Waheguru!
O Khalsa Jee, think of the deeds of the Five Beloved Ones, of Four Sons of Tenth Master; of the Forty Martyrs; of the devotees steeped in the colour of Naam; of the who were absorbed in the Naam; of those who remembered the Naam and shared their food in companionship; of those who started the free kitchen; of those who wielded the sword; of those who overlooked the short comings of other's; think of their deeds and;

Khalsa Jee Sahib hail-- Waheguru!

O Respected Khalsa Jee, think of and remember the unique service rendered by those brave Sikh men, who sacrificed their heads but did not surrender their Sikh religion; who got themselves cut to pieces joint by joint, who got their scalps removed; who were broken on the spiked wheels; who were cut by saws; who were boiled in cauldrons; who were burnt alive; who sacrificed themselves to upkeep the dignity of the Gurdwaras; who did not abandon their faith; who kept their Sikh Religion and breathed their last with long hair; think of their resignation and:
Khalsa Jee Sahib hail-- Waheguru!

The Sikh ladies (Singhnian) who suffered rigorous imprisonment in the Jails of Lahore and Patti, whose children were cut to pieces and put into their laps but they did not surrender their religion and accepted it as God's Will, remember their sacrifices and;

Khalsa Jee Sahib hail-- Waheguru!
Turn your thought to the five Takhats (seats of supreme temporal authority in Sikhism) and all the Gurdwaras;

Khalsa Jee Sahib hail--Waheguru!

First the entire respected Khalsa make this supplication that may they meditate on Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru-- Naam, and may all pleasures and comforts come through such meditation. Where ever Respected Khalsa is present, grant your Protection and Grace, Save us from lust, wrath, greed, undue attachment and conceit; May the free kitchen and sword never fail; Maintain the honour; Confer Victory upon Panth (the Sikh Nation); May the respected sword always come to our assistance; May the Khalsa always get honours;

Khalsa Jee Sahib hail--Waheguru!
Kindly confer upon the Sikhs, the Gift of Sikhism, the Gift of long hair, the gift of observing Sikh laws, the Gift of Divine knowledge, the Gift of firm faith, the. Gift of belief and the biggest gift of Naam and having a glimpse of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib and bath in the respected Tank of Amritsar.

O Almighty! May the choirs, the banners and mansions exist for ever; may the truth ever triumph;

Khalsa Jee Sahib hail--Waheguru!
May the minds of all Sikhs remain humble and their wisdom exalted; 0 Almighty! You are the Protector of wisdom and self-respect.

O Immortal Almighty, the constant Helper of His own Panth (Sikh Nation), kindly confer the gift of visiting, maintaining, controlling and worshipping, without any restrictions, the Gurdwaras of Nankana Sahib, other Gurdwaras, and Gurus Mansions, of which the Khalsa has been deprived (by partition of their country Punjab).

O True Father Waheguru! you are the honour of the meek, the power of the helpless ones, the shelter of the shelter-less, we humbly make prayer in Your Presence. We have recited (name of the Bani--- or the occasion can be substituted). Kindly pardon our errors and shortcomings in reciting the above Gurbani.

Kindly fulfill the objects of all. Kindly cause us to meet those true devotees by meeting whom, we may remember and meditate upon Your Naam. Nanak, may the glory the glorious Naam be ever in ascendancy and may all people prosper by your grace. Nanak we pray the Almighty to always keep us actively optimistic, may all prosper by thy grace.

Jo Bole So Nihal
Sat Sri Akal
Waheguru Jee Ka Khalsa
Waheguru Jee Kee Fateh.

Then all sit down and take respective seats.
Sikhs offer Ardas twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening.

BHAGTI IN SIKHISM

All major Indian traditional belief systems believe in salvation *(Mukti),* which means liberation from the cycle of re-birth and death. In Hinduism there are three major paths *(Maragas)* of salvation*:*

- *Karam (Karam Kaand--Rituals)*
- *Gyan* (Knowledge)
- *Bhagti* (Devotion to God)

Sikhism denounces all ritualism, *"Karam, kaand baho karay achaar, bin navin dhrig dhrig ahankar"* i.e, "The ego created by performance of rituals and good actions is cursed and damned without the `Name' of the Lord-God" (GGS, p.162). Similarly as per Sikh thought one cannot achieve liberation by aquiring l knowledge only. *Bhagti,* however, is recognized as an important step to achieve liberation (Mukti) in Sikhism. But in Sikhism liberation (*Mukti*) is replacement of ignorance by spiritual enlightenment, now and here and not after death, "*Mooay hoay ko mukat dehogay mukat na janay koela* –O God who will see that salvation, which you will grant me after death".GGS, p.1292).

According to ancient textbooks *Bhagti* is of two types:

Laukika or Behrang (outward) Bhagti:

It is ritualistic and is practiced in Hinduism. There are various sects and *Bhagti* cults in Hinduism. Mention has been made of the nine types of *Bhagti* called *Naudha Bhagti,* which has been prevalent among the Hindu populace and forms part of the *Laukika* or *Behrang Bhagti*. Ritualism is a necessary constituent of *Bhagti* in Hinduism. There are acts of outward devotion and rituals in Hindu homes and temples. In temples, ringing of bells, ritualistic dancing, clapping of hands, performing of the *Aarti* by the devotees, lighting of lights in earthen pots *(Deepa)* and offering gifts of flowers, incense *(Dhoopa), food (Naibeda)* or money to the idols constitute major acts of devotion. The temple priest serves the idols as living Gods.

Antrang or Anuraga (inward) Bhagti:

It is purely devotional and is practiced in Sikhism. The Holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib expounds *Antrang Bhagti,* through *Sewa* (service of humanity) and *Simran* (rebmembrance of God in mind, words and actions). It rejects the outward acts of devotion and ritualism like ringing of bells, ritualistic dancing, clapping of hands, performing of *Aarti,* keeping *Kumbh,* breaking coconut, burning of earthen lamps with *Desi Ghee,* offering food to the deity and such like other things, "To exhibit devotion through ritualistic dancing leads to suffering" (GGS, p.364). "*The Bhagti* of the Lord is hislove. No Bhagti can be performed on heresay" (Ibid, Sri Rag, M3, p.218). Outward ritual cannot destroy ignorance. Sikhism lays emphasis on inward devotion of pure love, which is called Prem Bhagti (love mysticism), which leads towards Sehaj or final emancipation

In Sikhism *Bhagti* is not a phenomenon of isolation to be practiced in seclusion; it goes side by side with life of activity. The *Bhagti Marag* of Sikhism is called '*Wismad Marg'.* For Sikhs rituals are not *Bhagti*. The repetition of merely the name of God or some special hymns, at a

particular time or particular number of times, at a particular place, in a particular manner, without understanding the meanings and not practicing those teachings in one's daily life, is not *Bhagti* in Sikhism. It is rather hypocrisy. A Sikh is supposed to recite hymns, understand the substance and practice the same in his / her daily life.

MEDITATION IN SIKHISM

Meditation forms an important part of spiritual practices of Sikhism. In Sikh terminology it is called *dhyana, dhiaona* or *dhyan lagaona,* which means to concentrate or think about. It is a technique that inwardly reflects upon the meaning of the divine *Name* (Naam), with the intention of bringing one's whole being into harmony with the divine harmony of the *Name*. It can be practiced in a sitting or lying down position with eyes closed, hands folded in front of chest and mind focused on one's breathing, while repeating the holy word *Waheguru. Wahe* while inhaling and *Guru* while exhaling or *Satnam, Sat* while inhaling *and Nam* when inhaling.

Physically meditation calms the mind and relaxes the body, while spiritually it leads to enlightenment. The best time for the practice of, meditation is early morning hours when the mind is fresh and can concentrate easily. It does not require withdrawal from daily life.

NAAM AND NAAM SIMRAN OR

SIMRAN IN SIKHISM

What is Naam?

Naam is a technical term in religious literature of Sikhism like logos in Greek bearing various meanings. Sometimes it is used for God Himself as in Sukmani: *"Naam* sustains the animal life; *Naam* supports the whole universe and all its parts (GGS, p284)". To be more precise, however, *Naam* is God as revealed:

Wherever God is manifest there is God's *Name.*
Whatever is, that is the manifestation of God's *Name.*
There is no place where the *Name* is not (Ibid, p. 4)".

It is described as being immortal, immaculate indweller of all creation, and is to be sung, uttered, thought upon, served and worshipped. In most cases it means revelation of God as found in the Divine Word *(Shabad), "*The True Creator is known by means of *Shabad* (Ibid, p.688). It means both a symbol of Supreme Reality and an application," Without the word how can one cross the ocean of fear? Without the *Name* the disease of duality has spread throughout the world. People have sunk in the ocean and perished (Ibid, p 1125).

What is Naam Simran?

The remembrance of God in words, mind and actions is known as *Simran* or *Naam-Simran.* According to Sikhism Almighty (God) exists in abstract *(Nirgun)* form and does not have a specific name, but 'He' manifests himself in attributive *(Sargun)* form and has innumerable

attributive names. In Sikhism the manifesting word used for the Supereme Eternal Reality *(Akal purkh—Karta Purkh--God)* is, "*Waheguru".* Meditating on this title can help us grow in the knowledge of God: "*Waheguru, Guru Mantar Hai Mil Haumein Khoi"* (Bhai Gurdas).

Lack of spirituality makes people more self-centered *(Manmukh)* and encourages a feeling of alienation and detachment from society. Life without *Naam* is barren and meaningless. *Naam* alone brings equipoise. *Naam is* one of the richest and profound concepts of Sikhism--according to Gurbani:

- "*Naam bihoona tan man heena jal bin machhlee jio ma-ray*-Without the *Naam,* the body and mind are empty and die like fish out of water" (GGS, p. 80).

- *"Sarb rog kaa aokhad Naam-Naam* is the panacea for all ills" (Ibid p.274).

- "*Sagal mataant keval harnaam*-Lord's *name* is the essence of all faiths" (Ibid, p.296).

- "Love, contentment, truth, humility and virtues enable the seed of Naam to sprout-- (Ibid, p955).

- "O my body and mind, the *Naam* is the only mainstay. Through contemplation on it is revealed the essence of happiness to me" (Ibid, p.366).

- "Those who meditate upon the *Naam,* have no obstacle in their way" (Ibid, p.451).
- Naam is the treasure, it is attained through the Guru (GG, p, 590)

- "One enshrines the Name in one's heart through the Word-- (Ibid, p.1242)".

Obstacles to *'Naam'* are sleep, occult powers and worldly thoughts--basic instincts: *Kaam* (lust), *Karodh* (anger), *Lobh* (greed), *Moh* (attachment) and *Hankar* (arrogance--ego), which are to be kept properly harnessed and not let loose. *Naam* (God) resides inside every body:

- "*Jaat mein jot, jot mein jaata"* (Ibid, p469)-- He pervades in every creature and every creature is contained in His light.

- "*Ghat, ghat antar brahm lukaia ghat, ghat jot sbai"* (Ibid, p597) God is hidden inside every heart and every heart is, illuminated by him.

- "*Ghat he mahein niranjan teray taen khojat udiana"* (Ibid, p632)-Immaculate lord is within thy mind, but you search him in the wilderness. To achieve this, an individual has to win (discipline) himself**,** "Mann *Toon Jot Saroop Hain Apna Mool Pachhaan*—My self, thou art thee embodiment (image) of Divine Light thou realize your origin.*"* (Ibid, Asa M3, p441) Lord then reveals to the devotee.

How to practice *Naam?*

To practice *naam* means to feel the presence of God by keeping Him in our mind, words and actions i.e, keeping conscious mind in tune with God, when engaged in worldly pursuits or to say otherwise dwelling on His excellences : "*Uthat Bethat Sovat Dhiai-ay, Marg Chalt Haray Har Gai-ay"* (Ibid, p386).

According to the ideology of Sikhism a Sikh should get up early in the morning and meditate during ambrosial hours of the dawn. He should be *Udhami* (believe in positive action / effort)—" *Udham Karaindian Jio Toon Kmawdian Sukh Bhunch, Dhiaindian Toon Prabhu Mil Nanak Utri Chint"* (Ibid, p522), shun the five great vices (the enemies of man-*Kam, Karodh, Lobh, Moh, Hankar*), seek the company of holy men *(Sei Piaray Mel jina Milian Tera Naam Chit Awey, Chit Awen Ka Sadka Sarb Sukh Hovay).* He should maintain moral conduct and practice moderation, dedication, compassion, sacrifice, tolerance, justice, peaceful coexistence, service to humanity and humility in daily life and never ever do or tolerate exploitation, injustice, and oppression. Even then Divine Grace is necessary for the practice in humility of *Naam Simran.*

All who follow the discipline of *naam simran* with devout persistence will progressively ascend to level of spiritual experience which they alone can comprehend. Five levels of progressively elevated attainment and illumination are mentioned in the stanzas *(Pauris-35* to *37)* of *Japji.* The end is *sach khand* or the Realam of Truth, mystical union in the eternal bliss of total serenity and experience of ever-growing wonder *(vismad),* leading eventually to the rapturous peace of total blending in the divine-condition called *sehaj (Gian--enlightenment).*

SIKHISM AND JOGISM / JOG (YOGA)

Jogism is the oldest Spiritual / religious philosophy in the world, which took birth in Punjab in the Indus valley in the Indian subcontinent. It originated here much before the arrival of the Aryans who learnt yoga (Jog) from the Punjabi jogis. The Punjabi Jogis worshiped only "One Supreme eternal Reality", whom they called 'Brahma'. Jog literally means to unite together (a pair of animals harnessed together--a yoke of oxen). Theosophically it means to unite with thSupreme Eternal reality i.e God. The Aryans who came to Punjab around 2000 B.C, pronounced the Punjabi word 'Jog' as yoga. The Punjabi jog was corrupted by the Aryans, who propagated the theory of 'Trinity of God' and started the worship of the deities: Vishnu and Shiva in addition to Brahma. They also introduced tortuous physical practices, which have nothing to do with spirituality. At the time of birth of Sikhism in the 15th century, the jogis / Naths and Siddhas dominated the religious landscape in Punjab. They practiced asceticism, renunciation, celibacy and tortuous physical practices for seeking salvation. Guru Nanak preached householder's life and denounced the escapist life and other practices of the jogis, who had reduced the spiritual heights of Yoga to mainly a healthy body building exercise. He held discussions (*goshties*) with them throughout the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent and carried his point every time.

Sikhism strongly denounces the escapist life of jogis and their tortuous practices. It preaches householders life *(Grahisti jiwan*) as forum of all activities. Gurbani deprecates the yogi who gives up the world and then is not ashamed of begging at the door of the householder

(GGS, p.886). It says:

- *Jati sadavay jugat na janay chhad bahay ghar baar*— (lbid, Var Asa M1, p.469).
- *Hasandian, khelandian, penandian Khawandian vichay hovay mukat* (GGS, p.522).
- *Ghaal kha-ay kichh hathon dey* Nanak *rah pachhanay say* (Ibid, 1245).
- "*So jogi jo jugat pchha-ay gurparsaadee eko jaanay*. A yogi, is one who recognizes the right way (Truth) and understands the One/God through enlightenment. (GGS, p.662).

According to Gurbani man should renounce evil and selfish motives and not the wordly life:

- *Tiagna tiagan neeka kam karodh lobh tiagna*— (Ibid, p1018).

- *Bin haun tiag kahan ko tiagi* (Ibid, p.1140).

God is there in the world that we see and we have to find Him there and yet remain detached:

- *Kahay ray ban khojan jaee, sarb nivaasee sadaa alepa tohee sang samaee* (Ibid M9, p.684.
- *Jaisay jal mah kamal niralam murgaee naisanay. Sur sabad bhav sagar taree-ay Nanak Naam wakhaanai* (GGS, p, 938).

- *Anjan mahe niranjan rahiay jog jugat tao pai-ay* (Ibid, p 730).

The Gurus also condemned the tortuous practices and exercises of 'Hath yoga' and 'Kundlani yoga' in order to realize God:

- *"Nivlee karam bhuangam bhaathee, rechak poorak kumbh karai' Bin satgur kichh sojhee nahin bharmo bhoola bood maray-"* Ibid, p 1343)
- *"Sidha kay aasan je sikhai indree vas kar kama-ay. Man kee mail na utray haumein mail na ja-ay*.

Gurbani has compared these yogic practices with actions of Bazigar (acrobat) in the absence of remembrance of Naam (God):

- "*Naam bina fokat sab karma jion bazigar bharam bhoolay*—Without the Name, vain are all deeds like those of a juggler, who deceives audience through illusion*"* (Ibid, p1343).

According to Guru Granth Sahib, the human body is the shrine of God, "*Man mandir tan ves kalandar"* i.e, "The body is the temple and the soul is the priest therein" (Ibid, Rag Bilawal, M1, p 795). If it is so, it is sin against Him (God) to torture the body or to deny it its rightful place. The search of the Lord will necessitate the care of the body, which needs to be fed inorder that it may live, function properly and serve its master, the soul, so that it was enabled to realize its goal, *"Nanak so prabh simri-ay tis dehi ko pal"i.e,* "The Lord should be meditated on by serving

the body first" (Ibid, Rag Bihagra, M5).

Gurbani thus describes the jogi:

"*Par ninda ustsat nahi ja kay kanchan loh smano, Harkh sog tay' rahey ateeta jogi tahey bakhano*—He who slanders or praises not others and to whom gold and iron are alike and who is also free from joy and sorrow, call him, a true yogi*".*

Sehaj Yoga of Sikhism

Sikhism believes in leading a balanced active and contemplative life.. Because of the theistic relationship with earlier religions, the Sikh Gurus did not quarrel with terms instead they deliberately used them and redefined them in the light of their own philosophy and Sikh mystical experience. They called the Sikh path as '*Sehaj Jog',*(intuitive poise) which is absolutely different from the *'Sehaj* of Buddhist Tantric' cults. According to Guru Nanak, "*Gur ka sabad manay mah mundra khintha khima hadaavo. Jo kichh karay bhalaa kar maano sehaj jog nidh paavo*--Let the word be the mind's ear rings and the quilt be the quality of forgiveness". And total submission to the will of Lord will bring unto you the *'Sehaj yoga'* (GGS, Asa Ml, p.359).

Sehaj in Sikhism

Sehaj in the theosophy of Sikhism means spiritual knowledge (intuitive poise—enlightenment). The state of *Sehaj* is the highest spiritual state. It is called *chautha pad*-(fourth state) or *param pad,* which is attained only on rising above three states of human life as expressed through, word or deed, which may be classified into:

1.Tamas-------Passion
2. Rajas-------Desire
3. *Satva*-----Peace

It is clearly mentioned by Guru Amar Dass that the fourth state is the state of *sehaj* and only a guru-ward enlightened person attains it, *chauthay pad mah sehaj hai gurmukh palai paa-ay"* (Ibid, Sri Rag M3, p.68). Because of *sehaj*, the devotee experiences bliss; without *sehaj,* the life is in vain-Because of *sehaj* the Name of the Lord abides in mind and one practices the true way of *life-Sehaj* does not spring in *Maya,* in which only duality is produced- "*Maya vich sehaj na a upjay maya doojay bha-ay*" (Ibid, Sri Rag, M3, p.68).

Sehaj Samadhi in Sikhism

Samadhi means total self-collectedness. It is the highest state of mental concentration that a man can achieve while still bound to body. It is a state of profound utter absorption, undistured by desire, anger or any other ego generated emotion. In Jogism (jog) it is an important tool for pursuing a path of self-awakening.

According to Bhai Gurdas, when with pure mind, a person contemplates God according to Sikh techniques of meditation and prayer, he transcends all yogic techniques and easily masters life breath centers of Ida, Pingla, and Sushmana and achieves *Sehaj Samadhi;* the transcendent state of union with God (Bhai Gurdas Var 7).

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CHAPTER 7

SACRAMENTS OF SIKHISM

The sacraments of Sikhism are:

- *Khanday Batay Dee Pahul* (*Amrit*)
- *Sarbloh* (All steel)
- *Langar*
- Punjabi Language
- Marriage
- *Karah Parshad*

AMRIT (KHANDAY BATAY DEE PAHUL)

Amrit or *Khanday Batay Dee Pahul* is sanctified elixir used for formal initiation (consecration) into Sikhism. Literally: *Mrit* means dead, whereas *A-mrit* means immortal. In the theosophy of Sikhism, *Amrit* means elixir of immortality. *Amrit is* that substance the intake of which is supposed to make a man immortal. Since the physical frame of the human body is mortal, there is nothing in the world which can make the mortal frame immortal. Immortality cannot, therefore, mean perpetuation of the physical body of the individual. By immortality is meant merging man's *Soul (Atma)* with the Supreme Soul *(Param- atma)* while being alive. In this way the individual soul becomes immortal.

Amritpaan brings total transformation of man from a secular being to gradual progress and ultimate transformation into a divine man. There is spiritual, moral, social and cultural transformation of the whole being of the person who accepts this baptism and thereafter follows the Sikh religious code of conduct. An *Amritdhari* Sikh (Khalsa) is a saint-soldier *(Sant-Sipahi* i.e, scholarly in knowledge of Gurbani and martial in spirit*), "Mukh tay har chit mein yudh veecharay"* (Guru Gobind Singh). *Amrit* (Khanday Batay Dee Pahul) was introduced into Sikhism by Guru Gobind Singh, on the Vaisakhi day 1699 A.D.

SARBLOH (ALL STEEL)-- Weapon of War –

(SWORD IN SIKHISM)

In Sikhism weapons of war are a sacrament and God is symbolized in them. Guru Gobind Singh says weapons should be worshiped, because they represent both, the destructive power of God as well as His benevolence. They destroy evil. They fight oppression, expoloitation and injustice. They uplift the oppressed people, bring justice and help sustain people.

The preamble to *ardas,* which is Guru Gobind Singh's composition, begins with words: "Having first remembered 'The Sword', meditate on Guru Nanak----". Guru Gobind Singh

hailed sword as savior and protector of saints and oppressed. In fact he even described *Akaal Purkh* (God) as *Sarbloh* (All steel)--'Sword'. At the beginning of his autobiographical account, *Bachitra Natak,* he used the term sword for the Transcendent and said:

"*Khag khand bihandam khala dala khandam*
ati ran mandam bara bandam.
Bhuja danda akhandam tej parchandam
joti amandam bhanu prabham.
Sukha santa karnam durmati darnam
kilbikh harnam asi sarnam.
Jai jai jag karan sristi ubaran
Mama pratiparan jai tegham"

Guru Gobind Singh had tried the experiment of persuations and counsel, of passively sacrificing the lives of his predecessors, their followers and their families but to no visible success. 'The Sword' remained to be put to test. In his letter to Aurangzeb, written in Persian, Guru Says: *Choon kar az haman heelte dar guzashat, halal ast burden ba shamsheer dast"* i.e, "When affairs are past other remedies, it is justifiable (righteous) to unseathe the sword". Guru Gobind Singh equipped the Khalsa with sword *(Kirpan),* which became for them "an emblem of power and self-respect" for all times to come. Khalsa is a saint-soldier: "*Mukh tay har chit mein yudh veecharay***"** (Guru Gobind Singh).

In the present world sword continues to be a symbol of power, as it has been in the past. On ceremonial occasions, practically all armies in the world wear it.

The *Kirpan* (sword) reminds the Sikhs that they are warriors. But they must also remember that *Kirpan is* not a weapon of attacking people or for perpetrating injustice, but for defending Sikh beliefs and protecting the weak and hap-less. It is the symbol of self-respect, to be used only in self-defence or in the cause of righteousness and even then only as a last resort. Therefore, it is right to say that the *Kirpan* holds a very important place in the history and philosophy of the Sikhs and is one of the articles of their faith. For an initiated Sikh wearing of a *Kirpan is* obligatory. An initiated Sikh not wearing *Kirpan* would be in breach of his faith.

In Sikhism *Kirpan* was granted the status of "article of faith" on the Vaisakhi day in 1699 A.D; at Anandpur Sahib (Punjab) by Guru Gobind Singh. The *Kirpan* has a chequered history. Although Sikhism required its followers to wear *Kirpan,* law of the country stood in their way after their country 'Punjab' was, annexed by the British in 1849 A.D. The Sikhs had to struggle for it. It was in June 1914 A.D; that the British government in the Punjab exempted *Kirpan* from within the purview of the Arms Act and possessing and wearing of *Kirpan* was allowed legally to the Sikhs in the Punjab. This was extended to cover other parts of British India in May 1917 and the Sikh soldiers in 1920 A.D. The Indian constitution adopted after independence, while granting fundamental rights to freedom of religion, explained that, "the wearing and carrying of *Kirpan"* shall be deemed to be included in the profession of Sikh religion".

LANGAR

Before the birth of Sikhism the Brahmanical Hinduism had divided the entire Indian society into water-tight compartments of caste and clan, under which the Shudras were considered as polluted (*Bhitay hoay*-unclean) by birth and any thing they touched became polluted *(Bhittee*). In order t**o** abolish caste, establish equality and teach people humility before each other Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism started *Langar,* where cooked food is served to people who sit together in a row *(Pangat)* and dine together as equals irrespective of their caste, creed, colour, gender, religion, nationality, social, political or economic status. It is thought meritorious to take meal in a Langar. The Sikhs regard the food in the *langar* as very sacred. They accept it in a very humble and respectful manner.

Every Gurdwara has an attached community kitchen (*Langar Khana*), where food is prepared and served to all the visitors in the Langar hall, free of cost, after the completion of service (bhog).

Langar in Sikhism is a place of charity and service, where everyone gives according to his capacity and takes according to his needs. The devotees may, bring provisions pay tithes, donate land to Langar or personally contribute their labour of love by cooking the food, fetching water, bringing fuel, serving food or cleaning the utensils etc. The Langar is open all day and night and volunteers are always ready to welcome and serve the needy with food.

In Sikhism maintenance of Langar is corporate obligation. All Sikhs make regular voluntary contributions to keep it running. Even the poorest of the poor Sikh will make his contribution. Contributions can be made in cash or kind or in the form of rendering help in the preparation of food, serving food, cleaning utensils, taking care of the shoes of the Sangat, cleaning the floors and removing trash etc. Only vegetarian food is served in *Guru Ka Langar*.

MARRIAGE IN SIKHISM

Sikh marriage is a sacrament and not a contract. It is called: Anad Karaj (Blissful union). Marriage in Sikhism is described as an act of socio-spiritual union of two souls, "They are not said to be husband and wife, who sit together. Rather they alone are called husband and wife, who have one soul in two bodies" (GGS, p.788), which is accorded religious sanction and is consciously embraced by the boy and the girl in the solemn presence of Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru is the witness to the marriage, no writing or document is necessary.

KARAH PARSHAD

Karah Parshad is freshly prepared sanctified soft pudding, which is distributed amongst all attending persons at the conclusion *(Bhog)* of all Sikh ceremonies and congregations, happy or sad. It is sanctified by, placing it in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib throughout the service, offering *ardas* and presenting it to *Kirpan* towards the end of *ardas*. It is prepared from equal parts of what four, sugar and desi ghee (clarified butter). The practice was introduced by Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith.

PUNJABI THE SACRED LANGUAGE OF THE

SIKHS AND SIKH HOMELAND, PUNJAB

Punjabi has been the spoken language of all the natives of the Punjab, including those in the Pakistan, since prehistoric times. F.E Keay and Grierson, both well known Orientalists are of the opinion, "that Punjabi is of greater antiquity than any of the languages of the Indo-Gangetic plain". Hence it is one of the oldest spoken languages in the world, although it was given different names at different times. It is 10th popular spoken language in the world. It is sacred to the Sikhs, because their scriptures are in Punjabi.

Punjab lies in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent and connects the Middle East and Central Asia with the South Asia. Because of its geographical location, a series of invaders from the north and west have trampled over this land for centuries. Every invader tried to destroy the local culture especially its language and impose his culture and language on the people of this land. Its different dialects have been variously and contemptuously been called by the invading people as: Harrapan (The language spoken by the people in and around Harrapa and Mohenjodaro), Prakrit lit: the language of the people who work for others, Apbhransh literally meaning corrupt, Taki or Takri (lit: The language of the malechh people), Sindh Sagri, Sauraseni, sahaskriti, Jatki (The language of the Jatts), Zabane Jattan, Hindvi, Sant Bhasha, Desi (lit:: local), Lahori (lit: The language spoken in and around Lahore) etc. During the Muslim rule here Emperor Akbar named this region of the Indus Valley as 'Punjab' in 1590 A.D, after which gradually the local vernacular came to be called 'Punjabi', the name which has persisted since then.

It is universally agreed upon now that man evolved in Africa and gradually spread over the entire globe. According to Dr. H.D. Sankalia, the renowed anthropologist, "It is more or less established that at the end of the First Glacial Period and into the beginning of the Second lce Age, Early Man entered the foot hills of the Northwest Punjab, into the area traversed by the Soan, Haro and other rivers within the Indus-Jhelum Doab. Early man spread into the area comprised by Rawalpindi and Attock districts of the Punjab, and the Jammu and Kashmir States". Recent Genographic studies reveal that these people arrived in India from Central Asia by travelling south of the rugged and mountainous Pamir knot, some 30,000 years ago. Early humans lived here as gatherers and hunters, who gradually developed ino a great civilization, now known as "The Indus Valley Civilization", which is one of the oldest civilizations of the world. The natives of the Indus Valley lived by farming the lands and were called "Jatts". 'The Jat tribe' is the oldest named tribe in India whose name is found even in Mahabharta. After the region was named Punjab by Emperor Akbar, its natives came to be called Punjabis.

More than 4000 years ago (about 2000 B.C), people of a white tribe from Asia Minor who called themselves 'Aryans' entered into the hills of the Punjab as herds-men and graziers of the cattle, through the passes in the mountains and setteled in the Kashmir region. It is a well known fact that the earliest spiritual traditions in the world began in the Punjab in the Indus Valley. People professing spirituality among the Punjabis called themselves Jogis / Siddhas (lit: knowledgeable). These Jogis believed in 'One Supreme Eternal Power', whom they called '*Brahma'*. They remembered their spiritual revelations orally and transmitted them from generation to generations verbally and did not produce any written scriptures, perhaps they feared loss of their sanctity by putting them into writing, although they had a script called, Brahmi /

Siddhmatrica. The Aryans spoke an Indo-European language that originated on the steppes of Eurasia. Some of them learnt spirituality from Jogis of the Punjab. They developed a slang dialect of Punjabi for worship purposes and cleverly called it, '*Brahm Bhasha'* literally: the language of God, but later on named it 'Sanskrit'. Rishi Panini laid the rules for Sanskrit grammar in Taxilla. Some of the Aryans learnt spirituality from the Punjabi Jogis and produced scriptures in Sanskrit, which were named 'Vedas'. As Sanskrit was devoid of any script, the Aryans created Sanskrit literature by using the local script prevalent in the place of its writing. For instance they used, Brahmi / Siddhmatrica of the Punjabi Jogis in the Kashmir region of the Punjab. The persons among the Aryans having knowledge of Vedas became the priestly class and called themselves 'Brahmins' (having knowledge of Brahma). The Brahmins made Sanskrit as the language of their scriptures, which could only be interpreted by them, because it was neither spoken nor understood by the common mass of the native people. The first center of Aryan culure in the Indian subcontinent developed in the hills of the Punjab in the Kashmir region. After centuries of their stay, development and proliferation in the hills of the Punjab in the Kashmir region the Aryans descended into the plains of the Punjab. They tried to dominate the 'Jatts' through the Brahmin. The Jatt spirit of freedom and equality refused to submit to the Brahmanical dominance and pushed the Aryans out of the limits of the Punjab and in its turns drew the censure of the Brahmins who pronounced that "no Aryan should stay in the Punjab for even two days because the Punjabis refused to obey the priests"*. Henceforth the Aryan Brahmin developed an extremely hostile attitude towards the jatts of the Punjab.

After their exist from the Punjab by the 'Jatts', the Aryans settled in the Ganga Jamna divide in the Malwa region of India, built their religio-cultural center there and named it 'Ujjain', which they affectionately called, '*Dev Nagri'* (ਦੇਵ ਨਗਰੀ). Here they used the local form of Sidhmatrica script for writing their Sanskrit literature. They named the script as '*Dev Naagri'* (ਦੇਵ ਨਾਰਗੀ). After sometime they shifted their center of activity in the easternly direction into the fertile and mineral rich area and built here their religio-cultural center on the banks of Ganges and named it Kashi (Varanasi-Banaras). Here they wrote more religious books in Sanskrit and named them, 'Shastras' in the 11th century. Because of the shastras the language spoken in and around Kashi (Varanasi-Benaras) came to be popularly called '*Shastri'*. The Aryans gained religious and cultural control of the Gangaes valley through the priest (Brahmin) b blending their culture with that of the natives, who believed in many Gods, the principals ones being by BRagma (creator), Vishnu (sustainer) and Shiva (destroyer). The Aryan society consisted of priests and warriors. The priests communed with the gods through animal sacrifices. They worshiped fire and chanted mantras from the Vedas. The warrior class consisted of tribal chieftains. The Aryans as a group lorded over merchants, land lords and the under class whom they called *dasas*, who served as laborers and farmers. Later on this class system was turned into hereditary caste system by Mannu, the Hindu law giver. Because the natives revered cow, the Aryans discarded animal sacrifices, prohibited meat eating, introduced vegetarianism ad started worshiping the Gods of the natives.

The Punjabi Jogis / Siddhas lived away from human habitations meditating for seeking personal salvation in the caves, jungles and snow clad mountains therefore acquisition of knowledge by the common man in the plains of the Punjab became impossible.

After the Aryans, foreign invasions of the Punjab started in the 5th century BC and continued until 1849 AD. A series of invaders from the north and west trampled over this land for centuries. They included the Persians (Iranians), Shakas (Scythians), the Parthians, the Greeks, the

Bactrians, the Kushans, the Huns, the Turks, the Mongols (Mughals), the Afghans (Pathans) and the British etc. Islamic invasions of the Punjab began in 711 AD. Its people resisted for centuries, but ultimately it fell to the invading Islamic forces in 1001 A.D. They named the area east of Indus River as 'Hindustan' in the beginning of the eighth century and called its inhabitants "Hindi," and later on Hindus. After the occupation of the Punjab they spread into the remaining India without any resistance.They made Persian as court language and Arabic as religious language of this region. They recorded the native language of the gangetic plain, in Persian script, which came to be called `Urdu***' and became the Muslim language in Hindustan. For centuries Punjab has witnessed numerous invasions in ever changing political upheavals. Every invader tried his best to kill the Punjabi language, Punjabi culture and civilization and replace it with his own. Inspite of all odds the Punjabi language and the Punjabis have remained unvanquished and proud, protecting their land and their rich heritage.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) founded Sikhism in the Punjab at the fag end of 15th century. At that period of time with the exception of Muslim rulers and the Muslim elite, Punjabi was the spoken language of the Punjab and Persian was the official language, Arabic was the religious language of the Muslims and Sanskrit was the religious language of the Hindus. Neither Sanskrit, nor Persian nor Arabic was spoken or understood by common mass of the People of the Punjab, who conversed among themselves in Punjabi. Guru Nanak gave his *'Bani'* in local vernacular that is Punjabi, instead of Sanskrit, which till then was the traditional medium for religious poetry / philosophy among the Hindustanis. As mentioned earlier Punjabi has been the spoken language of the people of the Punjab since prehistoric times, but till the birth of Sikhism it was only a spoken language and did not have a script for its proper pronunciation and expressions, therefore it did not have any written literature. Guru Nanak developed the script for Punjabi language by selecting appropriate letters from other scripts current in north India and creating some new ones. He perfected the script with acrophils and laid down the rules for its grammer. The alphabet has thirty five letters. He composed a hymn enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib as *'Patti Likhi'* in the form of an acrostic, making use of the 35-letter alphabet. Thus the Sikhs developed their dialect into written language. It gave the Sikhs a written language distinct from written language of Hindus-Sanskrit (Vedas) and Mussalmans-Arabic (Quran). The script was named *Gurmukhi* (The script used to write the language spoken from the mouth of the Guru) by his successor, Guru Angad, who greatly propagated the use of Gurmukhi letters in his drive for literacy among his followers, 'the Sikhs'. He gave form and finish to the alphabet, prepared primers *(Baalupdesh)* of Gurmukhi (Punjabi) alphabet and made copies of Guru Nanak's hymns and distributed them among the people leading to the increase in the number of literates in the Punjab. He broke the monopoly of the Brahmin over learning. Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Sikh Guru compiled, Granth Sahib (Guru Granth Sahib), the holy Sikh scripture in Gurmukhi script, in 1604 AD. Guru Gobind Singh established the first Sikh seat of learning in 1706AD, at Talwandi Sabo, now called Dam Dama Sahib in Bathinda district and named it *Guru Ki Kanshi* as counter part to the Hindu seat of learning in Varanasi (Benaras--Kanshi). After Guru Gobind Singh Sikhs were busy in their struggle for existence and were unable to pay any attention for the development of their mother tongue. At one time the teaching of Punjabi was forbidden in schools, which retarded the development of Punjabi literature. During the Sikh rule in Punjab Persian remained the official court language, no efforts were made for the promotion of Punjabi by them, because they remained busy in expanding and securing the borders of their young kingdom.

The British annexed the Sikh Kingdom, Punjab in 1849 A.D. Punjabis unlike the Bengalis and Sindhis were not allowed by them to use their mother tongue as an official language because they feared the development of Punjabi-Sikh nationalism. They made Urdu

along with English as the official court language in the British Punjab. The Muslims were made to believe that Urdu was their mother tongue. None of the alien languages i.e, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Greek, Udru or English etc, was spoken by the common mass of people of the Punjab, who continued to communicate among themselves in Punjabi, irrespective of their religious affiliations. After its annexation by the British, Christian missionaries came to Punjab and started seeking conversions of the Sikhs into Christianity in the Sikh homeland. Also a Gujrati Brahmin named Dyanand Saraswati, came to the Punjab in and founded his Hindu sect, Arya Samaj in Lahore. He started propagating the teachings of the Vedas and claimed that the Sikhs were a sect of Hindus and that Sikhism was not a separate religion. He started attacking the Punjabi language, Sikh scriptures (Guru Granth Sahib), the Sikh Gurus and other Sikh institutions. This awakened the Sikh inteligentia, who founded Singh Sabha (society of the practicing Sikhs) in 1873 AD, in Amritsar, for the propagation of the Sikh religion, Punjabi language and Punjabi culture.

Development of the Punjabi language and Gurmukhi script started after the birth of Singh Sabha. Singh Sabha started first Punjabi printing press in the Punjab with Gurmukhi script in Lahore in 1876 A.D, and published first Punjabi paper in Gurmukhi-Khalsa Akhbar. Under Singh Sabha movement Punjabi gained admittance into the university curriculum; inspite of severe opposition by the Hindu members of the Punjab University Lahore, who viewed it as no more than a rude dialect without any literary tradition and hence not worth teaching. Teaching of Punjabi in Gurmukhi script started in Oriental College Lahore in 1877. This gave Punjabi a communal label as language of the Sikhs, just as Shastri (now Hindi) was of the Hindus and Urdu of the Muslims. As a result, although Punjabi remained, as before, the spoken language of all Punjabis, whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian, its literary output came to be largely confined to the Sikh writers. Till the advent of print media and the modem broadcasting system, different dialects of Punjabi were spoken in different parts of the Punjab *viz: Majhi, Malwai* and *Doabi* were spoken in the central Punjab. *Poadi, Haryanvi, Sarhandi, Raathi, Bhatiani* and *Kangri* dialects were spoken beyond Ghaggar river, whereas *Dogri, Kangar, Himachali* were spoken in the hill tracts of the Punjab. *Multani, Jhangi, Pothohari* and *Dhani* dialects were spoken beyond Chenab River. After the advent of print and modem broadcasting media, the writers and broadcasters have evolved a standard form of Punjabi based on the dialect spoken in and around Lahore i.e, central Punjab called '*Majha'* giving it its present global form.

Development of Punjabi suffered a severe set back, when Punjab, the Sikh homeland was partitioned by the British in 1947 and Lahore, the capital of the Sikh Democratic Republic of Punjab, the nerve center of Punjabi culture and headquater of Punjabi press was denied to Sikhs and transferred to Pakistan by the British at the time of the decolonizaion of the Indian subcontinent.

After gaining independence, the congress government of India dominated by radical Hindus, officially recognized *Shastri* i.e, the vernacular spoken in and around the cities of Delhi and Lucknow, as the official language of India and named it 'Hindi'. Thereafter Hindi came to be symbolized as the language of all Hindus irrespective of the region they lived in.The Punjabi Hindu fundamentalists disowned Punjabi language and propagated that Punjabi was the language of the Sikh Nation only as it was the language of their scriptures (Guru Granth Sahib); the mother tongue of the Punjabi Hindu was Hindi. The Punjabi Hindu spoke Punjabi, but when it came to writing he felt more at home with English or Urdu and refused to accept Punjabi as his mother tongue, which was an absolute lie and when the Sikhs said their language was Punjabi, the Hindus sometimes accused them of motives beneath one's dignity to accept. Not only had the Sikh to

defend his language but with that his honour as a patriot as well. When the Punjabi Hindus finally were reconciled to the inescapable fact that Punjabi was to be their mother tongue, they trotted out a lame excuse that Gurmukhi was not a proper script for Punjabi. They wanted it to be written in '*Dev Naagri"* script and not in Gurmukhi script.

Secondly, shortly after independence the government of India announced that boundries of all the Indian States would be redrawn along linguistic lines and consequently, this was done for all the 14 major languages spoken in India except Punjabi. The Sikhs, therefore, raised the demand for the creation of a "Punjabi speaking state of the Punjab" through a campaign of non-violence inorder to defend the Sikh traditions and identity in addition to their cultural, linguistic, religious, economic and other interests. The Hindu organizations reacted by appealing to members of their community to formally disown Punjabi language. The Hindus in Punjab registered their language as Hindi in the census of 1951. Hindu organizations like Arya Samaj, Hindu Maha Sabha and Jan Sangh opposed the Sikh demand vehemently. The Hindus of Punjab and the Press dominated by Arya Samajist Hindus dubbed the Sikh demand as a stepping-stone towards the creation of an "independent Sikh State". Hindu Sikh riots broke out in many towns. The Hindu congress government with Pandit jawahar Lal Nehru as Prime Minister and Sardar Partap Singh Kairon as Chief Minister of Punjab opposed, each and every Sikh demand. Both in India and abroad the government-controlled media projected that the Sikhs demand an independent Sikh State. The Sikhs cajoled, threatened, pleaded, marched and suffered to win a "Punjabi speaking state," but India resisted.

Both Pt Nehru and Kairon, the arch opponents of the Sikh demand, died in 1964. Lal Bahadur Shastri became the next Prime Minister of India. Sant Fateh Singh, the then president of Sharomani Akali Dal, threatened to launch *morcha* (agitation) for the creation of Punjabi speaking state. Clouds of war between India and Pakistan were looming large at that time. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri gave an understanding to the Sikh leadership to conceed their demand provided they co-operated with the government in case of war between India and Pakistan. War broke out between India and Pakistan. The Sikhs played a remarkable role for defending the Indian borders. Ultimately on the conclusion of the Indo-Pakistan war in September 1965 in which the Sikh peasantry played a notable role helping Indian troops on the front line, a commission was appointed to demarcate Punjabi speaking areas from the Hindi speaking. In 1966, the already truncated Punjab was split into four states: Haryana, Himachal, Union Territory of Chandigarh and 'Punjabi speaking Punjab'. The division of the state was done by the congress government dominated by radical Hindus on communal lines and not on linguistic basis leaving large tracts of Punjabi speaking population out of the 'Punjabi Speaking Punjab'.

The Punjab Legislative Assembly under the Chief Ministership of Sardar Lashman Singh Gill in 1967, legistated and made Punjabi in Gurmukhi script as the official language of the Punjab and thereafter, the development of Punjabi language and production of Punjabi literature began in the right earnest.

Punjabi language has its own expressions and manifestations amongst the languages of the world. It is not in any way inferior to any other language. Unlike English Punjabi has a specific-name for each and every relationship, which indicates its cultural strength. Hiearchy in Punjabi families is very important and at a very young age children learn the appropriate kinship terms. One particular example of precise meaning of kinship names in Punjabi might be given as a demonstration, for instance an aunt might be called:

Masee if she is mother's sister

Mamee if she is mother's brother's wife

Bhooa if she is father's sister
Chachee if he is father's younger brother's wife
Taee if she is father's elder brother's wife

Today Punjabi is the world's tenth popular language and second popular language in the Indian capital, Delhi. It is second most popular spoken language in Pakistan and fourth popular spoken language in Canada. Punjabi with Gurmukhi script is used only by the Sikhs because it is connected with their religion and is the vehicle for its propagation. It is, and it will remain, the language of the Sikhs and Sikh religion. Its neglect cuts them off from their cultural and spiritual heritage in the form of worship in sangat and ablity to understand the Guru Granth Sahib.

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* Mahabharta, viii, verses 2063-2068 (*Karna Parva).*
** After the Muslims occupied Delhi in the 11th century they used Persian script to record the local dialect in-order to communicate with the common people. The Hindustani dialect of the Ganga Jamna divide around Delhi and Lukhnow called *Shastri* now Hindi recorded in Persian script came to be called Urdu. As Urdu in Persian language means camp and Urdugah means camping ground, the Muslim camp language in and around Delhi came to be called Urdu, which became the Muslim language in Hindustan (Indian subcontinent).

CHAPTER 8

RITUALISM (KARAM-KAAND) AND ITS REJECTION IN SIKHISM

Karam literally means act or action and Kaand means chapter or portion. Hinduism believes in performing certain acts of outward show in order to appease the deity. Theologically Karam-Kaand means that portion of Hindu Vedas / shasrta, which deals with the actions pertaining to worship and life in Hinduism. It also tells the way and time at which a particular action of religious worship is to be performed.

Sikhism, one of the latest and modem religions of the world, is basically anti-ritualistic. Gurmat lays great stress on Truth / Truthful living and leading a life full of virtues, based on righteousness, full of good intentions / morality and devoid of ego, instead of acts of outward show. Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism exposed the social, religious and political leaders of his time and their methods cutting at the very roots of misrepresentation of the religious doctrines of Hinduism by Brahmins and those of Islam by *Mullas, Qazis* and the rulers. He preached virtues should receive preference over outward acts in daily life. He rejected all the rituals (acts of outward show) which the clever religious leaders had invented to maintain their hold on the common man inorder to maintain their supremacy and gain social and material benefits. His *Manjh kee var* in Guru Granth Sahib deals with socio-ethical, socio-political and socio-economic conditions of India in his times. In *Asa Dee Var* he has discussed the doctrines, rituals, rites, practices and life of Yogis, Brahmins, and Turks (Muslims) and given their right interpretation which forms the foundations of Sikhism. The holy Sikh Scripture Guru Granth Sahib denounces all ritualic acts:

- *"Karam kand bahu karay achar, bin navin dhrig dhrig ahankar"* ie; The ego created by performance of rituals and good actions is cursed and damnedwithout the Name of Lord (God)--GGS, M3, p.162).

- "*Karam Dharam pakhand jo deesay, tin jam jaagati lootay' Nirbaan keertan gawo kartay ka, nimakh simrat jitchhootay*-i
- *Khatri, Brahmin, Sood, Vais, updes chauh varna kao sanjha, Gurmukh Naam japay,udhray so kal meh, ghat ghat Nanak majha -(*GGS,p. 747*).*

"*Tant mant pakhand na jana Ram riday mann mania*--I (Nanak) do not believe in magical formulae, magical hymns and religious hypocricies, because my mind is imbued with Almighty" (Ibid, Ml, p.766).

Modern Hinduism is represented by its Vaishnava, Ganapatya, Shauriya, Shaiva and Shakta sects and their beliefs and practices. All Hindus pay veneration to cow and Brahman. The Hindus believe that man is re-born after his death and this cycle continues indefinitely unless salvation *(Mukti)* is attained, for which the Brahmin (Hindu priest) told methods in the form of rituals to be performed by the followers of Hinduism. These rituals have been mentioned under three headings: *Karam Kanda* (the chapter of rituals mentioned in the Vedas / Shastras dealing with sacrificial acts), *Upashna Kanda* (The chapter of rituals dealing with the

actions pertaining to worship*)* and *Gian Kanda* (the chapter dealing with spiritual knowledge)". The Brahmin laid stress on the *Karma Kanda,* and *upashna Kanda,* because they helped to maintain his importance. He did not show much interest in *Gian Kanda*, which can be obtained from the study of four Vedas along with that of Shastras, Smiritis, Puranas, Gita, Ramayana and Mahabharta. The Vedas emphasise upon certain practices and qualities which need to be adopted for Moksha. The Brahman did not teach the real religion to the Hindus and led them into superstition and materialism. Under their wrong direction Hindus began to believe that religion concerned only caste, the ways of eating, bathing and listening to katha. The Brahman advocated for certain actions and methods of worship, according to Scriptures for the purification of mind, but in fact, his own mind was not pure. Guru Nanak says, "You expect others to call you wise, O Pundit! But you are devoid of (spiritual) knowledge and meditation" (Ibid, M1 p.1290). The Brahmin, who was without any knowledge in the field of spirituality, was well versed in the Pauranic legends. He did not teach the real religion to the Hindus and led them into superstition and materialism. According to Guru Granth Sahib:

Pundits are busy studying Puranas,
Yogis are busy in Yogic meditations,
Sanyasis are intoxicated with ego,
Tapsis are intoxicated with secrets of Tapas,
All are intoxicated, noe is wake,
With them are thieves robbing then--Ibid, p. 1193)

There are two categories of *Karmas (Karam Kanda)* in Hinduism Viz; *Nitya Karmas* and *Naimittika Karmas.* The first one observed daily and the second on special occasions.

Nitya Karmas

They are to be observed daily and are mainly divided into three parts:

(a) Sandhya
(b) Pooja
(c) Panchmahayajna.

Sandhya

The prayer which the Hindus offer along with the rituals in the morning and in the evening is known as *Sandhya* in which they recite *Gaayatri* mantra, which is an invocation to the Sun God, through which the person offering prayer invokes the God to shed His blessings on the earth. In addition to reciting the mantra, they offer water to Sun and the ritual is called *Tarpan.* This is followed by the practice of *Pranayama.* There is mention of this ritual of *Sandhya* and *Tarpan* in the Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib:

- They perform **'***Sandhya*'and '*Tarpan*'and recite Gaayatri mantra, but without the True knowledge they undergo sufferings' (ibid, M3, p.603).

The Guru means that the worship of created things is useless. Only the Lord-God should be remembered. He says again:

- Such a "*Sandhya***"** is approved, which implants my Lord in my mind. The love of Lord is created and attachment with Maya burns down. By Guru's (God's) grace, the duality dies away, the firm mind ponders over '*Sandhya*' If one performs self-willed '*Sandhya*' the Jiva does not become firm and one fuffers repeated births and deaths, saith Nanak "(Ibid, p.553).

Pooja

The second Nitya Karma in Hinduism is 'Pooja' (worship) which is offered to deities. Hinduism has five principal sects**:** The Vaishnavas, the Shaivas, the Shaktas, the Ganapatyas and the Shauryas, who are worshippers of Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Ganesha, and Surya respectively. All Hindus pay veneration to cow and Brahmin. The Vaishnavas are devotees of Vishnu and his incarnations Rama and Krishna. Their scriptures include: *Bhagvadgeeta,* the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Vishnu Purana.* They worship stones and idols. They call stones Saligram, while the idols are called moortis. The Vashnavas gather in the temple in the morning and in the evening for pooja. In Pooja, the offering consists of dhoopa (incense burning), deepa (lighting lamps with clarified butter), arga (grass blades, wshed rice, and oblations of water and milk-Kachi Lassi etc), madhuparka (offering of honey etc), gandha (perfumes, sandalwood paste etc), Phools (flowers) and Tulsi leaves and naibed (food for the deity). In the evening there is display of lights combined with offering and devotional singing. This is called *'Aarti'. Aarti* is performed by Shaivites also around the *Lingum*, with prayers the worshipper pours water on the *lingum* and makes on it the three marks of tripunda with a paste of sandalwood ash, mixed sometimes with saffron. He makes similar marks on his own forehead and places flowers and leaves on the top of the lingum as a sort of offering to the god. There are many manifestaions of Shiva and Shakti like the manifestations of Vishnu. The manifestations of Shiva are: Bhairva, Rudra,, Mahavira etc. Their scriptures are Agamas and Puranas. The Shaktas worship the Goddess Shakti in her various forms: Chandi, Kali, Durga etc. The scriptures of Shaktas are called Tantras. The Shaktas are divided into two paths i.e: '*Dakshina'* (rightists) and *'Vama'* (leftists). The Vamcharis are steeped in sensuous life. The Shaktas worship their supreme goddess through *mantras* (prayers and mystical formulae), *mudras* (hand gestures) and *mandalas* (magical diagrams representing cosmos).

Gurmat regards all these rituals i.e; *Karmas or Karm Kanda* as acts of hypocrisy and therefore rejects all such practices. The Gurus criticized the paraphernalia and the material ingredients used in worship. Saying:

- "*Dhoop deep naibedeh basa, kaisay pooj kareh teri dasa. Tan man arppao pooj chraavao. Gur parssd niranjan paavao."*--GGS, p, 525.
- *Bharam bhoolay agiani andhlay, bhram bhram phal toravay, Nirjio poojay, marah srevay sabh birthi ghaal gaavay*--Ibid, p.1264.

- "*Paati toray malini, paati paati jio,Jis pahan kao paati toray, so pahan nirjio, Bhooli malini hai io, satgur jagta hai deo"*--Ibid p.479.

