

**RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL PARADIGMS  
OF THE SIKH IDENTITY**

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Submitted by

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**Dedicated to**  
**My teacher and friend**  
**Prof. Jagdish Singh**

### **Certificate**

It is certified that Mr. Jaswinder Singh has worked under my supervision and guidance on his Ph.D. thesis entitled "Religious and Historical Paradigms of the Sikh Identity". It is further certified that no part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree/diploma to this or any other university/institution. I find it worthy of submission for Ph.D. degree.

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## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis "Religious and Historical Paradigms of the Sikh Identity" has been written by me and it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree/diploma by any other university/institution.

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## **(Abstract)**

### **Religious and Historical Paradigms of the Sikh Identity**

#### **1. *Introduction***

Study of identity and its reflections are becoming important in social sciences especially in religious study. Due to the recent developments in different religious groups and communities the study of identity has come in academic focus. The main problem of this study is to understand the nature and development of Sikh identity and to find out the connections in its religious and historical paradigms.

#### **2. *Concepts***

##### **2.1. Identity**

According to the Oxford Dictionary, identity is the characteristics, feelings or beliefs that distinguish people from others: a sense of national / cultural / personal / group identity. As a sense of uniqueness, a feeling of continuity over time and a sense of ego completeness. And fourth characteristic demands identification with the ideals of some group that affirms the sense of self that is the final achievement of a healthy sense of identity. In this research work we purpose to identify the uniqueness of Sikh identity and its religious and historical paradigms.

##### **2.2. Paradigm**

The word 'Paradigm' is derived from Greek word '*Paradeigma*' that means explanation of a pattern. In this research we are applying concept paradigm as a methodical framework to study the representative religious and historical patterns of the Sikh identity.

### **2.3. Religious Paradigm**

Religious paradigm of identity is a matter of religious identification or declaration. Those who believe or follow the specific doctrines of a particular faith are generally referred to as religious community. Every religious community has a specific identity that bonds their own faith. In this research we want to explore the distinguish feature of Sikh faith.

### **2.4. Historical Paradigm**

Almost every identity links with the history of his group, caste, tribe, class, nation and community because that attaches with these in the object of conscious and unconscious mind. According to J.S.Grewal, 'It is based on peculiar doctrines, institutions and social attitudes – including sense of commitment to matters temporal as well as spiritual. It necessary to take into account the approaches and the views for a comprehensive treatment of the subject. The historiographical perspectives have been presented to be examined in the light of understanding the subject'. The purpose of this research is also to understand the historical development of Sikh identity.

**3. Objectives:** The main objectives of this study are: –

1. To understand the nature and emergence of Sikh identity.
2. To understand the religious paradigms of the Sikh identity.
3. To understand the historical paradigms of the Sikh identity.
4. To understand the connections of religious and historical paradigms of the Sikh identity.
- 5.

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qU smrQu vfw myrI miq QorI rwm ]

*Thou art mighty and supreme; of little understanding I.*

*With Thy perfect glance of grace, even those ungrateful dost Thou Cherish.*

(SGGS; 547)

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## Introduction

### Significance:

The issue of *identity* has acquired an unprecedented significance in the contemporary academic world. Its historical genesis can be traced in the holocaust in Germany and the two World Wars. Although the resonances of this concern are faintly conspicuous in ancient and modern world but post-modernity has to grapple vigorously with the some given to the conflict, violence and political recognition of crisis in the wake of post-colonial resurgence and globalized pluralistic co-existence mobility as a way of life.

Post-modernism attempts to de-centre and re-interpret the whole structures of thought. It may be called the revolutionary phase in the present discourse. Due to this, to define and to find the solution of the complexes and crisis of philosophy, identity becomes a major issue. About the post-modern framing of identity, Ali Rattansi observes that 'this mode of analyzing identities is intrinsically connected to a decentring and de-essentializing of the subject and social. *Decentring* refers here in the first instance to the deflation of a rationalist/Cartesian pretension to unproblematic self-knowledge. It also involves a critique of the conception of a linear connection of subjects to the external world, in which reality is made transparent from a uniquely privileged vantage point through the application of rationality and empirical disciplines. *De-essentialism* is an intimately related manoeuvre, cutting the ground away from conceptions of subjects and social forms as reducible to a timeless, unchanging,

defining and determining element or ensemble of elements – ‘human nature’, for example, or in the case of the social, the logic of the market or mode of production. Altering is important here because subjects and the social, and thus both individual and collective identities, are seen not as essentially given, but as constantly under construction and transformation, a process in which differentiation from Others is a powerful constitutive force’.<sup>1</sup>

The conceptualization of decentring, de-essentializing and altering is very important to frame the *identity* in the present thought. The perspective of *other* is becoming important to understand the phenomena of identity. The issue of Sikh identity is becoming significant in Sikh studies. It has taken a serious turn after the attack on *Sri Harmandir Sahib* and *Sri Akal Takhat* in June 1984. *Sri Harmandir Sahib* and *Sri Akal Takhat* are highly respected and sacred places for the Sikhs. Kirpal Dhillon writes that ‘operation Blue Star finally concluded on 6 June with the death of Sant Bhindranwale, Shabeg Singh and a few others in assault on the Akal Takht, where they had been living for several months. In the process, the building of the Akal Takht, the most sacred of the five Sikh *thakat* or centers of temporal power, was razed to the ground and its many holy relics destroyed. The sanctum sanctorum and the Harmandir too received numerous bullet marks’.<sup>2</sup>

This attack was operated by Indian army. In this attack, hundreds of innocent people were killed by the army. Immediately, ‘between 1986-7 Operation Woodrose

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<sup>1</sup> Ali Rattansi, “Western Racisms, Ethnicities and Identities in a Postmodern Frame”, in *Racism, Modernity and Identity: On the Western Front*, Ali Rattansi and Sallie Westwood (eds.), Polity Press, UK, 1999, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Kirpal Dhillon, *Identity and Survival: Sikh Militancy in India 1978-1993*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2006, p. 193.

systematically terrorized the youth between the ages 16-20 driving many youngsters closer to the extremist point of view. In early 1988 the Woodrose method was given up for a less rigorous one. As an officer in uniform said in 1988: 'we no longer harass people if they were forced to give food or shelter to terrorists. Instead we encourage them to talk to us and we try to win them over to our side. This change in our policy has helped us a lot. Now people are beginning to inform us about the whereabouts of these terrorists'.<sup>3</sup>

Due to these operations, the situation was very crucial for the Sikhs to survive. One side the Indian state was presenting the Sikhs as terrorists and on the other side; the Sikhs were facing the problems within their own community. It was the complex situation of the Sikhs to project their real image on the world canvass.

Again, after 9/11, the issue of identity became a serious challenge for the Sikhs. Rita Verma writes that 'the post 9/11 backlash was pivotal in this community as it created more barriers for the youth in their schools as they became victims of racist slurs, threats and physical assault that were treated with apathy from teachers and administrators. Students stopped going to school, changed their physical appearances, displayed 'patriotic' American sentiment to promote an appearance of belonging, became depressed and were even suicidal as a result of the 9/11 backlash. The sense of persecution and of being labeled 'suspect' in the eyes of the public was detrimental to the families and ensuing 'fear' for their safety in public spaces provoked many violent

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<sup>3</sup> Dipanker Gupta, *The Context of Ethnicity: Sikh Identity in a Comparative Perspective*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002, p. 81.

memories from India that these families experienced during the Hindu-Sikh riots from 1984 to the mid-1990s'.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, world conditions forwarded a challenge for the Sikhs to define their identity. They faced many internal and external issues, which influence the image of the Sikh identity. The confusions about Sikh identity arose in the academic circles as well as in the political, social and cultural sphere. Rajiv A. Kapur writes that 'for centuries, Sikh identity was diffused between Sahajdhari and Kesdhari Sikhs and overlapped with the Hindu community. Kesdhari Sikhs formed a distinct brotherhood of the Khalsa, but not all Khalsa considered themselves as distinct from the Hindus. Khalsa numbers were fluid and even among Khalsa members numerous divisions between various sects and particular religious adherence existed.....Among Khalsa Sikhs there was a movement away from individual sect distinctions and towards the development of one common and distinct Sikh identity'.<sup>5</sup>

In academics, the issue of Sikh identity has been studied by the western scholars e.g. Trumpp, W.H. McLeod, Doris R. Jakobsh mainly. W.H. McLeod takes this question more seriously. However, he examines the problem from the historical angle. Harjot Oberoi, N.G. Barrier, Doris Jackbosh and some others carried the same tradition. On the other hand, Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha Daljeet Singh, G.S. Dhillon, J.S. Ahluwalia, J.S. Grewal and Gurbhagat Singh also try to treat this question in the Sikh perspective.

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<sup>4</sup> Rita Verma, "Trauma Cultural And Identity Politics in a Post-9/11 Era: Reflections By Sikh Youth", *Sikh Formations*, Vol. 2, No. 1, June 2006, p. 89.

<sup>5</sup> Rajiv A. Kapur, *Sikh Separatism: The Politics of Faith*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1986, p. 32.

**Objectives:**

The present study has four main objectives. These are;

1. To understand the nature of the Sikh identity.
2. To examine the religious paradigms of the Sikh identity.
3. To describe the historical paradigms of the Sikh identity.
4. To examine the mediations of the Sikh theory (the religious paradigms) and practices (the historical paradigms).

**Methodology:**

In this study, religio-historical discourse analysis approach is adopted. In the first step, we have tried to understand the concept of identity and found three main approaches. One group of thinkers takes attention upon the surrounding which emphasis on a human being and effects/affects/erodes/fades individual's identity. They conceive that the concepts of incommensurability, difference, diversity, hybridity, and confinement become the explanation of one's identity. Second group of scholars focuses upon race, feminism and marginality, which describe how the various concepts' impact on co-operative identity. Third group constructs the concepts of objectification, myth, commitment, rituals and conversation. These concepts explain the religious identity of a person or group and how these concepts associate with religious identity.

In the second step, we have tried to explore the major works of the scholars of Sikh studies e.g. Bhai Gurdas, Sainapat, John Malcolm, Ernest Trumpp, Frederic Pincott, Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, M.A. Macauliffe, W.H. McLeod, Harjot Oberoi, Pashaura Singh, Daljeet Singh, J.S. Grewal, Gurbhagat Singh and J.S. Ahluwalia. We observed that, the

concepts of faith, commitment and institutions are important to understand the religious identity. We have examined that the issue of Sikh identity comes within three strands: faith in Guru/*Waheguru/Akal Purkh*, commitment with Guru/*Waheguru* and institutions of Sikh tradition.

In the third step, we have tried to understand the religious paradigms of the Sikh faith. Every religion has its own paradigms. In this study, we have examined that how the Sikh Gurus construct the religious paradigms and we have focused upon the conceptualizations of God, commitment and institutions in the Sikh faith.

In the fourth step, the study has focused upon the practices of the Sikhs. It has concentrated that how the Gurus have constructed the history. In the view of historical paradigms, we have examined the various institutions of the Sikhs. We have also tried to understand that how the Sikhs and their Gurus are committed to their lives for the Divine.

At last, it has examined to understand the mediations between Sikh theory and practice. In the *identity* perspective, it was much important to understand these linkages because practice of any community shows its reflexions of thought.

## **Chapter I**

In this chapter, we have presented a relevant review of literature. The first chapter also describes the theory and concept of *identity*. This chapter has two parts. First part deals with the theoretical issues and second part examines the different studies, which linked with *identity*. It also describes that how the issue of identity became much

important in the present academic. In this chapter, we have major works, which are dealing the issue of Sikh identity.

## **Chapter II**

This chapter deals with the Religious Paradigms of the Sikh Identity. Three main issues of Sikh identity; Sikh faith, commitment and institutions have been discussed. It is important to understand the different layers of identity and what are the conceptualizations in the Sikh vision toward faith, commitment and institutions. Akal Purkh (ੴ) is the highest spiritual realization of Ultimate Reality in the Sikh vision, which a Sikh can achieve through his faith. To do this, he/she has to commit his/her life to the spiritual passionate Guru, the *Gur-Parmeshar*. The Guru guides the whole-life phenomena to a Sikh. He blessed the sacred institutions such as *Guruship*, *Dharamsala/Gurdwara* and *Sangat*, which give the distinct shape to Sikh identity.

Guru creates *Sangat*, which is the community of truthful people. *Sangat* has a spirit to best serve the other. *Other* is not antagonistic in Sikh vision, which is appreciable mark of Sikh identity. In the Sikh theory, there is much respect for other. In *Guru Granth Sahib*, *Siddha Gosti Bani* creates the paradigms of inter/intra-faith dialogue.

## **Chapter III**

The third chapter, *Historical Paradigms of the Sikh Identity* unfolds the important clues to understand that how the Sikh, and their Gurus created new paradigms in the practice. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, *Gurbani* contains various spiritual and experienced personalities. A Sikh lives according to Guru and follows to *Guru Granth Sahib*. Every



day he/she starts his/her life within the recitation of Divine *Nam* and tries to spent day and night in the Divine commitment of Guru, who leads him/her toward spiritual life and realization.

To recite the Divine *Nam*, Guru made *Sangat*, which gathers around Guru and meditates. Sikh meditation is known to as *Simran*, which is practiced within *Gurbani* reading and singing. *Gurbani* in *Guru Granth Sahib* has composed in musical symmetry. Sikh *Simran* relates with the embracing of *Waheguru* all the time to worship Him. In *Gurdwara*, *Sangat* recite the Divine *Nam* and serve the food in *Langar* to the indigents. *Ardas* is the daily prayer of the Sikhs, which connects the Sikhs to their past and the source of their actualized vision. The structure of *Ardas* memorizes the traumas, martyrdoms, faith, devotions and sacrifices of the Sikhs in History.

The paradigms of Sikh institutions describe that *Sri Harmandir Sahib* and *Sri Akal Takht* are the models of Sikh institutions. *Sri Harmandir Sahib* is the center of Sikh spirituality, ideology, vision and its practice and the unique model of Sikh *Gurdwara*. The spirituality, structure, formation, archetype, philosophy and vision of *Sri Harmandir Sahib* show the distinct Sikh practice of Divine life. *Sri Akal Takht* in the front of *Sri Harmandir Sahib* is the symbol of Sikh religio-socio-political Sikh identity. *Miri-Piri* institution describes the vision of *Sri Akal Takht*. Through this institution, a Sikh becomes saint-soldier, which is the distinct practice of the Sikhs.

In the perspective of commitment, *Khande ki pahul* explains the highest commitment/devotion toward the Guru of a Sikh. A Sikh takes the initiation through

*Khande ki pahul* to become *Khalsa* in his super-consciousness. Here, the study defines that how the sacred symbols of *Khalsa* become the projections of Sikh identity.

## **Chapter IV**

The connections between Sikh theory and practice are discussed in the last chapter, Sikh Identity: Mediations in Religious and Historical Paradigms. The Sikhs live their life according to *Guru Granth Sahib*, which describes their faith in *Akal Purkh* and splendor commitment toward Guru. The Sikh history is the practice of Sikh spirit/vision/ideology. In history, Sikhs made the best effort to keep the Divine words of their Gurus and *Gurbani*, and it is a perennial practice. A Sikh vows to imbibe *Gurbani* in daily routine and commits to conducting life in its guidance. A Sikh is in the highest quest of Guru's love and serves his whole life.

Some historians and scholars have missed out in envisaging the significant connections of Sikh theory and practices. Questionable comments and versions have emerged from this inadequacy, as visible explicating in McLeod school of thought. A Sikh's love, passion, ambition cannot be understood without the understanding of religiosity, which is in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Methodologically, the practices of a religious community can be understood only with the realizations of its spirituality. Religious experiences create countless indiscrete in the time and space. So, on the behalf of some facts, the interpretation of the complete spiritual phenomena of a particular faith cannot be made. In this chapter, we have an attempt to understand the inter-mediations of Sikh thought and the practices of the Sikhs.

## Chapter I

### Identity: Concepts and Theories

Identity is the fragrance of any culture. Nowadays faith, gender, race, class, caste and some other aspects of self are emerging with the complex mixed identity. Thus, there are some multilayer resonances on identity. The question of identity has been discussed on various levels. The post-theories give new dimensions to understand the identity issues. Presently, post-modernity/post-modernism focuses upon the words *identity, fragmentation, difference* and *diversity*.<sup>6</sup> The scholars are trying to revive the different disciplines of academic such as religion, philosophy, history, culturology, sociology, political, science, economics, etc. to understand collectively the problems of identity. The general human-psychic question: *who I am*, is becoming very crucial and complex. This chapter deals with the theory of identity, especially Sikh identity. There are two parts of this chapter. First part deals with theories of identity and the second part examines the works directly associated with Sikh identity.

#### ***Meaning and Concept of Identity***

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary records that identity is the characteristics, feelings or beliefs that distinguish people from others: a sense of national, cultural, personal, group identity.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>For more details see Kobena Mercer, "Welcome to the Jungle: Identity and Diversity in Postmodern Politics", in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1990, p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2010, p. 770.

The Webster's Dictionary mentions four important features of identity as;

1. The state of being identical or absolutely the same; self-sameness.
2. Sameness or character or quality. Identity may be of two sorts: *absolute*, which involves exact quality with itself, or self-sameness, as the equation  $a=a$ ; and *relative*, a less rigid sense, which implies a close material resemblance or similarity, as that the green of two leaves. The distinctive character belonging to an individual; personality; individuality. The state of being what is asserted or described.
3. The distinctive character belonging to an individual; personality; individuality.
4. The state of being what is asserted or described.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, identity is a sense of uniqueness, a feeling of continuity over time and a sense of ego completeness. And characteristic demands identification with the ideals of some group that affirms the sense of self that is the final achievement of a healthy sense of identity.

## I

### Theories of Identity:

#### Jonathan Rutherford:

Jonathan Rutherford describes the issues of identity and develops the perspective of *difference*. He is a co-editor of the journal of *Male Order: Unwrapping*

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<sup>8</sup>*The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language*, Trident Press International, USA, 2004, p. 627.

*Masculinity*. His academic research starts with his Ph.D. thesis on 'Men, Heterosexuality and Difference'. He employs *incommensurability*, *difference*, *diversity* and *margins* – the key terms to understand the various dimensions of identity. According to Rutherford, understanding of *difference* is crucial in the present scenario in fact the *other* has become a hegemonic point. The *other* plays a vital part in cultural phenomena. He writes, 'difference in this context is always perceived as the effect of the other. But a cultural politics that can address difference offers a way of breaking these hierarchies and dismantling this language of polarity. We can use the word 'difference' as a motif for the uprooting of certainty'.<sup>9</sup> In the desire to break the hierarchies of race, sex and class, the concept of *difference* imparts clarity to explain the nature of identity. Thus, identity depends upon one's relation with the alterity. The being/identity of self and *other* is reciprocally determined, we are told.

Rutherford uses the word '*incommensurability*', which states a wider perspective of identity and difference. He writes, 'the culture politics of difference recognizes both the interdependent and relational nature and their political right of autonomy'.<sup>10</sup> He presents that relationship is helpful to people because difference removes the threat and people become friends by relations. 'In the commodification of language and culture, objects and images are torn free of their referents for their meanings become a spectacle open to almost infinite translation. Difference ceases to threaten, or to signify power relations. The power relation is closer to tourism than imperialism, an

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<sup>9</sup>Jonathan Rutherford, "A Place Called Home: Identity and the Cultural Politics of Difference", in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1990, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10.

expropriation of meaning rather than material'.<sup>11</sup> He also maintains that the emergence of a cultural politics of difference is a response to the new political subjects and cultural identities.<sup>12</sup> Identity is the most powerful object in the life because it combines the relations of the past and gives the vision of the future. 'Identity then is never a static location, it contains traces of its past and what it is to become. It is to contingent, a provisional full stop in the play of differences and narrative of our own life'.<sup>13</sup> However, 'there are no ready-made identities or categories that we can unproblematically slip into'.<sup>14</sup>

Difference and diversity are important variables to understand the culture because the values of difference and respect of *other* play vital role in society formation of culture. Rutherford employs the concept 'home' instead of margin. He himself explains that he uses the word 'home' here, not only as making a sense of self and identity, but as a motif for a culture that values difference and thrives on its own identity.<sup>15</sup> He initiates debate in the realm of identity politics.

He says that formation of identity is incommensurable component. It is important factor in difference. The cultural politics of difference explains living with incommensurability through new ethical and democratic frameworks. It is possible within a culture that both recognizes difference and is committed to resolving its

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 20.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

antagonism. The acknowledgement of the otherness of ourselves is gained through the transformation of relations of subordination and discrimination.

According to Rutherford, *Difference* is a response to new political issues and culture identities. He has different approach from Derrida for *difference*.<sup>16</sup> Derrida constructs his concept in the philosophy of language but Rutherford observes it in the paradigm of social practice which recognizes the different identities. In his observation, Derrida and the other post-structuralists have helped to make sense of the absences in Marxist theory.

### **Homi K. Bhabha:**

Homi K. Bhabha infuses new motifs, models, structures, thoughts and ideas to understand the culture. He presents his understanding with the structure of *hybridity*. He explains that 'a process of hybridity, incorporating new 'people' in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning'.<sup>17</sup> Homi Bhabha recognizes the different cultures with the glances of incommensurability. For him, the different values, practices, customs etc. are meaningful and relevant. He denies the diversity rather than the difference. He describes that 'with the notion of cultural difference, I try to place myself in the position of liminality, in the productive space of the construction of culture as difference, in the spirit of alterity or otherness. The difference of cultures cannot be something that can be accommodated within a universalist framework. Different cultures, the difference between cultural practices, the difference in the construction of

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<sup>16</sup> For more details see Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, Routledge, London, 1993.

<sup>17</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, "Introduction: Narrating the Nation", in *Nation and Narration*, Homi K Bhabha (ed.), Routledge, New York, 1993, p. 4.

cultures within different groups, very often set up among and between themselves an *incommensurability*'.<sup>18</sup>

Homi Bhabha rejects the earlier and orthodox assumptions and gives the critical views about the sense of cultural diversity and marginalization. 'The marginal of 'minority' is not the space of a celebratory, or utopian, self-marginalization. It is much more substantial intervention into those justifications of modernity – progress, homogeneity, cultural organicism, the deep nation, the long past – that rationalize the authoritarian, 'normalizing' tendencies within cultures in the name of the national interest or the ethnic prerogative'.<sup>19</sup>

According to him, dialogues among the different cultures should be open. There is need to study every culture from within and without making other culture a reference point as to such a faith analysis. 'Other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid'.<sup>20</sup> It is fact that when a desire enters in super ego then it tries to establish its will. Then we see the *homogeneity* takes birth which wants to rule on another. The presence of any culture should be respectful and its continuity is very important. 'The theory of culture is close to a theory of language, as part of a process of translation. Cultures are only constituted in relation to that otherness internal to their own symbol-forming activity which makes them decentred structures – through that

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<sup>18</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, "The Third Space", in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1990, p. 208.

<sup>19</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *op. cit.*, 1993, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *op. cit.*, 1990, p. 208.



displacement of liminality opens up the possibility of articulating *different*, even incommensurable cultural practices and priorities'.<sup>21</sup>

Homi Bhabha rejects the cultural exclusivism. He prefers the concept of *hybridity* for culture that provides a *third space* for the presentation of culture. It explains that the encounters between two culture origins a new arena for discussion and to understand their internal beautiful variations of the various cultures. 'The act of cultural translation (both as representation and as reproduction) denies essentialism of a prior given original or originary culture, then we see all form of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. Hybridity for me is the 'third place' which enables other positions to emerge. This third place displaces the histories that constitute it'.<sup>22</sup>

The concept of *other* plays a vital role in post-colonial thought. The encounters among the different kinds of values, beliefs, faiths make new impacts. These impacts influence on the shape and form of identity. 'Cultural and political identity is constructed through a process of othering. The time of 'assimilating' minorities to holistic and organic notions of cultural value has passed – the very language of cultural community needs to be rethought from a post-colonial perspective'.<sup>23</sup> So in Bhabha's approach of identity emphasis the ambivalent nature of that relationship, which understands political subjectivity as a multidimensional, conflictual form of identification.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 210-11.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 211.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 219.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 221.

## Stuart Hall:

Stuart Hall is a professor of sociology. He writes on politics, race and culture. He did extensive work on cultural identity. A number of his writings have been collected as 'The Hard Road to Renewal'. He established the meaning and definitions of cultural identity in 'the third world'. He says that 'identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation'.<sup>25</sup> In this way, he covers the thoughts of post-colonial thinkers in his theory of identity.

According to Stuart Hall, the cultural identities have two aspects and which are related with the past and the future. History manifests itself in the present state of culture. It travels unconsciously and reflects its presence on the spot of negotiation. 'Cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning'.<sup>26</sup> It shows the frozen identity of one's self. That is bound with limitation. 'Cultural identity, in the second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which

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<sup>25</sup> Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in, *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1990, p. 222.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 222.

already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories'.<sup>27</sup>

The importance of history in cultural identity cannot be ignored because history has its facts, symbols and meanings and we are related with it. 'It is not once-and-for-all. It is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute Return. Of course, it is not mere phantasm either. It is something not a mere trick of the imagination. It has its histories and histories have their real, material and symbolic effects'.<sup>28</sup> Thus, every culture is dynamic and its past's influence shows in present situation. It will also reshape the future image. 'Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourse of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning'.<sup>29</sup>

He tries to understand the concept of hybridity through diaspora. In his perspective cultural identity and diaspora both are important. He says that 'the diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing then solves anew through transformation and difference'.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 225.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p. 226.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 226.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 235.

## **Kobena Mercer:**

Kobena Mercer works at the British film industry. He has an intensive work on film, media and cultural studies. In *Welcome to the Jungle: Identity and Diversity in Postmodern Politics*, he argues about post-modernity, identity and politics and their inter-relations and combinations. He tells that 'everybody wants to talk about 'identity'. As a key word in contemporary politics it has many different connotations that sometimes it is obvious that people are not even talking about the same thing. One thing at least is clear that identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis. The emergence to talk about identity is symptomatic of the post-modern predicament of contemporary politics'.<sup>31</sup>

The predicament has entered a peculiar situation and we can say it is in the form of struggle. This struggle is different in the post-modernity as well as the modernity. Post-modernity has broken the dogmatic and fanatic philosophy or thought of the modernity. 'Postmodernism means many different things to many different people, but the key motif on displacement, decentring and disenchantment have a specific resonance and relevance for new social movements'.<sup>32</sup> 'Like identity, difference, diversity and fragmentation are keywords in the postmodern vocabulary where they are saturated with groovy connotations. Postmodernism has been discussed as a weakening, fading or relativisation of the absolutist or universalist values of the

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<sup>31</sup> Kobena Mercer. "Welcome to the Jungle: Identity and Diversity in Postmodern Politics", in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1990, p. 43.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 49.

Western Enlightenment'.<sup>33</sup> In this complicated life, on the one hand a human being is losing his self identity however becoming very conscious of his identity on the other. Identities have different shades and these are explanation of external self. 'We don't need another hero. But we do need to make sense another of the experiences that characterize postmodern structures of feeling'.<sup>34</sup>

Identity relates with a class, community, tribe, group, faith and religion. It plays an important role to the construction of the self. 'A recognition of fragmentation of traditional sources of authority and identity membership and belonging such as 'class' and 'community' that help to construct political loyalties, affinities and identifications'.<sup>35</sup> The views constitute the observations of the *other*. 'Identity and subjectivity depend on the negation, exclusion and denial of *others*. Women, children, slaves, criminals, madmen and savages were all alike in as much as their otherness affirmed 'his' identity as the universal norm represented in the category 'human'".<sup>36</sup>

Mercer gives new dimension to identity by saying that black is beautiful. In addition to that he discusses so many issues about the identity e.g. gays, lesbian, youth and feminine. In the discourses of identity, *difference* and *diversity* has become framework to understand and justify to the identity. He also tries to understand the ideology of identity mvement. As he says that, 'I am not so sure that 'identity' is what these movements hold in common: on the contrary, within and between the various 'new' movements that have arisen in postwar Western capitalist democracies what is

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 49.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p. 55.

asserted in an emphasis on 'difference'.<sup>37</sup> The phenomenon can be understood by relating it to the concept of difference. Difference shows the values between two same personse instead of separateness. So, 'essentialist notions of identity and subjectivity surface in the vortex of this bewildering experience of difference because of the absence of a common idea of what diversity really means for the multitude of subjects, actors and agents.<sup>38</sup> He concludes as that 'social identities are structured 'like a language' in that they can be articulated into a range of contradictory positions from one discursive context to the next since each element in ideology and consciousness has no necessary belonging in any political code or system of representation'.<sup>39</sup>

### **Frances Angela:**

Frances Angela illustrates the various aspects of identity by photographs of herself, her mother and her grandmother. She enters in identity discourse with her term; 'Confinement' and analyses herself in the realm of *confinement*. She creates her theory within a deep pain. She struggles in the search of separate identity. She says about her photographs that 'all theses strands have shaped my life, but they cannot be represented separately. They hold meaning over each other and together they articulate my struggles over identity, about this attempt to represent a life on the margins. Just as language is a site of struggle, so too is representation'.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 44.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 65.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 57.

<sup>40</sup> Frances Angela, "Confinement", in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1990, p. 72.

She is representing the working women class as a symbol of feminine. In this world, the desires of working class are snubbed, frightened and threatened. Their selves are shrinking. So, Angela uses the word 'confinement' for identity. She says that 'class for me was labour, a lack of social rights and heavy weight of servility which harnessed me to the whims, desires and uses of others. If I have to think of one word that could work as a motif of this experience it is *confinement* – the shrinking of horizons'.<sup>41</sup> The other wants to suggest about movement. 'This movement does not abandon that marginal class position. This is a place of resistance'.<sup>42</sup> She has believed with hopes that new identities are articulating and the centre will take his position. 'This place is neither the old margin nor the co-option of the centre, but a third space where new subjectivities, new politics and new identities are articulated. New location has the resources of the centre but remains outside to disrupt and resist, continually threatening the centre with contradictions of its margins'.<sup>43</sup>

### **Jeffrey Weeks:**

Jeffrey Weeks tries to understand the crisis and clashes of cultural conflictions of identity and gives a framework of 'The Values of Difference'. According to him, the identity has different shades, relevance, forms and shapes in different communities. 'Identity is about belonging about what some people and what differentiates you from

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 72.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 73.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 73.

others. At its most basic it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality'.<sup>44</sup>

Difference is important to understand the inner core of self. 'Identities are not neutral. Behind the quest for identity, are different and often conflicting values'.<sup>45</sup> The significance of individual-self is converting in fanaticism. Self-importance is more significant than other responsibilities. Desires always drive the ego and some of them take the shape of super ego. So, Weeks agrees that 'there is no such thing as society, only individuals and their families, difference become merely a matter of individual quirks or pathologies'.<sup>46</sup>

So, the identity of a community is not be monolithic. It can best be described as 'a community of communities, to achieve a maximum political unity without denying difference'.<sup>47</sup> Change is an inevitable process continuing the aspect of human mind, values, cultural and social development for a civilized world. 'The aim instead is to offer a concept of politics as a process of continues debate and mutual education, and to broaden the democratic imagination through the acceptance of human variety of difference'.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Jeffrey Weeks, "The Value of Difference", in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1990, p. 88.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid. p. 89.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid. p. 92.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid. p. 90.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid. p. 99.



