

# The Creation of The KHALSA

S. S. Kapoor



Hemkunt



THE  
CREATION  
OF THE  
KHALSA







# THE CREATION OF THE KHALSA

The Saint Soldier

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# INTRODUCTION

We are at the threshold of the 21st century. The sound of the approaching footsteps of the millennium can be clearly heard. A year before we enter the 21st century, is the year of the 300th anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa. On this day, 300 years ago, the tenth prophet of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh created the Order of Khalsa, the army of the immortal God. The pacifist Sikhs were transformed into Saint-Soldiers. Each Sikh was given a hymn book to hold in one hand and a sword to hold in the other. A brotherhood of brave and fearless soldiers was created.

The history of the Sikhs start from 1469 when their prophet Guru Nanak was born. The word Guru means a prophet. The Sikhs have ten Gurus. Their holy scripture is named Guru Granth Sahib. They believe in the Almighty God, the teaching of the Sikh Gurus and the Word of Guru Granth Sahib. They treat Guru Granth Sahib as their living Guru. The Golden Temple in Amritsar is their holiest shrine.

The Sikhs are one of the bravest, honest and hard working communities of India. A large portion of their population is in the Indian army. Another significant part of the community are farmers. Their sweat and brow have made Punjab, the homeland of the Sikhs, as the granary of India. The Sikhs are also one of the richest communities of India. An important part of their community owns private transport and hotels all over India.

Outside Punjab their maximum number of concentration is in England, Canada and USA. These days a Sikh is found in almost every country of the world. Their honesty and hard work have made them popular and lovable wherever they have settled.

The year 1999 is an historic year for the Sikhs all over the globe. They will be celebrating the 300th anniversary of the Khalsa in every household and in every gurdwara (Sikh shrine)..

This is my 26th book on the Sikh religion. It contains selected articles from some of the world renowned authors on the Sikh history, both living and dead. I hope it will be a monument in the Sikh literature. It covers different aspects of Sikh religion and history, focusing mainly on the need of the creation of the Khalsa. My thanks are due to my secretary Poonam Kapoor for her invaluable suggestions and proof reading.

I hope my readers will appreciate this attempt of mine.

Dr. Sukhbir Singh Kapoor.

London

Baisakhi 1999



To my grandson  
Ben Sukhbir Singh

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26. Guru Granth Sahib - An Introductory Study
27. The Creation of the Khalsa

\* In addition to the above there is one book on Economic Theory, one book on Lectures on Business Organisation and one book on Financial Accounting.



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# PART I

## *Articles of Today*





# SAINT SOLDIER - (A Perfect Human Being)

Dr. Sukhbir Singh Kapoor

## CONCEPT OF THE PERFECT HUMAN BEING ACCORDING TO EMINENT RELIGIOUS TEACHERS AND PROPHETS IN THE CONTEXT OF SIKH THOUGHT

EGYPTIANS are said to be the most ancient, the first nation.<sup>1</sup> Their oldest written thoughts are embodied in *Memphite Sesame*.<sup>2</sup> It contains a long list of the qualities of an ideal man. The basic idea is that as God actively thought of man, an ideal man in turn should actively think of God. An ideal man should maintain in turn fellowship with God through prayer.<sup>3</sup>

A similar idea is also advocated in the Dasam Granth,  
“Know all deeds to be useless,  
Believe all religions to be of no avail,  
Without the PRAYER of the One Name of God,  
Believe all practices and acts to be useless and superstitious.”<sup>4</sup>  
And according to Guru Granth Sahib,  
“The head that never bows in PRAYER before the Master,  
Is worth chopping off.”<sup>5</sup>

It is believed that *Memphite Sesame* was written by priests from Heliopolis in the middle of the fourth century B.C.<sup>6</sup> It began with an invocation to the God Ptah, the local god of Memphis.<sup>7</sup> Ptah is proclaimed the Creator over all things. His creative organs are heart and tongue, the respective seats of intelligence and expression.<sup>8</sup> An ideal man, therefore is the embodiment of realised intelligence.<sup>9</sup>

1. E. W. F. Tomlin, *The Eastern Philosophers*, p.36
2. *Ibid.*, p.36
3. *Ibid.*, p.43
4. Guru Gobind Singh, *Akal Ustat*, verse 50
5. Guru Angad, *Siri*, P.89
6. E. W. F. Tomlin, *op cit.*, p.36
7. *Ibid.*, p.38
8. *Ibid.*, p.40
9. *Ibid.*, p.40

According to the Dasam Granth,

“..... Know that it is through mere ignorance,

And *lack of intelligence*,

That you run after deeds of non-religious and other shows;

Collect the wealth of WISDOM and CONTEMPLATION,

And discard egoism;

In this way pain and sin shall not touch you.....”<sup>10</sup>

According to *Memphite Sesame*, the world came into being and is continually sustained in the being by the active operation of Intelligence<sup>11</sup>, which is the breath of God Ptah.<sup>12</sup>

HAMMURABI, King of babylon, was the recipient of the gift of the oldest legal code from the Babylonian deity Shmash.<sup>13</sup> The concluding section of the code dealing with idealism states: “I am the guardian governor.... In my bosom I carried the people of the land of Summer and Akkad..... In my wisdom I restrained them that the strong might not oppress the weak, and that they should give justice to the orphan and the widow..... let any oppressed man who has a cause, come before my image as King of Righteousness..... let him read the inscription of my monument..... and may my monument enlighten him as to his cause, and may he understand his case.”<sup>14</sup>

The idea of the protection of the weak and suppression of the oppressor runs throughout the Dasam Granth; Guru Gobind Singh states:

“I have come into the world.....

And to extirpate all evil doers.”<sup>15</sup>

Hammurabi’s legal code, the most enlightened and liberal code that the world has known, was formulated nearly four thousand years ago;<sup>16</sup> a careful and detailed study of the code expected from a good citizen. For example, the code lays great emphasis on sense of justice, help to others, good and honest thinking, and right and honest deeds.<sup>17</sup>

According to Guru Granth Sahib,

“He alone has found the right way,

10. Guru Gobind Singh, Shabad, Ramkali, Dasam Granth, p.710

11. E. W. F. Tomlin ,op, cit., p.40

12. Ibid., P.43

13. R. Harper, Code of Hammurabi, p.10

14. C. H.W. John, The Oldest Code of Law, p.12

15. Guru Gobind Singh, Bachitar Natak, verse 43

16. E. W. Tomlin, op. cit., p.90

17. Ibid., p.92



Who eats what he earns through TOIL AND HONESTY,  
And shares his earnings with others."<sup>18</sup>

According to the Dasam Granth, Guru Gobind Singh's prayer is,  
"O Lord, grant me this boon,  
That I may never refrain from doing *good deeds*."<sup>19</sup>

ABRAHIM, father of three great religions of the world, all his life was engaged in preaching the idealism of man.<sup>20</sup> According to him the basic quality of an ideal man was 'Divine connection.'<sup>21</sup> In relation to this thought, Guru Gobind Singh says,

"Put faith in no created thing except the Creator,  
Own HIM as your God, who is Primal, Birthless, Invincible and Immortal."<sup>22</sup>

Abraham came from Ur, in Chaldea, and obeyed a divine call to leave his home and proceed to the land of Canaan.<sup>23</sup> He was promised that his descendants would become a great nation<sup>24</sup> and play a unique role in the history of human race. Abraham was seventy-five years old when he received the God's first Command.<sup>25</sup> When Abraham was ninety-nine years old God appeared again to him and said, 'I will make my covenant between me and you and will multiply you exceedingly.'<sup>26</sup> 'Behold my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of multitude of nations.'<sup>27</sup> The family of Abraham eventually settled in neighbouring Egypt, where during the course of centuries, their number multiplied. One of his descendants, Moses, became conscious of the slavery of his fellow Israelites; and when God's voice called him and made him lead the people of Israel out of Egypt, he obeyed.<sup>28</sup> Later, the Lord revealed himself to Moses at Sinai as the Lawgiver and entered into a covenant with Israel.<sup>29</sup> All these revelations are recorded in '*Torah*', the holy book of the Jews. The main text of the *Torah* is provided by 'Ten Words', or 'Ten Commandments'<sup>30</sup>, which constitute

18. Guru Nanak, Sarang, p.1245

19. Guru Gobind Singh, Chandi Charitar, verse 231

20. Woolley, Abraham, p.183

21. E.W.F. Tomlin, op.cit., p.115

22. Guru Gobind Singh, Shabad Kalyan, Dasam Granth, p.710

23. Genesis 12

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid. 17

27. Ibid.

28. Exodus: 3, 4

29. Ibid., 19, 20

30. Ibid., 20

the basic qualities of a Hebrew Ideal man. The commandments dictate what an ideal man must or must not do. The Commandments are:

“I am the Lord, your God, you shall have no other gods before me; You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is heaven above, or that is earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God;

“You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain;

“Remember the sabbath day. Six days you shall labour, and seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord; in it you shall not do any work;

“You shall honour your father and mother;

“You shall not kill;

“You shall not commit adultery;

“You shall not steal;

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour;

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house, your neighbour’s wife or anything that is your neighbour’s.”<sup>31</sup>

Other parts of the *Torah* deal with the sacredness and moral purposes of human life, the equality of all without distinction, including the foreigner and the slave before the law, personal holiness, and justice and righteousness in social relations.

In the twelfth century A.D., Moses Maimonides worked out thirteen articles to produce a formula against which Jewish doctrines and principles could be measured. These articles are listed to this day in the authorised prayer of most Jewish congregations. It lays down, inter alia, thirteen fundamental beliefs of an ideal man who has faith in Jewish religion.

The beliefs are:

1. Belief in the existence of a Creator and Providence.
2. Belief in His unity.
3. Belief in His incorporeality.
4. Belief in His eternity.
5. Belief that to Him alone is worship due.
6. Belief in the words of the prophets.
7. Belief that Moses was the greatest of all prophets.
8. Belief in the revelation of the Lord to Moses at Sinai.

31. Ibid.



9. Belief in the immutability of the revealed law.
10. Belief that God is Omniscient.
11. Belief in retribution in this world and the hereafter.
12. Belief in the coming of the Messiah.
13. Belief in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>32</sup>

The idea of Godhead and certain beliefs and commandments also run in the Dasam Granth and Guru Granth Sahib. The points which are not advocated by the Sikh scriptures and the points in which the Sikh thought differs from the Jewish beliefs are discussed below:

(I) .....for I the Lord, your God, am a jealous God;

In the whole Sikh thought there is no such reference as to make God as a jealous God. The Sikh view of Godhead has been described in both Dasam Granth and Guru Granth Sahib. In the Dasam Granth, Guru Gobind Singh has elaborated all the aspects of the Sikh conception of God.

(i) God is Creative:

“Just as out of one fire, million of sparks emanate,

.....

Just as out of a dust-storm countless dust particles are cast off.

.....

Just as out of the vast sea rise a myriad of waves

So out of the infinite universal Being emanate the living and insensate nature.”<sup>33</sup>

(ii) God is Immanent:

.....

“At all times and in every place, in all forms and appearances,  
I feel You O Beloved, to be ever the same.”<sup>34a</sup>

(iii) God is infinite, Eternal and Absolute:

“He has no colour, no form no profile,

.....

He is beyond time.....

He is beyond births and deaths.....”<sup>34b</sup>

(iv) God is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient:

“In the sea is God, in the desert God;

32. Norman Anderson (Ed.), *The World's Religions*, pp.56-57

33. Guru Gobind Singh, *Akal Ustat*, verse 87

34. a & b *Ibid.*, verses 103-113

In the Heart is God, in the forest God;  
On the mountain is God; in the cavern, God;  
On the earth is God: in the sky, God:

.....<sup>35</sup>

(v) God is Saviour:

“God is the saviour of the poor and humble,  
The saints He glorifies, the perverse he destroys,  
He is the sustainer of the birds, the animals.....  
He sees our ever-mounting faults, sins and he tires not of  
forgiving them....

He ultimately destroys all the evil forces.....<sup>36</sup>

(vi) “He is source of beauty.....

His is all truth.....

His speech is unstruck music.....<sup>37</sup>

(II) ‘You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.....’

The Sikh philosophy does not recognise this Commandment.

The belief is that the name of the God can be taken any time.

There is no such thing as- ‘....in vain’, in the Sikh belief.

According to the Dasam Granth,

“He who takes His name day and night...

Is true and pure Khalsa.”<sup>38</sup>

According to Guru Granth Sahib,

(i) “Day and night for ever,

Remember the Name of God...”<sup>39</sup>

(ii) “Contemplate the Lord, standing and sitting,

Either awake or asleep...”<sup>40</sup>

(III) “You shall not do any labour on sabbath...”

The Sikh religion, unlike other religions, does not recognise a day of the week as a special day. The Christians recognise ‘Sunday’, the Muslims prescribe ‘Friday’, the Hindus earmark ‘Tuesday’ and the Jews recognise ‘Saturday’ as their weekly holy day. The Sikh religion rejects such a belief of a special day and also denounces all the rituals and practices prescribed for such days by the other religions.

35. Ibid., verses 246

36. Ibid., verses 243-246

37. Ibid., verses 247, 259

38. Guru Gobind Singh, 33 Swayyas, 1

39. Guru Arjan, Gauri, p.498

40. Ibid., Asa 379



According to Guru Granth Sahib, all days of the week are special and important. They are meant to show the division of time and it is foolish to call some days of the week holy and others unholy.

According to Guru Amardas,

“On Sunday remember God...

On Monday attune to the truth and see God permeating all...

On Tuesday meditate on Him, who knows all, who has created all...

On Wednesday hail the victory of the Lord

On Thursday praise Him who has created all the gods and goddesses.

On Friday worship that Embodiment of Love, Truth and Continence...

On Saturday praise the Almighty who is mentioned in all the holy books...

The fifteen lunar days and the seven solar days,

And twelve months and six seasons come again and again,

Like the ever-changing day and night is the world in flux,

And comes and goes, as is the will of the Creator-Lord.....”<sup>41</sup>

Thus for a Sikh all days, seasons and months are the same. No particular days are more holy than the others.

(IV) ‘Belief in the resurrection of the dead.....’

The idea of the resurrection of the dead is very strong in the Jewish and Muslim beliefs. The Sikhs, however, do not recognise this concept. According to the Sikh thought, a man is tried in the court of God according to his deeds. The judgment then determines the next birth or form for his individual soul. The good actions along with the meditation can earn God’s Grace which can then lead a man to salvation or *mukti*. In the Sikh belief there are no geographical place or boundaries called heaven and hell.<sup>42</sup> The concept is used to illustrate the results of good and bad deeds and the good and bad stages in the present and future life. When a man, who by good deeds, love, meditation and prayer has purified himself and earned God’s grace, dies, he goes directly to God’s abode and is released from the pangs of metem-psychosis. Those who fail to earn His Grace and are involved in bad deeds go through a cycle of many thousands of lives till they earn back a human birth.

ZORASTER, the prophet of the Parsees lived about 6,000 years

41. Guru Amardas, Bilawal, p. 841. see also Kabir, Gauri, p.344

42. G.S. Mansukhani, Introduction to Sikhism, p. 37



B.C.<sup>43</sup> He assigned righteousness, adherence to *Ahura Mazda* (the name given to God by the Parsees), help to God in His struggle against evil and cooperation with God as the basic qualities of an Ideal man.<sup>44</sup>

The history of the Parsees states that Zoraster when young wandered in desert places seeking to speak to God. He was led into the presence of God by *Vohu Mana*(Good Mind). *Ahura Mazda* asked Zoraster to spread His mission in the world, to preach to the people to lead a good life and to tell the world to worship *Ahura Mazda* alone. Zoraster did believe in *Angra Mainyu* (The Spirit of Evil) as well and gave it equal status with *Ahura Mazda*.<sup>45</sup> He also believed that ultimately *Ahura Mazda* would triumph over *Angra Mainyu*.

The above view of equality of spirit of Evil with God is contrary to the Sikh belief. According to Sikh thought, everything including the Evil is created by God. Evil, here, does not mean Satan as in Christian and other beliefs, but anything which is not good and which is against the code of morality.

According to Guru Granth Sahib,

“There are five evils the body has to conquer,  
Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment and Pride.”<sup>46</sup>

In the Sikh belief, evil plays an integral part in the growth of the human mind. The ‘Good’ can be evaluated and ascertained only when it is in clash with the ‘Evil’. Man must learn to control evil. This is the main purpose of the world drama as staged by God. The spiritual progress is possible through noble actions, *Nam Simran* (meditation), self-control, humility and good deeds. The Sikh belief explains in detail how these qualities can be cultivated and evil eradicated from one’s mind.

CONFUCIUS, the prophet of the Chinese, lived about 551-471 B.C. He taught that in order to be a perfect man one must be a hard-working, conscientious and disciplined person. One must also be honest, reliable and trustworthy.<sup>47</sup> In his philosophy of human values, he set up a new standard of human relations and tried to improve the condition of life.<sup>48</sup> He believed that he was called by ‘Heaven’ to bring

43. E.W.F Tomlin, op.cit., p.133; this date is however, debatable. There is a belief that he lived between 628 B.C. and 551 B.C. See G. Parrinder, A Dictionary of non-Christian Religions, p.316

44. E.G. Parrinder, A Book of World Religions, p.115

45. B.W. Sherrat and D.J. Hawkins, Gods and Men, p.175

46. Guru Amardas, Sorath, p.600

47. B.W. Sherrat and D.J. Hawkins, op. cit., p.204

48. C.S.Sumner, The Philosophy of Man, p.50

about the reform of society.<sup>49</sup> His teachings are preserved in a question-answer form in the *Analects*. Other books associated with his name are: the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Works of Mencius*. His expression for a perfect man was a 'Princely Man'. He believed in the importance of virtue, propriety and rituals.<sup>50</sup> He claimed that virtue was the foundation of happiness,<sup>51</sup> and that a man could be virtuous only if he made up his mind to it.<sup>52</sup> His basic philosophy was to make this world better than the next.<sup>53</sup> He emphasizes that man could become 'princely by practicing Kindness, Sincerity, Graciousness, Loyalty and Self Denial.'<sup>54</sup>

Confucius was a moralist and a great teacher. He always stressed that the people should respect and look after their parents.<sup>55</sup>

Two main points of Confucius's teachings which directly conflict with the Sikh thought are: Firstly, his belief in the rituals; and secondly, his indifference towards the next world. In the Sikh literature, a perfect man is strictly forbidden to involve himself in any kind of rituals.

"Why do you perform hypocrisies and useless rituals.....

Get it firmly rooted in your heart that merely by wearing a specific robe,

Or other outwardly symbols,

Lord is not attained."<sup>56</sup>

Unlike Confucius, Sikh Gurus believed in *the existence of life after death*.<sup>57</sup> A perfect man, according to the Sikh Gurus, must not try to make only this life comfortable but should also endeavour to improve the next life. According to Guru Granth Sahib,

(i) "Hereafter one has to cross the Sea of Fire with its poisonous flames,

And there is no one, save for one's soul, keeps company with one.

The Sea of Fire blazes its waves leaping high,

And the egocentric is cast into it and he is roasted therein."<sup>58</sup>

(ii) "Save yourself both here and after,

49. E.G. Parrinder, op. cit., p.80

50. Norman Anderson, op. cit., p.221

51. Ibid., p.222

52. Ibid., p.222

53. Ibid., p.222

54. Ibid., p.221

55. E.G. Parrinder, op. cit., p80

56. Dasam Granth, p.713

57. Ibid., 19

58. Guru Nanak, Maru, p.1009



By remembering the Lord's Name in your heart."<sup>59</sup>

(iii) "He whose protector is the Guru-God,  
he is questioned not hereafter."<sup>60</sup>

According to the Sikh thought, after death, the soul carried with itself the imprint of a man's mental and moral fabric, one's whole past in the form of his character. On the basis of these impressions one's future and the quality of the next life is determined. Thus a man becomes an architect of his own destiny.<sup>61</sup> So long as he is conscious of his Divine connections and the spiritual origin and lives in God's presence, there is no cycle of births and death for him.<sup>63</sup> The very moment he forgets about his Divinity and he goes farther away from Truth, Virtue and Nam, the greater he involves himself in the cycle of births and deaths, joys and sorrows, and comforts and pangs. With the quality of his deeds he undergoes either a moral evolution or a moral devolution.<sup>64</sup> Sikhism rejects the Hindu doctrine of *Karma* which condemns a man to the cycle of life and death indefinitely. Anyone can overcome the *Karmic* forces by attaining God's Grace,<sup>65</sup> through noble deeds,<sup>66</sup> selfless service,<sup>67</sup> love for God and humanity,<sup>68</sup> meditation on God's name<sup>69</sup> and purified life.<sup>70</sup>

LAO TZU lived about 604 B.C.-444 B.C. and is another respected and revered Chinese Prophet, though some writers claim that his life and teachings are not history but myth.<sup>71</sup>

Tzu, in his teachings, has given us a very realistic prescription for becoming a perfect man. His belief is that by stillness one becomes a better receptacle for receiving *Tao*, the basic power of the Universe. To reach a state of a perfect man where one is ready to receive *Tao*, one must purge oneself of all desires, customs and impurities of thought and actions.

59. Guru Arjun, Gauri Sukhmani, p.293

60. Ibid., Siri, Ashtpadies, p.71

61. G.S.Mansukhani, Guru Nanak the Apostle of love, p.66

63. Guru Nanak, Ramkali, P.941, Gauri, p.228 Dhanasri p.662, 663 Bhairo, p.1127

64. Gurmukh Nihal Singh, Guru Nanak His life, Time and Teachings, p.101

65. Guru Nanak, Siri, p.730

66. Ibid., Asa pp.354, 468

67. Ibid., Asa, pp.354, 468, Siri, p.26

68. Ibid., Siri, pp.60, 62

69. Ibid., Suhi, p.730; Dhanasri p.661

70. Ibid., Dhanasri, p.586; Ramkali p.938

71. E.G. Parrinder, op, cit., p.82

72. C.S.Summers, op. cit., p.50

A perfect man is an ideal man.<sup>73</sup> Perfection is attained through the constant ascending evolution of the soul (*Yang*), called *Shen*. Thus the true condition, i.e. a condition of holiness, of an ideal man is realised.<sup>74</sup>

Tzu's teachings are preserved in his book, called *Way*, which is the greatest of all the Chinese books on religious and moral philosophy and is very widely read and revered.<sup>75</sup>

The *Book of the Way* says that men should live according to nature,<sup>76</sup> in non-violence,<sup>77</sup> and no weapons should be used even for defence.<sup>78</sup> The ideal man should always be humble<sup>79</sup> and should work without expecting any reward.<sup>80</sup> Tzu in the book says,

“He who by Tao proposes to help a ruler of men,  
Will oppose all conquest by force of arms;  
For such things are meant to rebound.....”<sup>81</sup>

The teachings of Tzu, which runs in direct contradiction to the Sikh theory of an ideal man, is clear on the prohibition of the use of arms even for defence. The whole purpose of the creation of the Khalsa was to make lions out of feeble and weak people and to teach them the usefulness of arms in cases of injustice and tyranny. The people of Northern India, who had been run over by hordes of Muslim invaders, and who were molested and looted many a time before the appearance of Guru Gobind Singh on the worldly stage with his Divine Mission, became overnight an army of fearless Saint-Soldiers and have been in Indian history as the bravest and most courageous martyrs of their times.

Explaining his own mission, the Tenth Master said,

- (i) “I have taken birth.....  
To seize and hurl down evil-doers.....”<sup>82</sup>
- (ii) “..... When all other means are exhausted,  
It is fair to use the Sword.”<sup>83</sup>

But it must not be forgotten that the Guru recommended the use of arms only for defence and only as a last resort when all the peaceful means and negotiations had failed.<sup>84</sup>

73. C.S. Summers, op. cit., p.50

74. Ibid., p.50

75. E.G. Parrinder, op, cit., p.82

76. Ibid., p.127

77. Ibid., p.127

78. Ibid., p.127

79. Ibid., p.127

80. Ibid., p.127

81. E.G. Parrinder, op, cit. cit (Trans) Way 30

82. Guru Gobind Singh, Bachitar Natak Chaupai, 41-46

83. Ibid. Zafarnama, vs 32, 42, 43

84. Ibid.



THE SHINTO SCRIPTURES date back to 1,000 B.C. and indicate the belief in and worship of the Japanese gods and the culture associated with them.<sup>85</sup> They are divided into two main branches: *Jinja* (Shrine) and *Kyoha* (Sect).<sup>86</sup>

The Shintos believe in organised priesthood and an elaborate ritual. They mention a number of gods - public, village and family gods. The religion of the Shinto is a religion of gratitude and love.<sup>87</sup>

The old Shinto stressed that man, in order to achieve perfection, must love Nature and show respect for the powers behind it. The modern Shinto has added social work and prayer as the qualities of a perfect man.<sup>88</sup> To illustrate the faith of the Shinto, one of the sacred Japanese song reads:

“The True Way is one and the same,

In every country and throughout heaven and earth.....”<sup>89</sup>

The Sikh thought conflicts with that of the Shinto in many ways.

Firstly, the Sikh thought rejects any organised priesthood<sup>90</sup> whereas the Shinto faith recognises it. Sikhism does not recognise the vow of celibacy. There are no nuns or monks in Sikhism. In the Sikh temples and at the Sikh ceremonies any Baptized Sikh can perform the ‘priest’ duties and, unlike many other religions, women, in Sikhism, can also perform the duties of a priest.<sup>91</sup>

Secondly, Sikhism is not only monotheist but also a monist religion. It believes in only One God. There is no place of any gods and goddesses in Sikhism, whereas the Shinto recommends the worship of a number of gods and goddesses. According to the Dasam Granth,

“The Lord is the Only and Absolute One.....”<sup>92</sup>

According to Guru Granth Sahib,

“God is Absolute, all Powerful and whatever He alone wills comes to pass.....”<sup>93</sup>

Thirdly, as has been mentioned before,<sup>94</sup> Sikhism does not believe in any rituals.

85. G.Parrinder, A Dictionary of non- Christian Religions, p.225

86. Ibid., p.225

87. G.Parrinder, Asian Religions, p.119

88. G.Parrinder, A Book of World Religions, p.132

89. Motoori, Precious Comb-box 6, quoted by G.Parrinder, op. cit., p.132

90. G.S.Mansukhani, Introduction to Sikhism, p.83

91. Ibid., p.83

92. Guru Gobind Singh, Akal Ustat, v.1

93. Guru Nanak, Wadhans, p.579

94. See page 25

On the other points of love for the Nature and the Power behind it, social work and prayer, the Sikh view is similar to that of the Shinto.

According to Guru Granth Sahib,

- (i) "O man! let your love for God be like that of a fish for the water, The more the water, the more she revels and feels peace of mind and body,  
But without the water, she cannot live even for a moment."<sup>95</sup>
- (ii) "..... We should dedicate ourselves to the service of the people in this world."<sup>96</sup>
- (iii) "it is prayer..... that succeeds with God."<sup>97</sup>

PRE-VEDIC BELIEFS date back to 2,000 B.C.<sup>98</sup> They emphasize the doctrine of Karma, meaning that while a man in the present may be the product of his own past, he is essentially the sole architect of his own future. Man's idealism is sustained by love and justice to his fellowmen and God.<sup>99</sup> Yoga and contemplation are essential for union with God.<sup>100</sup>

The Sikh thought also believes in the *Karma* theory but with a modification that the man can improve his own future in a limited way. On this point, Sikhism also lays a great deal of stress on *Hukam* (God's Will). According to Guru Granth Sahib,

- (i) "All are subject to God's Command, Nothing is outside His sway."<sup>101</sup>
- (ii) "God's Command directs the path"<sup>102</sup>

The theories of *Karma*, *Hukam* and the Free Will of Man are very complex. According to the Sikh thought, the *Karma* of a man refer to *Kirt Karma*, in other words, the accumulated deeds of the past which determine the next life. As a man who graduates from a university with good honors has a chance to get a good career in the future, his hard labour and studious work are his *Kirt Karma*. A good job and a brilliant career are his future (representing next life in the Karma theory). Now, suppose that man becomes a university lecturer. To perform his duties, he would be given a time-table by his Head of De-

95. Guru Nanak, Wadhans, p.557

96. Ibid., Siri, p.26

97. Ibid., Asa, p.474

98. Radhakrishnan, History of philosophy, p.38

99. Ibid., p.38

100. Ibid.

101. Guru Nanak, Jap Ji, p.1



partment. This timetable is thus a Command - Directive (representing *Hukam* in the Karma theory) of the Head of Department which only the head can change. Within the given time-table, the lecturer has the Free Will to choose his own way of assigning the home-work. If the lecturer works hard, with honesty, loyalty and enthusiasm, if he prepares his lessons and gives his best to the students; and if his class-results are good, then he will have a chance to get the favour of the Head of Department (the Grace of God in the theory of *Karma*) and get promoted and ultimately retire as the Head of Department (being one with God in the Karma theory). Thus the best and honest use of Free Will within the given time-table, i.e. *Hukam*, on which the lecturer has no control, will become the lecturer's *Kirt Karma* and will determine his future (next life in the Karma theory).

The same principle applies to one's life. The good or bad *Karma* of today, determine the quality of one's life in the future. A rich or poor man, a deaf or dumb man is the result of his *Kirt Karma*. What a man is now is the result of his past deeds; and what he will be, will depend what he does in the present. Within these constraints, one must earnestly try to become a perfect man; and if successful he will be freed from the cycle of life and death for good, and become merged in God, the Head of the world.

Thus, according to the Sikh thought, 'We' are the 'Effects' and 'We' are the 'Causes.' We are responsible for what we suffer and each one of us is the maker and designer of his own destiny.

THE VEDIC BELIEFS date back to 1200 B.C.<sup>103</sup> In the Vedas the concept of *rta* invested the moral code with sublimity and inviolability, and its working with inevitability and injustice, anticipating thus the doctrine of *Karma*. According to the moral code<sup>104</sup> of the Vedas, a perfect man must possess honesty, rectitude and fellow-feeling. He must give in charity, be truthful, be salutary and agreeable in speech, be non-violent, have reverential faith, lead the life of a recluse and practice austerity. The ideal man must not commit sins, viz., swearing falsehood, imprecation, back-biting, dishonesty, gambling, egoistic enjoyment, theft, adultery, injury to life and sorcery.

102. Ibid., p.2

103. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., pp.45-46

104. Ibid., pp.45-46



The Vedas are supposed to be a few of the earlier holy texts that we possess. The Vedas are four in number - *Atharva*, *Rig*, *Sama* and *Yajur*. Each Veda consists of three parts, known as *Mantras*, the creation of the poets; *Brahmans*, the work of the priests; and *Upanishads*, the meditation of the philosophers. The fundamental differences of Vedic idealism and Sikh idealism are the following:

Firstly, while the ethical idealism of the Vedas recommends the life of a recluse,<sup>106</sup> the Sikh idealism very strongly supports the life of a householder. According to Guru Granth Sahib,

“..... Such is the distinctive greatness of the supreme Guru  
That through His Grace and Guidance,  
One can attain salvation,  
Even while surrounded by one’s wife and children.....”<sup>107</sup>

Secondly, the Vedas believe in a number of gods and goddesses,<sup>108</sup> whereas as discussed before, Sikhism is a monist faith and believes in no one else except One Supreme Reality, who is the Creator, the Sustainer and the Destroyer of the Universe.

Finally, unlike the Vedas and other Indian and foreign traditions and beliefs, Sikhism considers human life as the supreme gift of the Almighty. The man according to the Sikh thought, is a microcosm.

According to Guru Granth Sahib,

- (i) “What is there in the Universe,  
Is also found in the human body.”<sup>109</sup>
- (ii) “Such is the Divine Play of the Creator,  
That He has reflected the whole Cosmos in the human body.”<sup>110</sup>
- (iii) “In the human body we find,  
The wealth of all the world.”<sup>111</sup>

**UPNISHAD** -- In one of the Upanashids which also dates back to 1200 B.C.,<sup>112</sup> *Brhadaranyaka* enumerates the main functions of the mind, i.e. the desire, resolve, doubt, faith, steadfastness, lack of faith, shame, intellect and fear. The *Vijananamaya* and *Anandmaya*

105. Ibid., pp.45-46

106. K.M.Sen, Hinduism, p.23. See also Rabinder Tagore, Religion of Man, p.198

107. Guru Nanak, Dhanasri, p.661

108. Chapter 2, p.21; Rig Veda says: “...the gods are later than the world’s production...” (10.129) “...He knows the gods who dwell above.”

109. Guru Nanak, Maru Sohila, pp.1020

110. Ibid., pp.117, 72

111. Ibid., Suhi, p.754

112. Radhakrishnan, op.cit p.56

represent the moral and the supra-moral levels of experience. In describing the different parts of the *Vijananamaya*, the Upanashid says, "Faith is its head, righteousness the right side; truth the left side; contemplation the body; might the lower part, the foundation."<sup>113</sup>

The *Upanishads* explore the depths of the inner world.<sup>114</sup> They reject to identify the 'self' (inner world) with the bodily self,<sup>115</sup> the empirical self<sup>116</sup> and the transcendental self.<sup>117</sup> They connect it with only the absolute self.<sup>118</sup> The inner immortal self and the great cosmic power are one of the same.<sup>119</sup> The supreme Power through which all things have been brought into being is one with the inmost self in each man's heart.<sup>120</sup>

In the *Upanishads* the concept of the perfect man has been mixed up with the concept of the Universal Reality,<sup>121</sup> which is too difficult to comprehend, for it has nothing specifically human, since it is the substratum of both world and man.<sup>122</sup>

According to the Upanishads you can only contemplate Reality alone; it is a personal experience. It rejects the idea of corporate worship.

Sikhism does not recognise the Universal Reality to be human and it encourages corporate worship. The idea of *Sangat* (religious congregation) is, rather, one of the corner-stones of the Sikh religion. Commenting on the form of God, Guru Gobind Singh said,

"God has no form or feature,  
God has no caste or lineage;  
None can describe His appearance, colour, mark or garb."<sup>124</sup>  
According to Guru Granth Sahib,  
"Come dear holy men;

Let us speak of the Gospel of the Ineffable God."<sup>125</sup>

The corporate worship, in Sikhism, gathered momentum in the times of Guru Arjun and reached its peak in the time of Guru Hargobind.<sup>126</sup>

113. Taittiriya Upanishad, 11-4

114. Kotha Upanishad, 11-4, The Self-existent Pierced the openings of the senses so that they turn towards not inwards into himself; some wise man, however, with his eyes closed and wishing for immortality, saw the self behind."

115. Chandogya Upanishad, VIII 3-12

116. Ibid., 3-12 117. Ibid., 3-12

118. Ibid., 3-12 119. Ibid., 3-12

120. Ibid., III, 14 Jean Fillozat

121. Anthropology of Religion, p.109

122. C.S.Summers, op. cit., p.44

124. Guru Gobind Singh, Jap, Chhape Chhand, verse no.1

125. Guru Amardas, Ramkali, p.918

126. Mohsin Fani, Debistan-i-Mazahib, p.239



Guru Hargobind also introduced the custom of choirs moving nightly round the Golden Temple and, with the blare of trumpets and flare of torches, singing hymns in stirring tunes.<sup>127</sup>

RAMAYNA was composed about 400 B.C. It presents, inter alia, a practical philosophy underlying ethics and religion. According to its thought, the end's which motivate human activities and which every normal human being should strive to attain (*Purusartha*) are three in number and hence collectively called *Tri-Varga*. These are *Dharma* (Spiritual merit), *Artha* (Wealth or material well-being) and *Kama* (Gratification of desire or pleasure).<sup>128</sup>

The Sikh thought accepts the attainment of Dharma and Artha, but regarding Kama it has its own theory which differs from the philosophy of *Ramayna*. Sikhism accepts sex as a fact of life; but rejects lust, promiscuity and permissiveness. According to Guru Granth Sahib,

“Ideal men become desireless and reject lust,  
Thus they attain to Supreme Bliss,  
In household, they remain unattached,  
And in life they show affection for the Lord,  
Sorrow and Separation cling not to them,  
And they remain happy in the Lord's Will.”<sup>131</sup>

According to Bhai Gurdas Bhalla, a contemporary of Guru Arjun and the scribe of Guru Granth Sahib,

“An perfect man must regard all other women, except his own wife, as daughters and sisters.”<sup>131a</sup>

In the Sikh philosophy, sex in family life is permitted. It is regarded as a part of the social order and worldly commitment. A happy family life is considered a great achievement and a divine boon.

BHAGAVAD GITA dates back to 200 B.C. It emphasizes the doctrine of four Gunas as determinants of individual character:

(a) *The Sattva* (Goodness) meaning purity, *The Rajas* (Activity) meaning passion and the *Tamas* (Darkness) meaning laziness or negativity.<sup>132</sup> ‘These three qualities are manifested in our daily motivation and

127. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, A Short Story of the Sikhs, p.40

128. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., p.48

131. Guru Amardas, p.1249

131a. Bhalla, Bhai Gurdas, Varan

132. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., pp.79-106



to determine the differences in eating, types of sacrifice and altruistic action. For example, fresh and natural food is an example of *sattva*; fried and spicy food which generally creates passions as a case of *Rajas*; whereas fermented, decomposed and preserved food is a mode of *Tamas*.<sup>133</sup> (b) The *Dharma*, spiritual merit or the path of Truth, (c) *Artha*, wealth or material advantage and (d) *Kama*, gratification of desire or pleasure.<sup>134</sup> The main emphasis is, however, on *Dharma* which as a goal of perfect man's endeavour represents the principle of righteousness.<sup>135</sup>

The *Gita* also lays stress on the path of duty,<sup>136</sup> the necessity of action including righteous war even with the kith and kin,<sup>137</sup> and the path of *Bhakti* (Devotion)<sup>138</sup> as the qualities of a perfect man.

The idealism of *Bhagavad Gita* and that of the Sikh Scriptures contain common points in spite of some differences. The *Bhagavad Gita* says,

“Whenever there is decay of righteousness,  
And there is exaltation of unrighteousness,  
Then I myself come forth;  
For the protection of the good,  
For the destruction of the evil-doers.  
For the sake of firmly establishing righteousness,  
I am born from age to age.”<sup>139</sup>

The *Dasam Granth* says,

“I am the slave of the Supreme Being,  
And have come to behold the spectacle of the world.

.....

To seize and hurl down evil-doers.....

.....

To spread the faith, to protect the saints,  
And to extirpate all tyrants and despots.”<sup>140</sup>

The message of the above two quotations is the same. The divine mission of Lord Krishna and Guru Gobind Singh, as described in the quotes, is also the same. But there is one striking difference.

Whereas the *Bhagavad Gita* recommends ‘*Avtarvad*’, the incarna-

133. G.S.Mansukhani, *Guru Ramdas*, pp.123, 134, 143

134. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, pp.79-106

135. *Ibid.* pp.79-106

136. *Bhagavad Gita*, Translation by Juan Mascaro, 2 (1, 2, 31, 32)

137. *Ibid.*, 2 (33); 3(8)

138. *Ibid.*, 3(3); 5(2)

139. *Bhagavad Gita*, *op. cit.*, 4(7, 8)

140. *Guru Gobind Singh*, *Bachitar Natak*, verses 32, 42, 43

tion of God in the human form, the *Dasam Granth* and the *Guru Granth Sahib* reject it. In the Sikh holy scriptures, it is the messengers or prophets who are sent with a divine message or mission. God himself is unborn.<sup>141</sup>

According to the *Dasam Granth*,  
“Put faith in no created thing.....  
Have faith only in God, who is Primal, Birthless.....”<sup>143</sup>

According to *Guru Granth Sahib*,  
“God is beyond birth and death.....”<sup>144</sup>

Another common point in the *Gita* and the Sikh scriptures is the war of righteousness. The *Gita* says,

“In the war of righteousness,  
In death the glory is in heaven,  
In the victory the glory is on earth.”<sup>145</sup>

The *Dasam Granth* says,  
“In the war of righteousness,  
The brave fight and when they die,  
They go to celestial regions.”<sup>146</sup>

Again, the *Gita* says,  
“Think of your duty and do not waver,  
There is no greater good for a warrior,  
Than to fight in a righteous war.”<sup>147</sup>

The *Dasam Granth* says,  
“O Lord, grant me this boon,  
That I may never refrain from doing righteous deeds,  
.....  
And when the time comes,  
I should die fighting for a righteous cause.”<sup>148</sup>

141. Guru Nanak, Jap Ji, p. 1

143. Ibid., Kalyan, Shabad Hazare, 5

144. Guru Nanak, Jap Ji, p. 1

145. Bhagvad Gita, op. cit., 2 (37)

146. Guru Gobind Singh, Bachitar Natak, III, verse 17

147. Bhagvad Gita, op. cit., 2 (37)

148. Guru Gobind Singh - Chandi Charitar I, verse 232

The Sikh thought also rejects the emphasis of the Gita on the caste-system<sup>149</sup> and asceticism.<sup>150</sup>

MANU'S code which was originally written in 1800 B.C. was revised in 200 B.C. This code has a great deal of influence on the Hindu laws. It is thought to be an ancient compilation, after the Vedas but before the *Upanishads*.<sup>151</sup> Manu has mentioned ten qualities of a perfect man.

These are: Contentment, Forgiveness, Self-Control, Purity, Restraint of the senses, Wisdom, Knowledge, Truthfulness, Control over anger and Abstention from misappropriation of another's property.<sup>152</sup>

The Sikh thought agrees with almost all the qualities recommended by Manu for a perfect man. But it rejects the caste-system which was idealized as an essential feature by Manu in his code. Manu recommended four castes (*Varnas*) and assigned a duty to each class. The *Brahmins* were to dedicate themselves to the intellectual and spiritual pursuits, the *Kshatriyas* were to take up soldiering and protection of the community, the *Vaisyas* were to apply themselves to agriculture, industry and trade and the *Shudras* were to undertake the service of the first three *varnas*.<sup>153</sup> This kind of stratification of society is rejected by the Gurus,

- (i) "The pride of caste and the glory of status are futile,  
For each one of us shelter under One and the same God."<sup>154</sup>
- (ii) "What power has caste? It is good deed that is tested.  
Whosoever tastes poison will die, no matter what his caste is."<sup>155</sup>

MAHAVIR, the prophet of the Jains, lived about 599 B.C.-527 B.C. According to him, the universe is peopled by countless souls. Salvation comes by freeing the soul from the matter. Life is judged by deeds. A perfect man must not kill any one and must also refuse to engage in occupations which would involve taking life, such as butchery, hunting or even farming.<sup>156</sup>

The motive which leads a man to strive for release (*Moksha*) is the

149. Bhagvad Gita, op. cit., 2(31, 32)

150. Ibid., 5(1)

151. G.Parrinder, A Dictionary of non-Christian Religions, p.176

152. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., p.117

153. Ibid., p.109

154. Guru Nanak, Siri, p.83

155. Ibid., Asa, p.349

156. E.G.Parrinder, A Book of World Religion, p.115



avoidance of pain; for *Moksha* is the state of the soul in pure happiness.<sup>157</sup>

The Sikh thought differs from Mahavir's doctrine on a number of points. Firstly, Mahavir denies the existence of Supreme Being, though not of gods;<sup>158</sup> but Sikhism's whole structure is based on One Reality. According to Dasam Granth,

“God is source of all light  
God is the Supreme Lord of all.”<sup>159</sup>

Secondly, Jainism teaches ascetic methods to destroy old Karma and ward off new *Karma*.<sup>160</sup> But Sikhism rejects the idea of ascetism and recommends family life. As has been mentioned before, according to Sikh doctrine a householder who leads a pious life, performs noble deeds and meditates on Holy names, qualifies for God's Grace which then destroys his old (bad) deeds and secures union with God. Commenting on the importance of meditation and rejection of Jain and Hindu practices, Guru Gobind Singh said,

“He who repeats, night and day, the Name of God,

.....

He who recognises only One God,  
He who does not put any faith in pilgrimages, alms,  
*ahinsa* (non-violence), Hindu penances and austerities,  
He is the pure member of the Khalsa.”<sup>161</sup>

Finally, Jainism believes in total Ahinsa (non-Violence) which implies that one must not kill or harm any living creature.<sup>162</sup> But in Sikhism, though non-violence is one of the doctrines, the use of force is recommended in certain cases, as for example, a righteous war, the restoration of justice and the uprooting of tyranny. Like Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, and Prophet Mohammed, Guru Gobind Singh, too was a warrior who fought numerous battles against Hindu and Muslim rulers; but his object was only to save the good, to annihilate the evil and to destroy the tyrant. In a letter which he wrote to Auranzeb, he affirmed,

“When all other possible remedies fail,  
It is but lawful to resort to the sword.”<sup>163</sup>

157. S.N.Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, p.40

158. G.Parrinder, Asian Religions, p.42

159. Guru Gobind Singh, Jap, verse 119

160. Radhakrishnan, op. cit. p.117. See also G.Parrinder, op. cit. p.42

161. Guru Gobind Singh, Zafarnama, verse 22

162. G.Parrinder, op. cit., p.42

163. Guru Gobind Singh, Zafarnama, verse 22

According to Guru Granth Sahib,

“Men, out of ignorance, quarrel over non-vegetarian food,  
Not bothering to know, what flesh and what is not-flesh,  
Which food is sinful and which is.....”<sup>164</sup>

But according to Mahavir,

“.....He who grasps at even a litter,  
Whether living or lifeless, or consents to another doing so,  
Will never be freed from sorrow,  
If a man kills living things, or slays by the hand of another, or consents  
to another slaying,  
His sins go on increasing.”<sup>165</sup>

BUDDHA lived from about 563 B.C. to 483 B.C. He preached that a perfect man must follow the eightfold path which includes the following: Right views, Right resolve, Right speech, Right conduct, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness and Right concentration. Buddha also emphasised that one must not destroy life, one must not steal, one must not be unchaste, one must not lie and one must not deceive. He stressed that a perfect man must abstain from intoxicants, eat moderately, avoid dancing and drama, refrain from the use of perfume and ornaments, reject a comfortable bed and refuse to wear gold or silver.<sup>166</sup> The Buddhist philosophy of man is entirely dominated by the concept of continuous flow of change;<sup>167</sup> when we understand truth, we can practise the means of liberation and perform those actions which are in accordance with Dharma and we should neither particularize, nor cling to objects of desire.<sup>168</sup>

The highest goal of Buddhism is Nirvana (Salvation). Like Jainism, Buddhism also does not believe in God as the Supreme Reality. To a Buddhist Nirvana means Freedom, Purity, Peace, Immortal State and everlasting Bliss.

Thus the Sikh thought differs from the basic Buddhist doctrine. In Sikhism the highest goal is the merger in God, the Time-less Reality. According to Guru Granth Sahib,

164. Guru Nanak, Malhar, p.1289

165. Book of Sermon 1:1

166. Sherrat and Hawkins, o, cit., p.152

167. C.S.Summers, op. cit., p.46

168. S.N.Dasgupta, op. cit., p.40



“Nirvana from bondage is affected by the will of God,  
None else has any say in it.”<sup>169</sup>

Again, unlike Buddhism, Sikhism accepts the facts of life and allows the enjoyment of all the comforts and luxuries of life, provided a man does not feel in any way attached or enslaved to them. This means that though an ideal man can possess and enjoy the worldly treasures, he should not have any longing or attachment for them and he should not grieve if he loses any of them. According to Guru Granth Sahib, man must

“Live detached amidst attachment,  
Like the lotus in the water.”<sup>170</sup>

Lastly, Sikhism also rejects the idea of renunciation and bondage of family relationship which is approved by the Buddhist system of asceticism. A Sikh, as has been mentioned before, must not be a recluse. He should fulfil all his household duties, social commitments and physical and spiritual needs.

According to Guru Granth Sahib,

"One can achieve Nirvan,  
While eating, dressing decently, laughing, playing, sporting,  
And in the midst of other worldly tangles."<sup>170A</sup>

JESUS CHRIST lived from 4 B.C. to 29 A.D. His gospel, as embodied in Matthew's Gospel in the Bible, enumerates the following qualities of a perfect man:

(i) "The poor in spirit -

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven!

(ii) Those who grieve -

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

(iii) The meek -

'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,'

(iv) The lovers of righteousness -

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.'

(v) The merciful -

'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'

169. Guru Nanak, Jap Ji, p.5

170. Ibid., Malar, p.1281

170A. Ibid., p.661



(vi) The pure of heart -

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

(vii) The peacemaker -

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.'

(viii) The martyr for righteousness sake -

'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.'

(ix) The sufferers for the sake of truth -

'Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you,  
And utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.  
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.'<sup>171</sup>

The teachings of Jesus Christ and the Sikh Gurus have more similarities than differences. Both the Christian and the Sikh thought believe in One Universal God, a God of Love and Grace. The Sikh theory of oneness of God is mentioned frequently in Guru Granth Sahib and the Dasam Granth. The very first line of Guru Granth Sahib reads as below in translation:

"God is One,  
Eternal Reality,  
Creator and Sustainer,  
Without fear,  
without enmity,  
Immortal and unchanging,  
Free from birth and death,  
Self-existing,  
Known by His Grace,"<sup>172</sup>

In Christianity, the idea is expressed as below:

"What is God?  
God is Spirit,  
Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable in His Being,  
Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness and Truth."<sup>173</sup>

Again, both religions believe in Salvation by the Grace of God. In Sikhism the words used for Grace are *Prasad, Nadar, Kirpa, Mehar*. In Guru Granth Sahib, these words are used over 626 times,<sup>174</sup>

171. Matthew, 5-3:11

172. Guru Nanak, Jap Ji, p.1

173. Westminster confession of Faith, Shorter Catechism, Question 4

174. D.H.Loehlin, 'Guru Manak's Religion with special reference to Christianity,'(article) in Guru Nanak His Life, Time and Teachings, p.148

whereas in the New Testament the word Grace is used over 169 times.<sup>175</sup> In both the scriptures the two words mean the same. In the Sikh doctrine, the Grace can be mediated through a Guru, where the word Guru means either God or prophet or religious guide or chosen teachers like the ten Nanaks. In Christianity, regarding Grace, John's gospel says,

"Grace was made flesh and dwelt among us."<sup>176</sup>

Again, St. Luke says,

"Do not be afraid Mary,

For you have found Grace with God,"<sup>177</sup>

However, the main points of differences between the two faiths, which are the theories of *Karma* and the life-after-death, have been discussed earlier. The Christian interpretation of the two theories is:<sup>178</sup>

"Life in Christ is life eternal. The resurrection of Jesus is God's sign that He will consummate His work of creation and reconciliation beyond death and bring to fulfilment the new life begun in Christ. Biblical visions and images of the rule of Christ- such a heavenly city, a father's house, a new heaven and earth, a marriage feast and an unending day - culminate in the image of the Kingdom. The Kingdom represents triumph of God over all that resists His Will and disrupts His creation. Already God's reign is present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in men and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgement and redemption. With an urgency born of this hope, the Church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope the Church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations for ever and ever. Amen."