- *Pooja, vart, tilak isnana, pun daan bahu daen Kahoon na bheeje sanjam soami, bolay meethay bain .l. ---Amrit naam nirmolak har jas tin paio jis kirpain Sadh sang rang prabh bhetay, Nanak sukh jan raen .* Ibid, p.674.

- *Satgur milay taan sehsa jaie, kis hao poojo, dooja nadir na aie, Ekay pathar, keejay bhao, doojay pathar dhariay pao, Je uh deo, tan uh bhi deva, kahay Nam Deo, ham har kee sewa*--Ibid, p525.

- *Tera Naam kari channathian, je mann ursa hoay,Kani kungoo je ralay, ghat antar pooja hoay, Pooja keechay Naam dhiaiay, bin navin pooj na hoay, Rhao, Bahir dev pakhalieh, je mann dhovay koay, jooth lahay jio manjiay, mokh paiana hoay*--Gujri, Ml, p.489.

- *Har bin sabh kichh maila santoh, kia haon pooj chdai, Har saachay bhavay sa pooja, bhana man vasaaee* --Ibid, M3, p.910.

Aarti

Aarti is Hindu ceremony performed in adoration of the deity or personage in which lamps are lit with *desi ghee* (clarified butter) and placed in a platter. The person performing *Aarti* rings a bell with one hand and moves the platter with lit lamps around the image *(moorti)* or the person with the other hand. During the process he continues to chant *mantras.* Each devotee snaps his fingers and claps with hands and towards the end attendents touch their respective heart, arms, eyes and head etc with the hands.

In Guru Granth Sahib there is mention *of Aarti,* and the above mentioned offerings, but Gurbani denounces this system of *Aarti* and the mode of worship and presents a cosmic version: "In the sky salver, the sun and the moon are the lamps and stars with their orbs, are the studded pearls. The fragrance of sandal wood trees makes Thy incense, wind Thy fan and all the vegetation Thine flowers, O Luminous Lord.----

Bless Nanak, the pied cuckoo, with the Nectar of Thine mercy, so that he may have an abode in Thy Name, 0 Lord." (Ibid, Ml p.663).

Stone Worship (Saligram / Thakur Pooja)

Hindus worship stone and call it Saligram or Thakur, which according to them represents Vishnu. Saligram is village located in the south of Nepal, which is situated on the bank of Gandka River. From the bed of this river come out round stones, black or bluish in colour having white streaks on them. According to Hinduism they represent Vishnu. From the name of this village these stones have derived their name Saligram, which are also called Gandika Sut (son of Gandika).

According to a Pauranic story Vishnu turned into a stone after he had a curse from Rani Satbrinda wife of Raja Jalandhara, whom he had cheated. Before his turning into stone Vishnu said that he will marry her in his next birth. Satbrinda committed 'Sati' and she was reborn as Tulsi plant, on her grave. The Hindus solemnize marriage of Tulsi with Saligram every year in the month of Kartik in temples. Gurmat denounces such beliefs:

- *Jo pathar ko kehtay dev, ta kee birtha hovai sev,*
  Jo pathar kee paein paa-ay, tis kee ghaal ajain ja-ay,
  Thakur hamra sad bolanta, Barb jia kao daan deta, rhao,
  Antar deo na jan-ay andh, bhram ka mohia pavay phandh,

Na pathar bolai na kichh day, fokat karam, nihphal hai sev – (Ibid, M5, p.1160).

- *Ekey pathar keejai bhao, doojay pathar dhareeay pao,*
  Je uh deo taan uh bhi deva. Ibid, p.525.

- "*Hindu moolay bhoolay akhuti janhi*
  Narad kahia se pooj kranhi.
  Andhey gungey andh andhar.
  Pather ley poojeh mughad gavar.
  Uh ja api dubey tum kaha taarnhaar--Ibid, p. 556.

- *Kahay ko poojat pahan kao, kichh pahan meh parmessar nahi*,--33 swaiyyas, Patshahi, 10

- *Gur mil Nanak Thakur jata, jal thal mahial pooran bidhata*—Ibid, Suhi M5, p.739

- *Apnay sewak kee aapay rakhay, Aapay Naam japavay,*
  Jeh jeh kirt sewak kee, tahan tahan uth dhavay,.1.
  Sewak ko nikti ho-ay dikhavay,
  Jo jo kathay Thakur peh sewak tatkaal ho-ay aavay.2.—Ibid, M5, p.403.

Gurbani says:

- "*Saligram bip pooj manavhoo, sukrit tulsi mala, Ram Naam, jap beda bandho daya karho dayala--- Pranvat Nanak, daasan daasa, daya karoh dayala*-" Ibid, p.1170-71.

Devta and Devi Pooja

Devta lit: means One who gives something, whereas *Devi* lit: means give me something. The Hindu priest, Brahman, determined, a controller (*Devta*) for every natural force, blessing, disease or clamity. These Devtas included planet gods viz; sun, moon and earth etc; the animals viz cow, elephant, snake etc; trees viz; banyan, *Pipal* etc; diseases viz small pox (*Seetla Devi*) etc. Even. Even the giver of life or creator was named Brahma, the destroyer Shiva and the sustainer was given the of Vishnu. The female forces were given the name of Devis, while the male forces were called Devtas. The Brahmin, himself, designated as Brahmin Devta. The total number of such *Devtas* and *Devis* (divinities) in Hinduism came to be thirty three crores. They were given numerous immaginal shapes. Different time was fixed for each one of them, different type of worship was fixed for different *Devtas* and *Devis* and different types of offerings were conceived for them, because every *Devta* fulfilled a different desire or demand. Because of his ignorance man became victim of uncessary imaginative worship. The verdict of Gurbani in this regard is:

- "*Devi Deva pooji-ay bhai kia mangi kia deh'Pahan neer pikhali-ay bhai, jal meh booday the*--Ibid, M1, p. 637.

- *Thakur chhod dasi kao simreh, manmukh andh agiana*-- Ibid, p.1138.

- *Isar Brahma Devi Deva, Inder tapay mun teri sewa, Jatee Satee ketay banvaee ant na koi paaida*--Ibid, M1, p.1034.

- *Devi Deva mool hai maya, Simrit saasat jin upaa-i-aa*--Ibid, M3, p.129.

- *Maya mohay Devi sabh Deva, kaal na chhoday bin gur kee sevaa,.Oh abinaasee alakh abhevaa***"**--Ibid, p. 227.

- *Mahima na jaaneh beyd*

  Brahmey nahee jaaneh bheyd

  Sankra nahin janeh bhev,
  Khojat harey dev.
  Deveeaa nahi janai marm.
  Sabh upar alakh Parbrhm--Ibid, p. 894.

Guru Gobind Singh says, "*Brahm Mahesar Bisan Sacheepat ant fasay jam faas paren gay*-Brahma, Vishu and Shiva were to be entangled in noose of death (Savaiyas-Akal Ustat) i.e, Brahma, Shiva and the husband of Saachi i.e, Indra will ultimately be entrapped in the noose of death".

Thus all divinities are prone to death, therefore the Lord is to be adorned, who is Ever-Existent, "Bin Kartar na Kirtam mano" i.e, 'Except the Creator do not worship any created beings' (Shabad Hazare). This is very important tenet of Sikhism.

Idol Worship *(Moorti Pooja)*

Idol worship is predominant and accepted form of worship in Hinduism. According to the ideology of Sikhism God is Transcendental, Who is without any form, delineation and colour. He is Indefinable, immeasurable and Inacessible,*"Thapia na ja-ay keeta na ho-ay"* (Ibid, M1, p.2), therefore He cannot be adorned in any form image or idol. The disapproval has been expressed in simple and common place terms:

- Hindus have forgotten the Primal Lord and are going the wrong way. As Narad instructed so they worship the idols. They are blind, dumb and the blindest of the blind. The ignorant fools take stones and worship them. Those stone idols which themselves sink, cannot ferry you across--Ibid, p.556.

- The sculptor carves the stone into an idol, by putting his feet on its chest. If the idol is truly God, then, why it does not punish the sculptor--Ibid, p.479).

- The Hindu die worshipping and worshipping the idols and Mussalman die bowing their heads. The former burns the dead and the latter bury them. Neither of the two find Thy real state. 0 Lord--Ibid, p.654.
- O Pundit, you install the idol of god in your house, along with lesser godlings. You wash it, worship it, offer saffron, sandalwood and flowers. You fall at its feet seeking to propitiate it. But you beg men for what you wear and eat. For thine dark deeds, thou shalt receive unforeseen punishment. The idol gives not the hungry and saves not the dying. It is a blind wrangling of the society of the blind--Ibid, p.1240.

Gurbani says:

. *"Eko jap eko salahay, ek simer ekay mann ahay Ekas kay gun gao anant, mann tan jaap ek bhagwant. Eko ek ek har aap, pooran poor rehio prabh biap*--Ibid, p.289.

- "*Jaagat jot Japai nis basar, ek bina mann naik na aanai"*
  33,Swayie, Patshahi, 10.

- *Har bin sabh kichh maila santo, kia hao pooj charaaie,*
  Har bhavay sa pooja hovay, bhana mann vasaie.

Avtar Pooja **(Worship of Incarnations)**

According to Hindu thought God descends to earth in the form of an incarnation to restore *Dharma* (righteousness) whenever there was rule of *Adharma* (un-righteousness) and therefore these incarnations are worshiped as God. It was also held in Hinduism that God took birth not only in human form, but also himself comes into the world in various anthropomorphic forms, such as, The *Hansa* (Swan), *Machh* or *Matsya (Fish), Kachh* or *Kurma* (Tortoise), *Varaha* (Boar), *Nar-Simha* (Partly human, partly tiger) and finally in human forms. Twenty-four incarnations of God Vishnu were accepted. Rama the son of king Dashratha and Krishna son of Vasudeva were among them. According to Gurmat God is *Ajooni* (beyond birth and death) and He is ever-present and omnipresent. Therefore worship should be of One Formless God. *Gurbani* says:

- *Janam maran nahin dhanda dher,* ie; The Almighty is free from birth and death cycle --Ibid, p936.
- *Janam maran tay rehat Narain* i.e; "The Almighty is free from birth and death--Ibid, M5, p.1 136.

- *Ekam, ekankaar nirala, amar ajoni, jaat na jala, Agam agochar, roop na rekhia, Khojat khojat ghat ghat dekhia*—GGS, M1, p.838.

- *Toon parbrahm parmesar joon na avhi* i.e; "You are the greatest and do not come into life and death cycle--Ibid, M5, p.1095.

- *Akal moorat ajooni sanbhao kal andhkar deepai,* i.e; "The one (whose allegoric body) is without any effect of time and space, is free from life and death cycle, is created by itself and gives light to disperse darkness" Ibid, M5 p.916.

- *Amog darshan ajooni sanbhao, Akal moorat jis kaday na khao",* i.e; "The inexhaustible Bounteous is without life-death cycle and is created by itself. There is no effect of time and space (on its allegoric body) and is never destroyed--Ibid, M5, p.1082.

Gurmat lays emphasis on the worship of the Transcendent Almighty *(Nirguna),* who is immortal and infinite:

- *Bin Kartar na kirtam mano, adi ajoni abnasi the Parmesar jano*—33 Swayie, Patshahi 10.

According to Gurbani the so called Avtars (of Hindus) were human beings and not God in human form, therefore it rejects their worship, because they are all created beings and also prone to death:

- The kings created by Thee in different ages are sung as Thine Avtaars. The Pandit and astrologers donot understand the matter; Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva were created to obey His will—Ibid, Ram Kali ki var, iii.

- O Puandit! I saw your Ram Chand coming. He had a quarrel with Ravana and lost his wife" Ibid, Gaund Nam Dev, p.875.

- Rama grieves in his mind, he gathers the army, he has within him the power and authority. The ten-headed Ravana has taken away Sita and because of a curse, Lakshmana was killed. Ram Chand grieves in his mind for Sita and Lakshmana—the mistaken demon (Ravana) does not comprehend it--It was Lord God, who did everything, who is carefree and whose writ cannot be effaced, saith Nanak Ibid, M1, p.1412.
- The false Gurus sing the Gopis and Krishna, Sita and Rama, but not the fearless, true transcendent Lord, who is the creator of the whole world whom only the servants through His grace adore—Ibid, M1 p. 465.

Several names of these incarnations, which were prevalent among the masses for the Supreme Eternal Reality (God), have been used by the Sikh Gurus in their verses, because they were more clearly understood by the devotees viz: Rama, Krishna, Gobind, Gopal, Banwari, Murari, Damodar etc.

Grave and Tomb Worship

Sikhism strictly forbids any such worship:

- *Dubhdha na parho, Har bin hor na poojo, Marhay masaan na jaee Trisna raach na par ghar Java, trisna naam bujhaee"*-- Ibid Ml, p. 634

- *Jagat jot japai nisbasur ek bina man naik na aney*
  Pooran prem pratit sajai, gor marhi mat bhool na maney
  Tirath dan daya tap sanjam ek bina neh ek pachhaney
  Pooran jot jagai ghat maein tab Khalas tahe nakhalas jaaney --33 Sawayyas patshahi. 10.

Panchmahayajnas

These include:

(a) Brahma Yajna: It calls upon every Hindu to study the Vedas.

(b) Pitri Yajna: It contains oblations offered to the manes *(pitris).* It is a libation of water poured out to the forefathers.

(c) Deva Yajna (Yag-Hom): It consists of sacrifices to gods through fire. The sacred fires are kept burning on sacrificial platforms *(Vedis)* and oblations of *Ghee* (clarified butter) are offered. This practice is called *'Havna'.*

(d) Bhuta Yajna: It consists of sacrifices to spirits or departed souls

(e) Atithi Yajna: It means hospitality to guests.

Sikhism does not accept authority of the Vedas and denounces all of these and other allied ritual practices.

Yag-Hom

According to Brahminism gods and goddesses are sustained because of sacrifices. It promotes holding of Yag--Homs and believe it to help in resolving all issues in life. Methods to please every Devi or Devta were outlined, which was in the form of Yag-Hom. It consists of offering the sacrificed animal to fire. The fire was designated as tongue of the *Devta* and Yag was believed to give pleasure in this and the next world. Different offerings or sacrifices were fixed for each and every *Devi* and *Devta* and on the basis of this offering or sacrifice various Yagias assumed their names viz:

- *Narmedh Yajna*-in which human sacrifice was offered.
- *Ashavamedh Yajna*-in which horse sacrifice was offered.
- *Gaindamedh Yajna*-in which rhinoceros was offered.
- *Gaomedh Yajna*-in which cow sacrifice was offered.
- *Bhainsamedh Yajna*-in which buffalo sacrifice was offered.

The animal which is sacrificed at the *Yag* and he who has made the offer of the animal, goes to heaven (Vishnu Smriti, Ch. 51).

According to Manu Brahma has created animals for offering them as a sacrifice during *Yag.* Sacrificing them does good to the entire world. Therefore, it carries no offence of violence. Whatever is used up during *Yag,* attains better life in the next birth. He who does not consume meat of a sacrificed animal takes twenty one births as a swine--Manu Ch 5, Shalok 35, 39-40

The fee paid to the Brahmin for the performance of the priestly work during the

sacrifice is called *dakshna.* Manu says that the Brahmin should not perform the sacrifice if he does not receive the *dakshna* desired by him.

The holy scripture of Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib, does not believe in the existence of *Devis* and *Devtas* (gods and goddesses), who form the basis of these *Yagas*. *So* the question of these *Yagas* does not arise in Sikhism. Gurbani says:

- *Hom jag teerath kee-ay bich haomai badhe bikaar. Narak surg do-ay bhunchna ho-ay bahur bahur avatar.----Jaiso gur updesia mai taiso kahiaa pukaar. Nanak kahay sun re manaa kar keertan ho-ay udhaar* --GGS, p.214.

- "*Hom jag sabh teerathaa, pad Pandit thakay Puraan, Bikh maya moh na mittee, vich haumai awan jaan*--GGS p,1417.

- *Asumedh jagnay, tula purkh daane, Praag isnanay, tao na pujeh har keerat Nama. Apunay raam bhaj re man aalseeaa-- Ibid*, p. 873.

- *Tirath lakh crore purbi nahvna, devi dev sthan sev kravna,Jap, tap, sanjam lakh sadh sdhavna, hom jag naived bhog lgavna, Vart name lakh daan karm kmavna, laobali dargeh pakhand na javna*—Bhai Gurdas,Var21, Pauri 15.

Naimittika Karmas

They are observed on special occasions and include:

a) The *Samskaras* (Rites / ceremonies). There are forty-six rites / ceremonies in Hinduism, but the most commonly performed ones are: *Garbhadharna* (ceremony of conception), *Jata Karma* (cermoney after birth), *Namadheya* (The ceremony of naming the child), *Annaprasna* (The ceremony of first feeding with rice, *Chudakarma* (Tonsure i.e *mundan* ceremony), *Upanayana* (Initiation ceremony), *Vivaha ceremony* (Marriage ceremony) and *Pind patal*—The funeral rites of Hinduism carries a faith of offering balls of cereals to Brahmins in the name of the dead for their deliverance. This cermoney is normally done at holy places like Gaya. Gurbani denounces such beliefs:

- *Aiya gaya moiya nao, pichhay patal sadih kaav,* Nanak *manmukh andh piar baajh guru duba sansaar*-GGS, p.138.

- *Deeva mera ikk Naam dukh vich paia tail,*
  Un chaanan uh sokhia chooka jam sion mail,
  Loka mat ko phakarh paey
  lakh marhia kar ekthey ek rati ley bhahey.1. Rahao
  Pind patal meri keso kiriya
  Sach naam kartar.
  Aithai othai agai pachhai eh mera adhar.2.
  Gang Banaras sifat tumari naval atam rao
  Sacha navan tan thiai jan ahnis lagai bhao.3.
  Ik loki hor chhamichhri

Brahmin vatt pind kha-ay,
Nanak *pind bakhsis ka*
kabhoon nikhootis nahay (Ibid, p. 358).

Shraddha (ਸਰਾਧ)

The ceremony of feeding the dead elders is known as Shradha. In Hinduism Shradh ceremony is done in the name of dead ancestors for the appeasement of their souls. During the days of Shradhas Brahmins are served food and offerings of other daily necessities. According to Hindu belief during the days of Shradhs, *Pitarpuri,* the abode of the elders gets vacated and all the elders come down on the earth to partake food of the Shradhs. If they are not served the meals, they shower curses and return to their abode. There is no bigger virtue than holding Shradhs. There is no bigger virtue than holding Shrads. Biggest sins of the person are destroyed if he organizes Shradhs in the memory of his ancestors. Such a person qualifies for a seat in heaven. Gurbani denounces Shradh rites / beliefs saying:

- Jeevat pitar na maanay ko-oo, mooay shraddh karahi (Ibid, p.332).

b) The *Shantis* (Propitiatory Cermonies): These ceremonies are of Puranic origion and are connected with Ganesha (the giver of success) and *Grahas* (the planets), which are nine in numbers (Navgrehas) and have astrological effects. The position of the planets, at the time of the birth of a person are said to exert favourable or evil influences. The *Nav grehas* include the *Suriya* (Sun), *Soma* (Moon), *Mangla* (Mars) *Budh, Guru, Shukar, Shani* (Saturn), *Rahu* and *Ketu*. People believe that they can save themselves from the impending calamity, if they perform certain actions and rites. Gurbani denounces such beliefs:

- *Sookh sehaj anand ghana har keertan gao, greh nivaray satguru dey apna nao*--Ibid,p. 400.

Sikhism believes that by remembering the all-powerful Lord-God one should have no fear of any universal agency created by the Almighty Lord.

b) *Vratas* (Fasts-Willful Hunger)

Observed mostly by women for the purification of soul, as they are not entitled to recite Vedic mantras. The Hindus think that by fasting soul gets purified for union with God. They consider *Ekadshi* fast as more meritorious. Muslims also observe fasts during Ramadan.

According to Gurbani fasting does not lead to union with God, instead it hurts the body. In reality soul becomes purified and bold only with knowledge of God *(Gur Gian):*

- *Ann na kha-ay dehi dukh deejay, bin gur gian tripat nahin theejay.*--Ibid, p.Ml, p.905

- *Chhoday ann karay pakhand na suhagan na uh randd*--Ibid, p.873.

- *Bart name sanjam meh rehta, tin ka aad na paiya Aggay chalan our hai bhai oohan kaam na aiya*--Ibid, p.216.

- *Vrat na raho, na meh ramdana, tis sei, jo rakhay nidhana*--Ibid, M5, p.1136.

Instead of observing fasts Gurbani tells us to control our mind and love His creation:

- *Mann santokh sarb jee daya, in bidh, bart sampooran bhaia*--Ibid, p.299.

d) *Prayaschittas* (Penances for the purification of the soul from sins): Gurbani forbids all sorts of penances:

- *Tan na tapai tanoor jio, balan hadd na baal, sir pairin kia, pheria, andarpiri samaal*--Ibid, p 1411.

- *Jion paawak sang seet ko naas, ai-say praschit sant sang binas*--Ibid, p.914.

The concept of Pollution and Ritual Purification in Hinduism

and its rejection in Sikhism

Pollution literally means contamination of water, air, food or any anything else, by dirt, harmful chemicals, waste material etc to make them unclean, impure, defile or dirty, but in Hinduism it has nothing to do with dirt or environmental issues that concern us in day to day life. *Sutak* in Hindu society is associated with impurity of the house on account of birth of a child and *Patak* is impurity associated with death of some one in the house.

Vedic Brahminism now popularly called Hinduism says that certain places, rivers, castes, cow (animal) and its products, and seasons are pure. Among the castes, Brahmins are born pure and if they ever incur impurity from bodily contact with an impure person, with a corpse or through sexual intercourse, they can regain their status of purity by bathing or performing other rituals. The Kashatriyas and the Vaishyas become pure after the jagyopavit ceremony, while the Shudras were permanently impure. To touch them or things with which they have been in contact results in pollution i.e *Bhit* (iB~t). River Ganges is pure, and forms the source of purification for all who bathe in it. The cow is a pure animal whose products are therefore purifying, hence Hindu system of using cow dung as a covering for the floor of the kitchen, the place in the house, which must be most pure. The *Kala pani* (lit: black water i.e sea around the Indian peninsula), is something no Hindu should cross for fear of pollution. In ancient Sanskrit texts, *Vishnu purana* in particular, it is laid that, "it is an exclusive privilege and grace of God that enables man to be born a Hindu in the sacred land called, Bharat, a birth in other lands, no matter of how excellent a condition and however frequently, is no better than a repetitious frustration and wearisome waste" i.e, "*Krsnanugrahato labhadawa manave janam bharte, anyasthane brtha janam nispphlanca gatagatam".* It is because of this fear that the Hindus refrained to migrate to the other parts of the world from India till the recent past. The Hindu ritualists considered several aspects of social life as devoid of purity, not in spiritual sense, but in physical sense. In the Brahmanical system, it was believed that any death rendered impure those of the household in which the demise occurred. It also held that women were most prone to such impurity called *Sutak,* during childbirth and during their menstrual periods, because both involved bleeding. Guru Nanak condemned such Hindu notions of pollution / impuity in no uncertain terms:

- Should *Sutak* be believed in, then that such impurity occurs everywhere, Worms are found in cow dung and the wood. No single grain of corn is without life in it. Water is the first source of life, and everyone is dependent on it for remaining alive" How can impurity of *Sutak* be warded off? It is to be found in every kitchen. Nanak says, pollution is not removed in this way (through rituals). It is washed away by knowledge of God (enlightenment)--Ibid, Ml, p.472.

- Just as the mensturation comes again and again to woman, likewise the lier lies and suffers repeatedly. They are not said to be pure, who wash their bodies. Only they are pure in whose mind, abides the Lord, saith Nanak—Ibid p. 472.

- The impurity of mind is greed, impurity of tongue is falsehood, the impurity of the eyes is to see the beauty of another's wife and another's wealth, the impurity of ears is to hear backbite. By such practices, the swan like persons go bound to *Yama,* saith Nanak--Ibid, Ml, p.472.

- The consideration of the impurities as contagious, is misapprehension, the birth and death happen under Lord's Will, the transmigration is under His command. All eatables and drinks as subsistence are pure. The Guruwards who have become conscious about it, there is no impurity for them, saith Nanak--Ibid, M1 p.472-73.

- The upper Caste Hindus think that for purity of food they must have specially prepared cooking place *(chaunka)* plastered with cow dung, so that no evil spirit can come near it and pollute the cooked food. Such practices have been denounced in Sikhism. Guru Nanak says:, "After preparing the square cooking place and marking its boundry, the liers sit saying that this food may not be touched so that it may not get polluted. With polluted body they indulge in evil actions and with the impure mind they rinse their mouth. Therefore saith Nanak, meditate on the True Lord. The True Lord can only be obtained with purity--Ibid, Ml, p.472.

- Those, who are liked by the Lord are pure, all others are full of impurity. The impure one becomes pure, when he is drenched by the philosopher's stone i.e. Guru--Ibid, M, p.1012.

Tirath Ishnan (Bathing at Places of Pilgrimage) and Sikhism

Sikhism attaches no importace of going to places of pilgrimage and bathing there. It gives prime importance to cleaning the mind of filth of false ego. Ritual *tirath Ishnan* has been denounced multiple times in Gurbani:

- *Jag haumai mail* (ਮੈਲੁ) *dukh paia, mal lagi dooje bhaey. Mal haumai, dhoti kive na uttrey, je sao tirath naey*--Ibid, Sri rag, M3.

- *Tirath naa-ay, na utras mail, karam dharm sabh, haumai phail*— Ibid, M5, p.890.

- *Man mailey sabh kichh maila*

Tan dhotai man hachha na ho-ay.
Ih jagat bhram bhulaia virla bujhai koey.— Ibid, p.558.

- *Jal kai majjan je gat hovai Nit nit meinduk naveh Jaisey meinduk taisey oey nar Phir phir joni aaveh*--Ibid, p.484.

- *Nawan ko tirath ghaney, man baora rey, poojan kao bahu dev, Kah Kabir chhootan nahee, man baora rey, chhootan har kee sev*—Ibid, p.336.

- *Makar prag (ਪ੍ਰਾਗ) daan bahu keea, sarir deeo adh kaat, Bin Har Naam ko mukat na pavey, bahu kanchan deeje kat kaa*t—Ibid M4, p.986.

- *Nanak dhoor puneet saadh lakh kot piragey*--Ibid, p.322.

- *Kaha bhaio, tirath brat ki-ay, Ram saran nahin aavey, Jog jag nihphal tih mano, jo prabh jas bisravey*—Ibid, p. 830.

- *Tirath karey, brat phun rakhey, neh manooa bas ja ko, Nihphal dharm tahey tum manho, saach kehat mein ya kao*- Ibid, p.831.

There is no doubt that the Sikh Gurus visited places of pilgrimage of various religions, but the purpose of their visits was to wean away people from performing useless rituals and show them the right path for the realization of the Almighty God and not to have *isnan* and perform *pun daan* themselves, "*Tirath udham satgur kia, sabh lok udhran artha"* (Ibid, M4, p1116). Thus it becomes clear that the pupose of their visits to these centres was not isnan and pun daan. According to Gurbani:

- *Tirath navan jao tirath nam hai.*
  *Tirath sabad bichar antar gian hai--Ibid, p.*687

- *Gur samaan, tirath nahin koay, sar santokh, taas gur hoay*--Ibid, Ml, p.1328-29.

- *Tirath poora satguru, jo andin, har har Naam dhia-ay. Oh aap chhutaa kutamb sio de har har naam sabh sarist chhadaa-ay* Ibid, M4, p.140.

Reading of Scriptures

Guru Nanak boldly criticicized mere reading of scriptures and following useless rituals prevalent among people for centuries as hollow actions. He emphasizes that understanding of the Lord is more important:

- *Baid* (ਬੇਦ-ਵੇਦ) *path sansar kee kaar, par par Pandit karay beechar,*
  Bin boojhe sab ho-ay khuar, Nanak *gurmukh utras paar*--Ibid, p.791.

Regarding Mantras etc.

The word *mantra* in Hinduism stands for a hymn or text especially from Vedas chanted

or intoned as an incantation or prayer. There can be two types of *mantras* i.e. the sacred ones, used for spiritual uplift and the second type of *mantras* are those, which are used to create a spell. Guru Granth Sahib only propagates spiritual *mantras* and decries all those *mantras*, which are recited to creat a spell. Guru Nanak Dev says:

- *Tant mant pakhand na jana Ram ridhay man mania"* i.e; I (Nanak) do not believe in magical formulae, magical hymns and religious hypocrisies, because my mind is imbibed with the Almighty--Ibid, Ml, p.766.

Ishnan (Ritual Bath)

According to Brahminical teaching by washing the body, mind also becomes clean, but as per Gurmat mere washing the body does not clean the evil thoughts in one's mind. Gurbani says:

- Those who sit after washing their body are not called pure. Pure are they, O, Nanak within whose mind, He, the Lord abides--GGS, Ml, p.472.

- When mind is filthy, everything is filthy. By washing the body, the mind becomes not pure" (Ibid, M3, p.558).

- Why bath the body, defiled by falsehood. He, who practices Truth, only his ablution is approved--Ibid Ml, p.565.

- Within thee is great filth of greed and falsehood, so what for washest thou thy outside (body)?--Ibid, Ml, p.598.

- Of what avail is it to wash the body, when there is filth in the mind—Ibid, p.611.

Dhan Daan (Giving alms in Charity)

The philosophy of giving alms in charity to condone ones sins, and attain salvation *(Mukti)* was also the invention of the clever Pundits in Hinduism. According to this philosophy if a sinner gives alms to a Brahmin then his sins will be condoned. The alms could be in the form of cash money, land, gold, woman, etc. According to Gurmat by giving such ritualistic alms in charity, a sinner cannot be absolved of his sins. Alms given to the hypocritic religious leaders are of no use in spiritual life, instead only '*Naam Simran'* is given priorty, "*Kichh pun daan anek karni, Naam tul na samsaray"*-- Ibid, M1,p. 566.

Jap

Innumerable mantras have been mentioned in Hindu mantra shastras for the fulfillment of man's desires *(manokamnavan)* and attain union with the Supreme Eternal Reality. Innumerable methods and their fruites have been enumerated in Hindu shastras and by reciting the mantras of Bhairav, Kali Mai, Lashmi, Saraswati, Durga, Chandi etc; devis and devtas the attainment of innumerable powers have been told. Gurmat considers such rituals as fruiteless and advises the Sikhs to refrain from such rituals:

- *Jinni Naam visaaria, kia jap japeh hor' bista under keet se, muthay dhanday chor,* Nanak *Naam na veesray jhoothay laalach hor*--Ibid, p.1247.
- *Kia jap kia tap, kia brat pooja, jakay ridhay bhao hai dooja*--Ibid, p324.

Tap

Some people think that by torturing the body mind comes under control and thus union with God is attained. The common methods for torturing the body adopted by the ascetics were exposing the body to extrememes of heat or cold, standing in water on one leg for long periods of time, hanging the body upside down etc. Gurmat forbids such practices:

- *Tan na tapa-ay tanoor join, balan hadd na baal,Sir pairin kia pheria, under pireen small*--Ibid, M1, p.1411.

Gurmat advises:

- *Gur sewa, tapaan sir tap Saar,*
  Har jio mann vassay,
  sabh dukh visaaran haar— Ibid,M3, p.423.

Observance of auspicious Moments, days and lunar dates

In Hinduism according to the dictates of shastras some moments, days and lunar dates are regarded as auspicious. On all these days special rituals and functions are observed. The Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib denounces such beliefs:

Guru Granth Sahib denounces such beliefs:

- *Satgur bajhon andh ghubar thiti sevey mughad gwar*—(Ibid,M3, p.843)
- *Mah divas moorat bhaley, jin ko nadir karey-* (Ibid, M5, p.136).
- *Soi divas bhla meray bhai, Har gun ga-ay, param gat pai*— (Ibid, M5, p.395).
- *Nanak soi dins suhavda jit prabh avey chit, jit din visray Parbrahm, fit bhleri rutt*— (Ibid, M5. p.318).
- *Din raen sabh suhavnay piaray, jit japi-ay Har naao*—Ibid, M5, p.432.
- *Sa vela, so moorat, sa ghari, so mohat, safal hai, meri jindri-ay, jit Har chit aavay Ram—."* Ibid, M4, p.540.
- *Sai ghadi sulakhni simrat Har Naam*—Auspicious is the time when he Lord's Name is meditated (Ibid, M5, p.819).

Guru warns that person especially the Brahmin who loots the common man by devising the fear of auspicious and inauspicious days and dates:

Chaudas amavas rach rach mangeh, kar deeak lai koop pareh—Ibid, p.970.

Good and Bad Omens

In Hinduism people believe in good and bad omens. Gurbani denounces such beliefs:

- *Sagun upsagun tis kao lageh jis chit na aavay*— Ibid, M5, p.401.
- *Chhanichhar vaar saon saasat beechaar.*
  Haumai mera bharmai sansar.
  Manmukh andha dujai bhaey
  Jam dar badhachota kha-ay" GGS, p.841.

N.B:

The census figures of the last quarter of the 19th century and first quarter of the 20th century in the Punjab reveal that Sikh population inceased significantly during this period, because a large number of Punjabi Hindus embraced Sikhism inorder to avail the benefits available to Sikhs under the British rule. These neoconverts into Sikhism have been holding the ship of Sikhism with their hands but kept their feet firmly stuck in the boat of Hinduism i.e, they believe in Guru Granth Sahib, but continue to observe Brahmanical practices, rituals, rites/ ceremonies etc. Instead of following the Sikh 'Rehat Maryada' they try to Hinduise Sikhism by introducing Bipran kee reet (Brahmanical practices, rituals, and ritesetc) into Sikhism.

Hypocrisy and its Rejection in Sikhism

Guru Granth Sahib is highly critical of all outer acts of show and denounces them in strongest terms:

- – "Through hypocrisy Lord's devotion is not performed, nor is the Transcendent Lord obtained". (Ibid, M3 .849).

- .Through hypocrisy His love is not obtained. The counterfeit gilding is ruinous (GGS, Ml, p.54).

- The back-biters and slanderers remain hungry, die rolling in dust and their hands reach no where. Outwardly with hypocrisy, they do all the good deeds, but in their mind and heart they practice deceit--Ibid, M3, p.1417.

- (O Pundit) you read books, say vesper prayer and argue, you worship stones and sit in trance like a crane. With your mouth you utter falsehood like precious ornament and recite the three line Gayatri three times a day. Around your neck is rosary, on your forehead the sacred mark and on your head is a towel and you have two loin-clothes. If

you know the nature of Lord, then you will find that all these beliefs and rites are vain. Nanak says in good faith, meditate on Lord. Without the True Guru, man finds not the way—Ibid,M1, p 470).

- Detach thyself from the world and shed thy hypocrisy. He the Lord knows everything—Ibid, M3, p.440.

Janeu-Tag (Yagyopavit) *and Sikhism*

The sacred thread worn across chest by male members of the Hindu religion is called *Janeu or Yagyopavit.* The Brahmin had made its wearing compulsory. According to Gurmat it cannot put any check on evil intentions of man. The praise of the Lord is the real check because that produces a change in character Guru Nanak says:

- Out of the cotton of compassion, spin a thread of contentment, tie in it knot of continence then twist it with the strength of Truth; O Pundit! If you can make such a thread for my soul, then give it to me. Such a yagopavit never breaks, never gets polluted, can never be burnt by fire, and once worn is everlasting asset of the human mind.Sayeth Nanak such persons who wear this sacred thread are the worthiest of worthy, and whole universe says all hail to them—GGS, p.471

Rosery (Mala) and Sikhism

Gurmat is strictly against counting the beads:

- *Kabir Japnee kaath kee kia dikhlaveh lo-ay, Hirday Ram na chetee, ih japnee kia ho-ay*— Ibid Salok Kabir ji, p.1368

- *Hirday japni, japo gun taasa,*
  Har agham agochar, aprampar soami,
  Jan pag lag dhiavo, ho-ay dasan dasaa—Ibid, p.841.

- *Sukrit karni, saar japmali, hirday pher, chaley tudh nali, 1,Har har naam, japo banwali, Kar kirpa meloh sat sangat, toot gai jam jali*— Ibid M4, p1134.

- *Kanth ramneeya ram ram maala, hast ooch prem dharnee, Jeeh bhanijo utam slok, udharnang, nain nandni*—Ibid, M5, p.1356.

It is very clearly stated in Guru Granth Sahib that hypocrisy has no place in Gurmat instead truthful living is only acceptable. Guru Nanak says:

- *Sach vart, santokh tirath, gian dhian isnaan, Daya devta, khima japmali, tay maanas pardhaan, Jugat dhoti, surat chauka, tilak karni ho-ay, Bhao bhojan Nanaka, virla taan koi koey*— Ibid, Ml, p1245.

Tilak *and* Dhoti

Supporting *Tilak* and other marks of Brahminism are strictly forbidden in Sikhism, because these outward acts of mere show drive the mind away from God. Guru Nanak says if the Pandit had known about God, then he should have considered all the rituals as false:

- *Gal mala, tilak lilatan, do-ay dhoti, bastar kapaatang, Je jaanas braham karmang, sabh fokat nischio karmang*— Ibid, M1, p.470.

- *Mathay tilak hath maala baanaa, logan Ram khilauna jaana*—Ibid, p.1158.

- Through hypocrisy Lord's devotion is performed not, nor is Transcendent Lord obtained Ibid, p849.

CHAPTER 9

TRADITIONS OF SIKHISM

Sikh religion is rooted in history and not in mythology. The Sikhs have evolved their own traditions which are only unique to Sikhism:

TRADITION OF SARBAT KHALSA IN SIKHISM

Sarbat Khalsa literally means the Sikh nation as a whole. In the context of the Sikh polity it is an assembly of the representatives of all the Sikh organizations loyal to Akal Takhat, at Akal Takhat under the patronage of Guru Granth Sahib. This institution has its foundation in the grant of the leadership of the Sikh nation to the 'Guru Khalsa Panth' by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708. All the national resolves are made by the Sikh nation in the gatherings of Sarbat Khalsa at Akal Takhat under the patronage of Guru Granth Sahib.

Sarbat Khalsa made many important decisions which changed the history of the Punjab as, for example, regarding confronting the Moghul government (A.D; 1726), accepting a Jagir (estate) in 1733 AD., building a forte at Amritsar (AD.1747), reorganization of Dal Khalsa and constitution of Misals (A.D.1748), attacking Lahore (A.D.1760) etc. Through Sarbat Khalsa and Gurmatta the Sikhs destroyed the Muslim rule and domination in their homeland within one hundred years of the formal consecration of Sikhism by Guru Gobind Singh and established an independent Sikh Empire in 1799 A.D, with Lahore as their capital. During the British rule in Punjab they forced the British government to enact the Sikh marrige Act (Anand Marrige Act, 1909), legalization of wearing of Kirpan by the Sikhs, grant licenses for Jhatka meat in Sikh dominated areas, create separate electrolate for the Sikhs and the Sikh Gurdwara Act by following the tradition of Sarbat Khalsa and gurmatta. After the independence of the Indian subcontinent they successfully forced the Hindu government of India to create a Sikh dominated Punjabi speaking provinc.

TRADITION OF GUMATA IN SIKHISM

Literally meaning a decision made according to Guru's *Matt* (Counsel). All decisions affecting the Sikh Sangat reached through consensus, in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, and in accordance with the Sikh philosophy are called *Gurmata*. A *Gurmata* cannot be made to change the fundamental principles or basic postulates of Sikhism. The subject must be of concern to the entire 'Sikh Sangat', and must not pertain to the interest of a group or party of the Sikhs. *Gurmata* has to be unanimous; there is no question of majority view. The *Gurmata* is morally binding on all because the Guru is present in the sangat. There is no difference between the Guru and the Sangat / Panth / Khalsa. What is true of Panth is true of Sangat. The power of the Guru is in the Panth. The Guru is the Khalsa and the Khalsa is the Guru. There is no difference between the Guru and the Khalsa. So in essence, *Gurmata* is a "decision of the collective will of the Sikh Sangat". It is the symbol and form of the supreme authority of the Sangat / Panth (Sikh Nation). It has the sanction of the Guru Granth Sahib (Guru) and the entire Sikh Sangat / Sikh Nation. In case of local issues Gurmatta is imlplemented by the Sangat through Panj Piaras.

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The solution of new problems facing the 'Sikh Nation' can be sought through the institution of Gurmata, by Sarbat Khalsa at Akal Takhat. *Gurmatas* at Akal Takhat are taken in cases of emergency or when a crisis faces the 'Sikh Nation' as a whole. This *Gurmata is* issued as a Hukamnama to the 'Sikh Nation' by the ***'Sewadar'***, of Akal Takhat.

TRADITION OF HUKAMNAMA IN SIKHISM

Hukamnama literally means: Royal order. In Sikh theology Akal Takhat is the Throne of the Almighty and the orders of the Almighty are of course, *Hukamnamas.* A *Hukamnama is* the *Gurmata* of the Sarbat Khalsa, issued from Akal Takhat Sahib for implementation. *A Hukamnama,* when it is issued in a proper manner, is binding on the whole Sikh nation. The tradition started during the eighteenth century after the abolition of human Guruship by Guru Gobind Singh and installation of Guru Granth Sahibas the permanent Sikh Guru, the orders issued under the supremacy of Akal Takhat and the patronage of Guru Granth Sahibcame to be known as ukanamsa, when Bhai Mani Singh the great Sikh theologian was the Sewadar (Care taker) of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) and Akal Takhat. The tradition is being followed, since then. The Sikhs consider it a matter of honour to respectthese hukamnamas. During the life time of the Sikh Gurus the term was used for letters written by Guru to Sikhs.

TRADITION OF MORCHA IN SIKHISM

Morcha literally means a trench where soldiers in the battlefield take defensive position or to make a concerted attack on the enemy, and in the current parlance of Sikh political struggle it stands for a peaceful political agitation. Whenever the Sikh people are persuaded that the government of the day is acting in a manner, which is basically hostile to the fundamental Sikh interests, they create or seek for a situation in which the government has to enforce its statutory laws by penalizing the Sikhs. Thus, a situation develops in which bands of the Sikhs come forth to undergo penalities of the law with a view to assert the supremacy of their own fundamental interests. Such a confrontation is given the name of Morcha.

Before starting any Morch they hold a Sarbat Khalsa meeting at Akal Takhat Amritsar, discuss the sdverse issue confronting them, then pass a Gurmata to start a Morcha against the Government in order to get the injustice undone.

TRADITION OF HONOURING IN SIKHISM
SIROPA

Siropa literally means, from head (*Sir)* to feet (*Pao),* but in Sikh culture, *Siropa* means robe of honour. *Siropa* is presented to those persons who have contributed something positive and remarable for the cause of the Sikh nation. It usually consists of a stole alone but it can be a stole in combination with a kirpan (sword).

TRADITION OF RELIGIOUS PUNISHMENT IN SIKHISM--Tankha

The term, *Tankhah* in Sikhism is used for fine (religious punishment) imposed upon a Sikh who has confessed his guilt or has been declared guilty of breach of rehatmaryada or for some activity against the interest of the Sikh nation. The religious punishment (*Tankhah*) in Sikhism, is usually in the form of dusting the shoes of Sangat in the *Jora Ghar* of the Gurdwara, cleaning floors of the Gurdwara or cleaning the used utensils in the Langar for a specified number of days along with reciting Path and on successful completion of the penance offer Karah Parshad in the Gurdwara and pay obeisance. After he has carried the same, he should have no grudge of feeling of religious devotion and not with a feeling of guilt.

Tankhahia

A person who has been held guilty of breach of religious discipline is called Tankhahia i.e; one who has been granted or is liable to be granted Tankhah. Any person who has been declared Tankhahia must personally appear and submit himself to the Sangat in a Gurdwara (if act was personal) or Sarbat Khalsa at Akal Takhat (if the offence was national) as a humble Sikh. He should have a feeling of repentance and must make public expression for his guilt and ask for forgiveness. He should declare his will to accept the verdict. If convicted, then the sentence is passed, jointly by *Panj Piaras*.

Tradition of Daswandh in Sikhism

Daswandh, in Punjabi literally means one-tenth, but in Sikh theosophy it refers to the obligation on each Sikh to contribute voluntarily according to his/her wishes for the organized help of the Sikh community. It is a method of sharing the wealth with the needy or the less fortunate. It is used for running the *Langar* and propagation of Sikhism. If a Sikh cannot afford money he / she may contribute his/ her time or his / her services for the nation. The concept of *daswandh* as compared with traditional charity/alms giving is unique in Sikhism. It is not charity *(Daan)* as in Sikhism there is no place for Brahmanical alms giving. In Sikhism no particular section of community like Brahmins in Hinduism is entitled to alms or charity, instead, it is the poor man's mouth, "*Gharib da moonh Guru dee golak hai***"**. Sikhism does not have any set complicated or strict rules for its collection / realization as are found in Islamic scriptures regarding Zakat. It was introduced in Sikhism by the 5th Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev. *Daswandh* serves the dual purpose of organizing help for the needy as well as for providing an opportunity to members to participate in *Sewa* (voluntary-selfless service) and thus weld them together in closer ties.

Tradition of Sewa in Sikhism

Sewa is another cardinal principle of Sikhism. In Sikhism it is not ordinary unpaid service, it is voluntary selfless, humble, without motive, without hope for reward or compensation. The founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak wished the followers of the Sikh faith to be servants of God and his people. "Having created the human body, God has installed HIS very-self there in," said he. And, "This world is the chamber of God where in the true one resides"— *"1h jag sachay kee hai kothari, sachay ka vich vaas"*. Therefore, with this human body, "Let us be of service in this world so that we may find a seat in the court of the Lord"---"*Vich dunia sev kama-iay, taan durgeh baisan pa-iay*—In this world perform Lord's service. Then you will get seat at God's Portal**"**

(GGS, p.26). It is held by the Gurus that service, if it is to be worthwhile, ought to be done without any consideration of reward. In case any reward is solicited for rendition of service it can be termed as bargain. "He who serves without desire for rewards, he alone attains to God"-- *"Sewa karat ho-ay nihkami, tis ko hot prapat soami"* (GGS, Gauri Sukhmani M5, p.286).

Sewa can be done by:
Physical means ie; *Tan dee sewa,*
Intellectual means ie; *Man dee sewa,*
Monetary means i.e; *Dhan dee sewa,*

Physical Sewa (Voluantary bodily service-*Tan dee sewa):* comes first of all and can be done by cooking food or by washing dishes in the Langar *(*the sacred community kitchen), by taking care of visitors shoes, by sweeping and cleaning floors in a Gurdwara, participating in Sikh National struggle, by doing humatarian work and so on.

Mental-intellectual service *(Man dee sewa):* can be done by imparting knowledge about Gurbani, Sikh religion, Sikh history and general education to the needy and the poor.

Monetary help *or Dhan dee sewa:* can be done in cash or kind. A Sikh is religiously required to contribute "Daswandh" for the community's welfare projects. Daswandh literally means ten percent of donor's income. Though this percentage is not always forthcoming, devotees do maintain a tremendous flow of funds for the maintenance of existing or the construction of new Gurdwaras or community's welfare projects.

From Sewa springs humility, tolerance and generosity. It brings an end to ego (Haumai). It gives a Sikh a feeling of being a useful part of humanity. Gurbani lays great stress on Sewa:-

- *Jetay jee tetay sabh teray vin sewa phal kisay nahee*—Ibid, p.354.
- *Nih-kapat sewa keejay har keri tan meray man sarb sukh pai-ay*— (Ibid, p.861).
- *Aap gva-ay sewa karay taan kichh pavay maan*—GGS, p.474
- *Bin sewa dhrig hath per, hor nehphal karni*—Bhai Gurdas *Var 27, pauri10.*
- *Bhada chatti jo bharay na gun na upkar. Stee khusee savaaree-ay Nanak kaaraj saar.*— GGS,p.787.

Tradition of Kaar Sewa, in Sikhism

Kaar means work and Seva means service, but in the theosophy of Sikhism *Kaar Sewa*, means work or service organized for religious purposes especially for the construction of Gurdwaras. Since it involves voluntary service by the community, this is the most respected method of constructing historical Gurdwaras. Most of the Gurus resorted to *Kaar Sewa* as a method of organizing labour for a common cause. Guru Hargobind got Akal Takhat constructed by the followers of the faith with their own hands.

CHAPTER 10

MAJOR DOCTRINES OF SIKHISM

Major doctrines of Sikhism include:

'Sri Guru Granth' and 'Guru Khalsa Panth' doctrine of Sikhism

Guru Gobind Singh felt that Sikhism had fully developed, matured and its fundamentals, institutions and philosophy had taken firm roots among the Sikhs, who no more needed the guidance of a living human Guru. He therefore gave the institution of Guruship a permanent and abiding character by vesting it in the immortality of `Guru Granth' and in continuity of 'Guru Khalsa Panth.' Doctrinally, the bani, has been paid high homage by the Sikh Gurus in the Guru Granth Sahib:

- *Shabad Guru surat dhun chela* i.e, Shabad is the Guru, consciousness and intention towards it make one its disciple (GGS, Ml, p.943).

- *Bani Guru Guru hai bani, vich bani amrit saaray Gurbani kahay, sevak jan manay, partakh Guru nistaaray"i.e, "*Bani is the Guru and Guru is the bani and it contains the elixir of life. If the devotee obeys what bani teaches us, God confers His Grace on him" (GGS, M4, p. 982).

- *Pothi permeshar ka thaan* i.e, "The book is the abode of God" (GGS, M5, p.628).

Before leaving the mortal world on the night falling between October 7-- 8, 1708, Guru Gobind Singh installed Aad Granth as Guru Eternal on October 5, 1708 and commanded the Sikhs to seek guidance from it in future: "*Sabh Sikhan ko hukam hai Guru manio Granth"* . Since then Aad Granth has assumed the status of "Guru Granth" and it is the presiding deity in every Gurdwara or the Sikh place of worship and is respectfully called Guru Granth Sahib by the Sikhs. A person who, believes in a living Guru after Guru Gobind Singh is not a Sikh.

Guru Gobind Singh after the Amritpaan Sanskar at Anandpur Sahib on the Vaisakhi day 1699; passed on the Temporal Guruship not to an individual but to the corporate body of the Sikhs and named it 'Guru Khalsa Panth'-'The Sikh Nation' and vested the authority for initiating the new entrants into the order of the Khalsa (Sikh faith) with the 'Panj Pairay'. He declared that the Sikhs were to collectively view themselves as 'Guru Khalsa Panth' and not to recognize any single person as their sole leader.

The Guru's worldly responsibility (secular authority) and his word (Spiritual knowledge-Adhiatmic giyan) were separated, the Panth (Guru Khalsa Panth) being invested with the worldly responsibility (Secular duties) and his word became Giyan (Spiritual) Guru-"Guru Granth".

All this can be considered as quite a satisfactory provision for a personal guidance and

inspiration to take the place of that which could not be maintained. Who can say after this, that the Guru is dead, "*So kaun kahey Sri Guru moyo"* (GGS, M5).

It is a complete answer to the two extreme views that there was no need at all for a Guru and the other that it was not possible to make any advancement without a living personal Guru. The Sikh Gurus combined both views making it possible for a seeker to have the necessary guidance and yet maintain initiative and independence.

MIRI PIRI DOCTRINE OF SIKHISM

Sikhism is a whole life system and does not accept any dichotomy in any sphere of life, whether it is `personal and social,' spiritual and material' `faith and reason', or `any other' differentiation. It involves an integral combination between spiritual and empirical life of man. This constitutes the *Miri Piri (Bhagti-Shakti)* doctrine of Sikhism revealed by Guru Nanak Dev and propounded by Guru Hargobind Sahib. *Miri* means social and political (material) aspects of life, while *Piri* guides on spiritual path of life. *Miri-Piri* combination means that while taking part in every aspect of social set-up, a Sikh must, as a religious responsibility, resist and confront all kinds of injustices, (social, political or religious) where ever he comes across them. It is this concept of Sikhism that makes a Sikh "Saint-Soldier". Guru Gobind Singh says that a Sikh must recite the Name of the Almighty with his tongue but simultaneously he must always be mentally prepared and remain ready for battle to uphold righteousness" *i.e; "Mukh tay har chit mein yudh beecharay".*

Sikhism is not a church of worship (Spirituality-Piri) only, but social and political (Temporal-Piri) activity also, meaning that man's public and spiritual life are inseparable. *Miri-Piri* doctrine of the Sikh faith prohibits a person from practicing dichotomous behaviour i.e, performing prayers in personal life, but being immoral in public life. In most countries, political and religious life is kept apart through statutory provisions. It is argued that the former is a dirty game while the latter is a person's sacred vow. They ask, "How can one practice a particular religion, while performing one's social and political responsibilities in a modem multi-religious society?" Therefore, they justify adoption of secularism in public life. Actually, modem secularism, divorced from religion, morality and ethics has come to mean selfserving life. One can be greedy, corrupt or a social parasite sucking blood of the helpless in one's public life and still claim to be religious person by performing some rituals in personal life. To avoid this pit fall the Guru gave the Sikhs the doctrine of *Miri-Piri,* so that man combines temporal life with spiritual life as a religious responsibility, thereby keeping the good of humanity foremost in his mind, instead of only the good of self, his race, caste, or nation.

The Sikh Gurus made the Gurdwaras as the center of their theopolitical activities and thus Gurdwaras aquired a theopolitical status. Sikh history, Sikh doctrines and Sikh traditions inextricably relate spiritual values of religion to politics and to every form of activity, which would otherwise degenerate into something soulless. With this background, how could politics be banned from being directed from Gurdwaras? It is only the truly religious minded people that have the power to change the established order built on wrong values by basing the practice of politics on high principles of religion.