## Pratibha Parmar:

Pratibha Parmar is a writer, filmmaker and political activist. She presents her approach of identity politics in her black look. 'In these post-modernist times the question of identity has taken on colossal weight particularly for those of us who are post-colonial migrants inhabiting histories of diaspora. Being cast into the role of the Other, marginalised, discriminated against and too often invisible, not only with everyday discourses of affirmation but also within the 'grand narratives' of European thought'.<sup>49</sup>

Western thought constructs a stable and fixed frame to represent diasporic and other identities. 'It has pointed to the disintegration of that paradigm of identity politics which posits our 'otherness' and 'difference' as singular, seemingly static identity of sexuality, race and gender'.<sup>50</sup> Identity is a feeling, which represents the cultural beauties, virtues and specialties. It works as a hub to conjunct, discourse, explanation and presentation among the different races. Parmar writes that, 'black Feminism has provided a space and a framework for different ethnicities, class and sexualities, even though at times that space had to be fought for and negotiated'.<sup>51</sup>

The experiences of diaspora reflects new ideas and thoughts to understand the *other*. Superior status of a class creates a sense of inferiority and jealousy towards particular category. About blacks, Parmar says that 'differences of skin colour have

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<sup>49</sup> Pratibha Parmar, "Black Feminism: The Politics of Articulation", in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1990, p. 106.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. p. 101.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. p. 106.

become the signifiers of diminished humanity and intellectual and cultural inferiority; black people are represented as savages and natives who have not yet progressed into adulthood and therefore by implication into full humanity'.<sup>52</sup> She takes the minimization of an identity and its dimensions also. She wants to pick up these issues in the search of new area of identity explanation of blacks. To express her views about hopes and observation, she quoted June Jordan as 'I don't want anyone to tell me where I should put my attention first. If down the line we can try to respect each other according to the principle of self-determination then we can begin to move forward'.<sup>53</sup>

### **Gary Taylor and Steve Spencer:**

Gary Taylor and Steve Spencer understand the issue of identity in their multi-disciplinary perspective. They write that 'it (identity) is a concept which embodies our sense of uniqueness as individual beings and as members of groups sharing values and beliefs. On the other it is an intensely political field in which the expansion of critical theory has allowed the emergence of competing voices demanding space for recognition of fragile and previously often fugitive and unspoken subjectivities'.<sup>54</sup>

They explore the issue of subjectivity and discuss the various aspects of identity in the relations with ideology, class, feminism, racism, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, nationalism and religion. They observe that 'identity is in part a uniquely personal, internal sense of self, but at the same time it flows of dominant cultural meanings and

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p.116.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 113.

<sup>54</sup> Gary Taylor and Steve Spencer, "Introduction", in *Social Identities: Multidisciplinary Approaches*, Gary Taylor and Steve Spencer (eds.), Routledge, New York, 2004, p. 1.

the power relations contingent on these. Language and the other cultural codes are central to our internal identity as well as to our sense of belonging or our collective identity'.<sup>55</sup>

Gary and Steve raise the question about political concerns of identity, which emphatically accentuate on identity. They note, 'identity is a work in progress, a negotiated space between ourselves and others; constantly being re-appraised and very much linked to the circulation of cultural meanings in a society. Furthermore identity is intensely political. There are constant efforts to escape, fix or perpetuate images and meanings of others. These transformations are apparent in every domain, and the relationships between these constructions reflect and reinforce power relations'.<sup>56</sup>

### **Roy F. Baumeister:**

Roy F. Baumeister is an experimental psychologist. He explores the terms *continuity* and *differentiation* to understand the concept of self-identity. He incorporates three variables (*values & priorities*, *interpersonal aspect* and *individual potentiality*) of identity. He observes that 'philosophical approaches to identity furnish us the following point of departure for a theory of identity, and a basic question suggests itself: How do we explain how the self can exist as *continues* – across time as *distinct* from others? We must also explain how a person can *know* the self as both continues and differentiated. Although part of the answer can be traced to awareness of the body, a full answer depends on the way people interpret their experiences, especially

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

experiences that continue across time. In addition, identity must be understood in the context of possible events of *potentiality*.<sup>57</sup>

Roy focuses on the element of potentiality to trace the formation of self-identity. It is also important in the continuity and difference, which are very valuable to understand the various layers of self-identity.

### **Michael Cronin:**

Michael Cronin designs the concept of translation to explain the identity. He observes that it is very complex task to translate the text/document/speech etc. in its original essence. With globalization, knowledge is spreading all over the world and the translation is contributing to knowledge. But translation of knowledge is complex and complicated task and it depends upon who is translating the text. He argues that 'identity in this scenario is the bleak, defensive interface between a global economy and infinitely malleable human material. It is in this context that the contribution of translation is paramount in describing both how certain forms of identity have come into being and how they are being shaped. Equally important is the manner in which translation theory and practice can point the way to forms of co-existence that are progressive and enabling rather than disabling and destructive'.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the translation creates a place for the process of interpretation of various forms of identity.

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<sup>57</sup> Roy F. Baumeister, *Identity: Cultural Change and the Struggle for Self*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1986, pp. 17-18.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Cronin, *Translation and Identity*, Routledge, London, 2006, p. 3.

## **Luke Tredinnick:**

Luke Tredinnick explores the effects and modes of identity in the present digital world. In fact, with the spread of technological, lot of information is available, but it is also creating a void in the human atmosphere. Identity becomes more framed, fixed and rigid sediment in the disc of digital information. It also becomes more unstable and fluid. Luke explains about the digital culture's influence upon identity as 'this influence contains three entangled elements: sedimentation, virtualisation and fragmentation. With its sedimentation, identity becomes increasingly disinvested from social processes. With virtualisation, the sedimentary record or trace our identity, actions and values become disassociated from our corporal being. With fragmentation, the unity of identity declines'.<sup>59</sup>

Luke observes that the digital age leads to the paradox of identity, which is affecting the nature of identity. The digital technologies are creating the dislocations of the identity. This paradox of identity gives vision to understand the religious identity. On the one side, a devotee or seeker of any faith is in quest to keep his/her traditional identity through the practice of certain rituals and cultural ceremonies, while on the other, due to conflicts of different cultures the human mind is changing.

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<sup>59</sup> Luke Tredinnick, *Digital Information Culture: The Individual and the Society in the Digital Age*, Chandos Publishing, England, 2008, p. 140.

## **Hans Mol:**

Hans Mol presents sociological theory of religious identity. According to him, the religious identity relates with sacralization/sacredness. He gives four main features of religious identity. These are;

- (1) 'Objectification; the projection of order in a beyond where it is less vulnerable to contradictions, exceptions, and contingencies - in other words a rarified realm where major outlines of order can be maintained in the face of temporal, but all-absorbing dislocations of that order.
- (2) Commitment; the emotional anchorage in the various, proliferating, foci of identity.
- (3) Rituals; the repetitive actions, articulations, and movements which prevent the object of sacralizations to be lost sight of.
- (4) Myth; the integration of the various strains in a coherent, short-hand symbolic account'.<sup>60</sup>

As per Hans Mol, objectification, commitment, rituals and myth are interrelated with each other.

## **Massimo Leone:**

Massimo Leone tries to understand the concept of religious identity from Christian perspective. He employs the semiotic analysis method to understand of the sacred text. Through the analysis of the scripture, he understands the formations of identity. Leone

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<sup>60</sup> Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred*, Oxford, Great Britain, 1976, p. 15.

shows his interest in conversation. By conversation, he explains that the psychological and social formations are very relevant to understand the identity. He observes that 'religious identity needs a certain amount of time to consolidate both at a psychological and at a social level. By measuring this time, and the variables which accelerate or delay the formation of religious identity after conversation, it is possible to categorize social and religious groups, depending on the different degree of permeability by which they accept (or reject) converted people, in fact, conversation plays a role of paramount importance in the formation of new religious groups, and in the dismantling of old communities'.<sup>61</sup>

There are some more scholars, who try to understand the issue of identity from different angles. Mirinal Miri examines this issue within the Eastern and Western traditions.<sup>62</sup> Bidyut Chakrabarty has edited a book *Communal Identity in India: Its Construction and Articulation in the Twentieth Century*, of the papers of eminent scholars who made valuable comments upon the communal and marginalized identities of India.<sup>63</sup> Harke A. Bosma et al. in their collaborative papers *Identity and Development: An Interdisciplinary View* explain the concerns of identity which reflect the confluences of individual core and communal culture.<sup>64</sup> Zygmunt Bauman<sup>65</sup>, R.C.

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<sup>61</sup> Massimo Leone, *Religious Conversation and Identity: The Semiotic Analysis of Texts*, Routledge, London, 2004, pp. 7-8.

<sup>62</sup> Mirinal Miri, *Identity and the Moral Life*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, passim.

<sup>63</sup> Bidyut Chakrabarty (ed.), *Communal Identity in India: Its Construction and Articulation in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford University Press, 2003.

<sup>64</sup> Harke A. Bosma, Tobi L.G. Graafsma, Harold D. Grotevant and David J. de Levita (eds.), *Identity and Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, Sage, London, 1994.

<sup>65</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist-or a Short History of Identity", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (eds.), Sage Publications, London, 1996.

Jiloha<sup>66</sup>, Yogendra Singh<sup>67</sup>, Michele Friedner<sup>68</sup>, P.K. Mohapatra<sup>69</sup>, Anna De Fina<sup>70</sup>, Bernd Simon<sup>71</sup>, G. Reginald Daniel<sup>72</sup>, Michael C. Thornton<sup>73</sup>, Sallie Westwood<sup>74</sup>, Farhana Ibrahim<sup>75</sup>, R Radhakrishnan<sup>76</sup> are also very important names in the study of identity.

Studies under scan show that there are two perspectives of identity. One is personal and the other is cooperative (group, communal and national). On the basis of these studies, the main features of identity are; incommensurability (Jonathan Rutherford), difference (Jeffrey Weeks), diversity (Kobena Mercer), margin and hybridity (Homi K. Bhabha), confinement (Frances Angela), race and feminism (Pratibha Parmar), conversation (Massimo Leone), translation (Michael Cronin), commitment, rituals, myths and objectification (Hans Mol) and subjectivity (Gary Taylor and Steve Spencer).

However, all the features of identity are determined by culture, politics, gender, race and other social constructions. So, every human being strives to find out the answer to the question that *who am I*. Above studies give a direction to understand the issue of Sikh identity.

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<sup>66</sup> R.C. Jiloha, *The Native Indian: In Search of Identity*, Blumoon, New Delhi, 1995.

<sup>67</sup> Yogendra Singh, *Culture Change in India: Identity and Globalization*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 2000.

<sup>68</sup> Michele Friedner, "Identity Formation and Transnational Discourses: Thinking Beyond Identity Politics", *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 15:2, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2008.

<sup>69</sup> P.K. Mohapatra, *Personal Identity*, Decent Books, New Delhi, 2000.

<sup>70</sup> Anna De Fina, *Identity in Narrative: A Study of Immigrant Discourse*, Johan Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 2003.

<sup>71</sup> Bernd Simon, *Identity in Modern Society: A Social Psychological Perspective*, Blackwell, USA, 2004.

<sup>72</sup> G. Reginald Daniel, "Black and White Identity in the New Millennium: Unsevering the Ties That Bind", *The Multiracial Expertece: Racial Borders as the New Fronter*, Maria P.P. Root (ed.), Sage Publications, California, 1996.

<sup>73</sup> Michael C. Thornton, "Hidden Agendas, Identity Theories, and Multiracial People", *The Multiracial Expertece: Racial Borders as the New Fronter*, Maria P.P. Root (ed.), Sage Publications, California, 1996.

<sup>74</sup> Sallie Westwood, "Racism, Mental Illness and the Politics of Identity", in *Racism, Modernity, Identity: On the Western Front*, Ali Rattansi & Sallie Westwood (eds.), Polity Press, Cambridge, 1994.

<sup>75</sup> Farhana Ibrahim, "Islamic 'Reform', the Nation-State and the Liberal Subject: The Cultural Politics of Identity in Kachchh, Gujrat", in *Contribution to Indian Sociology*, 42:2, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2008.

<sup>76</sup> R. Radhakrishnan, *Between Identity and Location*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2007.



## II

### **Sikh Identity in the Sikh Studies:**

The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) laid down a new orientation to spirituality. But that time, it was not accepted by the priests of the old/established religions. Due to this, the Sikhs Gurus faced many challenges from the others. The Hindus and Muslims denied to accept the independent identity of the Sikhs. From the very beginning, the Sikh Gurus and the scholars of Sikhism have been trying to describe the various aspects of Sikh identity. In this part, we are trying to understand the issue of Sikh identity from Sikh studies.

### **Bhai Gurdas Ji**

Bhai Gurdas (1551-1636) is known as the first Sikh theologian. He was very close to Sikh tradition because he has accompanied with Sikh Gurus. He has credit to inscribe the first copy of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. He was a well-learned scholar of Sikhism. His writings were appreciated by fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan with the reward of 'the key of Gurbani'. Dr. Darshan Singh writes that 'Bhai Gurdas and his writings have an authoritative place in Sikh history and religion. He is important as Ved Vias in Hinduism, Anand in Buddhism and St. Paul in Christianity'.<sup>77</sup>

*Var, Kabitt & Swayye* of Bhai Gurdas provide a valuable information about Sikh identity. His spiritual metaphors, symbols, language, ideas and understanding of Sikh

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<sup>77</sup> Darshan Singh, *Bhai Gurdas: Sikhi De Pehle Viakhiikaar*, Guru Gobind Singh Dept. of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1986, p. III.

vision in his writings make him a renowned personality of Sikhism. About his writings, Dr. Mohan Singh says that 'his work is deemed to hold the key to the Sikh spiritual treasury and to make the best and purest Rahit-Nama. Although derivative in thought and resonate and repetitive in vocabulary, Gurdas's considerable volume of poetry for its wealth of allusion, and imagery-fresh as well as rejuvenated –, its ripeness of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh cultural scholarship, its verbal felicities and rhythmic triumphs, its wide and deep love and observation of Nature – its laws and lawlessness, its realities and symbolism, its teachings and tortures –, and for force and colour-fullness of its style entitles him to the rank of the greatest medieval Punjabi poet outside the House of Baba Nanak'.<sup>78</sup>

Bhai Gurdas explains the Sikh *Panth* as a distinct path among the other religions. He interprets all the basics of Sikhism very descriptively. He says that since the true Guru integrated all the four *varnas* into one, this assemblage of *varnas* has come to be known as the holy congregation. Among six seasons and six philosophies, the Gurmukh-philosophy has been established like the Sun (among the planets). Wiping out all the twelve ways (of yogis) the Guru has created the mighty Gurmukh-way (*panth*). This *panth* keeps itself away from the boundaries of the Vedas and the *katebas* and always remembers as well as sings the unstuck word (Brahm).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Mohan Singh, *A History of Punjabi Literature* (1100-1932), Kasturi Lal & Sons, Amritsar, 1956, p. 47.

<sup>79</sup> cwir vrin iek vrin kir vrn avrn swDsMgu jwpY[  
iCa ruqI iCa drsnw gurmuiK drsnu sUrju QwpY[  
bwrh pMQ imtwie kY gurmuiK pMQ vfw prqwpY[  
vyd kqybhu bwhrw anhd sbdu agMm alwpY[ (Var 23;19)

Bhai Gurdas describes the spirituality/vision/philosophy/doctrine/objective of Sikhism in details. He states that in the world, he (Guru Nanak) established the authority (of his doctrines) and started a religion, devoid of any impurity (*Niramal Panth*). During his lifetime, he waved the company of Guru seat on the head of Lehna (Guru Angad) and merged his own light to him.<sup>80</sup>

His information and interpretation have an important place in the Sikh doctrine because he observed the Sikh tradition keenly. His interpretations about Sikhism are much relevant in the identity perspective.

## Sainapat

Sainapat was a poet in the courtyard of the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh. He was the first biographer of Guru Gobind Singh. He is the witness of the wars of Guru Gobind Singh against injustice kingdoms. He saw the creation of the Khalsa himself and lived for the time of Banda Singh Bahadur. He wrote all the things in his work *Sri Gur Sobha*, which is authenticated source of that time. He tells us that the *Khalsa* has a distinct image in the whole *Panth*. After the creation of the *Khalsa*, the message had spread the *Sangat* of various places. At Delhi, the five Sikhs baptized the Sikhs with *Amrit*. As he writes that within the *pahul* so many five Sikhs has blessed. They realized that the *Khalsa* is distinct from *Brahamn* and *Khatiri*.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> mwiraw iskw jgiq ivic nwnk inrml pMQ clwieaw[  
Qwipaw lihNw jIxdy guiraweI isir CqR iPrwieaw[ (Var 1;45)

<sup>81</sup> kir pwhl sb sMgiq cwKI[ pWc pWc isK kIey swKI[  
KqRI bRwhmN duie rhY inawrw[ Aun apny mn mwih ibcwrw[  
Sainapat, *Sri Gur Sobha*, Ganda Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1980, p. 33.

He further discusses about the attributes and duties of the Khalsa. He says that he is peculiar Khalsa that has not any doubt in his heart. He is my Master, who is much distinct from superstitions and customs.<sup>82</sup>

### **John Malcolm**

John Malcolm came to India in 1783. He serviced in the army for few years and after this, he was promoted for diplomatic service by the British Empire. He visited Punjab in 1805 and after this, he stayed Calcutta in 1806. Here, he wrote the *Sketch of the Sikhs*. Before his writing Charles Wilkins's article on Sikhs *Observations on the Seeks and their College* and George Forester's letter *On Sikhs and the Sikh Religion* had been published.

His *sketch* deals the Sikh history and origins of this faith respectively. He tries to give information about Sikh customs and manners. He observes that the Sikhs have ultimate faith in their Gurus and in the effort to keep the words of tenth Guru to establish the power overall nation. As he writes that 'from....dying words of Guru Govind, the Sikhs believe themselves to have been placed, by their last and most revered prophet, under the peculiar care of God: and their attachment to this mysterious principle, leads them to consider the Khalsa (or commonwealth) as a theocracy; and such an impression is likely to oppose a very serious obstacle if not an

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<sup>82</sup> Pwls Pws khwvY soeI jw kY ihrdY Brm n hoeI[  
Brm ByK qy rhY inawrw so Pwls siqgurU hmwrrw[  
Ibid. p. 128.

insuperable barrier, to the designs of any of their chiefs, who may hereafter endeavour to establish an absolute power over whole nation'.<sup>83</sup>

## **Ernest Trumpp**

Ernest Trumpp was a Christian missionary. He came from Germany to India to join the service of Church Missionary Society and stayed in Karachi for linguistic research. He was nominated by the Secretary of State for India to translate Sri Guru Granth Sahib from Gurmukhi (Punjabi) original to English. He completed his translation in English in Germany. However, his translation became much controversial in the Sikhs after soon its publishing.

There were so many conflicts, which were raised by Trumpp. His language and idiom were very faded and biased. He did not try to understand the feelings of Sikh faith. He writes that 'Nanak himself was not a speculative philosopher, who built up a concise system on scientific principles; he had not received a regular school-training, and uttered therefore his thoughts in a loose way, which are now scattered through the Granth.....Nanak himself was by no means an independent thinker, neither had he any idea of starting a new religious sect: he followed in all essential points the common Hindu philosophy of those days, and especially his predecessor *Kabir*'.<sup>84</sup> As he sees the Sikhism in the continuity of the Hinduism.

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<sup>83</sup> John Malcolm, "Sketch of the Sikhs", in *Western Image of the Sikh Religion: A Source Book*, Darshan Singh (ed.), National Book Organization, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 54-55.

<sup>84</sup> Ernest Trumpp, "Sketch of the Religion of the Sikhs", in *Western Image of the Sikh Religion: A Source Book*, Darshan Singh (ed.), National Book Organization, New Delhi, 1999, p. 125.

## **Frederic Pincott**

Frederic Pincott was the first writer who made scholarly comment on the writings of Trumpp. He refuted the points of Trumpp about the origins and nature of Sikhism that it emerged in the contrast of Muhammadanism. However, he also seems to fail to realize the Sikh vision, idea and practice. According to him, 'it (Sikhism) is based on Hinduism, modified by Buddhism, and stirred into new life by Sufism. There seems to be superabundant evidence that Nanak laboured earnestly to reconcile Hinduism with Muhammadanism, by insisting strongly on the tents on which both parties could agree, and by subordinating the points of difference'.<sup>85</sup> Such as, Pincott also tries to describe Sikhism as a part and extension of Hinduism.

## **Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha**

In the last decade of 19<sup>th</sup> century, prominent Sikh scholar Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha wrote a book *Hum Hindu Nahin*, which turned out to be very significant for Sikh identity. This book was an answer to those people who had showed Sikhs as Hindus. Bhai Kahan Singh tried his best to present that Sikhs are completely separate from Hindus and Muslims. To prove this, he relies upon his reading of Guru Granth Sahib, Dasam Granth, Bhai Gurdas Ji, Bhai Nand Lal, Janam Sakhies, Gur Bilasis, Bhai Santokh Singh and Panth Parkashes. This book was written in dialogue form. He himself tells about the aim of this book. He writes that, 'we are describing separateness of the Khalsa from the Hindu religion, because our brethren already think themselves to be

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<sup>85</sup> Frederic Pincott, "Sikhism", in *Western Image of the Sikh Religion: A Source Book*, Darshan Singh (ed.), National Book Organization, New Delhi, 1999, p. 177.

different from other religions. On account of their ignorance they call Khalsa Hindu, in other words a sect of the Hindus. I believe that my ignorant brethren, having read this book, will conduct themselves according to their religion. Considering themselves sons of the Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh they will join the Khalsa and will believe that 'We are not Hindus'.<sup>86</sup>

Theoretically, Bhai Kahan Singh makes a strong claim in favour of the uniqueness of Sikh identity. Discussing the scriptures, prophets, beliefs, daily routines, rites, rituals, symbols, worships, caste and class structures, he gives the powerful textual evidence to prove this claim. Bhai Kahan Singh does not want to create bitterness between Sikhs and Hindus. He has no objection in accepting the term 'Hindu' only if this word is taken to be denoting people living in a particular geographical region. For him, using the word 'Hindu' as referring to a particular religion is objectionable. As he says, 'if you call Sikhs Hindus because they live in Hindustan (India), then you should consider Christians, Moslems as Hindu too. If on account of residence they are Hindus we have no objection to be called Hindus, i.e., Indians'.<sup>87</sup>

He focuses upon *Khalsa* identity. Although he respects *Sehejdharies* but according to him, *Khalsa* represents Sikh identity in principle. After a long discussion on principles from various aspects, Bhai Kahan Singh represents his actual motif, which is to prove the distinct political identity of Sikh community. For this purpose, he uses the word *quam* (nation) for Sikh community. He states that, 'o brothers, followers of Guru

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<sup>86</sup> Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Sikhs...We are not Hindus*, Jarnail Singh (tr.), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2006, pp. 4-5.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

Nanak, I am confident that having read this book, you will consider yourself as a Quam (Sikh) and will realize that "We are not Hindus", and will consider all Indians as your part'.<sup>88</sup>

This work performed as justification for Singh Sabha and the other organizations (like Chief Khalsa Diwan) which disseminated the message of Sikh separateness. It has also been one-sided interpretation of the Sikh Panth like other interpretations because Kahan Singh's terminology emphasizes upon Sikh's distinct political identity. That's why, ultimately, he uses the word *quam* for Sikhs in his conclusion.

### **Max Arthur Macauliffe**

M.A. Macauliffe was a devotional author who has tried to understand Sikhism very carefully. He joined the service of British Empire after qualifying the exam of Indian Civil Service. 'During his stay in Punjab, Macauliffe devoted all of his time to the study of Sikhism and its literature and published three articles on Sikhism in the *Calcutta Review*, as early as 1880-81. He studied Sikhism under the able supervision of learned Sikh Gianis including Bhai Kahan Singh of Nabha. He produced his *magnum opus*, *The Sikh Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1909, in six volumes), after decades of unremitting hard labour, totally to the satisfaction of the Sikhs'.<sup>89</sup>

Macauliffe presents his observations and feeling in his writing about the faith of the Sikhs. He understands Sikhism differs from various aspects in the traditions of

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid. p. 136.

<sup>89</sup> Darshan Singh (ed.), *Western Image of the Sikh Religion: A Source Book*, National Book Organization, New Delhi, 1999, p. xx.



faiths. He observes about the authenticity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib that is distinct. As he writes that 'the Sikh religion differs, as regards the authenticity of its dogmas, from most other great theological systems. Many of the great teachers the world has known have not left a line of their own composition; and we only know what they taught through tradition or second-hand information.....they were written or compiled by his adherents and followers. However, the compositions of the Sikh Gurus are preserved in these volumes, and we know at first-hand what they taught. They employed the vehicle of verse, which is unalterable by copyists, and we even become in time familiar with their different styles. No spurious compositions or extraneous dogmas can, therefore, be palmed off on us as theirs'.<sup>90</sup> To justify his point, Macauliffe gives the example of Pythagoras, Socrates, Buddha, Confucius and the Arabian Prophet. But, he does not discuss about Jesus Christ and Bible.

#### **W.H. McLeod:**

W.H. McLeod started his academic career by undertaking research on the life of Guru Nanak. While comparing Guru Nanak with Sant Kabir, he states that 'the system developed by Guru Nanak is essentially a reworking of the Sant pattern, a reinterpretation which compounded experience and profound insights with a quality of coherence and a power of effective expression'.<sup>91</sup> He further gives some historical observations on Sikh identity in his book *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of the Sikh Identity* which is characterized by an excessive reliance upon logics or reasons. Such

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<sup>90</sup> M.A. Macauliffe, "The Sikh Religion", in *Western Image of the Sikh Religion: A Source Book*, Darshan Singh (ed.), National Book Organization, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 329-30.

<sup>91</sup> W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford, New Delhi, 2008, p. 151.

one-dimensional approach (historical) is inadequate to make a sense of spiritual oriented aspects of Sikh Panth. McLeod states that 'Nanak was a Hindu, and, although the Sikh tradition subsequently developed its own distinctive features, it remains firmly set within the larger matrix of Hindu belief and social convention'.<sup>92</sup>

He divides the development of Sikh identity in phases. According to him, the first phase begins with emphasis upon *Nam, Dan, Isnan*. He says that 'the teachings of Nanak and his early successors focused on the Nam or Divine *Name*, a term which we have already noted as the dominant feature of the popular nam, dan, isnan formula'.<sup>93</sup> He further states that Guru Amardas borrowed the practice of compulsory commensality from the Sufis. According to him, caste system was also not denied by the Gurus. On the basis of *Janam Sakhies*, he concludes that early Sikh identity was 'dimensioned by implied comparisons with *Vaishnavas*, by the suggestion that Nanak might adopt various Panthic identities, and by the occasional claim that he regarded himself as a Hindu. A Panth, which is in the process of self-definition but which has not yet achieved a clear awareness of separate identity. In the case of the early Nanak-Panth the conclusion which follows is that no clear line of demarcation can be drawn in order to separate it from contiguous Hindu tradition'.<sup>94</sup>

He further writes that Guru Arjan and Bhai Gurdas have given a new face to Sikh identity in early Nanak Panth. He also notes that institutions, *Dharamsalas* and *Baulies* are also important in the promotion of Sikh identity. After this, he focuses upon Guru

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<sup>92</sup> W.H. McLeod, *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 6.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p. 18.

Gobind Singh period and explores Khalsa terminology. McLeod projects the image of Khalsa dynamically. His thesis on Sikh identity circles around Khalsa and his *rahit* (Sikh code of conduct). He makes stress on this point that Khalsa identity is distinct from Hindu and Muslim identities. According to him, 'it is the way of life enunciated by the Khalsa tradition which is summarized in the word 'Rahit', and non-Khalsa Sikhs sustain a separate identity precisely because they decline to observe some key features of the standard 'Rahit'. The 'Rahit' is, thus, the Khalsa way of life, the system of belief and distinct behaviors which all who accept Khalsa initiation are expected to observe'.<sup>95</sup>

McLeod locates the formation of Sikh identity in his historical perspective. He examines the Sikh rituals, traditions and institutions as the symbols of Sikh identity. At last, he tries to provide a definition of Sikh identity. He says that 'it seems clear that a very substantial majority of Sikhs now reject the claim that Sikhs are Hindu or that the Panth is a Hindu sect. The Panth's origins were Hindu and its partial retention of caste must be acknowledged, but the experience and response of the past five centuries have together generated a sense of separate identity. A few Sikhs may still regard themselves as Hindus. Most do not'.<sup>96</sup>

Above discussion shows that he does not attempt to understand the Divine presence of Guru Nanak, and how Guru Nanak and his ideological arcanums are distinct from other traditions of faith. Rather he combines the Sikh *Panth* with *Sant* and Hindu traditions. He finds some contradictions between the ideology of Guru Nanak and Guru

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. p. 120.

Gobind Singh. For him, Khalsa identity is separate due to its *rahit* rather than the belief of the Sikhs.

### **Harjot Oberoi:**

Harjot Oberoi's work is known as an extension of McLeod's work. He raises the issue of religious boundaries of Sikh identity. He attempts to give a historical account of the formation of Sikh identity. According to him, historically, in early phase of Sikh history, there was no fixed identity. 'A narrative tradition which represents an image of Nanak is constant flux thus has manifold ramifications for early Sikh identity. Just as there no *fixed* Sikh identity in the early-Guru period'.<sup>97</sup> Oberoi denies that there was a distinct image of Sikh identity. In his perspective, Guru Granth Sahib under the supervision of Guru Arjan makes a powerful declaration of the separateness of the Sikhs. In the verses of Bhai Gurdas, who was somewhat aware of the separateness, we can trace some flashes of Sikh identity.