According to St. Paul,

"We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ."<sup>179</sup>

Here the apostle deemed not making a claim for Jesus which he had not made Himself, but referring to God.<sup>180</sup> Like Judaism and Islam, Christianity also believes in a 'Day of Judgement.'<sup>181</sup> The law of the deeds is that past error need not be a doom; that we may take pardon

175. Ibid., p.148

176. John 1:14

177. Luke 1:31

178: The Confession of 1967, General Assembly Minutes, pp.735, 740

179. 11 Cor. 5.10- Rom, 2.16, 14.10

180. Hugh Matin, The Claims of Christ p.93

181. Ibid.,p.93



for granted; forgive ourselves and start anew.<sup>182</sup> God's justice is an outcome and expression of His love. God creates the very desire for forgiveness by bringing home to men what sin means to Him and to themselves as a sin against love; and this forgiveness with the judgement on which it rested, needed the sacrifice of Jesus to reach men fully.<sup>183</sup> According to the *New Testament*, Jesus did not condone sin or tell people they could take forgiveness for granted. He knew that sin was doing to the men and women he loved. He saw more clearly than we can see with our sin-blunted sight what sin means in misery and degradation of the soul, in alienation from fellowship with God. For, forgiveness is to remission nor penalty; it is restoration of fellowship.<sup>184</sup>

PROPHET MOHAMMED lived from 570 A.D. to 632 A.D. He laid down five basic principles of Islam. Firstly, prayer five times a day. The main theme of the prayer is: "God is great. I testify that there is no God but Allah. I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of God."<sup>185</sup> Secondly, fasting during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar year. According to the Law of Islam, no food or drink must pass the lips between sunrise and sunset. However, it is not a total fast, because eating can be done at night. Thirdly, almsgiving is a duty of all Muslims. According to the Islamic thought, one-fourth of the income should be given to the poor. Fourthly, Pilgrimage to Mecca as a duty at least once in a lifetime of a Muslim. Lastly, it is the duty of every Muslim to spread the faith in Allah and his Apostle. Prophet Mohammed's ideas regarding the ideal man are simple. His main doctrine is that man is by necessity part of the group and thus the highest good of the individual consists in the cultivation and exercise of the virtue which is the basis of social good, justice in speech and conduct, justice in appearance and dress, justice in behaviour i.e. politeness, justice in economy, justice in liberty, justice in discipline and justice in human fellowship.<sup>186</sup>

Sikhism has a great deal in common with Islam as well. Both religions believe in the Oneness of God, the equality of men, an active community life, corporate worship, charity, meditation on the name of God and

182. Ibid., p.93

183. Moffat, the Theology of the Gospel, p.126

184. Hugh Martin op. cit. p92

185. 'Allahu hu Akbar. La illaha illa' illahu. Mohhad rasulu 'illah.

186. Radhakrishnan, op. cit. p.505



social obligations. The Quran says,

(i) "It is not righteousness that you turn your face towards the East and West,

But righteousness is that one should believe in Allah, And the last day, and the angels and the Book, and the prophets, And give away wealth out of love for Him, to the near of Kin and orphans and the needy and the wayfarers and the beggars and for captives, And keep up prayer and give alms....."<sup>187</sup>

(ii) "Serve God, and do not associate anything with Him, Show to parents kindness, also to relatives, orphans, and the poor, To the persons under protection whether a relative or not, ....."<sup>188</sup>

Similar ideas are also advocated by the Sikh Gurus and have been discussed at length before.

However, the important points on which the two faiths differ are the theories of *Karma* and the life-after death. Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam also believes that the last day would be a day of Judgement. This day and hour is only known to God, and the *Qoran* has mentioned twenty-five signs of its approach.<sup>189</sup> According to Islam, on that day all men will be raised, the record books kept by the angels will be opened; and God will sit on the throne of Justice and will pass judgement on each man according to his deeds. Those with a good record will be admitted to paradise. Others will be sent to hell. A true Muslim will go to paradise, whereas infidels will fall into the fire of hell.<sup>190</sup> The Sikh theory of *Karma* which is completely different from Islamic theory has already been discussed before.

187. Sura 2.172

188. Sura 4:40

189. Sura 75

190. Sura 3:30; 6:22; 74; 14,5:35; 7:52; 21:103; 22.1;25:22, 40; 49; 51; 78;8;

# BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANKIND

Justice Mota Singh

Sikhism is the youngest of world religions. It is a revealed religion and not an offshoot of one faith or a syncretic blend of different and often conflicting faiths.

Guru Nanak, the first Sikh prophet, to whom it traces its origin in the year 1469 (at the time England was in the throes of the Wars of the Roses) is, indisputably, the determinative formulator of the Sikh teachings. He has been rightly regarded as the original formulator of the Sikh tenets and its founder. A lot has been written about his life and teachings and even from his own days Guru Nanak has been lauded as the apostle of universal religion, unity of Godhead, brotherhood of man and messenger of peace and goodwill, laying emphasis on truth and righteous living, discarding idol worship, rituals and dogmas and denouncing the prevalent cast-system.

Just before his death he installed Guru Angad as his successor to carry on his mission. By this process of succession from one Guru to the other, Guru Gobind Singh became the tenth prophet of the Sikhs in 1674 A.D. on the martyrdom of his father, Guru Teg Bahadur. He was just 9 years old, but wise beyond his years, endowed with rare qualities of head and heart. With unparalleled zeal to raise the down-trodden and fight against repression, he created the Khalsa, uplifting the weak and installing in them supreme courage and devotion to righteous cause. Within a few years he created a mighty force of self-respecting, dauntless brave and disciplined Sikhs.

That was in the year 1699, the high point of Sikh tradition. It was a time of violent repression of majority Hindus by the Moghul rulers; forcible conversions were the order of the day. While Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture, saved the Hindus in the Punjab, from spiritual starvation, the establishment of the Khalsa panth prevented them from trespassing over religious boundaries from which their return was impossible (vide GC Narang). This is not pleasing sophistry. Just cast your



minds back to 300 years ago; you will realise how different the history of India would have been if Guru Gobind Singh Ji had not had the vision to create the panth. I refer to Guru Gobind Singh's vision: yet, that is not entirely accurate because the opening words of our Ardas, the Sikh prayer, make it clear beyond peradventure that the establishment of the Panth was ordained by God when he sent Guru Gobind Singh into the world, as his son, charged with the duty to uphold the good and uproot sin and evil and to spread true Dharma. (Aagia bhai Akalki)

It was after deep and long contemplation and considerable planning that he created the missionary force. The Khalsa, to accomplish his mission. When he created the new Order, he also laid down a strict code of discipline and insisted on its observance. How the Guru shook, out of their lassitude, people reconciled for long to their fallen state, their will to action completely atrophied, is one of the miracles of history. Out of the oppressed and demoralised arose distinctive people fired with a sense of mission and determination to usher in a new society, implicitly believing that the Khalsa shall rule. The Sikhs owe their distinctive look and identity to Guru Gobind Singh who created the Order of the Khalsa on the Waisakhi day festival in the year 1699. Among other requirements was the injunction to wear their hair and beards inviolate.

The Khalsa Panth was a powerful body which in unity, loyalty and courage (qualities which I am sure will strike a responsive chord in the hearts of the British) was to struggle against overwhelming odds, survive the cruellest of persecutions and ultimately rise to supremacy on the ruins of the Moghul empire. It was, as I said, a society possessing its own formulated religious doctrines and a coherent code of discipline, a community dedicated to the defence of righteousness, and an invincible 'army' of saint-soldiers, devout and committed to the good of humanity and destined to withstand the most fearsome repression. It was the Sikhs alone who, instead of seeking accommodation either within Hinduism or within the conquering Islam, chose to protest against both of them, revolt against the former and confront the latter. He successfully completed the "revolution" which was initiated by Guru Nanak 230 years earlier.



Clearly, therefore, the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa in 1999 is a momentous occasion for us, the Sikhs. It is not only an occasion to celebrate, it is much more than that; It is an occasion to take stock, to indulge in a bit of introspection, to see how we, the present-day Sikhs, measure up to the vision that Guru Gobind Singh had of the Panth. I remind myself of the great principles of our faith, principles for which our Gurus stood and some of them sacrificed all they had. At no period in our recent history have these principles been greater in need of being observed without question than now.

But I regret to have observed that we are living in a period of disintegration of faith and growing disillusionment about the traditional values which have come down to us. Many pernicious practices against which our Gurus revolted have crept into Sikh society. Worldly considerations are corrupting the great ideals. The barriers which the Gurus laboured to cast down have been recreated. Our society is more caste-ridden now than at any other time in history. We only pay lip-service to these ideals. We merely observe the trappings of religion, the gestures of faith and the confections of piety. There is a difference between our belief and our behaviour; our actions do not match our word. We conceal from ourselves the true nature of what we do by euphemisms. If we strip away all pretence and are honest with ourselves we will know that we are fast losing faith in decency. How different are we from the Sikh envisaged by Guru Gobind Singh?

Some years ago Sardar Khushwant Singh, the well-known author, felt constrained to write that a time would come when Sikhs, as an identifiable group, might well cease to exist. That caused consternation at the time. I think he either retracted that or modified his view, but I wonder whether we are seeing the fulfilment of that prophecy.

There are perceptible indications of a perilous danger facing the Sikh community in the United Kingdom. There are dangers from the zealots of other religions. Sikhism is a world religion, but it is not a proselytising religion; we do not seek to convert others. Regrettably, that cannot be said of some other religions some of whom are more aggressive in their efforts at conversion; they consider it a divine duty. Those who sponsor

religious propoganda in their zeal for the spiritual welfare of their fellowmen indulge in a vulgar competition about the knowhow of salvation. Agencies for proselytisation which scramble for souls are not in keeping with the true spirit of religion. There are still people who, with a crusading zeal, affirm that they have the monopoly of a final, unique, exclusive and incomparable revelation. These people are indirectly responsible for the eclipse of religion, for the blight of unbelief in large parts of the world. We, Sikhs believe that all human beings are of the same essence and therefore of equal worth and entitled to the same fundamental rights: that the human individual is the highest, most concrete embodiment of the spirit on earth and anything that hurts his individuality or damages his dignity is mostly wrong. We believe in religion as communion with God and do not dismiss differences among religions as unimportant or irrelevant. We do not propose an undifferentiated universalism or indifferentism. We believe in partnership among religions. Professor Arnold Toynbee writes: "I was brought up to believe that Christianity was a unique revelation of the whole truth. I have now come to believe that all the historic religions and philosophies are partial revelation of the truth in one or other of its aspects. In particular, I believe that Buddhism and Hinduism (and Sikhism - my addition) have a lesson to teach Christianity, Islam and Judaism in the 'one world' into which we are now being carried by the 'annihilation of distance.' Unlike the Judaic religion, the Indian religions are not exclusive. They allow for the possibility that there may be an alternate approach to the mystery of Existence; and this seems to be more likely to be the truth than the rival claims of Judaism, Christianity and Islam to unique and final revelations. This Indian standpoint is the one from which the last four volumes of my book have been written. For each of us, the easiest approach to the mystery of the universe is, no doubt, his ancestral religion; but that does not mean that he ought to rule out the other approaches that the other religions offer. If one can enter into these as well as into one's own, it is gain, not loss." It seems to be that the whole world is suffering from scepticism in faith, anarchy in morals; and we do not know which way to turn and what to do. There is a certain duplicity in human nature which makes us do things even when we recognise them to be wrong. When Pontius Pilate pronounced Jesus innocent and yet handed him over, he did what we all do, say one thing



and do another. But I digress. The situation for the Sikhs is fraught with anger. Young Sikhs, disillusioned, ingenuous, suggestible, vulnerable, unsuspecting, weak, seem an easy prey for the zealots of other religions who, as I have said, have agendas of their own, who beguile them, cajole them, seduce them with promise of untold and unlimited blessings and rewards. This may sound emotive; it is not intended to be; there is anecdotal evidence in support. But the danger to which I refer is a danger from within - the increasing indifference of our youth to religion, particularly to the symbol of our faith.

When people from one country migrate to another they take with them their religious and cultural beliefs and values. These beliefs and values react with the beliefs and values of others, whether indigenous or other ethnic immigrant. Sikhs have been here in the United Kingdom for many years. I believe they constitute the large number of the various ethnic groups now living here. Now Sikhs and the British are no strangers to each other. We share with them a common history extending over scores of years. We fought against them when we believed they were wrong, when we believed the right was on our side; we fought with them, alongside them, when we knew they were right, when we believed that the values they and we shared were threatened. And I recall with pleasure and appreciation that for many years one of the foremost books on the Sikh religion in the English language was by an Englishman, or rather by a Scotsman, Max Macauliffe, who went out to India as a civil servant and became fascinated with the Sikhs and their religion. There have been many other books, since then, but Macauliffe's was and has remained one of the standard books of reference.

We now share with the British a common destiny. We share with them qualities and virtues of resoluteness (if there is such a word), of independence, hardwork, self-reliance, self-help, of loyalty, indeed probity and integrity in our private and personal life - qualities which have often been referred to as Victorian and which made this country great. We recognise that no ethnic or religious minority could thrive if it tried to isolate itself from the mainstram of British life. And, because we and the British are no strangers to each other and to each other's religion, culture and way of life, we have had little difficulty in adjust-

ing ourselves to life in Britain, in integrating into the society here. There have not been many occasions when we have felt that our way of life was at risk and, by and large, we have found little difficulty in reconciling our personal life, lived in accordance with the tenets of our faith, and our life as full-fledged members of British society. I have said that we have experienced little difficulty in integrating into the society here. At the heart of our thinking is a Britain where Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, Sikh and others can all work and live together, but each retaining proudly their own faith and identity, while sharing in common the bond of being, by birth or choice, British.

Having said this, may I reiterate the genuine concern on the part of the Sikhs. What I am going to say may well apply to other ethnic groups from the sub-continent. There are now second, even third, generation Sikhs. It is painful to have to observe that most of the latter seems to have lost their moorings. In common with other ethnic minorities, Sikhs are justifiably concerned about the erosion of their religious and cultural values. This concern is also shared by all those who are aware of the danger faced by a disoriented generation unable to relate to any set of moral or cultural codes of conduct.

In Britain, as in other liberal societies, two main assumptions underpin the relations between the wider society and its immigrants and form the basis of an unspoken moral covenant. The society rightly expects its immigrants, who have chosen to come and settle in its midst, to make every effort to become part of it and in that sense to identify with it, and undertakes, in turn, to treat them equally with the rest of the citizens. These are fair terms of co-operation for they are embedded in and consistent with the central values of liberal society, reconcile the legitimate claims of the wider society and the immigrants in a reasonably responsible manner, and create the conditions of a cohesive and fair society. It implies, at the minimal, that the immigrants should not live in isolated and self-contained communities, cut themselves off from the common life of the wider society, because, and I recognise this, no ethnic or religious minority could thrive if it tried to isolate itself from the mainstream of British life. But that requirement of identification or integration does not mean total absorption into the



wider society's culture and the concomitant surrender of the immigrants' cultural identity. The immigrant does not have to become like the rest in order to develop a common sense of belonging with them. Immigrants may play a full part in the economy, the conduct of public affairs etc, but prefer, eg. to marry among themselves or to adhere to their own traditional cultural beliefs and practices. If some of them wish to break out of their communities, so be it, but if others decide differently their choices should be respected. Just as marriage does not require that one should turn one's back on one's parents, relations and friends, and it would not last if it did, the immigrant need not be expected to reject his earlier objects of devotion and affection and love in order to sustain or prove his commitment to the new ones. We accept integration as not a flattening process of assimilation, but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.

I believe that one's religion is an important indicator of personal and social well being. I am a practising Sikh; that means that I have been initiated into the order of the Khalsa in accordance with the rites and ceremonies laid down by the Sikh Gurus, and bound by a strict code of discipline. The Khalsa, as I have said, is a powerful brotherhood which in unity, loyalty and courage was to struggle against overwhelming odds and survive. The Code enjoins upon its adherents the highest standards of moral and spiritual rectitude and probity in daily life - ideals which are paramount. The climax of the ceremony is a form of baptism which requires all initiates to drink from a common bowl thereby striking at the nature of ritual purity. This is testimony to the fact that the Sikh Gurus were, beyond doubt, vigorous and practical denounciators of caste. Kenya, where I was born, was then a British colony and had a large Asian population. Sikhs formed a substantial part of that population. Sikhs and other Asian and non-Asian communities practised their religion and different forms of worship freely, without enmity or malice towards one another. There was no conflict between different religions or religious customs. We got on well with each other. The Sikhs were able to take part, a very active part, along with others - the Europeans and the Africans - in the ordinary life and affairs of the country. They never felt inhibited from carrying out any function either because

of their religion or because of any special cultural traits. And that was true of all Asians. Problems arise when political considerations interface with religious pursuits. So long as we look upon religion as the supreme endeavour of man by which he tries to complete his being, to integrate in nature, so long as we believe that man is incomplete, is unregenerated, so to say, is unfinished and he has to fulfill himself, he has to complete himself, then that kind of completeness can be achieved not by words of mouth or by acts of mere piety, however helpful they may be, but by a complete remaking of one's self. There were, as I have said, no conflicts, cultural or otherwise, with others. And that was due as much to the teachings of our Gurus as to our larger Indian traditions. I believe that our first and foremost duty must be to inculcate in our youth a sense of pride - in the community, in its origins, its history, its religion, its language. How do we do that? For example, by educating them, by trying to understand the pressures upon them of living in a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-religious society; by trying to understand their predicament, the inevitable conflicts to which they are subject, having to conform with one set of values at home and another set of values, sometimes alien and possibly superficially attractive, outside the home.

Our youth are a clever lot, they are a shrewd lot. Some will accept what we tell them, others will not; they will be convinced, not by force, but by reasoned argument, especially by example. If they ask questions, we should be prepared to answer these in a manner that is convincing. The object of education is to bring forth the ethical man - the man in whom all the capacities, spiritual, intellectual and physical, are fully developed. Being truly educated means having the light to see the truth and the strength to make it prevail. It has often been said that children of a nation are its capital, and in the proper investment of that capital consists its life and prosperity. We have a special responsibility towards our youth, and that responsibility is to ensure that they are protected from and do not fall prey to the pernicious practices I have mentioned.

In April 1999 Sikhs, in whatever corner of the world, will be celebrating the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa. It is a momentous occasion for us. This is the time to re-dedicate ourselves



to the great ideals and to fulfill our destiny. But do not forget, that we will only prove worthy of the Guru's grace if we ensure that our deeds match our words, if we become Khalsa in thought, work and deed. That is the call that beckons us. It is, at the same time, an opportunity for us to guide our youth in the path of the Guru, to remind them of the basic philosophy of Sikhism - charity, worship and hardwork are the ethical conduct of life. Poetry, art, music and philosophy are important; religion, however, is the highest faculty of attaining spiritual wisdom and knowledge of the eternal truth. If we fail now we will be answerable to our Guru and to posterity.

# KHALSA CONCEPT OF EMPOWERING PEOPLE: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Col Dr. Dalvinder Singh Grewal

Empower means 'to give power or authority to act.'<sup>1</sup> Kari and Michels(1991) defined empowerment as, "the ability to act collectively to solve problems and influence important issues."<sup>2</sup> Rapport et. al. defined empowerment as, "a process through which people become strong enough to participate within, share in the control of and influence events and institutions affecting their lives."<sup>3</sup> Empowerment in society includes psychology empowerment, a political action component and the achievement of redistribution of resources or decision *making*.<sup>4</sup> The key elements of empowerment emerge as equality, participation, access to opportunities, sharing of resources and influencing decisions both at psychological, political and community level.<sup>5</sup> These elements have been considered here as the basis for analysing the Khalsa concept of empowerment.

*Khalsa* is an improved word in Punjabi from Arabic '*Khalis*' (lit. pure, unsullied) and Perso-Arabic '*Khalisah*' (lit. pure; office of revenue department; lands directly under government management). The term *Khalisah* was used during the Muslim rule in India for 'crown lands administered directly by the king without the mediation of landlords' (*jagirdars or mansabdars*).<sup>6</sup> In *Sikh* history, this word is first found recorded in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS)* in the hymn of Saint Kabir<sup>7</sup> meaning 'pure'. Among the *Sikh Gurus*, *Guru Hargobind* (1595-1644) used it first in his epistle (*hukamnama*) starting 'poorv ki

1. Hornby: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, Oxford, 3rd Edn, 286

2. Kari, N & P. Michels (1991): The Lazarus Project: The Politics of Empowerment. Annual Journal of Occupational Therapy, 45, 719-725.

3. Rapport, J.C. Swift & R. Hess (1984): Studies in Empowerment: Steps towards understanding and action. New York: Howarth, 39-47

4. Rissel Christopher (1994). Empowerment. The holy grail of health promotion? Health Promotion International, 9(1), 41

5. Udai Pareek(1997). Empowering in Societies and Organisations, HRD Vol.13 No.3 Sept 1997, Hyderabad, 30-34

6. Harbans Singh: Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, Patiala, Punjabi University, 1996, 173

7. Sri Guru Granth Sahib(SGGS) p.655 'Kah(u) Kabir jan bhae Khalse, prembhagat(i) Jih janee' (Kabir says, the people, who have known the devotion by love, have become pure).



*sangat Guru ka Khalsa hoī* (The congregation of the East should become '*Guru ka Khalsa*' (Guru's own or Guru's special charge or directly administered by *Guru*).<sup>8</sup> *Guru Teg Bahadur* also used this word in his 'hukamnama' to the '*Sangat*' (congregation) of Patna<sup>9</sup> and *Guru Gobind Singh* too, used this word first in his *hukamnamas* in the same sense. *Guru Gobind Singh* used this word first in a *hukamnama* on March 12, 1699 addressed to the *Sangat* of Machhiwara just before the historic *Waisakhi* of 1699.<sup>10</sup> In this *Hukamnama* he specially instructed the *Sangat* not to accept *masands* (representatives of the *Guru*). On the historic *Waisakhi* of 1699 A.D., he used the word *Khalsa* for the Baptised *Sangat*. In almost all his later *hukamnamas*,<sup>11</sup> the *Guru* used the word *Khalsa* to connote as *Guru's Own/The Lord's own*.

Baptising of *Sikh Sangat* as *Khalsa* by *Guru Gobind Singh* is minutely recorded by the *Bhatts* of *Guru's* *darbar*. 'On the *Sangrand* of *Waisakh* 1755 (30 March, 1699 A.D.) at *Anandpur* in a congregation of around 5,000 devotees, *Guru Gobind Singh* came out on the dais with a naked sword and demanded for a *Sikh* to offer himself for sacrifice. It caused deadening silence among the people and a fear gripped many. It was *Daya Ram Sobti Khatri* from *Lahore* who came out to offer himself for the sacrifice. He showed no fear at the hands of the *Guru* as he himself had totally committed to the *Guru* and his ideas. As he led, four more *Sikhs*, *Muhkam Chand* of *Dwarka*, tailor by trade, *Sahib Chand* of *Bidar Karnatak*, barber by trade, *Dharam Chand* of *Hastinapur*, *Utter Pradesh* and a farmer by trade and *Himmat Chand* of *Jagannath Orissa*, water carrier by trade followed and offered themselves for the sacrifice one after the other... After performing the rituals, the *Guru* asked them to have a bath and wash their hair, and put on weapons. After the bath they were given five *K's* (*Kangha* (a wooden comb) for the *Kesh*(hair), *Sarb Loh Kada*(an iron bracelet) for the wrist, *Kachha*(a pair of short breeches) and *Kirpan* (a sword in a cloth belt) to be worn along with a *kesri* (pink) dress and double blue head-dress. *Guru* too wore the same dress and came along with these five, on the dais in front of the congregation surprising everyone present.

8. Ganda Singh (Dr.): *Hukamnama* (Punjabi), Patiala, Punjab University, 1993, 67

9. Fauja Singh: *Hukamnamahs Shri Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib*, Patiala, Punjabi University, 1976, 104

10. Ganda Singh (Dr.): *Hukamname* (Punjabi) 67.

11. *Ibid.* 159-189

The *Guru* addressed the congregation, "Dear *Sikhs*, in the trial of *Guru Nanak* only one *Sikh Bhai Lehna (Guru Angad)* passed the test and *Guru Nanak* closeted him and gave him name *Angad*. This time these five *Sikhs* have passed the test of sacrifice. I give them the position of '*Panj Piare*' (The Beloved Five). They shall be ever remembered so. ....The *Guru* then addressed himself to *Bhai Chaupat Rai* and said, "Brother *Sikh*! Take this pot-full of charn-pahul (nectar prepared by touch of foot) and clear it off in the River *Satluj*. Returning, you collect the fresh water of the river; I am to prepare pahul of double-edged sword (*Khānde ka pahul*)." *Guru ji* asked *Diwan Dharam Chand* to bring a stone-pestle (*koonda*), an iron pan (*batta*) and a double edged sword (*khanda*). *Guru ji* poured the water of *Satluj* in the iron pan in front of *Bhai Daya Ram* and others and rotated *khanda* in the water, reciting *Japu Ji Sahib* first..... *Mata Sahib* poured the sugar plums (*patasas*) into the iron pan. The *Guru* understood the feelings of *Mata Ji* but without looking up and losing his concentration, continued reciting *Japu Ji*, followed by the recitation of *Jaap*, *Sawaie*, *Chaupai* and *Sri Anand Sahib*. As the nectar was ready, he stood and prayed to the Lord and gave a winning call, 'Nanak says: Name of the Lord will always be in the ascendancy and His Will is the good for the entire humanity.'

He then put a drop on the edge of the '*khanda*' (two sided sword), put five drops into his own mouth and called '*Wahiguru ji ka Khalsa, Wahiguri ji ki Fateh*' (Hail the *Khalsa* who belongs to the Lord! Hail the Lord to whom belongs the victory!) five times. He explained the importance of *khanda* stating: "It is the same *khanda* given to him by the *Mahankal* (The Timeless Lord) after his meditation at *Hemkunt*, from which I am giving you the '*Khānde ka pahul*'. You must keep symbol of this '*khanda*' under the small turban. You will always succeed in every field by its blessings." He then received three verses from *Shashtarnama* reciting the importance of various weapons which were the gift of the Lord.

He prayed for Lord's protection as He alone can help in battles and lead one to win. The *Guru* then gave the pahul of *Khalsa* to *Bhai Daya Ram* and the other beloved Ones, one by one bidding them to be in



beer-aasan (sitting posture with one bent knee touching the ground). Guru then attached suffix Singh to his name and then to the names of the Beloved Five. He shouted, “Wahiguru Ji Ka Khalsa Wahiguru Ji Ki Fateh” and gave Jaikara (winning call).

The Guru then explained all the tenets of Khalsa Panth and said, “All your past life record, religion, deeds, superstitions and shame are now gone. You have been made Khalsa, the form of the Lord (Sargun Sarup Kaal). You must preserve its honour. Before giving you pahul, you have been given five K’s (Kes, Kangha, Kada, Kachha, Kirpan); never separate these from your body even by mistake.... If you ever separate even one of them, go to Gurudwara and get your mistake rectified post-haste with the permission of the sangat..... Except the Timeless Lord, do not worship mathh, tomb, or grave. I have mixed you all in the iron pan, hence never keep differences and doubts among yourself.”

He further described the details of Khalsa Rehit Maryada(Code of Conduct/discipline) and said, “O Brother Sikhs! Neither cause fear in nor be afraid of anyone. Keep faith in the Only One Timeless Lord-He will help you everywhere. Always earn your income through hard work..... Recite the Lord’s name and guide others to recite. Read and teach Bani (Guru’s hymns) and go to the congregation at the twilight.... After teaching Gurmukhi to your children, provide them the other education, from where-ever it is available and have no doubts. Go to Gurdwara twice i.e., in the morning and evening; give the winning call of the Lord (Wahguru Ji Ka Khalsa Wahguru Ji Ki Fateh) with folded hands; do not take anything without paying obeisance to the Sangat.”

From the above the following facts emerge:-

1. **Spirit of Sacrifice:** Offering self for a sacrifice in the extreme of total commitment to the cause and the Guru.
2. **Shedding away fear:** He removed fear of death by setting examples of the Beloved Five and named them ‘Singhs’. He armed them with swords and gave them strength of unity through common brotherhood maintaining no differences among themselves . He asked

them to believe in One and only Lord and to fear no one.

3. **Exemplary Motivation:** He motivated his followers so strongly that they came to offer their lives voluntarily for sacrifice and the masses accepted baptism in a spirit to rise together against the oppression and tyranny and to establish an independent authority.

4. **Resurrection through Baptism:** The Guru converted Sikhs from saints to saint-soldiers. And wedded 'bhagti' (meditation) and 'shakti' (power) through Khande ka pahul. He gave a new hope and strength and resuscitated the dying spirit of the masses who had given up in the face of oppression and tyranny and accepted these as their fate finding no way out. New spirit was born with will to ride all strides and to rise above all torrents of time. Baptism wedded peace with strength, unity in diversity, bhagti with shakti, sainthood with soldiering and low with high and broke all barriers as the Guru merged all into the 'Sarab Loh ka batta' removing all their differences.

5. **Arming for defence:** He armed the Sikhs in an order to protect themselves as he found that this was a course of action from tyranny and oppression. He gave equal importance to Shakti and bhagti.

6. **Collective Leadership:** The concept of 'panj piara' and decision making by sangat and sangat as Khalsa, all these were the new systems for inculcating the spirit of collective leadership.

7. **Welfare of the Mankind:** He kept the welfare of the entire mankind (Sarbat ka bhala) as his chief motive. He created Khalsa for the future betterment of the people and had no self-motive. It is the service of the humanity which reigned supreme in his mind in the entire initiation ceremony.

8. **Purity:** Guru Gobind Singh defined the term 'Khalsa' as 'The Lord's Own' (Wahiguru Ji ka Khalsa). He explained, 'the Khalsa will be called pure only when he believes and worships the One and the Only Lord and nothing else.' The definition and the explanation encompasses the



version of Khalsa given in earlier definitions including the definition by Saint Kabir, as 'the Khalsa belongs to the Lord alone and none else; Khalsa is truly pure as he believes in and belongs to the True Lord'. This purity became the root of fearlessness, equality, justice and fraternity.

9. Discipline through a Common Code of Conduct and Common Identity: The first Sikhs who offered themselves for sacrifice to the Guru belonged to all the corners of India representing high and low, rich and poor, and almost all key castes i.e., so-called untouchables and the Brahmins. The Guru wedded all into one removing all disparities, distinctions and identities through Pahul and called them the Singhs and the Khalsa. He merged his own identity too into the Khalsa and called them as brothers. He wore the same dress as prescribed to the newly baptised Singhs. He shed his supremacy by bowing before the five and quaffing pahul at their hands. He created Khalsa symbols and methodologies to depict independent identity of the Khalsa:-

(i) Wahiguru as the Gurumantar

(ii) Common Slogan: '*Wahiguru ji ka Khalsa, Wahiguri ji ki Fateh*' (Hail the Khalsa who belongs to the Lord! Hail the Lord to whom belongs the victory!)

(iii) Standardises Method of Baptism: He laid down a new procedure for baptism. The beauty of the system was that it was not a clergy based system but the people based system. Any five baptised Sikhs could get together any where, prepare pahul as per the given procedure and impart it to the believers who may be of any caste, creed, sex, or identity. Their identity after pahul was the Khalsa and nothing else.

(iv) 5K's as Symbols: *Kesh, Kangha, Kara, Kachha* and *Kirpan* were declared as a must for all Sikhs.

(v) Name: Men were to use Singh and women Kaur as suffixes with Khalsa names. The baptised Sikhs were to be called Khalsa. Language: Gurmukhi was accepted as the language for the Sikhs.

(vi) Common Dress: Five K's be worn along with a kesri(pink) dress and double blue head-dress.

(vii) Common Code of Conduct and Discipline: He introduced common

code of conduct for the Sikhs to follow strictly and he introduced certain restrictions (kurahit).

10. Equality: The Guru included a common mode of worship and a common social organisation based on the equality of man. He demolished the barriers of caste, creed, sex, region and religion and brought all on the same platform through baptism, Sangat and Pangat; establishing brotherhood and common identity by even merging his own identity with them.

(i) Sangat: He emphasised the role of *Sangat* (congregation) in *Sikhism*. The congregation could get together at any *gurdwara* (Sikh religious place) or at any other suitably chosen place and recite True Lord's name (Wahiguru) without any barrier of caste, creed, colour, sex, region and religion. This not only ensured equality of all but encouraged mass participation. The decision making was to be unanimous. Anyone could raise his point of view without fear or restriction. Anyone's point could form the basis of decision. Thus anyone could influence the decision and all had equal opportunities.

(ii) Pangat: The Guru instituted imparting of '*khande ka pahul*' in a row. He also emphasised on a free community kitchen '*Guru ka langar*' where all sat and ate together in the same row (Pangat) regardless of caste, creed, status or sex in life. The Hindus and Muslims, the Brahmins and the Sudras were thus brought to a common level.

(iii) Common Brotherhood: The Guru called the newly anointed Singhs as 'Bhai' (brother). All the Khalsa was declared as one brotherhood. The Guru said, "I have mixed you all in the Steel pan. There should be no difference among you all."

11. Establishment of an ideal social & economic order: The Guru brought the Sikhs to the centre-stage from the background and inducted them to be their own masters and the undaunted decision makers in conformity with the specified disciplinary code. The inherent and essential unity of the manifest phenomena with Creator Lord also implicitly supports the spiritual unity, ethnic equality



and social equality of the entire mankind. All external differences, between man and man are only superficial caused by the difference of the respective places and climes they live in. Inherently they are all one - not only with the Creator but also among themselves. The idea of universal brotherhood of mankind, coming as it does from the universal fatherhood of God, leads further to the cultivation of values like mutual love and compassion, understanding the altruism, harmony and co-existence, religious pluralism and democracy, without which the entire theological and metaphysical structure is bound to collapse. Communal harmony and co-existence with common-brotherhood among all was the basis of the new social structure. The basic qualities ingrained in the social and economic order were unity and strength, participation of masses without barriers, equal access to opportunities, sharing of resources, social justice and ability to influence decisions. The psychological upliftment through motivation, collective leadership, removal of fear of death, insecurity, distinctions and disparities and inculcating in them the spirit of self-defence caused an electric effect. Their social acceptance at an equal standing and sudden feeling of political and economic strength made them feel empowered in real terms.

If we go back to the history, we find that this was not a result of an overnight reaction or of a single cause, but result of a long evolution process, which started with *Guru Nanak* (1469-1539), the first Guru of the Sikhs. Guru Nanak was a revolutionary, religious and social reformer according to whom the political and cultural domination of the people by the ruling and priestly classes was chiefly responsible for their degeneration. He found the state of political scene very disturbing and wrote "Kings are the lions and the muqaddams, dogs; they fall upon the people day and night. Their agents inflict wounds with claws (of power) and the dogs lick blood and relish the liver."<sup>14</sup> Greed and sin together, are the raja and mehta; falsehood is the *shiqdar*, lust is the *naib*, to give counsel; they all conspire together.<sup>15</sup> In this situation, Guru Nanak thought the emancipation of the people could only be brought about by a new consciousness which should instil into them

14. 'Rajai sinha, muqaddam Kuttai, jai jagain baithai suttai, Cha:kar nehda: pa:in ghao Ratt Kutto chat jao'. Var Mala:r, S.G.G.S. 1288

15. 'Lab pa:p doi raja mehta, ku:r hoa siqdar; Ka:m naib sadd puchhiyai bah(i) bah (i) kara bichar', Ra:g A;sa: S.G.G.S. 468-69

the unity and fatherhood of God and the equality and fraternity of man. He refused to recognise distinctions between Man and Man, between the sexes and the castes<sup>16</sup> created by old caste systems and other orthodox social convictions and proclaimed that all men and women were equal in the eyes of the Lord. He said, 'There is only One Lord of all living-beings'<sup>17</sup> and 'The light of the Lord is in everyone. Every human light is lighted by his light.'<sup>18</sup> He felt that the real cause of the misery of the people was their disunity born of diversity of belief. He sought therefore to bring them together both in thought and deed. He included a common mode of worship and a common social organisation based on the equality of man. He advocated the importance of task performed rather than the caste and said, "The caste or creed is the same as is evident from the work produced."<sup>19</sup>

He laid the foundation of the Sangat, or mixed congregations where the followers of the faith meet in the evenings and brothers-in-faith, sang the hymns of the *Guru* and derived inspiration for remoulding their lives. He also established a free community kitchen '*Guru ka Langar*',<sup>20</sup> where all sat and ate together in the same row (*Pangat*) regardless of distinctions of caste, creed, status or sex in life. The *Hindus* and *Muslims*, the *Brahmins* and the *Sudras* were thus brought by Guru Nanak to a common social level.

Unlike many other saints and reformers Guru Nanak did not confine himself exclusively to a life of prayer and devotion. He refused to sit idle in slumbering meditation while his people groaned under the heels of the oppressors. He awakened them to a new consciousness and upbraided the rulers of his day, saying, "Kings are butchers, cruelty their knife, Dharma or the sense of duty and responsibility has taken wings and vanished"<sup>21</sup> and sang openly branding the rulers, it was only fools and idiots who ruled with little regard to the good of the people. 'The

16. Janhu jot(i) na poochhh-h(u) ja:tee, a:gai ja:t(i) na he. S.G.G.S. 349

17. Sabhna Jian ka eko data.. Japu Ji S.G.G.S. 2.

18. Sabh meh jot jot hai soi. Tis dai cha:nan sabh meh cha:nan hoi. Ras Asa S.G.G.S. 414

19. Sai ja:t sa pa:t hai Karam Kamai: Rag Prabhati S.G.G.S. 1330.

20. 'jab ra:t pavai tan sabhai ikathe a:i bahin(i) dharamsala. Tab ik(u) parsad(u) ra:tee Kah(i), bhalke ikathe jai khavan.' Walait Wali janamsakhi: Ed. Kirpal Singh(1969): Janam Sakhi Prampara, Panjabi University, Patiala, 48.

21. Kal Ka:ti: raje Kasa;ee dharam panth kar udria; Ku:r ama:vas sach chandrama deesai nahin kai chadia; Var Majh: S.G.G.S. 145



Kings', according to him 'should be dispensers of justice and righteousness.'<sup>22</sup>

This was a message of hope to the people to shake their cowardice and dependence and to 'have faith in God, who could in an instant, demolish the old kingly edifices and raise the lowest of the lowly to the highest pedestal.'<sup>23</sup> He said, "The Sultan, Khan or Badshah will not remain. Chaudhary or Rajas do not have a permanent stay. The public, the property, the *muqaddam* or *Siqdar*, none can be seen staying permanently in this world."<sup>24</sup> He travelled around the world and delivered the message of equality, justice and fraternity. He preached that there was but One Formless, Fearless, Friendly Lord and He belongs not to the Hindus or Muslims alone but to the entire humanity. The worship of God is not the exclusive privilege of a priestly class nor does he belong to Kings and lords who offer pretty sums on religious activities. He is best worshiped in selfless service of humanity because he lives in everyone's heart.<sup>25</sup> He protested against idol-worship, blind superstition and empty rituals which had sapped religions and morality and parted the hearts of man from their Creator. He thus struck at the very routes of the oppressors the priestly class and the rulers and their debauch tools of oppression.

Guru Nanak did not advocate renunciation or asceticism. Towards the end of his life he settled down with his family and sons at Kartarpur (Pakistan). He was a prophet of the people whose service to them was to create great happiness living in the Will of the Lord rather than the Will of the Oppressors. He lived among them, shared their sorrows and sufferings, pangs and pleasures and taught them the way of honest and truthful living. "Truth is higher, but higher still is truthful living."<sup>26</sup> Said he. He wished his people to be servant of the God and his people. He was held in affection not only among his *Sikh* disciples but also among his Hindu and Muslim countrymen who honoured him as a holy saint and called him *Baba Nanak* and on his death both claimed

22 'Rajai chulee niav ki padia sach(u) dhian'

23. U:cha:te phun neech Karat hai, neech Karai sultan: Parbhati S.G.G.S. 1329

24. Sultan Kha:n ba;dshah nahin rehna:, Chaudhri, rajai nahin kisai muka:m; Rayyat, mehar, mukaddam, Sikdari nihchal koi na disai sansarai: Rag Gauri, S.G.G.S 227

25. 'Sabhni ghati sahu vasai, sah bin ghat na koi' S.G.G.S 1412

26. Sach-hu urai sabh ko oopar sach(u). S.G.G.S. 62

his body and created mausoleums in their own fashions in his memory with a common wall between them - a thing unique in the history of religion.

His institution of Sangat and Pangat brought before the people the vision of a classless democratic society where all could claim equal status. This made Guru Nanak a symbol of manly independence and self-reliance, which as history shows, helped create people whose like in indomitable courage and dogged tenacity in war and peace has yet to be seen.

Guru Angad (1539-1552) successor to Guru Nanak strengthened the unifying institutions of Sangat and Pangat set up by the first Guru. He initiated the use of Gurmukhi script for recording the hymns and writing the biography of Guru Nanak in Punjabi language. Guru Amar Das (1552-1574) who followed Guru Anand, stood for the emancipation of women and opposed the practice of pardah (the veiling of the women) and led a vigorous campaign against sati (burning alive of widows at the pyres of their dead husbands). Guru Ram Das (1574-1581), the fourth Guru, gave the Sikhs the rallying centre at Amritsar. *Guru Arjun Dev* (1581-1606) completed the work of Darbar sahib and established it as a religious and cultural centre for the Sikhs, making four doors for entry to all without any prejudice or bar for caste, creed, class or religion. Dedicated to The True Lord (the Temple of the Lord) and no particular deity, idol/image installed, it has no sectarian bias.

Guru Arjun Dev compiled the hymns of the Gurus, Saints and Sufi poets before him along with his own hymns and installed these in Harimandir. This *Granth* (the holy book) became the guiding source for the Sikhs who drew their inspiration from this Granth in the absence of the Guru. Guru Granth Sahib, the name this holy book got later on, contains hymns of Hindus and *Sikhs, Brahmins* and the *Shudras*, high and the low with equal reference. It may rightly be called the Bible of the people. The most remarkable thing about it is that it is written in spoken language of the people to whom the masters delivered their message of devotion to God and service to humanity. The central



temple at *Amritsar* and the holy *Guru Granth Sahib* gave the Sikhism the shape of a regular system.

The teachings of the Gurus, the abolition of the dividing distinction of caste and creed and the establishment of Sikh congregations throughout the country, with *Amritsar* as their Mecca and *Granth Sahib* as their Bible, made the Sikhs a living community devoted to the moral and social regeneration of the people. The spirits of service and self-sacrifice engendered by the teachings of the Gurus crystallised at the time of *Guru Arjun Dev* into distinct national traits.

The increasing popularity of *Guru Arjun Dev* among Hindus and Muslims aroused suspicion in the mind of Emperor *Jehangir* who mentioned in his autobiography the *Tuzk-I-Jehangiri* that, "A Hindu, *Arjun* by name lived in the garb of a peer and Shaikh and captivated the hearts of many simple minded Hindus, and foolish and stupid Muslims by his ways and means... They called him *Guru* and from all directions fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. From three or four generations they had kept this shop warm, for years the thought had been haunting me that I should either put an end to this false traffic or that he (*Guru Arjun*) should be brought into the fold of Islam."<sup>29</sup> He then referred to the rebellion of his son *Khusro* and said, "I fully knew his heresies. I ordered that he should be brought into my presence, having handed over his house, mansions and children to *Murtaza* (Governor of *Lahore*) and having confiscated his property, I shall order that he should be put to death with torture." The orders were carried out and the *Guru* was tortured to death in 1606 AD.

*Guru Arjun Dev* thus suffered martyrdom at the alter of his death. Watching the tyranny of the Mughal authority, his son *Guru Hargobind* (1606-1645), relegated the rosary to the treasury and accorded sanctions to the use of steel in defence of *Dharma* and for the protection of the oppressed. He himself wore two swords on the occasion of his succession at *Akal Takhat* at *Amritsar* as emblems of spiritual and temporal authority- *Peeri* and *Meeri*- the combination of *Degh* and

29. *Jehangir, Noor-u-Din (Emperor): Tuzk-I-Jehangiri, Naval Press(undated)*

*Tegh*- the kettle to supply food to the needy and the sword to smite the oppressor. This was the first step towards the transformation of Sikhism into a militant church. Guru Hargobind was imprisoned and left to die through slow poisoning at Gwalior Fort. However, the Guru with the help of his followers foiled the scheme of the courtiers and through the Jailer Hari Ram, not only saved his life from the nefarious designs of the courtiers but also saved 52 other rulers of smaller states who too were imprisoned with him in similar circumstances.

On his release from jail, the Guru raised an Army of his devotees for self-destruction as he felt that not only his own life but also the good work done by his elders would be destroyed by the oppressors if the scheming was not stopped.

Mohsin Fani,<sup>30</sup> a contemporary of Guru Hargobind writes in *Dabistan-I-Mazahib* that, “the Guru had seven hundred horses in his stables; and three hundred cavaliers and sixty artillery men were always in his service.”<sup>31</sup> This was the first corps of Sikh volunteers raised by the Guru at Amritsar. The Sikhs fought the battle against the Mughal forces of Emperor Shah Jehan in 1628 at Gumtala on the outskirts of Amritsar.

Guru Hargobind, not a soldier by design, but made so by the circumstances. From his inner-self he remained a saint; a Guru the sixth in direct spiritual inheritance from Guru Nanak. He had taken to martial ways with a view to creating among his people a will to resistance and preparing them to stand up to the tyranny and oppression of the ruling race. Guru Hargobind’s reply to a question by the Maratha saint, Shri Samrath Ramdas (the teacher of Shivaji Maratha) at Srinagar Garhwal in about 1634:

Fully armed and riding a horse, the Guru had just returned from a hunting excursion. Sri Samrath Ramdas enquired from Guru Hargobind, “I had heard that you occupied the seat of Guru Nanak who had renounced the world and became a saint. You are wearing arms and keeping an army and horses. You allow yourself to be addressed as

30. Mohsin Fani(1645 A.D.) *Dabistab-I-Mazahib*, nawal Kishore Press, Kanpur

31. *Ibid.*



the true King (sacha patshah). What sort of sadhu are you?" Guru Hargobind replied, "Internally a hermit and externally a prince. Arms mean protection to the poor and destruction to the tyrant. Baba Nanak had not renounced the world but had renounced 'Maya' (self ego)"<sup>32</sup> Guru Hargobind's words appealed Samrath Ramdas who spontaneously said, "This appeals to my mind"<sup>33</sup> Samrath Ramdas realised the truth in Guru Hargobind's words that the spiritual make up of Marathas and Sikhs could well into the spirits of the guru and the tyranny of intolerant Mughals could be resisted and halted through the path described by Guru Hargobind. The vision of Guru Hargobind and Samrath Ramdas was fulfilled in the eighteenth century.

Guru Hargobind was a great missionary as well, it was a result of his work and that of the orders of Udasin and masands and other organisations encouraged and strengthened by him, that the faith of Sikhism spread beyond the boundaries of India. To this Mohsin Fani bears witness saying that there were not many cities in the inhabited countries where some Sikhs were not found.

Guru Har Rai (1645-1661) succeeded Guru Hargobind who maintained a Sikh force and encouraged wrestling. When the fugitive-philosopher prince Dara Shikoh approached the *Guru*, he was duly accosted. This elicited the wrath of Aurangzeb who later wreaked his vengeance on Guru Teg Bahadur, the Ninth Guru (1664-1675) on the pretext of his espousing the cause of Kashmiri Hindus and proselytising the activities and of association with Sufi saints such as Hafiz Adam and others. The Emperor ordered that the Guru be put to death and his body to be cut into four pieces and hung at the four gates of the fort of Delhi. Guru Teg Bahadur was however a dauntless crusader of Name of the lord and freely sang, "Neither create fear nor accept fear."<sup>34</sup> He laid his life espousing the cause of the oppressed and downtrodden.

Guru Gobind Singh (1675-1708) was a great saint soldier. He felt that

32. Guru Hargobind Kahiya, "batan faqiri, Zahar ameer; shashtar greeb ki rakhia, jarwane ki bhakhia. Baba Nanak sansar nahin tyaga tha, maya tyagi thee. (Guru Kian Sakhian)

33. yeh hamare man bhavtee hai (Guru Kian Sakhian)

34. Bhai kahu ko det(i) nah(i) bhai manat a:n 16. Mahla 9, S.G.G.S. 1427

to uphold righteousness and to destroy evil, both spiritual and physical, the will of the people had to be strengthened. The people started gathering at Anandpur in large numbers from all over India as they realised that only the Gurus could provide both the inner and outer strength to stand against the yoke of religious and political tyranny. The teachings of Guru Gobind Singh's predecessors and the unique examples of martyrdom by Guru Hargobind had elevated the spirits of believers and had set a course for him. A lot was done but there was still more to be done as the problem had reached enormous proportions.

The rallying masses required to be meshed into a fine web with the strength to stand united but the old social shackles of caste system in Hindu society which had not been fully broken, stood in the process and hindered the growth of homogeneous well knit class of people inspired by a common national idea. In fact, the idea of nationalism had not yet been born in India. The ancient idea of division of labour had created among people the well-marked group and classes which with the passage of time, had developed into rigid castes with deep-rooted prejudices. The Sikh institution of *Sangat* and *Pangat* had gone a long way towards demolishing caste. But the difference in the social level of the low caste Sudras and the high born *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* was so great that they could not join together in any common cause. These differences and prejudices could only be abolished by a bold reformist, ready to fight at once the religious fraternities and the political rulers of the land.