RAJ BINA NAHIN DHARAM CHALAY HAI

DOCRINE OF SIKHISM

It means that state power is necessary to sustain any religion and that man's public, private and spiritual lives are inseparable. It is the core teaching of the Gurus that Sikhs cannot fulfil their spiritual and social assignments without their own base of political power and that for a Sikh to insulate politics from religion is un-utterably abominable, degradation and fall from grace. As soon as Sikh people are separated from and deprived of political sovereignty and power Sikhism becomes eviscerated from true ethos. According to Guru Gobind Singh:

"Koow kisi ko raj na de hai, jo lay hai nij bal say lay hai
Raj bina nahi darm chalay hai dharm bina sabh dalay malay hai--"No body gives rulership to another person on a platter,
Any body who gets it, attains through his own muscle power,
Dharma cannot be sustained without political power,
Without *dharma* (righteousness) everything is crushed and ruined".

It is abundantly clear that, for the survival of any religious faith, sovereignty is the foremost requirement and a must. Without self-governance, spirituality cannot survive (as the slavery has no choice but to yield), but at the same time sovereignty must not over-ride, subjugate or guide spirituality. The spirituality basically, is a guide to guide the sovereignty and to bridle the absolute power of the ruler to some extent to maintain moral discipline and religious rectitude.

'NAASH' DOCTRINE OF SIKHISM

Naash literally means destruction. In theology of Sikhism it stands for the destruction of the divisive Hindu caste system. Sikhism believes in a casteless society, "Guru Gobind Singh says, "*Manas kee jaat sabay ekay pechanbo"*---"treat all humanity alike". According to **'***Naash'doctrine* of Sikhism the lowest is equal with the highest in race, as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes.

Amritpaan (Sikh baptism—*Khanday Baatay dee Pahul*) symbolizes a rebirth, by which the initiated are considered as having freed themselves of their previous family origin--caste or lineage i.e, *Kulnash* to become the family of Gobind Singh; of having renounced their earlier creeds--communal oulook i.e, *Dharmnash* for the creed of the Khalsa; of having renounced their previous occupations or professions i.e, *Kiratnash* for that of soldering; of having given up superstions i.e, *Bhramnash;* of having given up all empty rituals i.e, *Karamnash* and develop catholicity and universality of outlook.

Guru Gobind Singh explained to Sikhs that all their entanglements of caste or lineage which had dwarfed their vision and killed their self-respect, had been broken and if they again behaved in the old way they would suffer as they had hither to been doing.

In purely religious sphere, all men were to be regarded equal in all respects. Sikh Baptism was made open to all men and women, rich or poor, peasants or labourers, the learned or illetrate alike irrespective of gender, race, creed and caste. Any five initiated Sikhs who are true devotees

of God or God-oriented ***(Gurmukh)*** could baptize others so that no particular priestly class was allowed to be created. There was to be no special class to have monopoly of Divine knowledge or religious rights and ceremonies. Socially, no invidious distinctions were to be made between man and man.

DEG TEG FATEH DOCTRINE OF SIKHISM

The Sikh doctrine of *'Deg Teg Fateh'* represents the concept of spiritual transmission from the first to the tenth Guru and it is first found written on the seal of Banda Singh Bahadur stamped on his letters. The seal bore following inscription:

Deg-O-Teg-O-Fateh-Nusrat-i-Bedrang
Yafat Az-Nanak- Guru Gobind Singh

'Deg' represents the institution of Langar (Sikh symbol of economy) instituted in Sikhism by its founder Guru Nanak, to feed all and sundry on an egalitarian base so that no body sleeps empty stomach. *'Teg'* represents the Sikh symbol of power, granted to them by Guru Gobind Singh, to protect the weak and hapless and smite the tyrant and oppressor.

'Deg teg fateh' implies that the Sikhs should keep Guru ka langar running so that no body sleeps hungry and keep themselves armed to protect the weak and hapless and smite the tyrant and oppressor, victory will be theirs.

CHAPTER 11

THEOLOGY OF SIKHISM

THEOLOGY AND MAJOR THEOLOGICAL

CONCEPTS OF SIKHISM

Theos: Greek word meaning God and theology is the study of God and relations between God, mankind and the universe. Sikhism, like other major world religions has some basic theological concepts, which are supreme and inviolate. Belief in the existence of God is the fundamental theological concept of Sikhism. Sikhism affirms the unity of God and is critical of both polytheism and henotheism. It believes in the reality of God and reality of the world. It does not dismiss the world out of hand as mere illusion or Maya.

GOD IN SIKHISM

According to Sikhism God *(Akal Purkh / Karta Purkh)*, the Ultimate Spiritual Reality, is beyond human comprehension, but can be apprehended and experienced, though he cannot be fully understood, for the ineffable can never be wholly realized or rendered. He exists in *nirgun avastha* (impersonal--abstract state) and manifests himself in *sargun avastha* (personal-functional and creative -immanent state), both being the same, "*Nirgun aap sargun bhee ohee"* (GGS, Gauri Sukhmani, M5, p. 287). Guru Nanak has illustrated the attributes of God in his "first discourse". The Holy Sikh Scripture Guru Granth Sahib begins thus:

ੴ ਸੋਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ
ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ
ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ।।

Ikk Oankar-----There is only one God, He is infinit
Satnam----------He is Eternal Reality / Exists
Karta Purkh----He does everything in this universe-(He is the creator, sustainer and destroyer)
Nirbhao----------He is fearless
Nirwair----------He is inimical to none
Akaal moorat---------He is immortal
Ajooni----------He neither takes birth nor dies
Sai-bhang----------He is self-existent (Created by itself)
Gur Parsaad----------He is Enlightener and Gracious.

MONOTHEISM OF SIKHISM

Sikhism is a strictly monotheistic religion and oneness of God has been made crystal clear by Guru Nanak in the opening word of the opening verse (Invocation) of the holy Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib by writing 'ੴ. In Punjabi language "*Ikk*" means one and the alphabet ੳ-Oora with open end in Punjabi is pronounced as *Oh*, which means He, the Almighty (God). The open end of the alphabet "*Oora"* denotes His infiniteness (Beant), thereby literally meaning that there is only one God and he is infinite *(Oh ikk hai to Beant hai).* The numerical 1 in 'ੴ notes His unity and uniqueness. He is one without any equal and He is infmite. Guru Nanak has not assigned any descriptive name to Almighty (God), because according to him, the Almighty is ineffable. There are no separate God's for different religions, but only He is addressed by different names by different religions. He is not the sum total of so many forces bundled together (Sikhism does not believe in the Hindu trinity of God-Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva), on the other hand, He is the one who make existence and manifestation of all forces possible:

- *Sarbang saachaaa ek hai dooja nahin ko-ay".* --In the whole world, there is but one True Lord and there is not any other GGS, p.660.

- *Sahib mera ek hai, eko hai bhaaee eko hai".* Rhao--There is one and only one God, hey brother GGS, p.358.

- *Ekai re har ekai Jaan, ekai re gurmukh jaan.* Rhao.—Hey Gurmukh! Comprehend the Almighty as one and only (GGS, p.535).

- *Ek mein sarb, sarb meh ekaa eh sat gur dekh dikhaee*-- The true Guru has shown me the vision that the one is in every thing and every thing is the one (GGS, p907).

- *Nanak vartay ik iko ik toon"* Nanak says, "You, one and only, pervade everywhere" (GGS, p.966).

Difference between the Sikh and Islamic monotheism

Both Islam and Sikhism are strictly monotheistic religions. In Islam, the Almighty has been named, 'Allah' and it says, "*La illah illallah Mohamad Ur Rasul Allah* i.e, "There is no God but 'Allah' and Mohammad is prophet.

According to Sikhism 'The Supreme Eternal Reality' has no particular name, "*Namstang Anamay"* i.e, "I salute him who has no name" (Guru Gobind Singh--Jaap Sahib, Bhujang Prayat Chhand Verse 4).

Basic difference between the spiritual experience in Sikhism and Hinduism

Guru Nanak says, "He (God) is all love rest he is ineffable", (GGS, p.459). Guru Gobind Singh says, "*Jattar tartar disa visa hoay phaileo anurag"* i.e, "He is spread over all places and in all directions in the form of love" (Jaap Sahib verse 80). He again says, **"***Pooran prem parteet sajai, brat gor marhi (ਮੜੀ mat) (ਮਟ) bhool na manio"* i.e, "God is perceived, totally through love" (33 savaiye, Patshahi 10).

In earlier eastern religious systems like Vasnavism and Vedanta now popularly called Hinduism, God has been defined as, '*Sat- Chit- Ananda-'*(truth-conscience-bliss). This is far from being a dynamic concept. They give blessedness and ineffability as the nature of their spiritual experience. They nowhere mention 'Love' as the characteristic of that experience. Hence the religious system laid down by the Gurus is radically different from the earlier Indian systems.

NAME OF THE ETERNAL REALITY

"*SO har purkh agam hai kaho kit bidh paee-ay, Tis roop na rekh adrishat kaho jan kio dhiaiay, Nirankar niranjano har agam kia keh gungai-ay"* (GGS, Rag Sorath, M4) i.e; "Unfathomable is the Lord, say, how is one to attain Him? He hath neither form, nor lines (features) and is unseen, then how is he to be dwelt upon? He is formless, pure and unknowable, then, which attributes are to be sung?

It is in view of this difficulty that God has to be given a name. But what name? All names are His, "*Jeha keeta teha* nao (GGS, Japji, Ml) i.e, "What ever He hath created is His name". All that exists is His manifestation revealing His glory and, therefore, is His Name. Yet He is above, all names. Guru, therefore, freely employs all names that had come to be associated with 'The Eternal Reality'. All mean the same. It is only the heart that has to be in communion and, therefore any name was good enough.

The 'Infinite Supreme Eternal Reality' has been given religious and attributive names, yet He is without any name. Guru calls Him **"***Anamay"***-**without any name, **"***Namastan anamay"* (Guru Gobind Singh, Jaap Sahib) ie "I salute the Almighty who is without any name".

In Sikhism he has been simply addressed as, *"Naam".* His religious names-God, Allah, Khuda, Jehova, Waheguru, Parmatma, Oankar, Ishvar, Ram, Gopal, Hari, Shiva Murari, Banwari, Gorakh, Alakh Niranjan, Sahib etc; all mean the same. But although names have no inherent efficacy nor are they to be treated as charms they, get sanctified by tradition having been associated with the ecstatic experiences of the seekers who used them and then were inspired by them. But whatever the name, it is intended as an aid to work up and activise the mind for contact with higher regions where Soul and the Universal Soul (Eternal Reality) meet. As in geometry a line which is supposed to be without thickness and, therefore, undrawable, is yet drawn for the purpose of stimulating understanding, so also God is given a name as a symbol of His Personality in all diverse aspects. The name thus clothed with attributes that the personal God possesses, presents a person who could speak with us, lead us on path of Truth and Service, who is a dear father, whom we call our own and with whom we establish direct relations.

God is 'Ethical Deity' and embodiment of all attributes. All attributive names of God are suggestive of His nature, character and personality. His functional names, which are continually in the process of evolving depending on the development of man himself, who is finite and limited, therefore understands things in a limited way. The only aspect one could bring about with certitude and definiteness is that He (God) is `SAT' i.e, "Eternal Reality", permanent and unchanging:

"Kirtam naam japay teray jeebha, Sat-Naam tera poorbala, Maru M5)-- "Only thy functional names have I described. But thy Primordial Name is that "Thou art Eternal Reality"

He is above space, name and form. He is Abnashi (Indestructible), Achal (Permanent), Akal (Timeless) and Ajooni (Unborn).

As man grows in the upward direction, the character of God changes from the Personal to the impersonal. Then he is beyond the three qualities, above pleasure and pain. All distinctions of Name, Form, Colour, disappear. Words were mere means to express Him but the object of this worship is beyond them. Paradoxical as it may seem, the Formless is realized through Names:

"Baid, Kateb, Sansaar habaahoon bahira, Nanak *ka patshah disay jaaharaa"* –Asa, M5.GGS, p.397 i.e,"The Lord of Nanak who is beyond Vedas and Katebas (Hindu and Semitic scriptures) and beyond the visible world was clearly visible to him".

The Simran or worship of the Personal leads to that of the Impersonal.

Name used for the `Supreme Eternal Reality' (God) in Sikhism (*Waheguru*)

As per Sikh thought God exists in abstract (Nirgun) form and manifests Himself in immanent (Sargun) form. In His Nirgun form He has no name and has been simply addressed as '*Naam*' in Sikhism. He has limitless attribute, hence His attributive names are innumerable. Most common manifesting (attributive) word / name used for God in Sikhism is: 'Waheguru,'

- *Keea khel badd mel tamaasa Waheguru teree sab rachnaa"* (GGS, Svaiya, M4)i.e; "This wonderful creation is a great play of yours, *O Waheguru!*

- *"Waahu Waah Gur-Sikh nit sab karhu Gur pooray Waahu Waahu bhaavay"* i.e; "The Guru likes (approves) this word "Wahu" and you should recite it, always—Ibid. with Lord's praise and you should recite it, always" Ibid.

- *Waheguru Gur Mantar Hai jap Haumein Khoi"* --(Bhai Gurdas Var 13:2).

Guru Gobind Singh finally put the seal of his approval on the use of this word for the remembrance of God by the Sikhs on the Vaisakhi day 1699 AD at Anandpur Sahib, when he formally consecrated (launched) Sikhism in its present day form through Sikh initiation ceremony *(Amrit Paan Sanskaar)* and gave Sikhism its articles of faith, laid down the rules for the Sikh code of conduct, including its customs, ceremonies and the Sikh greetings:

"Waheguru Jee Ka Khalsa
Waheguru Jee Kee Fateh"

The word **'***Waheguru' is* found written in Guru Granth Sahib on pages 1402-3. Literally translated it means, 'Praise to the Guru' but more usually the phrase 'Wonderful Lord' is used. Other names, which are specifically Sikh include, Akal Purkh, Karta Purkh and Parmeshar. Sikh Gurus freely used Hindu names such as Hari, Gopal, Muraree, Oankar, Rama, Brahma, Shiva etc as well as Allah, Khuda and Sahib etc, from Islam. They seldom employed them with Hindu or Muslim concepts in mind. They believed in oneness of God and oneness of man. They simply used them for convenience as synonyms for "God"-'The Supreme Eternal Reality'.

Satnam

Literal meaning: *Sat:* True / Truth / Real / Reality / Exist / Existence. *Naam:* God,

Implication: God is a reality / God Exists.

The words *`Sat'* and *"Sach"* are commonly used in *Gurbani* and both mean true or truth and exist or existence and or reality depending on the context these words have been used. In *Mool Mantra* (Basic postulate of Sikhism) the word *'Sat'* means exists / reality. The Almighty (God) has been simply addressed as '*Naam'* in the Sikh Scriptures. Collectively *'Satnam',* therefore, means the Reality (God) who has no name, exists.

God and Satan

Gurbani does not believe in the existence of any good or bad Gods. God is the prime-mover behind all that happens, whether it appears to be 'good or bad'. We can discuss some facts of life to explain this. Darkness does not exist; it is only light which exists. Absence or deficiency of light is called darkness, but they have no physical existence. It is our perception only. Evil does not exist. It is absence or deficiency of goodness, which we call evil. Cause of evil is not 'Satan', but our ego, which arises from our failure to understand God's Will.

Outline, shape, colour, caste or lineage etc of God

Besides the belief that God is one, Guru Nanak taught that God had no garb, that is no form or attachments by which one could claim deity to be Hindu or Muslim. He freely used both Hindu and Muslim name during his uttrances e.g. Hari, Ram, Gopal, Oankar, Allah, Khuda, Sahib etc. Gurbani says:

- *Roop na rekh na rang kichh, treh gun tay prabh bhinn, tisay bhuja-ay* Nanaka, *jis hovay suparsan*- GGS, p283.

- *Chakar chin ar barn jaat ar paat nahin jeh*--God has no quoit, mark, colour, caste or lineage,

  Roop rung ar rekh bhekh kou keh na sakat keh None can describe His form, complexion, outline and costume,

- *Achal moorat anbhau parkas amitoj kahijay-He* is perpetual, self-illuminated, and

measureless in power,

- *Kot Inder Indran sahu sahaan ganijay-God* is the king of kings and God of millions of Indras,

- *Tribhavan maheep sur nar asur, net, net ban trin kehat*--God is emperor of three worlds, demigods, men and demons and woods and dales proclaim him as indescribable,

- *Tav sarb naam kathay kavan, karam naam barnat sumat*-No one can tell all the names of God, Who is called by special Name by the wise, according to His excellences and doings".

(Jaap Sahib Guru Gobind Singh)

God as Word in Sikhism

In Sikhism *Shabad* (The Divine Word) is the manifest form of God. When a group of yogis asked Guru Nanak to name his Guru he replied: "*Shabad Guru Surat dhun chela* i.e, The Shabad is the Guru, consciousness and intention towards it make one its disciple" GGS, p. 943). Thereafter, all the Gurus of the House of Nanak taught the same principle i.e, *Shabad* (Word / Bani) is the Guru. Guru Amar Dass said, "Praise be to the Bani (Word) of the Formless, Whom none can equal (GGS, p.515) Guru Ram Dass says, "*Bani Guru, Guru hai Bani vich Bani amrit saray, Gurbani kahay sewak jan maanay partakh Guru nistaray*" i. e, Bani is the Guru and Guru is Bani and it contains the elixir of life. If the devotee obeys what bani teaches us, the Guru confers his grace on him" (GGS, p. 982). Guru Arjan Dev says, "*Bani has come form God, it effaces all worries and anxieties*" (GGS, M 5, p. 628). He further adds, "Pothi Parmeshar ka than" i.e, The book is the Abode of God" (GGS, M5, p 1226).

God is immanent in His creation

- *Ih jag Sachchay kee hai kothri, Sachchay ka vich vaas*—GGS, p.463.
  Having created the human body god has installed His very self there in "he said And" this is the chamber of god where in the true one resides.

- *Jaat mein jot, jot mein jaata*—(GGS, p.469)—He pervades in evey creature and every creature is is contained in his light (The god is immanent in his creation).

- *Ghat Ghat antar Brahm lukaia Ghat, Ghat jot Sabai*—GGs, p.597 God is hidden in every heart and every heart is illuminated by Him.

- *Ghat he mahen Niranjan tere taen khojat udhiana*—(GGS, p.632). Thwe immaculate lord is within thy mind,but you search him in the wilderness.

- *Man toon jot saroop hain apna mool pachhan*—(GGS, p441). O my mind know yourself,God lives inside you.

- *Agham agochar roop na rekhia khojat khojat ghat ghat dekhia*—GGS, p.838)—He is unreachable. He is beyond mind and senses. He is formless. He has neither any form nor

outline yet I have seen him in each soul.

God is Omnipresent

- Guru Nank says, "Those who meditate on Love realize him. There is a reflection of His spirit in evry one. All 'glow' only with his light"—GGS, p.13.

- The whole universe sprang up from one Divine Light. A person who attune himself with Divine Law, finds him pervading every where throughout the whole universe—GGS, p.1349).

- None else but the Lord speaks in all beings, whether they trail on ground, walk on their legs or fly in the air. Those who give up all desire and become devotees of the Almighty, find him not away (different) from themselves—GGS, p. 988).

- Do not be rude to any person, the same Divine Master dwells in heart of every human being. If you want to realize the lord, do not hurt the feelimgs of any one, you will hurt him residing there in—GGS, p.1384.

- The Lord blessed me with the priceless jewel, the Divine Name. One can enjoy it, but lke a dumb person cannot describe it. I observe him revealin Himself everyehere—GGS, p.659.

- All thought of mine and thine, second or third (other than the creator) have vanished. I observe only Him everywhere—GGS, p.345.

- Instead of involving yourself in ritual worship, seek the Lord within yourself. The same Lord who is in the whole universe, dwells in every heart. Those who search (love) him realize him. GGS, p.695.

- O Lord! You are all pervading. You are a living reality in every humanbeing. You have made me experience the divine in my own heart—GGS, p.1195.

- O mind! Sing the virtues of the Lord (love the Lord) all kinds of discrimination and otherness will vanish from your mind (you will experience Him everywhere) GGS, p.526.

REALIZATION OF GOD

Realisation of God or merging with God ultimately means self-realisation. Enlightenment and not redemption is the goal of life in Sikhism. The Supreme Spirit is loged within one's -self, though unperceived because of perplexities of joy and sorrow and attachment to wordly objects. Gurbani says, **"***Pushap madh jio baas bast hai, mukar mein jaisay chhai, taisay he har basay nirtar ghat he khojo bhai"* i.e, "As fragrance dwells in a flower and reflection in a mirror so doth He dwell inside everything. Seek him, therefore in thy soul" (GGS, Rag Dhanasari, M 9, p 684). Again, **"***Atam mien Ram, Ram mien Atam***"** i.e, "God resides in the Soul and Soul is contained in Him" (Ibid, Rag Bhairon, Ml, p1153). Gurbani says, **"***Sabh kichh ghar meh bahir nahin,*

Bahir tole so bharam bhulaahee" i.e, "Everything is within us and nothing is outside. He who seeks outside only wanders in illusion" (GGS, Rag Manjh M5, p, 102). Thus He (God) resides in the Soul of every person and seach for Him must therefore proceed within, **"***Mann toon jot saroop hain apna mool pachhan* i.e; Myself, thou art thee embodiment (image) of Divine Light, thou realize your origin*"* (GGS, Rag Asa, M3, p 441).

Realising or merging in God means, in concrete terms, becoming like Him, **"***Jeha sevay teho* hovay"i.e, "Man becomes like Him whom he serves". (GGS, M3, Rag Bihagra, p 549). In Sikhism, God oriented man is called 'Gurmukh' or 'Sachiara' and a self-centered - egoistic person is called 'ਮਨਮੁਖ–Manmukh'. After coming into this world man gets lost into Maya (wordly attachment / materialism), develops ego (Haumai), becomes self-centered (Manmukh) and forgets the creator (Eternal Reality), resulting in pain and suffering. It is the ego that keeps man away from God, **"***Haumai nawien naal virodh hai, doe na vase ik tha-ay"* i.e, "Ego and Naam (God) are opposed to each other and they cannot share same place" (GGS, Rag Wadhans M3, p 560).

Gurbani tells us the method for the realization of God, **"***Kiv sachiara hoviay, Kiv kooray tootay paal"* i.e, "How the wall of false-hood (ego/arrogance) that separates the man (*jivatma)* and God *(Parmatma**)*** can be broken? (Ibid, Japji)". The answer provided in Gurbani is, **"***Hukam razain chalna Nanak likhia naal"* i.e, Nanak says, "It is ordained that one should follow the Divine Will (Ibid, Japji, p1)". **"**Nanak *Hukame je bujhay taan haumai kahay na koey"* ie, "When one comes to know the Divine Will, then there is no ego (GGS, Japji, 1)."

"*Haumai kithon upje"* (Ibid, Var Asa M1, p 466) i.e, "Where does the ego come from"? Guru Nanak says, **"***Haumai vich jag upje, purkha Naam visre dukh pa-ay"* ie "After coming in this world man develops ego and forgetting Naam (God) becomes unhappy" (GGS, Ram Kali, M1, p 946).

It is stated in Guru Granth Sahib that Maya (materialism) and Ego (self-hood), prevent man's union with God, **"***Ih Maya jit har visaray"* i.e, "It is Maya that causes God to be forgotten (Ibid, Ram Kali M3, Anand)." Gurbani says, **"***Dhanpir ka ik he sang vasa vich haumai bheet karari* i.e, "The bride *(Atma**)*** and the bridegroom ***(Parmatma)*** *live* together with a powerful wall of ego separating them" (GGS, M 4, p1263). It further says, **"***Antar alakh na jai lakhia vich parda haumai pai***"** i.e, "The unfathomable is within, not realized because of the veil of ego in between" (Ibid, Gauri, M5, p 205).

The evils of lust (Kam), anger (Karodh), greed (lobh), attachment (Moh) and pride (Hankar) constitute Haumai (ego) and make a man self-centered (Manmukh) and prevent his union with God. Guru Nanak says, "*Haumai boojhay taan dar soojay"* i.e, "The gate way to Him opens when the fire of ego is extinguished" (GGS, Var Asa M1, p 466).

According to Sikhism enlightenment happens only through God's grace and inspires humans to dedicate their lives to service (Sewa) of humanity and contemplation (Naam Simran), **"***Kirpa karay je apni taan Gur ka shabad kamahay, Nanak kahay sunuh jano it sanjam dukh ja-ay"*(GGS, p 466) i.e**,**-"Lord sends grace and man practices the Guru's word, then this leads to elimination of the evil (ego). The reward is the total peace in mystical union.

THE THIRD EYE

The permanent unperishable life principle-"The Eternal Reality" behind the visible world as also within the human soul is realisable through what may be called third eye or intution or insight or inspiration. Man experiences all knowledge of the external world through the sensory organs of our body and feelings through our mind, but eyes for seeing God are different from the physical eyes, **"***Loin loi dith pias na buihe moo ghani,* Nanak *say akhrian beean jinni disando ma piri"* (GGS, p.577) i.e;"I have seen the Soul of Souls (GodParmatma) with my eyes, yet my immense thirst for the sight is quenched not. Those eyes are different O, Nanak, with which my beloved Lord was seen" (GGS, p.577)-".

It has been proved with the development of clairvoyance and telepathy that knowledge of the external world can come through channels other than sense organs. Thought is transmitted from man to the other man even when the two are separated by thousands of miles. A man endowed with the gift of clairvoyance can detect hidden things at great distances and can perceive events in space and time--events that had already happened or were yet to happen. The few, who have true understanding turn their minds inwards and realize the self within.

Enlightenment does not come from extensive study or through intellect or by learned discussion. It comes of itself when one's-self yearns for realization but not unless the mind has turned away from evil (ego) and has learnt to control itself and to be at peace with the world. In this endeavour one needs guidance, which is provided by the ten Gurus, the epitome of which it contained in Guru Granth Sahib.

Rejection of the Hindu concept of trinity of God in Sikhism

ੴ

ੴ is the opening word of Guru Granth Sahib. It implies that there is only one God and He is infinite (Beant). Guru Nanak said, "He (God is one and is infinite". 'Ikk' appears as prefix to the open-end alphabet Oora (ੴ). 'Ikk' in Punjabi language means one and ੳ (Oora with open end) is pronounced as 'Oh', which means 'He' and open end of of the alphabet 'Oora' denotes infiniteness of God. Therefore, ੴ implies that, God is one and He is infinite. In Punjabi it means "Oh (God) ikk hai tay beant hai"

It is different from the Hindu concept of *'Oam'* (*'Aum'),* which is belived to be a combination of three alphabets: O, a, m (representing, Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh). Guru Nanak says, "ੴ---*Oh* (God) *ikk hai tay Beant hai"*----*"*There is one God and he is infinite", thereby rejecting the Hindu concept of trinity of God.

Guru Nanak has not coined any descriptive name for the almighty because according to him the Almighty is ineffable. It is a new word, ੴ, i.e 'one'+ 'Oora' with an open end and that is extended, coined by Guru Nanak to explain the 'Oneness' and 'Infiniteness' of '*Oh',* the Almighty, to whom no descriptive or specific name can be assigned. The open end of *'Oora'* has been extended to characterize him as *Beant* (ਬੇਅੰਤ)-- infinite. It stands for the attributes and not the name of Almighty (God).

Sikhism and Oankaar

Oankar is a Hindu religious shrine associated with Shiv ji and situated on the banks of Narbada River in southern India. During Guru Nanak's visit to this place at the time of *Aarti* in the evening everybody performed *Dandaot Bandna* (Hindu way of offering paryer by lying straight with face down) to 'Oankar', but Guru Nanak remained standing. He was questioned by worshippers, the reason for his not joining the *Dandwat Parnam* to Oankar. Then Guru Nanak explained them the concept of God and the correct method of worshipping him. The long sermon, which he delivered here, is found recorded in GGS on pages 929--- 938 under the heading "*Dakhnee Oankar*".

Since the word Om (Oam / Aum) was used as manifesting word (Ishvara) in Hindu theosophy and was written as invocation in ancient Hindu literature, the early Sikh theologians started writing ੴ as synonym for Oam.

The sign used for invocation in Sikhism is ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ।। ੴ is nowhere found alone written in Guru Granth Sahib published by Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee.

Rejection of *Avtaar-Vaad* (incarnation) theory by Sikhism

It is a well-established concept in the ancient philosophy of India (Hinduism) that God appears in the form of human again and again when cruelty on human beings is on the increase. When Guru Nanak appeared on the soil in the Indian subcontinent, according to ancient Hindu thought there were many Gods. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva formed the trinity as creator, preserver and destroyer. It was also held that God took birth not only in human form but also himself comes into the world in various forms, such as, The *Hansa* (Swan), *Machh* or *Matsya* (Fish), *-Kachh* or *Kurma* (Tortoise), *Varaha* (boar), *Nara-Simha* (partly human, partly tiger) and finally, in human forms. Twenty-four incarnations of God Vishnu were accepted. Rama the son of king Dashratha and Lord Krishna son of Vasudeva were among them. Countless male and female divinities were also regarded as Gods. The total gods came to 33 crores.

Contrary to this philosophy according to Sikhism, there is one and only one God and He does not descend on earth and does not assume human form as the Avtar-Vad (incarnation) theory in Hinduism portrays. Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism says, "*Sarbang saachaa ek hai dooja nahin ko-ay"* (GGS, p660) i.e, "In the whole world there is one God second to none". Sikhism neither believes in the Hindu trinity of God, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva nor the 24 incarnations nor 33 crore divinities. As per Sikh thought there is one God and He is supreme reality. There is no division of functions and no delegation of authority. According to Sikhism, "God does not descend on earth. He neither takes birth nor dies. He is uncreated. He does not assume human or anthropomorphic forms as the Avtaarvad (incarnation) theory of Hinduism portays". This characteristic has been mentioned in Gurbani repeatedly:

- ਜਨਮਿ ਮਰਣਿ ਨਹੀ ਧੰਧਾ ਧੈਰੁ ।।-- GGS, p. 931,
  The Almighty is free from birth and death cycle nothing interferes"

- ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ।।--GGS, M5, p 1136.
  The Almighty is free from birth and death.

- The Almighty is free from birth and death.

- ਤੂ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਜੂਨ ਨਾ ਆਵਹੀ।।--GGS, M5, p.1095
  You are the greatest and donot come into life and death cycle.

- ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ਕਲਿ ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਦੀਪਾਈ॥···GGS, p.916.
  The one (whose allegoric body) is without any effect of time and space, is free from life and death, is created by itself and gives light to disperse darkness.

- ਅਮੋਘ ਦਰਸਨ ਆਜੂਨਿ ਸੰਭਉ।।
  ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਜਿਸੁ ਕਦੇ ਨਹੀ ਖਉ।। (GGS, M5, p. 1082).
  The inexhaustible Bounteous is without life-death cycle and is created by itself. There is no effect of time and space (on its allegoric body) and is never destroyed

- *So mukh jalo jit kahay Thakur joni*—GGS,p.1136—"Burnt be the tongue that says the Lord takes birth and undergoes death,: says Guru Arjan Dev

- The people sing about incarnations, who were ctreated as kings of different ages. They did not know His limits, what to say after rumination?—Asa M3, p.423.

- The ten incarnations lived as kings and Yogi Shiva, all of them did not know Thy Limits, they were tired of applying ashes on their bodies—Suhi M5, p.747.

Guru Granth sahib rejects the worship of Gods and their incarnations, because they are all created beings and also prone to death. It lays emphasis on the worship of the Transcendent Almighty (Nirguna), who is Immortal and Infinite. I quote from Guru Granth Sahib:

- The thirty three crore of divinities are Thys slaves--, Ibid, Asa Ashtpadi, iii.

- The kings created by Thee in different ages are sung of as Thine Avtars
  The Pundit and astrologers donot understand the matter; Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were ctreated to obey His will.—Ibid, Ram Kali Ki Var, iii.

- Pundit! I saw your Ramchand coming. He had a qurrel with Ravna and lost his wife—GGS, Gaund Nam Dev, p.875.

- Rama grieves in his mind, he gathers the army, he haswithin him the power and authority. The ten headed Ravana has taken away Seeta and because of a curse, Lakshmana was killed. Ramchand grives in his mind for Sita and Lakshman, the mistaen demon (Ravana) does not comprehend it.—It was the Lord God, who did everything, who is carefree and whose writ cannot be effaced said Nanak—GGS, M1, p.1412.

- The false Gurus sing and the Gopis and Krishna, Sita and Rama, but not the fearless True, Transcendent Lord, who is creator of the whole world, whom only the servents through His gracr adore—GGS, M1, p.465.

Several names of these incarnations, which were prevalent among the masses for God, have been used by the Sikh Gurus, because they were more clearly understood by the devotees. Some of the names are Rama, Krishna, Gobind,, Gopal, Banwari, Murari etc.

Sikh Gurus never claimed divinity

The Sikh Gurus were divine people, but they have made themselves abundantly clear that they were neither God Himself nor His incarnations and they were ordinary human beings. They proclaimed that they convey the divine word to the mankid under the commandment of God, the Almighty. Guru Nanak says:

- ਹਉ ਢਾਡੀ ਵੇਕਾਰ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ।।
  ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਹੈ ਕੈ ਗੁਰ ਧੁਰਹੁ ਫਰਮਾਇਆ।।
  ਢਾਡੀ ਸਚੇ ਮਹਿਲ ਖਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ।।
  ਸਚੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਕਪੜਾ ਪਾਇਆ।।--GGS,MI, p150.
  " I was an out of work minstrel, God gave me employment. God gave me the order, 'Sing day and night'. God summoned the minstrel to His court and bestowed on me the robe of honouring Him and singing His praises".

- ਤਾ ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਕਹਣ ਜਾ ਤੁਝੈ ਕਹਾਇਆ।।–GGS M1, p.566 –I speak only when you, 0 God, inspire me to speak"--GGS M1..
  And,
- ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ।।--GGS, M1,p.722.

  As the word of Master (God) comes to me so I make it known.
- ਸੋ ਮੁਖ ਜਲੌ ਜਿਤ ਕਹੇ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਜੋਨੀ‥GGS,, p.1136.
  Guru Arjan says, "Burnt be the tongue that says Lord takes birth"

Guru Gobind Singh says:

- ਮੈਂ ਹੂੰ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੋ ਦਾਸਾ, ਦੇਖਣ ਆਇਉ ਜਗਤ ਤਮਾਸਾ।। ਜੋ ਮੁਝ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਉਚਰੇ, ਤੇ ਨਰ ਨਰਕ ਕੁੰਡ ਮੇਂ ਪੜ ਹੈਂ।।--Bachittar Natak
  I am but slave of God, and I have come to witness the wonders of His creation But whosoever regards me as Lord shall be damned and destroyed.--(Bachittar Natak).

Rejection of Idolatry in Sikhism

According to the ideology of Sikhism God is Transcendent, who is without any form, delineation and colour. He is infinable, immeasurable and inaccessible,
"*Thapia na jay keeta na hoay*" i.e, "The Lord cannot be installed" (GGS, p.2), therefore he cannot be adored in any form, image or idol. Grgu Nanak protested against and successfully disengaged his followers from the Hindu idolatry and placed them free on a bord of

religious and moral purity (Nanak *nirmal Panth chlaio*). The disapproval has been expressed in simple and common place terms:

- The stone idols which themselves sink, canot ferry you across—GGS, p.556.

- One worships stone gods and goddesses but what can demand form them and what can they give? If you wash the stone god in water, it sinks down below—GGS, p, 637.

- Those who call stone a God, their service is in vain. Those who fa;ll at the feet of stone God, all the labour goes waste. My Lord always speaks and gives gifts to all living beings. The blind one does not know that the Lord lives within our body. Deluded by illusuion, he is entangled in a noose. The stone-god neither speaks nor gives anthting. All rituals performed by the idolator are in vain and the service is fruiteless—GGS, p.1160.

- We adore one stone (Idol) and pput our feet on the other. If one is god, the other must also be a god. But I am in the service of the Lord—GGS, p.525.

- Some worship stones and on their heads they wear them,
  Some the phallus stung in necklace wear its emblem,
  Some behold their God in the south, some to the west bow their head,
  Some worship images, others busy praying to dead,
  The world is thus bound by false ritual
  And God is secret unread

  --Swayye, Guru Gobind Singh

- Bin Karatar na kirtam mano—Except the creator do not worship any created being

  --Shabad Hazare, Guru Gobind Singh

The basic postulate of Sikhism

The basic postulate of Sikhism is popularly known as *'Mangal'*and its recitation is called:

Manglacharan

It reads:

ੴ(*Ik Oankar), Sat Naam, Karta Purkh, Nirbhao, Nirvair, Akaal Moorat, Ajooni, Saibhang, Gur Parsad.*

Literal meaning:
There is only one Almighty (God), the infinite;
He exists (He is a Reality);
He does everything (He is the creator' sustainer, destroyer);
He is fearless (not governed by any other)
He is Inimical to none (Without enmity)
He is Immortal (without effect of time and space---Timeless)
He is Unborn (Neither takes birth nor dies)

He is self-existent (Created by itself)
He is enlightener; and gracious.

NB: The basic postulate of Sikhism is also called *Mool Mantar*

Sign Used for Invocation in Sikhism

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ।।

Literal meaning:

There is one God. He is infinite. He exists. He is enlightener and gracious.

Implication: We begin by the grace of God who is infinite (Beant), a reality, enlightener and gracious.

NB:

The commencing verse

The commencing verse of Gurbani in Guru Granth Sahib known as '*Mool Mantra'*(Basic Postulate) is used as invocation in Sikhism. It has been represented by Guru Arjan dev many times throughout the Guru Granth Sahib before the beginning of every Raag, every section and every subsection of GGS as such without abridgement or in an abridged form as follows:

(1) Complete form: ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈ ਭੰਗ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ।।..

(2) Abriged forms:
ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਗੁਰਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ।।
ੴ ਸੇਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ।।
ੴ ਸੇਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ।।

Hence the shortest abridged form of *Mool Mantar* most commonly used in the Guru Granth Sahib (GGS) is as follows:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ।।

Guru in Sikhism

In Sikh scriptures, the word 'Guru' has been used to denote at least three different senses.Firstly, it has been used for God Himself, secondly, the word has been referred to as teacher-Guru, and finally it is used for the Holy Sikh scripture, "Guru Granth Sahib".

Guru in Sikhism is not God in human form, but a messenger or prophet sent by God, for a specific mission. He is not an incarnation of God but an instrument of God. He is not an end in himself but only means. He is a humble messenger invested with the duty of showing the true

spiritual way to the people. The Guru is an intermediary (bridge) between God and Creation. The Guru is an enlightened soul, through whom the revelations of God or the Word of God or 'Naam' are spread. Guru occupies a very high status in Sikhism. There were ten living Gurus but all of them had the same Jyoti (light). After Guru Gobind Singh, Guru Granth Sahib is the existing and final Sikh Guru.

Shabad* (Word) as Guru in Sikhism

In this context, when a group yogis asked Guru Nanak to name his Guru he replied "*Shabad Guru surat dhun chela"* i.e, "*Shabad* is the Guru, conscience and intention towards it make one its disciple" (GGS, p.943). Thereafter, all the Gurus of the House of Nanak taught the same principle i.e, "*Shabad* (hymn / *Bani)* is the Guru. Guru Amar Dass said, "Praise be to the Bani (word) of the Formless, Whom none can equal" (GGS, p.515). Guru Ram Dass says, **"***Bani Guru, Guru hai Bani which Bani amrit saray, Gurbani kahay sewak jan manay partakh Guru nistaray"* i.e, "Bani is the Guru and Guru is the Bani and it contains the elixir of life. If the devotee obeys what Bani teaches us, the Guru confers His grace on him" (GGS, 982). Guru Arjan Dev says, "Bani has come from God, it effaces all worries and anxieties"-(GGS, M5, p.628) He further adds, **"***Pothi Parmeshar ka than"* i.e, "The book is the Abode of God" (GGS, M5, p.1226).

Priest in Sikhism

There is no ordained priestly class in Sikhism, but for the benefit of *Sangat* usually a paid devout *Amritdhari* Sikh is employed to read the scriptures, perform religious service and help in *Langar*. He is designated as Granthi. Unlike Christianity (Pastor), Islam (*Mullah)* and Hinduism (*Pujari),* Sikhism does not invest the Granthi with any particular social or religious status, but he commands a great respect in the society and is addressed as *Bhai jee.* Any initiated Sikh, male or female can perform religious service in a Gurdwara. In Sikhism there are neither hereditary priests nor monks and it does not enforce the vow of celibacy.

*Shabad (word) is revealed / transmitted in the form of sound (Naad-Dhawani), which is heard and is called Dhawantiatmic. It is transmuted and exhibited in alphabetic (Varnatmic) form, which is written and read.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF EACH GURU'S LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO SIKHISM

Guru Nanak Dev

Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism was born on 14 April 1469 in Talwandi Rai Bhoi now called Nankana Sahib in his honour; in Punjab in the Indian subcontinent. This village is not far away from Lahore in the present day Pakistan. According to *janam-sakhis* Guru Nanak led a saintly life, since his childhood. He was an enlightened soul by birth, as is evident from his childhood stories. He outstripped his teachers in knowledge while questioning the traditional standards and practices of piety which he encountered, both in Hindus and Muslims. After finishing his education, he migrated to Sultanpur Lodhi in the Bist Doab Jallandhar in 1484

A.D and lived with his elder sister Nanaki and her husband Jai Ram. There he earned his living by seving as '*Modi* (manager of food grain store) in the *Modi Khana* (food grain store) of the Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi from 1485 to 1496 A.D. He got married to Sulakhani of Batala in 1487, led the life of a householder *(Grahisti jiwan)* and had two sons. He was contemporary of Emperor Akbar.

The turning point in the life of Guru Nanak as a prophet and the founder of a revealed religion came in year 1496 A.D; when he was twenty seven years of age. As usual Nanak went to take his morning dip in the small river called *Bein/ Wein,* which still flows there near the town. It is recorded in *Janam Sakhis* (Biographies), that after entering the waters of the *Bein* for a dip, he stayed there for full three days and was assumed as drowned and dead and lost. On the morning of the fourth day he came out of the waters of the river to the spot where his friend, who was to be his lifelong companion, Mardana, was faithfully waiting with Nanak's clothes. The first words on emerging from the waters he uttered, **"***Na koi Hindu na Mussalman"* i.e "There is neither any Hindu nor any Mussalman. I shall follow God's path. God is neither Hindu nor Mussalman and the path I follow is God's". All writers of the *Janam Sakhis* of Guru Nanak agree that Nanak received his first revelation and his first commission to found and preach a new religion and new way of life on this occasion. This encounter is described in Janam Sakhis in the following words:

"As God willed, Nanak his devotee was escorted to His presence, to the divine presence, and then a cup filled with Elixer of Immortality *(Amrit)* was given to him, accompanied by the command: "Nanak, pay attention. This cup of holy adoration of my Name; drink it. I am with thee, and thee do I bless and exalt. Go, rejoice in my Name, the Name of God, and preach to others to do the same. Let this be thy calling". Guru Nanak himself refers to this divine assingnment with deep gratitude. He says, **"***Hau dhadi vekar karey laia, "*I, an unemployed minstrel, was assigned a very rewarding task indeed" (GGS, M1 p.150) and his hymns were the result of direct communication from God, **"***Jaisi mein avey khasam ki bani taisra kari gian vay Lalo"* (GGS, Ml, p.722).

Guru Nanak thereafter resigned from his job at Sultanpur Lodhi and travelled widely for forty years not only in Hindustan but also in various parts of the world to preach the religion of the Name of God, which is 'Sikhism'. His travels are grouped into four lengthy journeys called *Udasis* in Punjabi. He visited the main centers of the world religions. In Hindustan he visited the main Hindu, Buddhist and Jain shrines. In the Middle-East he passed through Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Turkey and Persia (Iran) and came across the followers of Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam in their places of pilgrimage. In the Himalyas and in the northern parts of India he discoursed with the Yogis, Sidhs and Naths. He met the Buddhists in Tibet, Burma and Ceylon. In parts of China he met the disciples of Tao and Confuciuos faiths. He debated with the protagonists of nearly all systems of religious beliefs and practice. During his visits to Mecca-Medina, the birthplace of Islam and the religious centers of Hinduism he engaged himself with Muslim priestly class-Qazis and Sankracharyas of Hindus (Brahmins), proving his point.

He proclaimed that there was but one God, not of Hindus or of Mussalmans but of all mankind under whatever name He is remembered-Rama, Hari, Allah, Khuda etc. He freed the people from the bondage of so many gods and godlings, and led them to accept one Supreme creator and sustainer of all. He proclaimed oneness of God and oneness of man. Oneness of God

was, proclaimed by many before Guru Nanak, not so oneness of man, which was the more distinctive contribution of the founder of Sikh faith. He denounced the divisive Hindu caste system, and refused to recognize distinctions between man and man and between sexes created by it and orthodox social conventions. He declared that all people are equal in the eyes of God, who is the common father of all mankind. Men were to love one another as children of the same father, **"***Ek pita ekas ke ham barik toon mera gurhai"* (GGS, p. 611). This was a distinct blow to the social ideology of *Varn Ashram Dharma* (Hinduism), which gave scriptural sanction for the hierarchical caste system. Woman also received respect due to her, **"***So kion manda akhiay jit jammein rajaan"* (GGS, Var Asa M 1,).

The world, which the people had considered, as the home of sin, or at least a mere delusion was shown to be the house of God, **"***Ih jag sachchey ki hai kothri sachchay ka vich vaas"* (GGS, Sri Rag M1). The worldly life, which in a spirit of despair they had condemned, now became the only field for good action, "Only service done within the world can get us a place in heaven", **"***Vich dunia sev kamai-ay taan durgeh baisan paee-aey***"** (GGS, Maru M, 1).

Guru Nanak explicitly rejected the authority of Vedas and their Brahmin interpreters, the vain and superstitious forms of religious life and divine worship propagated by Hindu teachers. He also rejected all Hindu ritualism and acts of hypocrisy: Janeu (the sacred thread), Tilak (Mark on the fore head), *Dhoti* worn in a special style, Yajna (sacrificial feast) Hom /Havan (The sacred fire), *Varat* (observance of fasts) and other such elements, as they were made more important than, righteous actions by the Hindu priestly class i.e, Brahmans. He rejected the entire range of Brahmanical *"Avtars"*, idol worship and myths.

The most important aspect of worship adopted by Guru Nanak for himself and his followers was the use of his own compositions for this purpose. Nanak composed the sacred hymns in the language of the people, Punjabi in preference to Sanskrit, which till then was the traditional medium for religious poetry or philosophy. This was a logical corollary of his rejection of scriptural authority and scriptures of other religions.

Guru Nanak preached in the language of his people i.e. their mother tongue - 'Punjabi', which till then did not have its own script for proper pronunciation and expression. He evolved a script for Punjabi language. The script was named 'Gurmukhi' by his successor, Guru Angad Dev. Thus he gave the Sikhs a written language distinct from the written language of Hindus (Sanskrit--Vedas) and the Muslims (Arabic-Quran) and thereby fostered in them a sense of their being a separate people. Guru Nanak emphasized the importance of work. He said that work was a necessity of life and idleness a vice. He denounced renunciation and asceticism--a life of escapism practiced by "Hath Yogis", "Tantric Yogis", and "Nath Yogis" for achieving salvation ***(****Mukti****).*** He says, **"***Hasandiaan, khelanian Khawandian, Pehnandian, Vich-ay Hovay Mukat***"** i.e; "salvation' is not incompatible with laughing, playing, eating and dressing well" (GGS, p.522). Guru Nanak says, "He knows the way who earns his living and shares his earnings with others" i.e, **"***Ghal kha-ay kichh hathon day Nanak raah pachhanay say***"** (GGS, p 1245). The Guru deprecates the Yogi who gives up the world and then is not ashamed of begging at the door of the householder (GGS, p.886). Guru Nanak stressed the need of sharing wealth with the needy. He condemned exploitive collection of wealth. He stated, "God's bounty belongs all, but men grab it for themselves" (GGS, p.1177). Man gathers riches by making others miserable" GGS, p.889). "Wealth cannot be gathered without sin but it does not keep one's company after death" (GGS, p 417). He laid down the complete ideology of Sikhism including its fundamentals *(Kirat Karo,*

*Wand ke Chhako*o, *Naam Japo)* and founded its basic institutions *(Sangat, Pangat* and *Langar)* in order to remove caste inhibitions and promote equality in the society. He removed the hurdle of *Ahimsa (Ahinsa)* so that his society could discharge its socio-religious responsibility without any unwanted inhibitions and impediments in its path of fighting against injustice, oppression and exploitation. He challenged the religious bigotry of the Muslims and protested against violence, cruelty and persecution by the Muslim rulers. He awakened people to a new political consciousness and up braded the rulers of his day, saying, "Kings are butchers, cruelty their knife, Dharam or the sense of duty and responsibility has taken to wings and vanished", Kings according to Guru Nanak should be dispensers of equity and justice. He taught his people (followers) the way of honest and truthful living, "Truth is highest virtue, but still higher is truthful living," he said (GGS, p.62). Guru Nanak protested against and successfully disengaged his followers from Hindu Idolatory and Mohammadan superstitions and placed them free on a board of religious and moral purity. In his writings there was hardly any thing that he missed, in politics or government, in society or religion or in nature.

In 1504 A.D; he founded the first Sikh town on the western bank of River Ravi in Shakargarh Tehsil in the undivided Punjab and named it Kartarpur, literally meaning place of God, where people worked, shared and ate together irrespective of their religion and caste. He settled here in 1522 A.D and brought his parents here to live with him. They breathed their last here in his hands. He took to farming and worked in the fields. He continued to visit adjoining areas of Kartarpur in the Punjab till 1536 A.D. His travels lasted for forty years. On his death in 1539 at Kartarpur he was, claimed by both Hindus and Muslims as their own, and both in their own fashion raised mausoleums in his memory with a common wall between them-a thing unique in the history of religions. He was a contemporary of Emperor Babur and Humayon.

People subdued under rigors of caste system, the oppressive alien rule and religious bigotry could not be expected to take over the social responsibilities and adjust to the liberation offered in the new society, overnight. The infant society society had to be nurtured for sometime and it had to spread globally. So before his death, he introduced the system of succession and nominated Angad to succeed him as the next Guru. Nine more Gurus succeeded him who carried his mission forward.

A Brief life sketch of Guru Nanak;

Born: April 14*, 1469AD.
Place of birth: Talwandi Rai Bhoe now called Nankana Sahib (presently in Pakistan).
Breathed his last: September 22, 1539AD, at Katarpur (presently in Pakistan) on the western bank of river Ravi.
Father: Kalu Chand Bedi (Vedi), Patwari (revenue clerk)
Mother: Tripta
Sister: Nanaki married to Jai Ram of sultanpur Lodhi
Married to, Sulakhani daughter of Mool Chand Patwari of Batala
Children-Sri Chand and Lakhmi Chand
Founded the town of Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) on the western bank of River Ravi, Tehsil Shakargrah in district Gurdaspur.

Contributions to Sikhism:

He founded Sikhism and laid down its complete ideology. He evolved the script for the

Punjabi language and wrote his *`Bani-*ਬਾਣੀ' (spiritual hymns) in Punjabi instead of Sanskrit, which till then was the traditional medium of writing spiritual philosophy. He revealed the concept, attributes and nature of God according to Sikhism, as recorded in the opening verse of Aad Guru Granth, the holy Sikh scripture. He composed a total of 974 Hymns in 19 *Ragas,* as recorded in Guru Granth Sahib.

In 1504 A.D, he founded the first Sikh town on the western bank of river Ravi in Shakargarh tehsil, district Gurdaspur and named it Kartarpur.

*Guru Nanak was born on the Vaisakhi day, 1469 AD., but for reasons not yet clearly known, since the days of Sikh rule in Punjab it came to be celebrated in the month of October-November on the full moon day ***(****Pooran mashi* or *Punnia* in the month of *Katik--Katten--Kartik)* and now as per Sikh calendar, the date for celebration has been fixed for November 26 each year. Therefore some historians have started writing the date of birth of Guru Nanak in the month of November.

Guru Angad

Born in village *Mattay dee saraan* in Ferozepur district, but his father migrated to Village Khadur near Taran taaran. His childhood name was Lehna. He came into contact with Guru Nanak and served him with such great devotion that before his death in 1539 he nominated him as his successor Guru and named him, "Angad". He made Khadur, his native village as his place of residence. He was a zealous preacher, who strengthened the unifying institutions of ***Sangat*** and ***Pangat***, set up by the first Guru and popularized the Punjabi script, which he named **'*Gurmukhi'***. He prepared primers ***(Balupdesh)*** of Gurmukhi alphabet, recorded the Hymns of Guru Nanak in Gurmukhi and distributed the copies among the Sikhs. He broke the Brahmin's monopoly of learning by encouraging all sorts of people to learn **'***Gurmukhi'* and reading religious literature. He declared that human beings were created in the image of God. The human body was the temple of God. It was the duty of the Sikhs to keep the body quite fit to the last. Before leaving this mortal world in 1552 at Khadur Sahib he merged the light of Nanak in Amar Dass who became therafter, Guru Amar, Daas, the third Guru. Guru Angad was contemporary of Emperor Humayon, who visited him during his flight to Kabul after being defeated by Sher Shah Suri.