He does not trace the origin of Sikh identity from Guru Nanak. He notes that the creation of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh is a milestone in the formation of Sikh identity. He says that, 'although we have no contemporary description of *Khande ki pahul*, it is certain that it involved the use of a heavy double-edged sword and sanctified water. Whatever its precise form and sequence, this new image initiation rituals and its

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<sup>97</sup> Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, Oxford, Delhi, 1997, p. 56.

distinctive religious imagery gave the Khalsa a powerful symbolic grid to proclaim and affirm their new identity'.<sup>98</sup>

In the perception of Oberoi, Khalsa, its *rahit* and rituals perform the role to make unique Sikh identity. Outlook of the Khalsa with symbols and his practices according to *Rahitnamas* paints his image distinctively from *others*. After this he says that Khalsa identity performs hegemonic and dominant role in the *Sanatan* Sikh tradition which had pluralistic approach for Sikh belief. He also compares the Khalsa with other sects of the Sikh tradition. Within this, he makes the breach in the Sikh collectiveness. As per him, Khalsa is a new identity but in late nineteenth century the practice of Tat Khalsa as he understands it has been the clear awareness and performance of the Sikh identity.

In his whole work, Oberoi poses a serious question about Sikh identity, and reveals that it emerged from the political crisis. He gives the examples of Khalsa creation and the praxis of *Singh Sabha* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. His work shows clearly misunderstanding of Sikh practices. He creates illusions and gives statements and comments. J.S. Grewal comments that 'does Oberoi suggest that the Sikhs regarded themselves as both 'Muslim' and 'Hindu'? Or none, and therefore they had no identity? If 'heterodox textuality' means something different from diverse authorship and content, Oberoi does not make it clear. If the implication is that there are doctrinal contradictions in the text of the *Adi Granth*, Oberoi does not demonstrate. His insistence on 'unfixed' identity of the Sikh Panth does not appear to be an inference drawn from empirical evidence but *a priori* assumption. His interpretation of the

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid. p. 61.

evidence used becomes forced and farfetched. The statement that 'identity' of the early Sikh Panth was fluid and unfixed essentially means that the Sikh Panth was not distinct from the 'Hindu' society'.<sup>99</sup>

### **Pashaura Singh:**

Pashaura Singh deals with the question of Sikh identity and examines *Who is a Sikh*. He applies the Western methodology of historiography and divides Sikh history in some phases like early phase of Sikh community, institution of Khalsa to fall of Sikh sovereign rule, British Raj, Singh Sabha and Akali movements. For him, Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikh identity and his philosophy of ideal person *Gurmukh* creates a different era within the concepts of *Nam*, *Dan* and *Isnan*. He also defines the various concepts and institutions to explain the early Sikh Panth's identity. For him, *Gurmukh*, *Dharamsala*, continuity of *Gurgaddi*, *Kirtan*, *Langar*, *Gurmukhi* script are main flashes of Sikh identity. He says that '(the) sense of distinct identity was marked by distinctive belief system, modes of worship, socio-religious institutions and an over-arching organization with the Guru as its pivot. Indeed, the institution of the Guru carried an aura of divinity for the Sikhs'.<sup>100</sup>

He contemplates that the building of *Harmandir Sahib* and compilation of *Adi Granth* become strong determinates of independent Sikh identity. In his view the early Sikh identity was based upon peculiar doctrines, organizations and institutions and social attitudes including the gumption of spiritual and temporal concerns. In emerging

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<sup>99</sup> J.S. Grewal, *Historical Perspectives on Sikh Identity*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p. 13.

<sup>100</sup> Pashaura Singh, "Sikh Identity in the Light of History: A Dynamic Perspective", in *Sikhism and History*, Pashaura Singh & N. Gerald Barrier (eds.), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2004, p. 80.

of Sikh identity, Pashaura Singh goes to find out major four elements<sup>101</sup> in his research as he says that 'all four elements combined to produce the mutual interaction between ideology and environment that came to characterize the historical development of Sikhism. Overall, the pre-modern understandings of Sikh identity were primarily based upon orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy. Although the earlier Nanak-panth had permeable boundaries with the Hindu society at the popular level, the institution of Khalsa sharpened the process of the emergence of a separate Sikh identity'.<sup>102</sup>

Further, he investigates the Sikh history after the emergence of *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee*. He also coins a new term in the Sikh aura, that is, *Ichhadhari*, which is neutral in the comparison to other Sikhs (*Amritdhari*, *Sehejdhari* etc.).

Pashaura Singh observes that Sikh identity begins with Guru Nanak. He mentions some famous concepts of Sikh Panth and describes the shades of Sikh identity in continual historical process till date. In his account, there is not any fragrance of religious mysteries of Guru's praxis, Gurbani and the divine *Sakhi* experiences which are most relevant in the expressions and *core instinct*<sup>103</sup> of Sikh identity.

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<sup>101</sup> 'First was ideology, based on religious and cultural innovations of Guru Nanak and his successors. Second was Guru Teg Bahadur's influence in the rural area. Third one was conflict created by dissidents in Sikh community and at last fourth was the period of Punjab history (17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries), in which Sikh Panth evolved in tension with Mughals and Afgans'.

Ibid. p. 92.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> This term has been coined to express the brim fullness of a being, which defines the whole process of life around a central point. We shall see in the next chapters that the features or the projections of the Sikh identity have its own era to expand his distinct fragrance and equilibrium.

## Daljeet Singh:

Daljeet Singh's approach to understand Sikh identity is based upon Sikh ideology. He enumerates some features of Sikh identity by distancing his views from McLeod and Oberoi. Here, the point is that McLeod and Oberoi made history as the base to study identity. They evaluated Guru Granth Sahib as a historical text. But in the study of Daljeet Singh, Guru Granth Sahib cannot be limited as per historical document because it is living Guru for the Sikhs. Second, for McLeod and Oberoi, the ten Gurus have various positions but as per Sikh vision they are same light of Guru Nanak. Basically, there is a difference between in the methodological approach of Daljeet Singh and McLeod. McLeod and Oberoi prefer to do the study of events, facts and text as per historical method. On the other hand, for Daljeet Singh history is the part of faith.

To project his thesis on Sikh identity, Daljeet Singh marks the five arenas of Sikh thought and praxis. In his observation, Sikh identity is distinct primarily due to a radically distinct concept of God. He deals with this theme the title *Spiritual Experience of the Concept of God*.<sup>104</sup> His main concern is to explore the concepts of liberalism, freedom and sovereignty of Sikh religion. Sikh God apart from being transcendent, is also immanent and being immanent. He is creative, directive, ruler, protector, sovereign and has all values and virtues.<sup>105</sup>

The ideological difference from other religions, according to Daljeet Singh is the second feature, which explains the uniqueness of Sikh identity. Sikhism drives its

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<sup>104</sup> Daljeet Singh, *Essentials of Sikhism*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1994, p. 255.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. p. 256.



ideological different characters from its unique conceptions of reality of the world and goal of human life is to become *Gurmukh*. Comparatively, in his view, these attributes distinguish it from other religions. *Gurmukh*, an ideal of *Sant Sipahi* is a spiritual follower of Guru Nanak and has perfect consonance with the thesis of the Guru, is entirely different.<sup>106</sup> About the third aspect of Sikh identity, he explains about the class distinction in the Sikhs.

He gives the fourth feature of Sikh identity. According to him, 'Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh-Scripture, is the most emphatic pronouncement about the distinct and independent identity of Sikhism. The phenomenon of Sikh-Scripture is unique in the annals of religious history of man. In the case of every other religion, its scripture was compiled by decades, and mostly centuries, after the prophet had left the physical scene. In all these cases, numerous problems of authenticity, textual accuracy and advertant additions and interpolations, have arisen, thereby creating many controversies, both among the faithful and the scholars. But the step taken by Gurus had a new thesis to give, entirely different from the earlier ones, and for that matter, it required a separate and authentic compilation'.<sup>107</sup>

In the last, Daljeet Singh marks the fifth element of Sikh identity, i.e., *Panth and Its Institutions*. He defines that the purpose of Guru Nanak was not just to deliver the idea but also to spread this through practices. To apply this, Guru Nanak established Kartarpur after his world-wide visiting and meetings with remarkable spirits of that

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid. p. 258.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. p. 261.

time. Whole life systems of *Guru-Panth*, *Gurdwara*, *Sangat-Pangat*, *Miri-Piri*, *Langar*, *Sant-Sipahi*, *Khalsa* are based upon Guru Nanak's visionary thought.

Daljeet Singh gives some clues regarding Sikh identity. He emphasizes on Guru Nanak's ideology for exploration of Sikh identity. His research is confined to only dealing with the peripheral aspects of the phenomena of Sikh identity which as a result causes his work to overlook/oversimplify this complex issue. 'For Daljeet Singh, distinct identity was not only fully formed in the time of the Gurus but it was also their creation, resulting from the ideas of Guru Nanak and the ideals, institutions, and actions based on them. He is not bothered about 'uniformity' or 'fixity' in his conceptualization of identity'.<sup>108</sup>

#### **J.S. Grewal:**

J.S. Grewal is a prominent scholar of Sikh history. He has written various papers, books and documents but in *Historical Perspectives on Sikh Identity*, he presents a historical aspect of Sikh identity. According to him, Sikh identity begins with Guru Nanak which manifests itself through Sikh ideology, various institutions and practices of the Sikhs. But it is the Khalsa institution, which has given a determinate character to Sikh identity. According to him, 'He (Guru Nanak) told his followers that this mode of worship was the most efficacious for attaining liberation, and for them it was the only way. His successors wrote their own compositions, which were put together in the Granth compiled by Guru Arjan. The compositions of Guru Teg Bahadur were added

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<sup>108</sup> J.S. Grewal, *op. cit*, 1997, p. 14.

later. It is now known as the *Adi Granth*, and regarded as the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The adoption of new beliefs, practices, and institutions made the Sikhs conscious of their identity quite early in their history. The institution of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh appears to be a great landmark in the process precisely because it made Sikh identity unambiguously conspicuous. There is a long historiographical tradition in which the Khalsa figure as a community distinct from both Hindus and Muslims'.<sup>109</sup>

Grewal analyzes the approaches of W.H. McLeod, Harjot Oberoi, Daljeet Singh, G.S. Dhillon, Muhsin Fani and Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha in detail. In its essence, the Singh identity dominated the other Sikh identities like *Sahajdharis*, *Udasis* etc. Before 19<sup>th</sup> century there was not big rupture but till early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Singh identity was on its peak. He says that 'for the Sikhs, however, the Panth consisted of both the Singhs and the Sahajdharis. This situation began to change in the late nineteenth century when, in response to assertions that Sikhs had no identity separate from the Hindus, the Singh Sabha leaders began to treat the Singh identity as the preferable Sikh identity because of its greater visibility. But, they were also close to the Sikh tradition of the eighteenth century in which the Singh identity was the preferable Sikh identity. Their eventual success marginalized the Sahajdharis within the Sikh Panth'.<sup>110</sup>

Grewal observes the role of the leaders of Singh Sabhas, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Shiromani Akali Dal and also the movement of Khalistan. On the behalf of these, he understands about the Sikh identity in this era which relates with political flash. He

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<sup>109</sup> J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs: Ideology, Institutions and Identity*, Oxford, New Delhi, 2009, p. 290.

<sup>110</sup> J.S. Grewal, *Historical Perspectives on Sikh Identity*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p. 75.

concludes that, 'his (Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha) exposition of the Sikh identity was meant to show its political implication as much as its independence. The equation of the Sikh Panth with the '*Sikh quam*' made the Sikhs a political community. Sikh politics for him came to be based on Sikh identity. But he was not alone. The Chief Khalsa Diwan before and after 1920, the Shiromani Akali Dal before and after 1947, and recent movement for Khalistan invoked Sikh identity of vital importance – positively for the 'Sikhs' and negatively for some 'others'".<sup>111</sup>

### **J. S. Ahluwalia:**

Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia traces the philosophical problems of Sikh identity. He locates that Sikhism is a synthesis of the sacred traditions. He writes, 'in the absence of such a methodology Sikhism has been seen either as a continuation of the Hindu tradition in a reformed way, or as a total breakaway from the latter. *Neither of the two extremes is true and tenable*. Occasionally, there have been efforts to show that this new religion represents the medieval-age synthesis of the Hindu and Islamic elements. Such an integrationist approach, far from proving a synthesis, ends up in presenting a disharmonious picture of Sikhism as a syncretism of odd elements in an unresolved tension and disequilibrium'.<sup>112</sup>

According to Ahluwalia, Sikhism has emerged parallel to Vedantic idioms and Islamic practices. But the Vedanticized interpretation of Sikhism is eroding its identity. Vedanticization is trying to pave the sovereign doctrine of Sikhism. As per his view, 'to

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid. p. 76.

<sup>112</sup> J. S. Ahluwalia, *The Sovereignty of the Sikh Doctrine*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2006, p. 27.

locate the essential Sikh identity on various levels in the doctrine itself. Presenting the essential growth of Sikhism as a historical concretion of the seminal ideas inherent in the teachings of Guru Nanak, I have, for projecting as integral image of the Sikh identity, sought an integrative view of Sikh ontology, Sikh theology, Sikh ethics, Sikh polity, Sikh institutions and Sikh praxis in the unifying context of the Sikh doctrine'.<sup>113</sup>

Ahluwalia discusses the fundamental concepts of Guru Granth Sahib and Sikh praxis e.g. Sikh metaphysics, *Akal Murat*, *five Khands*, Sikh polity, *Sri Akal Takhat* etc. He also notes that 'the doctrinal identity of Sikhism was laid down by Guru Nanak; the socio-cultural identity of the Sikh society was established by Guru Amar Das through nomizational ceremonies, and the political identity of the Sikhs as a "people" was institutionalized through baptismal *amrit* on the Baisakhi day of the year 1699 at Sri Anandpur Sahib by Guru Gobind Singh, who in very categorical terms enjoined upon them to preserve their self-identity'.<sup>114</sup>

He makes it clear that the creation of Khalsa was the major juncture of separate Sikh identity. He explains that, 'the essence of the Sikh identity lies in the dual character of Sikhism which is not only an other-worldly path of soul salvation but also a this-worldly ideology with socio-political concerns; correspondingly, the Sikhs are not only a religious group but also a political 'people'. This transformation, inherent in the

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. pp. 75-76.

doctrine, was institutionalised by Guru Gobind Singh on the Baisakhi day of the year 1699 at Sri Anandpur Sahib'.<sup>115</sup>

### **Conclusions:**

1. Identity is the actuality/distinctness/sameness/appearance of a human being. It is dynamic and changes itself according to time and space.
2. Identity has two main orbits. One is personal identity and second is co-operative (group, communal, national and religious) identity. One's personal identity refers to his/her own psychological, genetically and physical appearance. A group's identity projects its own religious/cultural/social/communal rituals, rites and practices, which influence upon individual identity.
3. There are three main approaches toward identity. One group of thinkers draws attention upon the surrounding which emphasizes on human being and effects/affects/erodes/fades individual's identity. Their concepts of incommensurability, difference, diversity, hybridity, and confinement become the interpretation of one's identity. Second group focuses upon race, feminism and marginality which describe how these concepts impact on co-operative identity. Third group constructs the concepts of objectification, myth, commitment, rituals and conversation. These paradigms explain the religious identity of a person or group and how these are associated to the formation of religious identity.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid, p. 209.

4. To understand the religious identity, various paradigms are playing a significant role. A person from any particular religion or faith has own identity however an *other* elements cannot be denied.
5. In Sikh studies, there are different interpretations of Sikh identity. One group of scholars such as McLeod, Oberoi and Pashaura Singh understand the Sikh identity in historical perspective. They describe the Sikh identity as a continuity of Hindu tradition. Bhai Kahan Singh defines the Sikh identity from religious angle, while Daljeet Singh understands the ideology of Sikh identity. J. S. Grewal also takes the position with history but he marks the starting point of Sikh identity from Guru Nanak. For him, Khalsa institution is a crystal form of Sikh identity. J.S. Ahluwalia approaches this issue in a philosophical manner and finally bases his thesis on Sikh separateness rather distinctness. Some important aspects, which emerge from the whole discussion are Sikh doctrine, rites, institutions, rituals, praxis, symbols, etc.
6. Different paradigms of Sikh identity provide three defining essential strands: faith in *ੴ /Akal Purkh*, commitment with Guru/Waheguru/God and practices of the Sikhs.

## Chapter II

### Religious Paradigms of the Sikh Identity

This chapter deals with the religious paradigms of the Sikh identity that how faith, commitment and institutions emerge from the Sikh thought. Religious paradigms are the models of spiritual thoughts, which contain in the scripture. *Guru Granth Sahib* is a main source of the Sikh thought because it is a living Guru.

#### **Sikh Faith and Identity:**

Faith is a central part of the religious identity. Every religion presents a profound description and projection of particular identity. Thus, faith is a basic requirement of religious identity. Prophets or spiritual personalities propagate every faith. In the Sikh faith, Guru is the central personality, which illuminates the seekers and creates different faith towards Ultimate Reality. Sikh *Panth* has been founded by Guru Nanak. He was born at *Rai Bhoi Ki Talwandi* (now Nankana Sahib in Pakistan). Various scholars conceive him as a religious leader, thinker, philosopher, revolutionary and reformer. Bhai Gurdas, first Sikh theologian writes that 'The benefactor Lord listened to the cries (of humanity) and sent Guru Nanak to this world. He washed His feet, eulogized God and got his disciples drink the ambrosia of His feet. He preached in this dark age (*kaliyug*) that *sargun* (*Brahm*) and *nirgun* (*Parbrahm*) are same and identical. Dharma was now established on its four feet and all the four castes (through fraternal feeling) were converted into one caste (of humanity). Equating poor with the prince, he spread the etiquette of egotist high heads bowing to feet. Baba Nanak rescued this dark age



(*kalyug*) and recited 'satinam' mantra for one and all. Guru Nanak came to redeem the *kaliyuga*'.<sup>116</sup>

The nature of God or Ultimate Reality plays an important role in the formation of religious identity. Once, Jaques Derrida said in an interview that philosophy's first and last question is "What is being"?<sup>117</sup> But till now, philosophy could not reach at any conclusion on this point. To solve this question, the thinkers turned to look upon at the world scriptures. Inarguably, it has been accepted that in every religion, the questions about God, being and nature are basic around which all the paradigms of life are moving. To understand the faith of the Sikhs, which is created by the Guru Nanak, there is need to examine the nature of the Ultimate Reality as per the Sikh vision.

The world has two major religious traditions. One starts from Judaism and goes from Christianity to Islam, known as Semitic tradition and the second Vedic or Indian tradition comprising of Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism.

In Judaism, the name of God is known to as *Yahweh*. During nomadic stage of Hebrew culture, power in various forms of manifestation, was essence of diety. *Yahweh* was associated with strom, fire and war: the imagery was always anthropomorphic. 'In the Old Testament, Moses received a revelation (Exodus 3.2-15 and 6.2-8) from God

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<sup>116</sup> suNI pukwir dwqwr pRBu guru nwnk jg mwih pTwieaw [ crn Doie rhrwis kir crNwimRqu isKW pIlwieaw [ pwrbrHmu pURn bRhmu kiljuig aMdir ieku idKwieaw [ cwry pYr Drm dy cwir vrin ieku vrnu krwieaw [ rwNw rMku brwbrI pYrI pwvNw jig vrqwieaw [ Aultw Kylu iprMm dw pYrw Aupir sIsu invwieaw [ kiljugu bwby qwiraw siqnwmu piVH mMqR suNwieaw [kil qwriN guru nwnku awieaw] (Vaar 1; 23)

<sup>117</sup> Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Kofman (directors), *A Documentary on J. Derrida*, A Jane Doe Films Production, 2002.

as “He Who Is”, unique and without any possible rival. This God is just and merciful. He demands absolute fidelity and total devotion and will no brook any philandering with other so-called gods’.<sup>118</sup>

*Yahweh* is the God of ‘chosen people’ who are the native of Isreal. W.T. Davison writes that ‘the utterance of Dt 6.4, ‘Jahweh our God, Jahweh is one’, is the watchword of the religion of Isreal in no artificial or perfunctory sense throughout the national history.....The God who spoke to Moses from the bush was not an unknown Deity; He was the ‘God of thy father’ and ‘the God of your fathers’; even His name was previously known – ‘Jahweh the God of the Hebrews’ (Ex 3.6.15.18)’.<sup>119</sup> Thus, *Yahweh* is the God of Hebrew peoples only.

In Christological account, God is, ‘the Supreme Being, Pure Act, First cause of all, provident conservator and governor of the universe; the Absolute- infinite, eternal, immutable, intelligent, omniscient, all-powerful, and free; the Creator, to whom creatures owe homage, respect and obedience; the Sovereign Good, diffusive of all goodness, toward which everything tends as to its ultimate final cause; the supernatural source of revelation; the Godhead composed of three divine nature – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit’.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Geddes Macgrogor, *The Everyman Dictionary of Religion and Philosophy*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, London, 1990, p. 278.

<sup>119</sup> W.T. Davison, “God: Biblical and Christian”, in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (vol. vi), James Hastings (ed.), T. & T. Clark, New York, 1967, pp. 252-53.

<sup>120</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (vol.4), The Catholic University of America, McGraw Hill Book Company, New York, 1967, p. 535.

After Christianity, the next phase is of Islam, which was founded by the Prophet Muhammad. 'Muhammad introduced Islam in Arabia that was a welter of cultures and religions. Muhammad's own tribe, the *Quraysh*, was pagan. The Quraysh was based in the city of Mecca, which was a center of trade and pilgrimage: travelers from all the surrounding regions passed through it. The Quraysh did a lucrative trade due to the pilgrimages to the local shrine, the Ka'bah, which housed numerous pagan idols - chiefly the image of the god Hubal. The local gods of all the area tribes were represented in the shrine, along with other idols identified with trees and stones near the Ka'bah. One of these gods, "Allah," not yet identified with the lone god of Islam, may have been the tribal god of the Quraysh. Others included three goddesses beloved of many of the area tribes, al-Lat, al-'Uzza, and Manat, who played a significant role in Muhammad's prophetic career'.<sup>121</sup>

Although Allah's existence was in various local gods at Mecca before Muhammad but it was the new message of the God, which was said by Muhammad through Quran<sup>122</sup>, known to be the scripture of Islam. According to the interpretation of Quran the Allah is, 'the Unique One, the creator and Lord of the judgment, polarizes the thought of Islam; He is the sole reason for its existence. Allah was known to the pre-

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<sup>121</sup> Robert Spencer, *The Truth About Muhammad*, Regnery Publishing, Washington, 2006, pp. 33-34.

<sup>122</sup> 'The Quran is, for Muslims, the revealed word of God. Hence, the interpretation of the Quran (*tafsīr*) has emerged as one of the most revered disciplines in Islam. Given that the life of the early Muslims revolved around the Quran from the beginning, one of their earliest concerns was to understand the message of the sacred text. The Prophet Muhammad (d. 632) and his immediate followers (known as the *companions*) used the Quran for day-to-day guidance, prayer, and spiritual enrichment, and for liturgical and congregational use. Although interpretation of the Quran as a discipline developed over time, Muslims engaged with it from the beginning in less formal ways: reflecting on it, reciting it, discussing it, and attempting to explain it to each other. It was such activities that gradually led to the development of the exegetical tradition in Islam'.

Lindsay Jones (ed.), "Quran", in *Encyclopedia of Religion* (vol.11), Thomson Gale, New York, 2005, p. 7561.

Islamic Arabs; he was one of the Maccan deities, possibly the supreme deity and certainly a creation-god. He was already known, by antonomasia, as the God, allah (the most likely etymology; another suggestion is the Aramaic Alaha). For Allah before Islam, as shown by archaeological sources and the Kuran. But the vague notion of supreme (not sole) divinity, which Allah seems to have connoted in Maccan religion, was to become both universal and transcendental; it was to be turned, by the Kuranic preaching, into the affirmation of the Living God, the Exalted One'.<sup>123</sup>

In Indian tradition, Jainism is the earliest tradition. It is also known to as the oldest faith of the world. 'Jainism is a religion without God.....besides it denies the soul also. Jainism believes in the soul capable of attaining the divine status; naturally 'prayer' is conspicuously absent'.<sup>124</sup> Prayer is the most relevant part of Jain faith but it denies the existence of supreme spirit or god. Jainism believes in meditations which are much important in this faith. Due to this, mostly, the followers of Jainism are famous for long and difficult meditations. Ultimately, this faith is known to as atheist religion in the traditions of spirituality of the world. As B.B. Raynade writes that 'Jainism is atheistical, if by atheism we understand the belief that there is no eternal supreme God, Greater and Lord of all things; for Jains flatly deny such a supreme God. Nor need it surprise us that atheism should be essential to a religious system; for even the most

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<sup>123</sup> H.A.R. Gibb, J.H. Kramers, E. Levi-Provencal, J. Schacht, B. Lewis, Ch. Pellat and J. Schacht (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (vol. 1), E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1986, p. 406.

<sup>124</sup> B.B. Raynade, *Jaina Philosophy: Religion and Ethics*, Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Delhi, 2002, p. 63.

orthodox systems like Mimamsa deny the existence of a supreme God, though, of course, on other grounds than those of the Jains'.<sup>125</sup>

Buddhism is known to be professing the philosophy of Shunya precisely which is the fundamental concept relating with Nirvana. 'Nagarjuna, the second century AD Buddhist philosopher defines Shunya or void as "co-dependently originated in the principle of Pratityasamutpad". This is the Absolute of Buddhism, the ultimate form of the world. To intuit this through Prajana, which is beyond reason, as T.R.V. Murti says, means giving up of all views, standpoints and predicaments. Only merging into this Absolute world formation with necessary transformation can lead to Nirvana. In other words, the Buddhistic liberation could also form a memory to remember and organize things in a singular way, that is non-differentially'.<sup>126</sup>

Hinduism is a polytheist religion. There are many gods and goddesses in Hinduism. Vedas are assumed as the sacred literature of Hinduism. Besides this, *Upanishads, Smrities, Brahm Bhash, Sutras, Purans, Mahabharata, Gita* etc. are also the source of Hindu spirit. Chiefly, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are the prominent gods of Hinduism. As Swami Bhaskarananda says that 'Vedic statements like "Ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti" - "One alone exists, sages call it by various name", not only emphasizes the oneness of God, but also form a firm foundation of catholicity and

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid. p. 66.

<sup>126</sup> Gurbhagat Singh, "The Difference of Sikh Memory: Guru Nanak Dev's Japuji", in *The Sikh Memory: Its Distinction and Contribution to Humankind*, Gurbhagat Singh and Deepinder Jeet Randhawa, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2009, pp. 41-42.

tolerance in Hinduism. The idea of harmony of religions is a fundamental ingredient of Hinduism'.<sup>127</sup>

*Ishvara* is also the main feature of the Hindu God, which is projected in the three different energies; creation (Brahma), protection (Vishnu) and destruction (Shiva). These three spirits run the whole process of the universe and these also have their Avatars. 'Personal God in Hinduism is called Saguna Brahman or Ishvara. From the standpoint of man posited in the world of time, space and causation, Ishvara or Saguna Brahman is the creator of the world. He is omnipotent, omniscient and all-pervading. By His mere will, He manifests Himself as the manifold universe'.<sup>128</sup> So as in Hinduism, the major sign of Ishvara/Brahm occurs with acuteness. In the whole traditions of Hinduism, it occupies a central place.

These signs of God had been shifted in the Meta-Signs and Grand-Narratives. Postmodernist thinkers focus upon the limitations of the grand-narratives, which have been frozen. As Gayatri Spivak says that 'the grand recites are great narratives and the narrative has an end in view. And I think the post-structuralists, if I understand them right, imagine again and again that when a narrative is constructed, something is left out. When an end is defined, other ends are rejected, and one might not know what those ends are'.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Swami Bhaskarananda, *The Essentials of Hinduism*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, 1998, p. 66.

<sup>128</sup> Swami Bhaskarananda, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>129</sup> Gayatri Chakravarthy Spivak, *Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, Sarah Harasym (ed.), Routledge, New York, 1990, pp. 18-19.

Postmodernists also focus upon the remains of which are out of structures and narratives. The main problem is that the grand narratives do not leave space for *other* when they become hegemonic. The articulations of Allah, Shunya and Brahma were in totalitarian structures. As Gurbhagat Singh writes that 'the Hindu and the Buddhistic memory modes are totalitive and uni-centred. The idea of absoluteive Allah with total unity does not leave space for His multiple revelations. This kind of absolutely unitarian meta-sign of Allah could set up a uni-perspectival memory, not with many signifieds for varied contents. Accordingly, the articulation of this uniperspectival remembrance could also result into a uniforming organization of society and politics doing violence to other memories'.<sup>130</sup>

The followers of above discussed Gods try to maintain their identity. Formation of religious identity is directly linked with concept of God because the practice of a follower depends upon his/her faith.

The founder of Sikh faith, Guru Nanak re-constructs the spiritual and cultural reflexes. He also gives a new vision of Ultimate Reality with multiple dimensions, which is *Ek Onkar*. The concept of *Ek Onkar* (ੴ)<sup>131</sup> is the focal word around which the Sikh spiritual discipline of the Nam revolves. It was adopted as the basic concept of Sikh theology and an esoteric essence of Sikhism from the time of Guru Nanak. It is found in

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid, pp. 42-43.

<sup>131</sup> "Definitely Potent; Potential definitely realized (actualised) as 'Definite Potency'. Unit (Live cell)."  
Himat Singh, *The Philosophical Conception of Sabda in Guru Granth Sahib*, Sanbun Publishers, New Delhi, 2007, p. 24.

the revelations of the early Sikh Gurus, as preserved in the *Guru Granth*,<sup>132</sup> which it is known as Sikh's supreme and Ultimate Reality. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the Sikh scripture begins with *Ek Onkar*. It is interpreted and accepted in the Sikh doctrine that entire hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib* are the explanation of Ek Onkar. First impression of *Ek Onkar* commences with *Mul Mantra*<sup>133</sup>, which is 'Ek Onkar'<sup>134</sup>, the True Nam (Nam literally means Name, but the thought of God to initiate a holistic and loving meditation on Him, turns into an ecstasy). Here Nam's near equivalent could be: Luminous Quintessences. In Raga Asa the Guru says that the tranced mind drinks Nam as rasa (relish). The Sikh Gurus have called Nam as amrit (nectar).<sup>135</sup> Creator, Purakh (Purakh may be translated as "person", but it signifies a sensitive, responsive and powerful person or Primal Being without any gender-limit or hegemonic nuance). In the Indian Sankhya philosophical system, Purakh (Purusha) means Supreme Intelligence.)<sup>136</sup>, Fearless, Without Enmity, Eternal, Manifest, Immortal, Self-born, Realized by the Guru's Blessing'.<sup>137</sup>

Such attributes project the nature of *Ek Onkar*. On the superficial level, the question may be raised that Sikhism presents itself as monotheism such as Islam with the idea of One God. But monotheism in Sikhism is not exactly as in Judaism and Islam,

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<sup>132</sup> Kapur Singh, *Parasara prasna: The Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, Piar Singh and Madanjit Kaur (eds.), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2001, p. 53.