The first thing to do was to change the psychology of the people. The Guru achieved this by introducing a new form of baptism, and enjoining upon the baptised Sikhs to be called *Khalsa*, the master's own giving them an identity of their own; to wear a common dress, in future, with the same five symbols. Bravery as much as truth and purity, was to be their religion. *Guru Gobind Singh* merged his self identity too in *Khalsa*. He confirmed this in Sarb Loh Granth. '*Khalsa* is my special form... I live in *Khalsa*. ..., *Khalsa* is my entire thinking process. *Khalsa* represents my views and dispositions. *Khalsa* is my pleasure and pain. *Khalsa* is my friend and nearest one ....I belong to *Khalsa* and *Khalsa* belongs



to me. We are mixed with each other as a drop mixes in a sea.’<sup>35</sup>

The *Khalsa* was inspired by a sense of divine mission, and no fear of an earthly power was to deflect them from their duty. A tremendous change was thus brought about in the character of the people. The lowest of the low in the society including the sweepers, the barbers and the confectioners were transformed, as if by miracle, into doughty warriors who, along with the baptised Jats and Khatri, fought under the Guru’s command as many as fourteen battles, in twelve of which they were distinctly successful against the imperialist forces. When a Brahmin wanted to show off his superiority over the Sikhs present in *Guru Darbar*, Guru Gobind Singh declared the superiority of the *Khalsa* saying, “I won battles because of their blessings (*Khalsa*), it is due to their blessings that I donate so much. With their blessings all the evil and demons run away; with their blessings the temples are so venerated. With their blessings I have got this knowledge; with their blessings all the enemy was killed. I am established due to their blessings otherwise there are millions of poor people like me.”<sup>36</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh thus developed a strong identity of *Khalsa* in relation to the race, class, country, sex, or vocation and he distinguished this identity from narrow or pseudo identities. In other words he emancipated the people from narrow identities and empowered them to be capable of deciding their own destiny. He created *Khalsa ‘sabat mardana’*<sup>37</sup> which had all the values of saint and a soldier. It was to be pure in heart and strong in body and mind. The *Guru* explained the word *Khalsa* in his own words in *Sarab Loh Granth*:- ‘Who knows the internal essence, he is the *Khalsa*. He is in the Lord and the Lord is in him: there is no difference between them.’<sup>38</sup> This was in the same sense as used by Saint *Kabir*.

The aim of Guru Gobind Singh was to build a nation of the Purified Ones who would be free from fear and selfishness. At the time of consecration of the Five Beloved Ones and the *Khalsa* on the *Waisakhi*

35. Dasam Granth (Sarab Loh Granth) 667

36. Ibid.

37. Va:r Bhai Gurda Second

38. Sarab Loh Granth 667

of 1699 AD the Guru explained the term *Khalsa* clearly:-

‘The one who recites the name of the Eternal Light day and night; whose mind does not waiver from the Lord: Who has total love and devotion to Him; and does not worship grave, tomb and mathh even by mistake. He does not believe in pilgrimage, donation, pittance, meditation and self-control and does not believe in anything other than The Lord. Whose heart is enlightened by the True Eternal Light, that Khalsa must be considered pure.’<sup>39</sup> *Bhai Chaupa Singh* clarifies the entire approach of the Guru in a few words: ‘Worship of the Lord, Parchment (Order) of the World and Sight of the *Khalsa*.’<sup>40</sup>

He had gone beyond the self and aimed at the service of the entire society without any barriers of caste or creed, religion or faith, state or language, sex or the multitudes who had borne the brunt of the tyranny of times. He got the vibrating support of teeming millions and groups from all over India.

But the rulers of the time, saw this development as a threat into their own power. At their own initiative and under the orders of Emperor Aurungzeb, the Hill Rajas and Governors of Lahore and Sirhind launched a regular war against them. In spite of the heavy odds, the Guru continued to struggle. After his twelfth struggle he had to leave his ancestral home at Anandpur. His four sons and mother Gujri along with thousands of Sikhs had to lay their lives defending their faith with strong will and exemplary courage.

This did not alter his faith in Khalsa, but was confirmed all the more, in the battle of Chamkaur and later at Naraina Gaon in Rajasthan and is described here to confirm this. ‘After getting down from the horse, the Guru saluted Dadu Ram Bairagi’s tomb to test the Sikhs. Bhai Daya Singh saw this and after discussing with the Khalsa said to the Guru, “O Lord! Even though you are our Gurudev, yet you deserve punishment. Khalsa wants to punish you.” “The Guru?” Bhai Sahib said, “O, the saviour of the poor! You yourself said that we should not worship grave, tomb or mathh even by mistake. No you have done

39. 33 Sawayae: Dasam Granth. 712

40. Rahitnama Bhai Chaupa Singh: 'Pooja Akal ki, Parcha Shabad Ka, Deedar Khalse Ka'



a great mistake by saluting the tomb with your arrow. That is why the Khalsa declares you punishable.” The Guru listened to this and said, “Brother Daya Singh! We have seen that Khalsa has become complete Khalsa. There is no deficiency left. You should punish me. I will not disobey.” Thereafter the five beloved ones including Bhai Daya Singh held a meeting and a fine of rupees, one hundred and twenty five was levied on the Guru.’

Guru’s faith in Khalsa was total thereafter. A day before he left for heavenly abode, the Guru passed on the Guruship to Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Khalsa together. ‘The Guru took five paise and a coconut and while sitting on the cot said to Bhai Daya Singh, “Please place these in front of *Sri Granth Ji*.” He further said, “On the order of the Lord the Sikh religion was created and conducted. Every Sikh is hereby ordered that he must accept Granth as *Guru*. He also accepted the Khalsa as Guru in whose form the Guru’s form will exist. Whosoever Sikh wants me, must search me in these two.”<sup>42</sup> Thus he declared Khalsa as his successor along with *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji*. Poet Sainapat mentioned in *Sri Guru Sobha*, ‘One day after the incidence (of stabbing of Sri Guru Gobind Singh by two Pathans at Nanded), the Singhs gathered and enquired, “In what form will you be hereafter?”’ The Guru replied that ‘Khalsa will be his form. My every work will be completed by the Khalsa. I have passed on my form on to the Khalsa’.<sup>43</sup>

Khalsa was thus created from the people and for the people and consisted of the community at large having faith in the principles of Sikhism. An assembled congregation, deliberating the mystic presence of the Guru, represented by the holy book Sri Guru Granth Sahib would be Khalsa. Granth-Panth became the supreme religious and secular authority of the Sikhs in all matters and at all times. Thus democratic secularism of religion, greatly influenced the life and conduct of the Sikh people who like their Spiritual Masters became the pioneers of freedom movements establishing social republics, in the form of Sikh Missals and Panchayats in Northern India.

42. Ibid. 190

43. Sainpat: *Sri Gur Sobha*, 128 Also see *Rehitnama Bhai Prahlaad Singh*

The concepts of '*Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki fateh, Baba-bani, Naam di chadhdi kala, Bhagti-Shakti, Granth-Panth, Khalsa ji ke bol bale, Sarbat Khalsa, sarbat da bhala, sarab-sukh, sarbat de karaj raas, Degh-Tegh Fateh, Sri Sahib-Bhagauti, Panj Kakar, Panj Piare* and *Sangat-Pangat* not only became the guiding principles of the Khalsa but also most of them found place in the Sikh Prayer (*Ardaas*) and their day-to-day life.



# CREATION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE KHALSA OF 1699

Dr. Kuldip Singh

Creation of the Khalsa in 1699 was the culmination of the Divine Programme commenced by Guru Nanak at the behest of *Akal Purukh*: *Akal Purukh* (The Primal Lord) had ordained Nanak to commence not only a new revealed religion but also to create a new Nation. The new Nation had taken shape by a planned programme followed by Guru Nanak and his nine successor Gurus' carrying the divine light given to Guru Nanak by the Primal Lord. Guru Gobind Singh ji proclaimed in a unique way that the Khalsa of the wonderful Lord had finally emerged to load the world.

From the obvious nature of the task, Guru Nanak and the succeeding Gurus kept the whole programme in the imagination of the people. The programme could not be proclaimed or revealed and Guru Nanak did not even give any hint about the task that he had commenced. It is for this reason that the historians are perplexed about the aim of Guru Nanak. Dr Hari Ram Gupta discusses in detail: "Did Guru Nanak found a new religion?"<sup>1</sup> and concludes "Guru Nanak's aim appears to be to lay the foundation of a reform movement which should serve as a bridgehead between Hinduism and Islam." It is interesting that earlier<sup>2</sup> in the same book Dr. H.R. Gupta had stated "Guru Nanak aimed at uplifting the individual as well as building a nation". To understand the Khalsa and the task assigned to it by *Waheguru* (The Primal Lord) we have to analyse its inception from the beginning.

Guru Nanak was born with the mandate of revealing a new religious thought and to build up a new nation on the basis of truth. The Primal Lord wanted Nanak to project a totally scientific religion and build up a new Nation shorn of all hypocrisy and mythology. Nanak revealed his mission when he was taken to the teacher for imparting teaching in the crude local "*Landa or Mahajmi*" alphabet with which the Khatri maintained accounts. When the teacher wanted the seven year old Nanak to learn the letter "S" or "Sassa", Nanak asked as to what did that letter mean. The teacher said that it meant the letter "S" or "*Sassa*" nothing more. Guru Nanak stated that it stood for the Sole

Creator of the universe who is the one Lord of all of us "*Sasa Soye Srishat Jin Saaji, Sabhna Sahib Ek Bhaiyaa*"<sup>3</sup> The Bani in Raag Aasa over which Guru Arjun, the compiler of Guru Granth Sahib gave the heading *Patti Likhi* or the written alphabet contains a line or couplet for each of the 35 letters of the *Gurmukhi* alphabet. Essence of this first bani hints at the Preamble of Gurbani. "The Primal Lord is the giver. He alone is true, sing the praise of him whose limit cannot be found. If any one knows that the one Lord is present in all the beings then he does not talk egoistically".

Nanak was always engrossed in his thoughts and kept aloof from worldly pursuits. His parents thought that he was suffering from some ailment and called a *vaid*, the local physician. When the *vaid* held his arm to feel his pulse, Nanak uttered: "The *vaid* is called to diagnose my illness and he holds my arm; the ignorant *vaid* does not know that the trouble is in my mind. *Vaid*, if you are a true *vaid*, then diagnose my illness first".<sup>4</sup>

Nanak was given several jobs to occupy his mind. He was married and had two sons. His last job was as storekeeper for the Nawab at Sultanpur. One morning at the age of 30 in 1499, he entered the local rivulet for a bath and disappeared for 3 days. It appears he went to a nearby cave and fell into a long trance. During this he received enlightenment and a divine call showing his mission. The illumined Nanak appeared before the public announcing. "There is no Hindu, no Musalman". By this he conveyed that all are equal human beings stressing the universal brotherhood of man. It also referred that both Hindus and Muslims were paying lip service to religion. It may also be inferred that a new revolution was required to bridge the gap between man and man and this was Nanak's way to announce the mandate enshrined in the line "*Agya Bhaee akal ki Tabhai Chalaiyo Panthi*" "(Nanak commenced a new Panth at the bidding of the Timeless Lord.)" He was convinced that his duty was not to reform the prevalent religious practices only which was an impossible task but to create a new panth which would give a lead to all the existing religious creeds and act as a bridgehead to unite them. He immediately commenced his work by taking along with him Mardana, a low caste Muslim *Rebec* playing friend. His modus operandi of preaching was by singing *Gurbani*. Guru Nanak contemplated in Punjabi and the bani (sacred Hymns) were thus revealed to him in this language. Guruji,



wrote and recorded the bani in the Gurmukhi script, a script evolved by him by modifying and adding to the crude letters of Landa or Mahajni script and completing the same by adding maatras to denote vowel sounds. The bani was written in a concise grammatical order where the indicator *maatras* changed the meaning of the word. Punjabis had been speaking Punjabi for over 1000 years but this was the first time when Guru Nanak evolved a complete script for the language. Indeed Guru Granth Sahib is the first text ever written in the Gurmukhi script and Punjabi language. At the advent of Nanak, Muslims had been ruling Punjab for nearly 500 years and half the population had embraced Islam. The official or court language was Persian written in Arabic script. Maulvis in the mosques taught not only Arabic to Muslim children but also instructed the Muslims in observation of Muslim customs. The Brahmins only could read and explain the Hindu religious texts written in Sanskrit and would guide the correct observation of religious functions and rituals to Hindus on specific family or festival days. Indeed observation of specific rituals was regarded as religion by both Muslims and Hindus. There was very little righteousness, justice, ethics or morality in everyday life.

Guru Nanak observed "Kings are butchers and righteousness has taken wings and flown away. In the dark night of falsehood the moon of truth is not visible."<sup>5</sup>

Giving his sermons through singing of *Bani* being revealed to him, Guru Nanak travelled all over India and neighbouring countries for 28 years. He established assemblies of Sikhs or *sangats* at various places. Here the congregation recited *Gurbani* and sang the hymns of the Guru in praise and an adoration of *Akal Purukh* (The Timeless Being) which imperceptibly led the receptive mind of the Sikh to a life of virtue and service. The *sangat* or assembly of Sikhs attuned to the Lord was considered to be the embodiment of Guru and aimed at spiritual advancement of Sikhs. This was also Guru Nanak's way of causing a break between the Sikhs and the Brahmins on the one hand and also kept them away from allurements by the Muslim preachers specially *sufis*. The *sufi* saints were busy alluring the local population for conversion into the faith of the rulers. The aim of Guru Nanak was to change the docile and timid Hindus by giving spiritual strength to the Sikhs or seekers of truth. By repeating *Mul Mantra* again and again as a constant reminder of the attributes of the *Akal Purukh* as the one

and only one, all pervading and ever true, Creator of all who was fearless and without enmity, the Sikhs themselves acquired the same qualities of fearlessness and universal brotherhood. This was Guru Nanak's' unique way of commencing the evolution of a nation of saint soldiers or *sant sipahis*. In this manner Guru Nanak wanted to infuse a spirit of faith in the *Akal Purukh* and faith in themselves rather than having faith in any external object like idols of mythological deities and objects of nature like sun, plants, trees, animals, and recitation of unintelligible mantras recited by Brahmins, pilgrimages to holy places, bathing in holy rivers during auspicious times decided by Pandits. Guru Nanak firmly believed and sang, *Wadaiyee Vadda Paaiya*: "Singing his praises you reach the Lord."<sup>6</sup> Guru Nanak composed, and sang 974 *shabads* or compositions in various raags (poetical measures) and besides praising the One Primal Lord taught every possible truth to the Sikhs and every one who was interested to listen to him. He preached a universal religion of the world stressing the Equality of man and man. Islam also a revealed religion in which Prophet Mohammed had recorded praises of one Allah the Creator, preached equality, among all the followers of Mohammed. Guru Nanak preached that all human beings were equally loved by the Creator in whatever form they worshipped him or even if they were non-believers. Hence everybody listened to Nanak and considered him as his own. Salient features of his teachings which moulded the minds of the Sikhs that while remaining householders they could overcome the universal ills of lust, wrath, covetousness, attachment and pride or ego and imbibe virtues of truth and ethical behaviour:-

### 1. Relationship of Guru Nanak and Akal Purkh

#### *The Primal Lord.*

(a) "*Hau Dhahi vekar karrey Laaya ...*"<sup>7</sup>

"Me the bard out of work, the Lord appointed to His service. Be it night or day He gives His call and calls me to His court and there I praise

Him and receive the Robe and the true Nectar Name (Amrit) becomes my everlasting food. They who under the Gurus' instruction eat this food to satiety obtain peace. The bard thus spreads the Lord's glory by singing. Nanak, by praising the True one I have obtained the Perfect Lord."

(b) "*Aprampar Paarbraham pamesur Nanak Gur Milia Soi Jio*"<sup>8</sup>



“The Infinite, Transcendent Lord, the supreme God is he whom Nanak obtained as his Guru”

(c) “*Gur meh aap rakhiya kartara*”<sup>9</sup>

“Within the Guru, the Creator has placed his own self”

(d) “*Taan Meh Kahiya Kehan Jaan Tujhai Kahaiya*”<sup>10</sup>

“I am saying what You command me to say.”

(e) “*Gur meh aap somoaye Sabad vartaya*”<sup>11</sup>

“In the Guru (Nanak) He installed His own Spirit and thus He speaks himself.”

(f) “*Jaisi meh aavai khasamki bani...*”<sup>12</sup>

“O Lalo as comes the Divine Word from the Lord to me so do I narrate it”

## 2. Akal Purukh - The Primal Lord

(a) Mool Mantra or the Preamble

*Ik Onkar Satnam Karta Purukh Nirbhau Nirvair Akal Moorat  
Aujuni Saibhang gurparsad.*<sup>13</sup>

There is one lord presiding all over. True is his Name, Creative is his personality. Without Fear and without Enmity. His form is Immortal, Never Born, Self illumined. Realised by Gurus' Grace.

(b) *Aapinai Aap saajio aapinai Racheo Naun ...*<sup>14</sup>

The Lord Himself created His own self and assumed himself the Name. Secondly He made the creation and seated within it He beholds it with delight.

## 3. On Caste

(a) “*Neechan andar Neech Jaat ....*”<sup>15</sup>

Nanak seeks the company of those who are of low caste among the lowly, nay rather the lowest of the low. He has no desire to rival the lofty. Where the poor are looked after, there does rain the look of Your Grace.

(b) “*Jaanau Jot Na Poochho Jaati.....*”<sup>16</sup>

“Recognise Lord's light within all and inquire not the caste as there is not caste in the next world.

## 4. Pilgrimage

(a) “*Tirath Naata Kia Karey...*”<sup>17</sup>

“What does it avail man to bathe at a place of pilgrimage when the

filth of self conceit is within the mind.

(b) "*Tirath Naawan Jaon Tirath Naam Hai, Tirath...*"<sup>18</sup>

"Should I go to bathe at the place of pilgrimage. God's Name is the real place of pilgrimage. My pilgrim centres are contemplation of the Name and the realisation of inner divine knowledge".

(c) "*Gur Saagar Amritsar, Jo Ichhai, so Phal Paaye*"<sup>19</sup>

"In the world ocean, the guru (meaning gurbani) is the pool of Nectar (Amritsar) whosoever "bathes" in it will get his desire fulfilled.

## 5. Hypocrisy and demoralisation of Hindu society:

In the daily morning Kirtan (singing) of Asa Di Var Guru Nanak projected these two ills of the society.

(a) "*Parh Pustak Sandhaya Badang ...*"<sup>20</sup>

"You read books, recite evening (vesper) prayers, argue, worship stones and sit in trance like a crane; with your mouth you utter falsehood and recite the three line *mantra* (Gyatri) three times a day. You have a rosary around your neck, sacred mark on your forehead, a towel on your head and you have two *dhotis* (lion cloths). If you know the nature of the Lord then you will realise, that all these beliefs and rites are in vain. Nanak says that keeping firm faith meditate on the Lord."

(b) "*Daya Kapah Santokh Soot ....*"<sup>21</sup>

"Make compassion the cotton, contentment the thread, countenance the knot and truth the twist. This is the sacred thread of the soul, Blessed are the mortals, Nanak, who wear such a thread.

Man commits lakhs of thefts, adulteries, falsehoods, deceptions and villainies night and day. The thread is spun and twisted by the Brahmin, a goat is killed cooked and feasted upon and then everyone says "put on the thread" when it wears off, it is thrown away and another is worn. By believing in the Name honour is granted. Lord's praise is the true sacred thread which is worn in Lords' court and it never breaks.

(c) "*Antar Pooja Pareh Kateban Sanjam Turkan Bhai*"<sup>22</sup>

"Inside your homes you worship idols, outside you read Muslim books and adopt the Muhammadan way of life. Lay aside this hypocrisy."

(d) "*Neel vastar Paher hovey Parvan...*"<sup>23</sup>

"Wearing blue clothes, he becomes acceptable in the eyes of the



Muslims. Earning bread from the Muslims he worships *puraans*. He eats the Goat killed after uttering foreign words (*Kalma*) in the house of Muslims but allows none to enter his cooking enclosure. Plastering the ground he demarcates the area and the false one sits on it. Touch not, touch not lest our food gets defiled. With polluted body they commit evil deeds. Says Nanak meditate on the True Lord. If you are pure then alone you would obtain the True One."

## 6. Address to the Muslims

(a) "*Mehar Maseet Sidak Mussalah....*"<sup>24</sup>

"Make mercy your mosque, faith your prayer mat; what is just and lawful, your Quran, modesty your circumcision and civility your *Ramzan* fast to be real Muslim."

(b) "*Panj Niwanjaan Wakhat Panj....*"<sup>25</sup>

"There are five prayers (*Nimaz.*), five times for prayers and the five have five names. The first is truthfulness, second, the honest earning and third charity in God's name, the fourth is pure intent and mind and the fifth is Lord's admiration and praise. Your creed of Good deeds be your *Kalma* and only then you call yourself a Muslim."

## 7. Discussion With Miracle Men Sidh Gosht<sup>26</sup>

Guru Nanak's answers to important points raised by Sidhas : What is the Good of wandering about? It is through the True Name that man is rendered pure. The Lord is within all the hearts. In Him is my seat and abode. Walking in the True Gurus' (God's) will is my sect. I will go where He takes me. My way is to contemplate the Lord and maintain such comprehension. Knowing and recognising by Lord's grace, I have merged in Him. As a lotus flower remains in water and a duck swimming against the current of the stream remains dry, so with fixed mind on the word, the dreadful ocean of the world is crossed. Living without desire in the midst of desires, who realises and shows to others the Inaccessible and Incomprehensible Lord, of Him Nanak is a slave. See the Lord fully pervading everywhere and this should be your patched coat. Nanak : The Lord is my Guru whose meditation I, his disciple greatly love. Explaining the Ineffable Lord, Nanak remains detached. Uttering God's Name, the mind moon is illumined. He who knows the

mystery of God pervading in all the hearts is himself the manifestation of the Primal Immaculate Lord.

## 8 Creation

(a) "*Keeta Pasao Eko Kavao*"<sup>27</sup>

"With one word you created the expanding universe."

(b) "*Kavan su vela vakhat kavan....*"<sup>28</sup>

"What was the time, what moment, what lunar day, what week, day, season and month that the universe came into being. The Pundits do not find the time nor the *Qazis* who scribe the Quran, nor the Yogi. The Creator who created the universe He Himself knows about it."

(c) "*Patalan Paatal....*"<sup>29</sup>

"There are nether worlds below nether worlds above and lacs of skies over skies. *Ved* (The Hindu scriptures) say that people have grown weary finding the limits of creation. The Semitic scriptures say that there are eighteen thousand worlds but the Lords' creation is limitless.

(d) "*Arbad Narbad Dundukara....*"<sup>30</sup>

"For countless ages there was utter darkness. There was neither day, night, moon or sun but the Lord sat in profound trance... When He willed He created the Universe and without support created the firmament .. He founded the continents, solar systems and from the absolute self became manifest. No one knows His limits."

9. Haumain or Ego and INDIVIDUALISM is at the root of all human ills and the remedy is to link oneself to the True Name.

"*Labh Lobh Bura Ahankar....*"<sup>31</sup>

"Evil are avarice, covertness and egotism. Practicing slander and back biting, the self willed goes blind and foolish. He who with faith reaps the profit of the Name gathers true honour and is the true king." Besides the recitation and singing of *Gurbani* by the Sangats or holy assemblies the other important activity at the Dharamsals as the Gurdwaras were then called, was Pangat or sitting together in rows, shoulder to shoulder and eating together the food prepared in the community kitchen *Langar*, by voluntary contribution of cash, kind and service. This was a unique way of ending the *varun ashram* or the



caste system from the Sikhs.

## 10. Quality of Sikhs Envisaged by Guru Nanak

(a) “*Je Jeevai Patt Lathi Jaye*”<sup>32</sup>

“If one loses honour in life, Impure (*Haraam*) is all that one eats”

(b) “*Jau Tau Prem Khelan Ka Chao....*”<sup>33</sup>

“If you want to play the game of love, come to me with your head on the palm. On this path, the first step should be taken with the belief that you will not hesitate to offer your head when needed”.

## 11. Bhagat Bani or Compositions of Other Saints in Guru Granth Sahib

Guru Nanak recorded the Bani of other saints or Bhagats whom he either met during his extensive travels or learnt it from their disciples, the Bhagats having predeceased Nanak. The bani of only those Bhagats was included who believed in one Lord, were against caste system, believed in equality of mankind and denied the possibility of Akal Purukh, the ever existing Lord taking birth as incarnation in the human form. Their bani was also recorded not only in Gurmukhi script but also in the language of Guru Granth and stored along with his own revealed bani e.g.

*Sorath Bani Bhagat Kabir Ji ki:*

“*Butt Pooj Pooj Hindu mooy....*”<sup>34</sup>

“The Hindus kill themselves worshipping idols, the Muslims die making prostrations. The former are burned and the latter buried, but neither of them know any thing about you O’ Lord.”

“There were now Sikh centres all over India, Ceylon, Tibet and middle East. No founder of any religion had built such a vast organisation breaking all, provincial, National, International and cultural barriers during his life time.”<sup>35</sup> Guru Nanak was clear that the task which had been assigned to him by *Akal Purakh* could not be finished in one life time. The Sikhs were to have a permanent break with their past rituals and religious practices. His total philosophy had been written, but recitation and singing of Gurbani was not enough. The successor Gurus were required to explain by personal example the discipline of Sikh religion according to *Gurbani*. His choosing a correct successor to whom he passed on the mantle of Guruship is recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib....

“*Nanak Raj Chalaiya....*”<sup>36</sup>

“Nanak established the Kingdom of God and laid a very strong foundation of the fortress of truth. He placed the Lords’ canopy over Lehna’s (Guru Angad’s) head.... With the power of the sword of Gods’ wisdom completely changed his (Angad's) life. Guru Nanak, while alive bowed down on the feet of his disciple. Lo! he appointed him as the Guru, while he was himself alive. With Guru Nanak’s blessings Lehna’s fame spread far and wide. For the light was the same, only the body changed. Over his throne now waved Gods’ canopy and he sat there in doing what was ordained by his own Guru (Nanak).”

Sarup Das, the author of *Mehma Parkash*<sup>37</sup> writes an account of Guru Nanak passing on the guruship to Guru Angad. After installing him as the guru he asked his sons and sangat to pay obeisance to Guru Angad. He gave him his bag containing all his writings and asked him to immediately proceed to *Khadur* and occupy *Singhasan* (Throne) kept by him with Mai Bhirai and promised to visit him. When Guru Nanak visited him he found him meditating on the floor. When guru Angad opened his eyes, Guru Nanak remonstrated as to why he was giving trouble to his body when he had asked him to sit composed on the throne. He reminded Guru Angad about his assignment to organise the *Panth*. Guru Nanak urged him to begin organisation of the *Panth* right away. Guru Angad immediately began by teaching the Gurmukhi alphabet. Sikhs were expected not only to memorize *Gurbani* but also write it. “He had copies made of Guru Nanak’s Hymns and supplied one to each centre.... This step had far reaching results. It gave the Sikhs a written language distinct from the written language of the Hindus and the Musalmans and thus fostered a sense of their being a separate people.”<sup>38</sup> *Gurmukhi* knowing and *gurbani* writing individuals sought entry into the Sikh fold by partaking “*Charnamrit*” from the Guru. *Charnamrit* was the baptismal water prepared by dipping the Guru’s cleaned and washed big toe of the right foot in clean water kept in a clean vessel. Booklets or *Gutkas* as we the Sikhs call them containing written *bani* were the centre of reverence in the dharamsals. During the time of the 3rd Nanak, Guru Amar Das these *Gutkas* or the nucleus of the Granth were enlarged by addition of *bani* of Guru Amar Das.<sup>39</sup> It was adoption of the Gurmukhi characters which reminded those who employed them of their duty towards their Guru and constantly kept alive in their minds the consciousness that they were something distinct from the common mass of Hindus.”<sup>40</sup> As a



corollary Sikhs became independent of Brahmins and gave up all rituals based on Puranic mythology.

Guru Angad also bypassed his sons and gave Amardas, the mantle of Guruship, passing on the message of Guru Nanak that he had to further organise the *Panth*<sup>41</sup> Guru Amar Das took several steps to project the distinctness of Sikhs. He moved to Goindwal and got a *Bauli* constructed, a large deep well where water could be reached by descending 84 steps and this became the first pilgrim centre of the Sikhs. He appointed 22 sangtias to head 22 *Manjis* located in different parts of the country so that the Sikhs could gather there daily and specially on full moon day and new moon or amavas day and get instructions from the local Sikh leaders. All of them would visit the Guru on *Maghi* in January, *Vaisakhy* in April and Diwali in November. Eating in the *Langar* was made compulsory and Emperor Akbar had to take food in *Langar* before meeting Guru ji. Akbar was impressed with the institution of *langar* where food was served to one and all and offered a jagir for the same. Guru ji declined the offer saying that *Langar* was run only by contributions from Sikhs. Akbar then presented Guruji's daughter, Bhani, a marriage gift of 12 villages,<sup>42</sup> Guru Amardas asked Jetha, his son-in-law to proceed to the land given by Akbar and start building a new town in big *sarovar*(pool).

After the demise of Guru Angad, Baba Sri Chand, the elder son of Guru Nanak and founder of the ascetic sect of *Udasis* became active and tried his best to attract the Sikhs into his fold. Guru Amar Das preached categorically that those who believe in *Udasis* had no place among the Sikhs of Guru Nanak. Running away from life like *Udasis* was against the creed of Sikhs.

Guru Amar Das composed his *Bani "Anand"* or song of Bliss and along with other hymns of Gurbani, this was sung at times of social functions of birth, marriages and deaths and at conclusion of daily morning and evening *Kirtan*. Thus under Guru Amardas the difference between a Hindu and a Sikh became pronounced and the Sikhs drifted away from Orthodox Hindu Society.<sup>43</sup> Not only *Sati* was prohibited, Guru amar Das also abolished *Purdah* (Veil) which was practiced by the Hindu and Muslim women. The increasing popularity of Sikhism aroused the wrath and hostility of Brahmin and Khatri high caste Hindus who considered that the Hindus were going away from their ancient faith. They took a delegation to Akbar and made a strong com-

plaint against Guru Amar Das. M.A. Macauliffe discusses in detail the episode at the end of which Akbar dismissed the charge.<sup>44</sup> Bypassing his sons Guru Amar Das passed on the guruship to his son-in-law Jetha who came to be known as Ram Das.

Guru Ram Das, the founder of Amritsar impressed upon the Sikhs to offer prayers at the commencement of any work : “*Keeta Loriye Come Suher peh Aakhiye...*”<sup>45</sup> “What ever work you desire to commence make a prayer to Akal Purukh. He shall accomplish your task. The true Guru bears testimony to it.” In the extensive additions to Gurbani Guru Ram Das wrote a hymn on the marriage ceremony : “*Her Pehlari Lanv parviti...*”<sup>46</sup>

“By the first marriage ceremonial round the Lord has impressed the duties of active wordly life. You utter the hymns of the Guru instead of Vedas of Brahma to hold fast to righteousness dispelling your sins...”

Guru Ram Das considered his youngest son Arjun as the fittest person to hold the mantle of Guru Nanak. This event is recorded by Harbans Bhatt in Guru Granth Sahib.... “*Chhatar Singhasan Prithmi Guru Arjan kau Dey aayo*”<sup>47</sup> “Guru Ram Das has departed after handing over the Canopy and Throne of the World to Guru Arjun.”

“This succession of Guru Arjun Dev changed the very character of Guruship and materially contributed to the growth of Sikh power for hence forward the Guru was looked upon by his disciples not only in the light of a spiritual guide, but also as a worldly Lord and a ruling Sovereign.<sup>48</sup> The Sikhs started addressing Guru Arjun as *Sachcha Patshah* (True King). Guru Arjun completed the digging of pools of Santokhsar and Amritsar and in the centre of Amritsar he constructed the central Sikh shrine of Harimandar Sahib having a door in each of its four walls. The Harimandar Sahib was open to people of all religions and castes coming from any direction. The *Masand* system, started by Guru Amar Das was extended and Guru Arjun made it obligatory for the Sikhs to contribute *Dasvandh* or one tenth part of their income to the treasury of the gurus through these *Masands*. The most important work of Guru Arjun Dev was compilation of Adi Granth which included his own bani besides that of the previous four Gurus, fifteen bhagats and bards, Sundar, Satta and Balwand, eleven Bhatts (Chroniclers) arranged according to various musical measures or *Ragas*. When completed this Pothi Sahib was installed in Harimandar



Sahib in 1604. "These multifarious activities of Guru Arjun Dev and his style of living greatly increased the number of Sikhs"<sup>49</sup> Dr Gupta quotes extensively from Mohsin Fani a contemporary of Guru Arjun and Guru Hargobind<sup>50</sup> "In the time of Guru Arjun Mal, their (Sikhs) number became very large ... He erected lofty buildings at Amritsar, wore rich clothes and kept fine horses and elephants and maintained body guards. In consequence... the Sikhs called him *Sachcha Padishah*. S.M. Latif also writes in the same vein "He was the first of the Gurus, who laid aside the rosary and the garb of a fakir and dressed himself in costly attire.... He organised a system of taxation and appointed delegates for the purpose of collecting it from his followers throughout the country. Thus the Sikhs developed into a real power. To increase the common wealth, Arjun also sent his disciples to foreign countries for trade."<sup>51</sup>

"The Sikhs grew gradually to look upon their Gurus as their actual Sovereigns.... Guru Arjun laid aside the garb of a holy man and adopted the state of a grandee. He also traded on a great scale. He proved to have been a man of great originality as an organizer and in his time the Sikh Community increased quickly and spread far and wide..."<sup>52</sup>

There is no doubt that Guru Arjun Dev knew that the rising power and glory of the new *Panth* was bound to invite the wrath of others including the Delhi throne. He took the necessary steps for the next phase of Guru Nanaks' revolution. He asked Baba Buddha to organise imparting of military training including riding; astronomy, medicine and other sciences to Hargobind.<sup>53,54</sup> If we contemplate all the events leading to his *Shahidi* then it is apparent that Guru Arjun Dev had planned the events himself leading up to his martyrdom, a notable event in the history of the panth and the country. After bearing inhuman tortures calmly, before entering the river Ravi, he sent a message to Guru Hargobind: "Let him sit fully armed on his throne and maintain an army to the best of his ability"<sup>55</sup>

Eleven year old Hargobind had the spirit of Nanak and so could judge the situation following *Shahidi* of Guru Arjun. Only a year earlier a joint delegation of Hindus and Muslims had complained to Akbar that the *granth* contained remarks against Hindus and Muslim and did not contain any praise of Hindu gods and goddesses and that of Prophet Mohammed. Not only the Delhi throne but mobs of hostile Hindus and Muslims could easily destroy their Harmandir and other pilgrim cen-

tres besides Pothi Sahib and its few copies enshrined in other gurdwaras. Guru Hargobind asked Baba Buddha to adorn him with two swords one of Piri and other of Miri after he had dressed himself in a royal dress with turban and plume. He commenced construction of Akal Thakt (June 1606) himself taking assistance only from Bhai Gurdas and Baba Buddha. He asked for presentation of armaments and horses and sent a call to able bodied Sikhs to enlist in his army. Soon he raised a cavalry of 300 with 800 horses, 60 Musketeers and infantry rising to total of 2200.<sup>56</sup> These actions lifted the stunned feeling of remorse felt by the Sikhs for the loss of their *Sacha Patshah*. "The Gurus' abode did in fact become like that of an Emperor. He sat on a throne and held court. He went out with a royal umbrella over his head and was always accompanied by armed retainers. He sent envoys to ruling princes and received their agents in darbar where presents were exchanged. With Arjun, the title *Sacha Patshah* was only honorific but with Hargobind, it became a reality. He was *Miri Piri Da Malik* (the Lord of spiritual and secular domains). The change of emphasis from a peaceful propagation of the faith to the forthright declaration of the right to defend that faith by force of arms proved to be extremely popular".<sup>57</sup> The army added grandeur to the Guru Darbar and the Sikhs got the message that the spirituality being preached by the Gurus for over 100 years was not meant for personal salvation (Mukti) only. Now the Sikhs had their central spiritual shrine in Darbar Sahib and close by was the Akal Takht where Guru Hargobind took charge of all the temporal affairs of the Panth. But for the Akal Takht and the taking up of arms, the Panth had the danger of quickly regressing into a sect of *Kirtanias* organising langars only. The Akat Takht provided the message that the Panth had higher duties to perform. "To the symbols of sainthood was added the paraphernalia of sovereignty including the umbrella and the crest." "The Guru created a government of his own like that of the Mughals. All his disciples formed a separate and independent entity and had nothing to do with the agencies of the government of the day. Thus the Sikhs came to occupy a kind of a separate state within the Mughal State, the position of which was securely established by the fiscal policy of Guru Amardas, Guru Arjun and his own armed system."<sup>58</sup> It is significant that no Sikh took service under the Delhi Darbar and none joined the Mughal army. Farming and trade were the only professions taken up by the Sikhs apart from joining the



army of the Gurus or their own armies for 150 years after 1699.

Two notable events established Guru Hargobind's Supreme Spiritual Authority in one and the Supreme Temporal authority in the other. It is indeed a great wonder that Jehangir who had ordered killing of Guru Arjun by torture "to destroy his shop of falsehood",<sup>59</sup> released Guru Hargobind from Gwalior along with 52 other princes who had been confined there for political purposes. Not only this, Jehangir did not mind Guru Hargobind moving about with his army of body guards and his being addressed as Sacha Patshah. This was the spiritual hold of Guru Hargobind and the power of Akal Takht. Dr. H.R. Gupta<sup>60</sup> lists 6 skirmishes and battles between 1628-1635 engaged by the Gurus' army with that of the troops of Shah Jahan, the Mughal Emperor. The cause of the main battle of Amritsar (14th April 1634) was capturing of a royal hawk by the Guru's hunting party and the Sikhs inflicting casualties on the Imperial party demanding the return of the bird. Shah Jahan sent his trusted general Mukhlis Khan. "Mukhlis Khan marched from Lahore at the head of 7000 troops, who were, however, signally defeated near Amritsar, their leader being killed in the engagement. The defeated army returned to Lahore after losing many who were killed and wounded. This was the first combat in the annals of Punjab which was fought between the Mohammendans and the Sikhs.<sup>61</sup> For the Sikhs the message was clear that the Sikh army was not a show piece and the lord of Akal Takht was supreme and they were not to bow to the Delhi Throne. This was also the first defeat of the Muslim army in Punjab in 500 years.

Guru Har Rai brought home to the Sikhs another big lesson when he turned out his elder son, Ram Rai from the Sikh Panth. Ram Rai had sought to please the Mughal king, Aurangzeb by misinterpreting *Gurbani*. This was a remarkable lesson for the Panth that *pleasing the Delhi Darbar for personal favours was not pardonable*. Ram Rai's mother and other Sikhs interceded and beseeched Guru ji to relent and pardon the 17 year old Ram Rai, but Guru ji ordered Ram Rai never to come to his presence and sent word to all Sikh *sangats* not to entertain Ram Rai. It is strange that we Sikhs considered it an anecdote, a Sakhi and never considered it as a precedent laid out for us by Guru ji.

Guru Har Rai could easily appoint Tegh Bahadur as the Guru after him but the spirit of Nanak was passed on to the 5 year old

Harkrishan. After the revolutionary Guruship of 11 years old, Guru Har Rai, no Sikh doubted that the spirit of Nanak prevailed in the 5 years old Guru Harkrishan. This was a grand strategy of Guru Har Rai so that Sikhs for all times would firmly believe that it was the spirit of Nanak which was present in all the subsequent Gurus and that the *Panth* was taking shape as pre-planned. Guru Harkrishan refused to see Aurangzeb to show that the throne of Nanak was superior to that of Delhi.

The Ninth Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur, did two remarkable acts. He accompanied Raja Ram Singh, a General of Aurangzeb, who had been sent to subdue Raja of Kamrup in Assam. Guru Sahib brought about reconciliation between the two, avoiding bloodshed and emphasizing the peace keeping role of the Panth.<sup>62</sup> In the second, Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed himself to establish the right of Kashmiri Pandits to have their tilak (Saffron mark on forehead) and wear their sacred thread (Bachitar Natak-Guru Gobind Singh). Guru Nanak had refused to wear the sacred thread as a ritual of no significance but in his 9th incarnation he proclaims by his *Shahidi* (Martyrdom) the right of Hindus to follow their creed. This was to proclaim that the *Panth is to serve the whole humanity*.

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Nanak had to complete and give final shape to the emerging Sikhism and the Panth. He faced an uphill task when he occupied the throne of Nanak at the age of Nine. The hill Rajas around Anandpur became hostile. Their important leader Raja Bhim Chand of Bilaspur declared "I cannot as a Hindu be on good terms with a man who hath discarded our holy faith." "No men of high caste have joined the Guru, his followers are carriers, barbers, fishermen, washermen, sweepers and similar nondescript persons."<sup>63</sup> He forced two battles on the young Guru for taking possession of his property especially a trained elephant presented to him by Raja Rattan Rai of Assam and a costly tent presented by a Sikh. The first battle was in 1682 and the second in 1685 but he could not succeed. He prevailed upon other hill Rajas to form a united front against Guru Gobind Singh and made a forceful attempt to kill the Guru while he was at Paonta. This battle of Bhangani was fought in Sept. 1688 between the Guru and Rajas led by Fateh Shah and Harichand. Five Hundred Pathans employed by Guru Gobind Singh at the behest of Pir Budhu Shah defected to hill Rajas expecting that the large hill army, with the help



of Pathans, would overpower the Guru and plunder his treasury. Pir Budhu Shah came with 700 disciples and his four sons at the nick of time and fought on the side of the Guru. The hill Rajas and Pathans were thoroughly routed. Guru Gobind Singh describes his victory in Bachittar Natak ascribing it to the benevolence of the Lord. Hill Rajas became convinced that they could not fight and oust the Guru on their own and sought help of local Mughal officers. Guru ji erected several small fortresses and a large drum, Ranjit Nagara to build up the morale of Sikhs and fortify his defences. Sikhs were ever ready to fight and lay down their lives. Guruji was involved in 5 such battles between 1691-1697.<sup>65</sup>

### Creation of the Khalsa

Guru Gobind (Rai) felt satisfied that since the time of Guru Hargobind from 1628 onwards Sikhs had been sacrificing themselves to uphold the Panth whenever the occasion demanded. Three Sikhs, Bhai Mati Das, Sati Das and Bhai Dyala had accepted death following extreme torture in front of Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1675. Sikhs fought bravely, many of them dying in the battlefield but not one had ever run away forsaking his religion for his life. He planned to infuse this spirit in the whole mass of Sikhs spread out all over the country. He sent messages to Sangats all over that they should all come to Anandpur on Vaisakhi day in 1699 with intact Keshas. According to Kapur Singh "There is ample testimony in the meagre Sikh contemporary records and writings that from the very beginning, from Guru Nanak onwards, almost all the Gurus gave indication sufficiently clear, that the type of man and the society at which they were aiming must wear uncut hair as the veritable symbol and testament of their spiritual integrity."<sup>66</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh knew that hitherto the Sikhs had been sacrificing themselves encouraged by the presence of their Guru in their midst. Hence it was necessary that they should always feel that Guru was with them because he was going to be the last Guru in physical form. Guru Gobind Singh enacted two miracles on the Vaisakhi day of 1699. When he stood before the large gathering brandishing his sword and asking for the Sikhs to come forward and offer their heads to him, then the first one was Daya Ram, *Khatri* from Lahore, second was Dharam Chand, a *Jat* from Delhi, third Mohkam Chand a *washerman* from Dwarka, fourth Himmat Rai, a water carrier from

Jagannath Puri, and the fifth one was Sahib Chand, a barber from Bidar in Karnataka. Only Guru Nanak had been to Jagannath Puri in Orissa, Bidar in Karnataka and Dwarka in Gujarat around 1510 and Guru Gobind Singh made his call 190 years later. The first miracle was actually that of Guru Nanak, that the families who imbibed his religious thoughts, kept up the same by maintaining their contact with Guru Nanak and all the Gurus subsequently. The second miracle of Guru Gobind Singh was that the names of these five *Piaras* or the beloved 5 Sikhs denote the five prime qualities of the Khalsa. Daya or mercy and benevolence; Dharam or Duty, Righteousness integrity, justice and devotion; Mohkam or unshakable and firm; Himmat or Courage, valour and fortitude and Sahib or master, lord and boss. The Guru prepared the Pahul by stirring water with sugar puffs or *patashas* in an iron vessel with *Khanda* or double edged sword while reciting 5 *Banis* while the five were listening intently. This baptismal water or *Amrit* was given on the cupped palm 5 times for sipping and the *Piara* was asked to speak loudly : *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh* (Khalsa belongs to the Primal Lord and the Primal Lord is ever victorious) each time, then the same was put in his *keshas* 5 times, sprinkled in his eyes 5 times. The remaining Amrit in the iron bowl was then rotated from the first to the fifth and back again each time the Sikh took a sip and loudly exclaimed “*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa Waheguru ji ki Fateh*. Thus the Sikh of the Guru had by this unique method was made Khalsa of Waheguru. This is what Nanak and all the subsequent Gurus had been preaching through recitation and singing of Gurbani. This ceremony was to firmly ingrain in the minds of the Sikhs that now they verily belong to the Akal Purukh. “*Khalsa Akal Purukh ki Fauj*” (Khalsa is the Army of God). Guru Gobind Singh hailed them as Singhs and asked them to use this suffix with their names. He asked them always to wear *Kes*, (Long hair), *Kanga* (Comb); *Kirpan* (Sword), *Kachh* (Short drawers) and *Kara* or steel bracelet. They must consider a complete break with their past beliefs and practices : *Kulnash* - Forsaking of their previous caste ties, *Kritnash* - giving up their hereditary occupations which determined their place in society: *Dharam Nash* - giving up their previous beliefs and creeds and *Karam Nash* - giving up of all rituals they had been observing. Another important part of the ceremony was when Guru Gobind Rai touched his forehead on the feet of each of the five *Piaras* and with



folded hands begged them to initiate him into the fold of the Khalsa and give him the *Pahul* in the same manner. After initial hesitation and surprise the five piaras then administered the *Pahul* of the double edged sword or Khanda to Guru Gobind Singh. This was the Guru's way to show to the assembled Sikhs that the five baptized Sikhs were the embodiment of the Guru and thus five baptized Khalsa, keeping the code and conduct and following the dictates of *Gurbani* and contemplating *Gurbani* should feel that the Guru resides within them and they belong to the Primal Lord. They were expected always to act and behave as one, close to and in the presence of God.

At the time of initiation of the Khalsa by administration of the Amrit or *pahul*, the Persian historian Ghulam Mohi-ul-din sent the Emperor a report of the Guru's address to his Sikhs: It is dated the first of *VAISAKH SAMBAT* 1756 (AD 1699): "Let all embrace one creed and obliterate differences of religion. Let the four Hindu castes who have different rules for their guidance abandon them all, adopt the one form of adoration and become brothers. Let none deem himself superior to another. Let men of the four castes receive my baptism, eat out of one dish, and feel no disgust or contempt for one another". On this great occasion the hill chiefs including Raja Ajmer Chand visited the Guru. Guru ji asked them to become baptized and become Sikhs Ajmer Chand replied "Great king we must worship our idols and shave on the occasions of death in our houses. Guruji continued to address the assembled rajas: "How has your religious, political and social status deteriorated! You have abandoned the worship of the true God and addressed your devotion to gods, goddesses, rivers, trees etc. You despise and loathe one another through your narrow prejudices and you act contrary to the wishes of Almighty Father. Your morals have become so perverted that through fear and with a desire to please Mussalman rulers, you give them your daughters. Self respect has no place in your thoughts. I am intensely concerned for your fallen state. Are you not ashamed to call yourself Rajputs when Musalmans seize your wives and daughters before your very eyes. Your temples have been demolished and mosques built on their sites and many have been forcibly converted to Islam. If you still possess a trace of bravery and of the ancient spirit of your race then listen to my advice, embrace the Khalsa religion and gird up your loins to elevate the fallen condition of your country". Upon this the rajas took their departure.

Not only did the hill *Rajas* refuse *Pahul*, they became his sworn enemies and attacked Anandpur in 1699 twice.<sup>68</sup> They were defeated and they prevailed upon the local Mughal commanders including Governor of Sarhind to take action against the Guru and in 1700 Guru ji had to fight two more battles. The *Rajas* again with the help of Mughal general attacked Guru ji in 1702 and twice in 1703, but the Sikhs held their ground. "Raja Ajmer Chand was distressed on seeing the power and glory of the Sikhs daily increase and he prevailed on the other hill chiefs to join him in another mission to the Emperor against the Guru."<sup>69</sup> Thousands of Sikhs died in the last battle of Anandpur and Guru ji vacated Anandpur on the solemn promises made by the Hindus swearing on the cow and the Mughals on the Quran. As soon as they came out, the Guru and the Sikhs were attacked and later Guru ji was ambushed at Chamkaur Sahib.

Besides thousands of Sikhs, Guru ji lost all his four sons. All these battles between 1682 and 1705 were defensive battles and Guru ji had no scheme to establish any state which would have been against the plan of Guru Nanak. Khalsa of Waheguru had to defend themselves at the stage dying at the behest of Guru Gobind Singh ji without questioning his programme. It is remarkable that "prior to the time of Sikh Gurus no general ever conceived the idea of raising an army from men who were believed to be unclean and polluted from their birth but the stimulating precepts of the tenth Guru altered what had hitherto been deemed the dregs of humanity into warriors, whose prowess and loyalty never failed their leaders."<sup>70</sup> After the battle of Chamkaur, suffering such huge losses Guru Gobind Singh was in an ecstatic mood because the task of Guru Nanak had been so successfully concluded. He wrote an Epistle of Victory (*Zafarnama*) to Aurangzeb and had it delivered to him through his *Piara*, Bhai Daya Singh. Khalsa had learnt to die for their principles without the slightest hesitation. Having been born at Patna in the East and working most of his life at Anandpur, Guru Gobind Singh travelled to Nander in the South to end his mortal sojourn on this earth. He bestowed the Guruship of the *Panth* to the *bani* enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib as the future living Guru of the Sikhs for all times and confirmed bestowing of the Temporal Guruship or Sovereignty (*Miri*) to the Khalsa. He had twice before accepted the Guruship of the Khalsa, once when he had begged to be baptized by the five *Piaras* and again when he ac-



cepted the order of five Khalsa to leave Chamkaur when battle was raging between the small contingent of Khalsa and the hordes of Mughal army. He showered countless blessing on the Khalsa. e.g.

(i) "*Khalsa mero Roop Hai Khas, Khalsa Mein Haun Karon Niwas*"

Khalsa is my own special form. I dwell in the Khalsa.

(ii) "*Khalsa mero satguru poorā*" Khalsa is my perfect True Guru.

(iii) "*Judh Jite Inhi Ke Parsad .... Inhi Ki Kripa Ke Saje Hum*

*Hain Nahin Mo so Garib Karor Parey.*" "Through their grace I have won all my battles.... I owe my all to their grace, other wise there are millions of poor people like me".