A brief life sketch:

Father: Pheru Mal
Mother: Sabrai / Ramo
Date of birth: March 31, 1504 AD,
Place of birth: *Mattay Dee aSraan* (District Ferozepur), from where his father moved to Khadur, near Taran-Taaran.
Place of residence: Khadur
Wife: Khivi.
Children:

Sons: Dasu
Datu
Daughter:
Bibi Amro

Date of death: March 29,1552AD, at the age of 48years.
Place of death: Khadur Sahib.
Name before Guruship: Lehna
Meeting with Guru Nanak: 1532 AD, at the age of 27years.
Guru period----1539 to 1552 AD,
Contributions to Sikhism:

Composed 63 Salokas in 9 Ragas, recorded in Aad Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Amar Dass

Guru Amar Dass, the third Nanak was born in village Baserke in Amritsar district. He became a disciple of Guru Angad and served him with such dedication that he installed him as the third Guru. He chose Goindwal on the western bank of river Beas, not far away from Khadoor, as his place of residence. Here he got a ***Baoli*** (well with stairs) dug, into which people could go down the stairs and fill their buckets of water, irrespective of their caste creed, gender or social status. He was a great social reformer. He was a great social reformer. He stood for the emancipation of women and opposed the practice of Purdah, the veiling of women, and led a vigorous campaign against Sati, the burning alive of widows on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. He encouraged inter-caste marriages and remarriage of the widows. He spoke against female infanticide, polygamy and consumption of liquor. He introduced some distinctly Sikh ceremonies on the occasion of birth and death, for example recitation of hymns replaced the chanting of Sanskrit Shalokas.

'Hadd bast (demarcation) of the lands belonging to each village in the Punjab was carried out for the first time during the reign of Emperor Akbar. Guru Amar Dass aquired land for founding a new township and constructing in it the world seat of Sikhism (Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Amritsar) in the center of Punjab, at the junction of the lands of the villages: Gilwali, Tung, Sultanwind, and Gumtala close to the main trade route between Delhi and Afghanistan (Middle east and central Asia). Guru Amar Dass paid serious attention to the propagation of Sikhism. He divided the whole country into 22 dioceses (religious districts), which he named as '*Manjis'* and he appointed a devout Sikh in-charge of each region. He was contemporary of Emperor Akbar, who paid him a visit. He merged in the Divine Light in1574 A.D; in Goindwal at the age of 95. He selected 'Bhai Jetha' as his successor, who was bestowed Guruship as 'Guru Ram Dass'.

A brief life sketch:

Date of birth: May 04, 1479 AD,
Date of death: September 01, 1574, at the age of 95years.
Place of birth: Basarke Gillan (District Amritsar).
Father: Tej Bhan.
Mother: Lakho.
Wife: Manna Devi
Children;
Sons: Mohan and Mohri.
Daughters: Dani and Bhani.
Period of Guruship: March 29, 1552 to September 1574 AD,
Place of residence after becoming Guru: Goindwal (District Amritsar)

Contribution to Sikhism:
Composed, Hymns 907 recorded in Guru Granth in 17 different Ragas.
Founded: Goindwal

Guru Ram Dass

Guru Ram Dass, the fourth Guru of the Sikhs was born in a simple God fearing Sodhi family of Lahore. His childhood name was Bhai Jetha. He was son-in-law of Guru Amar Dass, whom he served with great devotion. He was chosen by his father-in-law as fourth Guru of the Sikhs, and he assumed Guruship as 'Guru Ram Dass' in 1574. He codified the rules for the Sikh way of life, which is enshrined in the holy Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib on page 305. He also composed ***'Lawan'***, the hymns recited at every Sikh wedding ***(Anand Karaj).*** He dug the Sarovar (pool) and named it Amritsarovar (Amritsar:literally meaning the pool of elixir of life), on a piece of land acquired by his father-in-law Guru Amar Dass from the villages of Gilwali, Sultanwind, Tung and Gumtala. Around this sarover he built a planned city and named it, 'Chak Guru'—later on appropriately came to be called 'Chak Ram Dass' and ultimately now Amritsar, because of the Amritsarover. He put missionary work on sound footing and sent missionaries to different parts of north India to propagate the message of Sikhism. He was also contemporary of Emperor Akbar (1556-1605), who was religiously very tolerant.

A brief life sketch:

Date of birth: September 23, 1534 A.D,
Date of death: September 01,1581AD at the age of 47 at Goindwal,
Place of birth: Lahore (now in Pakistan)
Name before Guru-ship: Jetha,
Father: Bhai Hari Dass
Mother: Daya Devi
Married to: Bhani daughter of Guru Amar Dass
Children: Pirthi Chand, Mahandev, Arjan Dev,
Period of Guru-ship: 1574---- 1581AD-Seven years
Place of residence after Guru-ship: Goindwal, Amritsar (Chak Ram Dasspur)

Contributions to Sikhism:

Hymns: 679 in 29 Ragas, recorded in Aad Granth. He codified the rules for the Sikh way of life, composed 'Lawan' for the solemnization of Sikh marriage and founded the city of Amritsar.

Guru Arjan Dev

Guru Ram Dass passed away in 1581 A.D. He chose his youngest son Arjan as the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. His succession was challenged by his eldest brother, Pirthi Chand, who lost the case both among the Sikhs and in the court also. Pirthi Chand, his progeny and followers

assumed hostile attitude towards *Guru-Ghar* and came to be known '*Minas'** in Sikhism.

Guru Arjan Dev was eighteen years old at the time of his succession to Guruship. He was a saint of rare piety and literary attainments. He was a practical philosopher, an eminent statesman, composer of music, and a great organizer of Sikh faith. He organized the finances of the Sikh Church on more systematic lines. He deputed sincere and zealous Sikhs in all important towns and cities to collect and transmit to headquareters the offerings made by the Sikhs. These missionaries were known as *Masands*, and through them a large number of people became Sikhs. He organized the system of *Daswandh* in Sikhism and thus put the economy of the Sikh church on sound footing. The *Masands* assembled at Amritsar on the occasions of Vaisakhi and Diwali and deposited the offerings collected by them with the Guru.

Guru Arjan Dev was a great architect and founder of the Sikh Architecture. He designed and constructed the building of the World Seat of Sikhism, Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar in the midst of the *Sarovar (pool)* dug by his father, Guru Ram Dass. He got the pool lined with burnt bricks. He created the Holy Sikh scripture (Guru Granth Sahib) as the revealed and final doctrinal authority of Sikhism, in 1604 AD, and installed it with reverence in the building, which he had completed three years earlier. Guru Arjan Dev declared the independent position of Sikhism and its dissociation with both Hinduism and Islam by writing in the Aad Granth (Guru Granth) on page 1136 in Rag Bhairon. According to Guru Arjan Dev, God himself had created a firm foundation of the city on which the Sikh community was now thriving, **"***Abchal niv dhari* Gur Nanak *nit nit charai savai"* (GGS, M5, p.500-501). The town built around Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, dedicated to the sovereign Lord of the universe, represented the divine kingdom, **"***Ramraj Ramdaspur kine gurdev",* (GGS, M5, p.817) and in this reign of humility everyone was living in comfort, **"***Sabh sukhali vuthia ihu hoa halemi raj jio* (GGS, M5, p.74), without having to pay any religious tax, **"***Jejiah dan ko lae na jagati* (GGS. M5, p.430). He glorified all honest occupations as sacred. Possession of wealth was no longer to be considered *Maya* , but as a very salutary and helpful thing in the conduct of human affairs: "For a religious man, it is not unholy to get wealth, provided he spends it in God's way, and gives and lives in comfort" (GGS, Sarang ki Var, M4). In addition to their hereditary profession of farming he encouraged the Sikhs to engage themselves in different professions like, banking, tailoring, embroidery, carpentry etc. Sikhs were initiated into trading in horses. Amritsar, located in the heart of Punjab, close to the main road trade route of Asia was developed as a center of commerce, art and architecture. He also founded the new towns of Tam Taran, Katar Pur (Bist Doab) and purchased the village Gobindpur in the vicinity of the Pathan (Afghan) town of Rohila (now Srihargobindpur in Gurdaspur district) around Amritsar and developed them as new centers of commerce and Sikh culture in the Punjab. He founded an asylum for lepers in Tarn Taran.

Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Amritsar and the holy Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) gave to Sikhism the shape of a regular church with dinstict physical identity. Till then Sikhism was preached by the Gurus only through the word of mouth and did not have any separate existence distinct from Hinduism and Islam. Because of its principles, Sikhism was acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. The mass acceptance of Sikhism by common people made Sikhs a potentially visible, social and political force. Erosion of both Hindu and Muslim faiths surprised the leaders of both communities, the Qazis and the Brahmins. Both of them began to consider Sikhism challenge to their respective faiths. The Muslims in addition felt challenge to their political power. Moreover Emperor Jahangir, who succeeded his father Emperor Akbar, was under the influence of the Muslim fundamentalists in Delhi and Sirhind. He was a bigot. The Muslim government

therefore tried to suppress the Sikhs and spread of their faith. The radical Hindus especially the *'Minas'* (Pirthi Chand and his progeny, the rival claiments to Guruship) and the Brahmins actively collaborated with the Muslim government against the Sikhs in this resolve. Jahangir had Guru Arjan Dev tortured to death at Lahore, in June 1606 A.D; on a false charge of treason. Guru Arjan Dev became the first martyr in the Sikh history. He nominated his son Hargobind as his successor before his death. He was contemporary of Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) and Emperor Jahangir (1605-1628).

Date of birth: April 15, 1563 AD,
Place of birth: Goindwal
Date of martyrdom: June 5, 1606AD, at the age of 43 at Lahore (presently Pakistan)
Father: Guru Ram Dass
Mother: Mata Bhani
Married to: Ganga daughter of Bhai Kishen Chand of Village Meo, District Jallandhar
Children: Hargobind
Period of Guruship: September 01, 1581 at the age of 18 to June 5,1606AD (25years)
Place of residence: Goindwal-Amritsar
Founded: The towns of Tarn Taran, Kartarpur (Bist Doab) and purchased the village of Gobindpur in the neighbourhood of the Pathan town of Rohilla (Gurdaspur).

Contributions to Sikhism:

Total Hymns=2218, recorded in Guru Granth Sahib in 30 Ragas. He designed and built Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Harimandir / Golden Temple) Amritsar. He compiled and installed Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) in 1604 AD, in the building of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), which was completed by him three years earlier.
* *Minas* in Sikh theology mean scoundrels.

Guru Hargobind

Guru Hargobind was the only son of Guru Arjan Dev. He was installed as the sixth Guru on May 25, A.D; 1606, when his father offered himself for arrest to the Moghul government at Lahore, where he was tortured to death. His career marks a turning point in the Sikh history. Seeing how peaceful resistance to oppression had proved abortive, he recognized recourse to sword as a lawful alternative. He took the seat of his father with two swords girded round his waist, one symbolizing spiritual power and the other temporal authority (The concept of *Miri-Piri, Bhagti* and *Shakti*) in Sikhism and thus making the Sikhs, Saint Soldiers. He cleared the ground for the building of a national character of the Sikhs. He started the military training of the Sikhs in order to actively oppose, react and resist against the oppressive Muslim regimen.

Sadhu Samrath Ram Dass, the mentor of Shiva ji Marhatta, visited Guru Hargobind in Srinagar (Gharwal hills) and on seeing his regalia, was struck with wonder, therefore he asked him certain questions to which Guru Hargobind replied, "*Shastar mazloom dee rakhia to jarwane dee bhakhia"* i.e "The weapons are to protect the weak and the oppressed and to smite the oppressor", '*Aurat eeman ;* "Woman is the conscious of man", "*Daulat guzran", "*Wealth is the necessity of life". Sadhu Ram Das quipped, *"Baat to mann ko bhati hai",*- The answer appeals to my mind".

At that time in Hindustan the Hindus were forbidden to wear a turban, ride a horse, to sit on a raised platform or seat and to keep weapons. In an open defiance of the imperial policy Guru Hargobind himself wore turban with a crown and made it compulsory part of the Sikh dress. He asked his followers to present him with good horses and weapons. He encouraged martial activity among his followers, exhorting them to learn horsemanship and the use of arms. He introduced "*Gatka",* 'the sword fight', *Dhadis* (ballad singers) into Sikhism and established '*Mal Akharas'* (parks for imparting training in wrestling) for the Sikhs. As a part of his new policy, in 1609 AD, he founded Akal Takhat, the Supreme seat of temporal authority of Sikhism, opposite Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar, as counterpart to the imperial Delhi Throne. He held his court there, received envoys, settled disputes and administered justice. He built a forte in Amritsar and named it Lohgarh.

The Governor of Lahore sent reports to Emperor in Delhi, regarding his activities. Guru Hargobind was summoned to Agra by the emperor. He presented himself in the imperial court, where he was taken in custody and sent to Gwalior forte as a prisoner, where political prisoners were kept. During the period of detention of Guru Hargobind, Jahangir became a bit mentally disturbed. Noor Jahan (who was a follower of Hazrat Sain Mian Mir) prevailed upon her husband to release Guru Hargobind, which might help him cure his mental sickness. Guru Hargobind was released on the Diwali day, October 26, 1619 AD. Guru Hargobind successfully secured the release of fifty two Hindu Rajas from the emperor along with him due to which he came to be known as '*Bandi Chhod"*. Since then the Sikhs celebrate 'Diwali' as '*Bandi chhodDivas'*.

In Punjab, Pirthi Chand, the elder brother of Guru Arjan Dev (rival claimant to guruship, his progeny (son Meharban and grand son Harji), upper caste Hindus, and the provincial Muslim officials forged an alliance with the objective to contain the growing influence of Sikhism. After his release from detention from the Gwalior fort, Guru Hargobind was treated as a rebel by the state government of the Punjab and four armed attempts were made at different places in Punjab to kill or capture him, but he always escaped unhurt and defeated the provincial armed forces. After the battle of Kartarpur in 1635 A.D, he left the plains of the Punjab and made Kiratpur in the Shivalik hills as his headquarter. Kiratpur was comparatively inaccessible and formed part of the territory of a Hindu hill Rajput chief who came under the direct control of the central government of Delhi. The hill chiefs at that time were favorably disposed disposed towards Guru Hargobind.

After the expulsion of Guru Hargobind from Amritsar the '*Minas*' came to occupy Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar (The Headquartres of Sikhism), which remained under their occupation for about next six decades. During this period the *Minas* with the help of learned Brahmins headed by Pandit Kesho composed their own Granth, in which they included the compositions of the first four Gurus besides their own but excluded the compositions of Bhagats, as they were from low castes, The *Minas* installed at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) their own Granth in place of Guru Arjan Dev's Aad Granth, which was carried away by Dhirmal grandson of Guru Hargobind to Kartarpur in Jallandhar Doab, which till today exists with the family of Sodhis there and is known as Kartarpuri Bir. The *Minas* during this period played havoc with Sikh ideology. They wrote *Janam Sakhi* Meharban *Janam Sakhi* of Guru Nanak, in the process reducing him to the status of *Avtar* within the pantheism of Hinduism and brought in a lot of Pauranic tales into Sikhism. The *Masand* system established by the Sikh Gurus also went astray.

After settling at Kartarpur, Guru Hargobind took to missionary work more vigorously and consolidated seats of Sikhism from Kabul in the west to Dacca in the east. He preached Sikhism in Kashmir and visited Nanakmata (Gorakhmata) in Pilibhit and preached there. Guru Hargobind chose his grand son Har Rai (b-1630 A.D) to succeed him, before he departed this world in 1644 a.D. He was contemporary of Emperor Jehangir and Emperor Shahjahan.

A brief life sketch:

Date of birth: June 19, 1595 AD,
Place of birth: Guru Ki Wadali Chheherta (Amritsar)
Date of death: March 03, 1644 AD,
Place of death: Kiratpur (Nahan State)
Father: Guru Arjan Dev
Mother: Mata Ganga
Children: Five sons-Baba Gurditta, Atal Rai, Ani Rai, Teg Bahadur, Suraj Mal
Daughter: Bibi Veero.
Founded Akal Takhat and the towns of Kiratpur and Sri Hargobindpur

Contributions to Sikhism:

Hymns---none recorded in Aad Granth
Propagated the concept of *Miri- Piri---Bhagti* and *Shakti* in Sikhism, Missionary work.

Guru Har Rai

Guru Har Rai succeeded as seventh Sikh Guru after the death of his grand father Guru Hargobind in 1644 AD. He was the son of Baba Gurditta, the eldest son of Guru Hargobind. Baba Gurditta had died during the life time of his father. Keeping in view the hostility of the official machinery in the Majha area of the Punjab, he extensively traveled in Doaba and Malwa, where he met considerable success in claiming conversions. He never visited Amritsar or the Majha area of the Punjab. Guru Har Rai was a very magnanimous person. He was a soldier, a strong, self-respecting man and even when summoned by Aurangzeb to appear before him to explain the main tenets of Sikhism, refused to appear before him and instead sent his son, Ram Rai to explain a passage in the Aad Granth, which was considered offensive to Muslims. It ran: - **"***Mitti Mussalman kee peray paee kumiar, ghar itaan bhandhay paee jalti karay pukaar"* i.e; "The dust of a Mussalman's body fords its way in the hands of potter, who makes pots and bricks out of it. He fires the clay, it cries out as it bums" (GGS). Ram Rai substituted the word **'***Beimaan'* (faithless) for *Mussalmaan* in order to save his skin. On being appraised by a special messenger, Guru Har Rai immediately sent a letter reprimanding him, "You no longer deserve my affection, and the blunder cannot be forgiven". Ram Rai was advised not to show his face to the Guru. Hence Ram Rai's toady behaviour at the Moghul court turned his father's mind against him. Aurangzeb patronized Ram Rai for using him against **'***Guru Ghar'* (Guru's house). He was given Jagir (estate) in Doon- Valley. Sangat Singh in his book 'the Sikhs in history' writes, "Aurangzeb by now had made inroads into the Guru's confidants, especially Masands--apart from Ram Rai himself. He used some of them to administer poison to Guru Har Rai who died at

young age of 31 years on October 6, 1661AD, after installing Ram Rai's younger brother Harkishen (b-July 1652AD,) as his successor". He was contemporary of Emperor Aurangzeb.

A brief life sketch:

Date of birth: Jannaryl6, 1630AD,
Place of birth: Kiratpur
Date of death: October 6, 1661 AD,
Place of death: Kiratpur
Father: Baba Gurditta
Mother: Vimla Devi
Married to: Kotkalyani and Krishna Devi
Children: Ram Rai from Kotkalyani and Harkishen from Krishna Devi

Contributions to Sikhism:

Hymns: None recorded in Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib)
Missionary work.

Guru Harkishen

Guru Harkishen was the eighth Guru of the Sikhs. As Guru Har Rai was not happy with his elder son Ram Rai because of his having changed the text of a line of the Aad Granth in the Moghul court at Delhi therefore he debarred him from Guruship and before his death appointed his younger son, Harkishen aged five, as his successor.

The Guruship of Guru Harkishen did not suit Aurangzeb, who wanted to play a decisive role in the affairs of the Sikhs. He summoned the infant Guru to Delhi from Kiratpur, with the intention of arbitrating between his claims and those of his elder brother, Ram Rai. Guru Harkishen arrived in Delhi and was put up in the *Haveli* (Bangalow) of Mirza Raja Jai Singh in Raisina, where Gurdwara Bangla Sahib stands today. Harkishen was however fatally stricken with small pox after a few days of his stay in Delhi. Before he breathed his last, he told the people gathered around him that the next Guru was to be the old man living in the village of Bakala by saying, *"Baba Bakalay".* By "Baba (Grandfather)", he meant 'Baba Teg Bahadur', who incidentally was the only one from the Guru's family at Bakala at that time. He was also contemporary of Emperor Aurangzeb.

A brief life sketch:

Father: Guru Har Rai.
Mother: Krishna Devi
Place of birth: Kiratpur
Date of birth: July 7, 1656
Date of death: March 3, 1664
Place of death: Delhi

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Contributions to Sikhism:
Hymns---non---recorded in Guru Granth Sahib
Missionary work

Guru Teg Bahadur

Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Guru was the youngest son of Guru Hargobind. He was born at Amritsar. After the death of his father, Guru Hargobind in 1644 A.D, he along with his wife and mother left Kiratpur and settled in Bakala, the parental village of his mother, where he meditated for full twenty years (March 1644 to March 1664 A.D.), before he received the **"CALL"** for his great divine mission.

He started his carrier as the ninth successor of Guru Nanak at Bakala on March 30, 1664 A.D, after that he left Baba Bakala and preached in the Majha area for a few months. During his visit to Amritsar he was not allowed to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden temple) by the *Minas*. He then moved to Kiratpur, the town built by his father. There he bought a hillock, five miles north of Kiratpur, and built himself a new village and named it Chak Nanaki after the name of his mother.

Under his leadership the Sikh community was, however able to stabilize itself. He revived the distant congregations in eastern and central India, made successful tours of the Malwa region of the Punjab, bringing the local landed families of the area into Sikh fold and expanding the base of the Sikh community. During this peaceful period he wrote sacred hymns, which were later on incorporated into the holy Sikh Scripture, Granth Sahib (Guru Granth Sahib) by his son successor, Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Teg Bahadur left Chak Nanaki with his wife and mother and embarked on missionary work in the central and eastern parts of India. He traveled through Delhi, Agra, Prayag (Allahbad), Benaras, Gaya, and arrived at Patna. His wife being in an advance stage of pregnancy could not go any further. The Guru made arrangements for her confinement and left her and his mother at Patna and he himself proceeded further with his missionary work. He was in Dacca (Bengal), when he received the news of the birth of his son on 7 Sudi Poh 1723 B.S (January 5, 1666 A.D). From Bengal the Guru went to Assam. He spent nearly three years there before returning to Patna to join his family. While in Patna, he received very disturbing news about the conditions in the north India.

He reached Chak Nanaki in April 1671 AD. Persecution of the Hindus was very important feature of Aurangzeb's rule. It was suggested to Aurangzeb by his advisors that if he converts the Brahmins first, it would be easy to force the rest of the Hindus to embrace Islam. The idea atonce caught his imagination. He gave orders that the Brahmins of Kashmir, Hardwar and Benaras should be converted into Islam.The policy to enforce conversions was initiated in Kashmir first of all. The Kashmiri Brahmins were asked to embrace Islam or face death. A group of Brahmins led by Pandit Kirpa Ram of Mattan (one of the former teachers of Guru Gobind Singh) came to Chak Nanaki (now Anandpur Sahib) to seek the Guru's help. The Guru listened intently to their tale of woe and pondered over the problem. There upon he said to his visitors, "Convey to the Emperor Aurangzeb that Guru Teg Bahadur is our guide and leader, if he was converted, they would all voluntarily accept Islam". The message was duly conveyed to the emperor. Aurangzeb took it as

an affront on the part of Guru Teg Bahadur to side with the idolatrous Brahmins. He therefore, issued orders for Teg Bahadur's arrest.

On July 8, 1675 A.D, Guru Teg Bahadur nominated his son Gobind Rai as the next Guru, and accompanied by leading personalities of his *Darbar,* Diwan Mati Dass, Sati Dass, Dyal Dass and many others started for Delhi to take up the Brahmin's case. Before his departure he addressed his son, ***"****Bal chhotkio bandhan parey kachhoo na hot upa-ay****"*** i.e. "The shackles are due to our being powerless" (GGS, Salok M9); and then he advised him, ***"****Bal hoa bandhan chhotay sabh kichh hot upa-ay"* i.e; "Power can break all shackles (GGS, M9,)". Guru Teg Bahadur and his companions were arrested on their way to Delhi and taken to Sirhind from where they were taken to Delhi. In Delhi Guru Teg Bahadur was produced in a Qazi's court along with his companions. The Qazi asked Guru Teg Bahadur, "You yourself donot believe in idolatry, then why you want to die for the cause of idol worshippers?" Guru Teg Bahadur said, "I have given them a promise that if you convince me and convert into Islam they will all follow me". His words are thus recorded in Bhat vahi Multaani Sindhi by Keshav Bhatt: **"***Behin jina dee pakri-ay sir deeje bahin na chhodi-ay," "*Never desert a person, whom you have made a promise even if you have to get your head cut". Then the Qazi asked the second question, "Why don't you save your life by accepting Islam?" Guru Teg Bahadur replied that as you love your faith, similarly I love my faith, "*Dhar pai-ay dharma na chhodi-ay": "*It is better to die than to give up one's faith". Then the Qazi asked Guru Teg Bahadur to exhibit some of the miraculous powers he was supposed to posses. The Guru refused, but the Qazi insisted. Then Guru asked the Qazi to give him a piece of paper and a pen, which were immediately provided. There upon, the Guru wrote some words on that piece of paper and tied it around his neck after wrapping it in a piece of cloth. This he said would prevent the executioner's sword from cutting of his head. The executioner wielded the sword and the Guru's head was severed. His son Gobind Singh, commenting on this supreme sacrifice said: *"Sis diya par sirar na diya": "*He gave his head but not his conviction (belief--faith).

This "Unique Saviour" of the oppressed humanity laid down his life not for his own faith and principles, but for the fundamental rights of Brahmins, the custodians of Hindu religion, to worship the deity according to their own tradition, culture and formal rites. Guru Teg Bahadur firmly believed that the foremost duty and true test of an "Apostal Saviour" was to fight for human rights and freedom of the oppressed people, irrespective of their creed, their beliefs and ideology. No powerful people in the human world have the right to terrorise and enslave smaller nationalities or people having different ways of life. He taught the Sikhs peaceful coexistence, **"***Bha-ay kahay ko det neh neh bha-ay maanat aan"* i.e; "Neither fear nor frighten" (GGS, Salok M9). He too was a contemporary of Emperor Aurangzeb.

A brief life sketch:

Father: Guru Hargobind
Mother: Mata Nanaki
Date of birth: April 1, 1621 AD, (Vaisakhi 1678B.S.)
Place of birth: Amritsar
Date of death: November 11, 1675AD,
Place of death: Chandni Chowk Delhi
Married to Gujri Devi at Kartarpur (Jalandhar), (in Assu 1689 B.S i.e 1632 A.D)
Children: Guru Gobind Singh.

Founded Chak Nanaki

Contributions to Sikhism:

Hymns recorded in Guru Granth-115 in 15 Ragas. Missionary work

Guru Gobind Singh

Guru Teg Bahadur's only child Gobind Rai was born to Mata Gujri at Patna on 7 Sudi Poh 1723 Bikrami Samvat (Jan5, 1666 AD) at Patna in Bihar. He was born at a time when the morale of the people was very low and armed repression of the Sikh movement was highly probable. The tenth Nanak was hardly nine years old when the great responsibility of directing the affairs of the Sikh faith fell on his shoulders. He started his carrier as tenth successor of Nanak at Chak Nanaki (Bilaspur state) on July 8, 1675 AD; when his father Guru Teg Bahadur proceeded to Delhi on the summons issued against him by Emperor Aurangzeb for preaching passive resistance.

He was a born genius, great political and religious leader, patriot, statesman, ruler and an unmatched general with an iron will, an unflinching faith in God and detrmination to win, on whose mind *Dharam Yudh* (the righteous war), was uppermost and above all a reformer and nation builder. In his autobiography, he tells us the purpose of his coming into this world. He says, "I came into the world charged with the duty to uphold the right in every place, to destroy sin and evil. O ye holy men, know it well in your hearts that the only reason I took birth was to see that righteousness may flourish, that the good may live and tyrants be torn out by their roots." He was a gifted and talented human being and since his infancy his father's words always echoed in his ears, "*Bal chhotkio bandan parey***"** and **"***Bal hoa bandhan katey".* In this materialistic world nothing could be achieved without power *(Bal),* comprising both of knowledge *(Buddhi da Bal)* and temporal or wordly power *(Duniavi Bal).* So he granted top priorty to the attainment of knowledge both spiritual and temporal. He spent his early years in retirement and concentrated on self-education, studying Hinduism and Islam and chalking out his future plans. The teachings of his predecessors and the unique examples of martyrdom had elevated the spirits of the Sikhs. But the old social shackles of the divisive caste system of Hindu Community had not been completely broken. This hindered the growth of a homogenous wellknit class of people inspired by a common national goal. In fact, the idea of nationalism had not yet been born in this country. In the words of Gokal Chand Narang, "Hindus had a religion but no national feeling while Guru Gobind Singh made nationalism the religion of the Khalsa (Sikhs). In short, Guru Gobind Singh had emerged as a nation builder and the Sikhs had emerged as a nation in the premodern times".

The Hindu caste system had developed deep rooted prejudices among various groups of the natives of Hindustan. The difference in the social level of low caste Shudras and the high born Brahmin and Kashatriyas was so great that they could not join together in any common cause. In order to bring people under a common banner to fight injustice, oppression and the foreign invaders it was of utmost necessary to remove the evil of the divisive caste system, which had made the society powerless *(Balheen)* and thereby slave. Guru Gobind Singh vowed to remove the evil of divisive caste system and create a united and strong, casteless society for attainig self-rule. He says:

"Koow kisi ko raj na de hai, jo le hai nij bal say le hai, Raj bina nahin dharma chaley hai, dharma bina sabh daley maley hai"

He gained mastery over Sanskrit apart from Braj, Persian, Arabic and Punjabi languages and became a literary giant and a poet of rare piety. After completing his studies he started unfolding his plans. On the Vaisakhi day of 1684, he laid the foundation of a new town by the side of Chak Nanaki and named it Anandpur 'the abode of bliss'. Thereafter he shifted the center of his activities further deep into the mountains and built a town on the bank of river Jamna and named it Paonta, where Sikh armed forces were trained. He constructed a forte and pursued his martial and literary pursuits there. Martial exercises became daily routine, besides racing horses and shooting training and huntings. Not only the Sikhs, but devout Muslims who did not approve of the tyrrany of the Mughals became the followers of the Guru. Budhu Shah of Sadhaura joined the Sikh army with five hundred Pathan warriors. Guru Gobind Singh had in his court fifty-two renouned poets well versed in Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Braj and Punjabi. At Paonta, he produced a large amount of literature. His compositions include, Jaap Sahib, Akal Uastat, Shaster Nama Ma1a, giving an account of the weapons of the time, Var Sri Bhagauti Ji Ki, popularly called Chandi Di Var dealing with battles of Goddess Chandi (Sword) to uphold righteousness and justice. In order to aquire the knowledge of Hindu mythology and a comprehensive understanding of Hindu religion and thought, he sent five of his disciples to Banaras for the prosecution of classical learning from the aristocratic Pandits of that place. He instructed them to observe all customs necessary for the studentship at the feet of the Brahmin Scholars. On their return after training he conferred on them the title of '*Nirmala'* (literally: without impurity). They rooted them selves in Vedanta, but followed the Sikh way of worship instead of Sanatan image worship and caste observance. They formed the Sikh literary aristocratic class devoting themselves to the popularization of Vedanta and philosophisation of Sikhism.

The rulers of the hill states were upset at the reports of Guru's growing following and imparting military training to his followers. They became apprehensive of his growing strength and influence. Therefore they decided to oust him from their territory. Several rajas combined under the leadership of Fateh Chand of Garhwal and attacked him. A battle ensued at Bhangani, a village near Paonta in September 1688. The aggressors were defeated. Guru Gobind Singh wound up his establishment in Paonta and came back to Anandpur in 1689. He got five forts constructed arround Anandpur Sahib. These forts were named Anandgharh, Lohgarh, Taragarh, Agamgarh and Fatehgarh. In 1691, the Moghul governor of Kangra and the Hindu hill rajas jointly attacked Guru Gobind Singh and the battle ensued at Nadaudan, which ended in victory for the Sikhs. It was not until 1695 AD that he fully emerged from his retirement and committed himself to two projects. The first was political-the liberation from oppressive, unjust Mughal rule and the achievement of a daring new ideal, an 'Independent Sikh State'. The second was spiritual-the reanimation of Sikhism itself and expression of Guru Nanak's ideas in new forms. Both projects were revolutionary.

He marked that the institution of *Masands* in Sikhism had become thoroughly corrupt and needed immediate redressal. In 1697-98, he investigated each and every complaint against the *'Masands',* punished the guilty and abolished the institution. Since then there is no priestly class in Sikhism.

He formally consecrated Sikhism in its present day form on the first day of Vaisakh

(Vaisakhi) 1699 AD; when he called forth five representatives of the new nation whose adoption was tried at the altar of death and gave them *Pahul (Amrit)* from the same *'Bata'* (steel bowl). The initiated group was named 'Khalsa', with a common name 'Singh' for every male and 'Kaur' for every female. On this day Guru Gobind Singh gave Sikh religion finishing touch. He laid down distinct Sikh religious code of conduct '*Sikh Rehatmaryada'*. The verbal instructions were written down by well-known Khalsa leaders like Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Desa Singh, Bhai Chaupa Singh, Bhai Parehlad Singh and Bhai Nand Lal Singh and are known as '*Rehatnamas'*.

The *'Minas'* in Amritsar lost their relevance both among the Hindus and the Muslims as they did not need them any more. On the contrary, because of their kinship with Sikhism they suffered persecution at the hands of the Muslim rulers of the Lahore province and ultimately left the Majha area crossed the river Satlej and the settled in the sandy tract of Malwa region in the Punjab, where they founded the town of Guru Harsahai. In the middle of 1699 Guru Gobind Singh sent Bhai Mani Singh to Amritsar. He took charge of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) and resumed the *Maryada* in the shrine. He undertook *Amrit Parchar* in the Majha area, where the peasantry received initiation en-mass.

The event of Amritpaan Samskar on the Vaisakhi day at Anandpur generated ill will among the Hindu Hill Rajput Rajas against Guru Gobind Singh and his Khalsa, which they considered inimical to their '*Varn-ashram Dharma'* i.e, 'the Hindu Caste System', which forms the bed- rock of Hinduism*. Therefore, they vowed to desroy Guru Gobind Singh and his nascent Khalsa. First the Hindu Rajas around Anandpur Sahib tried on their own but after failing in their mission alone they petitioned to emperor Aurangzeb through Raja Ajmer Chand, who pleaded to the emperor that, the Guru who had founded 'A New Religion', wanted all Hindus to embrace it and to wage war on the 'Moghul Empire'. Alarmed at the grim story narrated by Ajmer Chand, Aurangzeb ordered dispatch of all available troops at Delhi, Sirhind and Lahore under the command of Wazid Khan Subedar (governor) of Sirhind. The Hindu hill chiefs were to assist the Moghul forces. This led to the siege of Anandpur Sahib starting May 3, 1705AD. It lasted for seven months till December 4, 1705AD. The Moghuls promised Guru Gobind Singh safe passage if he evacuated Anandpur and retired to Kangar in Malwa region of the Punjab. Believing them Gobind Singh evacuated the fort on the night of December 5, 1705, along with his family and the Sikh soldiers. The Moghul and Hindu forces forgetting all pledges set out in hot pursuit. In the confusion that ensued, Gobind Singh's mother and the two younger sons along with their Brahmin cook named Gangoo (Gangadhar Kaul) got lost in the darkness of night. Similarly a band of Sikhs from Majha area of the Punjab also went astray in the darkness. Valuable literature was washed in the flooded Sirsa Nadi (rivulet). Guru Gobind Singh and his fighting force proceeded southwards and managed to reach the village Chamkaur, where he took position along with his two elder sons and the remaining Singhs and decided to fight to a finish. Every few hours some of them would issue forth and fight the besiegers until they were killed. Among those who fell were Guru Gobind Singh's two elder sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh. When all seemed lost Guru Gobind Singh was ordered by Panj Piaras to leave the fortress at Chamkaur. Sangat Singh, put on the Guru's dress, took the command and the Guru himself made his escape during the darkness of night and reached village Machhiwara, where he met Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan, two Pathans known to him earlier.

Mean while the imperial forces again closed in on him, the Pathans put Guru Gobind Singh in a curtained Planquin and passed the Moghul guards with the explanation that they were carrying their '*Pir' (Uchch Da Pir).* The Moghul forces lost track of the Guru and hence

were unable to pursue him any more. He arrived in the village Jat Pura, near Alamgir in Ludhiana district. Here, he learned the execution of his two remaining sons Zorawar Singh aged eight and Fateh Singh aged six and the death of his mother at Sirhind who were betrayed by their Brahmin cook Gangu. Guru Gobind Singh took the news calmly. The two were asked to embrace Islam or face death, they chose latter. They were bricked alive and suffocated to unconsciousness, they resolutely refused to embrace Islam and accepted the butcher's knife with which they were slowly done to death by the orders of Wazid Khan, the governor of Sirhind and his advisor Sucha Nand Khatri in the Christmas week of 1705. In-spite of all odds facing him Guru Gobind Singh was full of faith and courage. He wrote his first letter to Aurangzeb condemning his actions. "I shall strike fire under the hoofs of your horses and will not let you drink the water of my Punjab" (Zafarnama).

From Jatpura Guru Gobind Singh moved to Alamgir (near Ludhiana) and then to Kotkapoora (now in Faridkot district). The news of murders of the Guru's sons and death of his mother, spread all over the countryside and thousands of Sikhs flocked to Guru Gobind Singh to help him avenge the crime. The news reached the Guru that the forces of Wazid Khan, the subedar of Sirhind, were marching against him. The Guru now had enough men with him to make a stand. So he moved to the village Khidrana now called Mukatsar (now a district head quarter), which had a large pond of water, which his forces could use. Meanwhile a large number of Sikhs from the Majha area of Punjab along with the band of those who got separated from the main body of the fighting force accompanying Guru Gobind Singh in the confusion during the darkness of night while crossing the flooded Sirsa Nadi, also arrived led by Bhai Mahan Singh of Villaige Sur Singh and a Sikh warrior lady Mai Bhago from vaillage Jhabal, engaged themselves with the pursuers and defeated them. On the Sikh side forty Sikhs embraced martyrdom. Guru Gobind Singh blessed them profusely. Bhag Kaur lay injured while Bhai Mahan Singh was in his last breaths and breathed his last in the lap of Guru Gobind Singh asking for forgiveness if he had committed even inadvertently during his association with the Guru during his life time. The Guru blessed all the forty martyrs as **'***Muktas*'---The Liberated One's. This happened on 30 Poh BK1762 (12, January, 1706A.D).

Guru Gobind Singh now moved to Sabo Ki Talwandi now called Damdama Sahib, in Bathinda district, where he remained for over nine months, after breaking his journey for a short period at Dina Kangar from where he wrote another letter to to Aurangzeb, condemning his actions. In his journey from Anandpur Sahib to Talwandi Sabo, all his four sons, mother and innumerable Sikhs embraced martyrdom and most of the valuable literature was washed away in the flooded Sirsa Nadi. Here he wanted to have a Path (recitation) of Aad Granth for the peace of the deprted souls. So he sent five Sikhs to Kartarpur to bring the volume of Aad Granth from there, but it was refused with the sarcastic remarks, that if he was the Guru, he should produce the Aad Granth himself. The Sikhs returned to Talwandi Sabo and narrated the whole story to Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Gobind Singh was a literary giant and *'Hafiz'* (one who remembers orally) of Granth Sahib, he dictated the whole Granth Sahib verbally which was jointly recorded by Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh turn by turn. This happened in May 1706. In this volume he entered the Bani of his father, ninth Guru-'Guru Teg Bahadur'. After reading the letters of Guru Gobind Singh, Emoeror Aueangzeb sent him an invitation for talks for making reconciliation.

When Guru Gobind Singh was preparing to leave for Deccan (south) to meet emperor

Aurangzeb on his invitation, the Sikhs requested him that they were lucky to have a copy of Granth Sahib, but arrangements be made to avoid a recurrence. Guru Gobind Singh appointed Baba Deep Singh to make copies of Granth Sahib and teach meanings of Gurbani to Sikhs, thus making Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo) the Sikh seat of learning and called it *'Guru Ki Kanshi'*, as counter part of Hindu seat of learning Kanshi (Benaras). Baba Deep Singh made four more copies of Granth Sahib by hand, which still exist today. Baba Deep Singh was the first Sewadar (Granthi) of Damdama Sahib. He served in this capacity till his martyrdom in 1757 AD. This institution started producing Sikhs of high learning and came to be known as Damdami Taksal.

Before the departure of Guru Gobind Singh to Deccan emperor Aurangzeb died on February 21, 1707. The war of succession ensued between the sons of Aurangzeb. Prince Muazzam later known as Bahadur Shah requested for help to Guru Gobind Singh in his fight against his younger brother Tara Azam. Guru Gobind Singh supported Bahadur Shah in his struggle for succession to the imperial throne, after receiving verbal assurance from him regarding the suzrenity of the Sikhs over Punjab and punishing Wazid Khan the governor of Sirhind, if he became emperor of Hindustan with the help of the Sikhs. Bahadur Shah emerged victorious and became emperor of Hindustan with the help of the Sikhs, but immediately a rebellion broke out in Deccan and he had to proceed there to suppress it. Guru Gobind Singh accompanied Bahadur Shah, chalking out his own travel plans. Guru Gobind Singh on his way discussed with Bahadur Shah the subject of punishment of Subedar (governor) of Sarhind for his excesses. He got the impression of Bahadur Shah's reluctance to do justice in this case.

From Godawari, Guru Gobind Singh, broke off with Emperor and reached Nander and visited visited the *Dera* of Lashman Dass Beragi, who was born in Rajouri (Jammu and Kashmir) but had adopted ascetic life, assumed the name of Madho Dass, and migrated to Qasur (district Lahore)-a center of Sikh and Sufi culture in Punjab, where he stayed for five years and became Udasi Sikh. After staying for five years in Qasur he left for south to learn yoga and settled in Nander. According to Sikh sources Guru Gobind Singh and Madho Dass knew each other and had met earlier at Hardwar. Madho Dass recognized Guru Gobind Singh and submitted to him, saying, "He was his Banda*" (ਮੈ ਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਹੀ ਬੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਜੀ). On September 3, 1708 Madho Dass was administered Amrit and initiated into the order of the Khalsa and renamed Banda Singh by Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Gobind Singh decided to remain at Nander perhaps on account of the ongoing negotiations with Emperor Bahadur Shah and appointed Banda Singh on Oct 5, 1708 jathedar of the Panth (general of the Sikh army—*Khalsa Fauj*) and attached to him five leading Sikhs, Bawas Binodh Singh, Kahn Singh and Bhais Bhagwant Singh, Koer Singh and Baj Singh to provide corporate leadership to the Khalsa. The Guru also handed over to him a seal, five arrows from his quiver, *Nishan Sahib* (the Sikh flag pole), a *Nigara* (war drum) and *Hukamnama* (directive-order) to the Sikhs in Punjab, directing them to rally around Banda Singh. Banda Singh accompanied by about twentyfive Sikhs, left for Punjab on the same day with a brief, to punish the Subedar (Governor) of Sirhind and uproot the oppressive Moghul rule from Sikh homeland.

The proximity between Emperor Bahadur Shah and Guru Gobind Singh was considered as danger signal to his life by Wazid Khan, the governor of Srihind, who hired two Pathans, to assassinate Guru Gobind Singh. These two hired assaissins according to Sikh sources were the grand-sons of Paindey Khan, foster brother of Guru Hargobind

(grand-father of Guru Gobind Singh), against whom Paindey Khan had rebelled and got killed at his hands, in the battle of Kartarpur in Bist Doab. The two hired men reached Nander and paid occasional visits to the Guru, with whom they became aquainted.

The very day after Banda Singh left for Punjab, Guru Gobind Singh was having a nap after the evening service. One of the Pathans saw his chance and stabbed the Guru in the chest. Before he could deal another blow he was dispachted by the Guru with his sword. His flying companion fell under the sword of the Sikhs who had come up hearing the noise. Guru's wound was immediately sewn up and dressed. Realising the grievousness of the wound Guru Gobind Singh passed on the Guruship to the Granth Sahib and granted it the status of "Guru Granth". He told the Sikhs to seek its guidance after him. The Guru's wound started healing. After a couple of days a Sikh presented Guru Gobind Singh with a bow. When the Guru tried to bend the stiff bow, the imperectly healed wound burst open and caused profused bleeding. Finding his end near Guru Gobind Singh bowed his head before Guru Granth and breathed his last on the night intervening Oct7-8. During his life time Guru Gobind Singh gave Sikhism a finishing touch. He gave it a distinct indentity. In addition to the institutionalization of Guruship into 'Guru Granth' and 'Guru Khalsa Panth', he gave birth to two classes of people among the Sikhs in order to provide theological and philosophical gackground to the institutional side of religion. He started two schools for the Sikhs, one for the training of theologians and expositionists of the Sikh scriptures and the other for the study of Hindu philosophy and comparative religion. Theologians and expositionists of Aad Granth came to be known as 'Gianis'. Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh received this training from Guru Gobind Singh himself. Scholars of Hindu philosophy and comparative religion were called 'Nirmalas'.

Guru Gobind Singh did not deviate from the guidelines laid down by Guru Nanak. Rather he brought to culmination the salient aspects of Guru Nanak's philosophy. Guru Gobind Singh introduced no change. His Sikhism was that of Nanak, believing in one supreme creator, who was without form or substance or beyond human comprehension. Guru Nanak described God as Ausar Samghar-Destroyer of demonical persons (GGS, p.224), destroyer of evil doers (demons-Sant-Sipahi) (Ibid, p.1208), slayer of the inimical (Ibid, p.145) and protector of the weak. Guru Gobind Singh condemned superstition and the worship of idols (Swayye). He glorified Bhagauti (Sword) as a means of securing justice in the name of God. He *says, "Choon kar az haman heelte dar guzashat halal ast burden ba shamsheer dast"- "*When all peaceful means to secure justice fail, it is righteous to unsheath the sword" (Zafarnama). Like Nanak he disapproved asceticism (Shabad Hazare) and ridiculed the caste system, while preaching love and equality of all mankind. He wrote in Akal Ustat, "*Dehora maseet soee, pooja 0 nimaz ohi, Manas kee jaat Babe eke pehchanbo"- "*Temple and Mosque are the same and so their worship, treat all mankind alike". Still further he says, "*Sach kahoon sun leho sabey, jin prem kio tin he prabh paio"- "*He utters nothing but truth that he alone attains God, who loves his creation". He high lights the importance of morality, ethics, sharing and courage in personal conduct, good deeds, protection of the weak and resistance to tyranny and injustice, "*Deh Shiva bar mohey ehai shub karman tay Kabhoon na* taron"--(Swayya in Chandi Charittar, Dasam Granth). Like Nanak, he believed that the end of life's journey was merging of the individual in God (Akal Ustat). Like Nanak Gobind Singh believed that the sovereign remedy of all ills of mankind was *Naam, "*a life of prayer". He gave the institution of Guruship a permanent and abiding character by vesting it in the immortality of Guru Granth and the continuity of Khalsa Panth. He did not alter the

form of prayer-The Aad Granth remained the scripture, and not the compilation of his own works. He never accorded same status to his own compositions. He emphatically disclaimed divinity, *"Jo ham ko parmeshar uchrey, Tai sabh narak kund mein parihai"- "*whoever refers me as God will end up in the cauldron of hell" and continues, **"***Mein hoon param purkh ko dassa dekhan aaeeo jagat tamaasaa"*- **"**regard me only as His servitor, have to watch the drama of the world".

A brief life sketch:

Father: Guru Teg Bahadur
Mother: Mata Gujri
Place of birth: Patna (Bihar)
Date of birth: 7 Sudi, Poh 1723 B. S corresponding with January 5, 1666 AD.
Child-hood name: Gobind Rai
Married in 1677A.D; to: Jito, who was renamed Sundri after marriage and Sahib Kaur after Amritpaan.
Children: Ajit Singh, Jujhar Singh, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh.
Guru Gobind Singh is the father and Mata Sahib Kaur is the mother of the Khalsa. Places of residence: ---Patna (Bihar), Anandpur (Punjab), Paonta, Talwandi Sabo--Damdama (Punjab), Nander (Maharashtra)
Period of Guruship: 1675-1708AD (33years)

Contributions to Sikhism:

1. Creation of the Khalsa:

It gave Sikhism its corporate identity. The institution of Sangat, established by Guru Nanak was given the status of 'Guru Khalsa Panth', 'The Sikh Nation' by Guru Gobind Singh. Every person high or low, rich or poor, Hindu or Muslim, who believed in Sikhism and was willing to follow the sublime path of the faith, was welcome to become a member of the Khalsa.

2. Institutionalization of Sikhism:

After Guru Arjan Dev declared the independent identity of Sikhism by writing in 'The Aad Granth' in Rag Bhairon on page 1136 and creating Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar, attempts were started to physically destroy the institution of the Guru both by Hindus and the Muslims, who considered Sikhism inimical to their respective faiths, but the Sikh Gurus faced the challenge very boldly and stuck to the completion of the divine mission assigned to them by the Almighty God. Sikhism developed and matured under the guidance of its Gurus for a period spanning over about two hundred years. Guru Gobind Singh felt that Sikhism had taken deep roots and it no more needed the guidance of a living human Guru. He abolished the personal human Guruship in Sikhism and invested the institution of Guruship a permanent and abiding character by vesting it in the immortality of Granth (Guru Granth) and in continuity of Khalsa Panth (Guru Khalsa Panth—The Sikh Nation), which could neither be killed nor eliminated.The Guru's responsibility and his word were separated. The Panth being invested with the temporal responsibility of Guru (Guru Khalsa Panth: The Sikh Nation) and the word became the Giyan Guru (Guru Granth).

3. Compilations:

Jaap Sahib, Akal Ustat, Shastar Nama Mala, Var Sri Bhagauti ji kee, popularly called Chandi dee

Var, Shabad Hazare, Swayyay, Khalsay dee mehma and Zafarnama etc. Guru Gobind Singh recensed the Aad Granth and entered into it the Bani of the 9th Guru, Guru Teg Bahadur. The authorship of some of the contents of Dasam Granth attributed to be the creation of Guru Gobind Singh and compiled by Bhai Mani Singh 26 years after Guru Gobind Singh's death is disputed.

4. He founded the town of Anandpur Sahib and the Sikh seat of learning:
Guru ki Kanshi at Dam Dama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo) in the district Bathinda and established two schools that of Giyanis and Nirmalas for the propagation of Sikhism.

5. Holla Mohalla:
Guru Gobind Singh added the festival of Hola Mohalla to the list of historical festivals of Vaisakhi and Divali already celebrated by the Sikhs. It is celebrated at Anandpur Sahib in the Punjab in the Month of March every year.

6. Hymns in Guru Granth Sahib: None

* *Banda* in Punjabi means, man and not slave. The Hindi word which means slave is pronounced as *Baanda* for male slave and *Baandi* for female slave and therefore it should not be confused:
"Wakhat veecaaray so banda hoay" GGS.
"*Kar banday too bandgee jichar ghat mein saho"* (Ibid)

A brief account of the theological activities of the Sikhs

Till the birth of Sikhism, Punjabi the spoken language of the Punjab did not have its own script. Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikh religion, evolved the script for the Punjabi language. He wrote an acrostic of 35 alphabets, perfected the script with vowels and laid rules of grammar. He composed the sacred hymns in the language of the people-'Punjabi'-in preference to Sanskrit, which was the traditional medium for religious poetry or philosophy. The tradition was followed by his successors. The script was named Gurmukhi by his successor, Guru Angad, who greatly propagated the use of Gurmukhi alphabets in his drive for literacy among his followers, the Sikhs. He broke the monopoly of the Brahmin over learning. He made the copies of the hymns of Guru Nanak and distributed them to various Sikh centers. He himself, Guru Amar Dass and Guru Ram Dass gave their 'Gurbani' in Punjabi in Gurmukhi script. Guru Arjan Dev wrote 'Gurbani' in Gurmukhi script, edited and compiled the Pothi Sahib / Granth Sahib (now Guru Granth Sahib-the holy Sikh scripture) in 1604 AD; in Gurmukhi script. Guru Teg Bahadur gave his `Bani in simple Punjabi with Gurmukhi script. Guru Gobind Singh, recensed Pothi Sahib / Granth Sahib (Guru Granth Sahib) in 1706AD, at Talwandi Sabo now called Damdama Sahib (district, Bathinda) and entered the `Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur in it. He also produced a large amount of literature with Gurmukhi script. The exclusive use of Punjabi language and Gurmukhi script and total rejection of Sanskrit by Sikh Gurus, led to two results. On one hand it dealt a powerful blow to the domination of Hindu priestly class (Brahmins) who boasted of knowledge of Sanskrit, on the other hand introduction of new alphabets increased the number of literates in Punjab, by making religious literature accessible to the masses in their mother tongue to facilitate the reform work of the Gurus. The memories of Guru Nanak compiled by Guru Angad formed the first prose work in Punjabi language.

EMINENT SIKH THEOLOGIANS OF GURU PERIOD

Bhai Gurdas I

Bhai Gurdas was a cousin of Guru Amar Dass. His exact date of birth of is not known with certainty but from the contemporary sources it is assumed that he was born around 1553 AD at Goindwal. His parents passed away during his infancy and he grew up under the care of his uncle, Guru Amar Dass. He received his education in Punjabi, Devnagri, Persian and Arabic at Goindwal and Sultanpur Lodhi and then went to Kanshi and became a scholar of Sanskrit. He studied Braj at Agra. He spent his entire life in the service of Guru-Ghar, preaching Sikhism. He preached Sikhism at Lahore, Kanshi and Agra. Guru Arjan respectfully called him *'mamaji',* maternal uncle. He calligraphed the first volume of Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) at the diction of Guru Arjan Dev. He is also the author of 39 Vars (ballads in the heroic metre) in Punjabi and 556 Kabits (couplets) in Braj, of which the former are of historical and theological importance. They are the only really authentic references to the period of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Gurus by a Sikh, as he was a contemporary of Guru Amar Dass, Guru Ram Dass, Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Hargobind. He was a great scholar of Punjabi, Sanskrit, Persian and Braj. His book known as 'Varan' was, designated as the 'key to Granth Sahib' by Guru Arjan Dev. He died at Goindwal in A.D. 1637.