<sup>133</sup> ੴ ਸਿਗਨ੍ਵਮ ਕਰ੍ਗੁ ਪੁਰ੍ਕੁ ਇਨ੍ਰਬਾਉ ਇਨ੍ਰਯਰੁ ਅਕ੍ਵਲ ਮੁਰ੍ਇਕ ਅਜੁਨ੍ਇ ਸਯਮ ਗੁਰਪ੍ਰਸ੍ਵਿਦ੍ (SGGS; 1)

<sup>134</sup> Ek Onkar can be approximately translated as the one Dynamic Being. Ek Symbolized by the numeral 1 (One) qualifies the soleness, oneness, or wholeness of God but it does not suggest His totalitive Being that may assimilate all. As the Guru explains in the text below. God loves His creation and keeps it under His kind glance to gladden it.

Gurbhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, 2009, p. 50.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, pp. 50-51.



with a personified yet transcendent God, Jehevah or Allah. It is rather the Supreme Being in two aspects - the unattributed-transcendent and the attributed-immanent. To distinguish these two aspects of the Supreme Being, a subtle differentiation in terminology has been made: Ek Oankar, standing at the head of Mul-Mantra, meaning the Sole, Indivisible Supreme Being is the unattributed transcendent Par-Brahm'.<sup>138</sup>

Uninterruptedly, *Par-Brahm* performs in a dual manner - both *Nirguna* and *Sarguna*. In dialectics, being is in confusion about God. Someone says He is outside and the other says inside but Guru deals it as:

'Some aver He is outside of us: some that He is within:

Invisible His hue and feature.

Sisters of wedded bliss! tell me the truth of it.

Pervading all, in all abiding, He from Maya-taint free.

Saith Nanak : Listen, people of the world !

On the tongue of the holy He abides'.<sup>139</sup>

It means *Waheguru* exists and the holy beings realize Him through Nam. He is uncountable, immeasurable and unsayable. All the universes are singing His praise of illimitability:

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<sup>138</sup> Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib in English Translation* (vol. 1), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1984, p. xlv.

<sup>139</sup> ko khqo sB bwhir bwhir ko khqo sB mhIaAu ]  
brnu n dIsY ichnu n lKIaY suhwgin swiq buJhIaAu ]  
srb invwsI Git Git vwsI lypu nhI alphIaAu ]  
nwnku khq sunhu ry logw sMq rsn ko bshIaAu ] (SGGS; 700)

'Placed on the salver of heaven are the lamps, sun and moon,  
With pearls of constellations-Thy offering.

Fragrant mountain-breezes Thy incense, the wind Thy fly-whisk.

The entire blossoming vegetation Thy flower offering- Thou who art light.

How wonderful is this arati, Thy arati, Thou Annuler of transmigration.

Divine spiritual harmony, Thy worship orchestrates.

Thousands Thy eyes, Thy forms : yet without physical eyes, formless Thou remainist;

thousands Thy lotus-feet, Thy senses of fragrances- Yet without visible organs art Thou!

Wonderful to me are Thy ways'.<sup>140</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib has many attributes of the *Ek Onkar*. *Ek Onkar/Waheguru/Akal Purakh* cannot be framed in a single dimension. He is beyond the forms but manifests in various forms. There is no power to express Him accurately and in wholeness. Invocatory verse of Sri Dasam Granth is that 'you (Waheguru) have no specific physical appearance, nor you have any Varna, caste or sub-caste. Nobody can describe your features, complexion, your outlines or your grab. Eternal being, Self-Effulgent Possessor of infinite powers - this is how you are addressed. You are the supreme among the millions of Indras, the God of gods, and the Ruler of rulers. The Ruler of three worlds, you are called *neti neti* - this is not He, this is not He, by the

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<sup>140</sup> ggn mY Qwlu riv cMdu dIpK bny qwirkw mMfl jnk moqI ]  
DUpu mlawnlo pvNu cvro kry sgl bnrwie PULûq joqI ]1]  
kYsI awrqI hoie ] Bv KMfnw qyrI awrqI ] anhw sbd vwjMq ByrI ]1] rhwAu ]  
shs qv nYn nn nYn hih qoih kAu shs mUriq nnw eyk quohI ]  
shs pd ibml nn eyk pd gMD ibnu shs qv gMD iev clq mohI ]2] (SGGS;13)

gods, humans and demons as well as by every leaf of grass in the forest: they all acknowledge your infinity. Who can express all of your names, and that is why the wise men have described only your functional names'.<sup>141</sup>

The *Ek Onkar* is one God but he is not signifier. He is out of castes and cannot be frozen in singular aspect/format. The paradigms of Allah and Brahma had been monad at the time of Guru Nanak and it is the grace of Guru's wonder that he breaks the one-dimensional perspective of God. Within spiritual and practical deconstruction, he creates the new symbol of God, who is full of wonders. He is original but also gives space to other for their originalities and creativities. It is His wonderful attribute, which is imagined by the current thinking of post-modernity. Gurbhagat Singh says that 'Waheguru is the highest symbol of Sikh revolution whose distinctive originality could not be understood till now. Waheguru is multi-dimensional. He is the idol of polynomial truth. As the "quantum-leap" of quantum-physics, any resplendence of original thought from its multiplicity can come with jump. In unity also, Waheguru is multiple worth seeing and multi-layers. His multicity layer crates probability of multi-revelations'.<sup>142</sup>

Thus, *Waheguru* provides chance to world for performance in multi-colours. In Guru Nanak's paradigm of *Vismadic* terminology, Waheguru is also Vismadi. 'Vismad is in fact what Bataille would term "excess" or the self-crossing of the mind and life in the

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<sup>141</sup> cKRichn Arubrn j wiq Arupwq nihn ij h ] rþ rþ ArurK BK kœlkih n skiq ikh ]  
 Acl mliq AnBv pkws Aimqj kihjY] kit ielRielBix sihusihwix gixjY]  
 iqBvx mhlþ sr nr Asr njq njq bn iqk khq ] qsrþ nmm kQYkvn krm nmm brxq smiq ]  
 Rattan Singh Jaggi and Gursharan Kaur Jaggi (eds.), *Shri Dasam Granth: Text-editing & Commentry* (vol. i), Gobind Sadan, New Delhi, 1999, p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> Gurbhagat Singh, *Vismadi Poonji: Punjab ate Punjabi di Maulikta*, Singh Brothers, 2010, pp. 12-13.

non-rational diversity of life. Vismad of the Guru, because of its diversity and high intensity exceeds the excess of Bataille'.<sup>143</sup> In this universe, all the music, knowledge, creatures, diversities, forms, colours, air, water, fire, earth, beings etc. are in joy and marvellous. As;

'Marvellous are the varied forms of speech in the universe;

Marvellous the scriptures recorded:

Marvellous the multiplicity of creation, wonderful their distinctions:

Marvellous creation's forms, wonderful its variety.

Strange the sight of creatures going about naked.

Marvellous the motions of air, wonderful is water;

Astounding the pleasures in which are human beings involved.

Wonderful is union, wonderful is separation.

Inexplicable is hunger afflicting some: Strange the way some are straying.

Wonderful the sight of others following the straight path.

Wonderful some that are close to God; Strange others though far off.

To see much marvels with wonder am I struck.

Saith Nanak : By supreme good fortune only is this mystery resolved'.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Gurbhagat Singh, "Locating trauma in a Wider Meaning-World", in *The Sikh Memory: Its Distinction and Contribution to Humankind*, Gurbhagat Singh and Deepinder Jeet Randhawa, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2009, p. 71.

<sup>144</sup> ivsmwdu nwd ivsmwdu vyd ] ivsmwdu jIa ivsmwdu Byd ]  
ivsmwdu rUp ivsmwdu rMg ] ivsmwdu nwgY iPrih jMq ]  
ivsmwdu pAuNu ivsmwdu pwNI ] ivsmwdu agNI Kyfih ivfwNI ]  
ivsmwdu DrqI ivsmwdu KwNI ] ivsmwdu swid lgih prwNI ]  
ivsmwdu sMjogu ivsmwdu ivjogu ] ivsmwdu BuK ivsmwdu Bogu ]  
ivsmwdu isPiq ivsmwdu swlwh ] ivsmwdu AuJV ivsmwdu rwh ]

In *Akal Ustati*, Guru Gobind Singh gives an account of *Vismadic Akal Purakh* with his sinewy language, which is full of significant metaphors, signs and symbols. It also shows the Sikh distinctness and there does not seem any narrowness toward others. All over, a Sikh prays in the Sikh doctrine in the nature of 'Thou', not in 'I' because Sikh always sings Him, and without *Waheguru*, he is nothing. Guru Gobind Singh explains that, 'Thou art the earth; And Thou the Sky; Thou art the house; And Thou its owner. Free from incarnation; And given to nobody's fear; Too subtle to be touched art Thou; Beyond all destruction and decay. Thou art epitome of all virtue; Fast and austerities art Thou; Thou art the libration; Liberation-incarnate art Thou. Thou art, Thou art; Thou art, Thou art; Thou art, Thou art; Thou art, Thou art; Thou art, Thou art; Thou art, Thou art'.<sup>145</sup>

As within the musical sounds of *Tuhi*, Guru fills the aura of being with fragrance of pure-metaphysics which is the journey of *Surti* to Par-Brahma. It is here known-able and remarkable to say that Sikh experience of God is in *neh*<sup>146</sup> not in fear.

The tradition of Sikh naming of God is very important which performs as an axle of spiritualism. Both the traditions of Aryan and Semitic come in the Sikh experience, that's why the Punjab is also the centre of world spiritualism. The culmination of Semitic tradition (Sufis through Baba Shaikh Farid) and the climax of Aryan tradition (Bhagats) take breath in Guru Granth Sahib. The practice of attributing of various names to God in

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ivsmwdu nyVY ivsmwdu dUir ] ivsmwdu dyKY hwjrw hjUir ]  
 vyik ivfwNu rihaw ivsmwdu ] nwnk buJNu pUrY Bwig ] (SGGS; 463-64)  
<sup>145</sup> ijmI quhI[ jmW quhI[ mkIx quhI[ mkW quhI[ aBU quhI[ aBY quhI[ aCU quhI[ aCY  
 quhI]

jqs quhI[ bRqs quhI[ gqs quhI[ mqs quhI] quhI quhI[ quhI quhI[ quhI quhI[  
 quhI quhI]

Rattan Singh Jaggi and Gursharan Kaur Jaggi (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>146</sup> *Neh* can be called the pure crystallized form of love. In the experience of *Neh*, there is no place of any ego and such as. To more details see Guru Granth Sahib, p. 60, 83, 399, 966, 1094 etc.

the Aryan tradition manifests itself in *Sehsarnamas* which define the thousands name of particular Gods and Goddesses like Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, Chandika etc. In Semitic tradition, this tradition performs in Islam's scripture Koran. There we met with 99 names<sup>147</sup> of Allah. In both the traditions, the names express a particular form of God, that is static, one dimensional and also hegemonic.

Sikh experience of *Waheguru/Ek Onkar* is capacious and gigantic. Due to the presence of above both traditions in *Guru Granth Sahib* and *Dasam Granth*, the experience of God naming is really extraordinary. Guru Arjan calls *Waheguru/Ek Onkar* with the name of *Karim, Pritpal, Rahim, Allah, Khuda, Bhagwant, Gusai, Jagnath, Jagjivan, Rikhikes, Gopal, Gobind, Mukand, Meharvan, Maula, Pir, Paikambar, Saikh, Narain, Narhar, Dyal, Ram, Basdev, Parbrahma* etc.<sup>148</sup> These names present both the traditions' spiritual experiences. In *Jap* and *Akal Ustati*, Guru Gobind Singh also describes that there are countless names of God. In *Jap*, thousand names of *Ek Onkar* have mentioned such as *Sehsarnama*, but it is not in hegemonic mode rather it is in the flow of multi-spirituals. He salutes to the different forms of God. As: 'Salutation to the Kinless; Salutation to the Fearless; Salutation to the Merciful; [and] Salutation to the

<sup>147</sup> Thomas Patrick, *Dictionary of Islam*, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1977, p. 141.

<sup>148</sup> kwrn krn krIm ] srb pRiqpwI rhIm ]  
 alh alK apwr ] Kuid Kudwie vf bysumwr ]1]  
 Eux nmo BgvMq gusweI ] Kwlku riv rihaw srb TweI ]1] rhwAu ]  
 jgMnwQ jgjIvn mwDo ] BAu BMjn ird mwih arwDo ]  
 irKIkyS gopwl guoivMd ] pUrn srbqR mukMd ]2]  
 imhrvwn mAulw qUhI eyk ] pIr pYkWbr syK ]  
 idlw kw mwlku kry hwku ] kurwn kqyb qy pwku ]3]  
 nwrwieN nrhr dieawl ] rmq rwm Gt Gt awDwr ]  
 bsudyv bsq sB Twie ] lIlw ikCu lKI n jwie ]4]  
 imhr dieaw kir krnYhwr ] Bgiq bMdgI dyih isrjNhwr ]  
 khu nwnk guir Koey Brm ]eyko alhu pwrbrRhm ]5] (SGGS;896)

Compassionate. Salutation to the Perfect Yogi; Salutation to the Enjoyer of all; Salutation to the One kind to all; [and] Salutation to the One Preserver of all'.<sup>149</sup>

*Waheguru/Ek Onkar* is the God of livings and non-livings of the universes. He is not in caste, creed, colour and area specific. In the perspective of immensity, Guru Gobind Singh sees all the people of world are singing His praise. He says that 'natives of France and England, Bilinguals of France; Mridangi of Makran-all sing His eulogies; Resident of Bhakkar and Qandhar, Gakharis of Gor, Natives of Gardeja, Those who live on air alone - remember His name; Plaum, Kamrup and Kamaun - all in the East Thou pervade all places wherever we go; Master with Perfect grandeur, unaffected by magic; None can fathom His grandeur unfathomable'.<sup>150</sup>

Thus, Sikh realization of *Waheguru/Ek Onkar* by Gurus is radically distinct. Guru Nanak's experience of God is *jahra*<sup>151</sup>, which cannot be shriveled among the *Vedas/Kateba*. Through the conceptualization of *Ek Onkar*, Guru coins a new identity. Thus, *Ek Onkar* becomes the center of the Sikh faith which is an essential mark of Sikh identity.

## Commitment and Sikh Identity:

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<sup>149</sup> nmsqM inRswky[ nmsqM inRbwky[ nmsqM rhImy[ nmsqM krImy]  
nmo jog jogy[ nmo Bog Bogy[ nmo srb idawly[ nmo srb pwly]  
Rattan Singh Jaggi and Gursharan Kaur Jaggi (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>150</sup> PrwsI iPrMgI PrWsIs ky durMgI[ mkrwn ky imRdMgI qyry gIq gweIaqu hY[  
BzKrI kMDwrI goir gzKrI grdyjwrI[ pAun ky awhwrI qyry nwm iDaweIaqu hY[  
pUrb plwAU kwmrUp aAu kmwAUx[ srb TAur mY ibrwjY jhW jhW jweIaq hY[  
pUrn pRqwpI jMqR mMqR qy awqwpI nwQ[ kIriq iqhwrI ko n pwr pweIaq hY[  
Rattan Singh Jaggi and Gursharan Kaur Jaggi (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>151</sup> nwnk kw pwiqswhu idsY jwhrw ] (SGGS;397)

It is an amazing fact that people from various faiths respected Guru Nanak. He was an ocean of Divine love. In the observation of Bhai Nand Lal Goya, Nanak has the true spirit of religion. There is nobody like him. His anchoritic raises the head of the sainthood. Everybody desires to take a mote of his feet.<sup>152</sup> The *Janam Sakhi* (biographical accouts on Guru Nanak) explains the union between Guru Nanak and Akal Purakh. Guru Nanak was honored by the Ultimate One. God said to Guru Nanak that where there is your grace, there is My grace. My name is *Parbraham Parmeshar* and you are *Gur Parmesher*.<sup>153</sup>

Guru Nanak created new identity, which is entirely different from established traditions. Bhai Gurdas explains in his writing that the position of the religion without Guru was in darkness. The sin had spread in the world and justice was weeping.<sup>154</sup> When Guru Nanak came out from the *Bei* stream, he clearly declares that there is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim.<sup>155</sup>

Ultimately, Guru Nanak has established a new form of religion with the invention of ई<sup>156</sup> (the Ultimate One). He has direct conversation with the Akal Purakh. There is no mediator between them. Due to this, Sirdar Kapur Singh writes, 'Guru Nanak is the Guru, and he is demonstrably not a 'reformer', as Davy Cunningham in his History calls

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<sup>152</sup> nwim AU Swih nwnk hzk kyS[ ik inawied cuL idgr drvyS]  
 āukry AU ākr rw sr-āwrwZI[ pyiS AU kwir jumlw jwnbwZI]  
 qwilby Pwik AU ich Pwso ich awm[ ich mlwiek ich hwiZrwin qmwm]  
 Ganda Singh (ed.), *Bhai Nand Lal Granthawali*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1994, p. 164.

<sup>153</sup> Bhai Vir Singh (ed.), *Puratan Janam Sakhi Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji*, Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan, New Delhi, 2006, p. 41.

<sup>154</sup> bwJu gurU aMDyr hY Kih Kih mrdy bhu ibiD loaw[ vriqaw pwp jgiqR qy DAul  
 AufINw inis idin roaw]  
 Bhai Gurdas, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>155</sup> Bhai Vir Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>156</sup> The discussions about the nature of God in the Sikh experience will study in the next section of this chapter.



him. A 'reformer' is one who restores an already established religion to its supposed original purity or amends it to remove its supposed defects. A 'reformer' accepts the validity of the already established religion and does not, directly or indirectly, repudiate or foreswear, is emphatic and explicit that he "follows that what is directly revealed to him by God".<sup>157</sup>

To make his followers the distinct disciples, Guru Nanak has transformed himself in ten forms. Gurbani explains that the same Divine light is transforming in the different bodies.<sup>158</sup> He has created the third path to achieve the Ultimate One and for their emancipations from the sins. Every Guru of his tradition under a different name has propagated the same vision and ideology. As per *Sri Dasam Granth* that second Guru, Angad was recognized the great Guru Nanak himself, and in Amardas was accepted the presence of the spirit of Angad. Ramdas was known to be the very self of Amardas. The saints could see it. The ignorant could not realize it. All took them to be different. The oneness was realized by the very few exceptional ones only.<sup>159</sup> Guru Gobind Singh describes in details about the same Divine light.

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<sup>157</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *Guru Nanak's Life and Thought*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2001, pp. 92-93.

<sup>158</sup> joiq Ehw jugiq swie sih kwieaw Pyir pltIaY ] (SGGS; 966)

<sup>159</sup> sRI nwnk aMgid kir mwnw[ amrdws aMgd pihcwnw[ amrdws rwmDws khwXo[ swDn lKw mUVH nih pwXo[ iBMn iBMn sB hUM kr jwnw[ eyk rUp iknhUM pihcwnw[ ijn jwnw iqn hI isiD pweI[ ibnu smJy isiD hwQ nw aweI[ rwmDws hir so imil gey[ gurqw dyq arjunih Bey[ jb arjun pRB loik isDwey[ hir goibMd iqhTW Thrwey[ hir goibMd pRB loik isDwry[ hir rwie iqhTW byTwry[ hrI ikRsin iqn ky suq vey[ iqn qy qyg bhwDw Bey[ iqlk jMJU rwKw pRB qwkW[ kIno bfo kLU mih swkw[ swDn hyq ieqI ijin krI[ sis dIXw pru sI n AucrI] Bhai Randhir Singh, *Shabadarath Dasam Granth Sahib* (vol. i), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1973, p. 70.

The followers of the Guru realized this phenomenon from the core of their heart. Therefore, Bhai Nand Lal Goya in his writing explains about the oneness of the spirit of Guru and he is the spectator of Guru Gobind Singh in his age. 'He had witnessed the devotion of the Sikhs for the Tenth Master whom they recognized as Nanak himself. He, thus, confirms the tradition then current and refers to all the Gurus having one spirit excelling all others in greatness, and radiating one another with their spirit. The confirmation of this tradition by a contemporary scholar of Guru Gobind Singh should be considered enough evidence of the complete identification of Guru Gobind Singh with the spirit of the First Master'.<sup>160</sup>

Not only the Sikhs realize about the oneness of Gurus, but also Mohsin Fani, the contemporary of Sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind writes in his *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* that 'when Guru Nanak left his body, he absorbed (himself) in Guru Angad who was his nearest servant (most devoted disciple), and that Guru Angad is Nanak himself. After that, at the time of his death, Guru Angad entered into the body of Amardas in the above-mentioned manner. He in the same manner occupied a place in the body of Ramdas, and Ramdas in the same way got united with Arjun Mal'.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Gurbux Singh, "Guru Nanak as Revealed in the Poetry of Bhai Nand Lal", in *Punjab History Conference*, Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora (eds.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1970, pp. 79-80.

<sup>161</sup> Mohsin Fani, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, Ganda Singh (trans.), in *The Punjab : Past and Present* (vol.iii), Ganda Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, pp. 49-50.

In Sikhism, the *Bani* is the Guru and Guru is the *Bani*.<sup>162</sup> In *Siddh Gosti*, the *Siddhas* ask Guru Nanak that who is your Guru and Guru Nanak replies that *Sabad* is my Guru and the consciousness is his follower. As he writes;

‘What is the origin of existence? What teaching is appropriate to this age?  
Who is the master whose disciple thou art?

But what discourse from Maya-stain you remain free?

Saith Nanak: Said the Yogis, listen thou novice! Expound to us the  
discourse, As to the Word that liberation confers.

The air of breath is the origin of existence; the age in need of the holy receptor’s  
teaching stands.

The holy Word is the Preceptor; by devoted meditation on it I am its  
disciple’.<sup>163</sup>

Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan compiled *Adi Granth* and the tenth Nanak Guru Gobind Singh declared finally the ultimate Guru is *Guru Granth Sahib* for the Sikhs forever. There is no difference between the Guru and the *Bani*. Both are same. The *Bani* has all the virtues of the Guru. The Sikh must follow what the *Bani* says.<sup>164</sup> Sobharani Basu writes, ‘Guru Nanak, the guru is the Sabda, the word. He says: “The Word is Guru.” “It is only through the Word that I dwell on Him and so through the Guru the fire of *humai*

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<sup>162</sup> The revealed realizations and experiences of the Guru, which are compiled by Guru-self in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

<sup>163</sup> kvN mUlu kvN miq vylw ] qyrw kvNu gurU ijs kw qU cylw ]  
kvN kQw ly rhhu inrwly ] boly nwnku suNhu qum bwly ]  
eysu kQw kw dyie bIcwru ] Bvjlu sbid lûGwvNhwru ]  
pvn arMBu siggur miq vylw ] sbdu gurU suriq Duin cylw ] (SGGS; 942-43)

<sup>164</sup> bwNI gurU gurU hY bwNI ivic bwNI aMimRqu swry ]  
guru bwNI khY syvku jnu mwnY prqiK gurU insqwry ] (SGGS; 982)

(ego) is extinguished". It is evident from his statement that the Guru is the God and Guru is the voice of God, the Guru is the Word, the Truth of God. The Guru is identified with God'.<sup>165</sup>

The Sikhs commit their lives to the Guru. In the Sikh experience, Guru is the manifestation of the truth. He follows the path of the Ultimate Reality and leads his followers on the same way. He recites the name of *Akal Purakh* and assists the Sikhs in recitation. As:

'Whoever has truth within, By a truthful tongue the holy Name utters.  
Himself treading the Lord's path, others too on the Lord's path he guides.  
At a sacred spot may impurity be removed;  
Bathing in a pond will only with more filth cover him.  
The true sacred spot is the holy Preceptor,  
Who unceasingly on the name Divine meditates.  
Himself along with his tribe finds he release:  
By gift of devotion to the whole creation too release he procures.  
Nanak, servant of God, is a sacrifice to such  
As contemplate the Name Divine and others to it inspire'.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Sobharni Basu, "Some religious Concepts in Hinduism and Sikhism: Guru and Sabda", in *Perspectives On Guru Nanak*, Harbans Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1990, p. 129.

<sup>166</sup> ijs dY aMdir scu hY so scw nwmu muiK scu alwey ]  
Ehu hir mwrig awip cldw hornw no hir mwrig pwey ]  
jy agY qIrQu hoie qw mlu lhY CpiV nwqY sgvI mlu lwey ]  
qIrQu pUrw siggurU jo anidnu hir hir nwmu iDawey ]  
Ehu awip Cutw kutMb isAu dy hir hir nwmu sB isRsit Cfwey ]

Guru shows the way to Divine Nam. Without Guru, there is darkness everywhere and the life is worthless. Guru cares for his Sikhs and they are committed to him. There is no fear if Guru is with the Sikhs. He gives all kinds of knowledge to the Sikhs. As;

‘Whoever has the Master on his side, never of wealth should be proud.

Whoever has the Master on his side, what need for him of lakhs of supporters?

Whoever has the Master on his side, in enlightenment and contemplation remains absorbed.

Whoever has the Master on his side the house of truth enters and on the Word discourses.

States the bard in humility: Whoever day and night repeats the Master’s name,

And lodges the Master’s name in heart , is freed from transmigration’.<sup>167</sup>

On the other hand, it is an arduous task to be a Sikh. The relationship between Guru and a Sikh is the relation of love. Actually, *Sikhi* is the practice of love. Sikhism is the religion of love and the *Guru Granth Sahib* gives the message of love. Guru clearly enunciates that if you want to play the game of love, first and foremost task is to come

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jn nwnk iqsu bilhwrNY jo awip jpY avrw nwmu jpwey ] (SGGS;140)

<sup>167</sup> jwim gurU hoie vil Dnih ikaw gwrvu idjie ] jwim gurU hoie vil lK bwhy ikaw ikjie ]

jwim gurU hoie vil igawn aru iDawn ann pir ] jwim gurU hoie vil sbdu swKI su sch Gir ]

jo gurU gurU aihinis jpY dwsu Btu byniq khY ] jo gurU nwmu ird mih DrY so jnm mrN duh Qy rhY] (SGGS;1399)

in my street, with your head laid upon your palm. If you want to walk on this path, there is no need to be proud.<sup>168</sup> If you want to be called a Sikh then you must be obligated. As;

‘One known as disciple of the holy Preceptor, Must, rising at dawn,  
on the Name Divine mediate.

At dawn must he no way fail to rise, Should cleanse himself and in  
God’s Name, the Pool of Amrita take bath.

Then, as by the Master instructed, must he the Name Divine repeatedly utter –  
There shall all his sins, evil and foul doings be shed. Then with rise of day must  
he chant the Master’s Word – In rest and movement on the Name Divine must  
he mediate.

The disciple that with each breath and morsel on the Lord mediates, shall the  
Master’s pleasure win.

The Master to such of the disciples his teaching imparts, as the Lord’s grace have  
received.

Nanak, servant of God, seeks dust of feet of such a disciple

As contemplating the holy Name, to it inspires others’.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> jAu qAu pRym KylN kw cwAu] isru Dir qLI gLI myrI awAu]  
iequ mwig pYru DrIjY] isru dIjY kwiN n kIjY] (SGGS; 1412)

<sup>169</sup> gur siqgur kw jo isKu aKwey su Blky AuT hir nwm iDawvY ]  
Audmu kry Blky prBwqI iesnwnu kry aMimRq sir nwvY ]  
Aupdyis gurU hir hir jpu jwpY siB ikliV pwp doK lih jwvY ]  
iPir cVY idvsu gurbwNI gwvY bhidaw AuTidaw hir nwm iDawvY ]  
jo swis igrwis iDawey myrw hir hir so gurisKu gurU min BwvY ]  
ijs no dieawlu hovY myrw suawmI iqsu gurisK gurU Aupdysu suNwvY ] (SGGS; 305-306)

Guru teaches the spiritual way of an ideal life. A Sikh sacrifices his life in love with the Guru. He infuses the extra-ordinary energy in a Sikh so that he can meet Him. Due to this, a Sikh desires that if there is anyone, who speaks of *Akal Purkh* to him, he would offer his head to him as a stool to sit and would serve him devoid of his head.<sup>170</sup> It is the climax of Sikh devotion towards his faith and commitment.

### **Spiritual Foundations of Sikh Institutions:**

Guruship is the basic institution of Sikhism because Guru is the central point of the Sikh faith. Guruship was started by Guru Nanak to carry the vision and practice of Divine Nam. Guruship is continuing in the form of *Guru Granth Sahib*. All the Sikh institutions move around Guru. Gurdwara exists within the presence of Guru and all the activities of the Sikhs take direction from here.

In the perspective of social association, Guru Nanak established *Sangat* (gathering of the disciples of *Shabda*). In the *Dharamsal/Gurdwara* the *Sangat* gather to recite the Divine Nam. In *Sangat*, which is called the *sat-sangat* (the gathering of truthful people) and *Sadh-Sangat* (the gathering of the sages), one can get his/her real identity. Without *Sangat* living of a Sikh is worthless. *Sangat* is the place where a devotee can access his/her inner-experience and be in-tune with higher-consciousness. Through the experience of *Kirtan* (recitation of the Divine Nam with music instruments), a Sikh makes the journey to the spiritual world. As per *Gurbani*, without *Sangat* the life

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<sup>170</sup> qY swihb kI bwq ij awKY khu nwnk ikaw dIjY ]  
sIsu vFy kir bYsNu dIjY ivNu isr syv krIjY ] (SGGS; 558)

is cursed. It must be gotten by very good luck. It can make iron to gold and Guru also wishes to get *Sangat* of those people who recite the Divine Nam. As;

‘Such as on the Name Divine not meditated are unfortunate, in  
Yama’s noose caught.