Before breathing his last he spoke the famous Persian quotation:

"*Deg, Teg, Fateh, O, Nusrat Bedrang, Yaft Uz Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.*" "Guru Gobind Singh obtained from Guru Nanak, Hospitality, The Sword, Victory and Prompt Assistance." A few days before Guruji was mortally stabbed, he had baptised Banda Bahadur and sent him to Punjab giving him a sword, five arrows accompanied by a small contingent of Sikhs and *hukamnamas* (letters) in the name of Sikh Sangats. Not only thousands of Sikhs but also a large number of Hindus and Muslims came forward to join his forces. As soon as Banda had sizeable territory under him he minted a coin as a mark of sovereignty inscribed with a remarkable couplet in Persian:

"*Sikha Zad Har Do Alam Tegh-i-Nanak Sahib Ast.*

*Fateh Gobind Singh Sahah-i-Shahan Fazali-Sacha Sahib Ast.*"

"Coin struck for the two worlds with the Sword of Nanak. Victory belonged to Gobind Singh, King of Kings by the Grace of the true Lord."<sup>71</sup> Thus Banda Bahadur acknowledged that the Sword that he was provided belonged to Guru Nanak. Gobind Singh, was indeed Nanak. Right from the time of Guru Hargobind, the Sikhs and later the Khalsa always felt that they were Sovereign and this feeling continued up to 1849. Ranjit Singh's Raj called Sarkar-i-Khalsa was a totally secular state where practically all ministers of Ranjit Singh's cabinet were non-Sikhs. Ranjit Singh completely forgot that the high caste Hindus had been opposing the Sikhs and Sikh Gurus right from the time of Guru Amardas and Guru Gobind Singh had to face 12 combats with the Hill Rajas. The latter were after the blood of the Guru and the Sikhs.

Not only that, throughout the 18th century when the Sikhs were being hounded out both by the Mughals and Abdali the invading King of Afganisatan, many a times the Hindus would side and give information about the Sikhs to the Mughal or Abdali forces. His Brahmin Prime Minister and Brahmin Generals played a treacherous role after his death. Also the Sikhs had gone down in their Sikh values during the Khalsa Raj. Our Gurus had foreseen the dangers of geographical states. A geographic state in any part of the world leads to individual corruption and degradation of moral and ethical values, with the lower half of the population always at the mercy of the top 20 percent. A study of Gurbani and Sikh history points clearly that the objective of Guru Nanak in founding a new religion and a new Panth was to establish a World Sikh (Khalsa) state under the aegis of Akal Takht. Guru Nanak travelled all over India and places outside it while propagating a religion of humanity. He collected the Bani or teachings of Hindu and Muslim saints and gave all his writings to his successor whom he passed on the mantle received by him from *Akal Purakh*. Guru Granth Sahib is thus the universal Guru of Humanity. Time is ripe now, when we are celebrating the 300th anniversary of the Khalsa that we announce boldly the constitution of this "Sovereign World Sikh (Khalsa) Welfare State" or Sarkar Khalsa under Akal Takht. This state having no geographical boundaries will encompass the whole world. With the help of computers each and every Sikh family would be attached to Akal Takht and the State would have hundreds of offices in all countries where Sikhs are residing.

## THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WORLD SIKHS WELFARE STATE

### 1. Welfare of the Sikhs

Like every other geographical state which has the welfare of its nationals as its top priority, this state would also be responsible for the welfare, both spiritual as well as temporal of each Sikh family.

### 2. Welfare of the whole world-Sarbat Da Bhalla

"Robbing others is what constitutes the act of Empire founding. Conserving Wealth for oneself is to make many die of hunger. It is a life of distribution and not of "possession" that the Guru presents to humanity."<sup>72</sup> Right from the time of Guru Arjan, Sikhs had been contributing "Daswandh" or 1/10 part of their income for the commu-



nity. This World Welfare State would be maintained by voluntary contribution of 1/10 or even more of the income of Sikh families.

### Some aspects of World Welfare

(i) This state would influence all the world governments, states and tribes by preaching the gospel of Guru Granth Sahib a spiritual Guru meant for the whole humanity. Ministers, Councillors and Ambassadors of this state would not be holding their jobs for money or executive power. They would raise their voice, investigate and prevent any *violation of human rights* both at the state level and individual level and also provide much needed succour on emergency basis by its volunteer force.

(ii) Worldwide movement for *destruction of All Nuclear Weapons and Missiles*. The world today is at the brink of a nuclear holocaust. At the spur of a moment a Prime Minister ordered explosion of a nuclear device and in retaliation another Prime Minister reciprocated the same. When everybody feels concerned that a Nuclear War would usher an untold suffering and loss of millions of innocent lives then there is no reason to stockpile the nuclear bombs and store missiles with or without nuclear war heads. Signing of treaties (PTBD) on paper is not going to stall the nuclear holocaust for ever. A strong movement for permanent elimination of weapons of mass destruction in every country of the World would be a top programme of the Sarkar Khalsa or World Sikh Welfare State.

### (iii) Elimination of Aggression

The most glaring example of persistent aggression is provided by 400,000 Tibetans who are staying as refugees in many countries since 1959. UNO has failed to remove this continuous Chinese aggression which is not allowing them to return and practise their own religion. Khalsa has to propagate persistently that every human has the right to practise his/her own religion and thus all countries must force the Chinese to vacate this aggression allowing the Tibetans to return.

### (iv) Stopping Continuous Loss of Human Lives Anywhere

Loss of human lives, mostly of young men and women is occurring in several countries of the world due to ethnic differences e.g. Sri Lanka, Europe, Middle East and in many African countries. Khalsa

of Waheguru has to propagate forcefully that all human beings are equal and children of the same heavenly father. The "Ambassadors" of Sarkar Khalsa would personally visit and discuss with the leaders of the warring groups to bring an end to this strife everywhere. Most of the countries owing allegiance to the Charter of Human Rights do not observe them and interpret it as it suits them. Individual or group terrorism can always be traced to State Terrorism. This unique World Sikh Welfare State having no army of its own, no weapons and no boundaries to protect or expand would be the greatest moral force in the world. It is for this that Guru Nanak got the Divine revelation in 1499 when he came out proclaiming "There is no Hindu or Musalman" and embarked upon creation of a new religious philosophy and a Khalsa of the Waheguru to bring peace among all the Humanity created by Him.

### MOVEMENT FOR VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE OF SCAMS IN INDIA

Ever since 1947, due to collusion between the bureaucrats and the politicians, thousands of crores of rupees have been scammed or pocketed. All this money would have been used for development work. The protracted legal cases in courts would not achieve anything. A propaganda blitz asking for all those politicians who have amassed wealth to declare their assets and hand them to the government is the only way. The Khalsa would appeal to religious leaders of all communities to join in this mass movement. There is no other way to improve the economic, educational and health needs of the lower half of Indian society. Only Khalsa can make *SATYA MEV JAITEY* a reality.

The whole world urgently needs the creation of The World Sikh Welfare State. This is the type of Raj which all Sikhs daily pray in the Ardas or Prayer :

#### *RAJ KAREGA KHALSA*

*Sikhism is not an individualistic religion meant for personal salvation. It is meant to usher world peace through Khalsa of Waheguru.*



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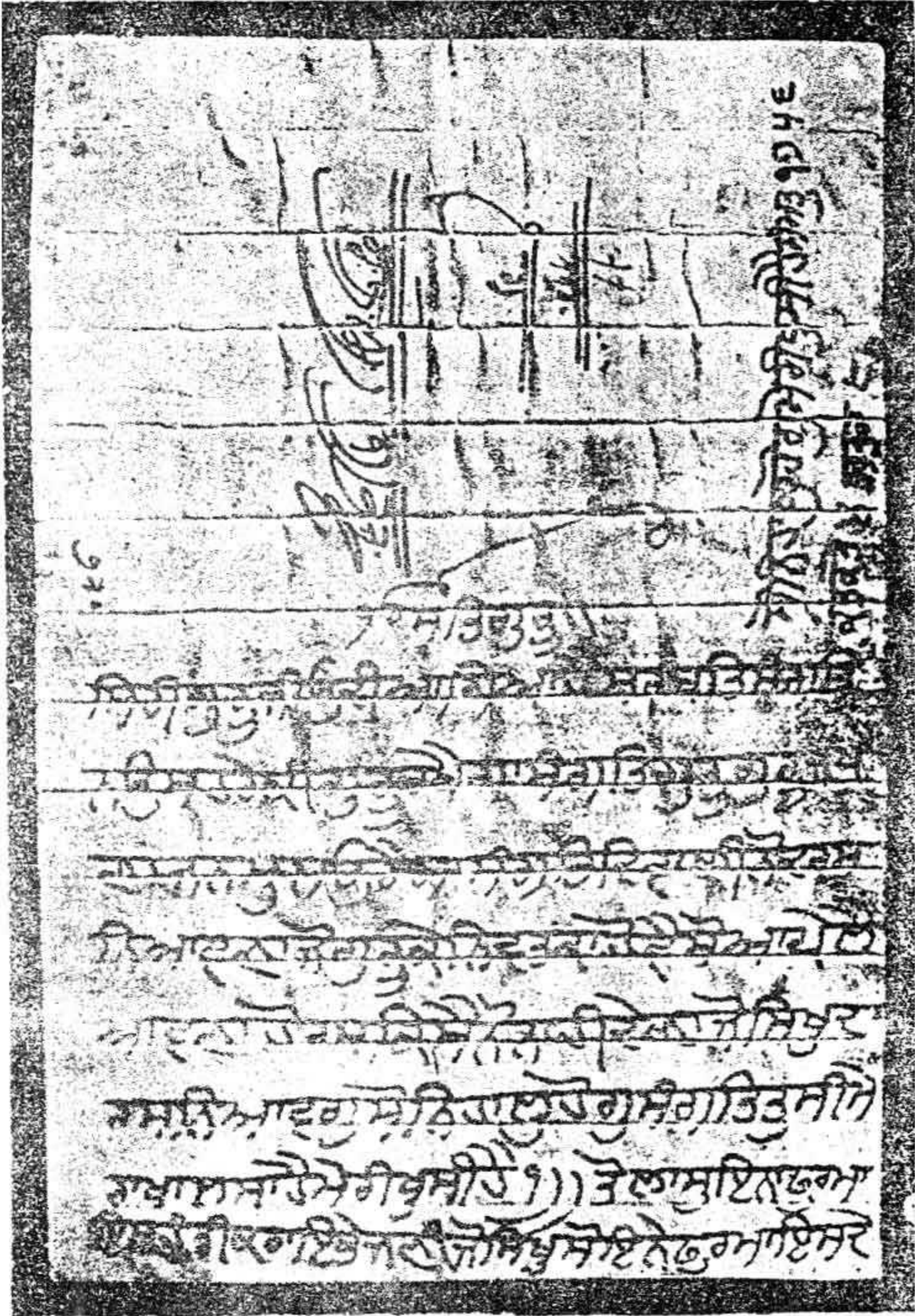
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ਦਸਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਨਉਸ਼ਹਰੇ ਕੀ ਜੋਗੁ

[ਕਤਕ ੪, ੧੭੫੬ ਬਿ., ੫ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ੧੬੯੯ ਈ.]

"ਸੰਗਤਿ ਦੀਵਾਲੀ ਨੋ ਦਰਸਨ ਆਵਣਾ... ਸੰਗਤਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੈ..."



[ਨਉਸ਼ਹਰਾ ਪੰਨ੍ਹਆ ਵਿਚ]

# A HUKUMNAMAH OF GURU GOBIND SINGH

Dr. Kirpal Singh

Hukamnamah is a compound Persian word made up of Hukam which means 'command' and Namah which means 'letter', hence meaning thereby 'Letter of Command'. A letter issued by Guru Gobind Singh is respectfully called by the Sikhs 'Hukamnamah', a letter of command, such letters are mostly addressed by name to the Sikhs at different places.

A close scrutiny and examination of different Hukamnamahs of Guru Gobind Singh leads us to conclude that the Guru had scribes and dictated them the contents of the letters. In order to convince the addressee of the genuineness of the letter, the Gurus used to fix his autographs with the gist of the contents and the number of the lines written in the body of letter. Mostly, the Guru's autograph is on the top, space being left blank for this purpose. In some of his Hukamnamahs, the long list of the names of the local Sikhs to whom the letter is addressed, gives a clue to the records that the Guru must have kept the names of the Sikh followers living in different parts of the country.

In the Hukamnamah collection of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, there is a photograph of a Hukamnamah discovered from village Naushehra Pannuan, District Amritsar. It was dictated by Guru Gobind Singh and is dated October 5, Thursday, 1699 (Kartik 4, 1756 B.K.). Its wording is as follows :

There is one God. He is a Truth and Light.

By the order of the Guru to the *sangat* of Naushehra, the Guru would protect you. Repeat Guru-Guru, and you would elevate your life. Come to me on the occasion of Diwali. Bring the voluntary offerings meant for the Guru yourself. Do not depend on anybody else in this respect. Those who would come would be blessed. You are my Khalsa and my source of happiness. One *tola* of gold may be sent through draft. Whosoever would contribute, would be blessed. (Katak 4, Sambat 1758) (Eight lines).<sup>1</sup>

1. S.H.R. No.11, Sikh History Research Deptt., Khalsa College Amritsar



The wording of this Hukamnamah implies that Guru abolished the age old *Masand* system by exhorting the Sikhs to bring their voluntary offerings themselves and not to depend on anybody else in this respect. This measure was of a radical nature as *Masand* organisation had been in vogue for about a century. In order to understand the significance of this reform, it would be essential to trace the origin of *Masand* system and the circumstances leading to its downfall.

The word *Masand* is a corrupt form of Arabic word *Masanad*. The title of *Masnad-i-ala* was given to the highest ministers and nobles in the Pathan State<sup>2</sup> of Northern India during the 16th century. A Sikh missionary was called *Masand* as he was offered higher seat in the congregation or Sikh *sangat*. When Yogis asked Guru Nanak to work a miracle he replied that in carrying on his mission he relied on nothing but Name of God and congregation - *Sangat*<sup>3</sup> (1st Var of Bhai Gurdas). According to the author of *Syrul-Mutakhrin*, Guru Nanak established *sangats* or associations of his followers wherever he went. It was on this account that Guru Amar Das, the third Sikh Guru fixed dioceses called *Manjis* to look after the Sikhs at distant places and to preach Sikhism. According to Bhai Kahn Singh, there were twenty two dioceses and he has given the names of persons appointed there. The main task of these persons was to preach Sikhism rather than to collect voluntary offerings. Guru Ram Dass (1574-81) instituted *Masand* order replacing the *Manjis* of Guru Amar Dass. We do not know the exact circumstances necessitating this change. The possible explanation is that Sikhism spread far and wide and the House of the Guru needed money for building Amritsar and other humanitarian works like Free Kitchen etc. Bhai Gurdas who was contemporary of Guru Arjan Dev has mentioned the names of the places like Kabul-Kashmir, Delhi, Agra, Ujjain, Patna, Dacca, Burhanpur etc. where Sikhism was flourishing.<sup>4</sup> There was, therefore, a real need for some agency to establish links between the Sikhs living at distant places and the Guru. *Masand* system provided this channel and helped the house of Guru by collecting voluntary offerings meant for the Guru.

According to William Irvine, Guru Arjan substituted the fluctuating voluntary offerings of his disciples for titles to be received by collec-

2. Nanak Panthian, Extracts from Dabistan, p.7.

3. First Var of Bhai Gurdas, Pauri 42

4. Eleventh Var of Bhai Gurdas

tors deputed by him who forwarded the money to him once a year.<sup>5</sup>

Successful working of *Masand* system required on the one hand a strong unchallenged central authority and a set of pious workers on the other. After the death of Guru Hargobind, there had been rival claimants for Guruship. This gave the *Masands* opportunity and ready excuse for misappropriating the Guru's offerings. During the course of time, the *Masands* acquired episcopal powers. This enabled them to pose themselves as persons of special sanctity.

The *Masand* could not reconcile themselves to the changed circumstances when the peaceful community of the Sikhs was transformed into a community of soldier saints. During the life time of Guru Gobind Singh, the *Masands* proved most reactionary. They objected to the reforms of the young Guru. Macauliffe has quoted several examples. Once they made representation, "First consider the sources of the enemy. They are kings and possess armies, wealth and ammunition of war. It is, therefore, not advisable to contend with them."<sup>6</sup> It had, however, no effect on the Guru.

The *Masands* grossly misbehaved towards Ram Rai of Dehra Dun a relation of Guru Gobind Singh. Macauliffe writes, "Ram Rai fell into a trance and in that state was cremated by *Masands* in defiance of the prayers and entreaties of his wife Punjab Kaur. The *Masands* then proceeded to take possession of his property and of the offerings intended for him and each began to proclaim himself Guru. Punjab Kaur sent a letter to Guru Gobind Rai to inform him of the circumstances and prayed for his advice and assistance."<sup>7</sup>

The Guru went to Dehra Dun. Punjab Kaur requested the Guru to punish the *Masands* ... she recalled to memory all their crimes and misdemeanors. They used to go to the house of the Sikhs to demand intoxicants and frequented the society of the undesirable persons. They used to boast that the Guru was of their own making and if they did not serve him no one would even look at him. They practised oppression in every form, they embezzled offerings made to the Guru and committed many other anomalies. The Guru accordingly meted out punishment to the guilty among them and rewarded those who had remained faithful to Punjab Kaur.<sup>8</sup>

5. Later Mughals, Vol.1, William Irvine, p.76

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8. Ibid., p.23



Sewa Das, a 18th century Sikh writer narrates how the *Masands* began to consider themselves rivals of the Guru. They ceased to respect the Guru whom they thought to be their own creation.<sup>9</sup> Macauliffe writes, "The Guru continued to receive many complaints against the Masands. One of them in particular billeted himself on a poor Sikh and claimed sweets instead of crushed pulse and unleavened bread which formed staple food of his host. The *Masand* took the bread, threw it into the host's face and dashed the crushed pulse on the ground. He then began to abuse the Sikh and would not cease until the poor man had sold his wife's petticoat to provide him with sweets ... one day a company mimes went to the Guru and asked him to imitate the *Masands*. One of them accordingly dressed as *Masand*, two as *Masand's* servants and a fourth as *Masand's* undesirable companion riding behind him on horseback as he went to collect offerings for the Guru. The mimes portrayed to life the villains and oppression practised by the *Masands*."<sup>10</sup>

At last Guru Gobind Singh became convinced of their utter perversity. The Guru, therefore, decided to free the Sikhs from the *Masands'* tyranny, and to establish direct link with the Sikhs. The *Masands* were, therefore, denounced and excommunicated within Sikhism. In order to implement this decision, the Guru wrote several such letters to the Sikhs at various places exhorting them not to rely on the *Masands* and bring themselves the voluntary offerings meant for the Guru. As a result of this reform an organised priesthood was abolished among the Sikhs for good.

This letter of the Guru is one of the several such letters which were written by Guru Gobind Singh after abolishing the *Masand* organisation. Hence, it is a very significant document in tracing the evolution of Sikhism.

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# SAINT SOLDIER CONCEPT AND THE SIKH GURUS

Ujagar Singh Bawa, Ph.D.

**INTRODUCTION:** Sikhs have been called 'Militant Nationalists' or 'Nationalistic Militants'. This expression gives out the overtones of 'radicalism' or 'belligerance'. This was not at all the intent of the Sikh Gurus when they organised Sikhism. Therefore, the term I have chosen is "Nationalists with Militarism".

Nationalistic Militarism connoted a policy of aggressive military preparedness for nationalistic objectives, i.e., to organise and discipline yourself for (i) defending your honour and self respect; (ii) your own civil rights; (iii) the right of the oppressed, the weak, the poor, the women, and the children; (iv) social and political rights; and (v) the right to profess a religion of one's choice. All these principles are amply illustrated from the pages of Sikh history.

We need to keep the distinction between the modern-day heroes, and those of the fourteenth through the eighteenth centuries. In the more recent events of the early twentieth century, there was a wave of nationalistic feelings against the British rule, and the Sikhs played a leading role to exhibit a sympathetic, and strong support and commitment for the cause, the patriotism. Almost all other communities, Muslims, Hindus, and Christians played their respective roles as well. But imagine the situation during the earlier centuries, when the Sikhs were the only community, and the isolated one, to face the imperialism of Mughal emperors. The Sikhs were singled out. Anyone who dared to support them and their ideals, goals and missions did so explicitly at the cost of serious reprisals to one's life, family, property, and self-respect. Unfortunately, this challenge was not a one time phenomenon, but happened again and again when India was recurrently invaded by foreign forces from Central and middle Asia. During these rampages, these marauders created havocs of looting, destruction, killings, slaving, abductions, forced rapes, and many more inhuman atrocities. The major reason for these repeated occurrences was that the invaders could



come and go as and when they pleased, so to speak. Any opposition, much less an organised one, was absolutely non-existent. The existing communities were grossly timid and dreaded even to raise their voice of opposition. Those imperialists turned out to be “fanatics”, least tolerant of other established existing religious faiths, and their viewpoints. They had absolutely no hesitation to use any kind of force to quell any opposition to their dogmatic religious views, and to satisfy their unsatisfied greed to loot and enslave people.

**GENESIS OF SAINT SOLDIER:** The first five Gurus of the Sikhs were benign, gracious, tender-hearted, saintly, affectionate and compassionate mentors. Their message was primarily social and religious, and not political. They spoke against the over prevalence of ritualism, blind faith, exploitation of the masses by the then priestly class, pervading caste consciousness, and the imposition of Islam by the Mughal emperors on the downtrodden Hindu community. There were conflicts about the method of worshipping, building religious centres, temples, and mosques. The invaders had demolished many temples either because of their religious fanaticism, or their under-fulfilled avarice for wealth. The first Mughal emperor, Babar, like many of his predecessors imprisoned large numbers of people who would be against his religion or viewpoint without discrimination including the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak. He later agreed to go to the jail without protest, because he had intended to draw the attention of the ruler of his dogmatism, and erroneous religious thinking in a totally non-violent and humane manner. The Mughals were so much hung up on the conversion of everyone to Islam, a slightest excuse could trigger their ire infuriating them to cause unprecedented devastation and misery.

Guru Arjun Dev, the fifth Sikh Guru, was adored by the Sikhs, and had become immensely popular amongst the Hindus and even Muslims. Muslim saints like Mian Meer of Lahore was immensely impressed after he saw him spending several months taking care, sharing the pain and agony of the population stricken by the great famine of Lahore. The famine led to diseases like small pox and malaria. The Guru provided selfless service, solace, and medical care to the grief and disease-stricken population, hungry orphans afflicted with infectious and contagious diseases exposing himself, and even his five

year old son, Hargobind, to all kinds of dangers. This influenced the thinking of emperor Akbar positively in favour of the Guru in spite of fretful campaign by the enemies of the Guru. He was impressed by his humanitarian, relief, and noble work. When Akbar's son, Jehangir, came into power, following the footsteps of his great-grandfather, Babar, he was ruthless and intolerant, and singled out Guru Arjun for execution for the latter's enormous popularity, for his alleged socially degrading remarks against him and Islam, and for his alleged refusal to pay taxes, and thus challenging his authority and power. He was continuously being instigated by one of his officials, Chandu Shah, who had become an arch enemy and revengeful of the Guru.

The Guru was subjected to the most inhuman, tortuous and merciless treatment unheard of in the human history. He made him sit on a hot steel plate with fire raging under, and red hot sand was poured over his head and body. As if it was not enough of barbarism, he was further made to sit in a vat of boiling water that saw his skin melting away with infinite number of blisters and sore all over his body. This was the climax of cruelty and savagery. But on the other extreme was the sense of forbearance, and absence of any reaction, and its acceptance with dignity and calmness as a part of Waheguru's Will with complete non-violence that had been the corner stone of the Sikh Gurus. No visitors were allowed including family members. The Muslim Saint Mian Meer, revered by the emperor, and due to his influence in the royal quarters, he was, perhaps, the only person allowed in the royal fort. When he saw the dastardly treatment of the Guru, he could not stand the ghastly sight, and offered his assistance to the Guru. But the Guru declined his offer, and bore all the atrocious treatment without a complaint. The Guru had enormous spiritual and miraculous powers to obviate this calamity, but he did not use them. In fact, out of his saintly disposition, he simply said, "It was the Will of Akalpurakh, and that I accept it". This has been the modus operandi of all the five Gurus. The spiritual inspiration of the Sikh Gurus had consisted solely in the loving adoration of the Akalpurakh. But neither Guru Nanak nor his predecessors did ever organise themselves. In a way, their contention was that if the foundation of this concept was laid down during his first five spirits (Gurus) on meditation, welfare of humanity, the Shabad, and the Naam, then this principle will last eternally.



This tragedy was the culmination of this utter inhuman act of the then rulers, and became the turning point in the thinking of the Sikh Gurus. Their patience had thinned out beyond realism. When Guru Arjun's body succumbed to the unprecedented torture, his indomitable spirit served as a living inspiration for all generations to come. His son, Guru Har Gobind took pains to expose to the masses of the inadequacy of the age-old, and age-honoured ideal of worship. He sought to supplement this noble quality by the defensive force of a warrior. He said, "An individual seeking the high objective of saintliness ought to possess the protective might of a soldier." He, thus, realised that the time had come for the saintliness of his ancestors to be amalgamated with martial aspect. By his own example, he conveyed to his countrymen the most vital principle of human existence. He said, "To the bliss and peace that flow out of the loving adoration of the Immortal Waheguru, the saving power of the guardian soldier must be harmonized. For without it, the objective of sainthood was incomplete, meaningless, and well nigh impossible of attainment." His thesis was simple and clear. He further said, "The highest state of Supreme Bliss, the main objective of a religion, can hardly be attained until the individual acquires in himself the physical and moral fortitude to protect himself, and those around him, especially, the destitute, disadvantaged and the weak. No religion, however sublime in itself, can hope to survive unless it has in itself the moral fibre and physical forcefulness to fight back the evil forces besetting it. The young preceptor began to blend the sweet Shabad with the sharp edge of the sword. This proclamation was without precedent. "The Guru strongly felt after the martyrdom of his father, Guru Arjun Dev, that when the self of a person or his Dharam-faith, was threatened, it was the foremost obligation to offer meaningful resistance even with arms to protect the faith, and safeguard one's very being." (Nirankari)

Therefore, he donned two swords, one of Miri (militarism, temporal, and royalty) and the other that of Piri (holiness and spiritualism). He ascertained that if true spirituality were to survive, it must be defended. He taught the Sikhs to be fearless in defending the truth as Guru Arjun did even after untold torture. He declared, "My rosary shall be the sword-belt, and on my turban shall I wear the emblem of royalty. "(Khushwant Singh in History of Sikhs, Vol I, p.6). Guru Hargobind built the Akaal Takhat, throne of the Timeless Waheguru,

where he received dignitaries, and planned his military strategy. He also built a small fortress, called Lohgarh, the Castle of Steel, in Amritsar. Of course, he also engaged himself in hunting and martial sports. Bhai Gurdas Ji, the Sikh philosopher-statesman, noting the transformation in Gurudom, wrote:

“Guru Har Gobind, the brave and the heroic destroyer of battalions was at the same time a great philanthropist.” (Bhai Gurdas, Vaar I, Pauree 48)

To the Guru’s critics of this change in philosophy, Bhai Gurdas replied:

“Just as a fence is necessary to keep away the stray cattle from the fields,

the thorny Kikar tree is needed to guard the orchard,.... In the same way the man of God must protect himself and his beliefs with sword. If you want peace, be prepared for the war now.”

This combination of saintliness and warriorship was noted by Swami Ramdas Samrath, the Marathi saint, and religious preceptor of Shivaji, when he met Guru Hargobind in Srinagar in 1634. He questioned the Guru regarding his royal equipage. The Guru explained to him the idea of a true Sikh - he is an ascetic within, and a prince without - Baatan Fakeeree and Zaahar Ameeree.

**Practising Saint-Soldier Principles:** The spirit of Miri and Piri, Sardaaree and Fakeeree, Bhaktee and Shaktee, the celestial and worldly, and the spiritual and secular was evident in the loves and actions of the Gurus previous to Guru Hargobind. Though it did not assume the form of sovereignty or revolt, it expressed itself in fearlessness and non-conformity in a non-violent manner. It is said that “royalty without divinity is futile.” [Adi Granth, p.14]

ਸੁਲਤਾਨ ਹੋਵਾ ਮੇਲ ਲਸਕਰ ਤਖਤ ਰਾਖਾ ਪਾਉ,  
ਹੁਕਮ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰੀ ਬੈਠਾ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਸਭ ਵਾਉ ॥

Guru Angad, when he faced the sword of Humayun, told him that he should have used it against Sher Shah Suri, and not run away from the battlefield. Guru Amardas refused to meet with Akbar till the latter had eaten with the common person in the community kitchen (Guru Ka Langar). Guru Ramdas spurned the offer of land (jagir)



made by Akbar. The fifth Guru, Guru Arjun, rejected the matrimonial offer of Chandu's daughter for his son, Guru Hargobind, primarily acceding to the desires of the *Saadh Sangat*, and also knowing fully well that it was going to generate the hostility of the royal quarters.

The word, *Piri*, is of Muslim origin. *Pir* means a holy person, or a religious head, or a prophet. Guru Nanak Sahib called the "Shabad" his *Pir*. Bhai Gurdas called the Gurus the *Pirs*, the messengers of Akaalpurakh. According to Guru Gobind Singh, *Pir* also meant someone or something worthy of respect. He called his weapons *Pirs* because their use to oppose injustice was regarded as a religious duty. He wrote, "Dagger, kirpan, khanda, axe, matchlock arrows, straight sword, the saber, sirohi sword, and the spear were his religious preceptors."

*Miri* stands for rulership, *Sardaaree*, or *Baadshaahee*. But it was intended to establish a *Haleemee Raaj*, a rule of humanity based on moral or ethical principles. Enlightened and humanitarian rule combined with qualities of courage and heroism can only ensure the right type of administration. The spirit of *Miri*, the secular power is not opposed to the concept of egalitarianism. The Sikh Gurus regarded all human beings as the creation of *Akalpurakh*; there are no chosen people or prophets. Caste system was decried because it was a man-made institution that prevents interaction and the growth of an individual.

While the predecessor Gurus brought out the axioms of

- (i) quality of outlook and action,
- (ii) a mass renaissance through literacy, and thus breaking the hegemony of the Pundits and Mullahs over the world of learning,
- (iii) social equality by seating the high and low together in the *Sangat* and the *Pangat*, and
- (iv) the equality of different religions and traditions by including the hymns of 'low caste.'

Bhagats and Muslim saints in the *Adi Granth*, Guru Hargobind destroyed the myth of the martial classes, and recruited soldiers from all segments of the society, and with their assistance defeated the Mughal forces.

Guru Gobind Singh broke the monopoly of fighting races by

declaring that baptism of Amrit (the elixir) removes all sense of caste, creed or profession. Therefore, the Sikh idea of a casteless society strengthened the forces of secularism. He brought the idea of a 'saint-soldier' to culmination. Guru Gobind Singh was an inspiring and a prolific writer, a gallant and a superb warrior, and a great source of divine wisdom. "When all other means fail," it is then righteous to take up the sword". Guru Gobind Singh wrote in Chandi Charittar:

ਦੇਹ ਸਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ, ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਟਰੋਂ ।  
 ਨ ਡਰੋਂ ਅਰਿ ਸੈ ਜਬ ਜਾਇ ਲਰੋਂ, ਨਿਸਚੇ ਕਰਿ ਆਪਣੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰੋਂ ।  
 ਆਰੁ ਸਿਖ ਹੋ ਆਪਨੇ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਕੋ, ਇਹ ਲਾਲਚ ਹਉ ਗੁਨ ਤਉ ਉਚਰੋਂ ।  
 ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਧਾਨ ਬਨੈ, ਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਰਣ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਜੂਝ ਮਰੋਂ । (231)

The concept of religious freedom underwent a change. Dharam Yudh, the holy war, was not a crusade to convert the non-believers. Islam depended on force and subjugation for its propagation. Guru Gobind Singh's idea of a holy war was the vindication of freedom of religious belief. It was understandable to use power for securing justice and fair play. Force could be used as the last resort when all other peaceful means have been exhausted. The use of violence in the context of religion, as the last resort, was an exercise of the right of self defence for individual freedom and belief. The Guru's crusade was absolutely free from hate and fear. He used to shoot a gold-tipped arrow in war so that the person aimed, if wounded could pay for his medical expenses, and if killed, would be compensated for his funeral expenses. He had no anti-Muslim feelings when he fought against the Mughal armies, even though he knew that his father, and great-grand-father had been the victims of Mughal tyranny. He waged a war against the forces of repression and evil. He fought against the Muslims at Nadaun and against the Hindu Rajas at Bhangani for the same principle of individual freedom and belief. He had both Hindus and Muslims fighting on his side, shoulder to shoulder with the Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh's militarism was neither vitiated by any ambition to create a theocratic state, nor did he commit any aggression or started a war for his personal glory. The principle behind the Muslim Holy war, the *Jehad*, was diametrically opposite of the Guru's ideal. *Jehad* was an aggression for purpose of conversion, or punishment to those professing a different religion, or to annex territories. The Tenth Guru opposed forced conversion and persecution. He had no ambition



to convert anyone to his faith by force of arms. In fact, he had no personal ambition to be a ruler, nor did he want any territory or a kingdom for himself. His fundamental aim in fighting the evil was to remove the hurdles that lay in the process and practice of religious freedom. Furthermore, the wars with the Mughals were not of his own seeking but rather imposed on him. He didn't consider the small size and the weapons of his army as any serious handicap. He had a strong belief in the principles that he believed in, and he was going to achieve them even if it was going to cost him his own life, his sons, his father, and his family. Even so, on the battle front, the Sikhs were enjoined to follow the humanitarian and moral codes. His soldiers were not mercenaries; they, too, like himself, were saint-soldiers. The actions of bhai Kanaheeyaa, the water carrier, of giving water to the injured Sikhs as well as Muslim soldiers pointed to the fact that it was a war against evil and injustice, and not against any individual or sect. The objective of being a saint-soldier, namely, the means should be as noble as the ends, was never forgotten.

The tenth Guru never started a war on his own, nor did he launch any attack on any ruler. Even after victory, he did not occupy or retain any territory of his enemy. The main reason for his militarism against the Mughals was their policy of oppression, injustice, and discrimination practised against non-Muslims. The forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam, which was the mainstay of the policy of Aurangzeb, had to be resisted. One can not stand with folded hands before a ferocious tiger, one has to be ready for self defence specially when pre-cautioned. How long should a community and its leaders suffer before they start resisting? Is it moral to play the tune of a tyrant? A true religious approach shall be to stand firm for the protection of one's values, and to meet force by force to protect and preserve them when all peaceful means have failed.

Political scientists have realised the need of a sanction or an in-built device to protect and support any powerful organisation. Just as no state can survive without an army or police, similarly, saintliness can not survive against the evil forces if it does not have a source of strength to fall back upon. The fall of some of the religions like Buddhism in different parts of the world would be an example of the need of an in-built mechanism for strength and survival. Mere spiritualism or mere physical force may not be adequate in themselves. *Piri* can

not flourish without *Miri*. Saints without defence will be at the mercy of hooligans and tyrants; similarly, warriors and freedom fighters without goodness and godliness will become ruthless Fascists. The marriage of these two great qualities resulted in the entity of the saint-soldier, a concept further propagated by the tenth Guru. This was a guarantee against ruthless exploitation of the masses by their political leaders, and an instrument for overcoming the hurdles that lay in the path of virtue and godliness. The use of the sword, however, was restricted to the times of emergency and for purpose of defence only. It was this conviction in the righteousness of the cause which enabled the Sikh armies to face Mughal forces several times larger than their scant number. This inner courage and hope was the secret of the fearless freedom fighters who were saints as well as soldiers with high moral character.

Guru Gobind Singh's personality had many a splendid aspects. He accomplished so much in such a short time that there are hardly any parallels in the history. His short span of life, December 26, 1666-October 7, 1708, lasted for only 42 years and nine and half months. All his adult years were too turbulent. He was engaged in several battles, all provoked by the hill rajas in concert with the then ruling Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb. He lived under dire circumstances. Still he was able to compose numerous Gurbaanees compiled into the Dasam Granth of 1,428 pages. He did represent a unique phenomenon in the history of mankind. He had a deep spiritual vision along with heroic action and courage. He synthesized compassion with dynamism, and piety with practical involvement. He evolved a pattern of philosophy and human conduct that gave a new direction to the history of religions. He had a multifaceted genius and an eventful career. His life was totally dedicated to the love of Akalpurakh, and to the service of humanity. As a litterateur, he created heroic and devotional literature to inspire and educate his Sikhs. As a military organiser, he trained his soldiers in planning the strategy of the battlefields. As a statesman, he steered clear through the intrigues of hill rajas, and at times, was able to secure united opposition to the Mughal oppression. As a nation builder, he created the order of Khalsa, and levelled down the caste barriers to give everyone a sense of unity and nationalism. His humility in spirit and action, his purity of thought, his passion



for art and literature, his austerity of conduct, his untiring and invincible spirit not to surrender to tyranny and aggression are some of the inspiring traits of his personality. The Guru's poetic diction is a joy, a veritable feast, and heroically inspirational. His portrait depiction is superb, and his sense of humor unfailing. He had a gift of persuading anyone to participate in the adventure of Guru's Naam, the *Naam Ras*. His hymns are full of *Vir Ras*, the heroic sentiment. His *Chandi Ki Vaar* shows how goddess, Chandi, an embodiment of military power, comes to the rescue of Devaas, the gods with her spiritual and divine powers.

ਸੁਨਤ ਬਚਨ ਏ ਚੰਡਿਕਾ, ਮਨ ਮੈ ਉਠੀ ਰਿਸਾਇ ॥  
 ਸਭ ਦੈਤਨ ਕੋ ਛੈ ਕਰਉ, ਬਸਉ ਸਿਵਪੁਰੀ ਜਾਇ ॥  
 ਦੈਤਨ ਕੇ ਬਧ ਕੋ ਜਬੈ, ਚੰਡੀ ਕੀਉ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ ॥  
 ਸਿੰਘ ਸੰਖ ਅਉ ਅਸੌਤ੍ਰ ਸਭੁ ਸਸਤ੍ਰ ਆਏਂਗੇ ਪਾਸ ॥  
 ਦੈਤ ਸੰਘਾਰਨ ਕੇ ਨਮਿਤ, ਕਾਲ ਜਨਮ ਇਹ ਲੀਨ ॥  
 ਸਿੰਘ ਚੰਡ ਬਾਹਨ ਭਇਉ, ਸੌਤ੍ਰਨ ਕੋ ਦੁਖ ਦੀਨ ॥

[Dohra 22, 23, and 24, Chandi Charittar]

Guru Gobind Singh's multiple achievements in the realm of war and spiritualism, literature and art show that he was a true specimen of a saint-soldier. When he approached the end of his worldly journey, he passed on the twin aspects his Guruship to allied successors. *Piri* was passed on to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, and *Miri* to Khalsa Panth. *Piri* is eternal and unchanging, and is based on universally fundamental values. *Miri* (policy) has to tolerate changes with time. *Piri* is the spirit, the *Jot*, and *Miri* the methodology, the *Jugat*. The *Jot* is permanent, while *Jugat* can be modified. The Khalsa Panth is the embodiment of the Guru, and takes all its decisions based on the advice from Guru Granth Sahib. Professor Pooran Singh noted thus, "Guru Gobind Singh's policy was to transfer the sovereignty of the soul of a true king to a whole people."

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# "ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE OF CREATION OF THE KHALSA"

Dr. Inderpal Kaur

## Introduction

Religion has always placed the idea of the individual endeavour at the core of its processes. The stress in all religions is on the individual to perform austerities and to purify the self, to the state of enlightenment and bliss. There has been an upsurge of interest in religions of the world recently and need is being felt to relate it to economic progress. In the process of economic progress the role of religion as a sociological feature of economic development merits special attention. For some, religion is a negative force generating social stigma and irrationality. For others, religion is primarily a matter of belief, or faith; and for some, it is ritual or ethical conduct; and for yet others, it is feeling, sensation, or experience. Although all of these aspects are present in all religions, but their extent varies from one to another. Human nature is a mixture of good and evil. Religious beliefs are most commonly associated with statements about gods, spirits, the soul, heaven, hell and so on. Religious beliefs deal with the world as a totality in time and space, and with the general principles or laws that govern it by reference to a supernatural realm. They provide a general framework for order, endowing particular acts with cosmic significance.

Religious beliefs are not mere speculations. They organise perceptions and cognition and provide a foundation for human actions. In other words, they are acted out and modified by experience. And yet, religious beliefs are not derived entirely from what happened in the empirical world. They are not the sum of confirmed experiences. Religious belief contains a large element of faith which in preceding cognition, determines experiences as much as it is determined by it.

Sociological Talcott Parsons observed that the human in culture cannot tolerate a merely random existence. Things have to be meaningful: people have to be able to lend meaning to their joys and sorrows. This can be achieved through religion, which includes a symbol system that evolves man's deepest response, it is pervasive in culture and has an impact on the individual and society. "Religion is the soul of the culture", said Paul Tillich "and culture is the form of religion".

Thus, religion is a binding force which helps in the generation of values that produce an integrated character and culture, paving the way for a stable society. The religious institutions in the right perspective are also important for imparting moral training and spiritual direction to the youth. Therefore, it may be inferred from the above analysis that society is a system of which religion is a part, and that the development of both religion and economics will not take place haphazardly but within constraints that each impose on the other. Dominant economic ethics and the religious teachings or mainstream have a definite and strong relationship with each other. The various important shifts in economic thinking that occur from time to time have not undermined this close relationship, although they have occasioned some strain. It is in economics that we encounter the universally valid science of human action.

In the above mentioned context the objectives of the present work are as follows:

- (i) To establish the relationship between economics and religion in general.
- (ii) To explore and analyse economic implication of 'Sikh' religion with special reference to the creation of 'Khalsa'.

As the creation of 'Khalsa' by the 'Tenth Master' was not in isolation from Guru Nanak's Mission in the world, any aspect related with 'Sikhism' (social, political or economic in nature) is incomplete without reference to Guru Nanak's contribution in the field. With this view the present study had been divided into three parts, Part I relating to seek the relationship between religion and economics, Part II dealing with economic concerns of Guru Nanak and finally Part III de-



voted to the creation of 'Khalsa' by Guru Gobind Singh and its economic implications.

## Part I

### Economics and Religion

Economics has to do with the getting and spending of wealth. Economic institutions are the roles and groups within which this getting and spending is carried out. The ideas that men and women have about their work, the occupational communities to which they belong, the market where they go to buy essential goods - in short the economic aspect of life - are shaped by non-economic forces, one of which is religion. Religious ethics have practical consequences for economic life and hereby help shape economic institutions. Sometimes, these conservers are the largely unacknowledged ideals of asceticism and influence how a woman judges her needs and priorities and how a man distinguishes between a pressing need and a luxury.

Sociologists have long been interested in the impact of religion on economic action and no less interested is the impact of economics on religion. There has been a tendency to assume a congruence between religious and economic institutions. That is dominant religious and economic values will be similar and religious and economic ethics will be compatible. The basis for this assumption is Durkheim's theory that religious ideas are a reflection or projection of existing social relationships including economic and technological forces which are experienced as external to individual people. But this assumption is sometimes false and the fact that religion can escalate economic conflict rather than bring harmony may also be true.

Economic forms and economic thinking have undergone continued development and by and large religious thinking has shifted to accommodate these developments. Changes in work were accompanied by changes in consumption. It is significant that the changes in mode of production and consumption have been paralleled by changes in religious ethics. Religious leaders have placed increasing emphasis on the need for social adjustment and conformity.

Therefore, it may be said that the materialism represented by economics and spiritualism represented broadly speaking by religion

may appear to be conflicting philosophies, but they are not so. They have a common goal i.e. the welfare of the man. The approach is different neither perfect in itself. Both are supplementary to each other. It is a combination of these two which is ultimately required for the happiness of the mankind. The total well being of man is inclusive of both.

One is likely to believe that, being a modern science, economics cannot have its roots in the thinking of spiritual Gurus of the medieval period. But it is not true because economics as a separate discipline might be of recent origin but economic ideas are as old as civilisation. Economic problems are basically problems of choice. The question of choice, whether materialistic or secular existed long before modern Economics came into existence.

### Economic Thought and Sikhism

Sikhism vibrant and youngest of world religions, took its birth in Punjab over five hundred years ago. The Sikh religion has developed its own independent approaches to problems of life. A close observation of the Sikh people reveals that their bent of mind, their physical frame, their religious fervor, their enterprising quality and life style are different from the majority of other Indians. Human life is influenced by a multiplicity of factors and in the case of Sikh people also the factors are many, but one important element appears to be the religion.

Sikhism's central theological belief is that there is one God for all of creation, a loving creator attainable through meditation upon and remembrance of his name. In addition, Sikhs are enjoined to lead moral lives, earn their living through hard work and honest means, and to share the fruits of their labour with the needy through charitable contributions and work. Sikhism is a way of life that advocates the practice of holistic life experiences - work, worship and service in order to attain perpetual union with God, while creating a just social order. A Sikh is enjoined to lead to wholesome family life style, and to avoid celibacy or asceticism as a means of reaching God. Spurred by their religion's dictates, Sikhs have a long celebrated heritage of speaking out against injustice, and for standing up for the defenseless.



The Gurus lived at a time when the people were suffering great poverty. The rulers and their henchmen were out to exploit the weak and helpless. The Gurus being men of a spiritual background reacted to the problems in a historical imperative and arrived at their economic ideas regarding property, the nature of goods, hard work, honesty and sincerity towards work, consumption habits, taxes and duties of the state etc. The religious scriptures of the Sikhs provide much information related to economic issues. The Guru's ideas about the solution of prevailing economic problems, about business practices, capital investment, economic disparities, ownership etc. can be easily discerned in their devotional compositions.

The first five Gurus laid firm foundations for the growth and development of the community. They established 'sangat' and centres of worship for the propagation of Sikh religion. The gurdwaras served the twin purpose of free boarding, lodging and food for the visitors and the poor people. The basic tenants of 'Kirat Karo', 'Vand Ke Chhako' and 'Nam Jappo' as preached by Guru Nanak laid the foundation of a just and humane society in which the interests of poor and down-trodden were duly protected. The martyrdom of the fifth Guru, Guru Arjun Dev, changed the course of development of Sikh society. Since it had to contend continuously with a hostile government, the sixth Guru led the community in a new direction which offered armed resistance to government oppression. This ultimately led to the 'Creation of Khalsa' by instituting the 'Khalsa', Guru Gobind Singh re-affirmed the faith promulgated by 'Nanak', consolidated the Sikh 'panth' to withstand any external interference, inspired his Sikhs to defend the claims of their conscience at the risk of their lives and enabled them to stand on their own feet as a corporate body. In this process, he sharpened the distinct 'socio-religious' and thus the economic character of the Sikh panth.

## Part II

### Economic Concerns of Guru Nanak

The role of Guru Gobind Singh in the creation of Khalsa and its historical operation and achievements have to be evaluated in the light of the mission of Guru Nanak. One of the positive features of the

Sikhism is the welding of the spiritual and the empirical realms of human existence. It is very important to understand the worldview of Guru Nanak, who believed that the way to spiritual bliss was not through life negation and renunciation, but through active participation in life and its responsibilities. For him, there could be no love of God without active service. The Guru's call for action was, in fact, a call for dynamic social, political and above all an economic action. The Guru, thus, imparted a new perspective to man, "Truth is greater than everything, but greater still is truthful living".

Guru Nanak never wanted human beings to die of starvation. On the other hand, he struck a balance between a luxurious and a sub-human life. Nanak warned against the multiplicity of wants and their further aggravation because they are the source of suffering. Unfulfilled desires lead to frustration, discontentment and clashes in society. In the field of exchange, Guru Nanak instructed the traders to be fair in their dealings, to measure and weigh properly, not to hoard, and to supply materials to society at reasonable prices. The Guru stressed on the proper and fair distribution of wealth. To bridge the gap between rich and poor and to narrow down these disparities, Guru put a condition to the level of consumption and this consumption was priority 'distribution' and was based on the principle of "Wand Ke Chhako".

Further, Nanak wanted the ruler to be a true ruler who takes care of the interest of the poor. Guru Nanak also attacked the established property and family relations and gave an alternative. He firmly believed that property and wealth should be held in common and the owner should claim himself to be only the custodian. Guru Nanak preached collectivism in the field of agriculture and the trusteeship principle in the field of commerce and industry. Guru Nanak was against ill-gotten (black money) wealth. He emphasized production through hard and honest work. He did not put any limit to the earning of wealth but Nanak was against feudalism as the system was based on exploitation of poor by rich.

Therefore, it can be inferred from the above analysis that Guru Nanak laid the foundation stone of the ideal economic and social set



up which was further strengthened and given its climax with the 'Creation of Khalsa' by the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh.

### Part III

#### 'Creation of Khalsa' and its Economic Relevance

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs is unparalleled in the history of world religions. The Guru was a creative genius, a poet, a warrior and a Divine soul. He presents a unique combination of higher spiritual attainment and humanitarian and secular endeavour. Guru Gobind Singh's greatest achievement is the creation of 'Khalsa' by the famous baptismal ceremony on the Baisakhi Day of 1699 by which the Guru raised the 'Khalsa' and bestowed on them his blessings, gift of valour and a distinct identify (five emblems, Kakars). The 'Khalsa' was bound to a strict code of conduct (Rahit Maryada). After the ceremony the Guru stood up before the Five Beloved Ones with bowed head and formally requested them to formally initiate him as a 'Singh' in the same manner in which he had initiated them. The process was of crucial significance because it truly established the equality between 'Guru and Khalsa' or rather supremacy of the 'Khalsa'. Further, Guru Gobind Singh did not appoint any mortal successor to succeed him as Guru but invested the 'Guru Granth' with the Guruship i.e. Guru is 'Shabad' and 'Shabad' is Guru. It was also made clear to the Khalsa that the affinity between the Khalsa and the Guru shall remain conditioned to the adherence of the Khalsa to the code of conduct prescribed by the Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh's contribution had left a deep impact on the Indian history and world civilization. Guru Gobind Singh preached the great ideals of humanitarian commitments and raised a new breed of men to protect the honour and independence of the nation and people at the cost of their lives. Guru Gobind Singh not only preserved the glorious secular heritage of India but also kept alight the torch of equality, liberty and freedom at the cost of supreme sacrifices made by his family. The institution of 'amrit' has great economic and sociological significance as well because it provided an opportunity of vertical mobility upto the highest level to the lowest of the low in the land. Sikh institutions by reinforcing the doctrine of human equality promoted oc-

cupational mobility and dissemination of new knowledge and methods. Thus, it created an environment which was conducive to rational use of manpower and hence for economic growth.