Bhai Gurdas II

He was contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh. His compositions also known as '*Varan'* describe the time period of Guru Gobind Singh. He is the author of the famous Var, '*Woh Pargatyo mard agamra, waryam akela, Waho Waho Gobind Singh ape Gur Chela*'

Bhai Mani Singh

As per evidence available from various Sikh sources Bhai Mani Singh was born in village Alipur near Multan in 1644 A.D. He was entrusted to Guru Har Rai's care by his parents during his childhood. He got married to Bibi Seeto daughter of Lakhi Shah of Khair pur. After his marriage he returned to Kiratrpur Sahib and served the Guru-Ghar with great devotion. After the death of Guru Har Rai he accompanied Guru Harkrishan to Delhi. After the death of Guru Harkrishen in Delhi he returned to Baba Bakala in the presence of Guru Teg Bahadur accompanying Mata Sulakhani. He moved to Chak Nanaki along with Guru Teg Bahadur. He received his early education from Guru Teg Bahadur. He was trained in the traditional art of exposition of the Sikh Scriptures by Guru Gobind Singh. He was appointed Diwan in the Guru's Darbar by Guru Gobind Singh in 1691 A.D. He took Pahul at the hands of Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day 1699 AD; at Anand Pur Sahib. He was appointed as Sewadar (Granthi) of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temlpe) Amritsar in mid 1699, by Guru Gobind Singh, when he took its control from 'Minas' (rival claimants to Guru-ship). He was assigned the duty of administering Amrit to the Sangat in the Majha area. After completing Amrit Parchar in the Majha, he went back to Anandpur Sahib. At the time of arrest of Banda Singh Bahadur from Gurdas Nangal, Bhai Mani Singh was again serving as sewadar at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar. He left Amritsar and went into hiding, during the worst period of the persecution of the Sikhs after the arrest and execution of Banda Singh in 1716. He retook as Sewadar of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar on the advice of Mata Sundri

widow of Guru Gobind Singh in 1721 AD and amicably resolved the dispute between the *Tat* Khalsa and the *Bandai Khalsa.* Bhai Mani Singh had been right hand man of Mata Sundri after the death of Guru Gobind Singh.

He was a great Sikh theologian, he ingrained into the Sikh psyche, the concept of the Guru Granth, the Shabad, the word as contained in the Granth Sahib (Guru Granth Sahib) as 'The Guru' and 'Guru Khalsa Panth', the whole Sikh community, as the 'Corporate Guru'. This democratic concept led to the concept of *Gurmata,* the Guru's decision, taken by the community under the supremacy of Akal Takhat in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. He was a serious thinker and a renouned scholar of a tactful and amicable disposition.

Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh jointly scribed the Damdami Bir of Aad Granth at the diction of Guru Gobind Singh at Talwandi Sabo (now Damdama Sahib) in 1706 A.D. He compiled *Dasam Granth.* He himself wrote two books *Bhagat Ratnawali* and *Gian Ratnawali.* He realized the need for small volumes containing parts of the Guru Granth, these being ideally suited to the need of the Sikhs and could be easily carried by them during their stay in forests, deserts and the hills during their persecution. He compiled *Gutkas, Panj Granthi* and *Baee Varan.* He was arrested on the orders of the governor of Lahore for preaching and spreading Sikhism and was cut limb by limb in 1738AD.

Baba Deep Singh

Baba Deep Singh was born in the village Pahuwind in the district of Lahore in 1682 A.D. He received his education and Pahul from Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur Sahib. Both Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh were trained in the traditional art of the exposition *(Katha)* of the Sikh Scriptures. After completing his education he came to visit his parents. He was in his village at the time of the siege of Anandpur Sahib, by the forces of Hindu hill Rajas and the Moghul forces. He was part of the *jatha* of *Mujhail* Singhs, who defeated the Moghul forces pursuing Guru Gobind Singh at Khidrana (now Muktsar). Thereafter he remained in the service of "*Guru-Ghar"* for the remaining part of his life. He and Bhai Mani Singh jointly scribed the Damdami Bir of Granth Sahib in 1706 A.D. Baba Deep Singh is said to have been a man of scholarly disposition with thorough knowledge of Sikh scriptures. Before leaving for Deccan on the invitation of Emperor Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh appointed him to prepare copies of Granth Sahib (Guru Granth Sahib) and teach the meanings of Gurbani to the Sikhs, thus making Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo), the seat of Sikh learning and called it *Guru Kee Kanshi* as a counterpart to the Hindu seat of learning in Kanshi (Benaras). Four more, hand written copies of Granth Sahib were made by Baba Deep Singh, which still exist today. Baba Deep Singh was the first *Sewadar (Granthi)* of Damdama Sahib. He actively took part in the battles to uproot the unjust and oppressive Moghul rule along with Banda Singh Bahadur. After the arrest and subsequent execution of Banda Singh Bahadur he retired to Damdama Sahib (Talwndi sabo) and resumed his duties as sewadar of Gurdwara Damdama Sahib in 1715. He spent about ten years from 1716 to 1726, in preparing more copies of the holy *Guru Granth Sahib,* refered to above. He kept himself fully posted with the activities of the Sikhs and maintained his deep interest in the Sikh movement for their liberation. In 1733; Dal Khalsa was split into Budha Dal and Taruna dal and Truna Dal was further organized into five sections for efficient administration, one of these sections was led by Baba Deep Singh. Again when Dal Khalsa was reorganized in 1748 into twelve Misals, Baba Deep Singh became the *Jathedar* of Shaheed Misal. He embraced martyrdom in the precints of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar in 1757AD; while leading the Sikh forces against the invading Afghan army of Ahmad Shah Abdali.

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Bhai Nand Lal Singh

He was born in A.D; 1633 at Gazni, in Afghanistan. At school he learnt Persian and Arabic and started writing poems in Persian. After the death of his parents he migrated first to Multan where he married a Sikh girl. As he could not find fulfillment here for his literary talents, he shifted to Delhi. There he served as a teacher of prince Muazzam, later known as Bahadur Shah, son of Aurangzeb. Because of his scholarship regarding Islam Aurangzeb wanted him to become a Muslim. In 1889 A.D; he fled from Delhi and came to Anandpur (Punjab), sought asylum with Guru Gobind Singh and embraced Sikhism. He was one of the fifty-two poets of Guru Gobind Singh. He wrote ten books, seven in Persian, two in Punjabi and one in Hindi. His Punjabi books are Rehatnama and Tankha Nama (qnKwh nwmw), which are expositions of the code of conduct for the Sikhs as laid down by Guru Gobind Singh. He had accompanied Guru Gobind Singh to Deccan and was present by his side when he breathed his last there. In his later life he migrated to Multan, where he died in 1713, A.D.

The Bhatts of the Punjab

The Bhatts are Brahmin scholars, who sang praises of their patrons *(Jajmans)* and maintained the registers called ***Vahees***, mentioning accounts of various happenings in different parts of the Punjab including birth and death records of their *Jajmans,* since ancient times. There are two major subdivisions of Brahmins namely Gaur and Sarsut (Saraswat) Brahmins. The Gaur Brahmins lived on the banks of the river Ganges on the eastern side of the Saraswati River (now Ghagar) in the Ganga-Jamna divide, while the Sarsut Brahmins lived on the western side of the Saraswati River in the Punjab. The Bhatts are a sub-sect the Sarsut Brahmins. In the pre-modem times they inhabited numerous villages in the Punjab along the banks of Saraswati River in and around Pehowa, in Kamal district. Some of the Bhatts came to Guru's Darbar during the pontificate of Guru Arjan Dev soon after the demise of Guru Ram Dass and their hymns are found recorded in Guru Granth Sahib, under the heading, "*Bhattan Day Sawayye".* A Bhatt *Vahee* related with the events in the Punjab was discovered by Sikh scholars in 1961 A.D; in the possession of Bhai Sant Singh Bhatt of village Karsindhu in tehsil Jind. These *Bhatt vahees* have become an important source of Sikh theology and history.

VARIOUS SIKH SAMPARDAIS

Giani Sampardai

This *sampardai* of the Sikhs was founded by Guru Gobind Singh for preparing professors of theology of Sikhism. Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh were the only two Sikhs who had received training from Guru Gobind Singh in this regard. During his tenure as sewadar of Harimandir Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar, Bhai Mani Singh founded here the *Giani* School of the Sikhs. Main task of these *Gianis* has been to perform exposition of the Sikh Scriptures. The place where the *Gianis* used to live within the Harimandir Sahib complex came to be known as *"Bunga Gianian"* During the days of persecution of the Sikhs in the

18th century the manangement of Gurdwara Harimandir Sahib passed into the hands of the Udasi saints, who were not persecuted because of their Hindu looks. These Udasis came to be known as *Mahants.* These *Mahants* successively served as head priests of Harimandir Sahib and Akal Takhat at Amritsar and the Giani institution of Sikhism remained under their control till they were forcibly ejected by the Sikhs under Singh Sabha in 1920's, because they had introduced not only un-Sikh but even anti- Sikh practices in the Sikh shrines and made numerous interpolations in the Sikh literature. With the enactment of the Sikh Gurdwara Act and constitution of Sharmani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 1925, their control over the Sikh Shrines and the Giani institution of Sikhism in Amritsar officially came to an end. These days their followers have established deras (centres) in and outside Punjab, in India and even abroad.

Damdami Taksal

Before leaving for Deccan Guru Gobind Singh appointed Baba Deep Singh to make copies of Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) and teach meanings of Gurbani to Sikhs at Talwandi Sabo (now Damdama Sahib), thus making Damdama Sahib the seat of Sikh learning. He named it *'Guru Ki Kanshi'* as counterpart to the Hindu seat of leaning in Kanshi (Benaras). Baba Deep Singh was the first *sewadar* (Granthi) of Damdama Sahib, in district Bathinda. He served in this capacity till his martyrdom in 1757 A.D. Literal meaning of *Taksal* is 'Mint' (used for minting coins). Because this institution started producing Sikhs of high learning well versed in the exposition of Sikh Scriptures, Sikh philosophy and Sikh religious music (Kirtan), it came to be known as *Damdami Taksaal.* Inspite of so many institutions being run on the western lines in the Punjab, it continues to produce (mint) Saint Professors of Sikh theology, who move from one place to another as traditional wandering university. In doing so they aim at rendering two fold service to the community. They give some insight in the Sikh principles to general public and they also give opportunities at the very doors of such persons who want to specialize in the Sampardai / traditional knowledge, but can not remain away from home for a very long time. This institution has produced innumerable scholars in theology of Sikhism but the most distiguished names are:

Giani Sant Sunder Singh ji Bhindranwale,
GianiGurbachan Singh ji 'Khalsa' Bhindranwale,
Sant Kartar Singh Ji 'Khalsa' Bhindranwale,
Sant Jernail Singh Ji 'Khalsa' Bhindranwale,
Bhai Amrik Singh ji 'Khalsa'.

Udasi Sampardai

This is the earliest sampardai of the Sikhs. It was founded by Sri Chand son of Guru Nanak. Udasis rever Guru Granth Sahib and recognize the line of ten Gurus from Nanak to Gobind Singh, but they believe in the chain of succession which descends from Sri Chand to the reigning Mahant of the branch they follow. They are ascetics, believe in celibacy and follow the path of renunciation *(Udas)* and refuse to acknowledge Khalsa practices.

After the death of Banda Singh Bahadur in the beginning of the eighteenth century the Moghul Muslim Government of Hindustan from Delhi and the Aghan Government from Kabul woved to eliminate the Sikh nation from the face of earth. The Sikhs refused to submit, left their homes and hearths and escaped into the jungles and mountains of the Punjab and the adjoining

deserts of Rajputana. The situation prevailed for about fifty years. During this period of persecution of the Khalsa the clean shaven Udasi Sikhs having Hindu looks took care of the Sikh shrines. Because of their being clean shaven and having Hindu looks they were not targeted by the Muslim rulers. The Sikhs successfully destroyed the Muslim domination and rule in the Punjab and established their own rule in the middle of the eighteenth century. The udasis during this period grew hair and became Sikh in appearance, but remained Hindu at heart. During the Sikh rule in the Punjab huge properties were given in grant to the historical Sikh shrines. The Udasi priests of the Sikh shrines called themselves *mahants*---the priestly order, which was abolished by Guru Gobind Singh in Sikhism. The Sikhs lost their rule in 1849, when their kingdom was annexed by the British. The mahants were patronized by the British rulers of the Punjab for political reasons. Because of the huge incomes from the Gurdwara properties most of these mahants led luxurious lives and became morally corrupt and because of their Hindu background they introduced Hindu practices and rituals in Gurdwaras, which were not only un-Sikh, but even anti-Sikh. They also made several interpolations in the Sikh literature. Some of them even got Gurdwara properties transferred into their names in collusion with the British officials. During Singh Sabha movement in the last quarter of nineteenth century, the Udasis were targeted by the Khalsa as prime examples of Hindu interference in Sikhism. The Khalsa Sikhs became increasingly uneasy about Udasi authority over Gurdwaras and during the Gurdwara Reform Movement of early 1920's all the Udasis were summarily ejected from the control of Gurdwaras. After the enactment of Sikh Gurdwara act and creation of SGPC in 1925, they have lost their relevance in Sikhism.

Nirmala Sampardai

The order of the Nirmalas started during the days of Guru Gobind Singh. In order to intellectually enter the impregnable forte of Varn Ashram Dharma i.e, Brahminism, Guru Gobind Singh selected five of the most scholarly Sikhs and sent them to Banaras (Kanshi) in the guise of Brahmins, to learn Sanskrit, Vedas and other ancient Hindu religious texts. On their return, being learned people he called them Nirmalas (unsullied). They formed the school of Sikh theosophy. They remain celibate and wear saffron clothes. They practice meditation, yoga and study scriptures: Guru Granth Sahib, the Vedas, the Shastras, the Puranas and the Epics. After the Sikhs destroyed Muslim rule and domination in the Punjab and established their rule under the Misals, the learned Barahmins from Paryag and Banaras came to the Punjab in the garb of Nirmala Sikhs and settled in the Malwa region of the Punjab. They were given patronage by the Sikh rulers of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Faridkot states and have a substantial following among the Sikhs in this area. They produced a lot of Sikh religious literature in the light of Vedantic philosophy and tried to Hinduise Sikhism through their writings and religious practices. The Nirmala deras received land grants and religious endowments from various Sikh rulers of the Punjab. This school of Sikhism has produced many scholars of high learning. They have contributed greatly in the propagation of Sikhism outside Punjab. Although Nirmalas are accepted as a part of the Panth, their ascetic discipline and the strong nature of their interpretations of the Sikh Scriptures with a Brahmanical (vedantic i.e Sanatani) bias deviate sharply from Gurmat, which is unacceptable to the Khalsa Sikhs. Presently they have their establishments in the form of Gurdwaras and deras internationally.

The Sewa Panthi Sampardai

Literally *sewa panthi sampardai* means fellowship of service. It was founded by Bhai Ghahnaiya, who during the siege of Anandpur toured the battlefield carrying water and serving it

to the friend and foe alike. Sewa Panthis are principally Sindhi Sikhs, celibate and very few. They have established a big dera at Goniana Mandi in Bathinda district and now are mainly devoted to the cause of education in addition to preaching of Sikhism.

Nihang Sampardai

Nihangs constitute an order of the Sikhs, who never care about death and misery. They are ever-ready for martyrdom and remain unsullied by wordly possessions. They are house-holders and have families. Origionally they were death-squads of the Sikhs, who spearheaded the task of toppling down the' Moghuls and Afghan' political hegemony in the Punjab, according to the programme given to Banda Singh Bahadur by Guru Gobind Singh in the year 1708. Ever since the days of Guru Gobind Singh, they have been in the vanguard of the Sikh struggle against tyranny and foreign rule. They rendered most conspicuous service in establishing Sikh power in the Punjab between Khyber and River Jamna (Delhi). At that time they were known as Akalis literally meaning immortals and were greatly feared as determined warriors. Through their extraordinary zeal and enthusiasm, they acquired the character of priests in which capacity they acted effectively while directing the conduct of Sikh councils at the Akhal Takhat. Nihangs can be recognized from a distance as they wear dark blue robes with their legs bare below the knees and high blue and yellow turbans laced with steel discs. They trace the origion of their blue dress from Guru Gobind Singh, who dressed himself with blue robes like a Muslim divine (*Uchch da pir)* to conceal his identity from the pursuing Moghal imperial forces, after his escape from the fortress at Chamkaur. -For part of the year they remain in their 'camps' called '*chhaunis',* attending to cultivation. At other times they roam around the Punjab and adjacent states on horse back. They usually carry spears, swords (Kirpan), daggers, shields and now of course guns. For the festival of Hola Mohalla they converge on Anandpur to participate in mock battles. They use a charming vocublary of Punjabi slang language, which they developed during the worst persecution of the Sikhs, for the purpose of communicating among themselves, which has found its way into Punjabi language. Their contigents are called "*Guru kian ladlian faujan".* Therefore they enjoy the regard of the whole Sikh community.

This Sikh Sampardai has its headquarter at Damdama Sahib, a holy Sikh shrine in Bathinda district of the present Punjab. This institution has also produced innumerable sons for the Sikh nation and among whom Akali Phoola Singh's name stands most distinguished.

CHAPTER 12

PHILOSOPHY OF SIKHISM

Philosophy is a Greek word and comes from: Philo i.e love; and Sophia i.e wisdom or knowledge. Therefore philosophy literally means love with wisdom. Man from the very beginning has been engaged in this endeavour that nothing should remain beyond his knowledge. He was challenged with such important questions: Why it happened? How it happened? When it happened? The education which deals with knowing: "What is universe? Who is its creator? What are the reasons? What is human being? What is the purpose of human life etc; are all topics of philosophy.

There are two ancient philosophies in the world: The Indian philosophy and the Greek philosophy. With the birth of Sikhism in the 15th century in the 'Punjab', third branch of philosophy was born, which is called *'Gurmat'.* Philosophy in Indian culture is called *'Darsan',* which literally means to see. The thing which was realized or seen was named '*Darsan'.The* ancient Indian philosophy comprises of six different Hindu thought systems and is called **'***Khat Darsan'.*

The philosophy of Sikhism has been propounded in the holy Sikh Scripture, 'Guru Granth Sahib'. Its fundamentals differ from the fundamentals of all the major world religions including all the six systems (*Khat Darshan*) of Hinduism i.e; Varn Ashram Dharma also called Sanatan Dharma. That is why Guru Amar Dass says, "*Khat darsan vartay vartaara, Gur ka darsan agamapaara*--GGS, p.360-61. It gives an insight into the metaphysics, ethics, mysticism and cosmology of Sikhism. From the inception of Sikhism by Guru Nanak to its ritual consecration by Guru Gobind Singh, within a period of about two hundred years, the Sikhs were able to evolve a comprehensive philosophy embracing spiritual, religious, social, economic, cultural, political and military aspects with the objective of creating a more disciplined organization of saint soldiers.

Sikhism is a strictly monotheistic religion and is critical of both polytheism and henotheism. It believes that this universe is the creation of God. Its origion was in God, it operates in God's order (*Hukam*) and its end is in God. It subscribes to the views of earlier eastern religions of Jog (Jogism-Yoga) and Vedanta (Hinduism) that this universe is made up of two major substances: the 'Soul' (Spirit */ Purkh')* and 'Matter' *(Prakriti),* but unlike them it neither grants superiority to the spirit over matter (Yoga-Jogism) nor it regards the matter *(Prakriti)* as illusion, *Mithya* or *Maya* (Hinduism). It radically accepts all reality, both spiritual and material. It believes in the reality (existence) of God and reality of the world and does not dismiss world out of hand as mere illusion or *Maya* or *Mithiya.* The world, which earlier religions believed was a snare or at best a mere delusion, the home of sin, a place of pain and suffering and hence evil and release could come through complete dissociation with it, was shown to be the house of God and field of action according to the philosophy of Sikhism and its renunciation is like a soldier running away from battlefield. Sikhism denounces renunciation, asceticism and celibacy and is highly critical of a life of escapeism. Sikhism is a life affirming religion and recommends full and virtuous participation in affairs of life. It involves an integral combination between spiritual and empirical life of man. All Sikhs are householders *(Grahistis)* and believe in sharing full social

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responsibility**.** Against the withdrawal of Sanyasis, recluses and Yogis, Sikhism proclaims that he knows the way who works and shares, his earnings with others. The inner purity does not come through mere escape and it was cowardly to run away from the battle of life. The basics of Sikhism indicate the need for a balance *(Sehaj)* between the active and contemplative life i. e; one of a *Grahisti* (house-holder) and a seeker of salvation as an integral member of society and being a good individual. In this endeavour to tread an upright path in an active life a Sikh is enjoined to be vary of his enemies *(Kam, Karodh, Lobh, Moh and Ahankar).*

Sikhism believes that 'Soul' *(Spirit--Purkh-Atma)* emerges from God *(Paramatma--The* Supreme Soul *Param-Purkh)* and re-merges with it after death. The basic belief of Sikhism is that life is not sinful in origion or that it was an evil and source of suffering inherent in it. On the contrary it believes that having emerged from a `pure source' was, pure in essence. Sikhism does not accept any dichotomy in life whether it is `personal' and social, 'faith and reason' or 'any other such differentiation', where as other ealier eastern religious systems consider spiritual path separate and distinct and there is a clear dichotomy between the empirical and spiritual life of man.

Sikhism unlike Hinduism and Buddhism takes a more positive view of the human body. It does not regard the human body as an unclean vessel, a seat of worms, but `temple of God', worthy of adoration and reverence. It strictly forbids any torture of body through penances like fasting, exposure to extremes of heat or cold or submitting it to tortuous exercises for the realization of God.

As per Sikh thought heaven and hell are not places for living hereafter, they are part of spiritual topography of man and do not exist otherwise. Dualism of God in heaven and men on earth has no meaning in Sikhism. Sikhism does not believe in other worldliness it believes in now and here.

According to Sikhism it is not irreligious to aquire wealth provided it is aquired through honest and fair means and is used not only to derive personal comfort for oneself or one's family but also to give comfort to society also. However, Sikhism is definitely against the exploitive collection of wealth.

Sikhism denounces idolatry and is against downgrading of woman instead it regards her as principle of eternal creation. It grants her equality in all fields of life. Marriage in Sikhism is considered as union of two souls and is regarded as a sacrament and not a contract. Sikhism does not believe in the hierarchical caste ideology of Hinduism. It preaches and practices equality of man. It also does not believe in the Hindu concept of pollution and ritual purification.

Sikh religion consists of truthful living, sharing full social responsibility, earning one's livelihood by sweat of brow, sharing one's hard earned earnings with the less fortunate and needy, equality of all human beings irrespective of caste, creed, race, gender, economic or social status, engendering tolerance, social justice, love of God's creation, service of humanity *(Sewa)* and contemplation *(Simran*).

Other doctrines and concepts of Sikhism deal with, the nature of creation, soul, body, life and death, worldly life, renunciation, asceticism, celibacy, Sikh ethics, morality, *Ahimsa (Ahinsa), Karma, Mukti, Hukam, Raza,* Grace, the phenomenon of reincarnation and transmigration, the concept of hell and heaven, idolatry, status of woman, the role of the Guru, the priest, the Hindu caste system and proselytization etc.

Because of the theistic kinship with other religious systems, the Sikh Gurus did not quarrel with terms instead they deliberately used them and redefined them in the light of their own philosophy and Sikh mystical experience. Terms like *Sehaj* (Sehja-Buddhism), *Purkh, Samadhi, Anhad, Naad (Jog), Mukti, Karma, Maya, Swarg, Narak, Atma, Chaurasee lakh joon,Yugas, Awagaun-Samsara* (Hinduism), *Hukam, Raza* (Islam), *Nadar--Grace* (Christianity) are found extensively used by the Sikh Gurus in the Sikh Scriptures. The *Purkh* of Nanak is absolutely different from the *Purusha* of Samakhya.

Spiritual philosophy of Sikhism

Spiritual philosophy of Sikhism is called, '*Naam Marag'*----The practice of remembrance of God in words, mind and actions. Spirituality means realizing the meaning and purpose of life, which ultimately means self-realization-**"***Man Toon Jot Saroop Hain Apna Mool Pachhan"* (GGS, M l, p. 441)- "O my mind know Yourself God lives inside you".

According to Sikhism, the goal of life is neither personal salvation nor to look for a heaven or paradise in the hereafter, but to cater for the spiritual well being of the society as a whole and realization of God with in us (self-realization) by abiding His will and seeking grace, now and here, which according to Sikhism is only possible through, *Sewa* (service-Active life of love--help of humanity), by observing principles of truth in their true spirit and *Naam Simran* (Contemplation). In this endeavor one needs guidance, which is provided by the ten Gurus, the epitome of which is contained in the Guru Granth Sahib. Sikhism gives greatest importance to *Sewa* (self-less service of humanity) and *Simran* (contemplation), it does not believe in otherworldliness.

Religious philosophy of Sikhism

Religious philosophy of Sikhism is called, '*Gurmat'*. Religiously a Sikh should lead a life according to the *Bani* and *Bana* of Sikhism as advised by the Gurus and enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib, **"***Sikhi Skihia Gur Veechar"* (GGS Mlp.465)-"Sikhism is the philosophy of the Guru". As per Sikhism, truthful living in the noble fear of Almighty (God) is heaven and having no faith in God and living an unethical life is *hell---"Tahay Baikunth Jahan Keertan Tera"* (GGS, p.749)---'Paradise is where your (The Almighty's) praises are sung'. Dualism of God in heaven and men on earth has no meaning in Sikhism. To realize the eternal lord, an individual has to inculcate the purity of body, mind and soul, in both personal conduct and in relation to society. Emphasis is on, *Naam Japo* (contemplate i.e remember God in your words, mind and actions), *Kirat Karo* (work hard honestly) and *Wand Kay Chhako* (share your earnings). The individual has to live in and as a part of this world while resisting temptation. In other words, Sikhism teaches and preaches a process of self discipline, which is three dimensional:

Physical discipline,
Moral discipline,
Spiritual discipline.

According to Gurbani:

- *Augun sab Mita-ay kay par upkar karay"*--GGS, p. 218.

- *"Jeh karni teh poori mat, karni bajhjon ghatay ghat"*—GGS, p24 A Sikh should mean what he says, any person who does not possess this quality can not be called a Sikh.
- *Alp, Aahar, sulp see ninda, daya, chhima, tan preet, Seel, santokh, sada nir bahitho, havebo tirgun ateet, Kaam, karodh, lobh, moh na man sion liavay, Tab he atam tat ko darse parm purkh keh pavay"*--Ibid.

- *Eo Gurmukh Aap nivari-ay, sab raj sariashat ka lay* –GGS. P 648 i.e, "God shall honour such a God-oriented Sikh and he can rule the entire world".

- *Jin kay bheetar hai antra, Jaisay pasoo, taisay uh nara"*--GGS, p. 1163,- "Those who do not mean what they say, they are as good as animals".

- Those who maitain only outer the appearance of a Sikh but donot posses inner values of Sikhism are not Sikhs. They are called Bhekhi Sikhs--While commenting on them Guru Nanak says, **"***Kartoot pasoo kee minas jat lok pachara karay din raat"* --GGS.p.267- They only look humans, but by actions they are animals".

- *Nanak se nar asal Khar, Je bin gun garbh karan*--GGS, P. 1246. Nanak those persons who have not adopted good qualities, but are full of ego, they are in reality, donkeys and not human beings

Economic philosophy of Sikhism

Economic philosophy of Sikhism is also supreme and unique. Out of all the ideologies, which came into existence in the last millennium (1000-2000), the philosophy of Sikh religion is the greatest. Three leading philosophies developed in the millennium; Capitalism, Communism, and Sikhism, when we compare the Sikh religious philosophy to the other two philosophies, then it becomes clear that its horizon is much wider than the other two:

Capitalism is based on selfishness and greed. Its' ideological base is liberalism. The real object of capitalism is to make a profit through liberalism

Marxism developed as a reaction to the Capitalism, which was pursuing naked oppression. It was based on principles of Social equality and justice, but it was affected by the unbalanced materialism of the west. It is limited to physical and material aspects of life *(Kirat karo* and *Wand ke chhako).*

Sikhism is a complete revolutionary philosophy, because it is three dimentional and covers all the three aspects of human life i.e, Spiritual, physical and material *(Naam Japo, Kirat Karo, Wand Ke Chhako).*

Both Marxism and Sikhism are revolutionary philosophies, but in aims and content Sikhism is poles apart from communism, as it is irrevocably committed to social pluralism and freedom of conscience, tolerance, and recognition of the human individual as an end in himself, and not an expandable limb in the beehive society of communism.

Political philosophy of Sikhism

It can be safely summed up in three words, "unity, equality and fraternity". Egalitarianism, democracy and seclarism form the basis of the political philosophy of Sikhism. Sikhism is a social and fraternal religion, which preaches common Fatherhood of God and universal brotherhood of man, recognizes equal status to all human beings and between man and woman. It is a faith, which aims at creation of a just order and believes in social equality and peaceful co-existence. Sikhism does not impose its values on others, but preaches a secularism, which respects other people's right to be different.

Social philosophy of Sikhism

Sikhism is a world-affirming, not world-denying, philosophy. It is a sociospiritual religion. It strongly denounces renunciation, asceticism and celibacy. It recommends an active life---the life of a householder *(Grahasti Jeevan)* in society, not in isolation. It emphasizes that normal life, lived with virtuous conduct and sincere faith in God, leads to its realization. Worldly duties are to be performed side by side with search for God, **"***Nama kahay Tilochna mukh tay raam small haath paon kar kam sab cheet niranjan naal*" (GGS). It lays emphasis on social obligations and it believes that the man, being part of society, has to work for its uplift. Sikhism extorts its followers to lead a social life based on the principles of *Naam Japna* (devotion to Divine), *Kirat Karna,* (earn a living with honest labour) and *Wand Kay Chhakna* (share earnings with the needy or the less fortunate).

Sikhism preaches love, tolerance, universal brotherhood and peaceful coexistence. Individualism in Sikhism is a cardinal sin. Sikhism is a universal religion catering for the spiritual well being of society and not a personal religion catering for individuals. Guru Nanak says, "*Aap mukat, mukat karay sansar, Nanak tis jan ko sada namskar"*—GGS. He himself is emancipated and emancipates the whole world. Nanak says, to that slave of the Lord, one may ever make an obeisance**"**.

Sikhism is not a philosophy of passivity or negativism. It is a dynamic faith that gives life a meaning and to man a breadth and comprehensiveness of vision. The world is a beautiful place to live in and human birth is a splendid gift of God to be cherished, for a beautiful living. The basics of Sikhism indicate the need for a balance between an active and contemplative life one of a *Grahisti jiwan* (houselder's life) and a seeker of salvation as an integral member of society and being a good moral individual.

Cultural philosophy of Sikhism

Sikhism teaches preaches and practices love for God's creation, equality (egalitarianism), tolerance, liberalism, selfless service and adventure in all fields of life. Woman in Sikhism symbolizes the eternal principle of creation. Music occupies prime position in Sikh culture. Almost entire Guru Granth Sahib has been structured according to Ragas.

Military philosophy of Sikhism

Sikhism recognizes that in some circumstances war becomes necessity. Guru Nanak insisted that tyrannical injustice must be resisted. Guru Hargobind said, "*Shastar mazloom dee*

*rakhia tay janvanay dee bhakhia vastay han" i.e, "*The weapons are meant to protect the weak and smite the oppressor." After the martyrdom of his father, Guru Arjan Dev in 1606, he armed the Sikhs and kept a standing army. Guru Teg Bahadur said, **"***Bha-ay kahoo kao det neh neh bhai maanat aan***"**-"Neither fear nor frighten any one". However, it was not untill the time of Guru Gobind Singh that the rules of war were drawn up. He propounded the theory of just war, *Dharm yudh***,** the one to be fought only in defence of justice. He laid down five conditions of a justifiable or righteous war *(Dharam Yudh):*

(1) When all other methods have failed it is righteous to draw the sword. He communicated this rule to the Moghul Emperor, Aurangzeb, in his letter called 'Zafarnama'.

(2) War should be waged without hatred for the enemy or any desire for revenge. Lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride are five vices or evils that Sikhs should shun. The first four could easily be committed during a war. In a just war Sikhs should avoid them, as at all other times.

(3) It must neither be waged for the purpose of gaining territory nor for racial superiority nor for power. War was for the establishment of faith and social justice and for the eradication of evil. Any land property captured in course of war be returned to its owner as soon as possible after hostilities have ended. Looting and taking of booty are forbidden, as this would turn motive of justice into ones of lust and greed. Those who died in battle were to be remembered as martyrs of faith.

(4) The soldiers must be committed Sikhs, who therefore conduct themselves according to Sikh standards. Non-combatant innocent citizens, soldier without a weapon, women, children, the religious and aged, were not to be attacked or harmed.

(5) The final just war principel is that only minmum force should be used. One the objectives of war have been achieved, fighting should cease and attempts should be made to establish peace.

Guru Gobind Singh said:

- *Choon kaar az haman heelte dar guzashat halal ast burdan ba shamsheer dast***"**--*"*When affairs are past other remedies, it is righteous to unsheath the sword."

  --Zafarnama Guru Gobind Singh

- *Dhan jio tih ko jag mein, mukh thee Har chit mein judh beecharay"*--- *"*Blessed is he", says Guru Gobind Singh "in this world, who cherishes war in his heart, but at the same time does not forget God".

  --Dasam Granth, Guru Gobind Singh

- *Soora so pehchani-ay jo laray deep kay het, purja, purja kat maray kabhoon na chhoday khet.***"**---*"*Only he receives the recognition as a brave man, who fights for a righteous cause, dies of being cut to pieces, but never deserts the battlefield"-- GGS, p.1105.

- *Raj bina nahin dharma chalay hai, dharma bina sab dalay malay hai*--Without self-

rule Dharam (righteousness) can not flourish, without righteousness everything is crushed and ruined".

- *Deh Shiva bar mohay]hay,*
  Shubh karman tay kabhoon na taroon
  Na daroon arson jab ja-ay laroon
  Nischay kar apni jeet karoon,
  Ar Sikh hoon apnay he mann ko,
  Eh lalach hoon gun tao uchro
  Jab aav kee audh nidhan banay,
  At he rann mein tab joojh maroon"
  (Guru Gobind Singh)

Protection, however, should characterize Sikh power wherever it exists. The Sikh prayer *(Ardas)* ends with the hymn:

Raj karega Khalsa--The Khalsa shall rule
Aakee rahey na ko-ay-No hostile powers shall exist
Khuar ho-ay sabh milein gay---The one's who have been lost shall re-unite
Bachay sharan jo ho-ay--Those who come to the Khalsa for shelter will be protected"

THEORY OF CREATION ACCORDING TO SIKHISM

According to the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, the material universe is God's creation. Its origion was in God and its end is in God; and it operates in the God's Hukam (God's order). Before this universe was created God *(Parmatma)* existed all alone in His 'abstract form *(Nirgun Avastha)*-Trascendent state*)'* and He was in a state of '*Sunn Samaad* (perfect meditation-deep trance') and He was in a state of *Sunn Smadh-perfect meditation-deep trance.* Guru Nanak had described this state of God in Guru Granth Sahib:

"Arbad narbad dhundukara, dharn na gagna, hukam apara----Avar na deesay eko soee i.e, There was utter darkness for countless years. There was neither earth nor sky; it was His will. There was neither day nornight, neither sun nor moon. He (God-Nirankar-Parmatma) was in deep trance-('Sunn Smaad). It is from this 'Nirgun (Transcendent/abstract) state of '*Sunn Smaadh'* that He created the universe with His will, **"***Jaa tis bhana taan jagat upaia"* GGS, p.1035. After creation God became manifest. This is the '*Sargun* or manifest (immanent), state of *Parmatma'*. "The abstract and immanent states of God are his two forms. He exists in 'Nirgun'state and manifests Himself in '*Sargun'* state"-GGS, p.290-When God became manifest, in order to realize Himself He made nature wherein He has his seat, Balhari kudrat vassia", tera ant na jaee lakhia"—GGS, Asa M1, p.469.

Guru Nanak says, "By His command, the creation, came into being, the command is indescribable"i.e, "*Hukmee hovan akaar hukam na kahiaa jai* GGS, p.1. "With one word 'Create' He set the process of evolution of nature into motion. He made the world's expanse." i.e; "*Keeta psaao* (process of evolution-ਪਸਾਉ), *eko kwao* (One Word-ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ*), tis te ho-ay lakh dariao"*-GGS, japji Sahib-Pauri 16, p.3. When was the universe created?-**"***Kavan so* (ਸੁ)

vela, wakhat kavan, kavan thit kavan vaar, Kavan se (ਿਮ) *rutti, mah kavan, jit hoa aakaar--jaan karta sarishti ko saajay aapay janay soi"* i.e; "None but the creator who created the universe, knows when He created it?"--GGS, M1, p.4.

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag explains that from the 'Supreme Power' gases came into existence and the gases formed water and from water there was origin of life:

- *Saachay tay pavna bhaia, pavnay tay jal hoay, jal tay tir bhavan sajia ghat ghat jot samoay*. He is in every one—GGS, p .19.
- *Andaj jeraj utbhuj, teray keenay janta*—Sorath M1
- *Andaj jeraj setaj keeni, utbhuj khan bahut rach deeni*—Chaupai, Guru Gobind Singh

Universe (Bremand) has innumerable spaces

This universe is very vast. There are innumerable worlds in it. There are a number of suns and moons to give it light and energy. The modern science has confirmed it. Guru Nanak says, "*Patalan patal lakh agasaan agaas*" (GGS, jap ji Pauri 22).

Creation of makind

Guru Nanak has explained that anthropological evolution of man was from flora and fauna to mankind when he says:

- ***"****Kaytay rukh birakh hum cheenay kaytay pasoo upa-ay kaytay naag kulee meh aa-ay kaytay pankh uda-ay*--GGS, P.156.

The Guru has given the evolution of man right from flora life to reptiles, creatures like snakes, birds, spinal animals etc. This process continued for many ages in the same life cycle and ultimately man came into existence after evolutionary process for unknown period. Man reborn in all the stages many times and only then got its present anthropological position, *Kaee janam bha-ay keet patanga, kaee janam, gaj meen kuranga. Kaee janam pankhee sarp hoio. Kaeejanam haivar brikh joio. Mil jagdees Milan kee bareeaa. Chirankaal ih deh sanjareeaa*-GGS, P 176.

Physiology and philosophy of man according according to

Guru Granth Sahib

Guru Nanak has explained the process of human development including conception, physiology and philosophy. He has explained that after the parents conjugate, the semen of father mingles the egg of the mother, conception takes place. The union of the semen and ovum flourishes and prepares residence (*tan*- i.e body) for the soul (*Jeev-atma***)***:*

- *Maat pita sanjog upai rakat bind mil pind karay. Antargarbh urdh liv laagee so prabh saaray daat karay*--GGS, p.1013.

- *Rakat bindu mil pind sariya.* Ibid, 1026.

- *Jeeo paa*-ay tan saajia rakhia banat bana-ay
  Akhee dekhay jihva bolay kannee surat sama-ay
  Pairee chalay hathee karna dita painay kha-ay—GGS, p138

Parmatma (God) put the *jiv atma* (soul) into the body and he inspirated air 9Pran) into it and made it to speak:

- *Har jeeo gupha under rakh ke waaja pawan waajaia*—GGS, p.922.

The body is mortal, whereas the soul is immortal. The body is controlled by the *mann**(Brain) through senses (Indrian), which are of two types: Karam Indrian and Gian Indrian. The body weighing three and a half maunds runs on the fuel of food and water:

The body weighing three and a half *maunds* (ਮਣ) runs on the fuel of food and water:

- *Saadhay traiy man dehi chalay paani ann"*--GGS, 1383.
- *Paun, paani agni ka mail, chanchal chapel budh ka khel,*
  Nau darwaje, daswan duar bhuj re giani ih beechar,॥१॥
  Kahu Nanak gur brahm dikhaia, marta jaata, nadir na aia॥४॥–GGS, M1 p. 152.

Thus the human being consists of body and soul. Soul (*Brahm jot*) lives in the body:

- *Ih sareer sabh dharm hai, jis under sachchay ki vich jot*—GGS, M4, p. 309.

- *Man mandir tan saaji baar, is he maddhe basat apaar*—GGS, M3 p.180—181.

- *Ae sareera meriaa, har tum meh jot rakhee,Ta too jag mein aiyaHar jot rakhi tudh vich, ta too jag meh aiya*—GGS, p921.

Guru Nanak has even explained the existence of female chromosomes in males and male hormes in females:

- *Purkh meh naar, naar meh purkha bhoojo Brahm giani* i.e; "In the Man is woman and in the woman is man. Realize this 'O' God-enlightened man"--GGS, p.879.

Place of the body and self in Sikhism

Sikhism unlike Hinduism and Buddhism takes a more positive view of the human body. Man, the acme of God's creation is not merely a handful of dust, but repository and medium of the message of the Lord. The body is not an unclean vessel, a seat of worms, but "Temple of God' worthy of adoration and reverence. Having created the human body God has installed His veryself therein:

- *Ih sarir sabh dharma hai, jis under sachchay kee vich jot*—GGS, p.309.
- *Panch tat mil ih tan keea,atam ram pa-ay such theea*—GGS, p. 1039.
- *Mann mandir tan saaji baar, is he madhay bast apaar*—GGS, M3, p.1059.

Thus according to Sikhism the body is the shrine (*Mandir*) of *Atma* (*Brahm jot*), therefore it is sin against God to torture the body or to deny its rightful place. Guru Nnak told to Farid jee:

- *Tan na tapai tanoor join balan had na baal, sir pairin kia pheria under piri smaal* i.e; "Burn not thy body like a furnace. Feed not the fire within thee with thy bones. There was nothing with thy head or feet. Look for the Lord within thyself' (Ibid, SalokM1). But search for the Lord will necessitate the care of the body, which needs to be fed inorder that it may live, function properly and serve its master, the soul, so that it was enabled to realize its goal.
- Nanak *so prabh simri-ay tis dehi ko paal, i.e,* "The Lord should be meditated on by serving the body first" (GGS, Rag Bihagra, M5). It is a priceless gift from God, which even angels are supposed to long for and and this they do, to enable to serve its master, the soul.
- *Is dehi ko simray dev, so dehi bhaj har kee sev* i.e, The angels prat for a gift of the body, O, man, engage this body for meditation on and in the service of the Lord" (GGS, p,1159).

Atma (Soul)

The elementary principle behind the body, the unseen master is the Soul ***(***Purkh-*Atma)* that controls it through the **"***mann"*. The Will, the emotions and the intelligence are all its instruments but it is distinct from them all. It is not located in any particular part of the body. It has a peculiar relationship with the body. Soul is neither born with the body nor dies with it. According to the philosophy of Sikhism, "When the body dies, it is released from the grip of three modes and merges with the unstruck melody of the word- (GGS, p.327). When the body dies it still lives. Guru Nanak says, **"***Dehi maati bolay paun, bujh ray giani mooa kaun, Mooi surat baad ahankaar, uh na mooa jo dekhanhaar"i.e, "*The body is mere earth in which air speaks. Tell me O wise man, what it is that? The life of pride and strife is dead, but the Soul that sees behind does not die" (GGS, Rag Gauri Ml).

***Mann (ਮਨ)**

The word '*mann'* in the holy Sikh Scripture, 'Guru Granth Sahib' has been used to denote three things: *Jiv-atma,* the brain and also for the thought process:

- *Mann loon jot saroop hai aapna mool pachhaan*-- GGS, M3, p.441. Here word '*mann'* has been used for *atma* (soul) which is part of *Paramatma* (God).

- *Ih mann karmaa, ih mann dharmaa, ih mann panch tat te janma*--GGS, M1, p.415. *Ih mann saktee ih mann seeo, ih mann panch tat ka jeeo* GGS, p.342. Here **'***mann'* stands for brain.

- *Mann jeetay jagjeet*--GGS, Japji, Pauri 28. Here 'mann' stands for thought process.

The relationship between God (parmatma), Soul (Atma) and body

In Sikhism the word *'Atma /Purkh /Jiva /Jiv-atma /Jot'* are synnonymous for the human soul. Similarly the words "*Parmatma/Akal Purkh/ Karta Purkh/ Parm Purkh /Parm Purkh/Joti"* are synnonymous for God. According to Sikh thought *Atma (Purkh)* first emerges from *Paramatma (Akal Purkh—Karta Purkh)* and then remerges in Him, as a spark comes from fire and falls back in it and as the waves come out from the ocean and dip back in it:

> *Jaisay ek aag te kanooka kot aag utheh niaray, niaray havaeke pher aag mein milaein gay,*
> *Jaise ek dhoor te anek dhoor poorat hai, dhoor kay kanooka pher dhoor he samahegay,*
> *Jaise ek nad te tirang kot upjat hai paan ke tirang sabe paan he kahain gay,*
> *Jaisay vishav roop te abhoot bhoot pargat havai tahi te upaj sabhe tahin mein samahegay"*

(Guru Gobind Singh, Akal Ustat) i.e, "As from one fire millions of sparks of fire arise and in rising remain separate, yet they again merge in the same fire; As from one heap of dust innumerable particles of dust occupy the expanse and yet they again unite with the dust; As from one stream millions of waves arise and yet the waves being made of water again become water. In the same way all sentients non-sentients emerge from the Universal Being. Having sprung from Him they all shall blend again with Him".

According to the philosophy of Sikhism, the Soul*/ Purkh /Atma*, Divine light or *jot* in us is a reflection of God */ Akal Purkh /Parmatma or Joti* ie, the main source of light. The two, God *(Akal Purkh--Parmatma)* and Soul *(Purkh--atma),* are identical in the same way as fire and its sparks or the sun and its rays or the mirror and its reflection. Soul is there because of God. It is not an independent entity without God. It is part of God. The ultimate Eternal Reality (God) resides in the human Soul and "It" and "Soul" are fundamentally same, **"***Atam meh Ram, Ram meh Aatam***"** ie, "God resides in the Soul and the Soul is contained in Him" (GGS, Rag Bhairon M1,). Soul is deathless like Him (God). Before creation it lived with God. After creation it takes bodily forms according to His Will.

Soul has peculiar relationship with the body. It is not born with the body and it does not die with it. "When the body dies, it is released from the grip of three modes and merges with the unstruck melody of the Word" (GGS, p.327). "Omy body the Soul is all your support. It is through the soul that I am joined with you. With it, you are sought after all. Without it no one likes to look at you" (GGS, p.390). "The body and the soul are immensely in love with each other, the Soul is detached like a Yogi, while the body is like a beauteous woman. Lo the soul enjoys a myriad joy but, then flies out, while so doing consulteth not his bride" (GGS, Maru M1). When the Soul *(Jot)* leaves the body it merges with the main source *(Parmatma-God-Joti)* as water merges with water in the same way Jot merges with the Joti. *Jion jal mein jal aa-ay khatana tion joti sang jot samana"* (Ibid). It does not go from one person to another at death but "returns to the true God who gave it".

SIKH CONCEPT OF LIFE

Life, *Pran,* and breath are synonymous The air when inspirited in the body by process of breathing is called *Pran.* Life enters the body with first breath and leaves it with last breath. Respiration maintains life. Gubani says: *"Har jio gufa under rakh kay vaaja pawan wajaia"* i.e; *Waheguru* put the Jiva into the body, then inspirited the air into it and made it to speak" (GGS, p. 922).

Sikhism does not accept the postulate of earlier religions that life was sinful in origion or that it was evil and source of suffering in itself. On the contrary it believes, **"***Aaap satt keea sab satt"* i.e, "God is true (reality) and so is his creation" (GGS, p294). Sikhism propagates that life is ephermal, "Brief like a spark of lightening is our sjourn in the world" (GGS, p.319). *"*Life in this world is like a dream but we cling to it taking it to be true, forsaking the great treasure of good" (GGS, p.482). Religious and virtuous life is adored, "Accursed is the life which does not yield the love of the Lord" (GGS, p.490). All seek to live long enough and no one wishes to die. But true life is in whose heart dwells the Lord through the Guru's Grace" (GGS, p.63). "Those that live caught in doubt achieve nothing. Those, who act and live by Guru's Word, become stable." (GGS, p.374).

Source of Life

According to Gurbani water is the primal source of life, "*Pehla Paani Jiv hai Jit Haria Sabh Koe*" (GGS). It assists growth of human beings, animals and plants (both flora ans fauna). Everything is alive because of water. No life is possible on planets, which do not have water on them.

Evolution of life according to Sikhism

Gurbani says, God created you out of a drop of water and breathed air in you. He endowed you with light of reason, discrimination and wisdom" (GGS, p.913). It also says, "for several births you were a mere worm, for several births, an insect, for several births a fish and an animal---"After ages you have the glory of being a man" (GGS, p.176). "After passing through myriads of specoes, one is blest with human form" (GGS, p.631). This is also the modern scientific theory of evolution.

The goal of life in Sikhism

In Sikhism the goal of life is not personal salvation or heavenly abode called paradise but self-realization. Gurbani says, "*Mann toon jot saroop hain apna mool pachhaan,* i.e, "O, my soul, you have emanated from the light of God, know your true essence (GGS, p.441)". It further says, **"***Bhaee prapat manukh deharia, Gobind Milan kee ih teri baria*---*"*Man, thou art blest with human birth, this is thy only opportunity, to meet Gobind i.e, God (GGS, Asa, M5, p.378)". According to the theosophy of Sikhism this is only possible by controlling ego through *Sewa,* by observing the principles of truth, love in their true spirit and *Naam Simran.*

Human life cycle

During the development of human body in the mother's womb *Atma* remains attached with its source *(Parmatma)* and is free from ego *(Gurmukh),* "*Re nar garbh kundal ja*

aachhat urdh dhian liv laaga" (GGS, p.93)—O man, when you were in the mother's womb, you didst meditate and fix your attention on the Lord, standing on your head----after coming out of mother's womb and entering into the mortal world, he forgets the creator *(Parmatma)* and develops ego and becomes *manmukh* (self-centred), **"***Garbh chhod mrit mandal aai-ya tao narhar manhu bisaaria. ੧*.(GGS,p.93).

Guru Sahib has discussed the actions and activities of man in different stages of life in Guru Granth Sahib in Rag Majh on pages 137 and 138.

Pahilai piaar lagaa than dudh,
Doojay maa-ay baap kee sudh,
Teeje bhayaa bhaabhee bayb,
Chauthai piaar upannee khayd,
Panjvai khan peen kee dhaat,
Chhivai kaam na puchhai jaat,
Satvai sanj keea ghar vaas,
Athvai krodh joaa tan naas,
Navai dhaulay ubhay saah,
Dasvai dadhaa hoaa suaah
Gaay sigeet pukaaree dhaah,
Udhi--aa hans dasaa-ay raah,
Aaia gaiaa muiaa naao,
*Pichhai patal sadihu kaav***,**
Nanak Manmukh andh piaar,
Baaj guroo dubaa sansar". 2. M 1

- *Das baaltan bees ravan teesa ka sundar kahaavay,*
  Chaleesee pur hoay pachaasee pag khisai sathee kay bodhaypaa aavai,
  Satar ka matiheen aseehaan kaa viuhaar na paavai,
  Navai kaa sihjaasnee mool na jaanai aap bal,
  Dhandholim dhoodhim dith mai Nanak jag dhooay kaa dhavalhar ".3.*Pauri*
  Toon karta purakh agamn hai aap sarisat upaatee
  Rang parang uparjanaa baho baho bidh bhaatee
  Toon jaaneh upaee sabh khayal tumatee--GGS, p137-138.

The Concept of Death in Sikhism

According to Gurmat human death is of two types: Physical death and moral death (moral degradation). Physical death is the fate of all living beings as it is subject to "Hukam" i.e Cosmic Law and is unavoidable, whereas "moral death" is avoidable. And that is the point that is emphasized in Guru Granth Sahib again and again. The Sikh concept of physical death revolves around the separation of the soul from the body:

- The Lord has brought the union of the soul with the body he is also responsible for separation--GGS, p.139.

- When the True Lord so wills, He gives command to the soul and it is separated from the body, and the separated ones then He unites again--GGS, p580.

- According to His will alone we come and go" --GGS, p294.

In order to reduce the shock of death for men, they have been again and again reminded of its inevitability:

- All that are created, by death must be destroyed"--GGS, p 227.
- All that comes in view as alive inevitably must die"--GGS, p 374.

The Concept of Salvation (Mukti) in Sikhism

According to major traditional belief systems belive in salvation *(Mukti) m*eans deliverance (liberation / freedom) from the cycle of life and re-birth called *Samsara* in Hinduism. Gurmat (Sikhism) does not subscribe to this view, it believes in liberation now and here and not after death, "*Mooay hoay jao mukat dehogay mukat na janay koela"*-"O, God, who will see that salvation, which you will grant me after death" (GGS, p1292). Followers of all major traditional belief systems seek salvation through *Bhagti* by observing asceticism, renunciation, celibacy. In order to achieve it the seeker escaped into a monastry, slipped int a forest or retreated into some mountain cave. It was believed that world was a snare and one must run away from it in order to save himself. Sikhism does not want its followers to be escapists. It wants them to be active and responsible participants in everyday life and attain salvation from within the hubbub of of the world. Guru Nanak says, "Salvation is not incompatible with laughing, eating, playing and dressing well"- "Nanak *Satgur bhetee-ay poori hovay jugat, hasandian, khelandian, penandian, khavandian vichay hovay mukat"*--GGS, p.522.

Enlightnment not redemption is the Sikh concept of salvation. In Sikhism salvation *(Mukti*) means replacement of ignorance by spiritual enlightenment by abiding His Will and seeking His grace, by observing principles of truth in their true spirit, by controlling ego *(Haumai)* through service (*Sewa*) of humanity and contemplation *(Simran),* while engaged in worldly pursuits now and here and not after death. According to Guru Granth Sahib:

- *So jan Mukat, jis ek liv laagi, sadaa rahay har naalay*--GGS, M3, p.796).

- *Prabh kee agiya, aatam hitavay, jeevan mukat, so-oo kahavay,*
  Taisa harkh, taiser os sog, sada anand, teh nahi biog,
  Taisa maan, taisa abhimaan, taisa rank, taisa rajaan,
  Jo vartay, saee jugat Nanak, *uh purkh kahiay jeevan mukat*--GGS, p.275.