Such as have not sought in congregation the Lord’s shelter,  
Cursed is their life passed, cursed the future’.<sup>171</sup>

‘By supreme good fortune is not found holy company. The unlucky in doubt  
stumble about.

Without good fortunate is not found holy company; Away from holy  
company does impurity accumulate’.<sup>172</sup>

‘As iron at touch of the philosopher’s stone, so in holy company does  
one turn into gold’.<sup>173</sup>

‘Those that by the Master’s guidance have lauded the Name, are  
universally acclaimed. Lord ! this is the prayer of this supplicant;  
Grant me association with such’.<sup>174</sup>

*Dharamsal/Gurdwara*<sup>175</sup> is the first institution, which was established by the Guru Nanak. Bhai Gurdas explains that ‘wherever Baba put his feet, a religious place was

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<sup>171</sup> ijn hir hir hir rsu nwmu n pwieaw qy BwghIN jm pwis ]  
jo siqgur sriN sMgiq nhI away iDRgu jIvy iDRgu jIvwis ] (SGGS;10)

<sup>172</sup> vfBwgI hir sMgiq pwvih ] BwghIn BRim cotw Kwvih ]  
ibnu Bwgu sqsMgu n lBY ibnu sMgiq mYlu BrIjY jIAu ] (SGGS;95)

<sup>173</sup> ijAu lohwa pwriss BytIaY imil sMgiq suvrnu hoie jwie ] (SGGS;303)

<sup>174</sup> ijnI gurmuiK nwmu slwihaw iqnw sB ko khY swbwis ]  
iqn kI sMgiq dyih pRB mY jwick kI ardwis ] (SGGS;42)



erected and established. All the Siddh-places now have been renamed on the name of Nanak. Every home has become a daily liturgy. Baba Nanak gave deliverance in all the four directions and nine divisions of earth'.<sup>176</sup> Guru Nanak visited four directions to find the truthful person and shared his spiritual experiences with people of different faiths. *Gurdwara* is a meeting place for his devotees. *Gurdwara* is the place where a person cleans himself from evil and dirtiness. *Gurbani* makes their minds pure. Guru writes about *Gurdwara* ;

'With whomsoever He is pleased, a pure heart He grants him.

A pot filthy in the extreme by washing is not purified.

By listening to the Master's teaching one acquires enlightenment.

At the Master's portal alone as washed, is it cleansed.

Himself has He established distinctions of foul and fair.

Let none reckon that despite evil-doing in the hereafter bliss he shall

attain- As man's actions, such shall his reward be.

Whoever the Name ambrosial widely distributes,

With honour departs; his life exalted, Resounding his repute.

Not in the poor world of men alone-in the three worlds shall it be

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<sup>175</sup> In Indian tradition, the *Dharamsal* was the place to stay for the visitors, which were made by the kind and rich persons of society. But in Sikhism, it became the place of *Dharma* where the people recite the Divine Name of *Waheguru*. Gradually, *Dharamsal* converted in the name of *Gurdwara* because the *Sangat* gathers around the Guru which the most relevant in Sikhism.

<sup>176</sup> ijQy bwbw pYru Dir pUjw awsN QwpN soaw[ isdwsN siB jgq dy nwnk awid mqy jy koaw[

Gir Gir aMdir Drmswl hovY kIrgnu sdw ivsoaw[ bwby qwry cwir cik nAu KMif ipRQvI scw Foaw[ (Vaar 1;27)

heard.

Saith Nanak: Not himself is he blessed- Saved are all his forebears'.<sup>177</sup>

*Gurdwara* is the place of Sikh devotees and seekers, where the Sikhs gather in the presence of their Guru. In *Gurdwara*, *Sangat* gathers to remember the Divine Nam and take guidance for the life. There is no discrimination among the devotees whatsoever where they come from. In *Gurdwara*, there is *Langar* which is the also a major institution of the Sikhs. In *Langar*, anybody can have food without any cost and with equally right in the same line, which is called *Pangat* in the Sikh vision. All the institutions, which emerge through *Gurdwara* are inter-linked. This shows the distinct identity of the Sikhs because in the whole world, such a vision and practice is unseen.

In *Gurdwara*, the Sikhs take the decisions for the Sikh *Panth*. All the decisions, although they are religious, political and social are taken through the institutions of *Hukamnama* and *Gurmata*. The *Sarbat-Khalsa* institution also came into existence through *Gurdwara*. All the institutions have distinct and significant role to make the distinct identity of Sikhs because all members of Sikh brotherhood are associated with these. These institutions have a significant impact upon the whole life of a Sikh. A Sikh in the faith and commitment with his Guru, make his/her best effort to develop these

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<sup>177</sup> BWfw hCw soie jo iqsu BwvsI ] BWfw aiq mlinu Doqw hCw n hoiesI ]  
gurU duawrY hoie soJI pwiesI ] eyqu duawrY Doie hCw hoiesI ]  
mYly hCy kw vIcwru awip vrqwiesI ] mqu ko jwNY jwie agY pwiesI ]  
jyhy krm kmwie qyhw hoiesI ] aMimRqu hir kw nwAu awip vrqwiesI ]  
cilaw piq isAu jnmU svwir vwjw vwiesI ] mwNsu ikaw vycwrw iqhu lok suNwiesI  
]  
nwnk awip inhwl siB kul qwrsI ] (SGGS; 730)

institutions because ultimately, these institutions guide him/her for the nobleness of the whole universe, which is the most important sacred duty of a Sikh.

The institution of *Sangat* is playing a vital role in the Sikh identity because *Sangat* eliminates the idea of *other*. In these days, the question of the *other* is becoming a central concept in the post-modern thought. It is significant to know that there is no *other* in *Sangat*. Although the problem of understanding and experiencing of *other* has been contemplated long ago but after the Second World War, the nature of thought and philosophy has taken the question of *other* seriously. The holocaust in Germany was another factor, which burned the issue of identity and *other*. Perhaps, 'philosophy begins and ends with the question of the other. The question of the other is not, of course, a question; it is a complex of questions. In one of its earliest and most recurrent forms, the problem of the other has been posed in terms of the relationship between the one and the many, or unity and plurality. In the modern period, the problem of the one and many has taken the form of the correlative questions of the interplay between subjectivity and objectivity, and the interrelation of identity and difference'.<sup>178</sup>

The colonialists tried to suppress and depress the others (native of the colonies) for their self-interest. To criticize this, Frantz Fanon observes that 'colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all

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<sup>178</sup> Mark C. Taylor, "Introduction: System...Structure...Difference...Other", in *Postmodernism* (vol. iii), Victor E. Taylor & Charles E. Winquist (eds.), Routledge, 1998, p. 376.

form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it'.<sup>179</sup>

The concept of objectification is very significant to understand the nature of the identity. That is a process where the other could be understood profoundly. It unfolds the conceptions of human-psyche and the understandings of self and other. In this perspective, cognitions of the relationship between self and other are very important. The identity of self cannot be imagined without *other*.

There is need to examine the nature of Sikh thought towards other. 'The Sikh identity is dynamic as it is formed by the interlinking God who sacralizes life, the sense of awesome wonder that demands acute and ever present sensitivity to the Other in his/her freshness, and handling the Sword to unblock the demned up energy by an ignorant. It is not frozen or pre-defined forever. It finally intends to formulate itself through participation in history in the fight for good, justice and the divine principle. The battle cannot be waged to deny the other's right'.<sup>180</sup>

Guru Nanak projects the peerless practice of the dialogue with others and establishes the Sikh identity. As J.S. Ahluwalia says, 'During one of his (Guru Nanak) peregrinations, while on the outskirts of Multan, a centre of the contemporaneous religious sects, the Guru was greeted with a cup of milk filled to the brim sent jointly by the religious leaders residing in the town. The message was very clear; the overfilled religious tradition of India would admit no new element. Guru Nanak also symbolically

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<sup>179</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, London, 1963, p. 170.

<sup>180</sup> Gurbhagat Singh, "The Sikh Identity and Sikh Institution", in *The Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. xxix, no. 2, Autumn 1998, p. 81.

responded to the gesture by gently placing a petal of jasmine flower over the surface of milk. The message was again very clear; the Guru envisioned his new dispensation, while maintaining its religio-socio-political identity'.<sup>181</sup>

This *Sakhi*<sup>182</sup> describes that Guru has respected of the other's identity. Guru was cognitively aware about the identity of those religious personalities who offered to him a cup of milk. The milk is a symbol of their pure existence and Guru Nanak did not deny it but with due respect, putted himself with a petal of jasmine. It means the experience of Guru's presence is fragrance, which cannot hurt anybody but will give sang-froid and peace to them and make the possibility of genius dialogue.

Factually, history has also proved that religion has acted as a motivating force behind all intellectual/practical endeavors of human society. In the views of Hans Mole, the sacred identity can be understood by objectification, which is a process to sanctify the identity. He defines that 'objectification is the process of meaning and order into a transcendent point of reference where the essences and archetypes of the mundane can be made to appear more orderly, consistent, and timeless. The contradictions, the exceptions, the contingencies of the mundane can consequently be understood as less arbitrary than they appear to those involved in the immediate situation'.<sup>183</sup>

The essence of discourse in the transcendental situation performs differently rather than this existing world. Hegel also faced the problem when he observed that

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<sup>181</sup> J.S. Ahluwalia, *The Sovereignty of the Sikh Doctrine*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2006, p. 23.

<sup>182</sup> *Bhai Mani Singh Wali Janam Sakhi*, in *Janam Sakhi Prampra: Itihasik Drishtikon Ton*, Kirpal Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 2009, p. 421.

<sup>183</sup> Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred*, Oxford, Great Britain, 1976, p. 214.

there is a big separation between ideal and material world. 'Hegel's main theoretical influence was Aristotle. What interested Hegel in Aristotle's work was his rejection of Plato's doctrine of the transcendent realm of absolutes, which tends to stand above the material world of experience. Aristotle maintained that Plato's separation of the material and ideal realms was unnecessary, and he took a view that both the ideal and material worlds were in fact immanent in human experience, and thus fundamentally belonged together and should be treated as a philosophic unity'.<sup>184</sup>

Hegel focused upon material world, which had been ignored by classical thought in his essence. 'Hegel, however thought that the tendency in classical idealism to draw sharp distinctions between the material world and the ideal world ultimately split human experience into two separate spheres and this, he thought, canceled out the study of the material world of experience. Hegel's most important contribution to the development of social theory, therefore, was his re-introduction of the material world back into thought'.<sup>185</sup> Hegel contributed the western philosophy by his formation but here we also see a lack of union between abstraction of supra-reality and the mundane. In the essence of objectification, Guru Nanak has engraved the new dimension in the world of philosophy and he seems to practice it entirely. He explains the material world's reality or actuality. For example, Guru Nanak writes;

'Bear not wrath to any; quaff amrita of the name:

Know, our stay in the world is not lasting.

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<sup>184</sup> Ken Morrison, *Marx Durkheim Weber*, Sage, London, 2006, p. 30.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.* p. 30.

Kings, noble, the poor-none shall last;

None follows adjuration to the way of life or instruction –

To whom shall I carry my supplication?

The sole Word, the Name Divine is of unfailing power to turn away evil:

By instruction in this the Master exaltation grants'.<sup>186</sup>

Philosophy of Sikhism tells about the achievement of the Ultimate Truth (*Akal Purkh*) and does not reject this corporeal world. In the essence of other, the dialogue plays vital role to understand the identity. Guru Nanak is the first person who taught the lesson of genuine dialogue and he established a new tradition of dialogue. Martin Buber was much influenced with his theory of dialogue, as seen in his genius work *I and Thou*. He elaborates in detail the difference between I-Thou and I-It relationship. In his essence, the whole phenomenon of the self and the other happens in dialogue. 'A relationship that has the ability to produce dialogue is referred to and as I-Thou relationship. This means that one will relate to and experience another person as another person. It requires having regard for both self and other. The opposite type of relationship is referred to as the I-It relationship. This relation contains only regard for self'.<sup>187</sup>

Guru Nanak's dialogue with the *Sidhas* and *Yogies* demonstrates the highest peak of spiritual discourse. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* contains so many examples of

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<sup>186</sup> rosu n kIjY aMimRqu pIjY rhNu nhI sMswry ]  
rwjy rwie rMk nhI rhNw awie jwie jug cwry ]  
rhN khN qy rhY n koeI iksu pih krAu ibnûqI ]  
eyku sbdu rwm nwm inroDru guru dyvY piq mqI ] (SGGS; 931)

<sup>187</sup> Erin Scholz, "Martin Buber-Dialogue", University of Colorado, Boulder, 1998. Accessed at 23.02.09  
[http://www.colorado.edu/communication/metadiscourses/Papers/App\\_Papers/Scholz.htm](http://www.colorado.edu/communication/metadiscourses/Papers/App_Papers/Scholz.htm)

dialogue that show the flashes of Sikh identity. Actually, the message of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is in the form of dialogue as many *Sabadas* clearly adopt dialogical style to state various themes. *Siddha Goshti* composition in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is an instance of beautiful dialogue on various subjects related with human, spirit and supra-reality.

Piar Singh says about the structure of this composition that 'the Goshti begins with the usual invocation. Then it unfolds the panorama of the debate. Guru Nanak is seated in an assembly of saints. The Siddhas appear there and join the congregation. The Guru sees Siddhas appear there and join the congregation. The Guru meets Siddhas' salutation by beseeching benedictions of the Lord. This is in the nature of a prologue. He then initiates a debate by stating the proposition, which is to serve as a refrain in the whole poem. It sets out the problem and also gives an answer to it'.<sup>188</sup> No doubt, *Siddhas* and *Yogies* were highly spiritual personalities and their questions show their intelligence. In the starting of discourse, seeing the young age of the Guru, they say that;

'Heed my prayer, O Master,

Impart unto me the true insights.

Be not offended, pray answer my query;

How may the portals of the True Master be reached?'.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Piar Singh, *Guru Nanak's Siddha Goshti*, GNDU, Amritsar, 1996, p. 21.

<sup>189</sup> *suiN suawmI ardwis hmwri pUCAu swcu bicwro ] rosu n kIjY Auqru dIjY ikAu pweIaY gur duawro ]*



It is the best example for the respect of others. Without mature dialogue this cannot happen and there is no room for any eagerness, ego or disrespect. During the dialogue, *Siddhas* feel the energetic spirituality of Guru Nanak and use *Purkha* word for young Guru. *Purkha* is a respectable word for eminent personality. As;

‘How have you undergone a transformation in life?

What is it you have attuned your mind to?

How have you curbed your cravings and yearnings?

How have you sought the Eternal Light within.

How may one munch steel without teeth? O Nanak, may you this truth reveal’.<sup>190</sup>

Guru Nanak gives the answers with sedateness and forbearance. Thus, Sikh philosophy gives respect to others and their identity. There is just an acceptance. In *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, we see respect of everybody without consideration of caste, religion, tribe, blood, nation etc. According to *Bani*, the attributes of a *Musliman* are;

‘A Mussalman should bear a tender heart;

And wash off from heart inner impurity.

Then will worldly dye not touch him, leaving him pure

As flowers, silk, ghee and dear-skin’.<sup>191</sup>

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iehu mnu clqAu sc Gir bYsY nwnk nwmu aDwro ] awpy myil imlwey krqw lwgY swic ipawro ] (SGGS; 938)

<sup>190</sup> ikqu ibiD purKw jnmv vtwieaw ] kwhy kAu quJu iehu mnu lwieaw ]  
ikqu ibiD awsw mnsW KweI ] ikqu ibiD joiq inrMqir pweI ]  
ibnu dMqw ikAu KweIaY swru ] nwnk swcw krhu bIcwru ] (SGGS; 939-40)

<sup>191</sup> muslimwNu mom idil hovY ] aMqr kI mlu idl qy DovY ]  
dunIaw rMg n awvY nyVY ijAu kusm pwtu iGAu pwku hrw ] (SGGS; 1084)

The *Gurbani* makes everyone relax and free from any rigidity and fanatics. The *Bani* extols the excellence of different people of this planet. For a *Musalmaan*, the *Namaj* (prayers) are very important and the *Bani* describes it as;

‘Five are the Muslim prayers; five their appointed hours, five their names.

These be the true prayers: truthfulness is the first, legitimate  
earning the second;

The third, prayer to God for universal weal.

The fourth is sincerity of heart and mind; the fifth, laudation of God.

Recite the Kalima of noble acting – thus may one be truly called Mussalmaan.

Saith Nanak: Of all hypocrites, ignoble is the end’.<sup>192</sup>

The Brahmins (Hindu priests) were also very rigid during those times and they were living in false practices. According to *Janam-sakhies*, after coming out from *Bei* stream Guru Nanak expressed the words that there is neither *Hindu* nor *Musalmaan*. It was a direct indication that Guru wanted to establish a new identity and he established it with his fresh vision and pure practices. He suggests to live a true religious life. According to Guru Granth Sahib, a real Brahmin who is;

‘Saith Kabir: Among us is he alone known as Brahmin,

who the Supreme Being contemplates’.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> pMij invwjw vKq pMij pMjw pMjy nwAu ] pihlw scu hlwl duie qIjw KYr Kudwie ]  
cAuQI nIaiq rwis mnu pMjvI isPiq snwie ] krNI klmw awiK kY qw muslmwNu  
sdwie ]

nwnk jyqy kUiVawr kUVY kUVI pwie ] (SGGS;141)

<sup>193</sup> khu kbIr jo bRhmu bIcwrY ] so bRwhmNu khIaqu hY hmwrY ] (SGGS;324)

'A true Brahmin is one who the Supreme realizes,

And is ever in the state of devotion'.<sup>194</sup>

'One realizing the Supreme Being is truly a Brahmin,

Should he by the Master's will abide.

Those bearing in heart the Lord are from malady of egoism freed;

Contemplating Divine attributes, garnering these,

With Divine light is their light merged.

Rare are the Brahmins in this age,

That with devotion the Supreme Being realize.

Saith Nanak: Those favoured with Divine grace,

Devoted to the Name abide'.<sup>195</sup>

'Say not that the Vedas and Muslim books are false.

False is he, who reflects not on them'.<sup>196</sup>

So, in this essence, *Sikhi* respects the freedom of life.

Sikh institutions are not the Utopian concept rather these are playing an important role in the organization of Sikhism. In the sociological perspective, it has brought out so many improvements in the social structures of life. *Nam japo, Kirat karo,*

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<sup>194</sup> bRhmu ibMdy so bRwhmNu khIaY ij anidnu hir ilv lwey ] (SGGS;512)

<sup>195</sup> bRhmu ibMdih qy bRwhmNw jy clih siqgur Bwie lijn kY ihrdY hir vsY hAumY rogu gvwie ]

guN rvih guN sMgRhih joqI joiq imlwie liesu jug mih ivrly bRwhmN bRhmu ibMdih icqu lwie ]

nwnk ijnA kAu ndir kry hir scw sy nwim rhy ilv lwie ] (SGGS; 850)

<sup>196</sup> byd kqyb khhu mq JUTy JUTw jo n ibcwrY ] (SGGS; 1350)

*Vand chhako* are the central bases of Sikh thought, which are practiced by *Sangat*. The Sikhs have faith in *Akal Purkh* and they have commitment towards Guru. Guru Gobind Singh has transformed the *Sangat* and into the *Khalsa*, which is an ideal form of social arrangement in the world. The *Khalsa* is the highest form of Sikh experience. *Khalsa* is the real and ultimate identity of the Sikhs. In the next chapter, we shall describe that how the *Khalsa* was created by the Guru Gobind Singh. The historical treatment of Sikh paradigm through the creation of *Khalsa* and the other praxis shall also discuss.

### **Conclusions:**

1. The concept of one God in its new form makes a distinct identity of the Sikhs. The vision of the higher truth, which is *Waheguru/Akal Purakh* is distinct due to its formation, symbolization and projection. ਯ, the Sikh spirituality, experience, vision and symbol of Ultimate Reality has multiple layers. The single interpretation for this is not adequate. It cannot be monad/frozen/static in any position. *Akal Purakh* is the Master of universe, which cannot be limited to any particular region/group/community. The naming tradition of the Ultimate Reality in Sikh experience is also distinct which accept the revealed experiences of spirituality of the various traditions of faith.
2. Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikh identity. He is regarded as *Gur-Parmeshar* in the Sikh vision. The concept of Guru is much distinct in the contrast to other religious traditions. There is no difference between the Guru and the concept of Sikh God. Guru is the way to make union with *Waheguru/Akal*

*Purakh* (ultimate reality). Guru is the junction of *sabda-surta* experience. The life of a Sikh revolves around the Guru. A Sikh gets all the directions of both worlds (transcendental and mundane). Sikh, in his great love for the Guru, has a commitment towards him and Guru grants all his spiritual powers to Sikhs.

3. The creation of *Sangat* in the Sikh vision is also important in the formation of Sikh identity. It is the symbol of equality and plurality. In *Sangat*, one feels his/her own distinctiveness. It is the major institution of the Sikhs, which lead all the institutions of Sikhs, under the supervision of *Khalsa*.
4. The other is also important which cannot be marginalized in the Sikh vision. The Sikhs have commitment with the Guru, which is essence of God. In Sikh vision, there is no division in self and other. I and Thou are interlinked. *Khalsa* is the best example of this combination.

## **Chapter III**

### **Historical Paradigms of the Sikh Identity**

Historical paradigms mean the luminous archetypes, which have been created by the Sikhs in the history under the guidance of the Guru. The foundation of *Guruship*, *Sangat*, *Gurdwara*, *Langar-Pangat*, *Manji Prtha*, *Sri Akal Takht* etc. are the new experiences in the history of human consciousness. We are trying to understand the various dimensions of these institutions and their role in Sikh faith and commitment. This chapter deals with the practical aspects of Sikh identity.

#### **The Experience of Sikh Faith:**

A Sikh lives according to Guru and follows to *Guru Granth Sahib*. Every day he/she starts his/her life within the recitation of Divine Nam and tries to spent day and night in the Divine obligations of Guru, who leads him/her toward spiritual life and realization. To recite the Divine Nam, Guru made *Sangat*, which gathers in the presence of the Guru and meditates His *Nam*. The recitation of Divine Nam of Guru is an important feature of Sikh life. Without him, life is worthless. Professor Puran Singh writes that 'Guru Nanak is 'the Name' we sing as the birds sing the joy of the new dawn. Guru Nanak, Guru Nanak, we say and we pass on. We look neither to the left nor to the right, with our lips sealed with honey of the Name, with our eyes enraptured by the dream of a greater, nobler universe of the Guru's mind. We go muttering even mechanically into the heart of men and things. We go mingling like a good thought in the blood of universe, 'the Name! the Name!'. As the babe knows its mother and nothing beyond, we know our Name and nothing beyond'.<sup>197</sup>

Sikh meditation is known to as *Simran*. Sikh *Simran* relates with the embracing of *Waheguru* all the time to worship<sup>198</sup> Him. Sikh-worship, according to Sirdar Kapur Singh is that 'it must be related to God, His attributes and praises. It must not be sensuous and passion-generating through its musical modality and verbal content.....It must remain within the traditional confines of its verbal content, which is, the sacred texts of the Guru Granth, the pious compositions of Bhai Gurdas and approved apostle of Sikhism and the devotional Persian hymnal songs of Bhai Nand Lal Goya, a dear, close

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<sup>197</sup> Puran Singh, *The Spirit Born People*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1976, p. 37.

<sup>198</sup> It is the devotion and remembrance of Sikh towards Guru/*Waheguru*.

associate and Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh. It must satisfy the over-all test of leading the mind inwards'.<sup>199</sup>

In *Simran*, *Kirtan* performs musically splendidous. *Gurbani* is sung on the instrument of music in *rags* known to as *Kirtan*. It is wondrous to a Sikh devotee when he recites and chants *Gurbani*. 'It accorded is this, *Kirtan*, the musical mode of worship, that has been accorded a central place in Sikh-worship and it is this mode of worship that is almost exclusively employed in the Sikh *sanctum sanctorum* of the Golden Temple at Amritsar. For, "the music and melody constitute the aid and catalyst to help man ascend into attunement with the Infinite, though the *numinous* experience itself is beyond the reach of music. "The Entrance-door of the God's Palace is attained by myriads of modes of music and myriads of human and divine musicians", says the famous *Stair* of the *Japu*, *Sodaru*. "The *kirtan* has the potency to rescue man from the clutches of Time". "God (sometimes) enters human experience in the form of Music".<sup>200</sup> Thus, *Kirtan* leads a soul of devotee toward ultimate Divine.

To understand the phenomena of Sikh faith in the experience of the Sikhs *Ardas* (daily prayer) is very important, which is not just a text or rite, as it explains the whole Sikh practice. *Ardas* is a basic postulate and daily practice in the Sikh *Panth*, which embodies various dimensions of spirituality. Prayer is important in almost every religion.

Jainism directs towards *Tap* (austerities meditation). This religion is known to as the hard meditation, *sadhna*. However, there does not seem any rite, which presents

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<sup>199</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *Some Insights Into Sikhism*, Madanjit Kaur and Piar Singh (eds.), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1995, p. 101.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. p. 102.



any event of collective prayer. 'Prayer is nevertheless not universally encouraged. Mahavira, for example, discouraged his followers, the Jains, from prayer, calling it of no avail since salvation lies within man himself. "Why do you want a friend beyond yourself?"<sup>201</sup>

We have noted that polytheism, which has various angels, gods and goddesses. The basic activity of this religion is *Puja*, which is not an act of prayer. 'During worship the Vedic Aryans used to offer God browned butter, oats, sesame seeds, fruits, and other foods they were fond of. After the offering was consumed by the fire they had the psychological satisfaction that God had accepted their offering'.<sup>202</sup>

*Puja* is like homage to God. The varieties of material are much important which is used in *Puja*. The main purpose of worship is purification. So the scented material became the central part of Hindu worships. 'The worship starts with purification. Every item used in the worship has to be purified by the thought of worshiper. Holy words associated with God, called mantras, are chanted by the worshiper along with thoughts of purification such as "may the flowers be pure and holy; may the water be pure and holy." In this manner he purifies every item used for worship. Then he purifies every part of his own body. After that he has to think of the divinity present in himself. He prays to God that, by God's grace, his inherent divinity becomes manifest and thus he may become fit to worship God'.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Geddes Macgrogor, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

<sup>202</sup> Swami Bhaskarananda, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid*, p. 140.

Buddhism also focuses upon meditations and emphasizes upon self-perfection with control upon mind, body and other desires. M. Anesaki describes that, 'Buddhism teaches that there is no personal creator or ruler of the world, and that the perfection of religious and moral ideas rests solely on one's own self-perfection. Thus in the Buddhist religion (Buddhism) there is no room for prayer, in the sense of petition, reason why Buddha so carefully guarded against a god for the purpose of securing a certain benefit throughout his special favour. But, when prayer is understood in a broader way, there is the Buddhist prayer as an expression of earnest faith, determined intention, as means of self-perfection in Buddhist ideals'.<sup>204</sup>

In Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism, there is no congregational prayer. The people of these faiths gather at a place to hear the discourse of God and Goddesses but there is no such activity of prayer ritual.

In Islam, the main practice/form to remember the God is *namaz*, which is called *Salat*. Obligatory, the reading and performing of *Salat* five times in a day is compulsory for a Muslim. It can be held in the mosque or at any clean place. But in mosque, women cannot pray; they have to do it in their homes. Ibrahim M. Abu - Rabi says that 'the intention of Quran is not to merely prescribe prayers as a ritual or an institution and communal commitment to order, punctuality, change, and coherence. *Salat*, in a sense, is the meeting point between the sacred and secular in Muslim life. It is a

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<sup>204</sup> M. Anesaki, "Buddhist Prayer", in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (vol. x), James Hastings (ed.), T. & T. Clark, 1967, p. 166.

reflection of a divine desire to change the world in the direction prescribed by God in the Quran'.<sup>205</sup>

*Salat*, in this sense, is a meeting point to transcend into the realm of divinity. It is also very important that how it has to be performed. 'The pillars of prayer consist of the following seventeen items: (1) intention (niyah); (2) the opening "God is the Greatest" ("Allahu akbar"); (3) standing (wuquf); (4) reciting the fatihah (the opening surah); (5) bowing (ruku); (6) remaining motionless a moment therein (tumanina); (7) straightening back up after bowing (litidal); (8) remaining motionless a moment therein (tumanina); (9) prostration (sujud); (10) remaining motionless a moment therein (litidal); (11) sitting back between the two prostration (al-julus bayna al-sajdaatayn); (12) remaining motionless a moment therein (litidal); (13) the prayer's final Testification of faith (al-tashahhud al-akhir); (14) sitting therein (julus); (15) the Blessing on the Prophet (al-salat ala al-Nabi); (16) saying "Peace be upon you" (al-salamu alaykum), the first of the two times it is said at the end of the prayer; and (17) the prophet sequence of the above integrals'.<sup>206</sup> This way of *Salat* is not normal or easy.

In Christianity, there is personal and a collective prayer that states the fulfillment of law. It is performed in the praise of Christ. Different churches perform different prayers also. About the Christian prayer R. M. Wolley explains that 'individual prayer is essentially private, bearing on personal and private needs. Such a prayer as 'O God of the crosses that are laid upon us, help thy servant Apphours', who has survived in a 4th

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<sup>205</sup> Ibrahim M. Abu – Rabi, "Salat", in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (vol. 3), (ed.) John L. Esposito, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995, p. 469.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, p. 470.

century fragment, may be taken as an example of prayer to God in time of intense personal need - such a prayer has been prayed millions of times. Collective prayer is public, the common prayers used when the family of God gather together to give Him the worship due from all. The history of common prayer is to be found in the liturgical service of the Church. Christ came to fulfill the law, not to destroy it. The Christian church regarded itself as the fulfillment and the perfection of Jewish church'.<sup>207</sup>

*Ardas* can be interpreted as multiplicities of human consciousness/sub-consciousness/un-consciousness. It is not just a prayer. It has multiple layers, which cover the disciplines of history, culture, anthropology, psychology and so on. In the Sikh experience, the word *Ardas* is used for prayer. 'Ardas is a Sanskrit word, from the root, 'ard' to ask, to beg, to pray and 'as' means, wish, hope, desire. To ask for what you desire is ardas, that is prayer, though some Sikh scholars are inclined to the view that ardas is just a Punjabi form of the Persian expression, 'arzasht, a petition, presented to a state authority by a citizen'.<sup>208</sup>

*Ardas* is a devotion to *Akal Purakh*. *Ardas* can be performed individually as well as in congregation. It is a supplication to Ultimate Beloved. It is recited twice everyday in the Sikh *Gurdwaras*. It is the collective experience of Sikh history, which is practiced ritually in the Sikh life.