Guru Gobind Singh intended Khalsa members to live their lives as an integral part of the healthy social, political and economic set up. With this view he warned them not to use tobacco, alcohol or drugs because using these things would slow them down physically and mentally. It would also make them more vulnerable to disease and illness. Although the Sikh philosophy and way of living do not emphasize much upon the economic and materialistic aspects of the human life, but the above mentioned rules do have strong economic repercussions, as they are directly related to the 'productivity contribution' and the creation of 'human resource development' (HRD) factor in the economy. Evidence everywhere shows that the human element is basic to economic development. It is the human resource, especially the equality, character and attitude of the people which ultimately counts. The differences in economic achievement are to be found not only among different countries and different regions of the same country, but also among different communities residing in the same region. The effect of a particular religion or culture can be so pervasive for a particular community in fixing its perceptions and manipulation of natural phenomena that it can always move ahead of other communities inhabiting the same region. The achievements of the Punjabis (especially the Sikhs) in different parts of the country as well as abroad across the various professions need a special mention in this regard.

Regarding the professional and moral ethics in life, Guru advises not to gamble or steal and the Sikhs should be loyal to their husbands and wives. The family is very important for Sikhs. To help them keep these rules, Sikhs should pray everyday; they should also visit the gurdwara as often as possible, so that they can study and pray with other Sikhs. Service to the community is also very important for Sikhs. They should be prepared to give their time, energy and money to those around them. Sikhs feel they should give in this way to everyone.

Sikhism with its new and radical philosophy of life made it



obligatory for members of the Khalsa fraternity to earn their living by honest means and share their earnings with others who need help. Moreover 'the creation of Khalsa' facilitated equality of opportunity for everyone in social and material advancement exclusively on the basis of their worth. The society envisaged by Guru Gobind Singh was based on the principles of equality and justice. These commandments strengthened the foundations of the Khalsa egalitarian order. The Khalsa order also symbolized a happy union between the spiritual and temporal concerns. The emergence of Green and White revolutions in Punjab and resultant prosperity can be attributed mainly to the equalitarian revolution brought about by the Sikh Gurus as a result of which there has been greater co-ordination and co-operativeness as well as interchange of ideas, skills and technical know how among the farming community which is predominantly Sikh. Similarly, the institutions of 'daswand', as founded by the founder of the 'Khalsa', denotes voluntary parting of one tenth of one's income as the minimum amount for the cause of society. These voluntary offerings are of the nature of surplus value which can be utilized for the maintenance of community welfare projects as well as for launching of new development projects.

Therefore, it may be inferred that the process of economic development is facilitated if there is unity of purpose and cohesion in the society and there is an equality of opportunity or material and social advancement. Material progress gets a fillip when merit gets duly recognised and a direct link between effort and reward is established. The creation of 'Khalsa' strengthened those values which helps in the flowering of the human personality. These values also aim at bringing suitable changes in the socio-economic and political environment in order to make it congenial for man's growth. In this light, it may be concluded that through the 'creation of Khalsa', Guru Gobind Singh created a life-asserting, world affirming progressive, active and equalitarian religion. It is helpful to economic growth because it stresses on equality of opportunity and upon truthful and honest way of living. It also stands for justice to all and paves way for an equitable distribution of income and wealth and thus provides a conducive environment for enterprise. Therefore, in the above men-

tioned context the religion can be a great catalyst of economic progress. Further, by following the social, cultural, political and economic norms as preached by Sikh Gurus, the Sikhs can create in themselves a psyche which stands for dynamic way and innovations, the spirit of daring and adventure, and belief and determination to reach the top in new fields and fresh pastures and most importantly the height and peak of spirituality along with worldly affluence.

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# THE CREATION OF THE KHALSA- THE SAINT SOLDIER

Mahinder Singh

The tricentenary birthday of the Khalsa will be celebrated by Sikhs all over the world on the Baisakhi day in April 1999. On this day, three hundred years ago, Guru Gobind Singh the tenth and the last Guru of Sikhs appeared at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab before a huge gathering of his followers who had come from all over India and who had been specially asked to come there with their hair and beards unshorn.

The Guru drew his sword out of its scabbard and repeated, "Is there anyone here who would lay down his life for Dharma?" This was an amazing call but after some trepidation a Khatri named Daya Ram of Lahore, now in Pakistan, offered himself. He was taken into a tent nearby which had been suitably set up earlier and a little later the Guru appeared again before the gathering with his sword dripping with blood and asked for another head. This time a Jat named Dharam Das of Hastinapur, Delhi, offered himself. He too was taken into the tent and similarly with Guru's sword dripping with blood he demanded three more heads which were offered by Mohkam Chand a washerman from Dwarka (Gujarat), Sahib Chand a barber from Bidar (Karnataka) and Himmat Rai a potter from Jagannathpuri (Orissa).

Then the Guru came out of the tent along with his five 'victims' all beautifully dressed as the Guru himself in saffron dyed garments including turbans all looking exactly as himself in outer appearance, form and glow. The Guru had slaughtered he-goats instead. The Guru announced that these five persons who were called '*Panj Piyare*' (five beloved) were to be the nucleus of a new community he is going to raise which was to be called the 'Khalsa' or the pure. The Guru baptised the five beloved in a new manner. He mixed water with sugar crystals (patashas) in an iron vessel and stirred the mixture with a two-edged sword (Khanda) reciting hymns namely *Japji* of Guru Nanak, the Anand of Guru Amar Das and the Jap, the ten Swaiyyas and the Chaupai of his own compositions. So in this Khalsa which came into being on this day the leadership of the Sikh community was invested in it and the spiritual Guru of Sikhs hence forward would be only the

scripture Guru Granth Sahib.

Although the above was only a form of ceremony, yet it had deep symbolic meaning which the Guru explained later. The Khalsa took a new birth of a spiritual kind, Guru Gobind Singh as father and his wife Mata Sahib Devan as spiritual mother. The Khalsa was now to enter the arena of service to entire humanity. So the Khalsa must carry with himself or herself not only the iron will and determination represented by the steel but also humility and sweetness represented by the sugar crystals as without the latter, mere iron will could well be a dangerous thing. The Khalsa was going to become a saint-soldier or a soldier-saint. It was necessary that he should be strong both in the physical and the spiritual sense if he were to carry the heart of a lion, the same heart should possess love, humility and contentment too. The Guru said “the dagger was to turn my Sikhs into heroes and the sugar candy will foster in them the milk of human kindness”. Thus, the Guru married valour to compassion.

Thus, the Khalsa was to be a dynamic machinery, infused with a crusading spirit and devoted to God and humanity for all times to come. It was designed to generate power and strength for a struggle against every evil.

The *Panj Pyare* (five beloved) were told to kneel on their left knees and look into the Guru's eyes. This too had a symbolic meaning. They were to enter the soul of the Guru and become exactly like him. The Guru, in turn, fixed his own gaze into the eyes of each of the five to fill them with spiritual loftiness equal to his own. So the Guru rightly said, “*Khalsa mero rup hai khas*” meaning “the Khalsa is exactly like me” and “where there are five (elected) there am I”. The Guru never thought in terms of numbers but of quality only and that too of the purest variety. The emphasis always was on the purity of the soul and those pure in heart and having a universal outlook could alone be considered the Khalsa.

The five he had chosen were already ideal Sikhs, but were being further blessed by him through psychological processes. He threw showers of nectar (*amrit*) into their faces to speak “*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh*” meaning “The Khalsa belongs to God and victory is ever God's”. Then the five Sikhs took, in turn, deep draughts of nectar, five times each, from the same vessel to signify the Brotherhood of equality. So the Sikhs initiated were considered hav-



ing renounced their previous occupations (*krit nas*) for that of soldiering; of having severed their family ties (*kul nas*) to become the family of Guru Gobind Singh, of having rejected their earlier creeds (*dharma nas*) for the creed of the Khalsa and of having given up all ritual (*Karm nas*) save that sanctioned by the Sikh faith. So now for Sikhs all distinctions of caste or creed were gone. All of them had become brothers without distinction of high or low. They were now equal with the Guru, Guru Gobind Singh kneeling before his own disciples asked them to prepare the nectar in the same way as he had done and administer to him. Thus, the Guru turned himself into a disciple and it was for the first time in the annals of history that the Master sat at the feet of his disciples asking them to be blessed with a draught of nectar. All the five became *Singhs* (lions) and the Guru whose former name was Gobind Rai after baptismal became Gobind Singh. Then Guru Gobind Singh enjoined Sikhs to wear long hair (*Kesh*), a '*kangha*' (comb) to keep the hair clean, a '*Kachera*' (a knicker-shaped underwear) a '*Kara*' (bracelet of steel) on the wrist and a *Kirpan* (sword) hanging on the left side as a weapon of defence and hope. Thus the Khalsa Brotherhood was created as an organised unit with its distinctiveness. Religion, according to Guru Gobind Singh, was not merely a set of views and doctrines but it is a way of life to be lived and practised. The Guru was aware that the need was of an army of soldier-saints who could effectively fight the forces of evil, exploitation of the poor and communal hatred. And the five symbols are necessary as means to promote moral and spiritual development. Guru Gobind Singh said, "a Sikh is dear to me not because of his name or form but because of his character" and he wrote in his autobiography, the *Bachittar Natak*, "those who put on false garbs, have no worth at all, in the estimation of God's men. Know ye all, once for all, that no one can find the Supreme Being through a false exterior". The Guru also had once dramatised for ridicule a show presenting a donkey clothed in the skin of a lion, let loose to frighten other animals. The donkey was pursued for sometime till it brayed out of fear and was then recognised. The Guru also explained that the distinctiveness which he gave to his Sikhs is not exclusiveness and in his composition the '*Akal Utsat*' that all men though appearing different under different influences were essentially the same. All have the same eyes, ears, bodies, and builds, all are made of the same elements - earth, air, fire and water and therefore should

be recognized as equal. He said “*manas ki jat sab ekai hi pachanbho*” - recognise the whole mankind as one. The glory of Sikhism is its universality which has always worked to knit diversity in caste, creed or race into one unit. To think in a small way about communal representation in this or that form cuts at the very roots of Sikhism and is wholly inconsistent with what it stands for. He said if religions degenerate into communal groups quarrelling with one another, they become a curse instead of a boon. It may also be stated that the Order of the Khalsa which Guru Gobind Singh had formed in 1699 A.D., its form and organisation were not born all at once, but they crystallised over time through a process of evolution. Guru Nanak, the founder and the first Guru of Sikhs 1469-1539 A.D. was also a critic of tyranny. He was the first known Indian poet who called India, Hindustan and termed the Muslim rulers of the age "butchers with long knives and agents of darkness engulfing the lights of law and order". The next nine Gurus in succession consolidated the political critique as well as the religious doctrine by adopting institutional measures of great symbolic and functional significance. The doctrine was consolidated in the form of the *Adi Granth* by Guru Arjan Dev 1581-1606 A.D. and the institutional defence against the abuse of state power was consolidated in the form of the *Khalsa Panth* by Guru Gobind Singh. So, what Guru Gobind Singh achieved was the logical culmination of the process that was started by Guru Nanak himself. So it is rightly said that the sword of Guru Gobind Singh contained the steel provided by Guru Nanak.

Therefore, the 300th anniversary celebrations of the birth of the Khalsa should be held by all. In India the preparations are already afoot. There is a race between the Punjab State Government and the *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC)* to steal the show. The State Government of Punjab has already set up a high level committee with the Chief Minister S. Parkash Singh Badal as its chairman. It is felt that Sardar Badal should look after the development of the holy city of *Anandpur Sahib* and raising of the heritage memorial there. It is reported that the State Government have already acquired the service of a world-renowned Israeli artist for designing the memorial at Anandpur Sahib. The SGPC chief has already sent an invitation to the US President Mr. Bill Clinton for participation in the celebrations of the birth of Khalsa. It is also being planned that



five processions would begin from all five places including Lahore from where Guru Gobind Singh's "*Panj Piyares*" had hailed. The five processions from Lahore, Bidar, Jagannathpuri, Dwarka and Delhi would converge at Anandpur Sahib close to the Baisakhi day in 1999 AD and participate in a world Sikh Conference. An international conclave under the leadership of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee is also being planned in which leaders and heads of States will be invited to deliberate on issues which are of topical concern to the humanity.

# GURU GOBIND - A NATION BUILDER

Dr. Gurcharan Singh Aulakh

The saga of Sikh Gurus inspires human-beings to have an abiding faith in the supremacy of man and oneness of God. It is a saga of unbroken record of search for truth, a struggle for equality and liberation. Guru Nanak, the first Guru, (1469-1539 A.D.) laid the foundations of the Sikh faith. It took two hundred years for the seed to grow and fructify.

When Guru Nanak appeared on the threshold of history, the state of Hinduism was utterly deplorable. The caste system had killed all freedom. The Hindus were so degraded that they fell prey to servility and self-abasement, had lost all self-respect. They were not allowed to bear arms, had all but lost that natural manliness which alone could promise a better future.<sup>1</sup> This cult of construction had blurred the vision of man, blocked the afflorescence of his personality and hogged down the progress. On the other hand a human storm in the shape of Islam swept over India with such a fierce and consistent velocity that it staggered the decadent Hindu Nationalism. The fanaticism of invaders, followed by the unjust Sultanate period and oppressive Mughal Monarchy is full of the blood-stained annals. This period was of suppression of Hindus with sword. It divided the Indians into two warring camps -Hindus v/s Muslims. During such heart-rending times, Guru Nanak followed by nine successors appeared on the scene and gave solace and courage to the depressed and oppressed. They wrought a miracle with their words, actions, and examples of supreme sacrifice.

Surprisingly, the people who were fighting for religion, had left no trace of religion. "The popular religion about the time of Nanak's birth was confined to peculiar forms of eating and drinking, peculiar ways of bathing and painting the forehead and other such mechanical observation. The springs of the true religion had been choked up by the weeds of unmeaning ceremonials, debasing superstitions, the selfishness of the priests and indifference of the people".<sup>2</sup> The position of the Muslims was no better. The Qazis and Mullahs were

1. Duncan Greenless, The Gospel of the Guru Granth

2. Gokal Chand Narang. Transformation of Sikhism, p.20



hypocrites and corrupt. The rulers were interested only in oppression. They were partisan and were dreaming of converting 'Dar-ul-Harh' into "Dar-ul-Islam". During this antagonism, man was lost. No wonder, Guru Nanak proclaimed: "There is no true Hindu; there is no true Muslim". All were hypocrites. In the words of Sewaram Singh, "Hindu had ceased to be Hindu and Muhammadan had ceased to be Muhammadan".<sup>3</sup>

The people of India, at that time, had fallen, and had to be dragged out of marsh. This could be done only by the formation of one Nation which had not existed in India for a millennium. This onerous task was to be performed, for two centuries, by the ten Sikh Gurus. Guru Nanak laid the foundations with 'Nirmal Panth'<sup>4</sup> and Guru Gobind Singh completed the 'super-structure' with the creation of the "Khalsa Panth".

What Nanak claimed was liberty from prescribed trammels, equality before God, and the Fraternity of Mankind. The practical application of the doctrine, thus taught, led to the formation of new nationality. The basic doctrines of Sikh principles and practices - *Sangat*, *Pangat* and welfare of all (*Sarbat da Bhala*) were pointing to the new directions. His successors grew hedges to protect the seeds planted by Guru Nanak and the fifth Guru by his sacrifice set the noblest example of courage in resisting the wrong and high handed policy of fanatic Mughal emperor-Jehangir - who represented the mightiest power on the earth.

Khuswant Singh rightly observes, "Aryan's blood became the seed of the Sikh church as well as of the Punjabi Nation."<sup>5</sup> Besides, two of his other achievements were (i) compilation of the *Adi Granth* (ii) The development of *Masand* system. The compilation of the *Adi Granth* was of the profoundest significance as it will remain a sun and moon of Sikh religion and nation for all times to come. Since then, no personal Guru has any relevance in Sikh socio-religious system. But the *masand* system, in due course of time became effected as the *masands* grew unscrupulous and corrupt. Guru Hargobind kept them under discipline. He also followed a new programme and policy. His armed satine, erection of Akal Takhat and wearing of two swords was a challenge to the

3. Sewaram Singh, *The Divine Master*, p.8

4. Bhai Gurdas, Waran, (published by S.G.P.C. Amritsar, 2nd edition 1994, Var 1, Pauri 45, p.23

5. Khushwant Singh: *A History of the Sikhs*. Vol.I, p.62

authority of fanatical Mughal emperor - it was an assertion of supernational autonomy, and of freedom from all fear and despotic rule. Guru Hargobind's policy was not different from his predecessors. He only added lustre of the sword to the torch lit by Guru Nanak.

During the ministries of Guru Har Rai, Harkrishan and Tegh Bahadur, the *Masands* grew more dishonest and indisciplined. The collateral dissenters also played in the hands of the rulers and the Mughal tyranny reached its climax. As a result of his bigotry, Aurangzeb became terror to the non-Muslims. "The persecution of the Hindus was the most momentous feature of Aurangzeb's reign".<sup>6</sup> At this critical period, Guru Tegh Bahadur came forward to save *tilak* and *janeu*. Guru Gobind Singh says :

He protected their tilak and Janeu;

In this Kali age, he performed a grand deed;

He made the supreme sacrifice for the sake of the men of faith.

He gave his head, but uttered not a groan."<sup>7</sup>

The Guru's sacrifice was a self-sought martyrdom. It was a sacrifice for religious toleration and freedom of worship.

The tenth master, Guru Tegh Bahadur's son and successor, was placed amongst unprecedented difficulties. He faced dissensions within and dangers from outside. For this, he had to make preparations for about 20 years. He wielded sword to challenge Mughal Empire. He outlawed the dissenters from Sikh fold. He abolished the *Masand* System. He created a nation out of chaotic conditions and antagonised the Hindus and Muslims alike. He performed the deeds which are not less than miracles. The story of Sikh Panth to Khalsa Panth is history.

Guru Gobind Singh's life is unparalleled in history and his story is a veritable cosmic drama. During the forty two years of life (1666-1708 AD) he did what no man could do and none had done in the entire history of mankind. He was a multi-faceted genius — a poet, a warrior, a philosopher, a redeemer, a scholar, a reformer, a revolutionary, a leader and a builder of men — all in one. The appraisal of his work and achievement is beyond human intellect.

He put a halt to the proselytising wave of Islam, he urged the Hindus to shake off the supremacy of the Brahmin and outclassed and

6. S.R.Sharma, Mughal Empire in India, p.286

7. Dasam Granth, (published by Panjabi University, Patiala 1985) Part I, p.70



outlawed the rival collateral dissenters who were a challenge from within. He demolished the citadel of 'Masands' who were destitute of the saintly qualities and had become dishonest, tyrannical and corrupt. He gave an entirely new shape, a new identity to '*Sikh Panth* or *Nirmal Panth*' of Guru Nanak and built the edifice of '*Khalsa Panth*'. In this special sense, he was a builder of a Nation. The distinctive features of the Sikhs make them unique and the qualities of Head, Heart and Hand make Khalsa envy of every creed. Thus, Guru Gobind has truly been called the builder "par excellence".

Guru Gobind Singh created Khalsa on the first of Baisakh (March 30, 1699) at Anandpur on the banks of Satluj where a large number of Sikhs had assembled.<sup>8</sup> This single deed was singular in ways more than one. With this superb action he fired their imagination with a new zeal, and with his psychological prognosis of their society. He gave them a new purpose and mission and freed them from the trammels of traditionalism, clutches of caste, class, creed, clan, profession and region.

He called the Sikhs one by one and demanded their heads. This stunned the gathering with stupor and fear. On the third call came forward one Daya Singh, Sobti Khatri of Lahore with folded hands in supplication. Then came Dharam Das, a jat of Delhi; Mohkam Chand, a washerman of Dwarka; Himmat Rai, a cook or Jhiwar of Jagan Nath; and last of all came forward Sahib Chand, a barber of Bidar. Each time the Guru seized the Sikh by arm and took him into the enclosure nearby where five goats had been kept tied. None knew about this. Each time the Guru killed a goat and came out with the sword drenched in blood. This spread panic and many timid fellows left the place out of fear and consternation.<sup>9</sup> The five, who volunteered for sacrifice came to be called '*Five Beloved*' and formed the nucleus of the Khalsa.

Then the Guru proceeded to initiate "*five beloved ones*". He abandoned the traditional system of '*Charan-Pahul*' by which the neophytes were asked to drink water touched by the toe of the Guru. Instead, he administered '*Khande-ka-Pahul*' - water stirred with double-edged dagger along with recitation of the Five Hymns - *Japji*, *Jap Sahib*,

8. Sainapat, Sri Gur Sobha, Panjabi University, Patiala, p.78

9. Koer Singh, Gur Bilas, Panjabi University, Patiala, 1988, Edition II, p.129

*Anand Sahib, Swayyas and Chaupai.* The water in an iron vessel was sweetened by putting sugar-crystals. The *Amrit* or nectar, thus, prepared was administered to the Five-Beloved from the same bowl to signify their initiation into the casteless brotherhood of Khalsa. This baptism symbolised a rebirth by which the initiated were considered as having renounced their previous occupation, previous family ties, their earlier creeds and clans as well as previous religious rites and rituals. Thus after *Krit Nash, Kul Nash, Dharam Nash* and *Karam Nash* a new man was born, nay, a New Nation emerged.

This new man, the Khalsa, was to wear Five K's - *Keshas* (long unshorn hair), *Kanga* (comb), *Kirpan* (Swords), *Kara* (steel bracelet) and *Kachh* (undershort). The Khalsa was also to follow the code of conduct faithfully such as not to cut any hair, not to smoke, not to touch alcohol or intoxicants, not to eat any meat except '*Jhatka*', not to molest Muslim woman or any other woman and strictly remain monogamous. He was asked never to enjoy, even in dream, the bed of a woman other than his own wife. Last of all he was ordained to tie a turban. The recitation of five hymns was to form a part of his daily regime.

After administering *Amrit* the Guru stood up in supplication and begged the '*Five Beloved*' to baptise him in the same way as he had baptised them. They were astonished at the strange request but he made them understand that he wanted to be one of them. He brought them home the truth that there should be no distinction between the Guru and his Sikhs. The Guru took baptism at the hands of the '*Five Beloved ones*' and he became Gobind Singh from Gobind Rai. Thus Guru became a teacher as well as a disciple.<sup>10</sup>

Thus Guru merged himself in the Khalsa and the whole body of the Khalsa was invested with the dignity of Gurudom.

The Guru had a deep sense of history, he knew the value of socio-cultural cohesion and organisational solidarity as well as psychological effect of this miracle. He was out to make a new crop of men, regenerated and liberated. He asked the Khalsa not to have any connection or intercourse with the dissenters, idol worshippers and all

10. Bhai Gurdas II, waran, (published by S.G.P.C. Amritsar, Edition VI, 1954, p.436)



those who had fallen away from the tenets and principles enunciated by Guru Nanak. The *Minas* (descendants of Pirthi Chand) Dhirmalias (descendants of Dhirmal, a son of Baba Gurditta) *Ram Raiyas* (descendants of Ram Rai, eldest son of Guru Har Rai), *Masands* and idolators were kept out of the fold of Khalsa Panth. They were also asked to have no link with daughter-killers, those who remove their hair and follow the practices of Hindus. In fact, Guru Gobind Singh laid the foundation of a new nation, which was to shine in full radiance in the form of *Khalsa Panth*.

His ideal the Khalsa -was in his own words, the worshipper of one God:

He who repeateth night and day His 'Name' Whose enduring light is unquenchable, Who bestoweth not a thought on any but one God, Who hath full love and confidence in God, Who putteth not faith even by mistake in fasting or worshipping cemeteries, places of cremation or jogi's places of sculpture, who only recognizes one God and not pilgrimages, alms, the non-destruction of life, Hindu penances or austerities, And in whose heart the light of the perfect one shineth, he is recognised as a pure member of Khalsa.<sup>11</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh had singular faith in his creation. He extented the Khalsa in hyperbolic terms:

All the battles I have won against tyranny,  
I have fought with the devoted backway of these people,  
Through them only I have been able to bestow gifts,  
By their kindness, the store houses have been filled,  
I owe my education to them  
By their kindness were the enemies killed  
I owe my glorious existence to them  
Otherwise ordinary men like me are found in millions.  
My wealth, my body, my soul, my head  
All that is in my house is dedicated to them."<sup>12</sup>

This was the crowning achievement of Guru Gobind Singh. It was a fulfillment of dream and completion of a mission. The creation of the Khalsa, on the one hand, marked the completion of the evolution of the

11. Guru Gobind Singh, *swayyas* (Dasam Granth) Translation by Meleod, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol V pp.261-263

12. *Swayyas of "Khalsa di Mahma"* p.77 given in *Gurmat Sudhakar* Translated by Dr. J.S. Grewal and S.S. Bal Guru Gobind Singh, p.122

Sikh Sangat and on the other hand, the Guru created a team of mankind always at war and ready to destroy the evil, wielding sword protecting righteousness. Thus, the creation of the Khalsa was such a supreme act which entitled him, to be called a builder 'par-excellance'.

Guru Gobind was very clear about his mission. His mission was to challenge tyranny in all its forms and annihilate it. He pleaded with the Almighty:

Grant me the boon,  
I crave with folded hands  
That when the end of my life cometh  
I may die fighting in the battlefield.<sup>13</sup>

He sang full-throatedly the song of the Sabre for the related steel and action to the primordial and ultimate principle of creation. The Guru was not an advocate of militancy. His aim was to shake the empire of loot, larceny and lies. And, he resorted to force only when all other means—appeal, advice, argument and persuasion — had been of no avail. He wrote in the 'Epistle of Victory' a letter addressed to Aurangzeb.

When all else hast failed,  
Thou shalt rightfully lift the sword.<sup>14</sup>

Though Khalsa was literally baptised in the shadow of the sword, yet it would be a great mistake to associate Khalsa with wanton wars and bloodshed. Guru used sword only when he saw that there was no other way to breathe life into the dead masses of Punjab.

Let there be no misunderstanding, Guru Gobind Singh was an embodiment of peace, equality, fraternity, courage and love. He was enemy of hatred, cowardice and cunningness. His message is eternal - it inspires us to be courageous and loving:-

Of all creation and protection  
the Sword is the very source,  
I sing of its glory and take refuge,  
within its force.  
God can't be found by practising  
silence or worshipping the dead.  
Not by wearing holy garments,  
or by shaving your head

13. Guru Gobind Singh, Dasam Granth Part II, (Punjabi University, Patiala 1978 p.798

14. Puran Singh, prof. , Guru Gobind Singh, Chandigarh p.27



By wearing prayer heads  
He can't be attained,  
Or by circumcision  
or if long hair is maintained.  
Truth is all that I say:  
Surrender to God is the only way.  
He cannot be found below or above.  
But can be reached only through love<sup>15</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh was for love. He was love. He built the bridges of amity, love and friendship. To that end he wielded the sword and pen with equal force and felicity. To that end, he opposed tooth and nail all those who advocated privileges and not equality. His struggle against Hindu rulers of the hill states around Anandpur and his resolve to cut the Gordian knot by fighting and defeating the Mughal forces at Anandpur, Chamkaur and Mukatsar were the different acts of the same drama.

With his actions and inspiration he evolved a new society. When he began his work, there was no such thing as a Hindu nation. Since the tenth century Punjab failed to produce any figure of note who could put check to the swarming armies and teeming enemies from the North-West. It was Guru Goibind Singh who forged the sword with which he was to fight. No doubt, Guru Nanak had elevated the morales of the Punjabi Hindus, but it was reserved for the exceptional genius of men inspired by the high political aspirations. The Guru made nationalism their religion. It was an article of faith in the new creed. Thus, the creation of Khalsa was epoch-making event in the history of India. A new nation was born out of ashes and lotus took birth in the muddy waters. The raising of the Indian spirit from lowness and servility which had dominated it for centuries brought about a great change in the tone of the national character. Even those people who had been considered as the dregs of humanity were changed as if by magic into something rich and strange, the like of which India had never seen before.<sup>16</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh was the architect of the Sikh nation and Punjabi nationalism. His aim in creating the Khalsa was to build up a nation of the purified who should be free from the evils of religion and society. It

15. Dr. Swami Rama, author of Cosmic Drama has rendered these lines of swayyas of Guru Gobind Singh in beautiful English verse.

16. Principal Tega Singh, Essays in Sikhism, Punjabi Language Department, Edition 1988, p.26

was a grand deed of history which brought a revolutionary change in men's minds. By the single stroke 'he effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people, and filled them with a lofty although fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy.'<sup>17</sup>

The foundation was laid by Guru Nanak and his successors strengthened the foundations of faith by sowing the seeds of some kind of organisation among the Sikhs. Their actions can be likened to the hedge planted to protect the tender plants. Guru Angad and Amardas organised and elaborated *langar* system and introduced new customs; Guru Ram Dass laid the foundations of the future greatness of the Sikhs as a nation in founding the town of Amritsar whereas Guru Arjan by the compilation of *Adi Granth* enabled the seed sown by Guru Nanak to blossom into fullness. The martyrdoms of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur turned the whole tenor of Sikh faith. The pacifist saints had become militant fighters. Under the tenth master Sikhism was invested with new outer symbols and the future nation was born. The initiation of the Khalsa with five K's is history's miracle. Guru Gobind Singh gave the Sikhs an identity which is their strength. No wonder, "today Sikhism can stand the shock of modern thought and remains unaffected by new challenges."<sup>18</sup> This is the contribution of Guru Gobind Singh who is rightly acclaimed the nation-builder.

17. J.D.Cunningham, A History of the Sikhs, p.75

18. General-O-More- Indian studies, London, p.44-64



# A DIVINELY SANCTIONED ORDER FOR ALL TIMES — THE KHALSA

Dr. Jasjit Singh Walia

## Why a New Order

In order to understand the *genesis of Khalsa* it is necessary that we examine and critically evaluate the social, political and religious conditions widespread in India during the period of fifteenth to seventeenth century. The carnage and the atrocities being meted upon the Hindu people starting with the Mughal king Babar were most barbaric. Babar even jailed Guru Nanak Dev, because the latter had raised his voice against former's ruthless brutalities. Voicing his innermost concern, Guru Nanak addresses God through the hymn <sup>1</sup>:

ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕੁਰਲਾਨੇ, ਤੈ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ

*aitee maar paiee kurlaanai, tai kee darad na aaya*

“So much beating was inflicted, (that people screamed), oh God, didn't you feel compassion”.

The circumstances became even more savage during the times of other Sikh Gurus, when brutal treatment to non-muslims intensified. So much so that Guru Arjan Dev was made to sacrifice his life by sitting on a red hot iron skillet for raising his voice against the tyranny of the ruling government. His martyrdom prevented a massive genocide, and taught his disciples two important lessons, first, to accept Divine Will without any resentment, and second, to be ready and willing to sacrifice life for a righteous cause. It was Guru Hargobind who reiterated Guru Nanak's philosophy, namely, the concepts of human rights, equality, peace, justice, freedom to worship freely, and truthful living as the fundamental rights of all human beings. He was convinced that to worship freely without any fear of the government one needs “*Shakti*” (physical prowess) and “*Bhagti*” (spiritual power). He emphasized that the former is simply to protect and safeguard the oppressed people so that they can pray freely without state fear and/or interference. Precisely for this reason he laid the foundation of Akal Takhat to demonstrate its key role as the seat of physical power for the protection of the place of spiritual power, the Harmandir Sahib. Similarly, Guru Tegh

Bahadur, through his martyrdom (decapitation) demonstrated his firm commitment to the cause of saving the Hindu people from their mass conversion to Islam. At the time of Guru ji's execution, his son, Gobind Rai was about nine years old. The adolescent Gobind had learnt from his parents that his great grand father, Guru Arjan Dev, was likewise tortured and executed in 1606 by the then governor of Lahore in concurrence with the Mughal rulers. No wonder, even at this tender age he was fully convinced that a brand new course of action was the need of the times to combat relentless state persecution.

**Imagine Yourself Living Under Following Scenario:**

Let us visualize India in the year 1675 under the rule of emperor Aurangzeb when Gobind Rai with his own eyes observed the most outrageous inhuman conditions prevalent at that time. Imagine for a moment that you are an eyewitness to the following scenario:

- you are not allowed to express your views
- you are not allowed to worship freely
- you are not allowed to raise your voice
- you are being denied your basic human rights
- you are being denied justice
- you are being subjected to unparalleled indignation
- you are being subjected to unprovoked brutal atrocities
- you are being terrorized for not converting to Islam
- your places of worship are being looted and razed
- the merciless beating, rape, and killing of your innocent women
- the pathetic plight of disheartened, discouraged, and helpless Hindu people
- your own Hindu rulers of small states cooperating with the Mughal empire just to save their faces and chairs
- your Guru's father, great grand father, and many of their devotees like Bhais Dayala, Mati Das, Sati Das and Mani Singh being tortured to death.

**Divine Command to Gobind Rai:**

The sad truth of those times was that hundreds of years of slavery had demoralized the spirit of Hindu people so much that their tongue was virtually sealed to raise any objections. They were indeed terrified



weaklings. To make matters worst, Aurangzeb, the most zealous of all Mughal rulers and the Emperor of Delhi at that time was determined to fulfil his dream to make India an Islamic state (Dar-ul-Islam). He was therefore using all kinds of ruthless tactics to accomplish his goal. Unfortunately, almost all the Hindu masses accepted their horrible persecution as a fait-accomplis. Gobind Rai considered these conditions not only unjust but also evil and sinful, and therefore unforgivable in God's court. No wonder, he became totally committed to defend the innocent people from state approved, ordered, and executed mass scale terrorism, and in turn, to spread the religion of righteousness and truthful living. This was indeed a Divine Command to Gobind Rai. He knew in his heart, through divine revelation, that to fight the mighty Mughal empire he had to raise the psyche, the mind, the heart, and the physical stamina of the terror-stricken people through a novel and revolutionary spirit. Indeed, he believed that his birth in human form was ordained, sanctioned and blessed by God almighty so that he would become the saviour for the cause of righteousness. Surely thus, in Bachittar Natak, the wonderous drama, he has succinctly described his mission in this world He writes<sup>2</sup>:

ਹਮ ਇਹ ਕਾਜ ਜਗਤ ਮੈਂ ਆਇ, ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਗੁਰ ਦੇਵ ਪਠਾਇ  
ਜਹਾ ਤਹਾ ਤੁਮ ਧਰਮ ਬਿਥਾਰੋ, ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਦੋਖੀਅਨ ਪਕਿਰ ਪਛਾਰੋ (42)

*hum eh kaaj jagut moe aayai, dharam het Gurdev pathayai jahaa tahaa tum dharam beethaaro, dusht dokhiun pakar pachhaaro(42)*  
“I have come into this world for this purpose, Gurdev (God) has sent me for defending righteousness, and to propagate righteousness here and there, and to seize and destroy the evil and sinful”.

### Gobind Rai's Novel Course of Action:

Gobind Rai started holding discourses with the common people of India to infuse a new kind of nationalistic spirit in them. For example, while conversing with an elite group of Brahmins from Mathura he said, "Oh custodians of Hindu religion and Hindu community, instead of being fearful of the enemy, face and fight the enemy. How can millions of you people become slave to a foreign power? You are descendants of Sri Krishan and Ram Chander. The former fought against tyranny and injustice, and the latter invaded Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and captured it for a righteous cause, namely to free Sita

from bondage. You are progeny of great warriors. Become brave and pick up the sword. Don't be afraid of death. Dying is the truth, and why not smilingly become martyrs rather than being killed by the enemy as cowards. Develop both spiritual and physical power, because the fence for freedom to worship freely lies in strength or power.

(ਭਗਤੀ ਦੀ ਵਾੜ ਹੈ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ)

It was through similar discourses with the common people that Gobind Rai had awakened their psyche, and thus aroused in them an incredible spirit of sacrifice and genuine loyalty for a noble national cause. He firmly believed as a divine revelation that righteousness, truth, equality, justice and just plain goodness must not be allowed to be destroyed by the forces of evil, terror and falsehood. He was highly motivated, fully determined, and totally committed, with an inexhaustible amount of energy, enthusiasm and enormous will-power, to accomplish his divinely sanctioned goal, if necessary, through force. In *Zafar Nama* (epistle of victory) written in persian he wrote to Aurangzeb detailing the mischievous and treacherous acts committed by him and his government. In it he wrote:

*Chu kar az hama, hilate afar guzasht*

*Halet ast burdan ba ahamsheer dast*

“When all means have failed, it is righteous to draw the sword”.

It is clear that Gobind Rai abhorred the concept that might is right, instead he firmly believed that the right cause is the mightiest of all. His immediate goal was to infuse a new spirit, a new blood, a new strength, a new courage, a new confidence, a renewed conscience, a renewed faith, and a renewed nation amongst the people. Indeed the time was now right for Gobind Rai to create a brand new “*Order*” from amongst his disciples, whose members, he envisioned, will be both saints and soldiers.

**Prelude to a New Order:**

Gobind Rai, now residing at Anandpur Sahib (*city of joy*), was being hailed as the flame of eternal divine light and God-sent saviour of mankind. A large number of Sikhs from all over India would visit Guru ji to pay their respects. One such Sikh was Bhai Lakhi, who had cremated Guru's father's decapitated body. Gobind Rai knew the whole episode, but wanted the Sikh congregation to hear it first hand. Bhai Lakhi stated, as he was moving a caravan of wagons



through Chandni Chowk, Delhi, there was a thick dark dust storm which made visibility very poor. He was thus able to "carry revered Guru Tegh Bahadur's body into his thatched hut at Rakaab Ganj in Delhi. The hut was set ablaze and thus the Guru's body got cremated." On hearing this episode the Sikhs in congregation could not control their tears and their anger. Gobind Rai then asked, Bhai Lakhi, tell us why any of the other Sikhs in Delhi did not come forward to retrieve the body. Bhai Lakhi responded, "Dear God in human form, you know the people were simply terrified and were scared of king's vitreous anger. No one therefore dared to come forward to pick the body for fear of reprisal from the government. It was only through natural intervention of dark clouds, and through your grace, that I was able to pick up the body." The Sikhs present in the congregation were deeply pained, and became truly inspired to face the unjust empire with force to prevent further persecution of innocent people. It was at this time that Gobind Rai remarked",<sup>3</sup> "I am going to organize a panth (group that will be conspicuous all over the world." Wherever and whenever lakhs of people of the world would assemble, and even if one Sikh should join them, he will be as prominent amongst them as would one swan be amongst herons, a peacock amongst the kites, a powerful horse amongst donkeys, and a lion amongst the deer".

#### Establishment of the New Order: An Historic Act:

Gobind Rai meditated and reflected on the concept of establishing a New Order for eleven months and eleven days before taking the historic step. It is specially meaningful to note that the foundation of this most novel, divinely sanctioned, Order in the history of the world, was laid through deep meditation and an intense personal reflection. Guru ji sent messages to all his Sikhs throughout India to come for a very special Baisakhi celebration at Anandpur Sahib on March 30, 1699. It is worth pointing out as to why Baisakhi day was selected. This is the month when God's thumb prints appear in nature as new vegetation, blooming flowers, rejuvenated leaves, and spring beauty manifests all around us. More importantly, it was on Baisakhi day, 1499, when Guru Nanak Dev held its first "*Sat Sangh*" (holy congregation) with Bhai Bala and Mardana, who remained his constant companions through-

out his missionary journeys. amazingly, hundreds of thousand (estimate<sup>4,5</sup> varies from 20,000 to 80,000) people came from different parts of the country. It was about noon time and every one in the congregation was looking forward to have the holy vision of Guru Gobind Singh. Soon after Guru ji appeared on the dais in a saffron coloured dress with a blue waistband and sporting a large sword on his left side. Admiringly, he welcomed every one with the greeting *Sat Sri Akal* (Truth, God is eternal). Holding his glittering sword he called aloud<sup>6</sup>, oh my dear Sikhs, ਕੋਈ ਹੈ ਸਿਖ ਬੇਟਾ ਜੋ ਕਰੈ ਸੀਮ ਭੈਟਾ that is, is there any Sikh son who can offer his head (to the sword). A sudden silence ensued. The people started murmuring and wondering why the Guru needs a head. Much confusion followed. No one realized that Guru ji might be testing their allegiance through such a call. There was pin drop silence and most people were just stunned at this demand. Gobind Rai renewed the call with an even more roaring voice. As he was completing his appeal, Daya Ram approached Guru ji with clasped hands, bowed in reverence, and remarked, "Guru ji my head is at your disposal." He was warmly escorted to a nearby tent by Guru ji. Soon afterward, from inside the tent, first a sound of Waheguru was heard followed by a noise of sword striking something (perhaps a goat). Guru ji now walked out of the tent with bloodied sword and reiterated his earlier demand for another head. Observing the blood on the sword, many people, assuming that Daya Ram had been killed, were frightened and some even started to leave. As he was reissuing his appeal, another devotee, Dharam Das, came forward obeying the call to offer his head. He was likewise taken into the tent by Guru ji and the first process repeated. This unusual call was made three more times. Surely, three more ardent Sikhs, Mohkam Chand, Sahib chand and Himat Rai heeded the invitation. Guru ji re-enacted the same drama each time inside the tent.

Few minutes later, Guru ji emerged out from the tent along with his most loyal five Sikhs all dressed in saffron garments with blue scarves tied around their waists. Indeed all the five looked alike with cheerful faces radiating a divinely glow resulting from the satisfaction that they had passed their Guru's test.<sup>7</sup> The congregation was ecstatic and felt greatly relieved to notice that the five Sikhs who were taken inside the tent were not only well and alive, but now had a special radiance on their faces. Every one in the congregation felt so much overjoyed



that the whole place was reverberating with the greetings of Sat Sri Akal.

### New Baptismal Amrit Ceremony

Shortly afterwards, Guru ji speaking to the congregation remarked, oh my dear Sikhs, you may recall how Guru Nanak Dev judged his devotees and only Bhai Lehna had emerged as the successful one, who subsequently became Guru Angad Dev. Mine was a similar test, but not to select a successor, but to create a new order. I wish to infuse in them a renewed kind of life full of supreme courage, hitherto unknown and unobserved amongst the people of the land. He thus decided to *baptize them not by the usual method of "charunpahul", but through an entirely new technique*<sup>8</sup>. Guru ji poured water in a steel bowl and asked the five tested Sikhs to sit around the bowl with Guru ji in the middle. Guru ji now requested each of the five ones, in turn, to recite Jap ji of Guru Nanak, Jaap Sahib, Swaeyaas, and Chowpae of Guru Gobind, and Anand Sahib of Guru Amar Das. During the recitation of the hymns Guru ji kept stirring the water with a Khanda, a double edged sword to make the water holy. The Khanda was intended to impart internal and eternal inner strength, courage, and power. When Guru ji's beloved wife, Sahib Kaur, affectionately called Mata ji, heard about this new ceremonial act, she promptly brought some *patashaas* (sugar crystals) and put into the holy water so it would not only impart gallantry, but also compassion and kindness of the heart. The sweet holy water thus prepared was divinely blessed and consecrated "*Amrit*" (*nectar*)<sup>9</sup>.

After the *Amrit* was ready, Guru ji baptized the five faithful ones by making them sip the holy nectar from the same vessel, thereby reiterating Guru Nanak's philosophy of equality of all human beings. As each one drank the divine nectar, Guru ji uttered the greetings, "*Waheguru jee kaa Khalsa, Waheguru jee kee fateh*", that is, Khalsa is of God, and victory is to God. He then proclaimed that a new *Order* (nation) under the banner of *Khalsa Panth* is now born, and these blessed five Sikhs standing on my right and left hand sides henceforth will be called *Five Beloved Ones*<sup>10</sup>, and the last name of each one of them is being changed to *Singh* to emphasize that they will be as brave, courageous and fearless as lions. Guru ji now, with clasped

hands, requested and obtained baptism from the Five Beloved Ones, and thus became, like one of them, Gobind Singh. What a glorious act, where the disciples were raised to the status of supreme Guru and from whom the Guru himself wished to become one of them. Subsequently, an estimated<sup>10</sup> over 20,000 Sikhs willingly and joyously received the *Amrit*, became *Singhs*, and part of *Khalsa Panth*.

### Gobind Singh's First Sermon to Khalsa Panth

It is at this time that Guru Gobind Singh is said<sup>11</sup> to have addressed the congregation of Khalsa Panth, as follows:

Five K's you will observe as a pledge of your allegiance to my ideals. You will wear unshorn hair (*kes*) like the ancient sages so you will behave as saints, a comb (*kangha*) to keep hair clean, a steel bracelet (*Kara*) to denote limitless God, an underwear (*Kachha*) to signify chastity, and a steel sword (*kirpan*) for defense.

\* You have now become *casteless*.

\* You will now act like lions, but you are not to frighten anyone,

nor are you to be fearful of anyone, or slave to anyone.

\* You will always defend the weak, and Deg (community kitchen) will be as much an essential part of your Order as Teg (the sword).

\* You will greet each other as *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji kee fateh*.

It is somewhat of an enigma that authors of *Rehitnamas* describe at length Guru's commandments<sup>12</sup> to the Sikhs, especially of five K's, yet Guru Gobind Singh's own writings do not seem to contain these instructions. His only *hymn which includes code of conduct*<sup>13</sup> for Khalsa is:

ਜਾਗਤ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ, ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ  
ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਸਜੈ, ਬ੍ਰਤ ਗੌਰ ਮੜੀ ਮਟ ਭੂਲ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ  
ਤੀਰਥ ਦਾਨ ਦਯਾ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ, ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹਿ ਏਕ ਪਛਾਨੈ  
ਪੂਰਨ ਜੋਤ ਜਗੈ ਘਟ ਮੈ, ਤਬ ਖਾਲਸ ਤਾਹਿ ਨਖਾਲਸ ਜਾਨੈ

*jaagut jot japai nis baasar, aik binaa mun naik na aanai  
pooran prem purteet sajai, brat gor marhee mut bhool na maanai  
teerath daan dayaa tap sanjam, aik binaa neh aik pachhaanai  
pooran jot jagai ghat mai, tab khaalis tah nakhaalis jaanai*

“(khalsa) meditates on eternal Light, and does not accept any one



else except One (God) in his mind. (*Khalsa*) decorates itself with perfect love and faith, and does not believe in fasts, tombs, crematorium and hermit cells even by mistake. During acts of pilgrimage, charities, compassion, austerity and self-control, *Khalsa* recognizes no one except One (God). Such a person in whose heart shines wholly Divinely radiant Light is a true and pure *Khalsa*.

It is worth nothing that in “*Sarab Loh Granth*” written by Bhai Mani Singh, a reference<sup>14</sup> is made to the importance of three K’s, namely *Kachha*, *Kes* and *Kirpaan* in the hymn:

ਕਛ ਕੇਸ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਮੁਦਰਾ, ਗੁਰ ਭਗਤਾ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਭਏ

*Kuchh kes kirpaan trai mudraa, Gur bhagtaa Raamdaas bhayai*

*Kavi (poet) Sainapat*, one of 52 poets of Guru ji, believed to be an eye-witness to the creation of *Khalsa*. In his code of conduct he writes<sup>15</sup> an injunction, on not cutting the hair and beard, and on not-smoking:

ਹੁਕਾ ਨਹੀ ਪੀਵੈ ਸੀਸ ਦਾੜੀ ਨ ਮੁੰਦਾਵੈ  
ਸੈ ਤੈ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ

*hooka nahee peevai sees dharee naa mundaavai*  
*so to Waheguru Waheguru Guru ji kaa Khalsa.*

“will not smoke, won't cut hair and beard. That will be *Khalsa* of Guru ji, hail that glorious Guru, (and) glory to God”.

It is significant to point out that in several places in our holy *Guru Granth Sahib* we read hymns containing references to hair (kes and beard). Thus Guru Amar Das writes<sup>16</sup> about beard:

ਸੇ ਦਾੜੀਆ ਸਚੀਆ, ਜਿ ਗੁਰ ਚਰਨੀ ਲਗਨਿ

*sai dhaaria suchhia, ji Gur charnee lagan*  
“true are beards which touch Guru's feet”

Likewise, Guru Arjan Dev ji remarks<sup>17</sup> about hair:

ਕੇਸਾ ਕਾ ਕਰਿ ਬੀਜਨਾ, ਸੰਤ ਚਉਰ ਢਲਾਵਉ

*kesaa kaa kar beejana, sunt chavur dhlaavoe*  
“making a fan of the hair, hover it over the saints”.

The hymns cited above along with other similar hymns in *Guru Granth Sahib* reinforce the belief that the hair (kes and beard) must

have been an integral part of most of the devotees of the earlier Sikh Gurus.

### Khalsa as Saints and as Soldiers

Thus a nation of Singhs under the *Order of Khalsa Panth* became a reality to obliterate over nine centuries of unjust rule by the Mughal kings, and to support, sustain and maintain the righteous living for all the people, irrespective of their colour, creed, caste, profession, faith or gender. A brand new infectious spirit of bravery, courage, determination and commitment was infused in the mind of the Khalsa so they will, at all times, be prepared to defend the freedom to worship freely, and to fight for liberty, equality, peace and justice for all, and not just a select few. It must be emphasized that the Guru's opposition was not to Muslim religion, or to all the families of Mughals, but only towards the oppressive rulers. The initiates of Khalsa thus became practicing saints, yet ever-ready to be the defenders of the fundamental human rights as soldiers par excellence. The mission of the new Order was to do or die for a righteous cause. It thus bestowed a brand new zeal amongst the masses, and it struck fear in the minds of adversaries. This drama instantly transformed the city of Anandpur Sahib into a capital of new Order. In establishing *Khalsa* brotherhood in a most democratic way at a time, when democracy was unheard in the world, Guru Gobind Singh fulfilled the innate universal desire for people-power. An almost miraculous transformation in the psyche of the members of Khalsa took place. Regardless of their prior caste or profession they all started to act like lions. The Guru remarked<sup>18</sup> to them, "I will call myself Gobind Singh only if I can make sparrows pounce upon hawks and tear them; only if one member of my Khalsa can face a regiment of the enemy." He decreed a five-fold philosophy<sup>19</sup> to win war against the evil and sinful rulers, which is:

ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਟਰੋ :

*shub kurmun tai kubhoo na taron*

“Never be deterred from doing noble deeds’

ਨ ਡਰੋ ਅਰਿ ਸੈ :

*na daron ari sion*

“Have no fear of the enemy”



ਨਿਸਚੇ ਕਰਿ ਅਪਨੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰੋ :

*nischai kar apnee jit karon*

“With certainty, you will win”

ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਉਚਰੋ :

*gun toe uchron*

“Recite (God’s) praises”

ਜੂਝ ਮਰੋ :

*Joojh maron*

“Die as a martyr”

No wonder their victories in the wars against powerful, but unjust, rulers for the sake of Dharma (righteousness) were hailed as victories of the oppressed people. Rightfully, then the emergence of such a valiant Khalsa Order (Panth), at that time, must be viewed as a divine intervention, since it was largely instrumental in saving India from becoming a wholly Islamic state. Indeed, the course of India’s history for all generations to come was changed forever.