Hinduism, Sufi-ism and Christianity seek personal salvation catering to the needs of individuals. They are unconcerned about the evils of society and barbarities of the rulers of the time. In Sikhism there is nothing like private or personal salvation, just Gid is benevolently the entire world, in the same way God-man's sphere of activity and responsibility is equallywide and unhedged by any self-created barriers. It caters for the spiritual well being of the society as a whole, "*Aap mukat, mukat karay sansaar*, Nanak *tis jan ko sada namskar*"

(GGS, p.295). This is the fundamental difference between a salvation religion catering for individuals and a universal religion catering for the spiritual well-being of society as a whole.

THE CONCEPT OF HEAVEN AND HELL IN SIKHISM

(*Narak Te Surag*)

As per Sikh thought, Heaven and Hell are not places for living here after, they are part of the spiritual topography of man and do not exist otherwise. They refer to good and evil stages of life respectively and can be lived now and here during our earthly existence. Sikhism does not believe in after life. It believes in now and here. Dualism of God in Heaven and men on earth has no meaning in Sikh ideology. As per Sikh thought:

- Truthful living in the noble fear of God is Heaven. Having no faith in God and living an unethical life is Hell--GGS, p24.
- Heaven is where abide the Lord's saintsand where one enshrines in one's mind the Lord's lotus feet--GGS, p.742.
- Heaven is where Lord's praises are being sung and he brings faith to man" "*Tahay bekunth jahan keertan tera*"--, p.479.
- Let your good deeds be your soil and Guru's word the seed. Irrigate it daily with the water of truth. Turn yourself into a farmer and let the crop of faith germinate enabling you thereby to learn the states of Heaven and Hell.---GGS, p.24)

The Concept of Hukam /Raza /Bhana (Divine Will) in Sikhism

In Punjabi *Hukam* literally means order, whereas in Sikh theosophy, *Hukam* as Supreme or Infinit Will is mentioned at many places in Guru Granth Granth Sahib (GGS). It existed before the creation when there was complete nothingness. The whole creation is the product *Hukam*, which is indescribable, *Hukam hovan akaar, Hukam na kahia jaee"* (GGS, Japji, p 1). Being the "Infinit Self-consiousness of God", *Hukam* is supremely one with Him. It is as infinit as God. In another sense *Hukam* is the supreme command. The universe moves, according to it. "*Hukmein under sabh ko bahir hukam na ko-ay-i.e;* -Every body and everything is controlled by His command, which none can escape (Japji)". "It is His command that makes men do high and low deeds. His command works in a myriad ways (GGS, p.277)". "One comes into this world and goes out of it at His command" (GGS, p 760). Sikhism lays great emphasis on the necessity of knowing and realizing *Hukam.* According to Guru Nanak, the only possible way of achieving truth is to tread on the path of *Hukam, "Hukam razain chalna* Nanak *likhia naal"* (GGS, japji,p.1).

A Sikh has an obligation to accept the *Hukam* (order) of the Almighty without any grudge or rancour. However, it does not make Sikhism as an ideology of fatalism. A Sikh is not a pessimist. A Sikh has an obligation to always make efforts *(Udham*-a~udm*)*, to struggle, to

strive to the best of feasibility but the final order is the Divine Will. Struggle knit with faith in the Almighty; leads to realization of every goal, **"***Udham karaindian jio toon kamawandian sukh bhunch, dhiaindian toon prabhu mil* Nanak *utri chint"* (GGS, p.522). The faith of a Sikh in the Grace and blessings of the Almighty is the nucleus of Sikh spiritual culture. In Sikh scriptures *Raza* and *Bhana* too have been used as synonyms of *Hukam.*

The Concept of Nadar (Grace) in Sikhism

Grace is that quality of God's nature, which is the source of man's undeserved blessings particularly those which have to do with his realization of God, "God is realized through the Grace of God" (GGS, p.1343). None is redeemed without the Grace of God" (GGS, p.661). "With thy Grace one attains the highest state of bliss. Thou art the creator, every thing else is thy creation. What is in the power of a *Jeeva?"* (GGS, p.423). One is responsible for one's decisions. In case a person's will is attuned to the Supreme Will, he is graced. He enjoys virtues and finds himself ever in His presence. If his decisions are ego-guided, then he gets caught in the web of pursuing the momentary pleasures and wastes the opportunity of finding the everlasting pleasure of his grace in this life. Through Divine Grace that final emancipation is attained.

The doctrine of Grace does not, however, mean that there are certain chosen people upon whom only, the God showers His Grace, "The Grace of the Master is on those who have meditated on Him with single mind and they have found favour in His heart" (GGS, p.24). If all the factors are favourable but Grace of God is wanting, the quality of life will be insignificant as explained in Japji Pauri 7, (GGS, p.2):

Je jug chaaray aarja hor dasonee hoay,
Nava khanda vich jaaneeay naal chalai sabh koay,
Changa naao rakhaa-ay ke jas keerat jag layay ,
Jay tis nadir na aavee to vaat na puchhai kay,
Keeta andar keet kar dosee dos dharay,
Nanak *nirgun gun karay gunvantiaa gun day.*
Tehaa koay na sujhee je tis gun koay karay

Sikhism does not accept any concept of the basic sinfulness or fall from grace. A Sikh's prime-most duty is to have faith in His Grace. It is one of the fundamental principles of Sikhism.

The Concept of Karma in Sikhism

In Punjabi *Karma* literally means actions. Theosophically the theory of *Karma* can be explained as the moral law of causation. Sikhism believes in the law of *'Karma;* but according to its own ideology. Good actions of a person have good results and bad actions have bad effects. A person has to suffer for his / her unsatisfactory behaviour. Guru Nanak says, *"Dadda dos na deo kisay dos karma apna, Jo mein keea so mein paia dos na deejay avar jana" i. e; "*Do not blame others for your sufferings, it is a result of your actions. You have harvested whatever you had sowed, why should you embroil others (GGS, p.433)?" "Every action is like a seed sown in the body" (GGS, M5, p78). The soul is the farmer. It has been given a field in the form of a body. Whatever the seed of action is sown in the field of body, the harvest is reaped accordingly, "*Jeha beejay so lunay karma Sandra khet" –i.e;* "As you sow so shall you reap" (GGS, M5, p.134).

"Farida *loray daakh bijaurian kikkar beejuay jat, handhay unn kataeda painda loray pat* (u)*"*- "Having sown Acasia Arabica, the farmer searches for juicy grapes. He weaves wool but wants to wear silk" (GGS, p.1379). "Good actions not only bring the appreciation of the world, but also in the presence of the Lord (GGS, M5, p397). "Bad actions lead to misery" (M1, p.15) "One should do good actions by which he may not feel ashamed in the presence of the Lord" (GGS, p1381)

According to the ideology of Sikhism *'Karma'* is not independent of God. Everything happens under the Will of God. God's Grace becomes a means of release from the `Law of *Karma'*. The chain of *'Karma'* obviously cannot bind God rather His Grace breaks this chain. Sikhism does not believe in the Hindu theory of the 'Law of *Karma'*.

Re-incarnation and Transmigration

Sikhism believes in now and here and rejects the existence of other world, liberation after death and hence rebirth, reincarnation and transmigration. It does not believe in re-incaernatio or rebirth of the soul, but it suggests means to get rid of the fear of re-birth created by other faiths. In Sikh literature there are referencesto *Chaurasi lakh joon* and *Ava gavan* (cycle of life and death). But these references are contextual and not conceptual. The reference to Chaurasi lakh joon is to explain thet human life is superior to all other millions of species. Similarly reference of Avagavan denotes the fear (created by Hindus) of life and death and not actual "cycle of birth and rebirth". According to Sikh philosophy Naam Simran and truthful living leads to elimination of fear of re-birth (GGS, pp. 275, 449, 742, 749, 1103).

The concept of Maya in Sikhism

*Maya** is one of the basic concepts of Hindu philosophy, which says that the world is not a reality, but a mere illusion. Sikhism believes that this world is real, because it has been created by God. God is a Reality (exists) and so is His creation, "*Sachcha aap sachcha darbar* (GGS, Japji Pauri 33). According to the philosophy of Sikhsim this world and everything in this world is real but ephemeral. In Sikhism the term *Maya* is used to denote the temporal world and attachment to it, hence the translation wordly attachment. *Maya* is any thing that keeps a person away from the truth and union with God.

- One's attachment with family is *Maya*--GGS, p.166.
- Maya impinges upon us through all enveloping darknessof five demons—GGS, p.182
- The desire for *Maya* attaches one to one's wife and progeny and one is beguiled by wealth, beauty, avarice and ego Ibid, p.61.
- Maya is where one is bound to pain and pleasure and one is promoted to egoism GGS, p. 671

Maya is creation of God:

- The Lord who has created *Maya* has also created the craving for it--GGS, p179.

- *Maya* works within His Will-- GGS, p.294.

- *Maya* came from the primal source as a servant. But she has conquered the nine continents and all spaces. She has not spared the yogis and ascetics at river banks and holy spots. Even those studying Simritis and expounding Vedas are helpless GGS, p.371.

Gurbani tells us simple solutions to get rid of *Maya:*

- burns off one's love for *Maya* through the Word --GGS, p. 120.
- The whole world is gripped with false *Maya.* It is in contemplation of God that I attain joy GGS, p.482.

* Maya: The word *Maya* in Guru Granth Sahib has been used to denote: Wealth or money-materialism, Worldly attachment and illusion, therefore its interprepation should be made by the interpreter according to the context in which it has been used.

The concept of Haumai (Ego) in Sikhism

In Sikhism self-conceit or I-am-ness is called *Haumai.* According to Gurbani, *Haumai* is a wall, which separates man from God and fellow beings, **"***Dhan pir ka ikk he sang vaasa vich haumai bheet karaari"* i.e; "The bride *(Atma)* and the bridegroom *(Parmatma)* live together with a powerful wall of ego separating them (GGS, Malhar M4) . ***Haumai*** is the greatest malady afflicting most people, "*Haumai wadda rog hai"* (GGS, p.466). **"***Haumai kithon upje--, "*Where does the ego come from (Ibid, Var Asa Ml)?" Guru Nanak says, ***"****Haumai vich jag upjay, purkha Naam visriay dukh pa-ee"* i.e; "After coming into this world man gets lost in *Maya,* develops ego, becomes *Manmukh* (Self-centered i.e egoist) and forgets the creator, resulting in pain and suffering (Ibid, Ml, Ram Kali, Sidh Ghoshat)". It is stated in Guru Granth Sahib that *Maya* and ego prevent man's union with God, ***"****Ih Maya jit har visray"* i.e; "It is *Maya* that causes God to be forgotten (GGS, Ram Kali M3, Anand)". It is ego that keeps man away from God, ***"****Haumai nawein naal virodh hai, do-ay na vassay ikk tha-ay"* i.e; "Ego and love of God *(Naam)* are opposed to each other and they cannot share the same place (GGS, Rag Wadhans, M3). "We degrade ourselves from human order because of *Haumai* (GGS, p.466)". "By stilling the ego, you are united with the Lord (GGS, p.117)". Human goal is to be free of the self and ego, and become divine to rise above life and death. By subduing his ego an egoist becomes God-oriented *(Gurmukh-Divine)* and gets liberated. Such aperson is called *Jiwan Mukta* (liberated):

- Who finds life after destroying ego--GGS, p.449.
- Liberated are those who subdue their ego--GGS, p.413.

In Gurbani simple solutions for remedying egoism have been suggested:

- One sheds egoism in the society of saints--GGS, p. l89.

- Egoism is shed through Guru's Word--GGS, p.263.

Renunciation, Asceticism and Sikhism

Theologically renunciation (ਤਿਆਗ) means dissociation from wordly life *(Grahisti jiwan).* All ancient Indian relgious systems regarded renunciation as a precondition for achieving salvation *(Mukti).* Sikhism denounces this concept in strong terms. It accepts householder's life *(Grahisti jiwan)* as the forum of spiritual activities and growth. It does not believe the version of earlier religions that this world was a snare or at the best a mere delusion, a house of sin, a place of pain and suffering and hence an evil and release could come through complete dissociation with it. Sikhism regards this world as, "The house of God and He resides in it" i.e, ***"****Ih jag sachchay kee hai kothari sachahay ka vich vaas****"*** (GGS, Sri Rag, M2). Also, ***"****Ih vis sanar tum dekhday, ih har ka roop hai, har coop nadrin aiya"* ie, "This world you see is his manifestation. It is the God that you see every where" (Ibid, Ram Kali, M3, Anand). Guru Nanak deprecates the Yogi who gives up the world and then is not ashamed of begging at the door of the householder. He says, "The person incapable of earning his living gets his ears split (turns a Nath Yogi) and becomes a mendicant. He calls himself a guru or a saint. Do not look upto him nor touch his feet. He knows the way, who earns his living and shares his earnings with others, "*Ghaal kha-ay kichh hathon day Nanak rah pachhanay say"* (Ibid, p.1245). According to Sikh thought, salvation is not incompatible with laughing, playing, dressing well and eating i.e, "Nanak *Satgur bhetiay poori hovay jugat, hasandian, khelandian, penandian, khavandian vichay hovay mukat* (Ibid, p.522). Sikhism believes that one can lead a thoroughly religious life, as a part of the household, i.e. The house and the forest are alike for one who lives in poise (Ibid, p.351)".

According to Gurbani, "Family life is superior to the ascetic life because it is from householders that ascetics meet their needs (i.e, by begging) (Ibid, p.586), God is there in the world that we see and we have to find Him there and yet remain detached, "*Jion jal mein kamla alpato vartey, tion vichey girhey udas*" (Ibid, p989). Guru Nanak says, ***"****Nanak ghar he baithian sahu milay je neeat raas karay i.e* If you put your mind on the right path then, even while seated at home, you shall Nanak says, meet with your Groom (God)*"* (Ibid, p1383).

According to Sikh thought true renunciation is renunciation of evil / ego / lust, anger, greed, attachment, and pride. Only renunciation of wordly life *(Grahisti jiwan)* cannot lead to bliss (realization of God / salvation). The evil thought remains in mind:

- *Greh taj ban khand jai-ay chun khai-ay kanda, ajhu bikaar na chhodaee paapi man manda* Ibid, p.855.

- *Bin haun tiag kaha ko-oo tiagi*--Ibid, p.1140.

- *Tiagna tiagun neeka kam, karodh, lobh tiagna-* Ibid, p.101 8).

Sikhism propagates living in equipoise *(Sehaj),* while leading a householder's life without falling prey to worldly temptations.

Brahmacharya i.e Celibacy in Sikhism

Brahm-acharya literally means student of God, whereas in Hindu theosoy it means an un-

married person under a vow not to marry as a means to achieve bliss. According to Gurbani, "If one were to be saved by celibacy, then why didn't the enuchs attain highest bliss? (GGS, p. 324)". "Those who call themselves celibates do not know the way and so they leave their homes in search of God (GGS, p.469)". Logically monasticism and celibacy go together and Guru Nanak categorically rejected both of them. Celibacy before marriage is a part of Sikh ethics, but it is mandatory for a Sikh to get married.

Sex and Sex Life in Sikhism

Sikhism denounces celibacy. There was nothing unholy in a married sex life. Sikhism does not treat normal sexual relationship of a married couple as immoral. According to Sikhism, sex instinct being a natural phenomenon, was not to be annihilated. It possessed a great potency and therefore to exercise unnatural repression was most injurious for moral and spiritual health. The natural urges are not to be completely denied but indulged in a disciplined manner. If they are completely denied, they will find expression in other unhealthy ways. For want of proper outlet, mere denial of physical indulgence may lead to disgraceful situations.

Excessive sexual activity is harmful, physically, mentally and morally. It produces both physical and mental degradation. Guru Nanak says, **"***Kaam karodh kaya ko galay jion kanchan sohaga dhalay***"** i.e; "As borax melts gold, so do lust and anger consume the body (GGS, p.932). Premarital and extramarital sex is forbidden in Sikhism. Guru Gobind Singh says, **"***Nij nari kay saath tum nehon nit din barhaio, par nari kee sej bhool supnay mat jaio*-i.e; You should increase love for your wife day and night, but you should not think of going to the conjugal bed of another's wife even in dream*".*

Extra-marital Relationship in Sikhism

Adultry is one of the major probibitions *(Kurehat)* in Sikhism. An initiated *(Amritdhari* Sikh) found guilty of having exra-marital relationship looses his / her membership among the Khalsa and he has to submit himself before the *Sangat,* confess his / her guilt, accept *tankhah* (religious punishment) and get re-initiated. Gurbani gives very clear instructions in this regard:

- *Jaisa sang bisier sion hai ray taisay he ih par greh"* i.e "Extra-marital relationship is like having friendship with a snake--GGS, p.403.
- *Par triya roop na pekhay netar* i.e, "One should not even caste an evil eye on another's woman--Ibid, p274.
- *Eka naari jati ho-ay, par naari dhee bhain wakhanay* --Bhai Gurdas, Var 6, Pauri 8.
- *Dekh paraian changian mawan bhaina dhian jaanay"* (Ibid, Var 29, Pauri 11)

Gian (Knowledge)

Sikhism lays great stress on the need for attainment of knowledge both, spiritual as

well as temporal as it dispels the darkness of ignorance. Guru Nanak says, "When sun rises, the moon is not seen, where knowledge appears ignorance is dispelled" (Ibid, Suhi M1, p.791). Sikhism gives top priority for the aquisition of spiritual knowledge. Wordly knowledge satisfies for a while, but spiritual knowledge grants permanent bliss. Guru Nanak in Japuji Pauri 38 stresses on the creation of knowledge with divine value which is based on truth and properly calibrated like gold coin. Knowledge cannot be attained without education through a Guru:

- *Gur bin gian na hovie, na sukh vassay mann a-ay Gian vihoonay manmukhi jaasan janam gava-ay*—GGS.

- *Gian anjan gur deea agian andher binaas.* Ibid.

- *Gian anjan ja kee netreen paria taa ko sarab pargasa*--Ibid.

- *Kumbhay badhdha jal rahay jal bin kunmb na hoay, Gian ka badhdha mann rahe gur bin gian na hoay*— Ibid Var Asa.

Dhan Daulat (Wealth)

According to the philosophy of Sikhism wealth is a necessity of worldly life, *Daulat Guzran"* (Gurbilas patshahi chheveen--Guru Hargobind). Sikhism is not against collection of wealth and being rich, provided it is aquired through hard work and honest means. However, Sikhism is definitely against exploitive collection of wealth:

- *Hakk paraia* Nanaka *ous sooar ous ga-ay, gur pir hami taan bharay je murdar na kha-ay*— GGS-p.141.

- *Is jar Kaaran ghani vighutti in jar ghani khuaie, Papaan bajhon hovay nahin mooian sath na jaee*—Ibid, p.417.

- *Je ratt lagay kapray jama ho-ay paleet, jo ratt peevhay mansaan tin kio nirmal cheet*— Ibid, p.140.

Trishna (Desire)

Desire means to long for or crave. Only a dead person can be without any desire. As per Sikh thought one must have desires, but to a limited extent. Every un-fulfilled desire is a source of man's misery. Inorder to remain happy one must fix a goal for one's achievement and strive hard to achieve it and once it is fulfilled one should feel contended and thank the almighty God for the boons. But one who achieves an easy going life, comfort and property always desires more and more:

- *Sehas khatay lakh ko uth dhavay, tripat na aay maya pachhay pavay*--Ibid, p.278.

- *Maya manhu na veesrai mangai damma dam*—Thou forsakest not, from thy mind, the wealth and incessantly ask for more and more--Ibid, p.1093.

- *Baday baday rajan ar bhooman ta kee trisan na boojhi*—The thirst of even the great kings and the big land-lords is not quenched.*"* Ibid, p.672.

Gurbani advises that we should limit our desires, ***"****Bina santokh nahin kooo rajay"* i.e "No body is content without contentment" (Ibid, p.279). In order to remain happy one should limit one's desires.

***Udham*- (Positive effort)**

In Sikhism stress is laid on *udham* (positive action or effort) in any situation. Results are not in one's control. They are dependent on what is ordained therefore, what is received is acceptance of and surrender to Divine Will. Sikhism believes in God and selfreliance:

- *Udham karaindian jio toon kamawandian sukh bhunch, Dhiandian toon Prabhu mil* Nanak *utri chint*— Ibid, p.522.

- *Udham karo vadbhagio simro har Har Har Rai,* Nanak *jis simrat sabh sukh hoveh dookh dard bhram ja-ay*— Ibid, p.456.

- *Dhar jiaray ik take toon la-hay bidaani aas,* Nanak *Naam dhiai-ay karaj aavay raas*— Ibid.

- *Dhrig tina da jiwia jina wadani aas* (Ibid)

Self-respect and Sikhism

Sikhism believes in leading a respectful life. It recommends not to compromise in the matter of self-respect under any circumstances:

- *Je jeevay pat lathi ja-ay, sabh hram jeta kichh kha-ay* i.e.—Ibid.

Mittarta (Friendship) and Sikhism

It has been explained in Guru Granth Sahib that if one wants to have friendship, one must be selfless to the extent that he may be in a position to lay down head for the friend and should not mind public opinion. Guru Nanak explains that those who are greedy for wealth can never be good friends, (ibid, p.1412). Their friendship will always be false. Since their foundation is on falsehood which is false:

- *Sajan sae naal mein chaldian naal chalan, jithay lekha mangi-ay thith-ay kharay disun*--Ibid,p.729.

- *Jao tao prem khaylan ka chao, sir dhar tali ghalee mayree aao It maarag paiyr dhareejai, sir deejjai kaan na keejay Naal kiraarha dostee koorhay koorhee paa-ay, Maran na jaapay mooliaa aavai kitai thaa-ay.*— Ibid, M1, p.1412.

Akiratghanta (Ungratefulness) and Sikhism

Akirtghan in Punjabi means, "The one who forgets the good done to him". In common language he is also known as **"***ahsaan fraamosh/ Nimak haram*". He is most despised person in the society. Bhai Gurdas gives the description of an ungrateful person in the following words:

- *Madh vich ridhaa paekay kutte daa maas.*
  Dharia manas khoporee tis mandee vaas.
  Rattoo bhariaa kapprha kar kajjan taas.
  Dhak lay challi choohri kar bhog bilaas.
  Aakh sunai puchhiaa laahe vishvaas.
  Nardeen pavay akirtghan, mat ho-ay vinaas--Bhai Gurdas.

Sarbat Da Bhala

Sikhism believes in fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, ***"****Ek pita ekas ke ham barik toon mera gurhaee*" (GGS, p.611). Every Sikh prays aloud at least twice a day: "O God, in your Name shower your blessings on everyone". This belief in oneness of humanity, and the insistence on working for the welfare of all people whether Sikhs or non-Sikhs even at the cost of sacrificing one's life, is what sets Sikhism apart from other religions.

THE CONCEPT OF SEVA IN SIKHISM

***Seva* (voluntary service)**

Seva is another cardinal principle of Sikhism. In Sikhism it is not ordinary unpaid service, instead it is voluntary selfless, humble, without motive, without hope for reward or compensation. The founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak wished the followers of the Sikh faith to be servants of God and his people. "Having created this world, God has installed His very self there in," said he. And, "this world is the chamber of God where in the true one resides" i.e, ***"****Ih Jag Sachay kee hai kothari, Sachay ka vich vaas****"*** (GGS, Sri Rag M2). Therefore, with this human body, "Let us be of service in this world so that we may find a seat in the court of the Lord*"*-***"****Vich dunia sev kamayi-ay taan durgeh baisan pai-ay"* (Ibid, p26). It is held by the Gurus that service, if it is to be worthwhile, ought to be done without any consideration of reward. ***"****Baddha chatti jo bharay, na gun na upkar, seti khusi sawriay Nanak kaaraj saar****"*** (Ibid, p787). In case any reward is solicited for rendition of service it can be termed as a bargain. **"***Seva kart ho-ay nihkami tis ko hot prapat soami****"*** *i*. e, "He who serves without desire for rewards, he alone attains to God" (Ibid M5, p 286). ***"****Dekha dekhee sabh karay Manmukh boojh na pa-ay, jin Gurmukh hirda sudh hai sev paee tin tha-ay****"*** *i.e,* "One who does it (Seva) in imitation, such Manmukh (self-willed) can not understand. Those Gurmukh, whose initiative is pure, his service is accepted in the court of Almighty" (Ibid, *p.28).* Seva can be done by following means:

Tan dee seva (through Physical means):

Physical service comes first of all and can be done by helping in cooking food or by washing dishes in the Langar (the Sikh community Kitchen), by taking care of the visitors shoes, by sweeping and cleaning floors in a Gurdwara, by participating in the Sikh national struggle, by doing humanitarian work and so on.

***Man dee seva* (Intellectual service --Mind--Mental means):**

It can be done, by imparting knowledge about Gurbani, Sikh religion, Sikh history and general education to the needy.

***Dhan dee seva* (Monetary means):**

It can be done in cash or kind.

From Seva springs humility, tolerance and generosity. It brings an end to ego *(Haumai).* It gives a Sikh a feeling of being a useful part of humanity. Gurbani lays great stress on *seva*:

- *Jetay jee teay sabh teray vin (u) seva phal nahin*—GGS, p.992**.**
- *Nih-kapat seva keejay har keri tan meray man sarb sukh pai-ay* Ibid, p.861.
- *Bin seva dhrig hath per, hor nehphal karni*- Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var27, pauri 10
- *Aaap goa-ay seva karay tan kichh pavey maan*—Ibid 474.

DEMOCRACY IN SIKHISM

Democracy an important aspect of modern society is the guiding rule in Sikh polity. In Sikhism democracy is not the rule of the majority even the smallest minority has complete say in this ideology, where every body is free to express his / her views in the meeting (Sangat--Congregation/ Sarbat Khalsa-the Sikh commonwealth), the matter under consideration is discussed threadbare and after listening to the views of the speakers a descion is taken through consensus. The basic institutes of the Sikh democracy are *Sangat, Panches, Panj piaray, Sarbat Khalsa* and *Gurmatta*.

- Sikhism vests authority in *Sangat.*
- Guru Nanak says, ***"****Panch parwan, panch pardhan, panchay paveh dargeh maan, panchay sohay dar rajaan, panchan ka Gur ek dhian"* i.e;"The *Panchayt*---The five look good in His court. They concentrate their minds on Him alone".
- *Ik Sikh do-ay sadh sang panjin Parmeshar*-- (Bhai Gurdas) i.e; "When alone he is a Sikh, when two it is an assembly of saints and when five they represent God".
- Guru Gobind Singh passed on the spiritual Guru-ship to the Aad Granth and corporate Guru-ship to the Khalsa before his death. He vested in them the authority to initiate new

entrants into the Sikh faith. Guru Gobind Singh says:

"Panchon mein nit bartit maein hoon. Panch milan so piran ie.; Where there are five (elected) there am I. When the five meet, they are the holiest of the holy".

The Sikh tradition of Sarbat Khalsa is an unparalleled democratic institution of the Sikhs in the history of religions and nations for taking collective decisions during the times of crisis facing the Sikh nation. By following the Sarbat Khalsa tradition the Sikhs successfully destroyed unjust oppressive Muslim rule and domination, both of Muslims and the Hindus, in their homeland Punjab by, 1765 A.D; and established the Sikh kingdom, Punjab, which was most powerful state in Asia before its annexation by the British in, 1849 A.D.

Egalitarianism in Sikhism

Guru Nanak gave a new thought and laid foundation of the egalitarian society with equality for all human beings. He brought about social equality in society shattering its false ego based on superior caste and superior gender considerations. He gave a new concept of *Sangat, Pangat and Langar* based on equality.

Sikhism advocates that all people should have equal political, social and economic rights. Sikhism strongly emphasizes humanism. It has a global perspective that has a global concern for the whole humanity as opposed to a concern for a particular cultural group. It has never emphasized conversion to Sikhism rather it has preached becoming better human beings by following one's own religious beliefs, however if any one who likes its ideals is welcome to embrace it. Any attempts by one group of people to dominate the others and impose its' values on others can lead to confrontation. Therefore, the Sikh religion's principles of tolerance, love, peaceful co-existence and its global and universal outlook have become very relevant in this strife torn present day world.

Secularism in Sikhism

Sikhism believes in secularism. It preaches a secularism, which respects other people's right to be different. It does not impose its values on others.

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Ethics of Sikhism

The rules of conduct in Sikhism are very simple and salutary, which leave the followers work out their social consciousness themselves:

- *Jalo aisee reet jit mein piara veesray, Nanak sai bhali pareet jit sahib seti pat rahay"* "Put away the custom that makes you forget the Loved One" --Wadhans Ml.

- *Saach kahon sun leho sabay jin prem kio tin he prabh paio-* (Guru Gobind Singh).

- *Jit seviay sukh paiay so ahib sada samaliay, jit keeta paiay apna taan ghaal buri loon ghaaliay* GGS, *Asa* M1

- *Saach kahon sun leho sabay jin prem kio tin he prabh paio-* (Guru Gobind Singh).

- *Sai kam kray jit much ujla—Ibid*

- *Farida jinni kameen nahin gun tay kamray veesar, mat sharminda sevee sain day darbar*—ibid.

- *Gur satgur ka jo Sikh akhaa-ay so bhal-kay uth har Naam dhia-vay, Udham kar-ay bhal-kay parbhaati ishnaan ka-ray Amritsar naha-vay, Updes Guru har har japu japay sab kilvikh paap dokh leh javay, Phir charay divas gurbani gavay behndiaan uthdiaan har naam dhiavay Jo seas giraas dhia-ay mera har har so Gur-Sikh Gur mane bha-vay Jis noon dyal hovey mera sooami tis Gur-Sikh Gur updes sunavay, Jan Nanak dhoor mangey tis Gur-Sikh kee jo aap japay avroh naam japaaavai*—GGS, p.305-6.

- *Vich dunia sev kamaai-ay taan durgeh baisan paaee-ai*—In this world perform Lord's service. Then you will get seat at God's Portal" Ibid, p.26

- *Aap gavaa*-ay sewa kar-ay taan kichh paa-ay maan—Ibid,p.474.

- *Sewa kart ho-ay nihkaami tis ko hot praapat swami*—Ibid, p.286..

- *Sach oray sabh ko oper sach achaar*—Ibid, p.62.

- *Sach vart, santokh teerath, gian dhiaan ishnaan, daya devta, khima japmali to manas pardhan*—Ibid, Vaar Sarang, M1).

- *Augun sabh tiag ke parupkar karay—Ibid, p. 218.*

- *Ghaal kha-ay kichh hathon de,* Nanak *rah pachhanay se*—(Ibid, p.1245)

- *Ho-ay nimana jag raho,* Nanak *nadrin paar*—Ibid, Gauri M5.

- *Dhar trazoi toliay nivein so gaura ho-ay* Ibid, p.470.

- *Je loray change apna, kar punho neech sda-ay*—Ibid, Vaar Asa.

- Nanak *so prabh simri-ay tis dehi ko paal*—Ibid, Rag Bihagra, M5.

- *Mann apnay te buramitana pekhay sagal sarishat saajna*—Ibid.

- The Guru says that the food, clothes and transportation which cause pain to body and bring evil thought to mind should be avoided. There is no taboo regarding eatables, clothes and means of transportation according to Guru Nanak (Ibid, *Sri* Rag, pp.16-17):

*Chhateeh amrit bhaao ek jaa kao nadir karay.*१

Baabaa hor khaanaa khusee khuaar,
Jit khaaday tan peerheeay mann meh chaleh vikaar. १. rhaao.---,

Baaba hor painan khusee khuar, Jitpaidhay tan peereeay mann meh chaleh vikaar. १., rahaao

Baabaa hor charhnaa khusee khuaar,
Jit charchiay tan peerheeai mann meh chaleh vikaar".१..----(Ibid, p. *16,17)*

  - *Jit peetay mat door ho-ay barl pavey vich aa-ay----- Jhootha madh mool na peechee jey ka paar vasa-ay*— (Ibid, 554).

- *Alp Ahaar Sulp See Nindra daya chhima tan pareet*- Shabad Hazare, Guru Gobind Singh).

- *Adhak Suvad Rog Adhikai, Bin Gur Sehaj Na Paia*— (GGS M1, p1255).

- *Phit ihaiva jeeviya jit kha-ay vadhaia* – (Ibid, p.790).
- *Udham karaindian jeeo toon kamawndian sukh bhunch, dhiaindian toon Prabhu mil* Nanak, *utri chint*—Ibid, p.522.

- *Mithat neeveen* Nanaka *gun changiaiyan tatu*—Ibid,470

- *Dhar trazoo toil-ay nivin so gaura ho-ay*—Ibid, p470

- *Nanak Phika boliay tann mann phika ho-ay*—ibid, p473.
- *Augun sab mitai*-ay kay parupkaar karey—Ibid, p.218
- *Aisa kam mool na keechay jit ant pachhotai*-ay—Ibid
- *Par ka bura ns rakho cheet tum ko dukh nahin bni meet*—Ibid, Asa M5.
- *Baad bibad kahon sio na keejay, rasna Ram rasain peejay*—Ibid, Bhairon Nam Dev.
- *Labb lobh ahankaar taj trishna, bahut nahin bolna*—Ibid470.
- *Sanjh kreejay guneh keri chhod avgun chali-ay*— Ibid, p 766.
- *Jinni kammien nahin gun te kamray veesar*—Ibid.
- *Pirthmay man parbodhay apna pachhay avar reejhavay*—Ibid, p. 381.
- *Hakk praiya Nanka os, soar os gai, gur peer hami taan bhare je murder na kha-ay*—Ibid, p.141.
- *Ih jar kaaran ghani vigutti in jar ghani khuaie, papaan bajhon hovay nahin mooian saath na jaee*—Ibid, p.417.
- *Bin santokh nahin ko-ou rajay*—Ibid, p.279.
- *Je ratt laggay kapray jama hoay paleet, jo ratt peevah maansa tin kio nirmal cheet***"** (Ibid, p.140)
- *Parrhia moorakh akhie-ay, jit labh lobh hankaar*—Ibid, p.140).
- *So kion manda akhie-ay jit jamein rajaan*—Ibid, p.473.
- *Jaat janam neh poochhiay sach ghar leho bat-ay, sa jaati sa pat hoi jehay karam kamaa-ay*—Ibid,p.1330.
- *Jano jaat na puchho jaati, aggay jaat na hai*—Ibid, Asa M1, p.349.
- *Sajjan sayee naal mein chaldian naal chalan,*
  jithay lekha mangiay tithay kharay disun—Ibid, p.729
- *Dehora maseet ohee, pooja-o-nimaaz ohee, maanas kee jaat sabhay ekay pehchanbo*—Guru Gobind Singh
- *Ekay nain ekay kaan, ekay deb ekay baan,*
  Khaak baad, aatash au aab ko ralao hai,
  Allah abhekh soee, Puran au Quran oee
  Ek bee saroop sabhay ek bee bnao haiy—Guru Gobind Singh
- *Ek pita ekas kay ham barik toon mera gurhaee*—GGS, p.611
- *Sabhay sanjheewal disain koay na deesy bhira jeeo*—Ibid.
- *Je jivay pat lathi ja-ay sab haram jeta kichh kha-ay*—Ibid, p. 142)
- *Par triya roop na pekhay netar*—Ibid, p.274
- *Par dhan, par dari, par ninda in sion pareet nivar*—Ibid, Asa M5.
- *Jaisay sang bisier sion hai ray, taisy he ih par greh*—Ibid, p.403)
- *Dekh prain changian mawaan dhian bhena jaan*—Bhai Gurdas 29/11
- *Bha-ay kahay ko det neh, neh bha-ay maanat aan*—Ibid, Salok M9.
- Nanak *naam chardi kala teray bhanay sarbat ka bhala.*

Cardinal virtues of Sikhism

Virtue literally means `a specific moral quality regarded as good or meritorious. Virtues have been reffered to as `Changiaian /Shub Gunn /Shub karman' in Guru Granth Sahib, "*Changiaian buriaian vaache dharma hadoor*" i.e; "God watches our morally good and bad qualities and "When God wishes to punish a person, He deprives him of his virtues i.e "*Ja ko karta aap khoa-ay khus la-ay changiaee* (GGS, p.417).

Emphasis in Sikh ethics is laid on the practice of godly qualities. Their observance makes a human being God-like. In Sikhism all the senses are to be harnessed properly and the virtues of the body, speech and mind are to be inculcated. A Sikh has to remain alert on all three plains i.e; physical, mental and spiritual. Major virtues of Sikhism are:

Truth

Guru Nanak says, "Truth is highest virtue, but higher still is truthful living" i.e; "*Sachch oray sabh ko opar sachch achaar*" (Ibid, p.62).

Love

According to Gurmat love is quality of God as well as means to reach Him. Guru Gobind Singh says, "*Saach kahoon sunn leho sabhay, jin prem kio tin hee Prabh paio*"

Sanyam (Temperance—self-restraint)

Temperance is in opposition to lust. It means self-restraint in conduct, expression and indulgence of appetites, etc. According to Sikhism self-restraint is necessary in desires, words and actions for a balanced and harmonious existence-Sehaj. Such control is not to be violent or mortifying like the practices of Hath-yoga, but mental control through a process of harmony and moderation. One should enjoy normal comforts and amenities of life, but at the same time, he must keep his passions and desires under control, which will lead to harmonious existence. Gurbani says:

The mind seeks evil things, but through th Guru's word be controlled—GGS.
The seeker must remain within limits in order to remain fit—Ibid,p.679.

Too much of every thing is bad. Too much drinking and eating etc; makes one unhealthy. Similarly we endanger our health if we take less than than our requirement. Too much or too less sleep also makes us sick. We should sleep according to our requirement. Too much accumulation of wealth also worries us like poverty. Every action needs balance.

Sehansheelta (Tolerance)

It is in opposition to anger. Tolerance theologically means being tolerant, especially of views, beliefs and practices etc of others that differ from one's own or to say freedom from bigotry or prejudice. A tolerant person does not feel angry or upset. He keeps cool in

times of excitement or anger. Every Sikh is a saint-soldier. Tolerance is the hallmark of the Sikh, being a saint. Gurbani says, "If one observes the fast of tolerance, good conduct and contentment, he will never experience an illness or the agony of death" (Ibid, p.223)

***Santokh* (Contentment)**

It is in opposition to greed. It implies a state of mind covering temperance, patience, detachment and surrender to the Will of God with its necessary accompaniment of humility. It demands of a man check on his tendencies of worldly pursuits. It prohibits selfindulgence, greed, lust, overeating oversleeping. It recommends non-attachment with worldly affairs and further implies a control over egoistic and self-centered pursuits. It is stated in Guru Granth Sahib, "Without contentment, no one is sated" (GGS, p.279).

The contended are those who dwell upon none but the truest of true, serve Him truly. They do not tread the path of evil. They do good and practice righteousness. They loosen worldly bonds and eat and drink in moderation" (Ibid, p.467).

The contended man knows the limits of his own needs and so does not feel frustrated if he is unable to get what his neighbor or friend has inspite of his best efforts.

Detachment (Vairag)

Vairag is in opposition to attachment. In Sikhism Vairag (Detachment) does not mean asceticism or disinterestedness or indifference to the world. In Gurmat it implies, non-attachment to all things of a material nature. A Sikh has to live the life of a family man and at the same time, he ought to adopt an attitude as that of a trustee in reference to his near and dear ones. Gurbani says, "As the lotus in the pond remains unaffected by the mud or the dirty water. In the same way, the`detached' individual keeps himself away from worldly things, while living among them". To say otherwise, they live in the world, but are not involved in the worldliness.

Nimarta—Modesty (Halimi or Humility)

Modesty means humble behaviour. It is the hallmark of a Sikh. It is in opposition to egoism, which is a vice to be got rid of. An egoist is like a Simmel tree. The Simmel tree is straight, tall and thick. Those who come to it go away dissappointed. Its fruite is tasteless, flowers brackish and leaves of no use. Says Nanak: "The Simmel tree is straight, tall and thick. Those who come to it go away dissappointed. Its fruite is tasteless, flowers brackish and leaves of no use, in sweetness and humility lies the essence of merit and virtue. --Every one bows to oneself not to others for when weighed in a balance, the heavier pan dips lower" (Ibid, p.470). Nanak, "life is most fruiteful when we meet those who practice humility and gentleness, even when they are strong (Sri Rag Ml).

Humility is also an instrument of man's liberation. Gurmukhs are always humble. "He is blest with humility by the Lord's grace obtains deliverance here and peace hereafter" (Ibid, p.278). Nanak says, "The door of salvation is narrow and he who is tiny (humble) can pass through it. How can the mind that has grown bulky with ego pass through it?" (Ibid, pp 509-10).

VISHAY / VIKAAR AND SIKHISM

In Punjabi language *Visha* literally means subject and *Panj Vishay* means five subjects, but in the theosophy of Sikhism they refer to the five forces: *Kaam* (lust), *Karodh* (anger), *Lobh* (greed), *Moh* (attachment) and *Ahankar* (pride), which jointly control all the functions of the human beings and if they are not kept under control become *Vikaars* (vices). They have also been reffered to as *Panch doot* (Five demons) and five theives in Gurbani. The way to reach God was through spiritual elevation during the course of our lives. According to Sikh thought these five forces stand in the way of concentration by the self on the supreme value of the union with the Spiritual Absolute. They jointly constitute: *Haumai* (ego), which if not kept under strict control, tear to pieces the inner of a person. They destroy a person's potential and capabilities to worship and meditate. They sway him / her away from God. They keep a person in a state of constant imbalance and restlessness. In order to harness them, a person's spirituality and divinity must take over his worldly actions.

Kaam

Kaam is the most powerful pleasant desire which affects humans, animals and birds alike. Sikhism criticizes *Kaam* as a learnt sentiment and not wholly as a biological one. It does not treat normal sexual relationship as immoral. It is heightened passionate sensualism, which may over power all activities of the self is treated as moral sickness and evil, ***"****Kaam karodh kaiya ko galey jion kanchan sohaga dhaley"* i.e lust and anger affect the body in the same way as Borax melts gold (GGS p.932).

Karodh

Karodh (wrath or anger) is not only biologically hurting but socially destructive also. It destroys brutally so many social relations, which become difficult to redeem. Paralyzing reason and reasonableness, it follows its own dialectic of destruction. Guru Arjan Dev clarifies it in the Guru Granth Sahib: "O Karodh, O father of strife, you know no compassion, you have powerful sway over vicious men who dance to your tunes as does the monkey and then have to face punishment at the hands of couriers of death in whose company human beings turn into devils"--GGS, Slokas Sanskriti, Mohalla 5.

Lobh

Lobh (Greed) is the desire to posses what belongs to others. Guru Arjan Dev states in the Guru Granth Sahib, "O Lobh, you have swayed even the best men by your waves. And men's minds waver and run in all directions to gather more and more. You are respecter of neither friendship nor any ideal, nor mother, nor father, you make one do what one must not do; eat what is eaten not and build what cannot be built" (GGS, p1358). A greedy person never rests in peace and goes about in all directions. A greedy person is not trustworthy. He is not loyal to anything except wealth. He can deceive anybody to attain more wealth.

Moh

Moh (attachment) is a tendency whereby men cling to things, which they identify themselves, that is, the family, wealth etc. This tendency ultimately reduces the individual's chance of viewing things in the right perspective. Gurbani says, "O unconquerable, O powerful hero of the battlefield, that mows down everything before it, you have enticed away the hearts of even the gods and their attendants, heavenly musicians, the men, animal life and birds" (GGS, p1358). "The whole world is engulfed by mundane values and attachment to it" (Ibid, 1142). "Moh creates the family, through Moh are all works. Rid yourself then of Moh, for it leads to nothing but sin. O' though brave one, shed your Moh and doubt" (Ibid, p356). Moh is also used for delusion-being cheated of consciousness. "He who is imbued with Truth is ever detached" (Ibid, p. 117).

Ahankaar (*Hankaar*)

Ahankaar (pride) comes from one's possessions of beauty or wealth or experience or competence. Under its influence, man may treat even his friends as strangers, he may refuse to acknowledge his relationship or fulfill his social obligations. It blinds the individual to the underlying unity of mankind. Guru Arjan Dev states in Guru Granth Sahib: "O pride, the cause of our coming and going in the world, O soul of sin, thou estrange friends, confirm enmities and make men spread out the net of illusion far and wide, and tire men by keeping ever on the round, and making them experience now pleasure, now pain. And men walk through the utter wilderness of doubt, thou affect men with incurable maladies" (GGS, Salokas Sanskriti, p13 5 8).

According to Gurmat *Kaam, Karodh, Lobh, Moh* and *Ahankaar* should not be killed, but subordinated and be used for discharging our worldly duties and achieving union with the Absolute one. Only a dead man can be without them.

The Hindu Caste System and its Rejection in Sikhism

The term caste (Jaati) is Indian in origion and in Hinduism it is applied to social groups, which rank in a hierarchic order within which there is a minimal of social mobility. It refers to the division of Indian society. The caste system forms the bedrock of the Brahmanical religion, '*Varn Ashram Dharma'*. Varn means caste (Brahin, Kshatriya, Vashiya nd Shudra) and Ashram means stages (of life), *Brahm charya ashram, Grahist ahram, Sanyas ashram* and *Vaan prast ashram.*

Sikhism believes in universal brotherhood, egalitarian society and strongly denounces the divisive Hindu caste system. Anti-casteism is one of the basic distinguishing features of Sikhism. Guru Nanak (1469-1539) founded Sikhism in the 15th century. He stepped beyond the frontier in defiance of the 3000 years old caste rules of Hinduism. He declared, "Oneness of God and oneness of man". His mission was carried forward by his nine successors. Sikh Gurus powerfully attacked the Hinducaste system and successfully disengaged their followers rom it. Sikhism became established at the end of about two centuries to work is way in the world, when it was formally consecrated by the 10th Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh through Sikh baptismal ceremony-Khanday batay Dee Pahul, on the Vaisakhi day, 1699 AD: at Anandpur Sahib in the Punjab.

The Holy Sikh Scriture, Guru Granth Sahib is opposed to any discrimination in human society. It strongly condemns the age old caste system, the social classification in Hindu society and the disdain for the poor who are called Shudras. Guru Nanak found faukts with that ideology saying, "The Vedas make wrong distinction of caste" (GGS, p.1243). He severely condemned the artificial divisions of the caste system, which prevented people from loving one another as equals, saying:

- *Ek pita ekas ke ham barik toon mera gurhaaee* i.e;-We are all children of the same father and he takes care of us all" (GGS, p.61 1).
- *Jano joti, na poochhohjaati, aagay jati na haiy*—Ibid, Asa Ml, p.349.
- *Aagay, jaati roop na ja-ay, teha hovay, jehay karam kama-ay*--Ibid, Asa M3, p.363).
- *Sa Jaat sa pat hai jehay karam kamai"*--One's deeds proclaim one's caste and respect"Ibid, p.1330.
- *Jaat ka garbh na kar moorakh gawara is garb te chalah bahut vikaaraa*--Ibid, p. 1128-"O, ignorant do not take pride in grand caste, it leads to great conflicts"
- *Garbh vaas meh, kul nahin jaati, brahm bind tay sabh utpaatee* ।।৭।।

  Kaho ray Pandit, Baman kab kay hoay, Baman keh keh janam mat khoay ।।৭॥ Rahao।।

  Jao toon Brahmin Brahmani jaaiya, tao aan baat, kahay nahin aiya,
  Tum kat Brahmin, ham kat sood, ham kat lahoo, tum kat doodh (Ibid, p.324).
- Taking the image of the potter's wheel Guru has compared the different kinds of people to vessels of many types and patterns, but all made of clay-"*Maati ek anek bhaant kar saaji sirjan hare"* Ibid.

•*Manas kee jaat sabe ekay pehchanbo* i.e, Treat all mankind alike"--Guru Gobind Singh.

This was a distinct blow to the social ideology of *Varn Ashram Dharma* (Hinduism), which gave scriptural sanction for the hierarchical caste system. Sikhism not only gave every one right to be a warrior, but it also gave everyone right to be priest. Under the caste hierarchy, the workers were looked upon with disrespect and those whom they served were considered honourable. The elimination of caste system by Guru Nanak established the equality of man and dignity of labour.

SIKHISM TOOK PRACTICAL STEPS TO

ERADICATE THE CASTE SYSTEM

- Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism chose Bhai Mardana, a Muslim as his first life long companion. He founded the basic institutions of Sikhism based on equality:

  Sangat-Praying as equals.
  Pangat---Sitting in a row as equals.
  Langar-Eating cooked food as equals.

- 2nd Nanak, Guru Angad Dev created equality in learning. He named the script for Punjabi

language introduced by Guru Nanak, as Gurmukhi. Produced booklets of alphabets *(Baalupdesh)* of the Punjabi language and made copies of the hymns of Guru Nanak and distributed them among the Sikh centers for teaching to the common mass of the people in the Punjab to increase the number *of* the literates there. Thus he broke the monopoly of the Brahmin over learning, who boasted of having the knowledge of Sanskrit, which was neither spoken nor understood by the common mass of the people in the Punjab.

- 3th Nanak, Guru Amar Dass got *Baoli* dug at Goindwal, where people had to go down the steps to reach water and fill their buckets as equals. Before this the Shudras were not allowed to draw water from the community wells.

- 4th Nanak, Guru Ram Dass got *Amrit-sarovar* (Amrit-sar) dug for bathing in the same water as equals.

- 5th Nanak, Guru Man Dev built--Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) with four doors denoting that it was open to all the four castes-Brahmins, Kashatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, to all four religions in India-Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism, and to all the people of the world from all directions-- North, South, East and west. He edited Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) the holy Sikh scripture, which is in itself an example of caste-less-ness. In addition to the hymns of the Sikh Gurus contains hymns of holy men of other religions and different castes including the Shudras.

- 9th Nanak, Guru Teg Bahadur himself strictly monotheist sacrificed his life to defend the faith of Idolatrous Hindus.

- 10th Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, gave Sikhism, the *Naas* doctrine: *Kul Naas,* (deliverance from shams of caste system by birth), *Dharam Naas* (deliverence from previous religious practices), *Karam Naas* (deliverence from ritualism); *Bharam Naas* (deliverence from all the superstitions), *Kirt Naas* (deliverence from previous occupation) to signify a casteless society. The Panj Piaras, who received Pahul (Sikh Baptism) from Guru Gobind Singh were:

  Bhai Dya Ram a Khatri from Lahore
  Bhai Dharam Dass, a Jat of Delhi
  Bhai Mohkam Chand, a washer man from Dwarka
  Bhai Sahib Chand, a barber from Bidar
  Bhai Himmat Chand, a water-carrier of Jagan Nath.

Pahul (Sikh baptism) symbolizes a rebirth, by which the initiated are considered as having renounced their earlier creeds for the creed of the Khalsa, of having severed their family ties to become the family of Gobond Singh, of having renounced their previous occupations for that of soldiering, of having given up all rituals, of having given up all superstitions.

- In order to establish equality Guru Gobind Singh at the formal consecration of Sikhism on the Vaisakhi day 1699; instructed the followers of Sikhism to drop their last names, which in India indicate one's caste and take the last common name 'Singh' for males and ‘Kaur’ for females to show their acceptance of equality of all people.

Sikhism does not believe in classification of its followers on the basis of caste, class, clan or profession etc. The division of the Sikhs on such a basis was the creation of early writers of Sikhism who were mostly literate Hindus especially Brahmins, some of whom perhaps had embraced Sikhism with the ulterior motive of Hinduising it through their writings as they did not wish to do away with the divisive caste system, which forms the bedrock of the Varan Ashram Dharma i.e, Hinduism. Mentioning of caste, class, clan or profession etc, along with Sikh name in Sikhism is a social defect and does not concern Sikh religion.

Proselytisation (religious conversion) and Sikhism

All inhabitants of the Punjab are called Punjabis. Sikhism took its birth in the Punjab at the fag end of the 15th century. It was founded by Guru Nanak in 1496 A.D. Although people having faith in Islam and all the six systems of Hinduism lived in the Punjab at that time, the religious landscape here was dominated by the Jogis (Yoigs) / Naths.

Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism was born in a Punjabi Hindu Khatri family of Bedi subcaste, but he refused to accept the divisive Hindu caste system and its highly ritualized way of life since his childhood. Hinduism had become a matter of form rather than inner illumination. Guru Nanak said that it is not the intellectual or verbal assent to it that liberates man, but the deed and his quality of living. Truth is highest virtue, but higher still is truthful living.

Sikh religion strongly emphasizes humanism. Its philosophy contains all positive qualities required for the welfare of mankind. It has a global perspective that has concern for the whole humanity as opposed to a concern for a particular cultural group. It has never emphasized conversion to Sikhism rather it has preached becoming better human beings by following one's own beliefs. Any body who likes its ideals is welcome to embrace it. Sikhism does not believe in proselytisation through any bait or pressure.

It goes to the credit of the Sikhs that they have never resorted to forced conversions. Even during their eighty years of rule or any other time there is not even a single example of forced proselytisation by the Sikhs.

Sikh Gurus had their own methods to extend their moral and spiritual affinity with other faiths. They told people belonging to different faiths that they should believe in and love God; then it did not matter if they were Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs. All religions are equally good and that their followers should follow the inner values of their respective religions truthfully and not their outer form only, which is mere hypocrisy and not religion in the true sense. Guru Nanak said:

Be such a Brahmin

- *So Brahmin jo bindai Brahm, Jap tap sanjam kamavai karam. Seel santokh kaa rakhai dharm. Bandhan torai hovai mukat. Soee Brahman poojan gugat.--"*i.e; A true Brahmin is one, who garsps Brahm. Meditation on God and self-control are his daily routine. His religious observances are right conduct and humility. He removes the sensual chains that bind the soul. Such a Brahmin deserves all praise and honour--GGS, M1, p.1411.