Sirdar Kapur Singh in his book *Parasaraprasna: The Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh* writes a section upon *Ardas*. He writes that *Ardas* is not the application or

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<sup>207</sup> R. M. Woolley, "Christian Prayer", in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (vol. x), James Hastings (ed.), T. & T. Clark, 1967, p. 177.

<sup>208</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 276.

petition, which is given by a person to state authority. It is the wish, hope and desire which is begged by a devotee. Kapur Singh also differentiates Sikh *Ardas* from Hindu *puja* and *archa*. He explains that how an act of *puja* does not become prayer although it becomes an act of homage including that of entertainment.<sup>209</sup>

He describes that the vision of *puja* and *archa* in the analysis of their rituals in Vedic culture and *Tantrism*. He defines that in Hinduism, there is no practice of congregational praying. The sects of *Chaitanya* and *Vallabhacarya* tried to develop it but mostly the Hindu practice of praying is individual. He states that, 'ordinarily, a Hindu worshipper goes to the temple alone or with friends and family, makes his offerings and departs. Sometimes he may linger there to watch the act of worship by regular officiants in a well-endowed temple, but he and others form an audience and not a congregation'.<sup>210</sup>

Kapur Singh explains that in Sikhism, the canonical function is *simran*. It is the union with Ultimate. Through *seva*, the practice of a devotee enters in loving service which is glorified by prayer. He describes that, 'the basic activity of Sikhism is *simran*, communion with God through the yogic discipline of Name; its obligated and mandatory context is *seva*, loving service of fellow beings and prayer is the prescribed vitality of this activity. Prayer supports *simran* which evolves and matures in social context. Congregational prayer is, thus, an essential Sikh institution'.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid, p. 277.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, p. 278.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid. p. 278.

Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki describes his views on *Ardas* in a book *Ardas: Darshan, Roop, Abhias*. In the first part of book, he deals with the philosophy of *Ardas* and in the second part he explains about the structure of Sikh *Ardas*. In the last part, he defines about the praxis of the *Ardas*. He says that 'human is the final place of the concordance of time and timeless. *Ardas* is the sentimental effort of this concordance. It is summon to Ultimate that to come in time of human. It is the chance of human's limited consciousness and exuberance to go to Infinite'.<sup>212</sup>

Thus, *Ardas* is the bridge to combine the mundane and transcendental world. It is the invitation to meet the Beloved One. In the second part of the book, Dr. Neki tries to understand the etymological, ontological and epistemological meaning of *Ardas*. He explains the historical Sikh consciousness, which emerges from the spiritual and theoretical phenomena of the Sikh experiences. In last, he tells about the *Maryada* (code of conduct) of *Ardas* and describes about the distinct Sikh experience of *Ardas*. Dr. Neki writes the first stage of *Ardas* is *Darkhaasti* (It means when a devotee desires something from Akal Purakh), second *Shukrana* (When a devotee pays thank to Akal Purakh), third *Gunanavadi* (When a devotee recites the praises of Akal Purakh), forth *Goshat* (When a devotee is able to talk with Akal Purakh) and fifth is *Abol* (When a devotee achieves the position of silence).

Dr. Deepinder Jeet Randhawa understands the importance of Sikh *Ardas* in the memory of the Sikhs. She first writes about the theories of memory and then explains Sikh memory; at last she combines *Ardas* with the memory dimensions. She also writes about that uniqueness of Sikh *Ardas*.

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<sup>212</sup> Jaswant Singh Neki, *Ardas: Darshan, Roop, Abhias*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2008, p. 28.

In this age of globalization cultural study is becoming a major discipline. Memory is also a very important part for the study of any culture and civilization. Dr. Randhawa says that, 'cultural memory therefore is revisiting the past from the borderline of cultural flux disrupting the homogenized remembrance. It is a push towards plural disjunctions and explosive differential where cultural identities are rapidly being eroded and supplemented'.<sup>213</sup> Thus, culture memory recognizes other identity and retrieves the past thoughts. To explain the Sikh memory Dr. Randhawa explores strongly the Sikh connotations such as *bani/karuna/tegh/khanda/sehej/vismad/gyan/dhyan* etc. She writes, 'The memory becomes distinct by simultaneously moving in compassion (*karuna*) and the sword (*tegh, khanda*). It negotiates humility/militancy simultaneously. It is mediated by the equality of cultures/faiths (*Hindu Turk kou.....sabhai ekai pahchanbo*) and remains ready to protect its identity against hegemony'.<sup>214</sup>

She interprets the text of *Ardas* in the eight parts and takes these eight flashes as multiplicity of the Divine. In her views, Sikh *Ardas* is a junction where a devotee links with his/her past (which is full of divines, traumas, sacrifices, pain, martyrdoms etc.). But all these sufferings are in *Sahaj* (equilibrium). She states that, 'the memory of Sikh is multi-mediated by *Vismad*, creative energy, pain, anguish, joy and martyrdom. The trace of all these mediations does not let the memory be totalitive, it remains *Vismadic*

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<sup>213</sup> Deepinder Jeet Randhawa, "The Sikh *Ardas*: Specific and Co-existential Memory", in *The Sikh Memory: Its Distinction and Contribution to Humankind*, Gurbhagat Singh and Deepinder Jeet Randhawa, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2009, p. 107.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid*, p. 109.

(wonderus) and in *Sahaj*. The *Ardas* bestows on the Sikh memory joyful affirmation of the past and retrieves from a site of abundance that cannot be categorized'.<sup>215</sup>

The structure of *Ardas* is completely distinct rather than other prayers. There is no doubt, a prayer projects the conscious and unconscious worlds of a person or the followers of any faith. It signifies the traumatic, cultural, historic and existential memories in the time flow. On one side it reflects the collective experiences of divine and on the other side it magnifies the diversities and distinctiveness of any culture, community etc. In the words of Dr. Randhawa, 'the *Ardas*, therefore, becomes a distinct text that simultaneously negotiates the sacred, and collective, individual, universal energies. It is structured in excess that shapes and re-contextualizes the Sikh memory. It is a text of multiple flows where cultural specificities, global heterogeneity, body and mind are free from territorializing codes to reorient the community and its memory for a journey of gift retrieval. It prepares the community for responding to the immediacy of the present and the future'.<sup>216</sup>

### **Institutions in the Sikh History:**

The Sikh institutions have played an important role to make Sikh identity. Guru himself made the institutions, which reflect the Sikh's identity in the history. Fauja Singh writes that 'they (Gurus) provided an effective functional organization for the propagation and spread of the creed; symbolized the essential character of the Sikh movement; institutionalized the fundamentals of its teachings and made them easier to

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid, p. 120.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. p.121.



be imprinted on the minds of the devotees. They also imparted to it a hallmark of distinction and thereby smoothed the way for the development of its separate identity'.<sup>217</sup>

Guru Nanak established the institutions of *Dharamsal* and *Langar*. These institutions accelerated by the succeeding Gurus to create the new third path. All the Gurus performed a role of an activist to establish the various institutions. Jagjit Singh writes that 'Guru Nanak had started the institution of *Dharamsala*, *Sangat*, *Langar* and *Manjis*. The succeeding Gurus further consolidated and extended these institutions. Guru Amar Das systematized this institution of *Manjis* and created twenty-two centers for the extension of the mission. Persons of high religious calibre were nominated to these offices.....They were the links of the organization and the two-way channels of communication between the Guru and the Sangat.....the militarization of the movement only added a new dimension to this development. Even before this militarization, the Sikh movement had established a firm and a separate organizational identity known as the Sikh Panth'.<sup>218</sup>

The Sikh Gurus were aware of their mission and identity. It was the Guru vision to make *Dharamsal* (*Gurdwara*) everywhere. Bhai Gurdas also writes that when Guru Nanak came, there were abodes of *Dharma* all around. The music of Divine Nam was being played.<sup>219</sup> At the time of journeys, Bhai Mardana, the great musician was Guru

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<sup>217</sup> Fauja Singh, "Development of Sikhism Under the Gurus", in *Sikhism*, Fauja Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p. 1.

<sup>218</sup> Jagjit Singh, *The Sikh Revolution: A Perspective View*, Bahri Publications, New Delhi, 1981, pp. 109-10.

<sup>219</sup> Gr Gr aMdir Drmswl hovY kIrqnu sdw ivsoaw[ (Var1;27)

Nanak's follower and accompanist. Everywhere Guru Nanak sang the song of *Akal Purkh* and bonded the people into *Sangat*. Teja Singh writes that 'wherever he went, he left behind him a *sangat*, or association of his followers, with an injunction to build a *gurdwara*, or temple, for the purpose of meeting and singing his hymns together, and in a short while a network of Sikh temples sprang up all over the country. There were centers of his mission in Junagarh, Kamrup (Assam), Surat, Cuttack, Behar, Johar (Sbathu), Nanakmata (Kumaon Hills), Kathmandu, the Persian Gulf, Kabul, Jalalabad and other places'.<sup>220</sup> Guru Nanak established the centers of spirituality, and the next Gurus carried on this tradition successfully. *Gurdwara* and *Sangat* are interrelated because *Gurdwara* emerges within the presence of Guru. *Sangat* comes in *Gurdwara* to recite the Divine Nam in the presence of Guru. *Sangat* does the *Kirtan*, which is done by musical instruments. It is the daily practice in the *Gurdwaras*.

The Sikhs have developed religious mode of collection the funds. Every Sikh gives *Daswandh* (ten percent of his/her earning) to the *Gurdwara* for *Langar* (where every can get free food without any discrimination) and the other things for needy. Balwant Singh Dhillon writes about daswandh that 'besides the daswandh, there were some non-obligatory donations which enhanced the financial resources of the dharamsala. Firstly, there (dharamsala) was a golak, a box meant for collection of offerings. Secondly, we come across sukh-manat, a sort of thanks giving tribute which the Sikhs offered on fulfillment of their desire. Thirdly, there was a practice among the Sikhs to donate some amount for the welfare of dharamsala on the occasion of

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<sup>220</sup> Teja Singh, *Sikhism: Its Ideals and Institutions*, Orient Longmans, Bombay, 1964, p. 36.

marriage known as *kurmai*. Fourthly, there was a *chulia*, vow to donate something in the memory of dead. Fifthly, there was a strong practice among the Sikhs to set apart some amount from their earnings in the name of Guru and present the same to *dharamsala*. Sixthly, there was *kar-bhent*, a special campaign to collect money or material to fulfil the specific needs to the central as well as local *dharamsala*. Lastly, charity in the form of grain and produce was also a big source of income of the *dharamsala*. An early 17th century source exhorts the Sikhs to carry something in kind while visiting the *dharamsala*. Obviously, it added to the provisions of the *langar*.<sup>221</sup>

*Langar* is for the indigent persons of the society. *Langar* represents the *Pangat*. It means everyone is equal in the abode of Guru and in *Pangat* everyone can take food without any discrimination by the name of caste, creed, colour, tribe and nation. Nowadays, *Langar* has become an identity as a major institution of the Sikhs. Here, we would like to interpret the two leading institutions of the Sikh, which are the symbols and models of institutionalized Sikh identity. First, is *Sri Harmandir Sahib* and second is *Sri Akal Takht*.

### **Sri Harmandir Sahib/Sri Darbar Sahib:**

*Sri Harmandir Sahib* occupies an important place in Sikhism. The Sikhs take guidance for their lives from here. Everything related with *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sikh literature, Sikh history in *Sakhi* experiences, institutions and Sikh praxis project to Sikh identity. At the level of institutions, *Sri Harmandir Sahib* is the peerless place of Sikh

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<sup>221</sup> Balwant Singh Dhillon, "The Institutions of Dharamsal: Origin and Development", in *Guru Nanak: Ideal and Institutions*, H.S. Soch and Madanjit Kaur (eds.), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1998, pp. 193-94.

identity. It has combined vehemently to Sikh's life-practices. For the Sikhs, *Sri Harmandir Sahib* is the symbol of unsayable glory. Kapur Singh writes that 'the world-famous Golden Temple of the Sikhs, situated at Amritsar in India, bears Harmandir, 'the Temple of God', as its original name and it forms an island in a lake to which the name of Amritsar was given by the Nanak V. Guru Arjan (1563-1606), in the year 1589, when he laid the foundations of what is known as the Golden Temple, and the town which grew around this Mecca of the Sikhs has only subsequently acquired the name of Amritsar'.<sup>222</sup> The *Adi Granth Sahib* was installed at 1604 in *Sri Harmandir Sahib* for the first time and Baba Budha ji, the eminent personality of the Sikhs was the first chief *Granthi*.

Professor Puran Singh, who is known to be the author of the spirits, expresses the multiple spiritual dimensions in his poem 'Harmandir at Amritsar' in ecstatic mode. He says that it is the birth of God's world and also the first hour of the whole creation. It is the ecstasy of finished labour and the realized life. Ultimately, it is the spot of thankfulness.<sup>223</sup> *Sri Harmandir Sahib* has the sacred place among the world-natives' religions, which demonstrates the continuous flow of distinctiveness of Sikhs. It is the spot of spirits, which are meditating on Akal, the Ultimate beyond time reality. Prof. Puran Singh also says that 'It is not the place of ascetics, Yogies or the narrow minded. It is the adobe of prophet, who has loved God as an embodiment of true love. His love was such that he experienced happiness in the presence of God, in His meditation and in His praise. The great artist, creator gave the form of heart to Harmandir Sahib where

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<sup>222</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *Me Judice*, Bhai Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2003, p. 352.

<sup>223</sup> Puran Singh, *The Temple Tulips*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2001, p. 69.

humans get together as children. There is a window in the golden pinnacle where Guru sits to see the wondrous sights till now. There are so many temples of different faiths and people celebrate happiness at various religious places but Harmandir is matchless. It is not a building; it is palpitation life which is going on with the meditation glory of its own'.<sup>224</sup>

*Sri Harmandir Sahib* crosses the current conceptions of hybridity and incommensurability coined by Homi Bhabha due to its versatility. It is the warm realizations of distinctiveness, and there is much sky for the other. There is also no fear of fading/eroding any identity. Every spirit is respectable. In the comparative context, Sri Harmandir Sahib, for the Sikhs is such as Banaras of Hindus, Jerusalem of Jews, Rome of Christians and Mecca of Islam but it is ably known that above sacred places of various religions express particular blood, community, caste and class. These also have the voices of separateness and not distinctiveness which make them fanatic, but *Sri Harmandir Sahib* becomes a counter sign against any rigidity and one-dimensional programme for the whole universe. Sirdar Kapur Singh describes that 'this position and this status of the Golden Temple is unique in the religious or political centers of world history. It is the Mecca of the Sikhs, because it is the religious centre of the Sikhs, but it is vastly more. It is the St. Peter's Rome, for it is the capital of the Sikh theocracy, but it is very much more and also something less and more. It is the Varanasi or Banaras of Sikhism, because it is the holiest of the holies of the faith, but it is not precisely that because the true Sikh doctrine does not approve of any tradition or belief which seeks

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<sup>224</sup> Puran Singh, *Nau Lakha Haar Ate Hor Kahaniya*, Punajbi University, Patiala, 1994, pp. 89-90.

to tie up theophany with geography. It is the Jerusalem of Sikhism because it is the historical centre of the epiphany of Sikhism. But it is not precisely that because Sikhism, as a religion, is not history grounded, that is, its validity is not tied up with or dependent upon any historical event'.<sup>225</sup>

Every corner of *Sri Harmandir Sahib* has been centered with Sikh meditation, service, culture, life and politics. Its presence has been important from every aspect of Sikh life. It is accepted as a gift, presented by *Waheguru* in wondrous mood. Sikh life revolves around *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* which is the ultimate guide. In the *Sabad*/verse/hymns of Guru, *Sri Harmandir Sahib* is the creation of the *Akal Purkh*. It is His body. The Sikh body is also *Harmandir*, it is the abode of the light of *Akal Purkh*. This concept is the *Jugat* (skillfulness) of *Sikhi's* distinctiveness. *Guru Granth Sahib* initiates;

'My cherished beloved! this self is the temple by the Lord erected

Pervasive in it does He abide'.<sup>226</sup>

'To contemplate the Lord is the Divine temple erected, wherein

God's devotees His laudation sing'.<sup>227</sup>

'That spot alone is the Lord's Temple where Divine realization

comes'.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *op. cit.*, 2003, pp. 357-58.

<sup>226</sup> hir mMdru hir jIAu swijaw myry lwI jIAu hir iqsu mih rihaw smwey rwm ] (SGGS; 542)

<sup>227</sup> hir jpy hir mMdru swijaw sMq Bgq guN gwvih rwm ] (SGGS; 781)

'The body is the Lord's abode, by Him beautified; In it abides

Himself the Lord the Divine Being'.<sup>229</sup>

'The self is the Lord's Temple, by Himself attained, Inside it He

abides'.<sup>230</sup>

*Sri Harmandir Sahib* is the place of *Akal Purkh* which is also the centre of the Sikh religious memory. The uncountable Sikhs gave their heads for the service and care of *Sri Harmandir Sahib*. Puran Singh says that it is the peace of heaven send by Guru Gobind Singh to his own living children. It is the body of Guru Ramdas Ji. This *Harmandir* is our life, breath, earth, sky, bone, flesh, it is our heart. It is our victory of mundane and transcendental world, it is our great centre, and it is the abode of our *Akal Purakh*. Our Guru, with his own hands and his old Sikhs dig it, its God meditation is endless. Its self sacrifice is endless. Here thousands of Sikhs gave their heads. Every particle has filled with emotions. Here, uncountable, without names, without recognition Sikh's eyes seem which are full of God's love, silence and shrieking.<sup>231</sup> While you are moving around the tank of Amritsar, let the foot with care on the marbles. Beneath every marble has thousands heads of the Sikhs.<sup>232</sup>

The complete Sikh memory has connected with *Harmandir Sahib*, which is the identity of their self, as blessed by the Gurus. The enemy of the Sikhs had known that

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<sup>228</sup> hir mMdru soeI awKIaY ijQhu hir jwqw ] (SGGS; 953)

<sup>229</sup> kwieaw hir mMdru hir awip svwry ] (SGGS; 1059)

<sup>230</sup> hir mMdru hir swijaw hir vsY ijsu nwil ] (SGGS; 1418)

<sup>231</sup> Puran Singh, "Meri Pujja Di Ghari (Aatmak Pahu Phutala)", in *Sri Darbar Sahib Mahatata*, Giani Maha Singh (ed.), Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 28-37.

<sup>232</sup> Puran Singh, quoted by Ajmer Singh, *1984 Anchitvia Keher: Na Mannanjog, Na Bhulanjog, Na Bakhshanjog*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2009, p. 1.

*Sri Harmandir Sahib* and its tank is the holiest place for the Sikhs. Muslim invaders and others tried to fill the holy tank with dust and demolished the *Harmandir Sahib* repeatedly. But, in the great love and passion of Guru, Sikhs rebuild it with much respect and faith. They performed their better service. Bhai Vir Singh has explained the martyrdoms of Bhai Mansa Singh, Bhai Bhara Singh and Bhai Bijla Singh in the service of Sri Harmandir Sahib.<sup>233</sup>

To visit the *Sri Harmandir Sahib*, Sikhs always accepted the deadly challenges of the enemies with happy faces. There are so many testimonies and events in the Sikh history. The history of 18th century is full with uncountable unimaginable actions, which have been performed by Sikhs in the love of their great Gurus and this tradition is continuing.

Recently, the Indian Government operated Blue Star operation known as military action. In this operation, they attacked *Sri Harmandir Sahib* and *Sri Akal Takhat*. This attack became a cause of million deaths. The Sikhs cannot endure a minor disrespect of their abode of *Akal Purakh*. For *Harmandir Sahib*, they feel felicity to give their head in the service of *Sri Harmandir Sahib*. Ajmer Singh says that what is the status of Sri Harmandir Sahib in the heart of the Sikhs? Why are they ready every time to die easily for the respect of Harmandir Sahib? To understand this mystery, it is very important to know about Sikh philosophy, history, traditions and their peculiar consciousness, which

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<sup>233</sup> Bhai Vir Singh, "Sri Darbar Sahib Lyi Sikha Diya Kurbania", *Sri Darbar Sahib Mahatata*, (ed.) Giani Maha Singh, Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan, New Delhi, 1996, p. 10.



has been constructed in the distinctive aura. Without this cognitive, it is a very hard task to understand the depth of this mystery.<sup>234</sup>

*Sri Harmandir Sahib* blesses the ways of Sikhs who are in the process of gifting some other perfumed ways to the world civilization. Sikh Gurus do not bind the Sikh in any narrow-structure rather they give the way to universal development, which is full of grace and happiness. A Sikh never looks upon anybody as *other*; rather he welcomes his/her inner-world. There is no fear/suspicion of dissolving any identity. It is very important in the contemporary world thought towards identity paradigm. Dr. Randhawa writes that 'the vision to create the Darbar Sahib as a site of multilogue, cultural renewel and remembrance, was both revolutionary and futuristic. The Sikh faith and identity emerged out of the cataclysmic structures of its time when Vismadic and co-existential principle of the universe was being violated. The Darbar Sahib as a counter co-existential alterity disrupts the hegemonic paradigms of the Mughal and Brahmanical hierachization. By bringing together multiple traditions and arts the Darbar Sahib becomes a distinct site of heterology and beauty, and interspace of a variety of skills'.<sup>235</sup>

The presence of Guru in *Sri Harmandir Sahib*, *Kirtan* of *Gurbani* in the gathering of *Sangat*, its multidimensional archetype, its four doors, *Sri Akal Takhat*, *Parkarma*, *Duedies*, *Jhande*, *Bunge*, *Baba Budha Ji Ber*, *Lachi Ber*, *Dukh Bhanjani Ber*, multicultural art on buildings, the place of Baba Deep Singh Shaheed, *Baba Atal*, *Kaulsar* etc. are the multi-projections of the Sikh distinctiveness. These are the spiritual paths to the multi-

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<sup>234</sup> Ajmer Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>235</sup> Deepinder Jeet Randhawa, "The Harmandir Sahib: Remebering in Heterology and Vismad", in *The Sikh Memory: Its Distinction and Contribution to Humankind*, Gurbhaghat Singh and Deepinder Jeet Randhawa, Singh Brothers, 2009, pp. 129-31.

dimensional world of consciousness and cultures/civilizations. The Sikhs memorize and pray for world goodness here. The concept of identity, which the world academicians are discussing now, has been practiced by the Sikhs since centuries. There can be seen the picture of smoothly distinct existence in the respect of the Other. Opinderjit Kaur Takhar writes that 'a significant assertion of a distinct Sikh identity is further illustrated by the institutions made by the fifth Guru. By establishing Harmandir Sahib as the central place for Sikhs, and installing the Adi Granth within it, Guru Arjan provided both a spiritual centre and an authoritative scripture for the Sikhs'.<sup>236</sup>

### **Sri Akal Takhat**

*Sri Akal Takhat* is the major symbol of sovereign Sikh identity. It was established by the Sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind Sahib in front of *Sri Harmandir Sahib*. After the martyrdom of Guru Arjun, Guru Hargobind took the decision of making it. 'He strengthened the city of Amritsar by putting up a small fortification, called *Lohgarh*. In 1609, he also built a meeting place for Sikhs and called it the *Akal Takht*, or the Throne of the Almighty. Here, besides praying and preaching, talks were held on questions affecting the welfare of the community. He enrolled a bodyguard of 52 stout Sikhs, who formed, the nucleus of his future army'.<sup>237</sup>

*Sri Akal Takhat* reflects the flashes of socio-political life of the Sikhs under the supervision and authority of timeless being, Akal. 'The architecture (of *Sri Akal Takhat*) is a symbol of custodianship or trusteeship of *Akal purakh* and authentic existence of

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<sup>236</sup> Opinderjit Kaur Takhar, *Sikh Identity: An Exploration of Groups among Sikhs*, Ashgate, England, 2005, p. 10.

<sup>237</sup> Teja Singh Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1989, p. 37.

the truth. It hinges on the Guru's creative response to the historical atrocities of the Mughal Emperors. The sixth Guru divined it in ecstasy and concretized it on the earth, turning it into a symbol of sovereignty (*miri*) and spirituality (*piri*).<sup>238</sup> According to Major Gurmukh Singh, 'the word akal, a negative of kal (time), is the equivalent of timeless, beyond time, everlasting, and takht, in Persian, that of royal throne or chair of state. Akal Takht would thus mean "timeless or everlasting throne" or "throne of the Timeless One, i.e. God. In the Sikh system, God is postulated as Formless (Nirankar), yet to proclaim His sovereignty over His creation, He is sometimes referred to as sultan, patsah, sachā sah, or the True King; His seat is referred to as sachcha takht, the True Throne, sitting on which He dispenses sachcha niao, true justice'.<sup>239</sup>

In the doctrinal and historical perspective, we see that since establishment, *Akal Takht* is playing vital functions in the Sikh life. This intention is to establish the *Hlemi Raj*<sup>240</sup> in the phenomenal world. In the contrast of various religious esteems, *Akal Takht* presents its distinct identity. J.S. Ahluwalia writes that 'the nature of the authority of *Sri Akal Takht* is not religious in the theo-spiritual sense of the term. Its authority is homologous to the temporal power of State, rather than to the religious authority of the Roman Catholic Church'.<sup>241</sup> Guru Hargobind Sahib made *Akal Takht* under the holy order of *Akal Purakh*. In the Sikh history, about the life of Guru Hargobind Sahib, the text *Gur Bilas Patshahi 6* is very important. It tells us that *Akal Purkh* said to Guru

<sup>238</sup> Nirbhai Singh, *The Philosophical Perspective on Sikh View of Martyrdom*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2007, p. 79.

<sup>239</sup> Major Gurmukh Singh, "Akal Takht", in *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. i), Harbans Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1998, p. 105.

<sup>240</sup> huiN hukmu hoaw imhrvN dw ] pY koie n iksY rəwNdw ]

sB suKwI vuTiaw iehu hoaw hlymI rwju jIAu ] (SGGS; 74)

<sup>241</sup> J.S. Ahluwalia, *The Sovereignty of the Sikh Doctrine*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2006, p. 136.

Hargobind Sahib that recognize the words of the Saints. First and foremost, make the *takht* at this place and put on the swords of *Miri* and *Piri*. Adorn the *takht* and give it my name. Remove the grief of the earth.<sup>242</sup> Guru Hargobind wears the swords of *Miri* (symbol of temporal authority) and *Piri* (symbol of spiritual authority) and he laid down the foundation of *Sri Akal Takht*.

The concept of *Miri-Piri* emerges from *Gurbani*. It implies significance in essence the blending of sovereignty of the transcendental and mundane world. *Gurbani* describes the political dimensions and challenges the corrupt governers in the society.<sup>243</sup> Guru Nanak explains that the real *Dharam* has finished. There is only the kingdom of falsehood. There is not real voice of the priests of religions. God is watching all the things. Nanak speaks only truth.<sup>244</sup> In the complex position of politics, Guru

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<sup>242</sup> aOr sMq bc atl pCwnAu[ buFy muJ mih Byd n mwnAux]  
 ipRQmy ieh QW qKq svwro[ mIrI pIrI ais do Dwro]  
 qWqy ieh QW qKq svwrXo[ myry nwm qWih mih DwrXo]  
 mIrI pIrI doAU Dwro[ Drw Bwr sB dUr invwro]  
 Gurmukh Singh (ed.), *Gur Bilas Patshahi-6*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p. 246.

<sup>243</sup> rqn ivgwiV ivgoey kuqAI muieaw swr n kweI ] (SGGS; 360)  
 kil kwqI rwjy kwsweI Drmu pMK kir Aufiraw ]  
 kUVu amwvs scu cMdRmw dIsY nwhI kh ciVaw ] (SGGS; 145)

<sup>244</sup> srmu Drmu duie Cip Kloey kUVu iPrY prDwnu vy lwlo ] kwjIaw bwmNw kI gl QkI  
 agdu pVY sYqwnu vy lwlo ]  
 muslmwnIaw pVih kqybw kst mih krih Kudwie vy lwlo ] jwiq snwqI hoir  
 ihdvwnIaw eyih BI lyKY lwie vy lwlo ]  
 KUUn ky soihly gwvIaih nwnk rqu kw kuMgU pwie vy lwlo ] swihb ky guN nwnku  
 gwvY mws purI ivic awKu msolw ]  
 ijin AupweI rMig rvweI bYTw vyKY viK iekylw ] scw so swihbu scu qpwwsu  
 scVw inawAu krygu msolw ]  
 kwieaw kpVu tuku tuku hosI ihdusqwnu smwlsI bolw ] awvin aTqrY jwin sqwnvY  
 horu BI AuTsI mrd kw cylw ]  
 sc kI bwNI nwnku awKY scu suNwiesI sc kI bylw ] (SGGS; 722-23)

teaches a Sikh that he must live with dignity.<sup>245</sup> We have already discussed that *Khalsa* is directly under the supervision of *Akal Purkh*. There is no body between them.

Sikh philosophy presents the concept of Timeless Ultimate. Through the vehicle of the Guru, He partakes in the temporal world in the form of history. He covers both the sides. To recognize this, Niharranjan Ray writes that 'he (Guru Hargobind) himself took to arms and used to carry two swords, miri and piri, one hanging from the right and another from the left, one representing the spiritual and another the temporal authority. He also fortified Amritsar and built the Akal Takht opposite the Har Mandir, dispensing justice and temporal orders from the former and spiritual guidance from the latter, and living all the time of like a king with all the trappings of kingship'.<sup>246</sup>

For the union of humankind, soul and bodies, temporal and immortal, *Sri Akal Takht* makes such a way. The temporal authorities act in a bias manner due to narrowness of their fundamental traditions. A higher and cosmos vision can provide shed to various energies of the world. Sirdar Kapur Singh observes that 'ex-hypothesis there cannot be more than one takht in the empire and indeed, in the entire world, for, a true and logically whole empire must tend to acquire a total oecumenical sway and the doctrine of co-existence of more than one takht, which is the true Takht, is a self stultification. But since the Sikh doctrine of Double Sovereignty, miri-piri envisages a sway over the minds and souls of mankind, the entire world and does not contemplate

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<sup>245</sup> kil hoeI kuqy muhI Kwju hoaw murdwru ] kUVu boil boil BAukNw cUkw Drmu bIcwru ]

ijn jIvMidaw piq nhI muieaw mMdI soie ] iliKaw hovY nwnkw krqw kry su hoie ] (SGGS; 1242)

<sup>246</sup> Niharranjan Ray, *The Sikh Gurus and The Sikh Society: A Study in Social Analysis*, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, New Delhi, 1975, p. 25.

a coercive bondage of the bodies of men, it validates and promulgates a plurality of takhts, coexistent, coeval and complementary'.<sup>247</sup>

*Sri Akal takht* is not just a building. It is the ultra/meta-sign, which has been injected in the Sikh blood such as their genealogical genes. The whole *Sikh Panth* is under the supervision of everlasting energy. The Guru injects *Aad Sach* in the human mind/conscience, which is beyond past, present and future. *Sri Akal Takht* is a meta-sign, which shows the gateway of liberation of humanity. It frees the human from all strategic/narrow/nomad/frozen authorities of the world, which are always in a way to bind the human from various aspects such as physically, psychologically, culturally, genealogically.