On this tercentennial celebration of Khalsa *Order*, let us most enthusiastically pay our greatest possible admiration, profound debt of gratitude, and the most respectful homage to one of the greatest Saint, Philosopher, Theologian, Statesman, Humanist, and one of the finest soldiers the world has ever known, the incomparable, Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Ji, you were truly the saviour of the poor, the oppressed and the abused people. We can not thank you enough for establishing such a magnificent Universal Order for the propagation of righteousness, truth, liberty, equality and justice in this world. Guru Ji, we, the Hindus and Sikhs, owe our very existence in this world to your Divine enlightenment, supreme wisdom, superb forthrightness, and firm commitment for genuinely raising the consciousness of the people through religious, moral, ethical, social and political reforms. We all salute you over and over again with our utmost reverence, loyalty, love and allegiance. Nothing would please the Divine Spirit of Guru Gobind Singh more than to see his *Order* universally publicized and universally practiced. The best heritage we can present to our Guru ji would be to pledge our total commitment to the causes he so rightly proclaimed.

## References and footnotes

1. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Published by Shromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee, Amritsar, India, p 360.
2. G.S. Mansukhasni. "Hymns from the Dasam Granth", Hemkunt Press, New Delhi, 1980, pp 100-01.
3. Bhai Sahib Dr. Vir Singh, "Cherished Events of the Life of Dasam Guru Sri Guru Gobind Singh", Translated by Dr. Ujagar Singh, published by the Washington Sikh Center, 1988, p 33.
4. G.S. Sacha, "The Sikhs and their Way of Life", published by the Sikh Missionary Society, U.K., 1988, p 19.
5. Raghbir Singh, "Poorntaa daa Purteek Khalsa", Published by Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, India, 86, April 1985, p 23.
6. It is noteworthy that this was not the first time that a Sikh Guru had made such a call. A similar call was made by Guru Nanak Dev to test his followers when only Bhai Lahna ji was successful, who was subsequently bestowed Guruship, and was named Guru Angad Dev.
7. These five Sikhs came from different areas of India, and thus became representatives of all of India. It is most remarkable that their names personified five great virtues. Thus Daya Ram, a Khatri, came from North (Lahore), and the word Daya implies compassion, kindness and charity. The name of Dharam Das, a Jat from Central India (Rohtak, means religious and righteousness. Mohkam Chand, a washerman from Western India (Dwarka in Gujrat), stands for perseverance and determination. Himmat Rai, a water carrier from Eastern India (Jagan Nath Puri), is for courage and fortitude. And finally, Sahib Chand, a barber from South India (Bidar) signifies Grace and Honor. These five dear one's took rebirth from the congregation (sangat) and are therefore representatives of sangat. Through such a democratic process Khalsa Panth was thus established for all times to come. In a way it is the fulfilment of Guru Nanak Dev's mission as outlined in the hymn, "Punch Purwaan Punch Purdaan, Punchai Paawai Durgai Maan". (Reference 1, p 3).
8. Puran Singh, "The Ten Masters", published by Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, 1969, p 104.
9. It is pertinent to point out why the Amrit prepared this way was sanctimonious. First, on the spiritual side, the recitation of the most appropriate hymns was to invoke Divine Grace, Godly Spirit, and God's special blessings so that this ceremony will be blessed by Almighty God. Second, from the mundane point of view, the bowl and double edged sword selected for this auspicious occasion were made of pure steel, a metal of great strength. This was expected to impart deep seated inspiration, firm determination and tremendous will-power to the recipients so that they would stand up for the cause of righteousness. Third, the choice of preping Divine Nectar from sanctified water and sugar crystals was to reiterate that water is the key substance responsible for life, and sugar was to bestow sweetness of the tongue, a fine virtue, indeed.
10. K.S. Duggal, "Sikh Gurus. Their Lives and Teachings", UBS Publishers, India, 1993, p 203.
11. Dr. Gopal Singh, "A History of Sikh People", 2nd edition, Allied Publishers Ltd., 1988, pp 289-90.
12. Reference 11, Appendix VI on Rehitnamas, p 810. An interesting feature of the Hukumnamas (Edicts or Letters of Command) is that Guru Gobind Singh, even after the establishment of Khalsa, addressed both the orthodox (Singhs) and the unorthodox (Sahjdharis) as, "Tussee marai Khalsa Hoe", i.e., you are my Khalsa (reference 11, p 817). Indeed, even some of his most devoted Sikhs like Bhai Nand Lal and Bhai Kanihya never got baptized (reference 11, p 291). Dr. Gopal Singh in his book (reference 11, p 291) states that Guru Gobind Singh's own writings do not contain any reference to his commandments to Sikhs. However, the Sikhs, in general and the more orthodox in particular, passionately believe that the basic principles enunciated at the time of



initiation were indeed promulgated by Guru Gobind Singh.

13. Reference 2, p 82.

14. Amrit Keertan, published by Khalsa brothers, Amritsar, 1974, p 294.

15. Bhai Sahib Dr. Vir Singh, "Kalgidhur Chamutkaar", part II, Published by Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1981, p 447-8.

16. Reference 1, slok mahala 3, p 1419

17. Reference 1, suhi mahala 5, p. 749.

18. Reference 11, p 291.

19. Reference 2, p 106.

# THE CREATION OF THE KHALSA - THE SAINT SOLDIER

Dimpy Gurvinder Singh

Historically as well as spiritually, Guru Nanak Dev had sowed the seeds, Guru Hargobind Sahib nurtured it into a sapling and Guru Gobind Singh gave it the shape of a full-fledged tree.

Guru Nanak by protesting against the atrocities of Babar, the invader, not fearing for his life, paved the way for the future Gurus to follow the course of speaking up against torture and tyranny, oppression and injustice.

For righteousness and freedom to follow one's religious beliefs, Guru Arjan Dev Ji gave up his life, and became the first Martyr not only in the history of Punjab—the erstwhile land of five Rivers—but also in the history of India. It was upon Guru Arjan's martyrdom and prior to this his advice before being court arrested and taken to Lahore that promoted young eleven year old Guru Hargobind to take resort to arms and wearing and keeping of swords. Guru Hargobind later said:- "Arm yourself to protect your right to freely follow your religious belief. Arm yourself for self-defence and to protect the weak and lowly. '*Batam Faquiri*'- '*Zahir Amiree*'. Internally one should be a *saint* and externally one should live like a king was the exact life style of Guru Hargobind and his followers.

Similarly, Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom made him "Hind di Chadar" — India's sheltered haven—he gave up his life willingly upon the request of Brahmins of Kashmir that by doing so they would be spared from being converted to Islam.

Guru Tegh Bahadur as well as all preceding eight Gurus were against Brahmanical philosophy and Brahmins but still he voiced his protest for universal right of mankind to follow one's religious belief. His sacrifice thus became unique in the sense that he gave up his life for the beliefs of others which he did not believe an iota of it.



Guru Gobind Rai after his father's great sacrifice took leadership of the Sikhs who on the historic day of Baisakhi of 1699 with the initiation of 'Khande da Pahul' made Sikhs into Khalsas—the pure ones.

Maintaining and upkeep of unshorn *kes*h is the hallmark of a Khalsa's identity. From time immemorial, unshorn hair has been the identity of saints and saintly persons be it Jesus Christ or Rabindra Nath Tagore. If one loves the Creator and his Creation then one automatically loves and respects one's hair since it is nature's or God's gift. Does the peacock cut off its feathers, does the sheep cut off its wool, does the lion cut off its whiskers, does the fish cut off its fins? No!

Does the sun stop giving its heat, does the river stop flowing, the clouds stop moving and raining? No! Then, when hair is a natural gift then should one remove it from one's body? No! Hair is a sign of growth and Sikhs do not believe in negation of life or growth. Hence, unshorn *kes*h! "Sabat Surat"! Singhs like lions are supposed to be ferocious and fearless and ever ready to fight for righteousness and stake their selves for society at large. Unshorn hair is the sign of saints and saintliness and Guru Gobind Rai by taking *Amrit* from the *Panj Pyaras* became Guru Gobind Singh.

"Waho Waho Gobind Singh

Apae Gur Chela ..... (Poet Gurdas Ji)"

Guru Hargobind gave the sword to the Sikhs but Guru Gobind Singh went a step further—he made it compulsory for all Sikhs to wear it. He converted the sword into the Kirpan which is a conjunction of two words—*Kirpa* and *Aan*. 'Kirpa' means kindness and mercy and 'Aan' means self-respect and honour. In the Mughal period no non-Muslim had the right to carry arms or wear a turban or ride a horse. These were the privileges of the tyrannical rulers only. The upkeep of Five *Kakars* by all Sikhs was a proclamation that, "we defy your orders which is unjust and biased and we shall be ready to lay down our lives in honour of the Five *Kakars* and our faith rather than live in continued subjugation and oppression and live the life of a coward". Such moral strength and courage did the steel-stirred *Amrit*, prepared with the recitation of *Banis*, give to the Sikhs that those people of North India who were lowly and downtrodden, after Baptism rose up to such

heroic feats and accomplishments that Khalsas were commonly called. "*Ek Khalsa Sawa Lakh*". One Khalsa is equivalent to one lakh twenty five thousand persons. (What was meant by this quote was that the Khalsas were greater in terms of strength, courage and valour than their counter-parts who were non-Khalsas). One should not infer from this that the Sikhs before the creation of the Khalsa were lacking in courage or valour since during Guru Hargobind's guruship seven battles were fought (all in defence) which were won by the Sikhs.

During the time of Guru Nanak and his successors, '*Charan Pahul*' was the way of being initiated into the Sikh fold, water touched by the Guru's feet and consumed by the novice. A person who consumes thus, would be showing humility and thus, *haumai*, or I'ness would be lost. A person who is egocentric would not be able to consume water touched by someone else's feet. Only that person who is willing to lie at the Guru's feet, only that person who has the courage to put faith in God's commands spoken by the Guru would be able to do so!

In 1699, on *Baisakhi Day*, what Guru Gobind Singh did was not only change the method of Baptism from "*Charan Pahul*" to "*Khande da Pahul*" but also infuse the spirit of "*Chardi Kala*"! It was necessary to do so since Guruship was being bestowed upon the Guru Granth Sahib Ji and one cannot continue with the system of *Charan Pahul* with our Shabad Guru.

Recitation of the Bani while stirring the Double-Edged sword in the water along with the *patashas* gave the sanction of Akal Purakh (God). Double-edged sword signifies the tongue and water is the sustainer of life. Without water one cannot live and without tongue one cannot speak. Addition of *Patashas* to water signified that in life whatever one should speak with the tongue, should be sweet and good too. Tongue is the medium of our speech and without it one cannot speak and communicate the thoughts which arises in one's mind. Life would be meaningless without wisdom and intellect and the stirring denotes that one has to sharpen one's intellect, wisdom and knowledge each and everyday. Right from birth till death the Sikh has to live the life of a



disciple. The learning process never stops!

Out of twenty-four hours in a day at least two and a half hours (one-tenth widening the scope of Daswandh) should be spent upon meditation and contemplation upon Shabad Bani Guru, dwelling upon God and God's Praises. If this holy routine, *nit-nem*, is followed then the change in our lives would be tremendous and positive.

Whatever Guru Gobind Singh did was consistent with the teachings of the preceding nine Gurus and in particular, of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, who preached the equality of all, setting aside all distinctions of caste, creed and race. All humanity is one. So said the Tenth Master:

“Manas ki jaat  
sabh ek hi  
pehchanbo”

Partaking of *Amrit* from the same bowl by touching one's lips removes or rather burns away our past connections. One is reborn into either a Singh or a Kaur and all our past caste lineage and links are broken and removed. We are of the same race and sons/daughters of one God (Akal Purakh).

There cannot be two or more Gods. It becomes a contradiction.

“Gur Isar Gur Gorakh  
Brahma Gur Parbati Mai”

There may be many or several Gurus, but God is one.

“Guru ik deh bhujaiiee  
sabhna jia ka ik Data  
so main visar na jae”

“Our Guru makes us understand that God is one for all humans and may we never separate from Him”.

Guru Gobind Singh had a vision. This vision had its roots in the prophetic sayings of Guru Nanak. What our tenth Guru did was the creation of an orderly society having high character and morals. Society reformation was what he did. He can be rightly called a modern reformist with great ideas who was well ahead of his time. What one sees, i.e. alcoholism, smoking, gambling and prostitution in today's

society, be it West or East, is on the rise and our lives are being wasted away in fighting various problems and diseases arising out of such habits. Guru Gobind Singh while forming the Khalsa Brotherhood, or God's warriors, laid down the moral and physical Code of Conduct, i.e., REHAT MARYADA :-

1. Not to cut or dishonour KESHAS from any part of the body.
2. Not to eat Halal meat
3. Not to consume tobacco in any form.
4. Strictly keep sexual restraint and treat the other sex:
  - (a) If senior, as a mother/father.
  - (b) If younger, as a sister/brother or,
  - (c) As daughter/son.

Failure to strictly follow any of the above is considered as a taboo and re-baptism is a must with appropriate of punishment, if committed, intentionally.

The rest of the *Rehat Maryada* which Guru Gobind Singh laid down was all in conformity to the teachings of the previous nine Gurus. They are:-

1. Devotedly follow:
  - (a) Only Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji who is our only Guru who can lead us to the True One.
  - (b) The Path of Truth and Truthful Living.
  - (c) All the principles of Sikhism.
2. Daily do:
  - (a) Nitnem at Amrit Vela.
  - (b) Rehras, or evening prayer.
  - (c) Sohila, or night prayer before retiring to bed.
3. Respect, maintain and wear:
  - (a) *Kesh* in particular, along with other four "K's", viz., *Kanga, Kirpan, Kaccha* and *Kara*.
4. Not to mix with Deviants : Nirankaris, followers of Dhirmal or Prithi Chand or Ram Rai, users of Tobacco, killers of female infants, or other elements antagonistic to the Khalsa Panth.
5. Greet another Khalsa with:

*Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh.*



6. Always endeavour to control and curb:- Egoism, anger, greed, avarice, and attachment to Maya:

*“Kaam na krodh na lobh na moh na rog na sog na bhog na bhai hai”*.

And, above all, always remember God-’Sacha Patshah’-  
‘*Waheguru*’-in whatever you do, and donate Daswandh.

7. Should not:

- (a) Eat/Drink left - overs of the unbaptised Sikhs, (b) Dye one’s beard, (c) Give away son or daughter in marriage for a price or reward, (d) Consume intoxicants, (e) Should not hold, or be party to, any ceremony or practice contrary to the Guru’s way.

Do not be misled that by prescribing the Five *Kakars*, Guru Gobind Singh brought ritualism and form into Sikhism. Guru Nanak Dev propagated against ritualism, form and idols. *Kakars* are reminders to us of the path we have to follow, i.e. of spirituality and by maintaining the Five *Kakars* one cannot easily disown one’s identity. It shows the devotion and faith one has in what one follows as laid down by our Gurus. It proclaims our sovereignty over oneself!

By asking for the “heads” of five from amongst the huge gathering of Sikhs assembled at Anandpur on the eve of Baisakhi of 1699 was in no way different from what Guru Nanak did to Bhai Lehna before anointing him as Guru Angad. Guru Nanak put to test Bhai Lehna several times before he could be sure that he was capable of leading his followers after his departure from this world. Five from amongst the bewildered and shocked crowd, gradually thinning down, rose one after the other who were ready to give up their heads or lives at the call of their Guru — who could do it but only those who loved their Guru intensely and had full faith and devotion in him. Whom one loves one has full faith in him/her and nothing can deter them from the path of following that person. As Guru Gobind Singh has said in Tav Prasad Sawaiye-

*“Jin Prem Kio tin Hi Prabh Paio!”*

“Whoever has learnt to love shall realise God”, is what the saying means.

If one loves God, the Creator then his Creation automatically falls under the purview of that person's love. If the Creator is loved so shall the Creation be loved. And in the Creation comes nature as well as the inhabitants, whether it be humans or animals. And love is that force or magnet which attracts all to it. Call someone with politeness, with love and see the response you get! Call someone rudely and see the response you get! To the lover the Creator is visible in his creation. Then how can we not respect and love our fellow beings, be they Hindu, Muslim, Jew or Christian, etc. Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom was the perfect example of his love for mankind.

Guru Gobind Singh said to the *Panj Pyaras*, "Not to eat halal". He did not put any restriction to food. Eat whatever you feel like, be it meat, chicken, pork, ham, beef, egg, onion, potato, etc. No restrictions! This was because while doing the duties of a soldier one may have to eat whatever one gets hold of - because of survival. It is for the Khalsa Sikh, the disciple, to decide whether he wants to be a non-vegetarian or not. And the person who has read and understood our Holy Book would not take much time to decide!

The fearless five were rightly called the "*Panj Pyaras*"- "the Five Beloved Ones"-beloved of the Guru as well as beloved of "Waheguru"-The Wonderful Lord.

They were reborn into Khalsas and became Singhs burning away all caste distinctions:-

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Daya Ram :   | Became : Daya Singh   |
| (Who was a Khatri by caste from Lahore)                       |                       |
| 2. Dharam Chand :   | Became : Dharam Singh |
| (Who was a Jat from Rohtak)                                   |                       |
| 3. Himmat Rai :   | Became : Himmat Singh |
| (Who was of Dhiber caste,<br>by profession a cook from Puri). |                       |
| 4. Sahib Chand :  | Became : Sahib Singh  |
| (Who was of Barber caste,<br>an untouchable from Bidar)       |                       |
| 5. Mohkam Chand :   | Became : Mohkam Singh |
| (Who was a washerman from Dwarka).                            |                       |



Guru Gobind Singh merged his light in the PANJ PYARAS and declared that whenever five such Khalsas would assemble in the name of Akal Purakh, he the Tenth Nanak, would be physically present there. Such people's Commands are near perfection as good as the highest and the most exalted personal authority. Thus, the order of Khalsa Brotherhood was made eternal—to last for ever.

By touching with his forehead the feet of each of the 'PANJ PYARAS' the Guru declared the supremacy of the Khalsa in collective form asking in humility to initiate him as a member of the Khalsa Brotherhood and set a precedent that all Sikhs whether of high intellect or low, whether of extraordinary personality or not, has to follow the commands of the Five Beloved Ones.

He re-enacted the same scene that Guru Nanak Dev did by making his disciple Bhai Lehna sit on a raised platform and with folded hands bowed at the feet of his disciple and crowned him as the successor Guru Angad from Bhai Lehna.

The names of the first *Panj Pyaras* is not without great significance. It tells us that we have to follow the path of:-

1. Daya - Mercy and Charity.
2. Dharam - Truth, duty, devotion and religion
3. Himmat - Courage or fortitude.
4. Sahib - Honour and self-respect.
5. Mohkam - Perseverance, hope and patience.

The above virtues a Sikh has to imbibe in self to become a truly enlightened person.

By creating the Khalsa Brotherhood, Guru Gobind Singh solved two major problems and averted the crisis which could have cropped up later upon his *Joti-Jot*.

They were :-

1. Succession
2. Initiation.

By creating the Khalsa and declaring Guru Granth Sahib as the Shabad Guru of all Sikhs in future, the question of succession was

answered and none could now claim to the throne of Guruship as was the family strife seen in the years of Sikh history prior to Guru Gobind Singh.

By introducing the *Khande da Pahul* the question of initiation into the Sikh fold was solved since with the Shabad Guru-Charan Pahul was not possible. And who shall initiate one into the Sikh fold? The *Panj Pyaras*, i.e., any Five Khalsas.

What lovely soldiers did Guru Gobind Singh create- enter a battlefield, enter fearlessly because our duty of Dharma is more important than our lives. Never stoop down from your strength, i.e., high character by looting and arson or disrespecting women. The qualities of a Saint are never to be forgotten even while discharging your duties of a Soldier. And soldiers we are of righteousness and truth. And our soldierly strength is not to be mistaken as our purpose to oppress or subdue anyone but to protect our and other's lives and honour and for universal freedom to follow one's faith.

Guru Amardas had made us into soldiers of the spirit! To quote him: "*Panch doot tudh vas kite, kal kankar maria*".

One has to fight, control and ultimately overcome the Panch Doots, i.e., five vices-*Kaam, Krodh, Mob, Lobh, and Aahankar*. This was each and every Sikh's duty. Who ever has been able to control the five vices has attained the life's aim and purpose, i.e., of attaining Godhood and eternal bliss. One will only remain in ecstasy thereafter!

In current situation what is needed for Sikhs is that we should be fully trained in martial arts like judo, karate, boxing, wrestling, sword-lancing, javelin throwing, athletics, horse-riding or equestrian sports, mountaineering, etc. and at the same time we should not be left behind from our saintly duties too. Physically one has to be fit and sports is one arena which demands serious thought of our Punjab State educationists as well as of different Sikh organisations operating outside of Punjab. An organisation like the N.C.C. amongst the Sikhs would be a bull's hit. One can call it "United Sikh Corporate". To quote Guru Hargobind Sahib - "Never allow your temporal power to



supercede your spiritual power". In other words, both are necessary in everyday life.

If one has to learn swimming, then does one not have to jump into the water! In the same way if one wants to attain unison with the Almighty while discharging the duties of a householder, then one has to take admission into the Khalsa Brotherhood.

If we are true followers of our faith then we have to take *Amrit*, since as Sikhs we are supposed to believe and follow the teachings of all our Ten Gurus and also of Guru Granth Sahib Ji and it was Guru Gobind Singh who called upon his followers to take *Amrit*. If Guru Gobind Singh was alive today would we defy his orders - Surely Not! What are we afraid of? Why do we hesitate to take *Amrit*? What keeps us away from this initiation? Has three hundred years made us into cowards? Have our *Kirpans* become blunt? Question yourselves! One has to join the Brotherhood of the Khalsa to know the difference.

If we have to do a particular course, say Air Force training or Marine Engineering, etc. then don't we follow all the rules and regulations laid down by the concerned institute. If we have to successfully complete the course we cannot defy the orders and rules laid down or else we shall be failures.

Similarly, if we have to live the life of a Sikh or profess Sikhism, then we have to follow the rules or codes of conduct laid down by our Tenth Master which was unequivocally the teachings of our preceeding nine Gurus. There can be no compromise in it! None whatsoever! Adopt the lifestyle of a Khalsa and once you are into it then there is no turning back and the upwardly journey commences and we rise higher and higher on the planes of consciousness from the animal level to the human level to the Divine Level. *Sant-Sipahi* is what a Khalsa is and all Sikhs to be called Sikhs have to be baptised without any coercion or force.

Big plans are afoot to celebrate the tercentenary of the Khalsa Brotherhood falling on April, 1999 in which a call has been given to

the entire Sikh Nation to partake of Amrit by Baisakhi '99. visualise the scene at Anandpur on Baisakhi of 1699! Cowards fleeing, hypocrites retreating and apostates happy! The crowd thinning down! The faithful, devoted and fearless remaining! Will the same scene be repeated after three hundred years? Of course - yes! Let it be! Let the cream remain! Quality is what matters! Not quantity!

Let the casteless Khalsas - the Pure Ones - *Sant Sipahis*-Saint Soldiers-be perfect examples for the others to emulate to fulfil the vision of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

*“Na Koi Hindu! Na Koi Musalman!”*



# KHALSA BROTHERHOOD

Mrs. Kailash Puri (London)

Sikhism is an immigrant minority religion in Britain, Western Europe and North America and needs all the resources, care and efforts for its establishment as a world religion outside its home. Although the Sikhs have very largely succeeded in establishing as an economic community, their social, cultural and religious identity is still greatly misunderstood, due to both external and internal rivalries and riots.

The Guru Granth Sahib, religiously is the only Guru of the Sikhs. Guru Arjan, the fifth Nanak, ordained that the; "True Guru is Niranjana (formless God). Do not believe that he is in the form of a man (A.G. 895). Allegiance is to be the Gurbani—Bani Guru, Guru hai Bani, and not to the physical book. In the solver (book) are contained three substances—truth contentment and contemplation, the support of which is the Ambrosial NAM (WORD) of the Lord, *Koi Gavey Ko Suneh Koi Kare Vicharo* - So Katha, Kirtan and Meditation, all three are equally important for the psycho-physical needs of individuals. Translation of the Guru Granth Sahib into the modern European languages, and serious research and individual studies of the contents apart from mastery of the Punjabi language need the top priority.

The Guru Panth is vested with the political authority of the Khalsa (the baptised Sikhs). At the time of baptism the Sikh is to discard caste at birth and become a part of one family—a classless and casteless.

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru founded the Khalsa Panth on 13th April 1699, this was the transformation of the Sikhs into a martial race imbued with spiritual qualities and with a distinct identity. Thousands of people had gathered at Anandpur Sahib—It was an atmosphere of gaiety and cheerfulness, when Guru Gobind Singh said, "The initiation through *Charanpahul*, shall now be substituted with *Khande-da-Amrit*-baptism by water stirred with the double-edged sword. The nectar with steel, the Divine word and my spirit dissolved in it, shall perform miracles. Those who take it will become brave and shed their

cowardice. How these Sikhs shall be Singhs also — Classless and casteless Khalsa brotherhood there will be no high or low. All will enjoy this unique equality.

The Guru recited the hymns from the *Adi-Granth*—*Japji*, *Anand Sahib* and his own compositions *Jap Sahib*, *Sawayyas* and *Chaupayi*, while stirring the water with a double-edged sword, *Mata Sahib Dewan*, Mother of the Panth added the *Sugar Crystals*—which was much appreciated by the Guru. The *Amrit* was showered on the faces of the beloved ones. At the end of the oath taking the Guru hailed the converts with a new form of greeting-

*Wah-i-Guru ji ka Khalsa, Wah-i-Guru ji ki Fateh.*

(The Khalsa are the chosen of God. victory be to our Lord).

After initiating the Five Beloved Ones, the Guru asked them to baptise him into the new fraternity. The Guru was no longer their Superior. He had merged his entity in the Khalsa. It seems, this remains to be the only occasion in history where the Master and the disciple became equal. A poet at that time proclaimed, "Bravo! Bravo! Gobind Singh. As the Guru, so the Disciple."

In the rank and file of Khalsa Panth, all are equal, the lowest with the highest in race as in creed, in political rights as in other spheres. All questions affecting the welfare of the community are to be referred to the *sangat* which would decide them in the form of *Gurmattas*.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism and a social reformer par excellence, launched a crusade against the social evils which had plagued the social structure. The condition of women could not escape his humane and kindly attention. His heart ached to observe miserable plight of women, who, he believed played remarkably significant and sacred role in moulding the lives of men. He questioned the very basis of the idea of treating women as inferior - Says the Guru

By woman, man is conceived;  
of woman, he is born;  
with woman he is betrothed and married;  
with woman he contracteth  
friendship;



With woman he goeth through the world;  
When one woman dies, another is sought for;  
To woman he is bound;  
Why call her bad from whom  
are born kings?  
Of woman everyone is born  
none may exist without woman,  
Nanak, only true God is  
independent of woman.

(Mohalla 1, Asa di-var)

It is significant to note that the Sikh Gurus had admitted women in the *Sangat* without any restriction or reservation, and their message was meant as much for women as for men. Guru Amar Das, the third master vehemently denounced the evils of *pardah*, *sati* and female infanticide and child marriage. Condemning the *sati*, Guru Amar Das said,

“The real Sati was one who  
after the death of her husband  
led a pure and chaste life,  
And not the one who burnt herself  
on her husband’s pyre.  
In fact, the true Sati is the one  
who dies in grief of her husband’s death  
(Rag suhi)

And Guru Arjan’s hymn in Rag Gauri -

Those who respect their husbands as their Lords  
are blessed as Satis and are accepted in the  
Court of Lord Sayeth Nanak.

Guru Amar Das, the third master had appointed 146 missionaries, 52 were women. Never in the history of India had women been given such an august position in religious and cultural positions.

Nanaki, Guru Nanak’s elder sister was the first and foremost admirer of Nanak’s spiritual greatness. Bebe Nanaki gave him the much needed encouragement to tread on the great path he had chosen. The devoted wife of Guru Angad was to use the simile of the contemporary minstrel Balwand: like a shady tree to the Guru’s effectual

shade. Imbued with the spirit of social service and inspired by a keen sense of religious duty, she took upon herself the responsibility of the management of offerings and longer responsibility which she discharged with skill and selflessness characteristics of her.

Bibi Amro, daughter of Guru Angad, who was married to Guru Amar Das' nephew, played a significant role in bringing the next Guru into contact with the second Guru. Bibi Bhani, the illustrious daughter of Guru Amar Das, was an embodiment of devotion and humility. After her marriage to Bhai Jetha (afterwards Ram Das), both the husband and wife vied with each other in rendering the greatest possible service and devotion to Guru Amardas. The reward of the unique devotion of the couple was not only that Bhai Jetha was appointed as the successor to the third Guru but also that Guruship hereafter became hereditary from amongst their offsprings. Bibi Bhani may well be designated a Divine Mother who gave to the Sikh movement a line of great leaders, some of whom left a deep impress of their personality on posterity with their heroic deeds of struggle and sacrifice.

The most conspicuous among the names of women, who entered history at these functions, are those of Mata Gujri and Mai Bhago. The former, no less a woman than the mother of Guru Gobind Singh sagaciously advised the evacuation of the fort of Anandpur when the Sikhs were reduced to sore straits and soon after laid down her life out of deep affection for her two grandsons who were bricked alive most mercilessly by the Mughal Governor of Sirhind. Mai Bhago of Jhabal is another cynosure among the heroines of Sikh history, she evinced uncommon courage, valour and spirit when some Sikhs from Majha region of Punjab betrayed the Tenth Master and signed a *Bedaawa* or disclaimer, disowning him as their Guru. She not only made the deserters feel desperately ashamed of their cowardly conduct but also fought heroically along with them in the historic battle of Khidrana (Mukatsar).

Mata Sahib Kaur and Mata Sundari, consorts of the Tenth Master played prominent roles and were deeply devoted to the Guru. Mata Sahib Devan was a living picture of humility and sweetness, who had put "Patashas" sugar crystals into the nectar ... 'Khande ki Pahul'



being prepared by the genius of Guru Gobind Singh - by adding motherly sweetness to manly courage and fearlessness intended to be infused in the Khalsa.

Mata Jito Ji was married to Guru Gobind Singh in 1677 and later on Mata Sundari ji in 1684 and soon after Mata Sahib Devan, Mother of the Khalsa was the spiritual wife of the Guru. When they joined Guru ji at Damdama Sahib and asked about the four Sahibzadas, Guru Gobind Singh said that "they were with the eternal father and they should not grieve because in place of the four sons there were, now, thousands of sons in your lap. Pointing to the Sikh *sangat* the Tenth Master Said, "*In putran ke sees par, waar diey sut chaar, chaar maray to kaya bhaya, jivat kai hazaar*".

On hearing this dreadful news Mata Gujri ji collapsed and left for heavenly abode.

Unlike many religions, Sikhism believed that a woman who was the very pivot of the household or 'Grahasth Asharam' is the symbol of domestic harmony and happiness, social cohesion and unity. Women occupy a place of honour in the Sikh tradition. Right from the time of Guru Nanak, stress has been on the uplift and education of women. Sir Raja Baba Khem Singh Bedi, in the Pothohar region of Punjab was pioneer educationist who encouraged women and set up the girls schools. Later on reformers like Dr. Karve in Maharashtra, Mahatama Gandhi, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vidya Sagar and Bhai Takhat Singh who spent years in encouraging and convincing parents to send their daughters to school rather than to Dharamsala (Gurdawara) to learn Gurmukhi along with other subjects.

The Sikh Guru accepted the institution of marriage, but rituals in performing the marriage were condemned. No money or dowry were accepted for giving the hand of the woman. It was essential to obtain consent of both partners. Sikh women were ordained not to keep themselves in *Pardah*, Kabir also condemned this Muslim practice, saying:

Stay, stay, my daughter-in-law veil not they face;  
The veil shall only be real

If thou sing God's praises, and  
dance in this service,  
Sayeth Kabir, O daughter-in-law,  
Thou shall be victorious  
When thy life passeth in singing God's praises.

Guru Gobind Singh considered women '*Ardh-Sariri Mokh duari*', half of man and the gate-way to salvation. Sikh Gurus emphasised that happy married life should be mental and spiritual unity between husband and wife- '*Ek Jot Doe Murti*', one spirit and two bodies.

In fact, *Jivatma* is considered a bride who has to be received in Union by God, the Groom. This is the way to cross the Ocean of Life by the Grace of the Lord. Guru Nanak in a number of hymns has described the bride and groom relationship of man and God in Adi Granth (p. 243) he says;

“Listen Lord Spouse, the soul is lonely in the wilderness caught in the anguish is the bride without the spouse. Nanak the bride prays for union”.

Again-

“Hear Lord Spouse, my supplication, you are in your own abode; in seperation am I consumed to a heap of ashes - (A.G. 1111). He further says, “Look after thy Bride, her eyes flowing with tears. Flowing with tears her eyes, contemplating Thy virtues, questioning after Thee; Through surrender of body and soul. Nanak, the sapling of Amrita of joy supreme path put on fruit. In union with the beloved, its joy be tasted (A.G. 1111).

No other religion has bestowed so much honour to women as the Sikh Gurus did in their era. Guru Gobind Singh the Tenth Master's Hymn expounds.

“He who loves his own wife - Is the honoured disciple of the Guru” And the Sikh Savant, Bhai Gurdas views women as such, “Woman is man's other half, who assists him in salvation”. This is both according to tempered and spiritual point of view— woman brings happiness to the virtuous”

(Var V)



Thus, the Sikh women became conscious of their position and came forward as the defenders of their faith and honour. It was for the first time that Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus perceived that there can be no enduring democratic culture unless full equality was given to women alongwith men. The Guru proclaimed, " *Manas Ki Jaat Sabhay eke pehchano*", All Humanity one in spirit", and expected his followers, the true Gur-Sikhs to practise it in their day to day dealings in life and in the *Grahstha Ashram* (family life).

As we make into the next Millennium what sort of family and social structure do we anticipate? The present situation of the family relationships and Sikh *Maryada* demand a critical and honest look at ourselves.

There is not a slightest doubt in my mind that we live in a multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious society and our progeny are under great stress due to the pressures from their friends and peers. I have no intention of giving the soaring statistics of the decadence of the Sikh family relationship crisis. The greatest wrench in my heart is the ill-treatment of some women by the in-laws and husband. Sikh families are as much guilty of violence and ill-treatment of the daughters-in-law as any other section of the Indian society. Not a day passes when I do not shed tears while listening to the mental and physical cruelty suffered by the wife/daughter-in-law. Some of these unfortunate women are not allowed out of the house. They cannot go out for shopping and cannot visit their parents. And the parents are not permitted to visit their daughters in hospital or at home to see their new born grand child. Daughters-in-law are not allowed to go home to tie Rakhi (Rakhsa-bandhan) to their brothers. They cannot go to gurdwara unless Queen mother (mother-in-law) has pity on the subjugated wife of her son. One wonders if ever they think of Guru's message" - *Manas Ke Jaat Sabhay eke pehchanyo*' Especially when it is one's own family.

At this great historic occasion of the 300th birth Anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa, we must try to make some offering to the Tenth Master who happily and willingly sacrificed his grand father, father, mother, his own four young *sahibzadas*, himself and also those great men and women whom we pay homage every day in our *Ardasa*.

During 1720-1760 thousands of Sikhs were persecuted. There were rewards for the capture or killings of Sikhs. Again in Mir Mannu's governorship of the Punjab (1748-1753) hundreds of women were imprisoned and were forced to grind corn. They were made to wear wreaths round their necks made from the flesh of their slain children. These innocent women were tortured, starved and speared alive but they did not falter from their Sikh religious beliefs. They suffered and sacrificed themselves and their children for the sake of Sikh-Dharam the Khalsa Panth.

The Sikhs though associated with Sikh religious associations are now far from being *Keshadhari* Sikh society. Number of *Keshadhari* Sikhs are dwindling rapidly.

Can we today, after 300 years of the birth of Khalsa, look at ourselves and remember the hundreds of martyrs right from Pancham Padshah to the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh and ask ourselves, Am I a true Sikh, Khalsa of The Tenth Master - *Keshadhari*, practising Gursikh? Let us pledge today to continue to follow the tenants of Sikhism and to be proud *Keshadhari Gursikhs* of Guru Gobind Singh, our Lord and Master who honoured his Sikhs as such-

Through their grace I have attained all learning;

Through their help, in battle, I have slain all my enemies.

I was born to serve them, through them I reached eminence.

What would I have been without their kind and ready help?

There are millions of insignificant people like me?

(Shabad Hazare)



# BAISAKHI 1699:1999

Dr. Owen Cole

Thousands of fervent and obedient Sikhs had responded to the summons of their leader, Guru Gobind Rai, to present themselves before him at an open space now known as Anandpur Sahib, in 1699. Within a short time of their return home speculation would have begun upon the nature of the event which they had witnessed and, many of them, participated in. Sceptics, especially, would raise doubts about the whole event, as they still do.

What actually happened and what did it mean?

Artists have contributed to attempts to describe the event. Here only a few of their drawings or paintings can be mentioned. Others may be seen in gurdwaras or on the Baisakhi cards which are becoming increasingly popular.



One of the earliest extant representations may be a woodcut dated to about 1874-1875. It shows the fully armed Guru seated on an ornamental throne under a *chhatri*. His wife, Mata Jito, pours *patashas* into a bowl in which he stirs the *amrit* with a *kirpan*. The five initiates stand respectfully, apparently one behind the other, in front of the Guru who is fanned with a *chauri* by Man Singh.



A modern representation of the first ceremony is in colour but similar in detail, though this time the Guru uses a *khanda* and the initiates stand side by side. They, and the Guru are dressed in yellow uniforms with blue sashes. (Both these portraits are to found in Popular Sikh Art, W H McLeod, Oxford University Press, 1991).



A third example is a painting by the famous artist, Kirpal Singh, dated 1975. It is frequently to be found on calendars, from which the author obtained his copy. This example differs from the previous one in two respects. First, the initiates and the Guru are dressed in blue and wearing yellow sashes; secondly an attendant is seated behind a copy of the scripture. It is placed on a *manji*, covered with a *chhatri*, the custodian is waving a *chauri* over the open scripture. The Guru is kneeling to receive amrit from the panj piare. This painting is, in effect, largely based on current practice.



As to what happened on that fateful day, attention seems to centre upon events inside the tent into which the Guru led the five men who were willing to offer him their lives. Macauliffe in his monumental work, the Sikh Religion, used material which he had obtained from such eminent Sikhs as Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha. It must be from

the tradition which he received that he described the Guru as killing five goats, (volume six, p. 91-92, 1978 edition). The view that five goats were slaughtered has caused some hostility. An anonymous writer, presumably Sikh, noted in the margin of a book in Southall (London) library:

NOT TRUE. Reasons are as follows:

1. Guru Gobind Singh was not a liar. A fact borne out by history. On the day of Baisakhi he asked for the heads of SIKHS and NOT goats!
2. It seems highly unlikely that anyone would be able to keep five goats within a large tent without at least someone else finding out. Obviously he didn't put the tent up himself and so it follows that those who put it up must also have been aware of the presence of any goats inside the tent. Why didn't any one of them speak out when Guru Gobind Singh was asking for the heads of the Sikhs?
3. Guru Gobind Singh's autobiography does not mention any goats being slaughtered.
4. If Jesus Christ can rise from the dead after being crucified then it is not inconceivable for the five beloved ones to be brought back to life.

These interesting comments remind the author of two further points he has heard Sikhs make. First, vegetarian Sikhs argue that the Guru would not have killed goats. Others who share this view, have added that he would not have unnecessarily and wastefully killed these animals. Secondly, in reply to Christian claims for the Resurrection of Jesus, some Sikhs said, "Jesus only raised one person to life, himself. Guru Gobind Singh raised five times as many". Such points scoring is far from typical of Sikhs but may not be too surprising in a missionary environment!

As for purpose, commentators seem to be in general agreement that the Guru needed to wrest power from the *masands*, focus authority upon himself and institutionalise the use of force which, from the time of Guru Hargobind had existed within the Panth but informally. The significance of the *panj piare* may lie in the fact they belonged to a variety of zats, not all of them of the Hindu twice-born category.

What is to be said in conclusion to this piece?



First, it is somewhat idle to speculate upon the events of March 30th 1699. Fresh evidence to confirm or seriously contradict the tradition is unlikely to emerge after the passage of three hundred years. Such historical evidence as does exist is likely to be tainted by theological considerations. Ultimately, Baisakhi 1699 like the Christian belief in the Resurrection, or the revelations to the Prophet Muhammad's are to do with faith more than fact, though many believers will regard the reliability of historical fact as essential to their faith. So, secondly, more than dwelling upon the event the author would like, respectfully and tentatively, as a non-Sikh, to suggest that what is important is the message of the creation of the Khalsa for the life of the Panth in 1699 and beyond.

Three things come to mind:

1. The castelessness of the Panth. Much is always made of the zats of the first initiates into the Khalsa and the ways in which this demonstrates that Sikhism is open to everyone. However, in the UK and East Africa, perhaps less so in other parts of the Diaspora and India, zat counts for much. Jat usually marries Jat, Bhatra marries Bhatra, and gurdwaras are established on the basis of zat affiliation. Two distinct forms of religion, Ravidasia and Valmiki, are emerging largely because their members, *chamars* and *chuhras* were not fully accepted into the Panth. In the fourth century of the Khalsa caste distinction might be eradicated.
2. Women are said to enjoy equality with men in the Panth. In theory this is surely true. However, in practice the situation is very different. It is still very much a Khalsa "Brotherhood", not a Khalsa community. "Sisters" scarcely count! The birth of a girl is not as welcome as that of a son. She is *paraya dhan*, a burden on her family until her marriage when she becomes the responsibility of others. Although dowries are illegal in India and have always been condemned by the Sikh Gurus and the Rahit, nevertheless they exist. The denunciation of female infanticide never resulted in its total elimination by Sikhs in the Punjab. The use of amniocentesis simply leads to the aborting of female foetuses instead of the murder of girl babies. The theoretical equality of women is one which has yet to be achieved in practice. Another Khalsa goal for the next century.
3. Raj karega khalsa is a much discussed proclamation. What is meant by the assertion that the Khalsa will rule? Not, perhaps a nation state,

as some would desire. The evidence that Guru Gobind Singh hoped to establish a Sikh empire is very tenuous. His revolt was against Mughal injustice, not a rejection of their rule. However, one must concede that if his young life had not been cut short he might have looked for independence. What, however, is clear, is that a Sikh state, like Jewish Israel, would be more likely to result in an inward looking nation rather than the Sikh destiny which the Gurus envisaged. After all, the Punjab of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was scarcely one in which Sikh principles truly flourished. It may have been tolerant but it was also venal and corrupt.

4. The first lecture on Sikhism which I heard was delivered to students in Leeds in October, 1969. The eminent scholar touched on the heart of the matter. The title of the address was Guru Nanak, World Teacher. The author took the Guru far beyond the Punjab and left at least one member of his audience with a vision of the Panth's duty, now Sikhs live world wide, to share Guru Nanak's world view with the whole of humanity.

Of course, before any person or group can share a vision it must possess one, now is the time for Sikhs to discover what the teaching of the Gurus is for the world of 1999 and to share it with all people.

(The author wishes gratefully to acknowledge the help received while writing this article from his friends and co-students of Sikhism, Joy Barrow and Dr Eleanor Nesbitt.)



# A WORLD COMMUNITY BASED ON SPIRITUAL VALUES

Rev. Marcus Braybrooke

Four hundred years ago, Guru Gobind Singh inaugurated the Khalsa to be the nucleus of a pure casteless community. Today, as the world prepares for a new millennium, we need a world community free from religious bigotry, prejudice and racism, based on the moral values shared by all the world religions. This is the ideal that many people of faith, working together in the various interfaith organisations, are seeking for and in this work they may find inspiration in the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh and other Gurus.

Initially, much of the work of the interfaith movement has been to dispel ignorance and prejudice about other peoples' beliefs and practices and then to persuade members of different faiths to meet, to talk together and to become friends. In several religions, this new relationship has led to a rethinking of traditional exclusive claims.

Now, the focus of interfaith work is changing to discover what people of faith can do together for our world. The American theologian Paul Knitter wrote in his recent *One Earth, Many Religions* that "concern for the widespread suffering that grips humanity and threatens the planet can and must be the 'common cause' for all religions".<sup>1</sup>

Interfaith gatherings, which are now proliferating, are not an end in themselves, but so that we can help people of faith dispel prejudices and work together to alleviate the great crises that face our human society. *Sarva-Dharma-Sammelan*, held in Bangalore in 1993 to mark the centenary of the World's Parliament of Religions, was essentially a gathering of those actively involved in interfaith work. The key question was to consider how the work could be more effective in relieving suffering, healing conflict and protecting our precious but fragile planet. I suggested that a coming together of those who work for peace, who care about the environment, who tend the disadvantaged could create "a river strong enough to wash away the stains of ethnic cleansing, racism, sexism, discrimination and apartheid".<sup>2</sup>

This is beginning to happen. For example, a wide variety of organisations, including the Peace Council, came together in the campaign to ban land mines.

The current programmes of many interfaith organisations also have a practical emphasis. The International Interfaith Centre at Oxford has arranged conferences on the subject "How effective is interfaith activity in halting and healing conflict". There were participants from Sri Lanka and Bosnia and Northern Ireland and Israel/Palestine. In February 1998, the International Interfaith Centre helped to arrange the first interfaith conference in Northern Ireland. At this, those working for reconciliation in South Africa and the Middle East shared their experiences with those engaged in similar work in Ireland. Each situation is different, but we can learn from others' experiences.

The United Religions Initiative, which began with Bishop Swing of California asking himself why the religions could not come together as the nations had done in the UNV to work together for peace, seeks to unite religious people in work for peace. The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, besides its work in Metropolitan Chicago, is deeply involved in efforts to support the work of reconciliation in South Africa and plans to hold the next Parliament in Cape Town in December 1999.

Indeed 1999, which marks the three hundredth anniversary of the inauguration of the Khalsa, is to be a year of significant interfaith conferences. Besides the Parliament of Religions in South Africa, the International Association for Religious Freedom will hold its Congress next year in Vancouver and the World Conference on Religion and Peace will hold its Assembly in Jordan.

If all this interfaith activity is to have the impact on contemporary society that we hope for, it is important that there is good co-operation between all involved in this work, whether internationally, nationally or locally. The aim of the International Interfaith Centre at Oxford is precisely this, to encourage co-operation and net-working between those active in this field. The journal *World Faiths Encounter*, published by The World Congress of Faiths and the Journal



for Ecumenical Studies, both give information about a wide range of interfaith activity and have an interesting selection of articles and book reviews.

This new practical emphasis of interfaith work reflects a recognition of the fact that at their core, all the urgent current problems facing our world have a moral and spiritual dimension. It is important, therefore, for people of faith to articulate the ethical and moral values on which they agree. An attempt to do this was made at the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions at which *A Declaration Toward a Global Ethic* was adopted. This affirmed that in each religion there is a call to respect life and to avoid violence; to create a just economic order; to be tolerant and truthful and to respect human rights and the equality of men and women. It was recognised that religious communities have not always lived up to these values. There is also a need to seek what measure of agreement there is on the detailed application of these values.

This means that as we grapple with the problems of today, religious leaders need to meet with experts in particular disciplines. Dialogue needs to be multidisciplinary as well as multifaith. If interfaith concern is to deal with the vital issues that face human society, it should not be confined to religious specialists or religious leaders. It needs to engage those with expertise in all the relevant disciplines. Particularly, there should be an attempt to involve in this debate those with political and economic power as well as those who control the media. In this again, we can learn from Sikhism which did not distinguish between priests and laity and whose Gurus were prepared to challenge political leaders.

If we are to be effective in helping to see our world rebuilt on spiritual and moral principles, we have a great deal of work to do. In many societies, religions are peripheral to the centres of economic and political powers. Perhaps the greatest task is to argue that this is a moral and spiritual world.

One special contribution of faith is to inspire hope that change is possible. Such a conviction is based on our inner life. Although I have stressed the needs of the world as our common agenda, the hope and

energy to address this will come from the inner life of prayer and meditation. At *Sarva-Dharma-Sammelan* “we recognised that we would not succeed in saving the world from destruction by pointing once again to the obvious problems and perils all around us, but should instead call all peoples to rediscover the beauty and the wonder of their cultural and religious traditions and the eternal Spirit of life which they all share. For it is by renewed faith and new friendships among peoples of different religious communities, that justice and peace in our world may be realised.”<sup>3</sup> The source of practical action, as Guru Nanak taught, is our dependence on God. As the *Adi Granth* reminds us, “Remember God with word and deed”.

It is not only Sikhs, but members of all faiths, who should celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of the inauguration of the *Khalsa*, because Sikhs have important lessons to share with all people of faith.

1. Paul Knitter, *One Earth, many religions*, Orbis 1996, p. 21.

2. In *visions of an Interfaith Future*, Ed. David and Celia Storey, International Interfaith Centre, Oxford 1994, p. 25.

3. *Ibid*, p. 232.



# THE DOCTRINES OF SIKHISM

Dr. Manmohan Singh

Sikhism is a universal world-faith with a message for all men. The Sikhs must cease to think of their faith as just another good religion and must begin to think in terms of Sikhism being the religion for this new age. The religion preached by Guru Nanak is the faith of new age. The Sikh-faith is the universal religion for the present age. The Sikh religion is truly the answer to the problems of modern man. Now here is presented a religion totally unaffected by Semitic or Christian influence. Based on the concept of the unity of God, it rejected Hindu formularies and adopted an independent ethical system, rituals and standards which were totally opposed to the theological belief of Guru Nanak's age and century. It would be difficult to point out to a religion of greater originality or to a more comprehensive ethical system. A reading of *Guru Granth Sahib* suggests that Sikhism should be regarded as a new and a separate world religion. The religion is also one which should appeal to the occidental mind. It is essentially a practical religion. If judged from the pragmatism stand point, in some quarters it would rank almost first in the world.