- *So Brahmin jo Brahmu beechaaray.* --Ibid, p.662.

- *So Pandit jo man parbodhay Ram naam atam meh sodhay*--- Ibid, p.274.

Be such a vaisnav:

- *Baisno so jis ooper so parsann, bisan kee maya tay hoay bhinn*--Ibid, p.274.

Guru also asked Hindus to discard rituals. He logically asked them to substitute pious and virtuous deeds and the name of God in place of Rituals. Guru Nanak educates the stone worshiper and ritualist to realize the pervading God faith and do not waste this human birth:
Parbhatee M 1.
Ram naam jap antar poojaa .
Gur sabad veechaar avar nahee dooja.
Eko rav rahiaa sabh thaaee.
Avar na deesay kis pooj charhaaee. rahaao.—Ibid, 1345.

Be such a Muslim:

In Sri Rag Guru Nanak has described the attributes of a good Mussalman, **"***Mihar maseeti sidaku musala haku halalu Quran. Saram sunati silu roza hohu Musalmaanu***"** i.e, "Let mercy be your mosque. Let righteousness be your prayer mat. Let lawful living be your Quran. Let modesty be your rules of observance. Let gentleness be the fast you keep. In such a wise strive to become a Muslim. (Ibid, Ml, p.140).

- *Mussalmaan mom dil hovay, antar mal dil tay dhovay.* ibid, p.1084.

- *So mullaa jo mann sion laray. gur updes kaal sion juray*--Ibid. p.1159.

- *Sach kamavay soee Qazi*--Ibid, p.1084.

- *Soee Sekhu massaaik hajee so banda jisu najar naraa*--Ibid, p.1084.

- *Jo dil sodhay soee hajee*—Ibid, p.1084.

Be such a Sanyasi (Yogi)

In the Guru Nanak era, dominating sects were of yogis and naths among Hindus. They practiced asceticism, renunciation and celibacy. Guru Nanak (GGS, p419) advised yogis, who had renunciated the world and the clothes to leave forests and come back to their homes. He ridiculed them for not knowing any thing about meditating to merge with God. *"Re man aiso kar sanyasa, ban se sadan sabai kari samjhau mann hi mahi udasa" i.e, "*O man practice such a sanyasa, consider these mansions of the cities to be the forest dwellings, live like a hermit in solitude of your heart. Eat little and sleep little. Be compassionate and forgiving. Be calm and contended. Then you will go beyond the three states. Discard anger, lust, greed, obstinate self-sense and love of wordly things. Then reality will unveil and you will attain the Lord" (Dasm

Granth, Guru Gobind Singh).

Guru Nanak during his discussion with Yogis in the Himalyas told them: ***"****Nanak boley gurmukh bujhai, Jog jugat iv pai-ay****"***--My philosophical system (darsana) is continuous meditation on the Word of God. My symbols of penance and robes of poverty and renunciation are to discard attachment and pride, and see God in all human beings. Only the Lord can make me free. God is the Truth, and Truth is His name, says Nanak, let everyone test and experience this (Ibid, Ml *Siddh Gosht,* p.939).

Be such a Sikh

- *Augun sabh mita-ay ke parupkar karey* i.e; A Sikh should be free from all vices and do good to others. He should look different from others due to his inner qualities and not only because of his outer looks *(Bana)*--Ibid p.218.

- *Jeh karnee tah pooree mat, Karni bajhon ghatey ghat"* (Ibid, p.24) i.e "A Sikh should mean what he says, any person who does not posess this quality cannot be called a Sikh (Ibid, p.24)

- *Eo Gur-mukh aap nivari-ay sabh raaj srisat kaa ley."* God shall himself honour such a Sikh and he can rule the whole world--Ibid, p.648

Those who maintain only outer appearance of a particular faith but donot possess its inner values, are called *Bhekhis,* and while commenting on such people Gurbani says, ***"****Jin ke bheetar antra, jaise pasoo taise uh nara"* i.e; "Those persons who donot practice what they preach, they are as good as animals" (Ibid,p.1163). It father says, ***"****Kartoot pasoo kee manas jaat lok pchara kare din raat"* i.e; "They only look humans but by actions they are animals" (Ibid, p.267).

STATUS OF WOMAN IN SIKHISM

Before the birth of Sikhism the plight of the woman in the Indian subcontinent was highly deplorable. She had the most inferior position in the society. In Hinduism she was treated at par with animals. Tulsi Dass in his Ram Chrit Manas Says, **"***Dhor, ganwar, shudar, pashu, nari, yeh sab tarin ke adhikari"*-i.e, The stupid person, the Shudra, animal and woman all deserve reprimand". Manu the Hindu law-giver has attributed all that is good and great to males and on the contrary, assigned all that is bad and obnoxious to females. Woman was considered an obstacle in the holy path. Even Bhagat Kabir did not speak very high of woman and he has described her as a source of lust and passions and refuse of the world. In Buddhism a male Bhikshu is not supposed to touch and rescue a drowning woman even if she was his mother. Dighambra Jains believe that a woman cannot reach Kavalya and has to achieve first male incarnation.

The position in Sikhism however is totally different. One of the most notable social improvements introduced by Sikhism is the emancipation of women. The Sikh Gurus laid down norms of ethical equality of woman with man and granted her an exalted status. Sikhism does not consider woman inferior to man rather her position has been eulogized in Guru Granth Sahib (The holy Sikh scripture):

- From the woman is our birth; in woman's womb are we conceived. To woman are we engaged; to woman are we wedded. The woman is our friend and from woman is the family. If one woman dies, we seek another, through the woman are the bonds of the world. Why call the woman evil who gives birth to kings? *So Kion Manda Akhie Jit Jamien Rajaan.* From a woman, a woman is born. Without the woman there can be none. Nanak says, only the True Lord is without a woman"-(GGS Var Asa Ml, p.473).

- Guru Nanak says, *"Purkh Meh Naar, Naar Meh Purkha Boojho Brahm Giani"* (bid, p.879)-man is born of woman and woman of man, realize this O' divine.

- They are not wife and husband who sit together. Rather they are wife and husband who have one spirit in two bodies—Ibid, Suhi Ki Vaar.

- From temporal as well as from spiritual point of view, woman is man's other half and assists him to salvation. She assuredly brings happiness to the virtuous". (Var 5. Bhai Gurdas)

- Guru Hargobind during the course of his conversation with Sant Samrath Ram Dass, the mentor of Shiva jee Marhatta called woman, *"Aurat* eemaan**"**---Woman is the conscience of man. This shows unequivocally the high esteem in which a woman is required to be, held in Sikhism.

Sikhism took practical steps for socio-religious equality of man & woman

- In Sikhism there is no ban or prohibition on women to attend a Gurdwara and pay their obeisance. Women are equally entitled to get Sikh Initiation (Baptism) like men and wear articles of Sikh faith. Initiated women can perform all Sikh religious ceremonies, which initiated Sikh men can perform. Sikhism condemns female infanticide and a Sikh found guilty in this regard is excommunicated from the Sikh Panth. Sikhs are forbidden to have any relationship with *'Kuri Maar* (one who kills his daughter).

- Sikhism strictly forbids **'**Sati'the burning of widow on the pyre of her diseased husband.

- A widow or a divorced woman is allowed to remarry and lead a householder's life i.e, *Garahasti Jeenvan,* in Sikhism, if she so desired.
- Sikhism advocates education of women and encourages them to adopt various professions including armed forces and politics.
  Sikhism strictly forbids veiling ***(Purda)*** of women.

CHAPTER 13

MYTHOLOGY AND SIKHISM

Unlike Hinduism, Sikhism is rooted in history and not in mythology, rather it frowns at mythology. In Guru Granth Sahib mythological refernces on certain pages 224, 953-54, 1125, 1412 are only illustrative and do not indicate any Guru's belief in mythological personages or their actions. The Guru has discarded the myth and has asked the masses to leave all this and try to mingle with the Supreme Lord.

There have been efforts at the interpolation by the crafty Brahmins inorder to pollute the heritage of the pure religion (*Nirmal Panth*) created by Guru Nanak.

After the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, the combination of *Minas* (the rival claimants to Guruship), the caste Hindus and the provincial Muslim officials at Lahore drove Guru Hargobind out of the plains of the Punjab and he he relocated himself at Kiratpur in the Shivalik foot hills. The *Minas* gained control of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar which remained in their occupation for over six decades. During this period they played havoc with Sikh ideology. They in collaboration with the upper-caste Hindus (Brahmins) brought in a lot of Puranic mythology in various compositions on Sikhism including Guru Nanak's *Janam Sakhi* (biography), in the process reducing him to an *Avtaar* within the framework of Hindu pantheonism.

During the days of persecution of the Sikhs in the 18th century, the management of Gurdwara Harmander Sahib passed into the hands of the Udasis. Because of their beig clean and Hindu looks theUdsis were not targeted by the Muslim government officials. They successively served as head-priests Akal Takhat and Harimanir Sahib Amritsar, till they were forcibly ejected by the Khalsa Sikhs under Singh Sabha in early 1920's and with the constitution of Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 1925; their control over the Sikh shrines officially came to an end. During their control over the Sikh Shrines and the Sikh institutions, the Udasis tried their best to Hinduise Sikhism. They not only introduced un-Sikh but even anti-Sikh practices in the Sikh shrines and made manty interpolations in the Sikh literature.

The eratic thoughts expressed in the works emboldened the antagonistic forces in their onslaught against Sikhism in the modem period. Several works of Sikh philosophy, religion, history etc need thorough checking. They should be rewritten dropping all the erratic and spurious material, which does not fit with the Sikh thought content of the Holy Sikh Scripture.

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CHAPTER 14

SIKH CALENDAR

THE SIKH CALENDAR YEAR

NANAK SHAHI SAMVAT

The Sikh calendar year is based on the *'Baramah'* authored by the Gurus, which starts from the month of 'Chet'. 01 Chet Nanakshahi corresponds with 14 March CE. The year one of Nanakshahi calendar starts in 1469 CE-the year of the birth of Guru Nanak. It is based on the length of Tropical (solar) year 365d 5h 48m 45s. Its first five months contain 31 days each and last seven months 30 days each--a very simple rule to remember. It has a fixed leap year rule-last month to have 1 extra day every four years. It was prepared by, Sardar Pal Singh Purewal, a Canadian Sikh. Earlier Baba Banda Singh Bahadur adopted Nanak Shahi calendar in 1710 CE after the victory of Sirhind by the Sikh army. According to that calender the year 1710 CE became 241 NS (Nanakshahi), but this too was lunar.

Calendar is the system of measuring time for the needs of civil life, by dividing time into days, weeks, months and years, Calendar divisions are based on the movements of the earth and regular appearances of the sun and moon. A day is the average time required for one rotation of the earth on its axis. The measurement of a year is based on one revolution of the earth around the sun and is called a seasonal, tropical or solar year. A solar year contains 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 45.5 seconds.

A month was originally calculated by ancient people as the time between two full moons, or the number of days required for the moon to circle the earth (29. 5days). The measurement called a synodic or lunar month, resulted in a year of 354 days, 11.25 days shorter than a solar year.

The Hindu Calandar year is lunar and is called Bikrami Samvat, which is named after Maharaja Bikramajit who is said to have ruled over Ujjain more than 2000 years ago. Gurpurb dates based ¡on lunar *Thitees* change from year to year in CE. Every third or fourth lunar year has two months of the same name. The extra month is called *Malmas* in which no celebrations can be held, which is not in accordance with Gurbani, which says, *"Mahan divas moorat bhale jis ko nadar kare—* (GGS,p.136). *Thitee vaar sevah mughad gavaar--"* (Ibid, p.843).

Since the birth of Sikhism the Sikhs followed the Hindu Bikrami calendar according to which the dates of the Sikh historical events changed every year and also the relation of the months with seasons as given in Gurbani was changing. For instance as per Hindu Bikrami calendar in 1999 CE there was no Parkash Gurpurb of Guru Gobind Singh and similarly, Vaisakhi, the Khalsa *Sajna Divas* (The formal consecration day of Sikhism) fell on 9th April in 1753 CE, in 1799 CE on 10th April, in 1899 CE on 12th April, in 1999 CE on 14th April and accordingly after about 1100 years Vaisakhi shall fall in the month of May and after 13000 years

in the middle of October.

Because of these reasons the Sikhs all over the globe decided to discard the Hindu Bikrami Calendar based on lunar year and adopted Nanakshahi Calendar based on the length of solar (Tropical) year on the 300th anniversary of the birthday of the Khalsa in 1999 CE. It was - officially adopted by SGPC Amritsar in 2003, after holding detailed delibrations with various Sikh organizations lasting for many years. Since then SGPC uses Common Era calendar for its secular life. For Sikh religious life it uses the Sikh Nanakshahi calendar. It has fixed dates of Sangrands in Common Era. The permanent relation between seasons and months will stay according to Gurbani. Gurpurbs fall on fixed dates according to both Nanakshahi and Common Era Calendars All Gurpurbs occur once every year according to both Nanakshahi and Common Era Calendars. All Gurpurbs and other important dates of the Sikh history have been fixed according to solar dates e.g 23 Poh for Parkash of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib and 23 Poh will always occur on January 5. The present year 2007 CE corresponds with 539 NS.

In modern calendar, however, the number of days in a month is not based on the phases of moon. The length of the month is approximately one twelfth of a year (28 to 31 days) and is adjusted to fit the 12 months into a solar year. The ancient Egyptians were the first to replace lunar calendar with the solar calendar, the Christians followed suit. Now the solar calendar is used almost through out the world and is the most accurate calendar that is adjusted every fourth year to its accuracy. Since the solar calendar has been accepted throughout the world it is no more called as Christian Era Calendar. It is now called Common Era Calendar (CE). Now the entire world follows the Common-Era Calendar, which previously used to be called the Christian Era Calendar.

- Christianity has, the Christian- Era Calendar (now common-Era Calendar).
- Judaism has, Jewish calendar
- Islam has, Hijri calendar
- Hinduism has, Bikrami calendar
- Sikhism has, Nanak Shahi calendar

Name of months as per Sikh Calendar year:-

- Chet
- Vaisakh
- Jeth
- Asaar / Haar)
- Sawan (Saon)

- Bhadon / (Bhadron)
- Assoo
- Kattak (Katten)
- Maghar
- Poh
- Maagh
- Phagan

Name of days of the Week as per Sikh Calendar:

- Aitwar
- Somwar
- Mangalwar
- Budhwar
- Veerwar
- Shukarwar
- Shanisharwar

Guru Nanak has co-related Sun, seasons, months, weeks, dates, days, pehars, gharhi, chasa, visa, nimakh etc;

- *Visue chasiaa ghariaa pahraa thitee vaaree maah hoaa Sooraj eko rutt anek, Nanak kartay kay ketay ves*—Ibid, p.12
- *Sooraj eko rut anek, Nanak kate ke kete ves*--Ibid, p.357.

SANGRAAND

Sangrand is a Punjabi word for *Sankranti* (in Sanskrit), the day when the sun enters the new Rashi. It is the first day of every month. On this day special congregations are held in Gurdwaras, in which the new month is announced with reading of the relevant portion of *Baarah Mahaa* from Guru Granth Sahib. It does not have any sacredness in Sikhism, but is just a method of telling the Sikh masses that the new month has begun as till recently most of them were

illiterate and could not remember the calendar, which was a great necessity for sowing different crops at different times of the year and breeding of the cattle and other civil needs. Gurbani says:

- *Thiteen vaar sevay mughad gawaar"*---GGS, p. 843--Those who worship certain days or dates are great fools.

- *Mahan divas moorat bhale jin kao nadar karay* --lbid.

CHAPTER 15

FESTIVALS OF SIKHISM

The Sikh Festivals

Sikh festivals are called Gurpurbs and relate to days commemorating the birth, accession and death / martyrdom of Gurus and important events in Sikh history.

The martyrdom anniversaries of the Gurus are not an occasion to express grief, but are festivals to inspire Sikhs, to remind them of their history and struggle for justice to teach them the value of sacrifice for a good cause.

GURPURB CELEBRATIONS

Gurpurb celebrations generally last for three days. Two days before the actual day of Gurpurb, an Akhand Path is started in the Gurdwara. One day before the Gurpurb, a procession i.e '*Nagar* Keertan is organized through the Village/ town lead by *Panj Piaras* and the *Paalki* (planquin) of Guru Granth Sahib followed by the teams of *Raagis* (religious musicians), singing hymns, brass band playing different tunes and groups of devotees singing in chorus. On the actual day of Gurpurb, a *Deewaan* (religious session) begins early in the morning at about 4 O' clock, with the singing of the Asa Dee Var followed by the hymns from Guru Grath Sahib. Then follows the Bhog (reading of last five pages of Guru Granth Sahib) of *Akhand Path* after which more *Keertan, Katha,* lectures and recitation of poems in praise of the Guru. This celebration goes on till lunch time when Ardas is offered and *Karah Parshad* is distributed, then *Langar* is served to all. Some Gurdwaras also hold night services. These begin soon after sunset when *Rehras* and *Chaupai* are recited. Then follows *Keertan* till late in the night. Sometimes *Kavi Darbar* poetic symposium) is held, to enable poets to pay their tributes to the Guru in their own words. In the end *Ardas* is offered and *Karah Parshad* is distributed. Most notable days observed by the Sikhs worldwide are:

- Birth day Guru Gobind Singh Ji-January 5,
- Mela Maghi Mukatsar (Chali Muktian Da Shaheedi Divas)-January 13,
- Foundation day of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple-January 13,
- Vaisakhi (Khalsa Saajna Divas)--April 14,
- Ghallughara day 1984, June 4,
- Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji-- June 6,
- Foundation day of Akal Takhat-July 2,
- The installation of Guru Granth Sahib as permanent Guru-October 20,

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- Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji-- November 24,
- Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birthday celebration date-November 26*,
- Chhote Sahibzadian Da Shahaeedi Divas (martyrdom day of Guru Gobind Singh's younger sons--- Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh)-December 26,

*Although Guru Nanak Dev was born on the Vaisakhi day in 1469 A.D; but during the days of Sikh rule the celebration came to be held on the full moon day (Punnian / Poornima) in the month of Kattik according to the Bikrami Samvat and thus date used to be different every year, but now with the introduction of the Sikh calendar the celebration date has been fixed at November 26 for good.

VAISAKHI

Vaisakhi is the first day of the month of Vaisakh, corresponding with April 14. It is the most important day in Sikh history and is celebrated by the Sikhs all over the globe as Khalsa *Sajna Divas* (Formal consecration day of Sikhism). It marks:

- Birth day of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith (April 14, 1469 A.D).
- The birthday of the Khalsa (Vaisakhi, 1699), when Guru Gobind Singh formally revealed (consecrated-- launched) Sikhism in its present day form at Kesgarh Sahib (Anandpur Sahib-Punjab) through his Sikh initiation ceremony ---*Amrit Paan*, by offering *Amrit* to the five representatives *(Panj Piaray)* of the new faith (Sikhism) whose adoption was tried at the altar of death. In short it is the formal birthday of Sikhism.
- Dal Khalsa, who ultimately established Sikh rule in the Sikh home-land, Punjab was founded, on this day in 1726 A.D; in the Sarbat Khalsa held at Akal Takhat Amritsar, under the leadership of Sardar Darbara Singh.
- The formal establishment of the Sikh state on this day, in 1801 AD.
- The beginning of the summer and end of harsh winter season and so also the beginning of the wheat harvesting season, which is the major crop of the Sikh State, the Punjab.
- On this day in 1919 A.D the Jallian Wala Bagh massacre took place in Amritsar. The British who ruled Hindustan at that time had forbidden any gathering in Amritsar during that period. Nevertheless, Sikhs did come to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden temple) to celebrate the Vaisakhi festival, the army fired upon them at a place called Jallian Wala Bagh opposite Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), killing hundreds of unarmed innocent Sikhs.

To celebrate the Vaisakhi Akhand Path is held in Gurdwaras and on the concluding day, Bhog ceremony is held with Keertan, Katha, lectures, Ardas is offered and Karah Parshad is distributed and Langar is served. The main function is held at Gurdwra Darbar Sahib

(Golden Temple) Amritsar. Sikhs who want to join the Khalsa often do so at Vaisakhi. On this day the old cloth covering of Nishan sahib is changed with new one in all Gurdwaras. The Sikhs contribute their annual *Daswandh* to Gurdwaras on this day. Sarbat Khalsa is held at Akal Takhat on this day each year to discuss and sort out the problems facing the Sikh nation.

DIWALI

Generally regarded as a Hindu festival, Sikhs celebrate Diwali, because Guru Hargobind came back to Amritsar, after securing his own and fifty two Hindu Rajput Rajas release from the Gawalior forte jail, on this day in 1620 AD. The Sikhs celebrate Diwali as *'Bandee Chhod Divas'.* Main function is held in Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar. At Diwali Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) is lit up, there are fire works displays and people send sweets to their relatives and friends.

MAGHI

Maghi is celebrated in the memory of *Chali Muktas* (cwlI mukqy-the forty liberated one's--- immortals), who embraced martyrdom while fighting against and defeating Moghul forces, pursuing Guru Gobind Singh, at Muktsar in January 1706. Main function is held at Mukatsar. It corresponds with January 14 each year.

HOLA MOHALLA

Hola Mohalla is celebrated at Anandpur Sahib (Punjab). The word Hola seems to have been derived from *Hamla* or *Halla* meaning attack and *Mohalla* being the place of attack. On this day Guru Gobind Singh held mock battles of the Khalsa---the Sikh Army (*Khalsa Akal Purkh Kee Fauj*) after training them in warfare-a sort of military exercise in modern terms. The festival lasts for three days. On the final and concluding day the fair reaches its climax with a large procession called *Hola Mohalla.* The participants chant devotional hymns and display feats of horsemanship and soldiery as they march.

Hola Mohalla is celebrated in the month of March every year. Hola has no connection with *Holi*, which is a Hindu festival except that it falls on a day next to Holi. The festival lasts for three days. It was started by Guru Gobind Singh to wean the Sikhs away from celebrating the Hindu festival of Holi.

GHALLUGHARA DAY

(The Holocaust of 1984)

It is celebrated to commemorate the sad memory of operation blue star-- (code name for the army action against the Sikh nation by the Hindu government of India in June 1984), another sad day in the Sikh history.

On June 3, 1984 the Indian army occupied the Sikh Homeland-'Punjab', in order to curb the genuine, peaceful and democratic Sikh agitation, demanding more financial powers and a separate Sikh civil law like Hindus and Muslims in that country. Curfew was imposed and an undeclared martial law was promogulated in the Sikh State and communication with the outside world was snapped. On June 4, the government of India invaded Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) i.e; 'The world seat of Sikhism' and 'Akal Takhat', Amritsar i.e; 'the theo-political seat' of the Sikhs, with its full military might using infantry, artillery, tanks, air force and even navy. Along with it about 120 Gurdwaras were attacked throughout the length and breadth of Punjab. Several thousand Sikhs from all directions marched peacefully to register their protest. Hundreds of the peaceful marchers were shot dead by the Indian army in order to prevent their peaceful march towards Amritsar, the theopolitical capital of the Sikh nation. Several thousand Sikhs including women and children were arrested. The army's attack and the killings of the innocent Sikhs continued. Several arrested Sikhs with hands tied behind their backs were shot dead in cold blood. Thousands of pilgrims who had come to participate in the martyrdom day celebrations of Guru Arajan Dev were not allowed to leave the shrine and were killed mercilessly. Leave aside what happened to Sikh lives, the army action resulted in the destruction of the Akal Takhat, damaging the building of Guadwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) with innumerable bullet marks, destroying the buildings around Parikarma of the shrine, burning Sikh reference library, damaging Darshani Deori housing Sikh Toshakhana there by burning of the Chanani studded with jewels presented to Mharaja Ranjit Singh by the Nizam of Hydrabad. The Langar Hall, Guru Ramm Dass Serai and Teja Singh Samundrai Hall-the meeting place of SGPC-the Sikh Parliament were set ablaze. Sikh soldiers rebelled. Several of them were killed and several thousand arrested and court marshaled. Sikh leaders including the president of SGPC, the president of Sharomani Akali Dal and other established political leaders were arrested for waging war against the central government of India.

Sant Jernail Singh Bhindranwale, head of the Damdami Taksal, Bhai Amrik Singh, president the Sikh Students fedration, General Shabeg, the hero of Bangla Desh war along with several thousand Sikhs embraced martyrdom fighting for their faith.

Well known Sikhs sympathetic to the movement including doctor Baldev Singh Brar head of Guru Ram Dass charitable hospital Amritsar, Sardar Bhan Singh secretary SGPC, Sardar Abnashi Singh assistant secretary SGPC were eliminated. Sikh women were frequently raped by the security forces personnel in the garb of Sikhs in order defame the movement. Thousands of Sikh youth were tortured and killed in fake encounters labeling them as terrorists, Sikhs in general were harassed as sympathizers of terrorists, price and prizes fixed and announced for the capture or killing of the wanted Sikhs by the government. Indian constitution amended and draconian laws enacted with the Punjab state being put under the direct rule of the central government in order to terrorize and demoralize the Sikh Nation. Indiscriminate repression of the Sikhs continued till election to the state assembly were held along with the elections for central government in 1997 AD, and the congress government was ousted both at the center in Delhi and in the state of Punjab. The Sikhs under the leadership of Sharomani Akali Dal gained political control of their state with their demands still unresolved.

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CHAPTER 16

EDUCATION AND ITS CONCEPTS

IN SIKHISM

Before the birth of Sikhism in the Punjab in the Indian subcontinent, only Brahmins were entitled to have education under the Hindu caste system, the Varn Ashram Dharama. Even amongst Brahmins females were prohibited education. Sikhism believes in providing equal opportunity to all human beings and accords top priorty to the attainment of knowledge, through education to all without any discrimination of caste, creed, gender, colour or nationality. It has a very broad concept of education as attainment of knowledge, development and integration of human personality, through training in academic, physical, social, religious and spiritual aspects of life, which is aimed at creating ideal human beings. The concept is best summarized in, "Vidhya veechari taan parupkari" i.e, "A learned person indeed is he, who does good to others" (GGS, p356). *"Parrhia moorakh akhi-ay, jis labh lobh hankar"* i.e "The educated, who harbours greed, avarice and pride is said to be a fool" (Ibid, p140).

For centuries, the Punjab has been the gateway for attacks on the Indian subcontinent (Hindustan) from the central Asia, the Middle-East and Eastern Europe, through the passes in the mountains. Muslim invasions of the Punjab started in 711 A.D and continued till the Sikhs destroyed the Muslim domination and rule in the eighteenth century A.D, established the Sikh rule, reversed the tide of attacks and sealed the northwest border of the Indian subcontinent permanently.

Because of centuries of political turmoil and instability, conditions were not propitious for the development of any educational system and setting up of educational institutions in the Sikh homeland--Punjab. Although, Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian etc, were known to writers, but none was spoken or understood by the common people of the Punjab. The major language spoken and understood by the common people of Punjab was given different names at different times by the invading people who variously and contemptuously called it: Taki or Takri, Apabhramsha, Sind Saagri, Jatki, Zabane Jattan, Hindvi, Desi and Lahori etc. The region was named Punjab by Emperor Akbar in 1590 A.D and the language of this region gradually came to be called Punjabi and the name has persisted since then.

Till the birth of Sikhism in the Punjab, Punjabi language did not have its own script for its true pronunciation and expressions. Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikhism developed an alphabet of 35 letters for Punjabi language, completed it with acrophils and laid the rules for its grammar. The script was named 'Gurmukhi', by his successor Guru Angad Dev, who made great efforts to popularize it. He prepared primers (*Balupdesh*) of Gurmukhi and distributed them among the Sikh centers for teaching to the common mass of people. Thus he broke the monopoly of the Brahmin over learning, who boasted of his knowledge of Sanskrit. Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Dass, Guru Ram Dass and Guru Arjan Dev, gave their Bani in Gurmukhi (Punjabi). Guru Arjan Dev edited the Holy Sikh Scripture, Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) with Gurmukhi script in 1604 AD.

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Guru Gobind Singh established the first seat of Sikh learning at Talwandi Sabo, (District Bathinda) now called 'Damdama Sahib' as counter part to Hindu seat of learning in 'Kanshi' (Benaras) and called it '*Guru Kee Kanshi*. With the establishment of Sikh rule in the Punjab and return of peace, Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims of the Punjab started establishing their primitive educational institutions for the benefit of their own communities in their respective religious places of worship. The Sikh rule came to an end with the annexation of the Sikh Secular Democratic Republic of the Punjab by the British in 1849 A.D. A typical school serving the Sikh community before the annexation of the Sikh Secular Democratic Republic of the Punjab by the British in A.D; 1849 was a Gurmukhi school in a Gurdwara corresponding to Makatab or Madrassa for the Muslims in a Mosque or Path Shala for the Hindus in a Mandir. These schools imparted education in vernacular (Udru, Persian and Punjabi), mathematics and religion to their respective communities. After annexation of the Punjab by the British, English became the official court language in the British Punjab and as a result learning of English language and aquisition of western knowledge became necessary for Punjabis in the British Punjab. Till 1855AD, no formal schools existed in the British Punjab. In 1856 the education department of the British Punjab was constituted by the government and a beginning was made to set up schools independent of Mosques, temples and Gurdwaras. From 1875-76 official appointments and promotions in the British Punjab were reserved for those who had passed the middle school examination. As a result within 25 years of the annexation of the Sikh Secular Democratic Republic of the Punjab the parents and pupils lost interest in the traditional religious schools and there was a great decline in the number of students in them as the parents preferred that their wards should learn nothing at all than the system in vogue in government schools. Singh Sabha movement (Established: 1873)* among the Sikhs provided an answer to this deteriorating situation in the field of the Sikh educational system**.** Singh Sabha established a number of Khalsa Schools in the towns and villages of the British Punjab to impart modern education along with religious education.

The British established the first government college in the British Punjab in Lahore, in 1864, which was granted the status of University College in 1870. This college was converted into Punjab University on October 14, 1882.

Singh Sabha established Khalsa College Amritsar in 1892 and it became a forerunner of progressive Sikh institutions. This was a model of a Sikh institution combining new education with religious education**.** Singh Sabha established Sikh educational conference in 1908 A.D, which has since then made invaluable contributions in the field of education among the Sikhs in particular and the population of the British Punjab in general. Singh Sabha imparted complete three diamentional education to the people of the Punjab, covering social, religious and academic aspects. Giani Ditt Singh, who was a great social reformer, organized the social education in the British Punjab in general and the Sikhs in Particular. Bhai Jawahar Singh and Bhai Gurmukh Singh were instrumental in organizing religious and higher education here. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha imparted education in theology of Sikhism. He wrote Gurmat Prabhakar, Gurmat Sudhakar and Gurmat Shabad Ratnakar.

Only one university (Punjab University) existed in whole of the Sikhhomeland, Punjab between Afghanistan and New Delhi, before its partition in 1947. The literacy rate among its masses picked up only after its reorganization in 1966 and the state presently has a number of traditional universities, an agricultural university, a veterinary university, a technical university, a medical university and a school education board.

After their coming into existence, Chief Khalsa Dewan Amritsar, Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak committee Amritsar and Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak committee Delhi, have made valuable contributions in the field of education among the Sikhs in particular and all other Indians in general.

In the post independence era very few old type Khalsa Schools and colleges are being opened these days. But this has been largely, compensated by the opening of 'Sikh Public Schools', Sikh professional institutions like Sikh engineering colleges, Sikh medical colleges and Sikh dental colleges etc.

Miri- Piri Academy a residential Sikh School meant only for granting education to Sikh students from other countries, has been established with the efforts of Harbhajan Singh Yogi a Sikh preacher settled in the United states of America, near Gurdwara Chheherta Sahib 8 kilometers from Amritsar (Punjab) in 1997, on a 16-acre plot leased out to school by SGPC, for imparting value based education to the American Sikh children and also Sikh children from all over the globe. In addition to normal educational curriculum it imparts lessons in Sikh religion, Keertan, the Sikh way of life and the culture of Punjab.

SIKH RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL

INSTITUTIONS IN PUNJAB

Many Institutions are imparting pure religious education in Sikhism in the state of Punjab. Damdami Taksal, Gurmat College Patiala, Sikh missionary college Amritsar, Sikh missionary college Ludhiana, Guru Gobind Singh study circle Ludhiana, Guru Gobind Singh foundation Chandigarh and Guru Nanak foundation Delhi are most notable among them.

* See Sikh Organizations

CHAPTER 17

SIKH ART, CRAFT, CULTURE, CIVILIZATION, ARCHITECTURE, JURISPRUDENCE AND POLITICS

Sikh Art, Craft, Culture, Civilization etc.

Geographically, the Sikh homeland lies in the northwest at the periphery of the Indian subcontinent. Because of its location it has been natural land-gate for invasions of the Indian subcontinent from the Middle-East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, through the passes in the mountains on its northwest borders, since 2000 B.C. Centuries of successive raids of foreign invasions left Punjab utterly ruined. Every invader tried to destroy local culture, especially its language and impose his own culture / language on the local people, but the Punjabis and Punjabi language remained unvanquished. The development of art, culture and education, which need peaceful atmosphere for growth, was severely hampered in the Punjab during this long tumulous period of time. The Punjab, which forms major portion of the Indus Valley and was the fountain head of the Indus Valley civilization / culture stood utterly ruined. Till the end of 15th century its people had no written language, no inspiring religion, no commerce and no education. The invaders variously called it Sapt Sindhu, Sindhu Des, Taka des, Bahika Des, Jataka Des, Hafat Hindu, Pentopotamia etc; and finally during the Muslim rule here in the sixteenth century, Emperor Akbar named it Punjab, the name, which has persisted since then.

The major language spoken and understood by the common people in the Punjab has been variously and contemptuously called Sindh Sagri, Taki or Takri, Prakrit, Sauraseni Apabhrams, Zabane Jattan, Jatki, Hindvi, Sahaskriti, Desi and Lahori etc, by the invading people. Guru Nanak (1469-1539) founded Sikhism in Punjab in 1496 A.D, towards the end of the 15th century. He preached in the local vernacular of the Punjab. At the time of the birth of Sikhism, the language spoken and understood by the people in and around Lahore was called 'Lahori' and people used its regional dialects to communicate among themselves in different parts of the Punjab. Although Lahori was the spoken language of the people of the Punjab since prehistoric times, it did not posses a script before the birth of Sikhism. Guru Nanak developed a script for the vernacular of the Punjab and wrote an alphabet of thirty five letters, completed the script with acrophils and laid rules for its grammar. The script were named Gurmukhi (the script used for the language which flowed from the mouth of Guru) by his successor, Guru Angad Dev. Gradually with the passage of time, the dialect of the Punjab, came to be called Punjabi, but its script continues to be called Gurmukhi. Both Punjabi language and its script Gurmukhi form the basis of Sikh culture.

Thus Sikh religion, Sikh culture, Punjab the name of this region in the Indian subcontinent and Gurmukhi script for the Punjabi language were born here almost simultaneously. Eighty percent of the people of the Punjab are dependent on agriculture and out of them eighty

percent are Sikhs, hence any art, craft, culture and civilization of the Punjab is Sikh in origion. The Sikhs established their own rule here in the 18th century; after which the Sikh culture, art and craft etc started flourishing here in the right earnest.

SIKH CULTURE

The dictionary meaning of the word culture is "intellectual development," where as sociologically culture represents a whole complex, which includes language, knowledge, belief systems, art, technology, food, fashion, symbols, music, dance, laws, customs, pursuits, behaviours, ideals, pleasures, dreams and any other capabilities or habits aquired by man as a member of society in common parlance or every day use and are passed on to succeeding generations. Sikh culture is totally based on Gurmat. Any thing contrary to Gurmat is not Sikh culture.

Language forms the most important tool of a culture, viz; Hebrew (Jews-Judaism) English (Christians-Christianity), Sanskrit (Hindus-Hinduism), Arabic (Muslims-Islam), Pali (Buddhists- Buddhism) and Punjabi (Sikhs-Sikhism). Guru Arjan Dev the fifth Guru of the Sikhs created the holy Sikh scripture, Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) as the revealed and final doctrinal authority of Sikhism in Punjabi language with Gurmukhi script. Thus Punjabi language forms the identity of the Sikh culture. In addition to the Punjabi language, hospitality and humane love is an organic trait of Sikh culture. The warmth of 'you are mine' is in born. The Sikhs excel in social intercourse. They are irrepressibly extroverts. They are open-minded people and share the festivities with other communities. They believe in the universal golden principle of 'live and let live'. They are people of today and tomorrow, yet proud of yesterday.

Equality of mankind (egalitarianism) is the biggest trait of the Sikh culture and it is found in all spheres of Sikh way of life irrespective of caste, creed, race, gender or social, economic or political status of the individual and is marked by, *Sangat--praying* together as equals, *Pangat*--sitting together as equals, *Langar:* eating together as equals, *Sarovar:* bathing in the same pool as equals, *Pahul:* drinking Amrit from the same bowl as equals, *Karah Parshad:* accepting Karah Parshad as equals, equality of name: compulsory ending of the all Sikh names with 'Singh' for males and 'Kaur' for females, equality of dress: Turban for males and dupatta for females with or without a small turban *(Keski)* under it, *Kameez, Kachhehra* and observance of Sikh religious symbols as equals by the initiated Sikhs. Truthful living, social justice, peaceful co-existence, sharing, *Sewa* and *Simran* are other significant traits of Sikh culture.

Idolatry is strictly prohibited in Sikh culture. Any act or even a tinge of such idea is fiecerly contested. Sikh habits are totally different from other systems. They maintain their faith on "Waheguru" in happiness and sorrow. Saying, *'Waheguru'* in the face of a clamity is a matter of courage and deep conviction in God. They traditioally distribute *Karah Parshad* in sorrow too. After death in a family, wailing and crying is strictly prohibited in Sikhism. They maintain dignified appearance in the face of heavy odds and abhor label of cowardice. A Sikh has become synonymous with bravery, courage, honesty, fairplay and empathy. He is ever ready to help the needy.

In Sikhism woman, the mother of mighty heroes is elevated to the highest position in

the hierarchy of human beings. In Sikh culture she symbolizes 'the principle of eternal creation'. She is granted equal status with man in all aspects of life. She must be honoured in the same way as the man, each completes the other. She is *ardhangini* i.e if completeness of life were taken as a unit woman was one half, the other half being the man. Veiling of women is prohibited in Sikh culture, but vulgar display of body or parts of the body is against the Sikh culture. A head covering, turban for males and *Chunni* or *Dupatta* for females is part of Sikh culture. Naked head in Sikhism is treated as a mark of disrespect. Music occupies prime position in Sikh culture. The entire Guru Granth sahib (The holy Sikh scripture) is structured on the basis of Ragas-- Classical music (Gurmat Sangeet) in which the portions are supposed to be sung. Sikh music is of two types, religious music (Shabad Keertan) and folk music. However, sensual music is prohibited in Sikhism.

The Sikhs are very lively people and their male folk dances of *Bhangra* and *Jhoomar* are known throughout the world. Similarly, *Giddha* and *Kikali* are well known Sikh female folk dances. However ritualistic dancing is not permitted in Sikhism. The Sikh cultural ethos are best represented in the *Melas* (fairs), which form an important part of Sikh culture in the Punjab, where their cultural life can be seen in full bloom. The Sikh folklores, folk dances, folk customs, their martial and traditional games, folk traditions, folk tales and legends can be witnessed there. Important Sikh Melas are Vaisakhi, Diwali, Maghi and Hola Moballa, which draw audience from every nook and corner of Punjab. *Nakleas* and *Bhands* form an important part of the Punjabi Sikh culture. Like all other cultures of the world, Sikh culture is not static and keeps on making additions to its rich heritage.

Sikh Civilization

Punjab, the Sikh homeland forms major portion of the Indus valley, which is one of the oldest civilization in the world. Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in Punjab in the 15th century. It was embraced by people belonging to tribes in small numbers, but the "Jatt tribe" of central Punjab called "Majha" embraced Sikhism en-masse. Now Sikhism has gone global and is the fifth largest world religion.

The Sikh Gurus introduced city civilization in Punjab. No Sikh Guru settled in his ancestral village, but instead founded a new model town for his family and followers to give a new and fuller content to the secular living of their people. Guru Nanak founded the first Sikh town on the western bank of River Ravi in Shakargarh tehsil of the Punjab and named it Kartarpur (now in Pakistan). After him the towns of Khadur Sahib, Goindwal, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Sri Hargobindpur, Kartarpur (Bist Doab), Keeratpur Sahib, Anandpur Sahib etc; in the Punjab were founded and developed by the Sikh Gurus on the main trade routes. The cities founded by them were preplanned and not haphazard. Stone, brick and lime, instead of mud, were used as building materials. All these towns had plenty of water supply from public wells, brick lined streets, public baths, tanks and very good drainaige system. From the time of the sixth Guru these cities were girdled with forts and fortresses to take care of their defense requirements. These towns served as centers for the development of commerce, art, education, banking, trade, industry etc. and since then Punjab and the Sikhs have become leaders in all fields of life in the Indian subcontinent. The area of Punjab on both sides of the river Ravi, called central Punjab or Majha, is the fountainhead of Sikhism, Sikh culture and the Sikh civilization.

Sikh Architecture

The Sikhs have their own distinct architecture, which forms an important distinctive feature of the Sikh culture and civilization. The first building constructed in Sikh style is Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar, a marvel of late 16th century. The founder of the Sikh architecture was Guru Arjan Dev. He designed and built Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple).

The cities founded and developed by the Sikh Gurus in Punjab are well planned and present an example of the Sikh architecture. The Sikh architecture flourished and reached its zenith during the Sikh rule in the Punjab with Maharaja Ranjit Singh patronizing the buildings of forts, palaces and bungas (residential places) etc. The Bunga of the Ramgarhia chief Jassa Singh in Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Complex Amritsar is an artistic legacy of the Sikh architecture of late 18th century. The buildings of Ram Bagh palace of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Gobindgarh forte, Khalsa College Amritsar and the palace of Maharaja Sher Singh at Batala present the examples of Sikh architecture of the 19th century. Characteristics of Sikh architecture are guilded fluted domes, cupolas, kiosks and stone lanterns on the roofs of the Gurdwara buildings.

The Sikh Gurdwaras built in Sikh style all over the world stand uniquely different from the Hindu Mandirs, Muslim Mosques, Christian Churches, Jewish Synagogues and Buddhist Monastries.

Sikh Jurisprudence

The Sikhs most faithfully abide by the law of the land they live in. However, they have their own jurisprudenence in the matters relating to their religion, politics, inheritence and social dealings, includindg marriage. The Sikh legal system is based upon Guru Granth Sahib, Dasam Granth, the writings of Bhai Gurdas, the writings of Bhai Nand Lal, the Sikh customs, the Sikh customary laws and the Sikh traditions. The sanction of the Sikh jurisprudence vests in the Sarbat Khalsa, in the name of Akal Takhat under the patronage of Guru Granth Sahib. Father gives nationality to children. Only males inherit the property of their father, the famale receives share from the property of her father-in-law or husband.

Sikh Politics

The base of Sikh politics is religion and any leader who defies Sikh religious doctrines, values, traditions and institutions is bound to loose his grip among the Sikhs. The institutuions governing the politics in Sikhism are, Gurdwara and Akal Takhat, the doctrines being ‘Guru Granth’ and ‘Guru Khalsa’ Panth, while the traditions include: Sarbat Khalsa (the Sikh commonwealth) and Gurmatta (the Sikh system of consensus). Any Sikh leader who tries to make religion subservient to politics is bound to be doomed.

The Sikhs believe in democracy, secularism and egalitarianism. Sikh democracy is not the rule of the majority even the smallest minority too has complete say in this ideology.

'Sangat', 'Panches', 'Sarbat Khalsa' and 'Gurmatta' form the basis of democracy in Sikh politics. Sikhism peaches a secularism, which respects other people's right to be different. Sikhism preaches egalitarianism and believes in granting equal rights to every one irrespective of caste, creeds, gender or race etc.

ARTS AND CRAFTS OF THE SIKH

HOMELAND - PUNJAB

Arts and craft as a phrase mean decorative designs and handicraft. In this field also, Punjab, the Sikh homeland has an ancient and distinguished tradition which people have maintained inspite of the odds of time. The important items of art and craft of the Sikh homeland, Punjab include:

- Plastering of mud walls and drawing ferns, plants, several fascinating motifs by women of Punjab.

- Paper mache utensils (gohle) for storing house hold necessities in colourful designs were made out of paste made by women in Punjab by mixing paper and various kinds of earth.

- Floor mats and curtains were woven from *Sarkanda*. *Chhaj* used for separating edible food from the grain was also made from Sarkanda. Household items like *Chiks, Bohey, Pitarian, Changeran, Chhikkoos* and *Mooras* were also made from Sarkanda. Rattlers (*Chhankanas*) and other toys for children were also made from Sarkanda, which used to grow in plenty in Punjab before green revolution. Although these crafts of Punjab are not yet completely forgotten yet they are moving fast towards fading out.

- Weaving of *Nawar* for beds and *Durries* on myriad motives and designs especially by young girls in villages has been a long tradition in Punjab.

- Embroidery: Needlework of Punjab is aspect of life and the beautiful designs, which dextrous fingers of Punjab's proverbially beautiful women create, have such a wealth of form and motif that they defy enumeration. Some of these are called *Baghs* literally: a garden, *Phulkari,s* literally: flower work. The patterns of needlework on bed spreads, *Chunnis, Dupattas* and shirts and *Salvars* are still different.

- Punjabi hand fans (*Pakhian*) like the Japanese are almost typical and their leaves are made in much the same way as *Phulkaris* etc are made.

- The shoes made in different parts of Punjab have different traditions. Earlier shoes, which have come to be known as Punjabi *Juttis* throughout the world were embroidered with gold or silver wires all over in different patrons covering every part of the pair so that it looked as if it was made of gold or silver. Even now golden and silver threads are used to embroider these shoes, with the quality of these world famous shoes, still being maintained.

- Tailoring: The Punjabi *Salwar* and *Kameez*, typical Punjabi Sikh female dress attracts the

attention worldwide.

- The woodwork of Punjab has also been traditionally famous. Artistic beds with comfortable, skillfully made backrests filled with mirrors and carved colourful legs called *Pawas*, low seats called *Peeras* and *Peerian* were made by carpenters in every village. Sikh carpenters designed, Sikh chair based on early nineteenth century English examples, but it had a kind of new looped-arm to allow sitting in squatted position, giving it a novel Sikh effect. The town of Kartar pur in Bist Jallandhar Boab is famous for its woodwork. Amritsar excelled in ivory and woodcarving. Specimens of carving can be seen on some old doors, windows, panels, railings, ceilings and facades of balconies. The art of woodcarving owed much to the large number of Sikh carpenters of Amritsar.

- Gold and silver ornaments in Sikh style are manufactured and sold in villages and towns of Punjab. *Bazar Sarafan* in Amritsar is the biggest market in north India dealing with jewellry. Work in gold and silver leaf and in gold and silver thread is well known in the Amritsar city from its foundation.

- Pottery: All sorts of clay and metal potty manufactured in old and modem Punjabi Sikh style in different designs is available in Punjab.

- Textile: Kashmiri craftsmen manufactured shawls here. Amritsar is still very popular for its shawls and textile.

CHAPTER 18

MUSIC IN SIKHISM

Music, one of the fine arts of the world, occupies prime position in Sikhism. Sikhs love music and would sit through all night performances. Sikh music is of two types:

1. Sikh religious music
2. Sikh flok music

SIKH RELIGIOUS MUSIC

Sikh Gurus understood the power of music in men's minds and it was for this reason that they conveyed their message in sacred and devotional music. This sublime music called *Kirtan* inspires the disciple to higher spiritual goals. It promotes spiritual vision and is quite different from ordinary wordly music that is meant for entertainment. The entire holy book of Sikhism, 'Guru Granth Sahib' except for the initial seven and the concluding seventy seven pages is structured on the basis of *ragas* (*Gurmat Sangeet*) in which the portions are supposed to be sung. He total number of Ragas is according to ancient books is 84. Each *raga is* associated with the specific hour of the day or night or sometimes with particular season, and is designed, by virtue of its constitution, to express a certain mood or sentiment. This time theory, which governs the *ragaa is* the most unique feature of the Sikh religious music. 31 *ragas* are included in Guru Granth Sahib. The 31 *ragas*, which appear in Guru Granth Sahib are: *Sri, Majh, Gauri, Asa, Gujri, Devgandhari, Bihagra, Vadhans, Sorath, Dhanasri, Jaitsri, Todi, Bairari, Tilang, Suhi, Bilawal, Gaund, Ramkali, Nat Narain, Mali Gauda, Maru, Tukhari, Kedara, Bhairav, Basant, Sarang, Malar, Kanada, Kalyan, Parbhati* and *Jaijai-wanti*.

Sikh religious music has two subdivisions:-

(a) *Shabad Kirtan*

(b) *Dhadi Darbar*

Commonly used instruments used for Religious Music

These days *ragis* generally perform *kirtan* with harmonium and tablas (drums), but sometimes string instruments like Sitar, guitar, Rebec (Rabab), Taoos and Dilruba etc may be added. Dhadis use *Sarangi* and *Dhads* for singing ballads (*Varan*). During *Nagar Kirtan* and *Parbhat Pheris* Dholki, Chimta and Chhanay are used.

SIKH FOLK MUSIC

It includes: Kissey, waraan, jugni and mahia, dohray, tappay, suhag, ghorian etc. Folk music is part of every day Sikh life in Punjab. There is no festival or event in Sikh life, which is without music.

Commonly used Instruments for Folk Music:

Dhol, toombi, algozay, vanjali (bansuri) and *been* (bIn) are the commonly used Sikh folk musical instruments in Punjab.

Sensual music is prohibited in Sikhism.

CHAPTER 19

DANCING IN SIKHISM

Sikhism does not prohibit any sensible hobby, entertainment, pleasure or enjoyment, Gurbani says:

- *Nachan kuddan mann ka chaao* Nanak *jin mann* bhao (ਭਉ*) tina mann bhaao (ਭਾਉ)"* i.e, "Dancing and jumping are mind's yearnings. Nanak, those who have God's fear in their mind have real joy" (GGS, p.465).

However, Sikhism is definitely opposed to ritualistic dancing. Clapping of hands and dancing in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib is strictly prohibited in Sikhism:

- To exhibit devotion through ritualistic dancing leads to suffering" (GGS, p364).

In Hinduism dances are influenced by religion, Lord Krishna's *Baal Lila and Prem Lila*, *Raas Lila* in UP, *Keligopal* in Asam, *Maharaj* in Manipur, *Dahi-Handi* in Maharashtra and *Garbha-Rass* in Gujrat glorify the life of Lord Krishna through dances, whereas Sikh dances diverge from religious themes. None of the Sikh dances have religious themes as their basis. Sikh dances are performed collectively. They are spontaneous expression of the myrth and joy of the toiling people. *Bhangra, Ghidda* and *Jhoomar* are performed with beats of dhol (drum), claps and a few words of a simple song. These folk dances donot relate any story or theme therefore no hero or heroine's role is essential.

The male and female dances of the Sikhs in the Punjab expressing happiness and joy are distinctly different. Male dances are, *Bhangra and Jhoomar*, whereas female dances are *Giddha* and *Kikali*.

CHAPTER 20

SIKH ORGANIZATIONS

The Sikh organizations which have played vital role in the Sikh history so far are:

- Singh Sabha
- Chief Khalsa Diwan
- Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee
- Sharomani Akali Dal

SINGH SABHA

After the Sikh Kingdom (Sikh Democratic Republic of the Punjab) was annexed by the British in 1849 A.D; the relationship between the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs under went a complete change in the Punjab. With the Muslim threat and Sikh kingdom gone, the external pressures that kept Hindus and Sikhs together disappeared. They had to redefine their relationships. After its annexation the Sikh Kingdom Punjab, was dismantled, reorganized and merged with rest of India by the British. The Hindus and Muslims of the Punjab came into contact with well educated members of their respective religious communities from the rest of the Hindustan (India), which had already been under British rule for almost over more than one hundred years and were enlightened with the modem western education and knowledge, but the Sikhs had none to fall back upon. The ownership of the Gurdwaras had passed into the hands of the Hindus during the days of persecution of the Sikhs under the Muslim rule. During this period of occupation the Hindu priests called *'Mahants;* not only introduced un-Sikh, but even anti-Sikh practices in Gurdwaras. The Sikhs during their rule in the Punjab remained buisy with securing and expanding the boundries of their nascent Empire and did not take any steps to assert their religious identity through the Sikh *Rehat* (Sikh religious code of conduct) distinct from the Hindu practices.

In 1834, the American Ludhiana Mission began its work in Punjab. It brought the printing press with it and published the New Testament in Punjabi. The British annexed Punjab in 1849 and opened Christian missions in the British Punjab. The Christian missionaries were given a free play to attack the identity, ideology, history and institutions of Sikh religion. These Christian missons were primarily located in the heart of Sikh areas like Batala, Amritsar and Lahore, where they were successful in converting a large number of Shudras into Christianity by offering them various kinds of baits. They made serious attempts to claim conversions from amongest the Sikhs, but met with little success untill 1873, when four Sikh students of Amritsar Mission School declared their intention to be baptized.