All the *Hukamnamas* (sacred ordinances) of *Akal Takht* are respectively accepted by the Sikhs. It is also the place, where *Sikh Panth* makes the *Gurmatas*. Through this institution, the Sikhs take the decisions (*Gurmatas*) for the community, which may religiously, politically and socially also. This institution also emerges from *Gurbani*. *Gurbani* suggests that if you have any dilemma, then join and together. Sit together and recite the *Name* of *Waheguru*. The true Guru will save from all the critical positions. As *Gurbani* suggests;

'Brethren! all in unison meet,

And by absorption in *God* cast of duality.

In *devotion* to the Name Divine from pairs,

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<sup>247</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *Me Judice*, Bhai Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2003, p. 208.

And by the Master's guidance spread the dice-cloth.

Brother! Thus make your throw.

Day and night the Master's guidance the holy Name utter;

Thereby in the last moment shall you feel no torment.

Of actions of piety make the gambling square, of charity make the cubes.

Defeat lust, wrath, avarice and attachment – such gaming to the Lord is dear.

On rising at dawn take bath, go to bed supplicating the Lord.

The holy Preceptor even in awkward throws grant success,

And in serene joy one returns home. The Lord Himself has created the cosmos.

Saith Nanak, servant of God: whoever by the Master's guidance plays,

Return home a victor in the game'.<sup>248</sup>

Bhai Vir Singh explains that the *Mata* can be said to any resolution but not *Gurmata* because it is the institution, it is a higher hermitage. It is the temple, which has built on the foundations of sacredness, *Nam* and renunciation. It is a code of conduct; there is not any place for selfishness, personal profits, biasness, envy and the cheap way for the decisions of *Panth*.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> hoie iekqR imlhu myry BweI duibDw dUir krhu ilv lwie ] hir nwmY ky hovhu  
joVI gurmuiK bYshu sPw ivCwie ]  
ienÄ ibiD psw Fwlhu bIr ] gurmuiK nwmu jphu idnu rwqI aMq kwil nh lwgY pIr  
]  
krm Drm qumÄ cAupiV swjhu squ krhu qumÄ swrI ] kwmu kRoDu loBu mohu jIghu  
aYsI Kyl hir ipawrI ]  
AuiT iesnwnu krhu prBwqy soey hir awrwDy ] ibKVy dwAu lûGwvY myrw siqguru  
suK shj syqI Gir jwqy ]  
hir awpy KylY awpy dyKY hir awpy rcnu rcwieaw ] jn nwnk gurmuiK jo nru KylY  
so ijiN bwjI Gir awieaw ] (SGGS;1185)

<sup>249</sup> Quated by Jaspal Singh, *Raj Da Sikh Sankalp*, Navyug Publishers, New Delhi, 2009, pp. 234-35.

John Malcolm also affirms that 'the assembly, which is called the Guru-mata, is convened by the Acalis; and when the chiefs meet upon this solemn occasion, it is concluded that all private animosities cease, and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of the general good; and, actuated by principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion, and commonwealth, to which he belongs'.<sup>250</sup> In history, the Sikhs took so many relevant decisions by this institution under the supervision of *Sri Akal Takhat Sahib*.

Authoritatively, the *Jathedar* is the chief of this place but he takes decisions with *Gurmata*. His position is also different from the Christian Pope and Islamic Caliph due to the distinct vision of *Akal Takht*. Dr. Ahluwalia says that 'unlike the Pope who at one time wore two Swords representing other-worldly and this-worldly authority (both religious and temporal) the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht, like any other Singh, can wear only one sword partaking of the miri aspect and not the second sword symbolic of the piri aspect. In this way the position of the Jathedar is dissimilar to that of Christian Pope and Islamic Caliph claiming regency of God on earth and wielding as such both religious and secular authority'.<sup>251</sup>

The nature of *Hukamnamas*, issued by *Akal Takht*, is related with the temporal world. It is not like divine displeasure and sensor on spirituality against any person. It teaches the lesson of humbleness, which emerges from the Sikh spirit. According to Sikh tradition, Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Sikh King) also followed the supervisory of *Sri*

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid. p. 236.

<sup>251</sup> J.S. Ahluwalia, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 138.



*Akal Takht* and accepted punishment, which was given by Akali Phula Singh, who was the *Jathedar* of *Sri Akal Takht* at that time. Before the establishment of Sikh Kingdom, in the *Misals* period of 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, although all the *Misals* had different ruling areas and administration but they all collected under one consciousness of *Sri Akal Takht*. Dr. Jaspal Singh says that *Akal Takht* gave collective consciousness to unite *Panth* in *Misals*. Socially and politically, *Akal Takht* tied the Sikhs in one way, who were busy in personal fighting and had divided in various groups. Its collective consciousness and unity became the main base of *Khalsa* Kingdom. Total Sikh power gathered around one central power and political identity of Sikh society converted in sovereign *Khalsa* Kingdom.<sup>252</sup> The Sikhs take the guidance from *Sri Akal Takht*, which is under the *Meher* (bless, grace) of *Waheguru*. *Akal Takht* is a distinguishable institution in the world, which represents the distinct identity of the Sikhs. The structure of its building, art on walls and surroundings are very amazing, which make it much significant.

So, in the institutionally interpretation of identity, *Sri Harmandir Sahib* and *Sri Akal Takht* are the major institutions of the Sikhs, which are the central hubs of Sikh life. Thus, the paradigms of the Sikh identity project their distinction through the institutions, which have been discussed above. The Sikhs are trying to actualize the vision of their Gurus through their institutions. It shows their great love and commitment to the Guru.

### **Commitment towards Guru/Waheguru:**

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<sup>252</sup> Jaspal Singh, *Sikh Dharma ate Rajniti*, Nawyug Publishers, New Delhi, 1997, p. 45.

The Sikhs commit their lives in the faith of Guru who is the Master of their life. Guru Nanak was committed to create a new path of spirituality. Bhai Lehna was a faithful Sikh of Guru Nanak who gets the *Guruship* by his commitment. To continue the Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak has given *Guruship* to Bhai Lehna called second Nanak, Guru Angad. Harbans Singh writes that 'to assure the community of his disciples a continuing witness to his teachings, Guru Nanak appointed a successor. The succession of teachers and leaders was not to be dynastic, and thus he bypassed his own sons. A disciple was chosen and was made by Guru an equal with himself. He transmitted to him not only his responsibilities but, as the poets declared, his light as well.....The Sikh community thus had ten spiritual guides succeeding one another, who are regarded with equal adoration and honour'.<sup>253</sup>

Bhai Lehna became Guru Angad by his commitment, devotion and faith. J.D. Cunningham writes that 'Nanak said, 'Ye who trust in me, eat of this food.' All hesitated save Lahna; he knelt and uncovered the dead, and touched without tasting the flesh of man; but, behold! he disappeared and Nanak was in its place. The Guru embraced his faithful follower, saying he was as himself, and that his spirit would dwell within him'.<sup>254</sup> Thus, a Sikh's commitment with his Guru leads him toward the position of Guru.

There is no difference between Guru and God in Sikhism. In *Adi Sakhian*, it has mentioned that God was Nanak; Nanak, God'.<sup>255</sup> The Sikhs sacrificed their lives in

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<sup>253</sup> Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969, p. 222.

<sup>254</sup> Joseph Davey Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs: From the Origin of the Nation to the battles of the Sutlej*, H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), Satvic Books, Amritsar, 2005, p. 42

<sup>255</sup> Nazer Singh, "Understanding Early Sikh Idea of Martyrdom", in *Perspective On Guru Arjan Dev: Contribution and Martyrdom*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2008, p. 64.

commitment of Guru. Through commitment, they maintain their identity. On the other hand, anti-Sikhi (state) has been trying forcefully to finish their identity. In India, before the Sikhism, Mugal rulers tried to convert the non-Muslim into Islam. But the Sikhs challenged it and even gave their lives. Chhanda Chaterjee writes that 'the concept of *Shahadat* or martyrdom is the central idea of Sikhism. Those who embraced this faith had necessarily to be prepared to lay down their lives in defence of the oppressed and for the sake of their faith and the *Panth*. The history of the progress of Sikhism is replete with tales of heroic sacrifices by a long line of martyrs struggling against *Mughals* and *Afghans*, and making a gift of their lives for the cause of 'sovereignty'.<sup>256</sup>

Since Guru Arjan, the millions Sikhs sacrificed their lives in the commitment. The martyrdoms of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh and the countless Sikhs are highly respected in the Sikhs. Behind all the martyrdoms, religious fanaticism was one of the major causes. Since the time of Gurus, the Sikhs are struggling for their sovereign identity. Dharam Singh writes that 'though Aurangzib had nothing personal against Guru Tegh Bahadur, yet both of them stood clearly for ideals in stark opposition to each other – the former for religious exclusiveism and the latter for the freedom of conscience. The severe persecution that the community went through during the eighteenth century when prices were fixed on their heads and

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<sup>256</sup> Chhanda Chaterjee, "The Sikh Tradition of Martyrdom: A Continuum of Four Centuries", *Guru Arjan's Contribution, Martyrdom and Legacy*, Prithipal Singh Kapur and Mohinder Singh, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2009, p. 187.

efforts were made to exterminate them is also indicative of the Sikh stance against religious intolerance and exclusivism'.<sup>257</sup>

In the continuity of Sikh commitment, the creation of the *Khalsa* is a climax of Sikh experience. To follow the words of Guru Nanak, all his successors made efforts to build a divine community. Bhagat Singh writes that 'the last important aspect of Guru Nanak's work was his selection of Bhai Lehna as his successor in preference to his own sons, and his formal installation was the first step in the process which issued in the founding of the Khalsa and ultimately in the emergence of a Sikh nation. During the next two centuries, under the Gurus, the Sikh institutions were mainly the interpretation or extension of Guru Nanak's ideals'.<sup>258</sup>

### **Experience of *Sangat* to *Khalsa* :**

In the courtyard of Guru Gobind Singh, Bhai Gurdas Ji<sup>259</sup> was a poet. He writes that let take the *Pahul* of the double-edged sword and get liberation of life. Guru has transformed the *Sangat* into *Khalsa*.<sup>260</sup> According to him, there were not real priests and followers of religions. There was only complex in society. In the crisis of Hindu and Muslim's religions, Guru Gobind Singh created the third religion *Khalsa* who has the sword in the hand and recites to *Akal Purkh*.<sup>261</sup> Thus, the creation of *Khalsa* is very

<sup>257</sup> Dharam Singh, *Guru Arjan Dev*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2007, p. 7.

<sup>258</sup> Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity: In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Oriental Publishers, New Delhi, 1978, p. 23.

<sup>259</sup> He is known to as second Bhai Gurdas Ji.

<sup>260</sup> *pIE pwhul KMfDwr hoie jnm suhylw[ sMgiq kInI KwlsW mnmuKI duhylw[ Bhai Gurdas, Vaaran: Gian Ratanawli*, Amar Singh Chakar (ed.), SGPC, Sri Amritsar, 2005, p. 436.

<sup>261</sup> *mIr pIr sB Cip gey mjhb Aultwnw[ mlvwny kwjI piV Qky kCu mrmu n jwnw[ lK pMifq bRhmn joqkI ibK isAu AurJwnw[ Pun pwQr dyvl pUij kY aiq hI Brmwnw[*

important to understand the identity of the Sikhs because it is the climax of Sikh identity.

*Khalsa* has created with the ceremony of *Khande ki pahul*. Every religion and spiritual community has some special rite and ceremonies to express the spiritual visions of the people, particularly associated with them. Through ceremonies or rites, they perform their spiritual realizations and make way to touch noumenal in the phenomenal world. The rituals make junction among the sacred process of spheres of a human's internal world. As Hans Mol describes, 'our dominant and most general assumptions has been that this cluster creates the necessity for its own counterbalance in emotionally anchored meaning, integration, and identity. Ritual together with other sacralization mechanisms is thus part of his balancing act'.<sup>262</sup> Sikhs have such rites, which are remarkable and essentials of the *Sikh Panth*.

*Khande ki pahul* is the most relevant ceremony when a Sikh becomes *Singh/Khalsa*<sup>263</sup>. Through this, a Sikh is enrolled as the member of *Khalsa Panth*. We know that every step and movement of a religion is very important on the way of practice. 'There are certainly elements of ritual activities that can be understood

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ieAux dono iPrky kpt mox rc rhy indwnw[ ieAux qIsr mjhb KwlsW AupijE  
prDwnw[

ijin guru goibMd ky hukm isAu gih KVg idKwnw[ iqh sB dustn kAu Cyid kY  
akwl jpwnw[

Ibid. p. 441.

<sup>262</sup> Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred*, Oxford, Great Britain, 1976, p. 235.

<sup>263</sup> '*Khalsa*, from Arabic *khalis* (lit. pure, unsullied) and Perso-Arabic *Khalisah* (lit. pure; office of revenue department; lands directly under government management), is used collectively for the community of baptized Sikhs. The term *khalisah* was used during the Muslim rule in India for crown-lands administered directly by the king without the mediation of *jagirdars* or *mansabdars*. The term "*Khalsa*", however, acquired a specific connotation after Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) introduced, on 30 March 1699, the new form of initiating rites-*khande di pahul* (rites by *khanda* or double-edge sword).

Ganda Singh, '*Khalsa*', *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Harbans Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1998, pp. 473-74.

through looking at meanings and symbols. Rituals do involve elements of performance, communication, and repetition, and obvious purpose of many rituals is to create transformations'.<sup>264</sup> The practice of initiation in every religion is different. There are many important meanings behind performing this rite, which project various aspects and dimensions of spirituality. Every act of the rite of initiation is very rich symbolically that can be understood with the essentials and essences of the particular religion.

In Christianity, to initiate a person, the rite of baptism is performed. About initiation Mircea Eliade gives an observation that 'the term initiation in the most general sense denotes a body of rites and oral teachings whose purpose is to produce a radical modification of the religions and social status of the person to be initiated. In philosophical terms, initiation is equivalent to an ontological mutation of the existential condition. The novice emerges from his ordeal a totally different being: he has become "another". Generally speaking, there are three categories or types, of initiation - Puberty rites, secret cults and Shamans and medicine men'.<sup>265</sup>

It means, initiation has the spirit to change anyone. Christianity, as we see, performs three types of rite of initiation. This rite is called baptism. 'John baptized Jesus, like others who came to him, in the waters of the Jordan, but manifestations of the Father and Holy Spirit during Jesus' baptism give it a completely new dimension. Baptism as the gift of "a bath of regeneration and renewal; the baptismal water is at once the water of death in which the old, Sinful man is immersed and the water of life

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<sup>264</sup> Malory Nye, *Religion: The Basics*, Routledge, London & New York, 2003, p. 146.

<sup>265</sup> Mircea Eliade, "Initiation", in *Encyclopedia of Religion* (vol. 7), Mircea Eliade (ed.), Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1987, p. 226.

from which he emerges renewed. Every detail of the Christian ritual is intended to symbolize birth to a new life in Jesus Christ: nudity (at least for men) during immersion; conferral of new names on the neophytes, who are also given new, white garment; imposition of the sign of the cross, understood as the seal (sphragis) and dispensation of a drink of milk and honey to the newly baptized'.<sup>266</sup>

Therefore, we see some specific symbols are present in Christian baptism such as water, sin, new birth, nudity, white garment, milk, honey etc. These symbols direct towards spiritual symbolism that is full of mystical experiences. In Islam, there is no rite of Baptism to be seen. 'The only allusion to baptism in the Quran if found is Surah ii.132: "(we have) the baptism of God?" the word here translated baptism is sibghah, lit. "dye", which, the commentators al-Jalalain and al-Baizaw, say, may, by comparison, refer to Christian baptism, "for", says al-Baizawi, "the Nasara" (Christians) were in the habit of dipping their offspring in a yellow water which they called al-Mamudiyah and said it purified them and confirmed them as Christians'.<sup>267</sup> Islam is the last religion of Semitic tradition of religions which faiths upon the prophets and scriptures of Judaism and Christianity. It also projects the symbolized death through baptism.

In Hinduism, the initiation of a neophyte is to take *diksha*. The life of a Hindu is divided in four stages (*ashrams*<sup>268</sup>) according to Vedic literature. J.P.S. Uberoi observes

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<sup>266</sup> Michel Meslin, "Baptism", in *Encyclopedia of Religion* (vol. 2), Mircea Eliade (ed.), Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1987, p. 61.

<sup>267</sup> Thomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, Cosmo Publication, New Delhi, 1977, p. 36.

<sup>268</sup> "The *asramas* are four in number: (1) the *brhmacharya* – that of a student, (2) the *grihastha* – that of a married man, the house-holder, (3) the *vanaprastha* – that of retired life in the forest, after abandoning the home, preparatory to complete renouncement of worldly relations, and (4) the *samnyasa* – the life of complete renunciation of worldly relations and attachments".

that 'the candidate intending to attain renunciation must first go on a pilgrimage to find a guru, who should be a Brahmin; and then the latter on his part, satisfies himself as to his fitness and proceeds to initiate him. The neophyte commences with the *shraddha* (obsequies) to his ancestors to fulfill his obligations to them. He next performs the sacrificial *baji hawan* and gives away whatever he possesses, severing all connection with the social world. His beard, moustaches and head are entirely shaved (*mundan*), retaining only the scalp-lock (*shikha*), and the sacred thread is put aside. He then performs the *atma-shraddha* or his own death rites'.<sup>269</sup>

The ceremonies of *diksha* and *mundan* are performed by Jainism and Buddhism also when a devotee of these faiths take entry into the religion. The yogis also follow *mundan* at the time of initiation. They wear *mudra* in the ears and known to as *Darshani*, *Kanphatta* and *Naths*. 'In *Jogi* initiation the neophyte (*chela*) is first made to fast completely for two or three days. A knife is then driven into the earth, and the candidates vows by it not to (a) engage in trade, (b) take employment, (c) keep dangerous weapons, (d) become angry when abused, and (e) marry. He must also scrupulously protect his ears, for 'a *Jogi* whose ears were cut used to be buried alive, but is now only excommunicated'. The neophyte's scalp-lock is removed. He bathes and is smeared with ashes, then given other clothes to wear, including the *kafni* (shroud). The guru-mantra is communicated secretly, and on probations his ears are pierced and

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Pandharinath H. Prabhu, *Hindu Social Organization: A Study in Socio-Psychological and Ideological Foundations*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1963, p. 84.

<sup>269</sup> J.P.S. Uberoi, *Religion, Civil Society and the State*, Oxford, New Delhi, 1996, p. 6.



ear-rings inserted by the guru or an adept'.<sup>270</sup> Thus, these are the different types of initiations in Hinduism.

*Khande ki pahul* in *Sikh Panth* or *Amrit* is the higher spiritual stage to initiate a being. '*Pahul* or *Amrit sanskar*, is the name given in the Sikh tradition to the ceremony of initiation. The word *pāhul* or *pahul* is a derivative from a substantive, *pahu* – meaning an agent, which brightens, accelerates or sharpens the potentialities of a given object. In the history of Sikh faith, the initiation ceremony has passed through two distinct phases - from the time of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder, upto 1699, *charanamrit* or *pagpahul* was the custom. *Charanamrit* or *pagpahul* meant initiation by water touched by the Master's toe - the *charan* and *pag* both being equivalent of the word 'foot'.<sup>271</sup>

*Amrit* is the Divine element, which has been blessed by the Guru. Guru Nanak got the *Amrit* from *Akal Purkh*.<sup>272</sup> In the conceptual philosophy of *Guru Granth Sahib*, it is the Divine Nam of Ultimate One.<sup>273</sup> By partaking it, one can cross the fear of death. The whole *Bani* of *Guru Granth Sahib* is *Amrit*. He, who enshrines in his heart the immortalizing *Gurbani*, begins to meditate on the Divine Nam. Mcleod makes a comment on the production of *rahit* (code of conduct of *Khalsa*) and tries to find some differences between the practice of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. As he writes

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>271</sup> Taran Singh, "Pahul", in *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol.III), Harbans Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1998, p. 263.

<sup>272</sup> hAu FwFI vykwru kwrY lwieaw ] rwiq idhY kY vwr Durhu Purmwieaw ]  
FwFI scY mhl Ksim bulwieaw ] scI isPiQ swlwh kpVw pwieaw ]  
scw aMimRq nwmu Bojnu awieaw ] gurmQI KwDw rij iqin suKu pwieaw ]  
FwFI kry pswAu sbdu vjwieaw ] nwnk scu swlwih pUrW pwieaw ] (SGGS;150)

<sup>273</sup> gurmuiK sbdu pCwNIaY hir aMimRq nwim smwie ](SGGS;29)

that 'pre-1699 sources do little to complicate the issue because there is little in them which one identifies as typical *Rahit* material. Attention has frequently been drawn to an apparent difference in the spirit and general approach which evidently distinguishes the practices of the tenth Guru from the teachings of the first (the so called 'transformation of Sikhism')... *Rahit* is recognizably a product of the latter period'.<sup>274</sup> McLeod does not know that the understanding of Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak demands the heads from his devotees and challenges the religious orthodoxy and cruelty of state. *Khalsa* is not a simple movement but a product of whole practice performed by the Gurus. Here it is important to note that McLeod is a historian. Methodological, he does not know that how to understand a religious phenomena. It is fact that Guru Nanak has laid down the foundation of Khalsa. All the Gurus used the name "Nanak" in their own *bani*. It is clear that it is the thought and vision of Guru Nanak, which has been practiced through the various bodies of Guru. Therefore, the actions of Guru Gobind Singh cannot be unplugged from Guru Nanak. Both are same in the Sikh vision.

Before the ceremony of *Khande ki pahul*, to initiate a neophyte the rite of *Charanamrit* was being practiced. In this rite, the water was touched to the toe of the present Guru and it was given to neophyte to drink. But, the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh on the day of *Baisakhi*, completed the Sikh identity by the creation of Khalsa. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh say that 'on the Baisakhi day, March 30 of 1699, he called a big meeting at Anandpur. When all were seated, he drew out his sword and cried, 'Is there anyone here who would lay down his life for dharma?' At this the whole assembly

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<sup>274</sup> W.H. McLeod, *Exploring Sikhism: Aspects of Sikh Identity, Culture and Thought*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, p. 128.

was thrown into consternation; but the Guru went on repeating his demand. At the third call, Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore, rose from his seat and offered himself... He came out with the dripping weapon and flourishing it before the multitude asked again, 'Is there any other Sikh here who will offer himself as a sacrifice?' At this Dharam Das, a Jat of Delhi, came forward and was taken into the enclosure... In the same way three other men stood up one after another and offered themselves for the sacrifice. One was Muhkam Chand, a washerman of Dwarka; another was Himmat, a cook of Jagannanth; and the third was Sahib Chand, a barber of Bidar'.<sup>275</sup>

At that time, a large section of the society had marginalized by the upper caste people. They were ruling and acting the supremacy upon the poor. Unfortunately, Hindus were following the rigidities of casteism and Muslims had social stratification. Hegemonically, the people of upper classes were suppressing others and enjoying the power. Caste was a social division but lower caste people generally belonged to lower class. The experiences of the class can be understood in the words of Frances Angela that 'class for me was labour, a lack of social rights and the heavy weight of servility which harnessed me to the whims, desires and uses of others. If I have to think of one word that could work as a motif of this experience it is confinement'.<sup>276</sup>

It was such that the people had lower caste identities in the compatibility of the upper class. Everywhere, they had become mere creatures. They had no place in politics and the matter of the state. However, Guru has given them new identity. Their

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<sup>275</sup> Teja Singh Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2006, p. 67.

<sup>276</sup> Frances Angela, "Confinement", in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1990, p. 72.

old identities have replaced into new. There was a need of new identity because 'identity is a matter of considerable political significance, and is only likely to be advanced when both the necessity and the 'impossibility' of identities, and the suturing of the psychic and the discursive in their constitution, are fully and unambiguously acknowledged'.<sup>277</sup>

Guru Nanak says that if there is a dishonor in life, it is morally wrong to eat anything.<sup>278</sup> After demanding the heads from the audience, within some time, Guru appears on the stage in front of the gathering Sikhs, with his five beloved ones adoring new appearances. The five wore new blue clothes, and fully armed. As Prof. Puran Singh explains 'the Blessed Five were as full-armed soldiers in appearance, with the tresses of each tied in a knot of disciple Dharma gathered on the crown of the head and covered by a graceful turban; and they wore a kind of half-trousers. From within, the Master's tent came out a new incarnation of the disciple, a new face of the Saint-soldier who had accepted death in love. It was a moment of creation whose full fruition requires the lapse of aeons'.<sup>279</sup>

The steel-vessel full of water was brought and Guru recited the various *Banis*. At the time of recitation, the *Khanda* (double-edged sword of pure steel) was being moved in the water. *Khanda* is the most relevant here. It is not simply just a weapon. It has so many dimensions of the transcendent and mundane world. Sirdar Kapur Singh says that the *Khanda*, which was used by Guru Gobind Singh at the day of Baisakhi, March 30,

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<sup>277</sup> Staurt Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs identity", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Staurt Hall and Paul du Gay (eds.), Sage Publications, London, 1996, p. 16.

<sup>278</sup> jY jIvY piq lQI jwie ] sBu hrwmu jyqw ikCu Kwie ] (SGGS; 142)

<sup>279</sup> Puran Singh, *The Book of the Ten Master*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p. 78.

1699 and now, is in Anandpur Sahib, reflects the dimensions of Bodhisattva, Manjusri and Gita also. He writes that, 'Saddharmapundarka, ch. I, where the Bodhisattva, Manjusri, is described as "bearing a double-edged sword, that clean discriminating weapons." There is remarkable likeness between the double-edged sword preserved at Takhat Kesgarh, Anandpur Sahib as the identical sword....., shown as held in the right hand of bronze padmasana image of Manjusri sculptured in Java, in the seventh century, now preserved in Berlin Museum. It is reproduced in Grunwedel's Buddhist Art in India, which has been translated into English by Gibson, 1901, p. 200. Compare this esoteric significance of the double-edged sword with the exhortation of Guru Gobind Singh to the Khalsa bidding them to "take up the sword of the true knowledge in hand and destroy the illusion and ignorance of the mind, from the very roots". Also compare with the Bhagavadgita: with the sword of true knowledge cut out the roots of the nescience and perplexities that invade the mind'.<sup>280</sup>

Kapur Singh interprets the *Khanda* in the essences of True and Ultimate knowledge, which is the highest quest, and actual aim of the human as per the way of *Sikhi*. Within this, we see the Samurai warriors had a double-edged sword. It was their traditional weapon and they were also the protectors of the Kings of Japan. They were very adept in the hand to hand fighting with sword. This sword was honorable for them, which they got from their ancestors. The movie/documentary *The Last Samurai*<sup>281</sup> projects the vision in its starting that ultimate power moved the sword and in the end, the two drops fall on the earth. One of them was Japan, but they didn't

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<sup>280</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *Parasaraprashna: The Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, GNDU, Amritsar, 2001, p. 3.

<sup>281</sup> Edward Zwick (director & producer), *The Last Samurai*, 2003.

discuss about the second drop. It means according to the tradition of Samurai, who are the followers of Zen saints (the peak of Buddhism) presents that Japan was born from sword. In the vision of Guru Gobind Singh, first and foremost, *Akal Purkh* created the *Khanda* and then generated the whole world. He says that, 'The Lord first created *khanda*, the double-edged sword and then this manifest world. Having created Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, He created the entire play of *qudrat* (manifest world)'.<sup>282</sup> It means *Khanda* projects the multi-dimensionality of the creation and creator. To take a *Khanda* in the hand means understanding of both worlds.

Similarly, water is also very important in *Amrit*. Water plays an amazing performance in the initiation ceremony in all the religions, when they baptize a neophyte. The documentary, *Water: the Great Mystery of the Universe*<sup>283</sup> tells us that water has memories. It has the magnetic frequencies, which preserve the countless experiences and realizations of the human memories. Every sound/music/vibration influences upon it heavily. Through feelings and emotions, water creates stunned and extra-ordinary result. The Eastern and Western philosophies, both regard it as an important element of creation. And *Guru Granth Sahib* says about water that;

'the first of living thing is water,

Whereby is each object sustained'.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> KMfw pRQmY swijkY ijn sB sYswr Aupwieaw[  
bRhmv ibsnu mhys swij kudriq dw Kylu rcwie bNwieaw]  
Rattan Singh Jaggi and Gursharan Kaur Jaggi (eds.), *op. cit.* (vol. i), p. 314.

<sup>283</sup> Lex Lang (director), *Water: the Great Mystery of Universe*, Intention Media, Voice Entertainment.net, 2008.

<sup>284</sup> pihlw pwNI jIAu hY ijqu hiraw sBu koie ] (SGGS; 472)

The Western thought accepts the four elements of creative process of the universe creation such as water, fire, earth and air. M. Night Shyamalan directed a beautiful movie; *The Last Airbender*<sup>285</sup>, which teaches the lesson of 'acceptance'. In this movie, when the angel of air seems feeble and could not make concentration, then he goes to water-land. There the teacher of water-philosophy tells him that the major attribute of water is acceptance. It gives place to you for releasing your motions as such.