The founder of the Sikh religion was Guru Nanak Dev. The Sikh religion came into existence in the fifteenth century and developed very quickly, due to having vast qualities adopted in this faith. The seat of Sikh Gurus continued till the Tenth human guru and after that the *Guru-gaddi* was given to *Guru Granth Sahib* by Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Nanak the founder of Sikh religion is known for the social reforms. He used to preach for hard work, against *sati rasam* and against the superstitions existing in the society. He was too brave to speak against the ruler of that time. He performed his activities in a strange way which resulted in improving ways of life. He was declared a scientist as what he told five centuries ago, is being proved by the scientist, now.

The sacrifices made by Sri Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh are well known in the world. There was no

selfish interest but they fought against the cruelties done by the rulers of that time. To save Hindu religion, Guru Gobind Singh created Khalsa which he called saint-soldier as the order had both the qualities. The Khalsa is ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of nation and religion. In the Sikh religion every one is taught to ask for the well-being of the whole world and not of individual himself or of a particular community. According to Sikh-religion, the aim of life is not to get salvation or heavenly abode called paradise but to develop the best in man which is God. Everybody hankers after salvation, paradise or elysium, setting his hopes on them every day of his life. But those who love to see God, do not ask for salvation. The great Guru Nanak replied to the question, how to see God and love Him, in *Japji Sahib*.

According to Sikh religion, God has been described as *nirgun* or absolute and *sargun* or personal. Before creation there was darkness. He consulted Himself, what He did came into pass. Then there was no hell, or heaven or the three regioned world. There was then no sin, no virtue, no *Veda* or any religious book, no caste, no sex. When God becomes *sargun*. He becomes what is called the Name and in order to realise Himself God made Nature where He has His seat is diffused every where as love. The Gurus have represented the double phase of God and they have avoided the pitfalls into which some persons have fallen with them. God is not an abstract idea or model form but a personal being capable of being loved and honoured and yet He is conceived of as a Being, whose presence is diffused all over His creation. The God has no incarnations. He Himself is truth, beauty and eternal yearning of the heart after goodness. The Gurus have compared the Aryan idea of immanence with the scientific idea of transcendence without taking away anything from the unity and the personal character of God.

Some people generally have wrong interpretations of Sikhism. The persons who are familiar with the eastern thought fix upon the passages which refer to the thought of immanence and conclude that Sikhism is nothing but an echo of Hinduism while those who are imbued with Muslim or Christian thought take hold of changing passage to indentify Sikhism with other religions. The person who knows both, will see here no system, nothing particular but confusion. Guru Nanak



prescribed the fundamental of Sikh belief in God in the *Asa Di Var*. God is called the In-dweller of nature and is described as filling all things by an art which is artless. The universe too is not an illusion. It being rooted in God who is real, is a reality, not a reality final and abiding but a reality on account of God's presence in it. He is not a God belonging to certain persons. Muslim or Hindu but is dispenser of whole universal life. The only way of worshipping Him is to sing his praises. There can be no worship without good actions. Without pleasing God, all actions are worthless.

Prior to the 15th Century, the leaders of thought had fixed certain grades of salvation, according to the different capacities of men, whom they divided into high and low castes. Certain people belonging to favoured classes developed in them a few good qualities to a very high degree while others left to themselves, got degenerated. It was, as if a *mali* neglecting to look after all the different kinds of plants entrusted to him, were to bestow all his care on a few chosen ones, which were in bloom so that he might be able to supply a few flowers every day for his master's table. The Sikh Gurus did not want to take such a lopsided growth and wanted to give an opportunity of highest development to all the classes of people. They declared the whole humanity to be one and that a man is to be honoured not because he comes of a particular caste or creed but because he is a human being, an emanation from God whom God has given the same senses and same soul as to others. So they had to shun the idea of untouchability. Guru Nanak said, 'How women can be called inferior? They have given birth to kings and prophets'. Women as well as men share the grace of God and are equally responsible for their actions to Him. Guru Hargobind called women, the conscience of man.

The ultimate source of all that is in us is God alone. Without Him there is no strength in us. Man can be nothing without the strength provided by God to him. Now question arises, who is responsible for man's action? Man himself. We learn from the 1st *sloak* of 7th *Pauri* of *Asa Di Var* that man is given a free will which leads him to do good or evil actions, to think good or evil thoughts and to go in consequence to hell or heaven. The problem of good and evil is the problem of union and disunion with God. All things are sprung on God's will and man among them. As long as man is conscious of this, he lives and

moves in union with Him. But later on led away by the overweening sense of self, he cuts himself from that unity and begins to wander in moral isolation.

The way of religion shown by Sikh Gurus is not a set of views but a method of life, lived according to a specific model, based not on rules or laws but upon fellowship. In the functioning of fellowship the personality of the Guru is all along operative, commanding his whole being and shaping his life to its diviner without such a personality there would be no harmony, no direction in the moral forces of society. In spite of thousands of kinds of knowledge, would still be utter darkness. There is no force to connect man with man and then with God. Everybody will exist for himself in moral isolation like spurious seasmes left desolate in the field with a hundred masters to own them. The Sikh Gurus remove the barriers of caste and position set up by men among themselves and gathering them all upto themselves unite them with God. Like this, foundations are laid of a society of the purified who as an organized force strive for the good of whole universe. The Sikh Gurus were perfect and are described as such in the Sikh scriptures. Guru Nanak says 'Everybody else is subject to error, only the Guru and God are without error' 'Fifth Guru says' 'Whoever is seen, is defective, without any defect is my true, Guru the Yogi. The state of perfection attained by the Gurus is lucidly described by Guru Arjan Dev in the eighth and the eighteenth Ashtpadies of Sukhmani Sahib.

According to Sikh religion the change comes not only through association with the Guru, which is found in many other religions, but through the belief that the Sikh incorporates the Guru. He feels himself with the Guru and then feels himself linked up with an inexhaustible source of power. A Sikh who follows the teachings of his Guru is a great power in himself but when such a Sikh gets into himself the dynamic personality of such a perfect exemplar as Guru Gobind Singh, his powers acquire an infinite reach and he becomes a superman. The Guru says that Khalsa is my, otherself. In him I live and have my being. A single Sikh, a mere believer is only one but the equation changes when he takes Guru Gobind Singh into his embrace. He becomes equal to one lakh and a quarter in the Sikh parlance. The change occurs in his physical fitness, mental and spiritual outlook. He will keep the Guru's



flag always flying. The feeling of incorporation with the Guru makes the Sikh strong beyond his ordinary powers and in time of emergency comes to his rescue long before he can remember anything relevant to the occasion recorded in history or scripture.

The idea of religion in Sikhism is more practical than merely mystic, and consists of the practice of *Nam* and *Sewa*. The idea of service is that it should be, not only liberal but also efficient and economical, it should do the greatest good with the least possible means. There is no need to go to jungle to get salvation but by doing all the good actions in the normal way of life. The religion like Sikhism whose aim is to serve mankind belongs to the same category. It requires organisation of its followers as an essential condition of success. Guru Nanak began with two things in his religious work, the holy word and the organised fellowship. The idea of holy fellowship led to the establishment of local assemblies led by authorised leaders called *Masands*. Every Sikh was supposed to be a member of one or other such organisation. The love between the Guru and the Sikhs was more intense than had ever existed between the most romantic lovers of the world. The only form of worship was the meditation on the singing of the word.

Guru Gobind Singh founded Khalsa Panth on the Baisakhi day of 1699 at Anandpur Sahib. *Amrit* or baptism was made the basis of this organisation and the persons who wanted to serve humanity through Sikhism must join it seriously as regular members and receive its baptism as the initial step. All must have same creed which should be well defined and should not be confused with the belief in practices of neighbouring religions. Guru Gobind Singh ordered that the Khalsa should be distinct from the Hindus and Muslims. He who keeps alight the unquenchable touch of truth and never swerves from the thought of one God; he who has full love and confidence in God and does not put his faith even by mistake in fasting or in the graves, he who only recognizes one God and no pilgrimages, alms, non-destruction of life, penances or austerities and in whose heart light of the Perfect One shines, he is to be recognised as a pure member of the Khalsa.

The Khalsa is to embody in himself the highest ideal of manhood as described by the tenth Guru in the *Sarbloh*. The Khalsa was thought fit to administer baptism of the new order to the Guru or was conse-

crated as the Guru incarnate. Guru said, if anybody wishes to see me let him go to an assembly of Sikhs and approach them with faith and reverence, he will surely see me amongst them. In the ranks of Khalsa all are equal, women were to be given the *amrit* in the same way as to men and were to enjoy the same rights. The Khalsa organisation entails a certain disciplinary outfit in the shape of baptismal forms and vows. The Sikh religion as taught by Gurus is a force that not only saves individuals but also binds them to work for nobility in the world. Organisation implies to increase the possibility of scope and effectiveness of the work. For the working of an organisation effectively, itself, it is compulsory that the individuals concerned in it should be able to keep up their attachment to the cause and sufficient amount of enthusiasm for it. The discipline is secured by such devices as flags and drills and uniforms in armies and can form ceremonies in religion. Uniformity is essential, it creates necessary enthusiasm by appealing to imagination and sense. Forms are the art of religion. Similar to art of nature these forms impose certain limitations on the ideal but at the same time they make the ideal more real and workable for general use. Guru Nanak asked people to leave and burn that custom, "which makes you forget dear God". But the Sikh forms were not conceived in the spirit of exclusiveness or as essential to the advancement of individual souls. It is possible for a man to love God and cultivate his individual soul without adopting these forms but if we went to work in a systematic manner not only for our own advancement but for the good of others as well in the company of Sikhs we must adopt the disciplinary forms of their organisation. The Sikhs, who are the soldiers of the Tenth Guru and whose religion is surcharged with his personality find the uniform worn and ordained by him as a real help in playing their part as units of the *Panthik* Organisation. As is God so is the Guru and as is the Guru so must be the follower. By wearing knicker, one ensures briskness of movement at time of action and an easy underwear at times of rest, an iron ring on right arms as a sign of sternness and constraint and a sword by his side as an instrument of defence and as a symbol of power and dignity. The Guru presented an impressive picture of simple but disciplined soldier. He however combined in him saintline of the old *rishies* with the sternness and strength of a knight. He kept long hair which all the world over has always been associated with saintliness. A comb is a simple necessity for keeping the hair clean. These are the forms with which the Sikhs are invested at time of their baptism in order to look exactly like him.



One is not to worship and appease many a god and goddesses and seek the help of so many of them to meet one's need but one is to depend upon one God who is omnipresent and is with him wheresoever one is, God has no equal and has none to fear from. By worshipping Him one seeks his protection who is fearless and makes and lose all fears. God is all powerful and one's enemies, therefore, dare not touch him. The Sikhs have no rituals to perform to call Him to his side. They simply meditate on certain of His qualities and He stands by them in the particular form and shape of that quality. The Sikhs need not go from door to door to seek guidance and advice. They have all the guidance and advice incorporated in one and only one Holy Granth. It is the fountain-head from where all knowledge soars. Through it one sees God visualised. It gives clear vision and a true perspective of this world to come. It has in it the axioms of a happy life—a life of beauty and joy for ever and it makes one slight the most fearful the very death itself that emanates all fears. It brings home to one all the different values of life—personal and impersonal, social and individual, worldly and heavenly pertaining to one's soul and one's God. With it one soars to immeasurable height. With it one goes fathoms deep in successful search of invaluable rubies and diamonds and with it one stands exalted high as heaven. It puts into motion the inner most strings of life. One feels with universe, nay one with God Himself. Its constant enlightenment lets one not depart from Sikhism.

The Guru, though not visible to human eye, is always with the Sikh. He is great warrior, a knight among heroes, saviour of the innocent, kind and merciful and noblest of the noble souls who always comes to help the Sikhs where-ever and whenever they meditate and call on Him for help. In times of difficulties, the Sikhs concentrate on His dynamical personality and the Guru is there by their side. The Tenth Guru has put on Sikhs three commands—services, simran and sacrifice. Service of the humble and the needy, simran of the master's great qualities, and a sacrifice of self to uphold the right and just. Because Sikhs are a martial community, they always prefer to die a heroic death to a coward life. Their past history in their regular prayers every day to imbibe their spirit of sacrifice. They would not turn their back on the enemy. It is their martial spirit that has given them a place and an identification in the world. The *Amrit*, provides them supremacy of *Nam*, hardness of steel, coolness of water and sweetness of honey.

With it, one feels transformed to super humanity. With the long hair and comely beard, the Sikhs stand in appearance with prophets, *aratas* and *rishis*. The Sikh feels Shiva in him with a sword in hand to safeguard the interest of the weak and humble, to protect the honour of women and to defend the motherland against the aggression. There are no complexities of rituals and ceremonies, fasts and austerities, renunciations and reclusions or heavens and hells in the Sikh religion. One has no couch shells to blow, no bells to ring, no deities to appease, no pilgrimage to undertake. The Sikh wears a sword to meet unforeseen enemies and an iron bracelet, an emblem to remind him of the bondage of his Guru. The simplicity of a faith and freedom of joy are the greatest inducement for a person to be a Sikh. One is not to live in seclusions to get salvation. One can remember God while at work and while at home. It is our good action that counts and it is not word but practice that makes one perfect. No show, no deceitful presentation of one's self. The Sikhs sit together in the presence of their Guru, holy Granth, sing in chorus hymns from the Granth till they are all one and in harmony with the Guru. They stand up then and pray with folded hands for redemption of their sins, for proper guidance in life and for His blessings for the entire mankind and the universe. They feel one with the universe, of the common brother and lie prostrate at His feet with all humbleness praying for the common good of all.

Sikhism recognises no caste or creed as high or low. Nor is there any colour, country or race bar. There is no untouchability with the Sikhs. They run free community kitchens, where even the kings are to sit with *sangat* to have food and serve to clean the utensils in the *langar*. They have common bathing tanks at various places, constructed by the Gurus themselves, where all are welcome to have a holy dip without any distinction. Their common mess, common bath and common prayer with a common holy Granth to revere and one common God of all to pay their homage to, are the grand insignia to their deeprooted faith in the one common brotherhood of man. They stand for equality and fraternity and their congregation and their mass dinners are wonderful spectacle to look at Sikh faith is based on unity of God and brotherhood of man, service of the humanity and love of God are the essence in it. Thus spoke, Guru Gobind Singh, when he took Sikhs into his fold—the Khalsa “Master has sent me here with a message from Him as I shall convey to you what He has said to me I shall have no secrets from you nor shall add from myself. I draw all my



potency from Him alone and look to no other deity god or goddess. I have orders to raise an army of invulnerable soldiers, everyone of whom shall match his sword with a lakh and a quarter I shall draw them from the so called *shudras* and *vaishas* to humble the pretentious high castes. They shall safeguard the interest of the weak and the lowly and protect the honour of women. I shall give them a distinct uniform that shall never be put aside as a saintly appearance of the rights of this world, but the valour of Arjan and Krishna. They shall always have swords on them to meet aggression and offence. They shall be my saint-soldiers."

"I call upon you to join my army and defend the cause I have espoused. I bide a warrior's spirit and always have my uniform on. Be humble but suffer no humiliation as it damps your spirits. Be graceful. God will then be gracious to you. Let service and sacrifice be your watchworks in life. I have enlisted you a member of my Commonwealth—Khalsa—the pure and you have, therefore, to be pure in thought, word and deed. The Khalsa meditates on the one Being with unshaken faith and love. The Khalsa discards all gods and goddesses, idols, tombs, hermits and monastries. The Khalsa recognised no fasts, pilgrimage charities and austerities. The Khalsa kindles in him one divine radiant light, it is only then that he is Khalsa".

The above said Khalsa belongs to the Master who has all victory to Himself. From the history of Khalsa it is quite evident how effectively these baptismal forms with the accompanying vows of purity, love and service have aided them in keeping themselves united and their ideals unsullied even in times of the greatest trial. All worship and ceremony whether in temple or home, whether on birth, marriage or death consists of nothing else but praying and chanting hymns. In the Sikh religion cruelty on innocent people is never advised, even Gurus gave lessons to protect the innocent people from the cruel ruler. Hence untouchability, service to humanity and non-violence are the main theme of Sikh religion.

# SIKHISM-A UNIQUE RELIGION

Dalip Inder Singh

The population of Sikhs in India is a little over twenty million i.e. less than two percent of its total population. In proportion to the population of the world, it is a microscopic minority. Yet there is hardly any country where Sikhs are not a visible community. A Sikh man is a person who cannot hide himself in the local population and is conspicuous by the style of his turban and by his uncut beard. In some countries, Sikhs are the oldest migrants among Indians or Asians. Every country has its own history of Sikh migrants.

Looking at the ancient Sikh history, the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak had travelled widely within different parts of India, as well as to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Mecca, China etc. No roads or means of transportation were available during his times, about five hundred years back. The Guru, along with his two disciples Bala and Mardana (a Hindu and a Muslim) had been travelling on foot and preaching his mission of truth and humanity. There would hardly be any exponent of faith who had travelled even a few hundred miles to spread his mission. Sikhs have been migrating to European and American countries since the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Likewise, in South East Asian countries like Burma, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Sikhs can be seen in large numbers. During the British rule, Baba Ram Singh, a follower of Sikh tenants was deported to Rangoon (Myanmar) along with hundreds of his followers. There the entire community preserved its physical appearance. From Rangoon, they moved to different countries in South East Asia.

Sikh religion has some distinctive features of its own not found in others. Some of these features are outlined in the subsequent headings.

## Neither Hindu nor Musalman:

It is a common misconception that Sikhism was created simply by rejecting the obsolete and outdated beliefs of Hindus and Muslims, and has nothing unique of its own. The Indian government and its constitution still portray the Sikh religion as an offshoot of Hinduism,



and label the Sikhs as “Refined Hindus”. The British also, at times, considered Sikhism as a branch of Hinduism whenever it suited them, in order to mitigate the valour and martial spirit of the Sikhs. The Sikhs, however, never seemed to care about, or gotten into any conflict on this issue.

None of the Sikh Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh addressed themselves as Hindus in any of their writings. Guru Nanak, in his Bani, said that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim but a follower of God. All Gurus preached against idol worship or other practices and beliefs observed by Hindus. Guru Arjan Dev, the first compiler of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS), the sacred Sikh scripture, emphatically declared independent ideals of Sikhism in the following words:

I do not keep the Hindu fast nor the Muslim Roza  
I serve Him alone and seek refuge under Him  
I serve the One Master who is alone Allah  
I have severed myself from Hindu and Muslim  
I do not worship with the Hindu or go to Mecca like a Muslim  
I only serve Him and none else  
I will not pray to idols nor join the Muslim prayer  
I shall put my heart at the feet of the one Supreme Authority  
For we are neither Hindus nor Musalmans

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib 1136)

Guru Gobind Singh addressed Sikhs as Khalsa (pure) after baptism and ordered them to maintain a separate identity. He says :

*“Jab lag Khalsa rahe niara, Tab lag tej dion main sara,  
Jab eh gahe bipran ki reet, Main na karon inkee parteel”.*

So long as Khalsa stays distinct, I shall stand by it.

As and when it is cast in the mould of Brahmanism my patronage would cease.

Again in the Sawaiya (religious text) he said:

"Since I have befallen at your feet

I seek care from none else

The different paths enlightened by Ram (Ram Chander, king of Ayodhya),  
Rahim, Puranas and Quran are meaningless for me.

The Simiritis, Shastras and various Vedas reflect different doctrines but  
I follow none, I say whatever you command me to say."

## Unity of God

From the first to the last page of the holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib, there is a preaching of one and only one God, with various names and qualities. Sri Guru Granth Sahib starts with the numeral "1" which stands for one God. No person, picture, painting, object etc. can be depicted as God. The eternal Lord alone has the power to make and destroy. He is formless, omnipotent, self-created and indestructible. Thus, a Sikh is not to believe in idol worship, a living god or any other book except Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

## Holy Scriptures:

Sikhs all over the world accept Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS), a book with 1430 pages as their Living Guru. The tenth Guru conferred Guruship on this holy book. The holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib is keeping the community united in the whole world. Extracts or portions of Sri Guru Granth Sahib are always welcome; but these smaller parts, by themselves, cannot acquire the status of Sri Guru Granth Sahib or be given similar reverence.

## Kirtan (Devotional Hymn singing by a group or individual)

Sikhism came into existence with Guru Nanak at the time when the Mughal Emperor was the supreme ruler of India. Music has no place in Islam, and is merely considered a means of enjoyment and merry making. On the other hand, Kirtan is the blood and soul of Sikhism. All the Sikh Gurus, starting with Guru Nanak conveyed their teachings and devotional message through poetry which could be sung in the Indian classical music. Guru Nanak recited his hymns in nineteen Ragas (classical tunes) and sang them in the prescribed measures with the help of rebeck (Rabab) played upon by Mardana, his Muslim companion. Sri Guru Granth Sahib has been divided into different sections (chapters) on the basis of thirty one different Ragas. This is a very unique style of composition; a privilege bestowed only to the Sikh holy book. With the passage of time, the present day Sikh Ragis (Kirtan singers) have blended the classical tunes with the prevailing light music for the sake of popularity and group participation, but the emphasis on music remains strong. Kirtan singing is so popular among Sikhs that more than three-fourths of the time of any religious or social gathering is consumed by it. Be it a birth celebration, marriage, or even death, hymns from Sri Guru



Granth Sahib are sung with the traditional musical instruments and in the traditional tunes. Interestingly, in the main sanctum of the Golden Temple, Amritsar (Harmandir Sahib), it has been an ongoing convention to sing Kirtan continuously for about twenty hours each day. The hymns to be sung must be selected only from SGGS, Dasam Granth, or from one of the compositions of Bhai Gurdas or Bhai Nand Lal.

#### Karah Parshad: (Sacred Porridge)

Except in a Sikh gurdwara, there is hardly any place of worship, in any religion, where the devotees who participate in the prayers are offered a sacred sweet dish on the conclusion of the service. The notable uniqueness of this sacred dish lies in the fact that the same exact preparation is served all over the world. The contents and method of preparation are identical, as is the *maryada* (code of conduct) of serving the *Parshad*. The person preparing the *Prashad* brings it in an open bowl, nicely covered, and carried very respectfully. The bowl is placed on a raised piece of furniture kept in the area in front of the holy Granth. On conclusion of the service, a special prayer (*Ardas*) is conducted with all the participants up on their feet, and with folded hands facing towards SGGS. Permission is sought of Waheguru (the Almighty God) for its distribution. Before distribution, the *Prashad* is touched (or lightly pierced) with a Kirpan (Sikh knife) for acceptance.

#### Community Kitchen: (Langar)

At the conclusion of special gatherings, or gatherings ending close to meal times, lunch (and even dinner) is served free of cost. This preparation is nearly identical all over the world. However, variations are permissible keeping in view the local availability and tastes. Normally *rotis* made of wheat, pulses and vegetables are served. Meat and its preparations are avoided. *Langar* is served after members of the *Sangat* sit down at close distance in orderly rows (*pangat*). No segregation or discrimination of any kind is permitted in the *Langar*. Even Akbar, the mighty Emperor of India, who had come to pay reverence to Guru Amar Das (third Guru) had to sit in the *pangat*, and was served the same meal as everyone else. Everyone is equal in the eyes of the Almighty and so also in gurdwara where equality is the main teaching of Sikh religion.

### Akal Takhat: (Throne of the Immortal)

The sixth Guru (Guru Hargobind Sahib) laid the foundation stone of a peculiar building called "Akal Bunga" (Akal Takhat) on June 17, 1606. A few days after that, he started wearing two swords entitled Miri and Piri i.e. the symbol of spiritual and temporal powers. He popularised the carrying of sword for self defence and justice. In 1608, two saffron coloured Sikh flags were unfurled to confirm the faith. The Akal Bunga was turned into a throne of God as a symbol of dignity and justice. The Guru also raised an army. Capt. J.D. Cunningham reports that Guru Hargobind had 800 horses, 300 trained horsemen and 60 artillery men. The Sikhs raised the banner of revolt against a cruel and corrupt administration. Sikhs, who so far, were confined to the prayers of God came forward to learn martial skills. Thus the foundation of a Saint-Soldier was laid by the great Guru.

The purpose of Akal Takhat was to create a supreme religious authority that would oversee the activities of Sikhs worldwide. The Sikhs would thus unite under one banner, and all orders for the Panth would emerge from one source. All defaulters were to be summoned here and punished as per the Sikh traditions. Even Maharaja Ranjit Singh was summoned and religiously edified by the *Jathedar*. Recently, after Operation Blue Star, prominent Sikh political personalities were summoned at the Akal Takhat and punished, thereby confirming the supremacy of Akal Takhat over any state judicial authorities. Now its supremacy is being accepted by Sikhs all over the world. Some gurdwara disputes have been withdrawn from the local courts and would now be resolved by the *Jathedar* of Akal Takhat. Some Sikh scholars, working at American and Canadian Universities tried to belittle the dignity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Sikh history in their research work. One such scholar was summoned at the Akal Takhat and the inaccuracies in his thesis work were discussed. The scholar ultimately confessed before the Akal Takhat of his omission and apologised in writing. He was awarded *Tankhah* (religious punishment) which he happily accepted. It is obligatory for the *Jathedar* of Akal Takhat to take into confidence the *jathedars* of other Takhats also (to act as *Punj Piaras*) before announcement of the verdict. The sole authority of announcement, however, is vested in the *Jathedar* of Akal Takhat.



## Gurdwara (The Sikh Temple)

Principally a Gurdwara serves three functions:

- (1) It is a house of worship according to Sikh rites.
- (2) It provides shelter and food to travellers.
- (3) It provides covered and open space for holding religious ceremonies for special occasions like marriage and death. It also provides copies of Guru Granth Sahib for all occasions and the services of the *Granthi* (Priest) if needed at a place other than the gurdwara. Normally an elected/nominated executive body looks after the gurdwara and manages all activities pertaining to the Sikh religion.

## Kar Sewa (Voluntary Manual Service)

There may hardly be any mosque, church or Hindu temple that has been planned and built through voluntary services. In Sikhism, voluntary manual service is considered as a very noble act. Guru Nanak was the first person who worked on building projects by voluntary service and built the city of Kartarpur (now in Pakistan). Thereafter, the Second, Third and Fourth Gurus built Khadur Sahib, Goindwal and Amritsar. The Golden Temple (Harmandir Sahib) in Amritsar with its surroundings and ponds was built by the Fifth Guru with his manual assistance and personal supervision. The spirit of the voluntary service still persists among Sikhs and most of the historical gurdwaras in India are being constructed by various voluntary religious organisations.

## Flag and Emblem

There is perhaps no religion in the world which has only one flag and one emblem. Majority of the religions have no distinctive flag. It is essential for a gurdwara to hoist one type of specified flag at a height which is visible from a reasonable distance. It is a triangular saffron flag with Sikh emblem embossed at the centre. The emblem consists of a broad circle with a crossed double-edged dagger in between. The circle depicts a sharp disc made of steel. In the olden days, this type of disc was worn over the turban for the protection of the head (in place of helmet). It was also thrown on the enemy in a circular motion as a sharp weapon. The double-edged dagger serves as a weapon besides the symbol of *Amrit*.

### Baptism (Amrit, Sikh's initiation):

A child born in a Sikh family is a Sikh by birth. However, any person from any religion or family can willingly adopt this religion. He (or she) has to undergo the initiation ceremony and then change his (or her) last name to Singh (or Kaur). Of late it has been observed that 'Singh' and 'Kaur' are being avoided, and being replaced by other surnames. This practice is not in conformity with the preachings of Guru Gobind Singh who created the Khalsa (the name given to Sikhs after baptism for its purity). Even a Sikh born in a Sikh family needs to be baptised (initiated with Amrit, the nectar) in the same prescribed manner at a later stage. For this purpose five baptised Sikhs prepare a sweetened sanctified water called '*Amrit*'. The history of creation of this *Amrit* is also unique. A gathering of followers of Guru Gobind Singh was summoned on March 29, 1699 (corresponding to Baisakh 1, Samvat 1756) in a pre-arranged tented place at Anandpur Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh who was alone in the veiled area of the tent came out before the gathering with an unsheathed sword and asked for a volunteer who was prepared to be sacrificed. People thought that the Guru had lost his mental balance and wanted to kill them. After some pause, a person called Daya Ram (son of Sudha, mother named Diali, aged 30, resident of Lahore) offered himself to the Guru. He was taken into the veiled enclosure. Thereafter the Guru came out with the same sword smeared with blood four more times and took with him, one by one, four persons. These were Dharam Das (son of Sant Ram, mother named Sahibo, aged 33, resident of Hastinapur, Delhi), Himmat Chand (son of Gulzari Mal, mother named Dhano, aged 38, resident of Jagannath Puri, Orissa), Mohkam Chand (son of Tirath Chand and Deva Bai, aged 36, resident of Dwarka, Gujarat) and Sahib Chand (son of Chimna and Sonabai, aged 37, resident of Bidar, Maharashtra). After a long pause, the Guru came out with the same five persons, now dressed very elegantly in the traditional Sikh dress, turban and all. They were introduced as the Five Beloved Ones (*Panj Piare*). Subsequently, Guru Gobind Singh took a steel bowl, put some water and sugar puffs and began to stir with a double-edged dagger (*khanda*) steadily, reciting scriptures. He termed this sweetened water as *Amrit* (nectar, the holy water) and sprinkled some drops on the eyes, head and ears of the Beloved Ones reciting Waheguru (God) with every drop. Thereafter all the five were made to drink from the same



bowl. In the next round the Guru knelt before the Five Beloved Ones and begged for the same *Amrit*. He declared that the Khalsa so formed have acquired Guruship and Gobind Rai had acquired the status of disciple like others. He named himself Gobind Singh and the Beloved Ones as Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh etc. This was a revolutionary display of democracy and equality of status of the Guru and the entire Sikh community which he now called the Khalsa Panth. No other religion of the world has been formed with a sense of sacrifice as the Sikh for the Guru.

### Re-baptism

In religions where conversion of other faiths is permissible, the person to be converted has to undergo the drill prescribed for the purpose. While religions like Hinduism, and Parsee (Zoroastrian) do not accept converts, others like Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, and Islam welcome converts from other faiths. In the Sikh religion, there are four transgressions (tabooed practices) which if violated willfully are taken very seriously and the person has to appear before the *Panj Piare* for re-baptisation. these acts are: (a) Dishonouring the hair; (b) Eating meat of an animal slaughtered in the Muslim way (Halal); (c) Cohabiting with a person other than one's spouse, and (d) use of tobacco.

### Reht Maryada (The code of Sikh conduct and conventions)

There are no founders of three great religions of the world: Taoism of China, Shintoism of Japan, and Hinduism of India. These religions cannot have any code and all their religious beliefs are based on conventions and family traditions. Other religions like Islam and Judaism are more conservative and follow the codes framed by their founders, very strictly. The King of Saudi Arabia, for example, is always accompanied by the Imam who guides the King to act within the provisions of Shariat (the Muslim religious law).

The code of Sikh conduct took its route from Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Dasam Granth. All religious books like the Bible, Qoran, Geeta, and Tora. were written much after the death of their writers and thus lacked authenticity. Sri Guru Granth Sahib has been written on the texts recited by Sikh Gurus and Bhagats. The present form of Sikh religion was bestowed by Guru Gobind Singh after due baptism (Amrit) on March 30, 1699. Some guidelines were provided at that time which

had been going in circulation in writing by various authors. Although such writings multiplied with the increase in area and spreading religion, there were no contradictions in the contents. It generally varied in numbers and order of enforcement. Some of the chairs (*Manjis*) nominated by the Gurus tried to preach their own dictates and therefore Guru Gobind Singh transferred the power of conduct to the Khalsa (congregation gathered). The final authority was bestowed to Sarbat Khalsa consisting of the gathering assembled at Akal Takhat.

A new problem arose when the land where gurdwaras were located and registered in the name of priests-cum-landlords began to misuse the place of worship. The priests (*Mahants*) framed their own rules and grabbed the entire charity income of the gurdwaras. Even immoral and vicious acts started getting performed within the premises. They had the blessings of the British rulers. Hurt by the immoral acts of these *Mahants*, the Sikhs formed groups to liberate gurdwaras. It was a long battle. Many Sikhs got killed by the Mahants, and by the authorities. Ultimately, the Sikhs won, and the management of the gurdwaras was transferred to them. For this purpose, the then Punjab Government enacted a law known as Gurdwara Act of 1925 under which the SGPC was empowered to manage the affairs of certain Gurdwaras. After taking over the control, SGPC resolved to draft a code of conduct for the Sikhs and a committee for the purpose was formed in Oct. 1932. Periodical meetings of Sikh scholars, intelligentsia and devotees were held who took into consideration the previous codes. Fifteen such codes could be traced, out of which those written by Bhai Nand Lal, Bhai Prahlad Singh, Bhai Chaupa Singh and Bhai Daya Singh were more prominent. The revised code was finalised in January 1945 and published by SGPC. It is still in effect. It is a comprehensive document starting with the definition of a Sikh, his personal living, upkeep and the dignity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib at home and gurdwara, various types of *Paths* (recitation from the sacred Granth), preparation of the *Karah Prashad*, conducting the religious ceremonies at the time of birth, naming of the infant, marriage, death and other miscellaneous occasions. Emphasis is more on simplification rather than adhering to the old customs and rituals. The primary focus was remembering the Almighty.

Some of the fundamentals of Sikhism can be summarised as follows:



## **Dont's**

Do not renounce the world and go to jungles in search of God or for salvation.\*

Do not bathe in rivers for shedding of sins.

Do not meditate in the dark with eyes closed.\*\*

Do not keep faith in supernatural powers of a living being, portraits, idols, images, or articles created by man.

Do not go to graves, tombs, samadhis for prayers, salvation or worldly needs.

Do not count your beads while repeating a single word.

## **Do's**

Believe in ONE and only one Creator.

The creator should be remembered with every breath and thanked for what he has bestowed.

Since the road is not visible by closing one's eyes

How can such persons, my brethren, meet the infinite.

(Bachitar Natak)

**Shromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee: (S.G.P.C.)**-It is a statutory body constituted under the law (Gurdwara Act of 1925). Its office is situated within the premises of the Golden Temple Amritsar. It controls most of the historical gurdwaras in Punjab and a few outside Punjab. There is perhaps no religious body in the world whose electoral rolls are prepared by the state Government and election conducted by its administrative machinery. It is therefore a truly elected and democratic body. Election of its president is conducted once a year by the General body under the supervision of the Government nominee. The Body looks after some specified educational institutions and also maintains liaison with the Pakistan authorities (through the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India) for maintenance of some of the historical gurdwaras in that country.

## **Conclusion**

A Sikh acquiring the status of Khalsa (pure) after baptism has been

\* My house, my wealth and my everything is blessed if I sing God's glory (5th Guru, Rag Gauri)

\*\* They who practise hypocrisy by closing their eyes should be treated as blind men

described as a saint soldier in his self imposed uniform (five K's). The spiritual side of this person is the faith in one God i.e. "the timeless one" stressed by the Gurus and also SGGGS. God does not take birth as depicted by the Hindus and Christians. Guru Nanak gave a clear definition of who is "The Sole Supreme Being" of eternal salvation: Creator, Permanent Reality, Without Fear, Without Rancour, Timeless Being, Unincarnated, Self-Existent. Guru Gobind Singh after giving *Amrit* to his followers gave emphatic signals that he had sought refuge only at the feet of the Lord. He has not taken cognisance of any other power, like Ram (Ram Chander, king of Ayodhya), Rahim, Puranas, the Quran as all these depict numerous faiths and the Guru does not believe in any of them. The Vedas, the Puranas, the Books, the Quran have all failed to reveal the mystery of the Almighty, or even take a peep into the unfathomable depth of His mysterious powers. God is enshrined in one's own heart. Salvation is not achieved by *Pranayam* or other forms of austerities. It is to be achieved by remembering God in each and every breath, while carrying out routine for earning the daily bread.

Guru Arjan Dev has summarised the method of salvation in the following words:

"Nanak Satgur Bhetiye Poori Hovey Jugat  
Hasandian, Khelandian, Penandian, Khavandian, wiche hovey Mukht"

Meaning that -

By meeting the True Guru, man is enlightened with the perfect way. While laughing, playing, dressing and eating, he gets emancipated.



# THE MULTI-FAITH BOUNDARY

Rev. Alan Race

Religious communities are defined by their boundaries; yet in the global future that is now dawning, we are called to transcend them. Boundaries are necessary for religious identity: we are all nurtured by virtue of the specific religious traditions of belief and practice into which we are born or to which we attach ourselves in conversion. Tradition, at its best, functions to keep a religion's founding vision alive; it codifies and formalises the potential for transformation that such a vision espouses. However, this process takes place as part of wider shifts in cultural change. In our own time, these wider shifts are global in scope. Therefore, it seems that religious communities must now renegotiate their boundaries in relation to many complex global developments.

Part of this emerging global picture is the multi-faith nature of our total religious environment. Yet, in general terms, religious communities experience this expanding environment as both a threat and an opportunity. It is a threat because other communities which propose transcendent vision and human transformation do so in alien forms, thus presenting, initially at least, what appears as an alternative rather than a complementary religious apprehension of life. And it is an opportunity because religious communities are being offered the chance to let go of their negative views of the outsider and to embrace new partners in the search for a global future, constrained only by the tried and tested 'rules' of dialogue. The challenge before all of us is how we can, minimise the experience of our multi-faith context as a threat and maximise it as an opportunity. Moreover, religious communities bear particular responsibility in this regard, for the record of their relationships with one another in the past has, on the whole, been far from harmonious. We need to live with softened or permeable boundaries, not hardened or fixed boundaries.

One way in which religious communities can become more fully self-conscious about our global multi-faith environment is to incorporate the view of how others see them as part of their own core identities. In other words, we do not define who we are by reference to the

texts, traditions and cultural histories of our own particular and varied pasts alone. For the future, an account of our own religious identity will include the perspective of others on us. There are far-reaching implications in this proposal. As we open ourselves up to the critique from the other, to the inevitable misrepresentations of my identity and tradition, to the possibility of seeing my own identity as part of a larger world religious canvas, we shall be opening up to the very otherness of the other in all their strangeness and fascination.

A sharper way of expressing this proposal would be like this: we used to think that our religions were true, independently of other faith-commitments; but this is now doubtful.

Co-operation and dialogue between religious traditions, then, is an imperative. Without that, the future is indeed gloomy. But through this process we shall become implicated in one another's identities in much deeper ways. Perhaps that is why some religious bodies shun the multi-faith environment altogether. Yet it is impossible to live apart from our neighbours any longer, and so we are going to have to learn co-operation and dialogue or we destroy ourselves. The more challenging task will follow from our encounters: to learn more self-consciously about how the perspective of the other, as they view my tradition, modifies my sense of my own identity.

Let me give some historical examples to illustrate what I have in mind. Christianity's identity has been shaped in part by the Muslim response to it. Therefore, I need to know what that Muslim response to Christianity has been if I am to understand my own Christian commitment more fully, and that means, in turn, that I will need to know what the impact of Christian faith on Muslim identity has been and how that has affected Muslims experientially and intellectually. In order to know what Christianity is, I need to know what Muslims think of it! Another example could come from the history of Christian-Jewish relations. My Christian faith has been shaped by the Jewish rejection of it, and this has affected the heart of Christian identity. Some Christian theologians have gone so far as to say that historically the positive appreciation of Christian faith has been so inextricably linked to the negative appraisal of its Jewish ancestor that a renegotiation of Christianity with Judaism in our new global multi-faith environment will change Christianity out of all recognition. If this is so, then I need to become aware of the Jewish response to Christianity as part of my



own Christian identity now.

The encounter with the religious other gives us insight into the things we often prefer to forget. In conversation, Muslims remind me of the Christian crusades, with all its legacy of prejudice, violence and fear. Jews remind me of the history of Christian anti-Semitism, with all its legacy of negative stereotyping and cumulative hatred. All this is painfully sobering. But to overcome it requires not simply a change in attitude on the part of Christians to their religious neighbours. More is involved. Encounter can present us with opportunities for explaining ourselves better, for correcting caricatures and misperceptions; it can also be the occasion for serious rethinking. Dialogue sets tough priorities: we meet one another, we engage in mutual appreciation and criticism, we adjust our sense of identity accordingly.

Alongside the experience of encounter and exchange between traditions there is a growing literature that has begun to reflect more theoretically on the nature and shape of a theory of religious relationships. While no one theory has emerged - it is too early for this as yet - there are some building-blocks that can be put in place. For the second half of this essay I wish to present five such elements that seem to me to be important in the construction of a theory of religious relationships.

First, personal encounters with those of another tradition have opened up a window on to ultimate reality itself. It is persons who are bearers of religious truth, and persons are religious in diverse ways. But personal encounters indicate beauty, truth and goodness at the heart of different traditions that inform individuals and communities. Therefore, affirming religious plurality as a matter of historical and geographical fact leads directly to the affirmation of plurality as a matter of theological and philosophical value. It is not that the sheer existence of a religious tradition should lead to affirm its value. Rather, we have come to experience the value of the other as a factor to be welcomed in our religious awareness of ultimate reality as such.

Second; the objective study of the religions (however difficult that is to achieve) is making its mark on how religious communities reflect about their experience of the world. There is a structural simi-

larity in the religious liberation/salvation cycle, by which I mean that all the religions embody the following: a diagnosis of the human condition and its failings; a revelatory experience of transcendent vision, cohering around an historical figure or a book or a set of stories; proposals arising from transcendent vision for transforming human failings; and a goal or purpose of the religious life itself. The structural similarity of the religious cycle lends credence to what one Christian theologian has observed as the 'rough parity' at the level of religious truth between traditions.

Third, in ethical terms, we can note that no single tradition has been better at making its religious outlook work better than any other. All traditions inherit a mixture of good and bad historical record. Love, compassion, justice are not the possession of one community alone. Of course, there is more than one way of living ethically with ultimate reality. Yet we inhabit one planet and are responsible for a shared future. Therefore, some degree of shared ethical responsibility is called for if we are to survive and flourish. If this is the case, then it requires to be recognised at the heart of theological theory. Moreover, given the history of the linkage between the confession of religious absolutism (i.e. we are the one and only religious truth) and the practice of evil (for example, in supporting war, ethnic cleansing, or exploitation), the need for religious traditions to dismantle their captivity to absolutism seems scarcely objectionable.

Fourth, we know that the traditions are limited, constrained historically by factors of culture, language, context, and so on. To this extent we are all relativists. And because of the vast differences between cultures, the either-or mentality about the nature of religious truth, which has dominated at least western traditions, requires to be supplanted with a more versatile either-or attitude. So, it need not be the case that ultimate reality has to be either personal or not personal, or that human destiny has to be either this or that. Of course there are cognitive clashes at many levels between religions, and they present seemingly impossible dilemmas. But they need not disable the search for a global model of religious awareness that is appreciative of difference without the traditions becoming simultaneously compartmentalised.



Fifth, there is pressure now from the dialogue movement itself (if such a phrase is allowed to cover what is a hugely disparate enterprise the world over) to make its own strong difference in the field of theories of religious relationships. At one level, dialogue is simply the encounter where one person or group meets another person or group (or groups) with courtesy, with openness, and with convictions to offer, ready to learn and to respond critically. But one of the rules of dialogue is that we meet as equals, that is, without hidden agendas, and that we should be prepared to be changed. This entails for me that partners in dialogue are required to lay aside any remainder of belief in the eventual superiority of my own tradition. Without this, authentic dialogue does not come clean.

My contention is that these five building blocks require integration in a theory of religious relationships or theory of religious plurality. My own view, in the face of them, is that simply extending one's own tradition to accommodate religious awareness from elsewhere is not a bold enough move. The bolder move would be to undergo the paradigm shift that seems necessary to do justice to the new world into which we are moving. Each of our traditions is limited and each nurtures particular insights and hopes; yet each represents, in its own way, an authentic and adequate, if also imperfect, way of experiencing ultimate reality for particular communities at particular times. No one religion can now afford to be self-sufficient both at the level of practical sharing for a global future and at the level of theological/philosophical analysis. To date, we have defined who we are, largely by reference to our particular religious vision and traditions circumscribed by known boundaries. From now on, religious identity in a multi-faith world will need to include the perspective of the strangers beyond our known boundaries.

PART II

*ARTICLES OF  
YESTERDAYS*





# GURU GOBIND SINGH - CREATOR OF A NEW ORDER

Late Gurbachan Singh Talib

In paying homage to the personality of Guru Gobind Singh, the Indian people are commemorating the work of a divinely-inspired hero, who formed the vision of an awakened, resurgent India, in place of the helpless and strife-torn land which he and his predecessors on the Apostolic Seat since Guru Nanak had found. Idealist, visionary, saint and liberator, all these are the different but interrelated facets of a mighty personality. This personality, within the short span of a life of a little over forty one years (1666-1708), brought about such a tremendous revolution in the lives of men as made those who followed his banner, the Sikhs, the most potent force in North-Western India, which position they have kept over since their fire-baptism all through the eighteenth century. This impulse once given, has continued for these two and a half centuries to grow more and more powerful, so that there has appeared wave after wave of innumerable hosts of martyrs, idealists who undertook to suffer for the cause of man, for faith and for their land; men who when once they have put their shoulder to the wheel, in an all-embracing metaphorical sense, have stood their ground and not let themselves be branded cowards or renegades. This impulse is still fresh and potent, despite the peculiar features of the ages since Sikhism took its definitive turn in the new 'Baptism of Steel' on that historic day, the first of Baisakh, in Samvat 1756 corresponding to the Christian Year 1699, at Anandpur. Sikhism, from its birth had to contend with the vast Mughal Empire, very solidly founded on the conquests of some of the most powerful rulers this country has seen—Babar, Akbar and their successors.

When in reaction against the oppression of Aurangzeb, which became odious and intolerable on taking the form of religious persecution and open humiliation of the cherished creeds and spiritual ideals of the vast majority of the people of this land, Guru Gobind Singh felt forced to call upon the people of the Punjab—all, whether they were tillers of land or workers in other occupations of trades, to take the sword in defence of their faith and self respect. Such a flood of



persecution was released for such a long period and in such a virulent spirit of hate, as has perhaps nowhere else been paralleled in all these respects in history. The persecution of the early Christians in the Roman Empire was spasmodic, and by a people who were essentially tolerant of other faiths, and were impelled to revise their policy towards the new creed only when they found it becoming intolerant itself. The case as between the Sikhs and the Muslim rulers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the reverse of this. While Sikhism was in its conception tolerant and, as a matter of fact, actively a cementing force in its emotional approach between different communities, Mughal rule was based upon the Islamic theological concept of India being potentially a Muslim state. Dar-ul-Harb, and the non-Muslims in it being citizens of an inferior order. Under the peculiar bent of mind of the orthodox Aurangzeb, the entire might of the state was turned in the direction of humiliating non-Muslims and forcing them to forsake their religion or to live a life of degradation. This was the background to the emergence of that new ideal of the Saint-Soldier, the crusader, the martyr, which Guru Gobind Singh's genius bodied forth when he made the peaceably-minded masses of the Punjab into Singhs—Lions—who should know no fear and should bring down the arrogance of those who occupied places of power and brandished the sword of their tyranny over the heads of the helpless multitudes.

Guru Gobind Singh had, besides contending with the military power and persecuting zeal of the Muslim rulers, to contend with the long-established conservatism and incapacity to adjust itself to the changing demands of historical forces which had long been a feature of Hindu society. Hindu imagination hitched itself to a hoary past, which coloured its entire approach to life, and by shutting out a dynamic view of history, rendered itself static and helpless against aggression. India of the past, of course, was a vast world in itself a conglomeration of numerous kingdoms and a unit or a country only in the sense that its people had a common social code, which provided the irreducible minimum that bound them to what may be called an ethico-socio-spiritual faith. This society, spread over such a vast area for that age of primitive communications, separated at every few miles by differences of customs and language, was moreover, governed by a rigid caste-system, assumed to be established by the gods themselves,

and admitting of no reform or reorientation. The new ideals of Guru Gobind Singh, which could be fulfilled only by people who could entertain the view of a dynamic society, who could make adjustments to the unsparing demands of history and had vision and foresight were not only not understood by the higher castes and classes among the Hindus, but were actually violently opposed by them. It was still another instance of the patient stabbing the physician or the inmates of the boat attacking the pilot in midstream while the tempest was raging. Not that this is a rare phenomenon in history. Those who have sought to benefit mankind at the cost of their comfort and life, have often been paid back only with indifference, calumny and hostility. So, Guru Gobind Singh met with disapproval from the Brahmans who thought he was subverting the ancient basis of society, when he sought to bring all the castes, the four *varnas*, together, like his predecessors in the House of Nanak. To the conservative mind the new synthesis of Hinduism, which Guru Gobind Singh sought to formulate, was unintelligible. It looked upon the new movement in the nature of heresy and apostasy.

The Hindu chiefs and feudal lords had their own vested interests to serve; and like all other members of their class they would make all kinds of compromises with those who were more powerful than they, i.e. the Mughals, in order to retain their privileges. They would naturally be with their overlords against a leader like the Guru, whose movement was subversive of authority. While on the one hand they were anxious not to fall foul of the Mughal Viceroys who held them under the terror of their authority, on the other they were as much afraid of a mass-movement of the less privileged orders as were the Brahmans. Such a movement meant challenge to themselves and to their henchmen. Hence, the virulent opposition of the Hill Chiefs of the lower Shivalik range, around the present districts of Nahan, Hoshiarpur, Kangra and Mandi, to the new order of Guru Gobind Singh. They had inherited the traditions of fighting, from their ancestors, but their rule was that of an oligarchy, given to its privileges and pleasures, playing petty power politics, and afraid of change, which moreover they did not understand.

It is in the light of this background that the mighty work of Guru Gobind Singh must be understood. He set about it with faith in the Timeless Lord—Succourer of His servants and devotees. To the Lord he approached with a new vision—as the source of All Might which the ‘Puissant Arm’ (Bhari Bhujan) never-failing to those who



enter into a task in His cause. To the former conception and attributes of the Creator, he added a host of new ones, answering to his own vision of the Almighty. The Lord is not only the Cherisher of the meek and the humble, and the Dispeller of all fear and sorrow, He is the Bravest of the Brave; the Wielder of the Sword, Destroyer of the unrighteous and Trampler of the hosts of the wicked. He is All-Time, All Steel—who is the power which must contend with and overthrow evil and oppression in the universe.