These happenings awakened the Sikh intelligentia to discuss and resolve the crisis of Sikh identity, religious boundry marking and crystallize the *Sikh Rehatmaryada* (The Sikh religious code of conduct) of Guru Period from the mixture of Hindu rituals and prevent the relapse of Sikhism back into Hinduism and conversions into Christianity and also get legal recognition. Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia an uncle of the deposed Maharaja Dalip Singh took the initiative and

called a meeting of the prominent Sikh leaders of the Punjab in Guru Ka Bagh Amritsar. The meeting resulted in the formation of a society of the Sikhs, which was named *'Singh Sabha'* in Amritsar in 1873 A.D, with Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia as its founder president. That marked the birth of Singh Sabha movement. Other prominent persons who participated in the initial meeting were Kanwar Bikram Singh of Kapurthala, Baba Khem Singh Bedi, Giani Sardool Singh and Giani Gian Singh from Amritsar. The inaugural meeting of Singh Sabha was held on Dussehra day (October I, 1873) at Manji Sahib, Amritsar. Unfortunately this Sikh society came to be overwhelmingly dominated by persons who called themselves, Sanatan Sikhs (literally: ancient Sikhs). These Sanatan Sikhs although believed in Guru Granth Sahib, but they also observed caste, personal Guruship, idol worship and other Hindu rites, rituals and practices.They were led by Baba Khem Singh Bedi, a direct descendant of Guru Nanak and had their headquarters in Amritsar. In the programme they devised, particular emphasis was laid on the promotion of periodicals and other appropriate literature on Sikhism, but failed to address the question of crystallizing a distinct Sikh *Rehat* and establish a separate Sikh identity distinct from Hindus, which concerned the major portion of the Panth in Punjab. In 1877 a Gujrati Brahmin named Swami Dayanand Saraswati came to Punjab and opened a branch of his Arya Samaj Sect of Hindus in Lahore. He cleverly contended that the Sikhs were a sect of Hinduism and Sikhism was not a separate religion. He attacked the Sikh scriptures very vehemently, ridiculed the Sikh Gurus and the Punjabi language.

The Sikhs with radical views ('Tat Khalsa') disagreed with the actions of Amritsar Singh Sabha, therefore, they dissociated themselves form the parent body in 1879, and formed a parallel Singh Sabha in Lahore under the leadership of Professor Gurmukh Singh, Harsa Singh, Jawahar Singh and Giani Ditt Singh. The Lahore Singh Sabha proved to be more aggressive. As it was a revivalist movement and sought only to revive the Sikhism of Guru period without making any deviations, it instantly caught the imagination of the Sikhs in general and attracted the attention of Sikh aristocrats, intellectuals and scholars in particular. Among them the names of Sardar Attar Singh Bhadaur, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha (author of the encyclopaedia of Sikh literature, doctrine and history) and Bhai Vir Singh (noted for his contributions to Punjabi literature) are worth mentioning.

The objectives of the Singh Sabha were:-

(a) To preach among Sikhs to have faith in Guru Granth Sahib and not to worship, believe or recognize any human Guru after Guru Gobind Singh.

(b) To inculcate the principles of Sikh religion as preached by Sikh Gurus among the Sikhs with a view to restoring Sikhism to its pristine purity.

(c) To preach against the caste system, Idol, picture or grave worship and personal Gurudom.

(d) To preach the principles of Sikh religion by word of mouth, by publications of historical and religious books and through magazines and newspapers.

(e) To encourage propagation of Punjabi.

(f) To reclaim apostates.

(g) To attract the sympathies of those highly placed in public administration for the

educational progress of the Sikhs.

(h) Singh Sabha was to shun politics

The movement grew rapidly and within a short span of time Singh Sabhas sprang up in all the cities, towns and most of the villages of Punjab, setting up a net work of Khalsa Schools through out the length and breadth of the Punjab where study of Guru Granth Sahib and Gurmukhi were compulsory. It not only checked the relapse of the Sikhs into Hinduism but retaliated by carrying proselytizing activities into the Hindu camp. Large number of Hindus of northern and western Punjab became Sikhs. This however, brought Professor Gurmukh Singh, incharge of the movement, in conflict with *Mahants (Pujaris)* of the Gurdwaras. As the Gurdwaras were in the possession of the *Mahants* (*Pujaris*) who believed in Hindu practices, they stopped allowing the revivalist Sikhs to perform religious services there. The Singh Sabhas constructed their own Gurdwaras, with Granthis, Ragis and Updeshaks and became centers of Sikh revivalism.

Singh Sabha movement taught the Sikhs three things: Firstly, they are not Hindus, secondly, Khalsa membership should be the objective of all Sikhs and thirdly Khalsa membership requires obedience to the Sikh religious code of conduct (Sikh *Rehat Maryada).*

Achievements of Singh Sabha

(a) It brought religious awakening among the Sikhs and laid the foundation of social separation of the Sikhs from Hindus, which was completed by them under Chief Khalsa Diwan, Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) and The Sharomani Akali Dal.

(b) It started first Punjabi press with Gurmukhi script in Lahore in 1886, and published first Punjabi paper in Gurmukhi---Khalsa Akhbar, whose editor was Giani Ditt Singh.

(e) It got Punjabi in Gurmukhi script recognized as a subject for teaching in schools, colleges and university.

(f) It established Khalsa College Amritsar in 1892. It also opened a number of Khalsa Schools throughout the length and breadth of the Punjab.

(g) In 1905, it forced Auroor Singh, manager of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar to remove the statues of Hindu deities from Parikarma under legal orders.

(h) It propagated Anand Marriage among the Sikhs.

CHIEF KHALSA DIWAN

All the founding fathers of The Singh Sabha movement, including professor Gurmukh Singh (1849--1898), who were selfless and apolitical workers died by the end of the nineteenth century and its leadership was taken over by the politically ambitious Sikh leaders created by the

British. In 1902 these Sikh leaders formed first specifically political Sikh organization and named it Chief Khalsa Diwan, which pledged its loyalty to the crown, with Bhai Arjan Singh Bagrian, the high priest of Phoolkian States as its founder president and Sir Sunder Singh Majithia as its secretary and its members came form all sections of Sikh community in varying proportions from place to place. The ruling families were represented by the princes of Nabha, Faridkot and Kapurthala. The aristocracy was represented by men like Sunder Singh Majithia and Harbans Singh Attariwala. The new middle class was represented by teachers by like Bhai Jodh Singh. Petty bureaucrats were represented by men like by Bhai Jawahar Singh and Babu Teja Singh. Buisiness men were represented by Tarlochan Singh. Scholars by men like Bhai Kahn Singh and Giani Gian Singh. Writers by men like Bhai Vir Singh and Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid. Bhai Ditt Singh Giani represented the publishers. Mostly they were men of urban origion. Its head office is located in Amritsar since its inception. It started as a co-ordinating body for the Singh Sabhas and was, controlled by the elite Sikhs who pledged their loyalty to crown. It was registered under the Societies Act 1869 and now has branches all over India.

Aims and Objects

(a) To coordinate the activities of various Singh Sabhas.

(b) To propagate the message of Sikhism through publications and *Dharam Parchar*

(c) To safe guard the Sikh rights visa viz other communities and fight for adequate representation of the Sikhs in various services and ensure redress of their grievances by constitutional means.

(d) To remove illiteracy among Sikhs.

Achievements of chief Khalsa Diwan

(a) In 1908, it formed Sikh educational conference and from then onward an educational conference is held every year to take stock of the progress of literacy in the community and money is collected to build new educational institutions and to maintain the old ones. Now Diwan has a large number of educational institutions under its management. In addition it runs an orphanage at Amritsar and also a school for training *Ragis* (religious musicians), which has so far produced many renouned Ragis.

(b) Under Chief Khalsa Dewan Sikhs got legal recognition to Anand Marriage and The Anand Marriage Act (Sikh Marriage Act) was enacted in the Punjab in 1909 inspite of severe opposition by the Hindu members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, *Pujaris* and the *Mahants*.

(c) Chief Khalsa Dewan publishes books, tracts and a monthly journal for the propagation of Sikhism.

Sikh Governing Body

Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak

Committee

Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee popularly known as the SGPC is a statutory body constituted under an Act of the Punjab Legislature passed on July 8, 1925 in the British Punjab, which manages historical Sikh shrines of the present Indian Punjab and Haryana. Before the partition of the Sikh homeland in 1947 it also managed about 150 Gurdwaras left in Pakistan, which was created by the British after dividing the Sikh homeland, Punjab at the time of the de-colonization of the Indian subcontinent.

After the death of Banda Singh Bahadur, the Muslim government of Hindustan (India) declared total genocide of the Sikhs and thereby their extermination from the face of the earth, but the Sikhs refused to submit. They left their homes and hearths and took shelter in the Shivallik hills, jungle and desert areas of the Punjab. During this period of persection of the Sikhs, which lasted for about fifty years the Hindu priests took care of the Sikh Shrines. They came to be known as *Mahants*-- the priestly class, which was abolished by Guru Gobind Singh in Sikhism The Sikhs bore all hardships cheerfully, continued their struggle for survival and ultimatelty after a hard but determined struggle for about fifty years destroyed the Muslim rule and domination in their homeland and established their own rule in the middle of the eighteenth century. During the Sikh rule in the Punjab huge properties were granted to various historical Sikh Shrines, which continued to be managed by the *Mahants.* With the passage of time the office of the *Mahant* became hereditary.

After the annexation of the Punjab by the British in 1849, the Hindus and the Muslims were given the control of management of their respective religious places and the properties attached with them under the Vakaf Act 1861, but the Act was not applied in case of the Sikh Shrines on political grounds and the British retained their control under the British government and the *Mahants.* These *Mahants* with their Hindu background tried to Hinduise Sikhism. They not only introduced non-Sikh, but even anti-Sikh practices in Gurdwaras. They even installed statues of various Hindu deities in the Parikarma of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar. They became stooges of the British government, who used them against the Sikhs for their benefit. The British government at some places even transferred Gurdwara properties into the name of some of these *Mahants.*

Singh Sabha movement brought religious and educational awakening among the Sikhs. All the founding members of Singh Sabha movement who were apolitical and selfless workers passed away towards the end of the nineteenth century and its leadership was taken over by the politically ambitious aristocratic and urban educated Sikh leaders created by the British Government, who swore by their loyalty to the Crown. They formed a society in Amritsar in 1902; under the name of Chief Khalsa Dewan with the aim of co-ordinating the activities of various Singh Sabhas in the Punjab. It was sheer illusion to expect any opposition to the policies of the British government by such leadership. Therefore Chief Khalsa Dewan rapidly lost its relevance among the Sikhs.

By this time the rural peasantry comprising mostly of the ‘Jatt Sikhs’ in the British Punjab had recovered from the shock of loss of their rule, they decided to take control of their shrines

(Gurdwaras) from the British government and the *Mahants* into their own hands. Therefore they convened Sarbat Khalsa meeting at Akal Takhat Amritsar on I5 November 1920 and a Committee under the name of Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) with 175 members was constituted in order to take control of all Sikh Gurdwaras from the control of the British Government and the *Mahants*, through a peaceful, non-violent movement. In this SGPC representation was given to all districts of Punjab, provinces outside, Sikh states and Sikhs in Burma, Malaya, China, and America.

The Sarbat Khalsa nominated SGPC, launched Gurdwara reform movement to gain control of their shrines from the British government and the *Mahants*. This led to confrontation between some of the *Mahants* and the *'Khalsa'* (the catholic Sikhs / Akalis). At some of the places there were serious engagements, resulting in merciless killings of the peacefully agitating Sikhs by the *Mahants* and their hired men, but the Sikhs won't relent. Government itself did not wish to loose its control over Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) and other Gurdwaras under its control. This brought the Sikhs and the government in direct confrontation. The government decided to crush the movement with an iron hand. The Sikh nominated SGPC was declared as an unlawful organization on October 12, 1923, by the British government. The Sikhs faced the terror unleashed by the government cheerfully and nonviolently. This repression continued for years. In 1924, the government got seriously perturbed by the sympathies for the Akalis (Khalsa-Sikhs) in the services and political circles and agreed to introduce a Gurdwaras Bill acceptable to Sikhs. The Akali leaders who were being tried for waging a war against the King were released. The Sikh Gurdwara Bill was introduced in the Punjab Legislature Council on July 8, 1925 and came into force on November 1, 1925. The central body, S.G.P.C, was to consist of 151 members of whom 120 were to be elected, 12 nominated by the Sikh states, 14 to be co-opted and five to represent the four (now five) Takhats of the Sikh faith. Elections to S.G.P. C were to be held every five years.

The Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925 placed the entire control and management of all historical shrines under the elected S.G.P.C.The Punjab government with drew its earlier ban on SGPC and Sharomani Akali Dal. The Act accentuated and legalized the 'separate entity of the Sikh' and 'Hindu' shrines. The intervention of the Hindus through *Mahants* and *Pujaris* in the Gurdwaras was legally put to an end. The Bill defined a Sikh who made the declaration, "I solemnly affirm that I am a Sikh, that I believe in Guru Granth Sahib, that I believe in the ten Gurus, and that I profess no other religion". Hence in the process the Sikhs clarified, refined and delimited their religious and cultural identity. The parameters of distinct cultural identity of the Sikhs were laid down by way of defining Sikhism as a distinct religion, which didn't have any philosophical and historical links with Hinduism.

To summarise, in early twentieth century, the Sikhs could legally and legitimately claim to have their distinct religion, history, language and historical shrines and a large number of educational institutions and press. Guru Granth Sahib and the Khalsa traditions occupied the central position on the pattern of Sikh rituals, customs and Rehat. *'Sikh Rehat Maryada'* (Sikh religious code of conduct) was evolved on the basis of monotheism and Khalsa traditions and published in the form of a booklet in 1945. The SGPC became a sort of Parliament of the Sikhs. The income from the Gurdwaras gave it financial sustenance.

Elections to SGPC were for the first time held in 1926. The SGPC is responsible for the propagation of the Sikh religion, maintenance and management of the Sikh shrines (Gurdwaras) under its control, enforce Sikh religious code of conduct *(Sikh Rehat Maryada)*, take up matters

concerning Sikhs and Sikhism at various religious and political forums and open and run various Sikh institutions such as schools, colleges and hospitals etc. Income from Gurdwaras gives it financial sustinence. Patronage in the appointment of hundreds of Granthis, Sewadars (shrine attendants) teachers and professors for schools and colleges, which have been built by it, arrangement for training the missionaries for missionary activity in and outside Punjab, all has made SGPC "a state within state". Its head office is situated in Amritsar in the building named Teja Singh Samundri hall. Now in the recent past it has opened its suboffice in Chandigarh.

Before the partition of the Sikh homeland in 1947 elections to SGPC under the Sikh Gurdwara Act were held only in the British Punjab and only 12 members were nominated from the areas falling under the Sikh states (Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot, Kapurthala etc) of the Punjab, mostly falling in the *Malwa region* of the Sikh homeland, as a result the *Riasti Sikhs* remained ignorant about the main stream Sikh politics, traditions and practices. After the independence of India, the act was, therefore amended in 1949 to give proper representation to the Sikhs falling under the areas in the Punjab princely states (Pepsu), when hand picked members were nominated to the SGPC, which brought all Sikh shrines in former Punjab and Pepsu under one administration. Before partition of the Punjab elections to SGPC were held in 1944. In order to oust the Sikhs from the administration of the Gurdwaras the Sikh Gurdwaras Act was further amended in 1959, by the congress government in Punjab under the guidance of Indian Government dominated by radical Hindus to include Hindus under the fake name of Sehajdhari Sikhs as voters for SGPC. After the partition of the Punjab, elections to SGPC were held in 1960 for the first time. Latest elections to SGPC were held in 2004.

Now in addition to SGPC Amritsar, the Sikhs have Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in Delhi and Pakistan Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in Pakistan as legally constituted statutory bodies to manage their religious shrines and other Sikh religious affairs including propagation of Sikhism, education and social welfare etc.

SHROMANI AKALI DAL

The SGPC constituted Sharomani Akali Dal (SAD) in January 1921AD, to serve as a central body controlling and directing various *Jathas* for the Akali *Morchas*. In short SGPC represents thce religious and the SAD represents the political wing of the Sikhs.

SAD has its head office in Amritsar since its inception and now has established a sub-office in Chandigarh. It is the political organization of the Sikhs and has state level president with district, circle (comprising of the jurisdiction of a police station) and village level units each under the charge of a loyal and committed party worker called *Jathedar*. It has nominal voluntary membership and elections for the office bearers are held every five years. Usually the office bearers are elected through consensus.

CHAPTER 21

SPREAD OF SIKHISM

Global Spread of Sikhism

Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in the 15th century in Punjab, in the Indian subcontinent. Although the Sikh Gurus preached their message in the Punjab, Hindustan and adjoining countries including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Arabia, Palestine, Turkey, Tibet, parts of China and Sri Lanka etc; for a period spanning over more than two centuries, Sikhism was embraced en-mass only by the Punjabis in the central Punjab called Majha, when it was formally consecrated by the 10th Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day 1699, at Anandpur Sahib in the Punjab. Inspite of all odds Sikhism flourished and the Sikhs established their own rule in their homeland in the middle of the 18th century, after destroying the Muslim rule and domination in their motherland. The country of the Sikhs—'Punjab', was annexed by the British in 1849 A.D, after many bloody wars.

Till the closing years of the nineteenth century the Sikhs were confined to their motherland. The global spread of Sikhism has been mainly through migration of the Sikhs from the 'Punjab' and not through mass conversions from other faiths. Recently because of its principles, Sikhism has been embraced by many white people and now many white Sikhs and even black Sikhs can be found internationally, particularly in USA. Their children are being brought up in the Sikh way and some have been even educated at Sikh schools in the Punjab in India. Now *'Gora* Sikhs' dressed in Punjabi clothes is a common site in Amritsar.

Today Sikhism is a world religion and presently Sikhs are found in most of the countries of the world. Wherever they have gone they have carried their unique appearance and their unique philosophy with them. Every person in a new social, cultural or geographical environment faces many problems. Sikhs have had to face such problems more so because of their distinct appearance. However, Sikhs have adapted themselves to their new environment where ever they have settled. They have adopted new places as their homes and have mixed well with society.There have been several reasons for the Sikhs to migrate out of India:

The Sikhs migrate to South East Asia:

The out migration of the Sikhs from their country--Punjab, started in small numbers, after its annexation by the British in 1849; when the young Sikhs from aristocratic families whose priviledges had been abolished by the British for their anti-British role during the Anglo-Sikh wars and were reduced to the level of ordinary farmers, were harassed and kept under surveillance felt uncomfortable in the Majha area of the Punjab around Lahore and Amritsar. In the beginning the Sikhs escaped to Bengal out of the Punjab and from Bengal they traveled by ships to Hongkong, Malaya (Malysia), Singapore, Thailand, Sumatra, Shangai and Manila etc, where they worked as watchmen, policemen, and caretakers etc.

Second phase of the Sikh migration beyond India began after 1857 A.D, the year of the first independence struggle, known to British historians as the Mutiny. Sikhs stood aside from

this uprising because the *Poorbiahs* (The people belonging to the eastern side of the Punjab-both Hindus and Muslims), who now claimed to be crusaders for freedom, were the same people, who eight years ago (1849 A.D) had been the *feringee's* instrument in reducing the Sikhs to servitude, plundered their houses and insulted and even raped their women after their defeat and were presently hurling insult on them daily as occupation force on behalf of the British. Moreover, the re-establishment of Muslim rule under the Moghul King Bahadur Shah, who led the mutiny, was not acceptable to the Sikhs, who had suffered under the Muslim rule for generations. This won the Sikhs favour with the British, who began recruiting them into their army in large numbers. By 1870 Sikh soldiers were serving overseas and defending the British colonies. During the first and second world wars they fought in Asia, Middle-East, Africa and Europe. After retirement many of them returned to the counties they had visited during their service tenure and settled their.

Mid nineteenth century was the hey-day of the British Capitalism. The Punjab after its occupation by the British was opened to a vigorous process of colonization and developed as an agricultural appendix of the imperialist market economy. The strategy which the British pursued for the development of agriculture in the British Punjab, built a strong infrastructure, raised production, but simultaneously unleashed forces of increasing exploitation of the small and medium peasantry. The process of oppression was set in motion by new system of land revenue, law and justice. Although, the revenue assessment, was lower than that of the precolonial days, but the measures adopted for its collection on a due date in cash were very harsh. Whether the crop was good or bad in a particular year was no consideration. Since most peasants hardly saved any cash, money for payment of taxes had to be borrowed and lands mortgaged. The privilege, granted by the new revenue laws, for selling and mortgaging of land, facilitated borrowing from the *Shahookaar* (money lender / *Bania),* resulting in a fast rise of indebtedness of the peasants and consequent alienation of lands in the *British Punjab.* Once caught in the coils of *Bania* the poor peasant had little chance of respite, let alone release. The security of the British legal system facilitated exploitation by the money lender; his manipulation of accounts *(Dheli vich haveli)* lay beyond the reach of law. The lawyers turned out to augment and share the spoils. The automnomous Princely States of the Punjab in the Malwa region and in the hills of the Punjab remained free from these oppressive measures of the British. Only the peasants of the British Punjab suffered.

Economic conditions worsened further in the Sikh homeland during the first decade of the twentieth century. Monsoons failed successively from 1905-10. This led to famine. Epidemics of malaria and plague during this period further added to their woes. Under the circumstances, many enterprising Sikhs left their country to seek livelihood elsewhere.

The Sikhs were the first people to migrate out of India in large numbers to different parts of the world, as they neither believe in the Hindu concept of pollution (ਭਿੱਟੇ ਜਾਂਣਾ) by crossing the *Kala Paani* (Sea) nor the Hindu ideology, which says, "It is exclusive priviledge and grace of God that enables man to be born a Hindu in the sacred land called, Bharat, that is India; a birth in other lands, no matter of how excellent a condition and however frequently, is no better than a repetitious frustration and wearisome waste" i.e; *"Krsnanugrahato labhadawa manave janam bharte, anyasthane brtha janam nispphlanca gatagatam" (Vishnupurana),* which prevented the Hindus from migrating abroad.

The Sikhs in Australia

From Hong Kong and other South Asian countries the Sikhs started entering Australia in the 1880's and got employment in the sugar-cane fields there. Soon the Australian whites started bitterly opposing the coloured laboureres, though directed in particular at Chinese, it affected Indian workers. The 1901 Immigration Restriction Act effectively promulgated the infamous White Australia policy. This made it impossible for all but a handful of students, travelars and merchants on temporary permits to Australia, while the entry of women and dependents almost ceased. India gained Independence in 1947 and the period of colonization was over and Australia could not afford to strain trading relations with other nations by its stance on non-white people. The White Australia policy was therefore abandoned in early 1970s. Changes in the Australian laws made migration relatively easy to that country and enabled professional Sikh men to bring their families with them. They have purchased lands here and converted them into granaries of food. In Woolgoolga, a place south of Brisbane most of the land is owned by the Sikhs and they are rich growers of Avacado, pears and bananas. Some Sikhs, who were merely cane cutters in the beginning, now stand out for cane farming in the Cairns area up in Far North Queensland. In recent years, the number of Sikhs in Australia has grown considerably who have entered there as professionals or as refugees seeking political asylum after operation blue star, in 1984.

Sikhs reach New Zealand

From Australia some of the Sikhs migrated to New Zealand in or about 1890. There they adopted diary farming as their main profession, but when their presence became visible the government there also legislated to ban the entry of Asians. After India gained independence in 1947 a number of Sikhs have entered there as professionals or as refugees after the' Blue Star Operation, against the Sikhs by the government of India in the year 1984.

Sikhs in Africa

A large number of Sikhs came here between 1896 and 1901, as part of the skilled labour to build the East African Railway. Majority of them were Ramgarhia Sikhs (carpenters, blacksmiths and masons), knowing skills the British needed and the native Africans lacked. Major Sikh concentrations developed in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Sikhs in the Middle East

Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism himself visited Baghdad, where a Gurdwara stands in his memory. The building of this historic Gurdwara is said to have been damaged during the course of the on-going war between Iraq and USA. A large number of the Sikhs are working in gulf countries on contract basis.

Sikhs in Central Asia

Guru Nanak preached Sikhism in Central Asia. A considerable number of Afghan Sikhs are found in Afghanistan. After Afghanistan came under Taliban rule, majority of them were forced to leave Afghanistan, when they migrated to India, where most of them have settled in the Indian capital, Delhi.

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Sikhs migrate to the West

The Sikhs migrated to the west in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The deposed King of the Sikh Empire, Maharaja Dalip Singh became the first Sikh to immigrate to the west, when he reached Paris in June 1886 after renouncing Christianity and re-embracing Sikhism. First Gurdwara was established by the Sikhs in Britain in 1911 in Putney. Mass scale immigration to Great Britain occurred after the world war two, when men were needed to run the industries there.

At the time of the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, the British partitioned the Sikh homeland, Punjab into two parts: the eastern 38 % segment was attached to Hindu India, while the western 62% percent was made over to the newly created Islamic State of Pakistan. As soon as boundry line was drawn bloody riots broke out and the Sikhs and Hindus were forced by the Muslims to leave the western segment and migrate to either Indian side or other parts of the world. Being citizens of common wealth country, a large number of the Sikhs migrated to Great Britain and settled in the industrial centres like London, Birmingham, West Yorkshire, Central Lancashire, the East and West Midlands to work as labourers and technicians in factories.

After gaining independence in late 1960s, the East African countries pursued the policies of Africanisation due to which a large number of Sikhs there migrated to Britain. A substantial number of the Sikhs moved to Britain from Africa following their expulsion from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972. Britain now has largest Sikh population outside India, where their estimated number is more than half a million and Britain has more than one hundred Gurdwaras. Presently Sikhs are located in substantial numbers in France, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Italy etc.

The Sikhs in North America

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was celebated in 1887 A.D. The government of India sent a detachment of Sikh soldiers to London to attend the Jubilee celebrations. On their way back home they were given an opportunity to visit Canada and they traveled by train from Toronto to Vancouver. They were impressed by its prosperity. On the way back to their homes in the Punjab, these soldiers met the Sikhs residing in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaisya etc, and told them about the better opportunities there. From most of the available sources of information it becomes evident that the Sikhs started entering into North America in small batches during the last decade of the nineteenth century. They landed on its Pacific Coast and settled in Seattle, Oregon, California in America and the adjoining British Columbia in Canada. Soon, thereafter the waves of emigration from rural areas of the Punjab especially from the most congested districts of Jallandhar and Hoshiarpur started. Among these early arrivals 98% were Sikhs and hardly two percent were Hindus and Muslims and around fifty percent among them were ex-soldiers who had served in the British Indian Army.

The Sikhs in Canada

The Sikhs entered Canada towards the end of nineteenth century. Most of them settled in the province of the British Columbia in and around the city of Vancouver and were engaged in lumbering, timber trade and farm labour. Their wages were lower than those of white workers, still, because of their frugal habits, they were able to save enough money to send back home in the

Punjab. This attracted more Punjabi Sikh immigrants. By 1908 their numbers in the province was estimated to be around 5,000 and together with the Chinese and Japanese immigrants, were perceived as threat to their jobs in addition to other social and political issues, by the relatively small Anglo-Saxon population. As British subjects, South Asian Immigrants had been able to vote; but the British Columbia legislature removed that privilege, denying South Asians municipal and fedral voting rights and other civic rights like serving as school trustees, on juries or in public service, holding jobs resulting from public works contracts or in public service, holding jobs practicing the professions of law and pharmacy. The Sikhs organized themselves under the auspicies of Vancouver Khalsa Diwan Society and built their first Gurdwara in Vancouver in 1909. Wherever they settled they built more Gurdwaras, which in addition to being place of worship served for the benefit of visitors and new settlers as community centers.

By passing the 'continuous journey' legislation in 1908, the Canadian Fedral government effectively banned further South Asian immigration by requiring South Asians to purchase a ticket for a through passage to Canada from their country of origion that led to the unfortunate *komagata Maru* incident, which involved considerable embarrassment and left an enduring memory which continues to the present day among the Sikhs. However, wives and children of men living in Canada were allowed to Immigrate from India from 1919 onwards. On account of racial discrimination, the Sikhs had to face severe hardships, but they faced them cheerfully. Inspite of all these difficulties, the established Sikh families flourished economically and maintained their religious foundation through the Khalsa Diwan Society and its *Gurdwaras,* which exerted continual pressure on provincial and fedral politicians to cancel the 'continuous journey' rule and restore the right to vote to South Asian Canadians. They firmly remained determined to make Canada as their permanent home against all odds.

After Britain gave independence to India in 1947, the Indian government pressed Canada to institute an annual immigration quota such as had been established in the United States. Giving in to the pressure from the government of India from outside and from the Khalsa Diwan Society within, the Canadian government initiated a quota system for South Asian immigrants. In 1957 a new immigrant agreement between Canada and India raised the Indian quota from 150 to 300 per year, of which one-half was to be preferentially filled by relatives of South Asians who were already Canadian Citizens. By the end of 1961, under this new policy, dependent relatives and others entered into Canada. Under the other category mostly professors, engineers, doctors, teachers and technicians arrived into Canada. These professional immigrants settled all over Canada resulting in major Sikh concentrations in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa,, Hamilton, Wnnipeg, Edmonton and Calgery, after Vancouver. This pattern continued throughout the 1960s as Canada was then experiencing a shortage of professionals. Thus, while the earliest South Asian immigrants to Canada had been well-off Sikh farmers, the second influx of their relatives arriving in the 1950s and 1960s, were well-educated professionals. There was, however, another important dimension of this later group of South Asian immigrants, not all were Sikhs. Gradually during the 1950s and 1960s, other ethnic / religious groups began to arrive: Muslims from Pakistan, Hindus from Punjab, Gujrat, Uttar Pardesh, Bengal, Madras and other Indian states etc. A large number of the Sikhs entered Canada and sought asylum there as refugees after operation Blue Star in 1984. Presently they are said to constitute two percent of the total Canadian population, which is equivalent to their percentage in India.

Migration of the Sikhs to America

Since ancient times, second popular name for India is Hindustan and as a result all its residents migrating into America were labeled as Hindus by the immigrant officers at the ports of their entry, irrespective of their religion, therefore it is not possible to mark a date of entry of the Sikhs into U.S.A with certainty. However, according to an article that appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 April 1899, 'four Sikhs, namely Bakkshlied Singh, Bood Singh, Variam Singh and Sohava Singh, on the Nippon Maru ship were permitted to land by immigration officials in San Francisco. All of them belonged to the district of Lahore'.

After 1908, the Indian immigrants in Canada mostly Sikhs, began to cross over to the USA, because of the conditions created in Canada by its government. In USA, the Sikh immigrants found employment on farms and in lumbar mills in Washington, Oregon and California States. Small communities of the Sikhs grew up in San Joaquin and Sacramento villages. Some went further south to the Imperial Valley, where the climate was similar to Punjab. The Indian immigrants in America were inspired by a strong spirit of brotherliness. They treated one another as brothers irrespective of caste, creed or religion. The Sikhs organized themselves religiously and formed Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society and built their first small prayer hall in 1906, in Stockton. In 1908 Baba Jwala Singh (Tathian) and Baba Wasakha Singh (Dadher near Patti) formed a registered company and started farming after aquiring 500 acres of land on lease in the town of Holt (Halt) near Stockton. They ran a free kitchen. All new comers stayed with them until they got employment. They also provided scolarships to students to enable them to prosecute their studies. The USA whites had far less of racial prejudice than the Canadians. They were liberal and progressive in their outlook. Hence, the immigrants there had not to face racial discrimination of type and vehemence, which the immigrants had to experience in Canada. But, soon, there set in a severe depression in USA. The influx of cheap Punjabi labour added to their difficulties. Thereby the social and economic balance got shaken even in USA. There were wide spread race riots. The majority of Hindustani immigrants were Sikhs from the Punjab. The Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan society purchased a piece of land in Stockton on South Grant Street in September 1912 and started their first Gurdwara after installing Guru Granth Sahib in the building, which already existed there on the lot. Nishan Sahib (The Sikh national flag) was hoisted in front of the Gurdwara. Baba Wasakha Singh (Dadher Sahib) and Baba Jwala Singh (Tathian) were the first Granthis. The Sikhs now realized that they were given this prejudicial treatment, because they were not citizens of a free country. It gave birth to the *Ghadar* movement in 1913 in USA to free India.

The United States Government Legislated Banned Zone Act in 1917 to halt the Asian immigration to U.S and the denial of citizenship to the South Asians in 1923. California's Alien land laws, origionally designed to prevent the Japanese from leasing or owning agricultural land on the basis of their status as 'Aliens' ineligible for citizenship, were applied to 'Punjabis'. This was a telling blow, because most of the Punjabi men were Sikhs from farming backgrounds in Hindustan and were doing well. U.S restrictions on Asian immigration prevented all but a handful of Punjabi women from joining their husbands, made personal and family life of these early immigrants from the Punjab, very hard. Miscegenation laws prohibited marriage with women of other races. Hispanic women, like the Indians technically Caucasion but viewed as non-white, became the major source of wives in U.S for Punjabi men. Only six Sikh women form Punjab, resided in the country from 1904 to 1947.

Dalip Singh Saund born in 1899 in village Chhajalwadi, district Amritsar, Punjab, India,

came to USA in 1920, after securing his B.A. degree in mathematics from Punjab University in 1919. He attended the University of California at Barkley, from where he graduated with a master's degree in 1922 and Ph. D in 1924. During his college days he served as president of the national Hindustan Association of America and had many opportunities for public speaking, defending the nationalist movement in India and demand for self-rule. After completing his studies he chose to become a farmer. He got married with Marian Kosa in 1928. He was a successful farmer for nearly three decades in Imperial Valley, California. He decided to lead a life of fight to end restrictions that prohibited the naturalization of immigrants from India as reflected in such draconian laws like Quota Immigration Act, the Cable Act and the National Act in the 1920s. He worked very hard in the drive for U.S. citizenship, particularly in rousing the Indian residents of California, who had become discouraged after years of legal and legislatve defeat. Saund did not waver in his pursuite of American dream, even though he was subjected to racial prejudice and discrimination, not only being prohibited from owning the land he farmed on, but even his American wife stripped of her citizenship for marrying an alien. After years of lobbying on Capitol Hill he was able to convince Congress woman Claire Booth Luce of Connecticut and Congressman Emmanuel Cellar of New York to introduce legislation granting naturalization rights to Asian Indians and Fillipinos. In 1946, the legislation was signed into law by President Harry S Truman. The passage of the Luce-Cellar Bill made South Asians eligible for U.S. citizenship and therefore for leasing and owning of agricultural land. This change meant that the new citizens could bring immediate relatives. A small number of immigrants from Hindustan started arriving. Inspite of discrimination, the Sikh community in Clifornia prospered, and a second Gurdwara was built in El Centro in 1948. Saundh became U.S. citizen on 16 December 1949. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1956 from the 29th Congressional district of California-the first native of Asia elected to the United States Congress. He served three terms, working vigorously for all the constituents of his district. While running for re-election for a fourth term in 1962, Saund suffered a disabling stroke that ended his political career. He died on April 22, 1973 in Hollywood in California.

The trickle of new Sikh immigrants into USA became a flood when in 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, popularly known as Hart-Cellar Act was signed, which lifted "national origion" quotas and began a period of vigorous immigration from South Asia. These early Punjabi immigrants mostly Sikh settled in rural California, particularly in Yuba City / Marysville area. A large number of the Sikhs entered into different countries of the world including U.S.A; and sought asylum there as refugees in 1984 after the military action code named as 'Operation Blue Star' against them by the Indian government to suppress their genuine demand for more economic powers to all Indian states and a separate Sikh Civil Law like Hindus and Muslims in that country.

Presently the estimated number of the Sikhs in the world is about 23 (twenty three) million, out of which about 15 million live in the The Sikh Homeland, `Punjab', around six million live in the rest of India outside Punjab, while the rest about 2 million are spread all over the world, half a million (5 Lakhs) are in UK, another half a million are in North America out of which 3.5 hundred thousand (3.5 Lakhs) are in Canada and about 1.5 hundred thousand (1.5 Lakhs) are in located in United States Of America, the remaining one million are spread all over the globe. Big concentrations are located in Malaisya, Singapore, Australia, New-Zeland, German, Norway and other Asian, African and European countries.

All over the world the Sikhs now stand distinguished among the top ranking farmers,

players, soldiers, industrialists, buisinessmen, professionals and of course politicians. They are loyal to the countries in which they live but they look to the Punjab and its traditions, for spiritual inspiration.

WHICH PEOPLE EMBRACED SIKHISM

ENMASS FIRST OF ALL?

It is universally agreed upon now that man evolved in Africa and gradually spread over the entire globe. According to Dr. H.D Sankalia, the renowned anthropologist, "It is more or less established that at the end of the First Glacial Period and into the beginning of the Second Ice Age, Early Man entered the foothills of the Northwest Punjab, in the area traversed by the Soan, Haro and other rivers within the Indus- Jhelum Doab. Early man spread into the Area comprised by Rawalpindi and Attock districts of the Punjab, and the Jammu and Kashmir States". Recent Genographic studies reveal that these people arrived in India from Central Asia by traveling south of the rugged and mountainous Pamir Knot, some 30,000 years ago. Early humans lived as gatherers and hunters, who gradually developed into a great civilization, now known as "The Indus Valley Civilization", which is one of the oldest civilizations of the world. The natives here farmed the lands and were called 'Jatt- ਜੱਟ', which is the oldest named tribe in India whose name is found even in Mahabharta. After the region was named Punjab in 1590 A.D, the natives of this land came to be called Punjabis.

It is a well known fact that the earliest spiritual traditions in the world began in the Indus Valley. Those practicing spirituality were called Jogis/Siddhas, who believed in one 'Supreme Spiritual Reality', whom they called '*Brahma'.* The statues of the meditating jogis have been found among the ruins of Harappa and Mohenjodaro towns in the Indus Valley. The people of the Indus valley had reached a very high level of civilization more than 4000 years (about 2000 B.C.), when people of a white tribe from Asia Minor who called themselves Aryans entered the hills of the Punjab in the Kashmir region as herds- men and graziers of cattle through the passes in the Himalyas. The Aryans were smart people. Some of them learnt spirituality from the Jogis, created scriptures, which they named Vedas. Those among the Aryans having knowledge of the Vedas called themselves Brahmins (having knowledge of *Brahma),* became priestly class and gave birth to "Vedic Braminism". Thus the first center of Aryan culture developed in the Kashmir hills of the Punjab. All the Aryans did not come at once, but kept on pouring gradually over a period of centuries. Gradually after many centuries of their stay and developed in the hills they descended down into the plains of the Punjab. They tried to dominate the Jatt of the Punjab through the Brahmin, but the jatt refused to submit the Brahminical dominance and pushed the Aryans beyond the limit of the Punjab into the Ganga-Yamuna Doab. Khushwant Singh in his book titled, 'A History of the Sikhs' writes, "The Jatt's spirit of freedom and equality refused to submit to Brahmanical Hinduism and in its turn drew the censure of the privildged Brahmins of the Gangetic plains who pronoubced that "no Aryan should stay in the Punjab for even two days, because the 'Punjabis' refused to obey the priests". Henceforth the Aryan Brahmin developed an extremely hostile attitude towards the Jatts of the Punjab. However some of them did stay in the Punjab and accepted the local culture including the language.

Punjab connects South Asia with the Middle East and the Central Asia. Because of its geographical position it has been a perpetual battlefield serving as the gateway to India for the invaders from Central Asia and the Middle East. After the Aryans foreign invasions of the Punjab started in the 5th century B.C. A series of invaders trampled over this land for centuries. These early invaders included Iranians (Persians), the Greeks, the Parthians, the Shakas, (Scythians) the Kushans, the Huns and the Bactrians. Persian king Darious was the first to invade this land in the 5th century B.C. He was followed by the Greek conqueror, Alexander the great in 326 B.C, after whom Punjab was annexed by the Bactrian king Saleucus in 305 B.C and the Bactrians ruled over this land for about twohundred years. The Bactrians were defeated by Chander Gupat Maurya and he made the Punjab part of the vast Mauryan Empire. Buddhism became the state religion during the rule of Mauryan King Ashoka (274-232 B.C), who established university of Buddhist learning in Taxilla, Punjab, but Buddhism could not influence the Jatt of the Punjab. After the fall of Buddhist Mauryan Empire, Brahmanical revival took place in the Hindustan. The Aryan Brahmins converted the local farming tribe of the Ganges Valley into Brahminism (now Hinduism) and named them "Rajputs" and showered upon them various titles and created their long genealogies. There is no mention of Rajputs in Mahabharata and hence they are a later creation of the Aryan Bhamins. Heun Tsang makes no mention of the word Rajput during his visit in the 7th century.

Majority of the Jatts got concentrated in the central Punjab on both sides of the river Ravi. They continued to resist every invader boldly even against great odds. They never left Punjab.

The Brahmins under the leadership of Shankra Acharya (788-820 C.E) of Puri, violently wiped out Buddhism from Hindustan, but the Brahminism could not influence the "Jatts of the Punjab" and did not dare to penetrate into them in a big way and extend its influence beyond Jamna River. Punjab remained politically isolated from the Gangetic Plains for about one thousand years after the fall of Mauryan Empire.

Islamic invasions of the Punjab started in the beginning of the 8th century and the Turks, Moghul and Afghans followed one after the other. The brave people of the Punjab resisted for almost three centuries, but ultimately the Punjab fell to the invading Islamic forces in the beginning of the 11th century. Turks, Moghuls and Afghan (Pathan) tribes occupied the areas of the Punjab bordering Afghanistan and settled there permanently. Some of the weak minded Punjabis in this area got converted into Islam, while others fled in front of the Muslim onslaughts and settled on the northern fringe of the Punjab in a narrow belt running along the foothills of the Himalays, a region intersectected by mountain streams and deep ravines, difficult for easy access. They started worshipping goddess Durga and came to be known as 'Durgras' (worshippers of Durga), now simply called 'Dogras' and are found in the hills of the Punjab in large numbers.

Guru Nanak founded Sikhism, in the Punjab in the 15th century. Although the Sikh Gurus preached their message in the Punjab, Hindustan and adjoining countries including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Arabia, Palestine, Turkey, Tibet, Parts of China and Sri Lanka etc; for a period spanning over more than two centuries, their teachings were accepted only by the Punjabis, and Sikhism was formally embraced en-mass by the people of the central

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Punjab, mostly jatts, when it was formally consecrated by the 10th Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day in 1699 at Anandpur Sahib in the Punjab through Amritpaan ceremony. Today Sikhism is a world religion. Global spread of Sikhism has been mainly through migration of the Sikhs from the 'Punjab'. Recently, because of its principles Sikhism has been embraced by many white people and now many white and even black Sikhs can be found internationally, particularly in USA.

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THE SIKH POPULATION All OVER THE GLOBE

The population of the minorities is notoriously wrongly presented and under stated by the majority community governments all over the world and so is in the case of the Sikhs. Any way after the formal consecration of the Sikhism by Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day (April 14) of 1699 AD, the population of the Sikhs remained on the increase till Banda Singh was captured and executed in 1716 AD. During the next five decades, they suffered worst persecution in the history of mankind at the hands of the later Moghuls and Afghans (Muslims) and the increase in their population was considerably halted.

The Sikh population in Punjab increased considerably during the Sikh rule (Raj)1765-1849 A.D, mostly due to the conversion from Hindus who were literate and wanted to harvest the benefits of the Sikh rule, leave aside the common population at lower levels the most important examples in this regard are Raja Dhian Singh, Raja Gulab Singh Dogras of Jammu, Tej Singh and Lal Singh both Poorbiah Brahmins of Gangetic plain embraced Sikhism and joined hands with the British and brought the fall of the Sikh Empire after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Sikh population decreased quite a bit after the fall of Sikh rule as the neo-converts from Hinduism again reverted back to the fold of Hinduism.

Again population of the Sikhs in the Punjab increased during the early twentieth century as the Hindus accepted Sikhism in order to get benefits and favours available to Sikhs under the British rule.

Presently the Sikhs constitute roughly a little over two percent of the total Indian population, which has very recently crossed over one billion mark. To say otherwise, there are roughly 23 million Sikhs in the world. Out of the total 23 million Sikhs, 15 million live in Punjab, 6 million live in rest of India outside Punjab and about 2 million in the rest of the world. Among those who live outside Punjab, there are not many who donot have roots in Punjab. At the heart of their religion are the ten gurus, from the founding father Guru Nanak (1469-1539) to Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), who transferred authority from individual leaders to the scriptures and the community itself. Their impact on the Indian nation is out of proportion to their numbers.

CHAPTER 22

GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS

USED IN SIKHISM

Aad: First: Origional

Ant: The end

Akal Purkh: The Being beyond time; God

Akali: Worshipper of Akal (God).

Akhand Path: Continuous, uninterrupted reading of Guru Granth Sahib, by a relay of readers

Akiratghan: Ungrateful

Amrit: Elixer used for initiation into Sikhism. Literally: *Mrit* means dead and

A-mrit is immortal.

Ades: Epiphet used as greetings by Jogis

Asikh: Non-Sikh. Literally means not learned.

Avidya: Lack of education

Amritdhari: One who has been initiated according to Sikh rites.

Ardas: Sikh prayer.

Atman: Soul / Spirit / Self

Avtar: Incarnation of God

Bani: Contents of all the Holy Scriptures forming canon of Sikh faith.

Bhai: Literally, brother; an epiphet of respect used for a Sikh connected with religious affairs.
Bhog: Concluding ceremony of Sikh service

Baoli: A well with stairs down to water level

Baba: Title given to a respected man (often elderly)

Brahm-Giani: God-illuminated human being, a perfect saint

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Banda (bMdww): Man

Buddhi: Woman

Baanda(ਬਾਂਦਾ): Slave

Baandi: Slave woman

Birdh (ਬਿਰਧ): Old person

Bird(/ਬ੍ਰਿਦ): Follower (murId)

Bird kee Paij (/ਬ੍ਰਿਦ ਕੀ ਪੈਜ)): Follower's honour

Bungay: Places of residence

Bip, Biper, Brahmin: Purist Hindu Varna entiled to become priest and teacher.

Bipran kee reet: Brahmanical culture

Choohra: Member of serf class outside the pale of Hindu caste system i.e, *Ashoot*.

Chaunkian: Guard posts

Chaur: A fan of Yak hair or peacock feathers, waved over Sri Guru Granth Sahib as a sign of respect, a symbol of authority.

Chanani: Canopy over Guru Granth Sahib

Darbar Sahib: Sikh name for Golden Temple

Divan: Sikh act of congregational worship

Darsan: Literally, glimpse, whereas in Indian theosophy means Philosophy

Dera: Settlement of a spiritual teacher, where his followers get together to listen his sermons.

Daswandh: literally meaning one tenth, but practically it is voluntary contribution by the Sikhs to Gurdwara for the welfare of society and propagation of their religion i.e, Sikhism.

Deg: Cauldron

Dahri: Beard

Fakir: Muslim divine who lives on alms.

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Guru: In Sikh scriptures, the word 'Guru' has been used to denote at least three different senses. First, it has been used for God Himself, secondly, the word has been referred to as teacher-Guru and finally it is used for the Holy Sikh Scripture, "Guru Granth Sahib".

Gurdwara: Sikh place of worship.

Guru Granth Sahib: The holy Sikh scripture

Granthi: Reader of Sikh scriptures during service.

Giani: A person learned in Sikh teachings.

Gutka: Hand book of hymns for daily devotion in Sikhism.

Gurmat: Philosophy of Sikhism.

Gurmatta: Collective decision taken by the Sikhs in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib.

Gurmukh: God-oriented.

Grahisti: Householder

Gurpurb: Anniversary of a Guru's birth, death or succession.

Gaddi: Seat of authority
Hukam: Literally order, theologically divine command

Jatha: A band or group of the Sikhs

Jathedar: Leader of the Jatha

Joora: Top knot

Jog: One of the six systems of Hindu philosophy.
Kes: Unshorn hair on the head.

Kachhehra: Breaches extending upto knees worn by initiated Sikhs.

Kanga: Special comb used by the Sikhs.

Kara: Iron wristlet.

Kirpan: Sword

Kafir: Non-believer

Kookas: A break away sect of the Sikhs, who believe in Guru Granth Sahib but along with it also

believe in the continuity of a living Guru after Guru Gobind Singh. The sect was founded by Baba Balak Singh / Ram Singh. They have lost relevance in main stream Sikhism because of their belief in the continuity of a living Guru.

Kala Pani: Literally means black water, but in Hinduism it refers to sea water, which Hindus consider as polluting to cross.

Landa: A script used by shopkeepers in the Punjab

Lawan: Literaly separation, Hymn read at the time of somenization of marriage in Sikhism.
Madh: Middle

Malechh: Unclean

Man-mukh: Self-centered person

Masands: Order of the Sikh missionaries established by Guru Man and abolished by Guru Gobind Singh in Sikhism.

Math: a monastery

Mazhabi: Convert Sikh from Islam

Meena: Scoundrel

Moorti: Representation of deity used for worship in Hindu temlples and homes.

Misar: Another name for Brahmin

Mullah: Muslim religious teacher.

Mundavani: Stamp

Nishan Sahib: Sikh national flag

Nitnem: Daily devotional routine of the Sikhs

Nirmalas: Literally sinless. They believe in Guru Granth Sahib, instead of Sanatan image worship and caste observance, but because of their being deeply rooted in vedic philosophy have lost their relevance in Sikhism.

Pathi: Reciter of Sikh scriptures.

Panth: The entire Sikh community

Panj kakaar: Five symbols of Sikh faith, worn by initiated Sikhs.

Parchar: Preaching.

Parvirti: Ceremony / rite of others (ਅਨਯਰੀਤਿ)

Pasaar: Propagation.

Patka: Piece of cloth used by Sikh children as head covering.

Pandit: Learned i.e, teacher Brahmin

Pandiya /Panda: Tirath Brahmin.

Pir: Muslim divine

Pujari: Priest of a temple

Qazi / Qadi: Muslim legal authority.

Ragi: Sikh religious musician

Ramdasia: Convert Sikh from Charnars or leather-dressers

Ramraiya: Sikh follower of Ram Rai , Rival claimants to Guru Gaddi

Rangrheta: Convert Sikh from sweeper and other *Ashoots* class.

Sanatani Sikh: term, sometimes used to describe the ancient Sikhs before the birth of Khalsa.

Sehajdhari Sikh: One who beleves in Guru Granth Sahib, but does not observe Khalsa *rehat.*

Sikhi: Sikhism

Sikh: Follower of Sikhism i.e, Sikh faith. Literal meaning, learned.

Sangat: Congregation

Sant: Comes from the word *Shaant* meaning who has controlled his desires.

Sehaj: Spiritual knowledge--Gian

Siddh: A hermit possessing mystic powers.

Sidharan Path / Sehaj Path: Recitation of Guru Granth Sahib not over a specified period of time.

Tirath: Place of pilgrimage

Udasis: Udasi sect in Sikhism was founded by Sri Chand s/o Guru Nanak. Its followers are called Udasi Sikhs, who believe in Guru Granth Sahib, but donot grow long hair and believe in

renunciation, asceticism and celibacy. They have also lost their relevance in Sikhism, because of their Hindu practices.

Vaak: A random reading from Guru Granth Sahib

Var: Ode, ballad, a composition about the deeds of a hero.

Vidhya: Education

Vismad: wonder

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About the author

Dr Jagraj Singh was born in village Mari Megha, Tehsil Kasur, District Lahore, (now Tehsil Patti, District Tarn Taran) in the Sikh heart-land called 'Majha' (Central Punjab), the land of early Sikh vetrans. He had his preliminary education in district board middle school at Mari Megha. He passed his matriculation examination from Majha Khalsa High School Khalra and F.Sc medical from Khalsa College Amritsar, where Dr Taaran Singh was his professor of divinity. He was trained as an allopath at Arya Medical School Ludhiana. Thereafter, he had a short stint with government service in the Punjab, but soon he resigned his government job and started his private practice at the historic town of Sri Hargobindpur in Gurdaspur district. Before his migration to USA in 1998, he practiced there for about thirty five years. During all these years of his life he witnessed the partition of the Sikh homeland during 1947, the Punjabi Suba agitation by the Sikhs and the reorganization of the Punjab, the emergency of Indo-China war, emergency imposed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, two Indo-Pak wars, Operation Blue Star, operation balck thunder and the aftermath. He had the good luck of coming into personal contact with almost all important Sikh political and religious leaders of the afore-said period.

His grand-mother Sardarni Aas Kaur (died 1960) used to tell him the stories of the Sikh rule, Anglo-Sikh wars and the aftermath, which she had heard from her grand motherin-law, wife of Kumedan Bagga Singh, who was part and parcel of that regime. He suffered an attack of stroke at the surrender ceremony held at Kasur after the defeat of the Sikhs in the first Anglo-Sikh war at Sabhraon. He died next day at his village Mari Megha. His father Sardar Bhagwan Singh (died 1982) was a highly religious person and had great knowledge of oral Sikh history and religion, he taught him both.

Mari Megha is located about 20 miles south-east of Lahore, two miles off the road leading from Lahore to Harike and the historic villages of Mari Kambokay (Sukha Singh), Waan (Tara Singh), Pahuwind (Baba Deep Singh), Singhpura (Nawab Kapur Singh), Poohlay (Bhai Taru Singh), Sur Singh (Bhai Mahan Singh), Chhina (Bhai Bidhi Chand), Padhana (Garja Singh and Bota Singh), Jhabaal (Mai Bhago), lie within its ten mile radius.

All Sikh Gurus or their parents were born or brought up within a radius of about fifty miles around Lahore. The Moghul, Muslim government of the Punjab and Hindustan was forced by the Sikhs through armed struggle to accept their suzrenity over the Pargnas of Jhabal, Patti, Dipalpur, Kanganwal and Chunian areas along the north-west bank of Sutlej River between Ravi and Beas rivers. These areas were granted to the Sikhs as *Jagir* (estate) with Amritsar as their headquarter in the province (*Suba*) of Lahore in the Punjab in 1733 AD; by the Moghul, Muslim government and their leader Kapur Singh was given the title of Nawab. Eleven out of the total twelve Sikh Misals who successfully destroyed the Muslim domination and rule in the Punjab and established Sikh rule in their homeland (Punjab) belonged to this area.