It was a new kind of heroism which the Guru instilled into his people. It was not the traditional chivalry of an aristocracy, such as the Rajput, which fought for a traditional conception of honour of personal glory or the interests of its clans or warlords. Such chivalry, while it was impressive and pleasing to the aesthetic imagination, is the outer husk of a decadent social system, sustaining itself on the exploitation of vast masses of the poor. This chivalry, moreover, as was evident from the history of the Hindu upper classes in the days of Muslim rule, Mughal and pre-Mughal, never scrupled to make low compromises, unmindful of their faith with those in power. Earlier, Guru Nanak had castigated the Kashatriyas, martial Hindus, of his days, for the abject surrender of their self-respect and conscience to the rulers of those days. It was, therefore, not only a new order in the sense of a new religious sect that the Guru was creating, but a revolutionary urge among the common people, who were filled with a new feeling of self-respect and zeal for a high mission. The Sikh sacred writings are full of the idea of the equality of man, irrespective of caste. Wealth, instead of conferring honour is looked upon as the source of sin and fear and anxiety. The only source of honour is conceived of as the purity of heart and nobility of action. This teaching and the consequent society which it brought into existence, was a translation into actual terms of the highest ideals which man has sought to realize in individual and corporate life. What resulted from Guru Gobind Singh's transformation of the peace-loving religious minded Sikhs into the dedicated militant Singhs (Lions) was a mighty social revolution, brought about by the dispossessed masses, who overthrew, after a century's fiery ordeal, the arrogant aristocracy whose rule was a centuries-old tyranny. Thus was fulfilled the Guru's vision, who in the words of the poet, aspired to give to one the strength of a hundred thousand, and to confer on the meek sparrows the power to maul hawks.

# IMPORTANCE OF HAIR AND TURBAN TO THE SIKHS

Late Dr. Ganda Singh

The *kes*, *kesha*, or hair, is an indispensable, and vital essential of the Sikh faith as enunciated by the Tenth Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, at the time of the institution of the Sikh baptismal ceremony in 1699. It is an integral part of the human body created with it by God and calls for its preservation and maintenance as any other part thereof. It was, and is still, therefore, enjoined upon every Sikh at the time of his baptism to preserve the hair of his head, beard and other parts of his body uncut and unshorn. With the removal of his hair, a Sikh becomes an apostate and is thus excommunicated from the Sikh fold. He is then no longer recognised as a Sikh.

This is borne out by the commands of the Guru recorded in his *Hukamnamas* or letters, in the Rules of Sikh Conduct, the *Rahitnamas*, and in other books on the religion and history of the Sikhs compiled and written by contemporary and later writers from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the present day. The intact preservation of the *kes* or hair is further emphasized by putting the shaving of hair under a taboo as the first don't or *kurahit* of the Sikh Faith. These essential do's and don'ts are fundamentals of the Sikh Faith and are to be strictly observed as they form an essential part of the Sikh discipline.

The turban of a Sikh is an inseparable part of his dress to keep his hair in good form and properly covered. The turban also adds to the dignity of the person wearing it.

Since the injunction against the shaving of head, beard, etc. is an article of Sikh Faith and is an established historical fact, it should be enough to quote here the relevant pieces from the writings of the Guru, of his close associates and contemporary disciples and from works on the religion and history of the Sikhs.

## Insignia Described

Writing to the Sikh congregation on June 25, 1699, Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth and the last Guru of the Sikhs, who initiated the



baptismal ceremony among the Sikhs in 1699, said in a letter (*Hukamnama*); “You should take the Sikh baptism of the Sword, *Khande da Amrit* from the five (Sikhs). Keep (preserve uncut and unshaven) hair—this is our insignia (*tusan khande da amrit panjan ton laina, kes rakhne, ih asadi mohar hai*). The Guru told his close associate and scribe, baptized under the name of Gurubakhsh Singh : “Hair is the insignia of the Guru. He who discards it is an evil spirit, a ghost condemned of the angel of death” (*Mukat-Nama Rahit-nama*, p. 16).

The *Rahit-Nama* of Prehlad Singh, another associate of the Guru says that kes should be recognised as an essential of the Sikh Faith (*Rahit-Nama*, p. 10).

In reply to a question by Nandlal, a contemporary devoted Sikh and author of a number of Sikh treatises, the Guru told him that a Sikh ‘should comb’ his hair twice a day and wrap his turban properly folded. (*Tankhah-Nama*, the Kuliyat, Bhai Nandlal Goya, p. 180).

### Injunctions Issued

According to the Sri Guru Sobha of poet Sainapat, who was not only a courtier of Guru Gobind Singh but was also an eyewitness to most of the events of the Guru’s life, the Guru issued clear injunctions to his Sikh followers “not to shave their hair and beards under any circumstances, not even when their parents had died” (as was the practice among the Hindus). “He who obeyed this injunction as a part of the *Sikh-Sahib*—the disobedient ones would be ill-circumstanced in the community. (vide V, 18-24, 30; VI, I, etc.).

George Forster, the well-known traveller from East India to England, who passed through the Punjab, the country of the Sikhs in 1783, wrote from Kashmir to Mr. Gregory at Lucknow, on the basis of his personal observations:

“They (the Sikhs) permit the growth of the hair of the head and beard, they generally wear an iron bracelet on the left hand and the use of tobacco is proscribed amongst them.”—(*Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*. p. 79).

And Major James Browne tells us in his *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs* (1887) that:

“From the time that he (a Sikh) is admitted into the fraternity, he wears a steel ring round one of his wrists, lets his hair and beard grow to full length and calls on the name of the Gooroo in confirmation of all engagements”. (*Introduction*, p. xi. Ibid. 18).

We also give below relevant quotations from a few prominent works on the history and religion of the Sikhs, arranged chronologically: Malcolm, Lt. Col., *Sketch of the Sikhs*, 1812. p. 148

“The disciples of (Guru) Gobind (Singh) were required to allow their hair to grow...”

Cunningham, J.D., *A History of the Sikhs*, 1849 pp. 76-8.

“They should have one form of initiation,” he said—“Their locks should remain unshorn; they should all name themselves Singh”.

Gordon, Sir John J. H., *The Sikhs*, 1904, pp. 40-1.

“In order to mark them as a select body who should be known by outward signs, it was declared that every true Sikh must always have five things with him, their names all commencing with the letter ‘K’—namely, *kes* (long hair of the head : the Sikh must never cut his hair or beard), *kangha* (comb) to secure the hair tied up in a knot on the top of the head.”

Macauliffe, M.A. *The Sikh Religion*, 1909, Vol. V. pp. 91-7.

“The Guru invited all his Sikhs to attend the great Baisakhi at Anandpur without shaving or cutting their hair. (p. 91)”... A supplementary ordinance was now issued that if anyone cut his hair, smoked tobacco, associated with a Muhammedan woman, or ate the flesh of an animal whose throat had been jagged with a knife, he must be rebaptised, pay a fine and promise not to offend any more; otherwise, he must be held to be excommunicated from the Khalsa” (p. 97).

Narang, G.C. *The Transformation of Sikhism*, 1912, pp. 81-2.

“This was the significance of the *Pahul* or the baptism introduced by (Guru) Gobind (Singh). He made it a rule that all Sikhs should wear turbans and always keep the following five *kakars* of five things whose names begin with ‘K’ viz., *kēs* or long hair and long beard...”



Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, 1914.  
Part II. p. 544.

“The offences subjecting the offender to an immediate excommunication from the brotherhood were....(4) tampering with the hair. Such outcastes were held liable to very severe punishments and could be readmitted only on reinitiation.”

Payne, C.H., *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 35.

“.... the spirit of brotherhood was still further emphasized by the institution of a distinctive dress and the wearing of the five ‘K’s—namely, the kes or uncut hair and beard...”

Parry, R.E., *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 1921, pp. 18-12.

“These are the five outward signs of Sikhism, each beginning with the letter ‘K’ and known as the five *Kakars*:(1) kesh or long hair (2) kangha”...

Scott, G.B., *Religion and Short History of the Sikhs*, 1930, pp. 28-9.

“... Novitiates are exhorted ... never to cut hair or beard..”

Teja Singh, *Essays in Sikhism*, 1944, pp. 32-3.

“There was to be no caste among them, and all wear the same signs, that is long hair ... They were to call themselves Singhs.”

Pincott, Frederic, *The Sikh Religion: A Symposium*. (pub. 1958)—  
Sikhism, p. 80.

"Guru Gobind Singh ordained that every Sikh should always retain about his person five things, each beginning with the letter ‘K’ that is, kes, hair... A Sikh is to be distinctly different from both Hindu and Muhammadan, both of whom shave the head. A Sikh is never to shave or even to cut either hair or beard, as long as he lives.”

Ranbir Singh, *The Sikh Way of Life*, 1968, p. 102.

“The discipline prescribed by the Guru at the time of administering Amrit (baptism) is as follows : A Sikh must wear five K’s.  
(1) kesh—unshorn hair like the ancient sages (rishes) as a pledge of dedication to the Guru. Kesh is the first token of Sikh faith. The hair is the personality of the Khalsa.”

## Historical and Theological Works

In addition to the above evidence from the writings of the Guru, himself, and of his close associates and devotees speaking with personal knowledge and of some eminent scholars, there are the writings of a number of historians and theologians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whose works in the Punjabi, Persian and Urdu languages tell us a great deal about the importance attached by the Sikhs to the hair of their heads and beards, an essential of their faith. In the first half of the eighteenth century, when the Mughal emperors, Bahadur Shah (1707-12) and Farrukh-Siyar (1712-19), followed by Muhammad Shah (1719-48) and Ahmed Shah (1748-54) had ordered an indiscriminate massacre of the Sikhs wherever found, the Sikhs, preferred to lay down their lives than to allow their hair to be shaved to save themselves.

So hard were the ordeals through which those Sikhs (also known as Singhs or Khalsa after baptism) had to pass through and so great were the sacrifices that they had to make for their faith—to keep their hair intact to the last breath of their lives—that they are still remembered in the daily Sikh prayer, which acts as a source of inspiration to them in difficult times. The relevant passages in the Sikh prayers is as follows:

“Think of those Singhs, men and women, who sacrificed their lives at the altar of dharma (duty enjoined by Sikhism), who were cut up joint by joint, who suffered their scalps to be scraped off, who were broken on the wheels, who were sawn or flayed alive and who abjured not their faith and perjured not their soul but lived their devotion to Sikhism with their hair intact to the last breath of their lives—think of those great martyrs, O Khalsa, and utter Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru—Wonderful, Wonderful, Wonderful, is the Lord.”

## Sikh Requirement

All this speaks for itself and should be enough to show conclusively that all Sikhs are required at all times to : (1) keep their hair and beards intact and (2) to wear turbans as an inseparable part of their dress to keep their hair in proper form.

As Sikhs are easily recognisable by their bearded faces and head-gear, dastar or turban, they also serve them as helpful deterrents against undesirable acts and behaviour and keep them to the right



path. Living among the Hindu and Muslim populations, the Sikhs generally act as neutrals and play the part of reconciling friends when the two happen to fall out on religious and other questions. We have a living example of this.

In the 1946 riots at Calcutta, when the whole atmosphere was poisoned with communal virus, the Sikhs played the part of neutrals by helping the sufferers of both sides and bringing about peace and harmony among the blood-thirsty opponents. This was greatly appreciated not only by the people of India but also of the world at large. And historically, it stands to the eternal credit of the Sikhs.

### Sikh Essentials

The other Sikh essentials in addition to *kes* and *kangha* or comb are *kachh*—a pair of shorts, *kara*—an iron bracelet and *kirpan*—a sword.

The *kangha* speaks for itself. It is to keep the hair well-combed and clean.

The *kachh* reminds a Sikh of his vow to maintain the high standard of sexual morality as ordained by Sikh rules of conduct. It is also an all-time active dress as compared to the *dhoti* and *shalwar*.

Similarly, a Sikh's *kara* warns him against un-Sikh-like acts and encourages him to be helpful to the deserving needy. Worn on the right hand, as it is, it also provides protection to it when wielding a weapon in fighting.

The kirpan of the Sikhs is a weapon of defence against the evil-doers as a last resort. Guru Gobind Singh justified its use as such in his Zafarnamah to Emperor Aurangzeb saying:

*chu kar az hamah heelte dar-guzasht,  
halat ast burdan ba-shamshhir dast.*

“When all other means have failed to achieve an object, it is lawful to take the sword in hand.”

These five essential symbols together are called the *Panj Kakar* or the Five ‘K’s.

# CREATION OF THE KHALSA

Late Dr. A.C. Banerjee

Several important problems connected with the creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh require further investigation and clarification. Some tentative suggestions are put forward for consideration of scholars in the following pages.

Why did the Tenth Guru create the Khalsa? What was his real purpose? To this crucial question, Cunningham's answer is as follows : The Guru acted "... .. under the mixed impulse of avenging his own and his country's wrongs ...". He became an "irreconcilable foe of the Mahometan name". His aim was far reaching : "In the heart of a powerful empire, he set himself the task of subverting it". Narang summarised these points when he said that the Guru's purpose was to avenge his father's death and strike a blow at the power of Aurangzeb. Proceed-





ing along the same lines, Sir J.N. Sarkar observed that the Guru was “not the person to leave his father’s death unavenged; so he began a policy of open hostility to Islam”.

It is clear that neither Narang nor Sarkar made an independent examination of the issue; they followed the track laid by Cunningham. Perhaps it appeared to them quite natural that Guru Gobind Singh should seek to avenge his father’s cruel death and to punish the ruler who was responsible for it. Perhaps they attributed ordinary human motives to the Guru without attaching any importance to the spiritual height which he had reached. It was particularly unkind to identify his alleged hostility to Aurangzeb with “a policy of open hostility of Islam”. Sir J. N. Sarkar gave a wider meaning to Cunningham’s description. There was nothing to prevent Aurangzeb from following the precedent laid down by Jahangir after the execution of Guru Arjan : the Ninth Guru’s minor successor might have been put behind prison walls. The policy followed in the case of Jaswant Singh and his family might have been repeated : the Sikhs were then not in a position to offer such resistance as the Emperor encountered from the Rathors. There was, of course, no Sikh kingdom to be won; but he was no less interested in suppressing heresy. Before Guru Tegh Bahadur’s return to the Punjab from the East, Aurangzeb had “ordered the temples of the Sikhs to be destroyed and the Guru’s agents for collecting the tithes and presents of the faithful to be expelled from the cities.”<sup>1</sup>

### Extreme Step

It is not entirely improbable that Aurangzeb took the extreme step of taking Guru Tegh Bahadur’s life for a special reason, viz. the Guru’s championship of the Hindus of Kashmir. In the Bachitar Natak, Guru Gobind Singh says that Guru Tegh Bahadur “protected the frontal marks and sacrificial threads of the Hindus”.<sup>2</sup> From the Emperor’s point of view, this was unwarranted interference in the policy of forcible conversion which Sher Afghan, his viceroy in Kashmir, was following in that province. Imperial policy could not but take serious notice of the Sikh Guru’s attempts to project his own image in a neighbouring province. After the forfeiture of his life, it was unnecessary to continue the same harsh policy towards his community; his minor successor could not do as much as he had done. For Guru Har Rai’s

association with Dara, his eldest son had been kept a hostage in Delhi. Guru Harkrishan was summoned to Delhi in connection with the dispute about succession. No such step was taken in respect of Guru Gobind Singh after his father's death.

### Hostility of Aurangzeb

The Sikhs, however, had no reason to expect that Aurangzeb's hostility would cease with the death of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Mr. Khushwant Singh says "... the leaders of the Sikh community were concerned about the safety of Guru Gobind Singh, for the possibility of his being taken to Delhi as a hostage could not be ruled out. To avoid any chances, the young Guru and his entourage were shifted from Anandpur further into the mountains at Paonta."<sup>3</sup> Here we have an echo of Forster's statement : "The intelligence of his father's death and dread of a like fate had induced him to fly from Patna, whence he retired after a series of adventures into the territory of Shrinaghur" and "afterwards (he) proceeded with his adherents to the Punjab, where he was hospitably received by a marauding Hindu chief of that quarter, who gave him the dependencies of Meckoval."<sup>4</sup> Forster's chronology is not correct; Guru Gobind Singh had been brought to Punjab before his father's death. But "the dread of a like fate" necessitated caution on the part of his entourage. When he received his father's last message from Delhi, he said, "We will abide in Anandpur and destroy the Turks". His mother at once cautioned silence lest some agent of the Emperor should hear his words. The heroic boy replied that, that was not a time for silence and concealment.<sup>5</sup>

### Migration to Paonta

In the years following the Ninth Guru's martyrdom, the Turks took no steps against the Guru nor did he seek to destroy them. His migration to Paonta took place most probably in 1685 at the invitation of Raja Medini Prakash of Sirmour.<sup>6</sup> It had nothing to do with the "dread" of Mughal hostility which appears to have evaporated as a result of Mughal inactivity for about a decade. The Guru gives a brief account of these years in the *Bachitra Natak*.<sup>7</sup>

"When I obtained sovereignty, I conducted religious affairs to the best of my ability.

I hunted various sorts of game in the forest and killed bears,



nilgaus and elks.

Afterwards I left home and went to the place called Paonta. I enjoyed myself on the banks of the Kalindri and saw amusements of various kinds.

There I hunted and killed many lions, nilgaus and bears.”

It will be noted that the Guru does not make even an indirect reference to the Mughal Government. The lines quoted above are followed by an account of the battle of Bhangani : “Fateh Shah, the king (of Srinagar), became angry and came to blows with me without any reason.” The battle took place in 1687 or 1688.<sup>8</sup> The next important engagement was the battle of Nadaun which was followed successively by the expeditions led by the Khanzada, Hussain Khan, Jujhar Singh and the Shahzada. These military activities appeared to have covered the period 1690-1696.<sup>9</sup>

### Hill Rajahs' Rivalries

At Bhangani the Guru fought (as the *Bachitar Natak* clearly shows) against an alliance of hill chiefs organized by Fateh Shah, and it is obvious that he had involved himself in the political rivalries of the hill region. In explaining his motive, Cunningham says that his purpose was “to obtain a commanding influence over them, so as by degrees to establish a virtual principality amid mountain fastnesses to serve as the basis of his operations against the Mughal Government.” There is no evidence to show that the Guru was seeking a “basis of his operations against the Mughal Government”; there is not even a casual reference to the Mughals in his own account of the battle. After the victory, he says, he left Paonta and went to Kahlur where he “established the village of Anandpur.” In this new shelter, he spent his time, as he says, in “fostering the faithful and rooting out the wicked.” Apparently he did not try to “establish a virtual principality amid mountain fastnesses to serve as basis of his operations against the Mughal Government”; by the “wicked”, he seems to have meant “those who had kept themselves away from the battle” of Bhangani while “the faithful (among his followers) ... distinguished themselves there.” There is no trace in the Guru’s statement of any far-reaching political aim or military project.

## Hill Rajah Conflict

The next stage of the conflict in the hill region had wider political importance for it represented an attempt on the part of some local chiefs to rise in revolt against the Mughal suzerainty. Apparently they wanted to take advantage of Aurangzeb's long absence from the north and the consequent deterioration of the administrative vigilance in the northern provinces.<sup>10</sup> There was nothing new or surprising in this political enterprise; the hill rajas had been resisting Mughal encroachments since the reign of Akbar and had defeated a Mughal governor in the year of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution.<sup>11</sup> Sometime after Guru Gobind Singh's arrival at Anandpur, the hill rajas stopped payment of the tribute to the Mughal Government. The Guru says:

"Many days passed in this way till Miyan Khan of Jammu came and sent Alif Khan to Nadaun. Immediately a quarrel broke out with Bhim Chand.

The Raja called me to assist him in the war and I joined his side."<sup>12</sup>

It is clear from this statement that in the battle of Nadaun which followed, the Guru was an ally of the hill rajas—an auxiliary and not a principal. After Alif Khan's defeat and flight, the Guru "took leave of the rajas and returned home, and they proceeded higher up to settle terms of peace." He took no part in these negotiations. He says: "The two parties came to terms and, therefore, the story ends"<sup>13</sup> There were only "two parties"—the hill rajas and the Mughal Government. Obviously the battle of Nadaun formed no part of the Guru's alleged "operations against the Mughal Government."

## Battle of Nadaun

The battle of Nadaun took place probably in 1680. We read in an official newsletter dated November 20, 1693: "News from Sirhind--Guru Gobind Singh declared himself to be Guru Nanak. Faujdars ordered to prevent him from assembling (his Sikhs)."<sup>14</sup> Gobind had, of course, "declared himself to be Guru Nanak" long ago; but this was the first occasion when his military activities were noticed in a Mughal official document. To these activities, the Bachitar Natak contain no reference, although the Guru tells us that he "fostered the faithful and rooted out all the wicked" and that "all the thieves (the disaffected) were haunted and killed."<sup>15</sup> But the role played by him and his contingent in the battle of Nadaun did not escape the notice of the Mughal



Government. Dilawar Khan, who appears to have been a high official of the Mughal Government (and not a semi-independent local chieftain as Macauliffe suggests)<sup>16</sup>, was entrusted with the task of suppression of the Guru and his Sikhs. For the first time the Guru became the direct target of Mughal policy. That the Mughal Government took offence against him is clear from his own words :  
“Then Dilawar Khan sent his son against me.”<sup>17</sup>

### Direct Conflict Begins

Thus a new phase began in Guru Gobind Singh's career-probably in 1694; he was involved in a direct conflict with the Mughal Government. But it was not he who took the initiative with a view to avenging the death of his father; it was the Mughal Government which sought to penalise him for his involvement in the rebellion of the hill rajas. However, the expedition by Dilawar Khan's son (whom the Guru calls “Khanzadah”) failed. “The bloody Khans fled with their weapons unused”, says the Guru; “through the favour of God, the wretched fools could not even touch me.”<sup>18</sup> Dilawar Khan then sent Hussain Khan against the Guru; according to the Gur Sobha, his objective was Anandpur.<sup>19</sup> But he got himself involved in a campaign against the hill rajas from whom he wanted to collect tribute. Fortune turned against this impetuous general who, says the Guru, had “thrown all the tactical considerations to the winds.” He himself was killed and the defeat of his contingent was complete. The Guru says, “The Lord saved me (from unnecessary warfare) by making the cloud of battle rain elsewhere.”<sup>20</sup> Dilawar Khan became very angry and sent another army under Jujhar Singh. His primary target was the league of hill rajas. He fought valiently “and at last himself went to the other world.”<sup>21</sup> The Guru's account of this expedition does not show that he was in any way involved in it. After these disasters to Mughal armies, says the Guru. “Aurangzeb became very angry and sent his son to the Punjab”.<sup>22</sup> Muazzam (Shah Alam) governed Punjab for about three years (July 1696-May 1699).<sup>23</sup> He arrived at Lahore in August 1696 and presumably directed operations against the hill rajas from the provincial capital as the Bachitar Natak (XIII) tells us. Imperial wrath appears to have been directed against the rebellious hill rajas only; neither the Guru personally nor the Sikh religion appears to have been the Shahzada's target. On the other hand, the Bachitar (Natak (XIII) tells us that the

Mughals punished those “cowards” who left the Guru and “took shelter where the big hills stood”. From this incident, the Guru draws the lesson “ Babar’s successors shall seize and plunder those who deliver not the Guru’s money.”<sup>24</sup>

### **Doctrine of Co-existence**

There is no doubt that the Guru and his loyal Sikhs escaped unhurt on this occasion. A late tradition incorporated in the Gur Bilas attributed this immunity to the friendly intercession of a Khatri of Delhi named Nand Chand who had some influence with the Shahzada.<sup>25</sup> It is perhaps permissible to connect the Guru’s friendly contact with Shah Alam after Aurangzeb’s death with the prince’s tolerant attitude in 1696. There is, however, clear documentary evidence that the Guru apprehended serious trouble and tried to collect resources for self-defence. Fortunately, no occasion for a confrontation arose, and the Guru found it possible to lay a doctrine of peaceful co-existence:

“The successors of both Baba Nanak and Babar were created by God Himself.

Recognise the former as a spiritual and the latter as a temporal king.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Temporal Acknowledgement**

In these lines, we have an echo of the famous dictum “Render unto Ceaser the things that are Ceaser’s”. Instead of aiming at the destruction of the Mughal empire, the Guru recognizes it as a creation of God, legitimizes it in the eyes of his followers by calling upon them to acknowledge the temporal authority of Babar’s successors and even invokes its assistance for the punishment of those “who deliver not the Guru’s money”. It is clear, therefore, that resistance to the Mughals was not the Guru’s purpose in creating the Khalsa. It was not for avenging his father’s death that he involved himself in the affairs of the hill rajas—an involvement which dragged him into hostile contact with the Mughal Government, which would probably have left him unharmed in the hills if he had not lent his co-operation to the rebellious rajas.

The allegation that the Guru’s policy was “open hostility to Islam” is contradicted by his own teachings:

“Some men are Hindus and others are Musslamans; ... know that all



men are of the same caste.

*Karta* (the Creator) and *Kareem* (the Beneficent) are the same; *Razak* (the Provider) and *Raheem* (the Merciful) are the same; let no man, even by mistake, suppose there is a difference".<sup>27</sup>

Allah and Alakh are the same; the Puranas and the Quran are the same; they are all alike; it is the one God who created all".<sup>28</sup>

### Many Muslim Devotees

The Guru naturally practised what he said. Prof. Abdul Majid Khan says, "Guru Gobind Singh was not at all inimical towards Islam or Muslims... Guru Gobind Singh had many Muslim devotees who held him in very high esteem". In this connection, Professor Khan mentions several names and incidents.<sup>29</sup>

The Guru's mission is thus stated in the *Bachitar Natak*<sup>29</sup> :-

"The divine Guru sent me for religion's sake:

On this account I have come into this world—'Extend the faith everywhere;

Seize and destroy the evil and sinful'.

I assumed birth for the purpose  
of spreading the faith; saving the saints

And extirpating all tyrants".

Words like 'evil', 'sinful' and 'tyrants' are general terms; it would not be proper to detect in such expressions an indirect reference to any particular authority or religious community. These lines, it has been pointed out, "read like an echo of what we get in the *Gita*,"<sup>30</sup> with the difference that the Guru speaks as a human instrument of God and not as an incarnation of God.<sup>31</sup>

It would perhaps be relevant to point out in this connection that there is nothing in any of the three versions of *Chandi Charitar* which may be taken—even indirectly or remotely—as an indication of the Guru's hostility towards Islam or the Mughal Empire.<sup>32</sup> He makes it clear that he is following *Durga Saptashati* in the *Markandeya Purana*. Addressing his *Ishta* (One God), he says : "It is Thou who created *Durga* and destroyed the demons through her." The word "*Sheenha*" is used to indicate the mythical lion which *Chandi* rides during her battles, with *sankha*, *astra* and *shastra* in her hands. The demon *Madhukaitabha* is mentioned. The introduction added by the Guru to the *Chandi Charitar*

Ukat Bilasa expresses his earnestness for “moral victories:”<sup>33</sup>

“Give me this power, O Almighty  
From religious deed I may never refrain  
Fearless may I fight the battles of life  
Full confidence may I ever have  
In asserting my moral victories  
May my supreme ambition and learning be  
To sing of the glory and victory  
When this mortal life comes to a close  
May I die with the joy and courage of a martyr.”

Here the Guru's tone is milder than it is in the above quoted extract from the *Bachitar Natak*.

The continuous threat to the Guru's position for over a decade during his residence in the hill region seems to have led to acceleration of the process of the militarisation which had already begun. He received tents and elephants as presents in 1680, if not earlier. He was visited by princes, held darbars resembling a royal court, and was called by his Sikhs' Sacha

Padshah.<sup>34</sup> We are also told that Aurangzeb wanted his *faujdar*s on the north-west to see that Guru Gobind Singh stopped practices that created the impression that the Guru was a raja”.<sup>35</sup> The Guru recruited Pathans who had formerly fought in the Mughal army.<sup>36</sup> In his *Krishan Avtar*, composed in 1688, he say:

“The tenth story of the Bhagvat is rendered into the (popular) bhasha with no other purpose than that of war for the sake of righteousness.<sup>37</sup>

In the *Akal Ustat* he calls the Supreme, “All-Steel.” This idea was further developed in the *Bachitar Natak*.<sup>38</sup>

Militarisation could not, by itself, give the community as much strength as it needed to meet the mounting crisis. Internal unity was essential. There were deserters in the Guru's army. In his account of the battle of Bhangani in the *Bachitar Natak*, he says:

“Those who had kept themselves away from the battle, I drove them out of the place...”<sup>39</sup>

When the Shahzada came, “some” left the Guru and “took shelter where the hills stood”; but their houses were pulled down and plundered by Mughal officers. The Guru concludes:

“Babar's successors shall seize and plunder those who deliver not the Guru's money”.<sup>40</sup>



What was needed was such unquestioning obedience to the Guru as the "Five Beloveds" showed at Keshgarh.

The *masand* system had been developing on wrong lines, and difficulties had been felt even by Guru Hargobind. The worst feature of the system appeared after Guru Har Rai's death.<sup>41</sup> "The masands, who had been the foremost among the Guru's auxiliaries, became in course of time, the greatest counterpoise to his authority."<sup>42</sup> Guru Gobind Singh's condemnation of the masands is well-known.<sup>43</sup> The system had to be mended or ended; the Guru boldly chose the latter course. Drastic action was also needed against the dissident sects, viz. the Minas, the Dhirmalidas and the Ram Rais. Again, there could not be real solidarity within the community unless the caste system could be completely eradicated. The Guru had already initiated that process by treating the low caste Khalsa as social equals.<sup>44</sup>

These problems stirred the Guru's active mind. He retired for a time to the seclusion of the Naina Devi hills and "remained wrapt in deep and apparently anxious thought".<sup>45</sup> Then he returned to Anandpur and issued a general invitation to the Sikhs to muster stronger than usual on the occasion of that year's (1699) Baisakhi festival. At Keshgarh, the Khalsa was really and formally born,<sup>46</sup> and the Guru defined the qualifications of "a pure member of the Khalsa" in a well known Sawwaiya.<sup>47</sup>

All the distinguishing features of the Khalsa did not emerge suddenly or at a time. Even before the Keshgarh Assembly, Guru Gobind Singh had issued orders to his Sikhs to let their hair grow and to wear and to practise the use of arms.<sup>48</sup> As early as Guru Hargobind's time, a group of five Sikhs had been allowed to initiate a person into Sikhism.<sup>49</sup> This was in consonance with the statement of Bhai Gurdas, "..Where there are two Sikhs, there is a company of saints; where there are five Sikhs, there is God".<sup>50</sup>

Guru Hargobind almost identified the disciple with the Guru when he said: "Deem the Sikh who cometh to you with the Guru's name on his lips as your Guru".<sup>51</sup> Already the Sikh "had become a philosopher's stone and was capable of communicating holiness to others".<sup>52</sup> Guru Gobind Singh's injunction against caste restrictions was a repetition of the teachings of Guru Nanak and the practices of Guru Amar Das.

The greatness of Guru Gobind Singh's experiment lay in the harmonious combination of floating ideas and practices in a co-ordinated

system which had a definite objective in view, viz, the organization of an integrated, self-reliant and dedicated community pledged to destroy evils and sins and to extirpate tyrants. The moral strength required for the accomplishment of this difficult objective was to be derived from the unadulterated worship of one God—and of one God only.

The social cohesion needed for the purpose would arise from the removal of social barriers. The stimulus to courage and self-sacrifice would be provided by the concept of God as “All-Steel”.

The use of arms was no longer to be a concealed device for self-defence, misunderstood—if not suspected by the Sikhs themselves—as it had been in the days of Guru Hargobind.<sup>53</sup> It was to be an inescapable duty of the Khalsa.

The abolition of Guruship might appear to be an unforeseen development; but it was in logical conformity with the evolution of Sikhism. The personality of the Guru had always been kept separate from its spirit. What Guru Gobind did was to vest the personality in the Khalsa and the spirit in the Guru Granth Sahib. This bifurcation had its beginning at Keshgarh and its completion at the time of the Guru's death. At Keshgarh, he accepted initiation according to the new rites from the “Five Beloveds”, thus virtually surrendering his personal Guruship and transferring it to the Khalsa. He said a day before his death (says Sainapat) : “The Khalsa is the Guru and the Guru the Khalsa”. When questioned about the nomination of his successor he said that he had granted his “physical self” to the Khalsa and the “eternal and the limitless Word uttered with the Lord's light is our supreme Master.”<sup>54</sup> The Guru told Bhai Nand Lal that the Guru had three forms : Nirguna (the formless Supreme Spiriti), Sarguna (the visible form, the Sikhs) and Gur Shabad (the Master's Word, the Word of the Gurus incorporated in the Guru Granth-Sahib). When the Guru's atma was absorbed in parmatma, the Khalsa continued to pursue his mission in the light of the Word of the Guru.<sup>55</sup>

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# THE GURU'S GIFT

Late Dr. Hari Ram Gupta

There are, in this world, men who are endowed by nature with a great capacity for attaining perfection. In the days of peace, they work for the solace or instruction of mankind; and strive to smooth the way for the chariot of progress. In the days of calamity, suddenly they are seen to rise up, to guide the people, and with stoicism to expose themselves to the shocks of averse fortune. The grateful world would point to Guru Gobind Singh, as one of such names. Gobind Singh determined to take advantage of this situation, conceived a bold but noble design of inspiring the weak, selfish and vanquished Hindus with a new hope and new life. He knew that he would be able to do this by stirring the latent faculties of the human will, which, he understood, possessed the elasticity of rising to the loftiest height as well as of sinking to the lowest depth. Moreover, he was not unaware of the brilliant results achieved by the oppressed in Deccan under the leadership of Shivaji.

The greatness of Gobind Singh lies in the fact that he made full use of the strong sentiments which had been expressing itself in the new (Sikh) community in the form of sincere devotion and loving obedience for the person of the Guru. He propagated the truth that in order to safeguard the spiritual rights of the people, the country should not depend on the sovereign entirely. The people ought to entrust some right to themselves, and individually feel any national wrong done, and collectively organize means to withstand it. He therefore, turned the new born sentiment of his followers into an engine of strength to crush all opposition. *Nationalism rather than salvation, was placed before them as the ideal of religion* and self-respect and service the means to achieve this end. The disciples were, therefore, to worship *Akalpurkh* (God) only, pay homage to the *Granth* alone, be free from caste prejudices, take baptism of water stirred with a dagger, add the word Singh (lion) to their names, have one form of salutation, abstain from smoking, wear turbans, and always keep on their persons *kesh* (hair), *kangha* (comb), *kirpan*, (sword), *kara* (steel bracelet) and *kach* (a pair of



knicker-bockers). They were inspired with the belief that the Panth (the general body of the Sikhs), which stood for fighting the wrongs of the world, was the creation of God, who was always present with them, and therefore every disciple working in the cause of the Panth, was bound to be victorious.

Service involved two principles—discipline and sacrifice. *The disciples were to undergo physical, mental and spiritual discipline.* They were to exercise a strict control over their desires, passions and emotions; were to offer implicit obedience to their leaders, and were to think never in self-interest but always in terms of the Panth and the Country and they were to serve these with the faith that they were pleasing God thereby, and were to fear no foe however strong he might be. Each Sikh *working in the righteous cause* was to consider himself a tower of strength equal to the power of one lakh and a quarter hosts and was never to give way to despair. He must trust in God who had created him for victory and depend upon steel which would never betray him. He must always be prepared to lay down his life because his victory lay in the moment of his death. To such inspired and optimistic disciples Gobind Singh gave the name of “Khalsa—the purified ones.”

The creation of the Khalsa was an epoch making event in the religious and political history of the country. It marked the beginning of the rise of a new people, destined to play the role of a hero against all oppression and tyranny. The severities of the high-caste people over their brethren—the *shudras*—were set at naught as soon as one joined the ranks of the Khalsa, where all were equal and ready to render one another all help and useful service. Their only difficulty lay in destroying the organised oppression of the tyrannical despotism, under which the oppressed people had been acutely suffering. It was a gigantic task for the small community of the Khalsa, in which they stood aloof, without any sympathy, from other sections who could never think of displeasing the mighty rulers, whose very name struck terror in their hearts. Under the direction of the Guru, the Khalsa took up the profession of arms and the results were most surprising. The people, lowliest of the low, who had lived for centuries under complete servility now turned into doughty warriors, the praises of whose physique and valour are sung by all the world including their bitterest foes.

As out of a single stream  
Countless waves arise  
And, being water, fall  
Back into the water again.  
So from God's form emerge  
Alive and inanimate things  
And, since they arise from Him,  
They shall fall in Him again.

(Guru Gobind Singh)



# SIKHISM—A PRIVILEGED RELIGION-CUM-CULTURE-CUM-POLITY

Late Dr. Mohan Singh Dewana

## The Eastern Tradition

Maxmuller first classified religions as historical, psychological or philosophical and physical or natural. A historical religion, in the eastern tradition, is founded by a human being at a certain place, at a certain time. Firstly, the prophet had to stake his claim to Messenger hood; secondly, he had to produce a revealed book, i.e. produce, dictate or write a book which contains alleged direct revelations by God to him; thirdly, he had to work miracles by god-given powers (called in Sanskrit *ridhis & sidhis*) which could range from raising the dead, healing, curing, shattering a mountain, splitting the moon, making the sun return, inspiring cowards to heroism and transforming public women into saints. Miracles attend the lives of such prophets, miracles are worked by them, miracles are worked for them.

The prophet claims to be God's messenger, the true king or emperor on earth, the son of God, the beloved of God, the friend of God, the lover of God, the spouse of God. He enjoys closeness to God. He is granted a vision of God and audience with God; he is called to heaven, he is taken up to heaven. He receives direct revelation in words, in symbols, in written script, in signs, indications, etc. He also receives wisdom and truth via his purified intellect.

The prophet is a perfect man—is an ideal man—for his age and clime. He is an example for all ages; he usually admits to the appearance of prophets before him in that country and on the earth as a whole, but he himself is the last decrowning prophet. He truly brings down the kingdom of God on earth.

A huge price is exacted from the prophet for the honour and privilege of messengerhood; it varies from physical sufferings, torture, sickness, to martyrdom, death on the cross, death by stabbing, death by poison, death in war. The price is generally called sacrifice.

Although the methods of adoration of God as laid down authoritatively are different, empirical and admit of interpretation—even misinterpretation—they are, on the whole, based on or related to times,

i.e., seasons, particular fortnights, particular days, particular places—like tanks, rivers, seas. The priesthood is usually there in all religions. Some however, religions like Buddhism have done without priests.

### Historical Prophets

I am not mentioning the mythological religions, for the great difference between a mythological religion and an historical religion is that the first, in the words of Aurobindo Ghosh, represents the “descent of God and the second, the ascent of man”. God in Hinduism, which is not a historical religion but a mythological one, first descends as the three primal gods or the three-faced manifest God, then the three gods, incarnate on earth, set new norms and frames, new laws for the changed times. In the case of the historical prophets, the general emphasis is on ethical conduct, social organisations and strengthening and widening such appurtenances, rituals, liturgies and canons as appeal to the largest number of people. There is always an eye on the augmentation of the number of followers, who then through sheer cohesion and adhesion become either separate nations or separate *milliats*. So far as the spiritual or the hereafter of prophetic religions is concerned, there is just the idea of a universal resurrection on the day of judgement, when God judges and awards eternal hell or heaven. The psychological or philosophical religion keeps God out here as well as in the hereafter and carries the maxim, “you have made your bed, now you must lie in it;” “as you sow, so shall you reap”. They, too, extend this process of award and punishment backwards and forwards to eternity, although they do talk of the cessation of the working of the wheel in a ridiculously small number of cases. These religions inculcate no sense of human sinfulness, no urgency and need of forgiveness, preceded by sinfulness, and no possibility of intervention by the prophet or of the saint on behalf of man before God. The prophet, on the other hand, pledges grace and forgiveness of sins and eternal heaven for firm faith and belief on the name of God and on the name of the prophet. In the case of all these religions, the concept of God is hazy, rendered hazier and cloudier by distance of all kinds whether fixed or transcendable. The idea of personal identity or individual identity is equally floating—fluid or mercurial. The list of personal spiritual experience that has come down to us from antiquity is, in all cases, very small. The facts of the lives of the prophets are not too many—if not



too few—and as far as the continuation of direct descent or apostolate is concerned, the Buddha did not leave a direct descendent. There was no line of apostles. The reader can find for himself direct lines of spiritual succession in other cases.

The Chinese religion is the oldest. I speak subject to correction. It may be that the Egyptian religion is even older than the Chinese. I am not talking here of primitive religions. The Egyptian tradition is that there was a great fish teacher who gave Egypt (Misar) its religion. Can it be that this fish was the first incarnation of Vishnu called Matsya of which we have a full account in the Matsyapurana? Islam is the last prophetic religion that came in the sixth century A.D. Bahaim is also described as a prophetic religion. I wonder if American Mormonism can come under it?

Sikhism, whose founder Guru Nanak Dev was born in 1469 A.D. and who held nine successors as great as himself, has been called by me the most privileged religion, because it is the latest and is exactly 400 years. It stands before the world as a complete prophetic religion which gave the people not only a complete spirit realising a scheme of life, but also welded all its faithful into a thoroughly cohesive *millat* or universal participatory brotherhood, distinguishable from all others communities. Through its man-making technology, it produced a polity and state which was run by the common perfect man for the common perfect man.

# METAMORPHOSIS OF MAN

Late Sardar Hukam Singh

No national hero has been so much misunderstood or so grossly misrepresented as Guru Gobind Singh. This is no wonder. As the Guru was so great, it was not so easy for an ordinary man to comprehend and to make correct assessment about his contributions during his short span of life of only forty two years. According to Sadhu Vaswani, "Guru Gobind Singh was a mystic and loved to have quiet communion with God. The Bhakta, the poet, the lover of the beautiful, the dweller in silence and seclusion, the singer of the wonder of the world, become a practical man; the builder of the new Hindusthan."

The history of the world has not known another family where so many of its members sacrificed themselves for the love of their country, where everything was willingly offered for the sake of the poor and downtrodden. His great grandfather, Guru Arjan, was mercilessly tortured to death on the banks of the river Ravi. His grandfather, Guru Hargobind was captured and incarcerated in Gwalior fort in Madhya Pradesh; the father Guru Tegh Bahadur, was beheaded in Chandni Chowk, Delhi; Guru Gobind Singh himself was the victim of a hired assassin's dagger at Nanded (Maharashtra); two sons, Jhujhar and Ajit (15 and 13 years) fought violently and died at Chamkaur fortress; the two younger ones Zorawar and Fateh Singh (only 11 and 9 years) were bricked alive at Sirhind; and every one, near and dear including his mother, wife, uncles and adherents, was sacrificed to serve the cause that he had espoused. He left no cash, no property, no heir to succeed and no claimant to ask for office, "He abolished succession by heredity, and restored to the people, for the first time in man's history, sovereignty both spiritual and temporal. He spiritualised secular activity and to earthly hopes he gave religious sanctions."

Guru Gobind Singh's greatness cannot be measured in full only by the victories he won on the battle field or by the vast literature that he produced, or even by the high ideals that he preached and practised, though each one of these achievements is by itself remarkable. His real greatness lay in the transformation that he brought about in ordi-



nary men, and the revolution that he stirred up in the country and encouraged his country men to throw off the shackles of the tyrannical rulers and self centred priests. "A man who was born a mortal, but who, through sheer force of character and grace of God became immortal, who was born a prince, but chose to remain his whole life a mendicant; a saint whom circumstances turned into a warrior, but who even then remained a saint at heart, who battled and won, but did not acquire an inch of territory. He gave to the Indian people a concept of nationhood".

In his book, '*The Transformation of Sikhism*', Dr. Gokul Chand Narang has observed; "The Hindus were too mild by nature, too contented in their desires, too modest in their aspirations, too averse to physical exertion and terror stricken and demoralised, even though strongly attached to religion. They had religion but no national feeling. Guru Gobind Singh sought to make nationalism their religion".

This surely is an under statement. Under long subjugation, the Hindus had lost all sense of self respect. They were subjected to many disabilities. They were required to pay a tax for being allowed to stay in a Muslim State. This was in addition pilgrimage tax, the special tax, *Jazia* and the *Kharaj*. Prohibition to ride, wear rich clothes, erect new temples, celebrate Hindu festivals, and study sacred books, were some of the disabilities. Restrictions on dress, diet or use of conveyance were imposed on non-muslims. Converts were given concessions; that low caste Hindus accepted Islam as an escape from tyranny. It is strange that for all these indignities, the Hindus felt no remorse.

The Guru believed that the human mind had to be saved from political, social and economic degeneration. This was a stupendous task which could not be achieved during one generation. This was started by Guru Nanak and had been pursued by his successors. Love for all, and hatred against none, had been the basic policies. Non-violence and suffering had been tried. Guru Hargobind had intervened to recruit soldiers and also to fight injustice by force. But again his successors restricted their activities to peaceful resistance and path of sacrifice. All attempts proved futile. Even Guru Tegh Bhadur's martyrdom could not produce any change in the hearts and attitudes of the rulers.

As a great seer looking ahead, Guru Gobind Singh measured the

enormous tasks that he wanted to perform and the difficulties that he would have to encounter. The objective was to build a nation out of this emasculated and degenerated lot. It was not easy to convert base dross into shining gold. First of all the disintegrating elements had to be uprooted, untouchability was to be banished, the inequalities of castes by birth had to be done away with; fresh and living blood had to be injected and the dead stones had to be stirred to life.

This required an extraordinary man, a super human effort to accomplish. Guru Gobind Singh provided that need. In fact he was a superman in thought, spirit and determination. There was magic in his personality. He transformed meek men into fearless warriors who knew no retreat in any situations.

Never before has any son, mere child of nine, advised his own father, a pious and reputed religious leader, to go and offer himself to be beheaded for the sake of his country. Never has any father directed his young sons to go and fight against heavy odds, where death was certain. Never has any patriot sacrificed everything, dear and near to him, without any remorse and without any murmur; never before has any religious prophet given his own people a new status superior to himself, and then knelt before them to raise him equal to themselves; never has any other general fought battles retaining his equilibrium and compassion; and never before has the cult of sword been so reconciled with spiritual value as was done by the great Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh was a miracle man. He worked wonders. He had realised that though non-violence must continue to remain as the basic ideal, its application became impossible under certain situations. He felt convinced that "methods of appeal, persuasion and representation had failed. There could not be any constitutional agitations. There was no public or world opinion to restrain evil doers. Thus there was no hope to live a life of honour, dignity and self respect except through the arbitrament of arms even though it meant death and destruction to the land." It was with this frame of mind that he declared. When all remedies have been tried and proved futile, it is perfectly legitimate to draw the sword for action.

But this also required a master mind to convert his followers to this



viewpoint. When the Guru explained to the Sikhs that the use of force had become inevitable, they advised him to invoke the blessings of Kali goddess. The Guru knew that it would not be easy to convince these innocent people, sunk in superstitions, of the futility of such *havans* and invocations. So he agreed to make an effort to propitiate the goddess. On Naina Devi hills all materials including costly incenses, were collected, and the services of reputed priests requisitioned. The havan continued for long but there were no sign of the goddess. The head priest became apprehensive of the consequences, and suggested that the goddess demanded the sacrifice of some pure soul. Guru Gobind Singh asserted that there could not be any one purer than the Pandit himself. The priest stealthily ran away, the Guru threw all the inflammable material into the fire at once. There was a big ablaze visible for miles. People believed that the goddess had appeared and blessed the Guru. The Guru drew his sword and flourished it to announce to the people that this was the goddess, the protector of the weak and down trodden, the defender of faith and destroyer of the evil.

The plans of the Guru had been all well thought out. He came down from the hills, settled down at Anandpur Sahib, called upon his followers to bring offerings of good horses and arms instead of cash. These began to pour in, but unless there were fearless men to handle them nothing could be achieved. The question was to instil courage and patriotism in them. Their minds had to be awakened to the tyrannies they were suffering from. Above all a sense of unity had to be created which would give them strength to fight for a noble cause.

Having made these preparations, the Guru proceeded now to execute his mission of creating a nation that would be pure enough to free itself from the oppression of the priests and tyranny of the rulers. A message was sent round to collect at Anandpur Sahib on the Baisakhi day. It was the year 1699. Thousands of devotees had assembled from various parts of India. Guru Gobind Singh first addressed them and told them of his mission. Then he drew out his sword and enquired if some one was prepared to offer his head for the sake of religion. Five men, one after another, offered themselves. It is significant to note that while Daya Ram was khatri from Lahore, Dharam Das was a Jat

of Delhi, Muhkam Chand was a washerman from Dwaraka, Himmat was a cook from Jagannath; and the fifth was Sahib Chand, a barber of Bidar. The Guru brought them out dressed in neat and fine clothes before the assembly, where people were wondering what had taken place.

In this manner the Guru eliminated the fear of death. These five had undergone the process and were prepared to take any risks for the sake of *Dharma*. Then they were baptised with *Amrit* (nectar) prepared by stirring steel in water mixed with sugar. At least three out of the five were low castes. But all drank Amrit one after another from the same bowl. The tenacity and strength of steel had been blended with humility and sweetness of sugar. This was the Khalsa, a corporate religio-political entity, devoted to the service of mankind, always ready to take up the cause of the weak and to fight against tyranny and despotism.

Then came the climax. Guru Gobind Singh knelt down himself before these five and begged for the same Amrit to be administered to him. This perplexed the five beloved ones, but it had to be gone through. Now there was complete equality between the Guru and the Sikhs.

With this nation, newly created, he fought battles, none of his own seeking. He had to fight against Hindu Rajas as well as Mughal rulers. In Chamkaur the Guru could, with only forty men, engage thousands and then he could manage to escape successfully. Only one instance would demonstrate how complete had been the metamorphosis. A devotee brought a musket as an offering to the Guru. Sikhs came to know that the guru wanted to test the new weapon by actual firing on a human target. Two Sikhs competed with each other as to which one of them should have the privilege to be shot by the Guru. Both sacrificed themselves smilingly.

Though battles had to be fought, and some won and others lost, there never was any rancour or hatred against anybody. The Guru believed that Hindus and Sikhs were the same, the mosque and temple were not different. He loved Hindus and Muslims alike. Bhai Kanhya's role as the pioneer of red-cross movement is unique. He was attend-



ing equally to the wounded without regard to friend and foe. Complaint was lodged with the Guru. On hearing Bhai Kanhaya the Guru blessed him and encouraged him to look after the wounded alike whether he was a Sikh friend or a Mohamadan foe. Red Cross movement has not reached this stage even upto this day. It is the neutral nations that are entrusted with Red Cross work in wars between belligerents. There is no other instance in history where one fighting party might have provided such assistance to the enemy during actual fighting.

Prof. Bannerjee writes, 'It is undeniable that Guru Gobind Singh must be counted among the greatest of Indians of all ages. The object he attempted was great and laudable, and the means which he adopted were such as a comprehensive mind could alone have suggested.'

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19-25

All these authors were dons of Sikh Religion and History. Though they are no more with us but their writings have made them immortal in our hearts and in the pages of our history.