The water has supra-consciousness and multiple dimensions. Jean Rudhardt states that 'water often assumes a feminine character. The *Apsarasas* of India and the Greek Naiads and Nereids, are young women caught up in erotic adventures. But water can also be masculine. "They rest on sperm, as Varuna rests on the waters", says the Brhadaranyaka Upnisad 3.9.22. to the Greek poets, the heavens send rain, like seed, to the earth, in an amorous outburst. The Egyptian god of the floodwaters of the Nile - Hati, the dispenser of life - is androgynous, and Nile is imagined as half man and half woman. Its water are father and mother. In Greece the rivers are strongly masculine, and like the gods of the storm and of rain, have the attributes of a bull'.<sup>286</sup>

Thus, the water has so many attributes, which project it as the power. Due to this, it has been respected as God in various traditions of faith. Psychologically, the water's mind faculties are uncountable. The science has not been able to trace these till now. However, the spirituality knows about it very well. The prophets of religion give

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<sup>285</sup> M. Night Shyamalan (producer & director), *The Last Airbender*, Paramount Pictures & Nickolodeon Movies.

<sup>286</sup> Jean Rudhardt, "Water", in *Encyclopedia of Religion* (vol. 15), p. 356.

blessing through this as per their own way. 'Water can be ambiguous. As a fluid, it can symbolize a pure absence or as yet still amorphous material that will be used by the gods. It may fulfill a positive function. It bathes, dissolves, and purifies. It symbolizes a generative or life-giving quality, very similar to creative power. It is thus divine and sacralizing'.<sup>287</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh chooses the way in the *Hukam* of *Akal Purakh*. When Guru was preparing the nectar of immortal, the wife of Guru comes with sugar-plums. Prof. Puran Singh says that 'the Nectar was ready as he had just finished the chanting of his *Mantram*, when the Mother of his disciples came with sugar-crystals and stood waiting before the Master. "Welcome, good lady!" said he, "power without sweetness of soul means little. Pour the gift into the Nectar, so that our disciples may be blessed not only with power but with the grace of a woman-sweet soul". And the Mother thereupon sweetened the Nectar'.<sup>288</sup> The incoming of Mata ji and her contribution to prepare the *Amrit* states that women play an important role in Sikhism. *Khande ki pahul* has three main features. First, the initiation process is rather different from the other faith. Second, the objective of *Amrit* is to live on this earth with dignity and in the service of whole creation but other faiths have motive to disconnect the person from this planet. Third, *Khalsa* (who has blessed by *Amrit*) is the responsible person and fights for justice and equality. He loves the cosmic and luminous world.

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid, pp. 357-58.

<sup>288</sup> Puran Singh, *The Book of the Ten Master*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p. 78.



When the Guru was preparing *Amrit*, at that time every moment and action was in cosmetic vision. *Khanda*, round-able vessel, water, sugar-plums, chanting *Bani* creates the sacred music. Through the initiation of *Khande ki pahul*, a Sikh becomes *Khalsa*. Guru Gobind Singh gave right to the five beloveds to perform this ceremony. Therefore, five blessed beloveds can do this ceremony under the supervision of *Guru Granth Sahib*. Guru Gobind Singh had created *Khalsa* and he had gifted five special features, *Kakars* {*Kesh* (unshorn hair), *Kangha* (comb), *Kirpan* (sword), *Kara* (steel bracelet) and *Kacchehra* (long breech) which are the symbols of distinct Sikh identity.

### **Symbols of Sikh Identity:**

Keeping uncut hair is essential for a *Khalsa*. In *Guru Granth Sahib*, there are many references towards cosmos beauty and importance of the hair. For example, *Akal Purakh* has long hairs. The hairs are like fans which are for whisking upon the saints. Every single hair meditates on the name of Lord.<sup>289</sup>

Unshorn hair is an essential part of Sikh *rahit*. In *rahitnama* literature, there are compulsions to keep hair intact and strict prohibition to cut the hair. *Tankhahnama Bhai Nand Lal*<sup>290</sup>, *Rahitnama Prem Sumarag*<sup>291</sup> and *Rahitnama Bhai Chaupa Singh*<sup>292</sup> state

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<sup>289</sup> sohNy nk ijn lûmVy vwlw ] (SGGS; 567)  
 kysw kw kir bIjnw sMq cAuru FulwvAu ] (SGGS; 745)  
 kysw kw kir cvru Fulwvw crN DUiV muiK lweI ]  
 romy roim roim romy mY gurmuiK rwmu iDawey rwm ] (SGGS; 443)

<sup>290</sup> kMGw donAu vkq kr  
 pwg cunih kr bWDeI ]  
*Tankhahnama Bhai Nand Lal*, in *Rahitname*, Piara Singh Padam (ed.), Kalam Mandir, Patiala, 1974, p. 45.

<sup>291</sup> isr kys rzKY, dUir n krY, Bdr nw krY ]  
*Rahitnama Prem Sumarag*, in *Rahitname*, Piara Singh Padam (ed.), Kalam Mandir, Patiala, 1974, p. 128.

<sup>292</sup> gurU kw isK kysW dI pwlNw krY[ do vkq kMGw hovY ]

that keep the hairs and comb them twice a day. Don't perform the ceremony of *Bhaddar*. Sainapat was a great poet in the court of Guru Gobind Singh. He is also the first biographer of Guru Gobind Singh. In his *Sri Gur Sobha*, he insists upon *Khalsa rahit* very much. For him, *Khalsa* is the greatest creation of the world and Guru is the cover-shed of the whole universe. He is against the ceremony of *Bhaddar*. In this ceremony the persons cut their hair on the time of any death and also at the moment of initiation. He explains that Guru directs the Sikhs to avoid *Bhaddar*. Although the parents have died, there is no need to cut the hair. *Bhaddar* must not happen in omission also. Follow the sermon as truth.<sup>293</sup> Sainapat says that who neither smokes nor cuts the hair of the head and beard; he is the true Khalsa of the Guru.<sup>294</sup> In the love of Guru Gobind Singh, Bhai Nand Lal writes that, 'my faith and action, both are prisoners of the fairy-faced. The present and the here - after weigh less than a single hair of my Beloved'.<sup>295</sup>

The Sikhs keep the hair with respect and in a cultured way. We see that in the *rahitnamas*, there is a clear mention about the combing of hairs twice a day. It also highlights the selection of *dastar* (turban). The *kesh* are very mystical and have much relation to spirituality. Prof. Puran Singh says that, 'Don't you know these tresses of ours are the wandering waves of the sea of illusion? Guru Gobind Singh gathered the waves of the Ocean of Consciousness as the mother gathers the hair of the child. What is man but an ocean of consciousness. The master washed them, combed them and

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*Rahitnama Bhai Chaupa Singh*, in *Rahitname*, Piara Singh Padam (ed.), Kalam Mandir, Patiala, 1974, p. 80.

<sup>293</sup> Sainapat, *Sri Gur Sobha*, Ganda Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1996, p. 80.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid*, p. 81.

<sup>295</sup> dIno dunIaw, dr kmMid aW prI ruPswr mw[  
hr do awlm, kImiq Xk qwir mUey Xwir mw]  
B.P.L. Bedi, *The Pilgrim's Way*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p. 5.

bound them in a knot as the vow of the future manhood which shall know no caste, no distinction between man and man, and which shall work for the peace and amity of spiritual brotherhood. He who wears His knot of hair is a brother to all men, freed of all ill-feeling of selfishness'.<sup>296</sup>

The unshorn hairs are the symbol of unique Sikh identity. The turban and the unshorn hair constitute the symbol of uniqueness. In the world, there are various faiths, traditions and many historical personalities, icons and models; but Sikhs keep the hairs in their own way. As G.S. Sidhu says that the Sikhs must not be worried about the people of other religions that they keep their hairs or not. Because the Sikhs did not decide to keep their hair on seeing other religions, rather these are the part of their religious identity. Of course, the hairs are natural gift to the human but for Sikhs; these are the blessings of Guru and the stamp of *Sikhi*. To follow the message of Guru in practice, it is the holy duty of the Sikhs.<sup>297</sup>

*Kangha* (comb) has the spiritual importance in Sikh faith. In the Indian spiritual tradition, mostly the hairs of the angels, prophets, god and goddesses are unshorn. On the other hand in the practices of Indian ascetics and certain monastic order, hair seems to be in matted conditions. They do not care for their body and its parts, in the meditation. But we saw in the above discussion of *Kesha* that Sikhs respect their hair and they always keep it neat and clean. Combing of hair, twice a day has been mentioned in the *Rahitnama* literature.

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<sup>296</sup> Puran Singh, *The Spirit Born People*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1999, p. 45.

<sup>297</sup> Gurmeet Singh Sidhu, *Sikh Pachan Vich Kesan Da Mahatav*, Adab Parkashan, Patiala, 2008, p. 98.

Puran Singh said about the hairs that these are the waves of consciousness.<sup>298</sup> Bhai Vir Singh in his poetry expresses the inner experiences. To symbolize these he uses the metaphors of *Bijliyan De Haar*, *Leheran De Haar* etc. To control the flashes of religious light, Guru gifted a comb to the Sikhs. Maulana Hamid Shayar Kalandar in *Khair-ul-mjalis* informs us that Baba Shaikh Farid had a comb. He tells a *Sakhi* about Shaikh Farid ji that once a Sufi saint came to Baba ji and at the time of valediction, the Sufi demanded a comb from Baba ji.<sup>299</sup>

The *Sakhi* indicates about the Sufi desire of *zabat* (equilibrium). The demand of *kanghi* has been fulfilled at the time of Guru Gobind Singh when the Sufi saint Pir Buddhu Shah demanded the *Kangha* after the war of *Bhangani*. In the love, Guru Gobind Singh gifted the *Kangha* and also half of his turban. Avtar Singh tells us about the degrees of human consciousness that the journey of human's I Quo (intelligent quotient) to E Quo (emotional quotient) and S Quo (spiritual quotient). According to him, the uncombed and open hair of the poets, painters, filmmakers and sculptures tells us about the beauty of openness and intemperance. In the way of E Quo, the consciousness of a human doesn't cling in *Seva* (service). In the aura of S Quo, the beauty (*suhaaj*) transforms in equilibrium (*seheja*). The *Kanghi* is the symbol of beauty and the *Kangha* is the symbol of equilibrium.<sup>300</sup>

*Kangha* creates the balance and controls various dimensions of mind and others. In the battle of *Chamkor*, once a Sikh came to Guru Gobind Singh and said that my

<sup>298</sup> Puran Singh, *op. cit.*, 1999, p. 45.

<sup>299</sup> Pritam Singh, *Sreshat Goshtan*, GNDU, Amritsar, 1974, p. 48.

<sup>300</sup> Avtar Singh, *Sikh Saintan*, Arsee Publishers, Delhi, 2009, pp. 30-31.

arrows are missing the target. Guru Gobind Singh asked him that did you comb the hairs at evening. The Sikh remembered that he had not, as he had no time to comb in the evening. The *Sakhi* expresses that the *Kangha* covers the human tendencies and the layers of mind.

Every *Khalsa* must keep the sword (*kirpan/khanda/sri-sahib/bhagauti/kharag/teg*) obligatory. In the previous pages, it has discussed the various dimensions of *Khanda*, the double-edged sword. One meaning of the *Kirpan* is blessing with honour. At the front of *Kirpan*, there is actually no enemy. *Kirpan* just blesses upon the *jiva* and gives the emancipation from evil spirit. The *Kirpan* symbolizes the light of true knowledge. It cuts the darkness of nescience. The *Khalsa* was born through the double-edged sword. The Sikh experience of sword is also such as Ultimate Almighty. In the *Dasam Granth*, *Shashtarnammala* explains the various names of the weapons which symbolize the *Akal Purkh/Waheguru*. According to this, *Akal Purkh* is *tir/ass/kirpan/khanda/kharag/tupak/tabar/talwar/teg* etc.<sup>301</sup>

Due to the codification/conceptualization of *Sant-Sipahi*, the Sikh way of life about war and peace is different from others. A Sikh uses the *Kirpan* for defence as well as offence. The Sikh experience of *Teg* describes to create the balance on the earth. Due to this, in the Sikh realizations, concepts such as *Miri-Piri*, *Deg-Teg*, *Sant-Sipahi*

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<sup>301</sup> as ikRpwn KMfo KVg qupk qbr aru qIr] sYP srohI sYhQI XhY hmwrY pIr]  
 qIr quhI sYhQI quhI quhI qbr qlvwr] nwm iqhwro jo jpY Bey isMD Bv pwr]  
 kwl quhI kwlI quhI quhI qyg aru qIr] quhI inSwnI jIq kI awju quhI jgbIr]  
 Rattan Singh Jaggi and Gursharan Kaur Jaggi (eds.), *op. cit.* (vol.3), p. 402.

and *Sangat-Pangat* perform in a parallel manner. A Sikh raises the *Kirpan* when all the means are finished.<sup>302</sup>

The iron bracelet on the right wrist of a Sikh symbolizes the whole spirituality of the universe. The iron, pure steel is the preventer from evil spirits. The earth, sun, moon etc. are round in shape and the planets move around the sun in circles. In *Shurti* experiences, we see the *Chakarvarti*, who moves around to pursue the dharma. The *yuga* experience of time is also in circles. *Satyuga*, *tretha*, *dwaparr*, *kulyuga* come again and again. In *Kurkushetra*, the battlefield of ancient fighters *Kauravs* and *Pandavs*, there is a temple, which signs that you will come back here after 5000 years. The Hindus believe that life is in circle, which they want to cross through the *chakarvarti*. The Buddhists also establish the *Dhammachakka* to pursue their religion. In the present human consciousness, it is for the first time that the Sikh Guru tells us that no one knows when the earth came into existence. The wise men of the universe do not know about the creation of universe and what the date, day, month, season was exactly. Only and only He (the creator) knows about it.<sup>303</sup>

Before Sikhism, every religion laid a claim about the creation of the universe. But the Sikh experience denies it and explains that there is no beginning or end. The *Kara* shows this. Kapur Singh says, 'A circle, a chakra, is a perfect figure, all-inclusive in its circumference and without a beginning, without an end, in its structure. Symbols like

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<sup>302</sup> cUM kwr aZ hmh hIlqy dr guZSq[ hlwl asqu burdn b SmSIr dsq]  
Ibid. p. 678.

<sup>303</sup> iQiq vwru nw jogI jwNY ruiq mwhu nw koeI ]  
jw krqw isrTI kAu swjy awpy jwNY soeI ] (SGGS; 4)

the circle, the disk, the cube, Carl Jung explains, have been considered symbols of wholeness, perfect divinity. So must a Sikh aim to be God-centered, with the whole creation as the objective of his compassion and activities'.<sup>304</sup>

The iron bangle covers the *Dhammachakka* and *Chakarvarti* experiences. In the right hand, it directs a Sikh to move on the right path. The spiritual experienced being can raise the sword perfectly otherwise, the sword becomes the reason of cruelty. The iron-bangle takes hold on the hand to think the path of truth, which is gifted by Guru.

*Kacchehra/Kachh/Kachha*, a short drawer covers the genital organs and the thighs upto knees. It is obvious that when the body of a person goes through the meditative/mystical/spiritual experiences, it realizes the experiences of nature and universe. Due to this, the monastic and ascetic experience covert a devotee from nudity, for example *Degamber* in Jainism, Naked saints of India, Sufis like Sarmad in Islam etc. But the Sikh experience achieves a state of equilibrium (*Sahaj*) in this life. According to Gubhagat Singh, 'The *Sahaj* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is simultaneously enlightened thought, quintessence of knowledge, manifestation of light (jot) and *Sahaj Samadhi*. It is listening to the *anhad dhuni* (unstuck/ceaseless sound)... *Sahaj* is an ecstasy-giver or *kalalan*. But this ecstasy is a combination of transmittal bliss and knowledge that arises from being with *Waheguru*, the Guru of Wonder. The "sexo-yogic" joy of the tantric *Sahaj*, and the rise of the *Kundalini* in the *daswan duar*/tenth door integrating *Siva-Sakti*. The moon and the Sun of the Hath Yoga, has been

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<sup>304</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *op. cit.*, 2001, p.109.

transformed into the joy and sacred meeting with the Guru of Wonder. It is a sense of "Bismad".<sup>305</sup>

The Sikh *Kacch* is the symbol of civilized way to live on this planet. No doubt, the Sikh Gurus within their innumerable efforts carried on the process of civilization. 'The Sikh religion, on the other hand postulates social organization as the necessary context in which the Sikh way of life must be practiced. It conceives of the *summum bonum* as gradual enrichment and enlargement of human personality through a systematic cultivation of human values. It, therefore rightly repudiates this ascetic ideal based on the *Sankhya* system of which *digambara* nudity is the primary characteristic. The wearing of the *kaccha* is indicative of this repudiation'.<sup>306</sup>

Thus, Symbols are the projection of unsayable experiences, things and secrets. Symbols are different from signs. 'The sign is interchangeable at will. It does not arise from necessity, for it has no inner power. The symbol, however, does possess a necessary character. It cannot be exchanged. It can only disappear when, through dissolution, it loses its inner power. Nor can it be merely constructed; it can only be created. Words and signs originally had a symbolic character'.<sup>307</sup>

The symbol by its inner power has the secrets. Every symbol has its distinct meaning but in different traditions, regions, faiths, culture, it may be different also. The religious symbols have their distinct attitudes, tendencies and meanings. Paul Tillich

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<sup>305</sup> Gurbhagat Singh, "The Concept of Sahaj: A Transpoetic View", *Sri Guru Granth Sahib: The Sikh Scripture*, (ed.) Jaspal Singh, K.K. Publication, New Delhi, 2010. p. 53.

<sup>306</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *op. cit.*, 2001, pp. 112-13.

<sup>307</sup> Paul Tillich, "The Religious Symbol", in *Daedalus*, Vol. 87, No. 3, *Symbolism in Religion and Literature*, 1958, p. 4.



says that 'the fact that religious symbols are distinguished from all others in power of expression and immediacy, can be explained only by the fact that it pertains to the soul, and this also holds for the soul of a culture, must be defined precisely by the relation to the unconditioned transcendent. When this "soul" - apart from all objective, empirical relations - expresses itself, it does so religiously. It is in this context that the connection between the vital and the culture elements in the "soul" can be understood'.<sup>308</sup>

Religious symbols have the power to explain and connect the transcendental world with this mundane world. The connection between symbols and identity is very important. Every religion has their own symbols. Their symbols explain their identity. It does not matter that any symbol may be having different meanings in different traditions. For example, in Christianity, snake is the symbol of Satan but in Hindu tradition, it is worshiped. So, different symbols have their different experiences that project their own faith.

Significantly, symbols are very authoritative in every tradition of faith. Through symbols, every mode of realization and thought reflect the unseen and inner experiences. There are so much correlation among myth, ritual, spiritual and symbols. Due to much relevance, the study of symbols has become a major part of world academics especially in religion, psychology, history and cultural studies. About the importance of symbol, Malory Nye says that 'in each case the symbols are important because of their specific culturally determined meanings. A Christian may know why the eucharist or mass is important and the place within that ritual of bread and wine is

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<sup>308</sup> Ibid, pp. 8-9.

symbolic of the 'body of Christ' - because they have some ideas that lie behind it. Likewise a Hindu may take for granted the significance of ghee in sacrificial Vedic ritual. Looking at another's symbols, however, the substances may appear meaningless (and sometimes even repulsive), because we have no idea of their meanings'.<sup>309</sup>

Symbol gives the meaning according to the praxis of that age which is being practiced in its unconscious world. There memory is also very important because symbols are the way to memorize the past. In religion and the study of religion, the symbols of any religion give the sacred and secret meaning of their religiosity. The thinkers of religions confess that spiritual experiences and realizations of a person cannot be said directly. Due to this, experienced spirits/bodies use the symbols to say the unsayable things. For example, Islamic thinker Faridudin Attar in his masterpiece *Mantikutair* through the conferences of birds explains the seven valleys of spiritual world.<sup>310</sup> For spirit, he uses the symbol of birds. The processes of spiritual realizations are much different from the imaginative thoughts because in the whole writings of the prophets and holy persons, the mind is rejected at the first stage. When a person realizes the experiences of inner world and the metaphysical things/place, to describe these, he finds and chose the symbols from his/her tradition/culture/civilization etc.

Symbol is not an object. Sirdar Kapur Singh says, 'A symbol is different from a thing in so far as it has meaning also, while a thing has mere utility and no meaning. A

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<sup>309</sup> Malory Nay, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>310</sup> Faridudin Attar, *Mantikutair*, Gurdit Singh Premi (trans.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1995.

symbol must have a meaning, primarily, but it may be a thing of utility also'.<sup>311</sup> Symbol plays a very vital role in religion. 'Every sentiment, every ideal, every institution associated with the phenomenon of religion, be it noble or ignoble, subsists in an atmosphere of symbols. It is through symbols that religions survive in our midst and through symbols that we gain access to the religious life of past or alien cultures'.<sup>312</sup>

So, the intimacy between religion and symbols makes the hub of conscious and unconscious experiences. Symbols are very important in the *Khalsa* identity. *Kakars* are the main symbols of *Khalsa*. These symbols are the tokens of love, blessed by the Guru to the Sikhs. In Sikh *Panth*, *Khalsa* is the representative entity. *Khalsa* is the climax of the Sikh identity. His experiences, outlook, praxis and such, are much distinct rather than others. He seems clearly distinct among the thousands people of other traditions, beliefs and faiths.

At the time of creation of *Khalsa*, Guru Gobind Singh states that the *Khalsa* will wear the five symbols which are mandatory for him. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh explain that 'they (Khalsa) were to wear the same signs<sup>313</sup>, all beginnings with the letter K: long hair (kesh), a comb (kangha), a pair of shorts (kacchha), an iron bracelet (kara) and a sword (kirpan). They were to have a common surname, Singh or lion. Bravery as much as peace and purity, was to be their religion'.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 97.

<sup>312</sup> James W. Heisig, "Symbolism", *Encyclopedia of Religion* (vol. 14), p. 208.

<sup>313</sup> May be, these authors have not attention about the difference between sign and symbol. We have already discussed that there is much difference between signs and symbols.

To more details see – Paul Tillich, *op. cit.*

<sup>314</sup> Teja Singh Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

Prof. Puarn Singh says that, *Sache Patsah* (Guru Gobind Singh) blessed his beauty to his child *Khalsa*, blessed the sword, blessed the *kara*, *kachh*, *sword* and *kangha*, blessed the *kes*, blessed the horse to ride, blessed the supra-consciousness, blessed the everything and said that surely I shall meet you in my own form, keep it my remembrance, it is my worship and love. These things are mine not yours. I know that you don't know about these, you are not aware, but keep the deposit.<sup>315</sup> It means Guru knows about the relevance of symbols that have been coined by him. It is also very notable that the symbols have specific meanings. They must be interpreted according to the particular tradition, in which they have emerged in their own way. For example, snake in Christians is the symbol of Satan but in the Hindu tradition, snake is respected and worshiped.

Thus, the five 'K' explores the meaning, which directly seems distinct rather than other. The Sikh experience accepts the truths of other traditions and gives them a new meaning, interpretation and a way of path. JPS Uberoi says, 'The primary meaning of the five symbols, when they are taken together, lies in the ritual conjunction of the two opposed forces or aspects.... The aspect of assertion and aspect of constraint combine to produce what we may call for want of a better word the spirit of affirmation in history and society, characteristics of Sikhism as an example of modern non-dualism'.<sup>316</sup>

The five symbols or *Kakars* are the highest signs of the distinct Sikh identity. Although before the administration of *Khalsa*, the Sikhs were practicing the life

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<sup>315</sup> Puran Singh, *Khalse Da Aadarsh*, Gurmukh Singh (ed.), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2010, p. 126.

<sup>316</sup> JPS Uberoi, *Religion, Civil Society and the State*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1996, p. 13.

distinctively but these symbols made them clearly distinct from others. Niharranjan Ray says that, 'be that as it may, one can hardly doubt the hypothesis that these symbols worn externally, differentiated them socially from the Hindus and the Muslim alike. They also seem to prove that, symbolically speaking, they illustrate the Sikh concern for achieving a harmonized balance between negation and acceptance'.<sup>317</sup>

The *Khalsa* must avoid the four transgressions;

1. Dishonouring the hair;
2. Eating the meat of an animal slaughtered the Muslim way;
3. Cohabiting with a person other than one's spouse;
4. Using of tobacco.<sup>318</sup>

And the *Khalsa* must boycott following people;

1. Anyone maintaining relation to communion with elements antagonistic to the *Panth* including the minas (reprobates), the *masands* (agents once accredited to local Sikh communities as Guru's representatives since discredited for their faults and aberrations), followers of Dhirmal or Ram Rai, et. al., or users of tobacco or killers of female infants;
2. One who eats/drinks left-overs of the unbaptised or the fallen Sikhs;
3. One who dyes his beard;
4. One who gives off son or daughter in matrimony for a price or reward;

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<sup>317</sup> Ray, Niharranjan, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>318</sup> *Sikh Reht Maryada: The Code of Sikh Conduct & Conventions*, SGPC, Amritsar, 2002, p. 38.

5. Users of intoxicants (hemp, opium, liquor, narcotics, cocaine, etc.);
6. One holding, or being a party to, ceremonies or practices contrary the Guru's way;
7. One who defaults in the maintenance of Sikh discipline.<sup>319</sup>

### Conclusions:

1. Sikh identity takes its real form through the institutions. *Guruship* is the most important institution for Sikh Identity. Guru Nanak created *Dharamsala/Gurdwara*, the major institution of the Sikhs, which is a center of Sikh spirituality. The Sikh principles take practical shape in *Gurdwara*. Sikh experience of *Nam, Dan, Isnan, Sangat, Sewa, Simran, Langar* and *Pangat* makes an empirical paradigm of Sikh identity.
2. *Sri Harmandir Sahib* is the unique model of Sikh *Gurdwara*. *Sri Harmandir Sahib*, situated in Amritsar (the holy tank) is the place of emancipation from all the evils. The structure, formation, archetype and vision of *Sri Harmandir Sahib* refer to a unique formation of Sikh identity. The four doors of *Sri Harmandir Sahib* indicate the Sikh vision of equality and plurality.
3. *Sri Akal Takht* in front of *Sri Harmandir Sahib* is the symbol of Sikh religio-socio-political Sikh identity. It is also the symbol of Sikh sovereignty. It creates an awakening in a Sikh, whom is not under any spatial power; instead, he has a direct link with *Akal Purkh* (the timeless Being).

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid, pp. 38-39.

4. Commitment of the Sikhs in history projects the divine practice of the Sikhs. The uncountable martyrdoms of the Sikhs show the commitment toward Guru. The *Khande ki pahul*, which created the *Khalsa*, is the climax of Sikh identity. A Sikh is blessed through the ceremony of *Khande ki pahul*, which has been blessed upon by Guru Gobind Singh on the day of *Baisakhi* 30 March, 1699.
5. *Khalsa* is the Sikh, *Gurmakh*, who is expressed in *Guru Granth Sahib*. *Khalsa* seems distinct not only due to its outlook, which has been beautified within five k's (*Kesh*, *Kangha*, *Kara*, *Kirpan*, *Kachhehra*) but also due to its amazing practice. To keep these symbols, a Sikh seems distinct and on the other hand, these symbols realize him for his ultimate mission and duty on this planet. Within these symbols, a Sikh makes the connection with his Guru and memorizes his Divine Word. He is the *Sant-Sipahi*, who is responsible and dutiful for the world civilization and society.
6. *Ardas* is the climax combination of *Gurbani*, *Sangat*, *Seva*, *Simran* and *Kirtan*. It memorizes the whole practice of the Sikhs because it explains the great martyrdom, bravery and fighting tradition of the Sikhs. It expresses the whole memory, devotion, commitment, sacrifice and love towards Guru/God/Waheguru. The structure, content and vision of *Ardas* also make it distinct as compared to other traditions of faith.

## **Chapter IV**

### **The Sikh Identity: Mediations in Religious and Historical Paradigms**



We have observed that the faith in *Akal Purkh*, commitment with Guru and the institution of *Gurdwara* and *Sangat* play a central role in the formation of Sikh identity. In this chapter, we shall try to find out combinations in religious and historical paradigms of the Sikh identity.

### Early Sikh Tradition of Sikh Identity

*Sakhi* experience of Sikh spirituality itself embodies/recollects meta-signs/symbols and has potential to enforce these in the present. It acts as a support to understand the various dimensions of the inner experiences of a devotee/seeker. *Sakhi*, on one side crosses the limitations of the time and space and on the other hand projects the transcendental experiences in the mundane world. When Guru Nanak receives spiritual enlightenment, he enunciates that there is neither Hindu nor Muslim. Actually, Guru Nanak has given an insight that they have gone astray from the realizations of *Ilhaam*<sup>320</sup> and *Sharuti*<sup>321</sup> experiences. Guru Nanak gives the signs of the realizations of *Shabad* through *Bani*. Guru Nanak is the first Guru of the Sikhs and according to the Sikh faith the next nine Gurus are embodiment of the light of Guru Nanak. As *Guru Granth Sahib* says that;

‘The proclamation concerning Lehna by Nanak was now spread:

The same light permeated him the same praxis –

Only the Master his visible form had changed.

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<sup>320</sup> *Ilhaam* is the revealed experiences, which was done by Prophet Mohammad and the Quran is the revealed book in Islam.

<sup>321</sup> *Sharuti* is also the revealed realizations, which were experienced by the ancient saints of the Hindus and they manifested this through the *Vedas*.

Over Lehna's head waved the immaculate umbrella,

As in the Guru's home on throne he was seated'.<sup>322</sup>

Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh declared that the final and Ultimate Guru, is *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Due to this, ultimately *Sabad* is the Guru in the Sikh realization and experience. Guru Nanak establishes the third path of spirituality. Guru Arjan explains about the distinct mode of the third path clearly. As he says that;

'I observe neither fasting nor the ritual of the Ramdan month:

Him I serve who at the last shall save.

The Lord of the universe of the Hindus and Allah to me are one:

From Hindus and Muhammadans have I broken free.

I perform neither Kaaba pilgrimage nor at bathing spots worship:

One sole Lord I serve, and no other.

I perform neither the Hindu worship nor namaz:

To the Sole Formless Lord in my heart I bow.

We neither are Hindus nor Musalmans:

Our body and life is Allah-Rama's Thus has Kabir preached:

By contact with the Preceptor, the Lord have we realized'.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> lhNy dI PyrweIaY nwnkw dohI KtIaY ] joiq Ehw jugiq swie sih kwieaw Pyir  
pltIaY ]

July su Cqu inrMjnI mil qKqu bYTw gur htIaY ] (SGGS; 966)

<sup>323</sup> vrq n rhAu n mh rmdwnw ] iqsu syvI jo rKY indwnw ]1]  
eyku gusweI alhu myrw ] ihMdU qurk duhW nybyrw ]1] rhwAu ]  
hj kwby jwAu n qIrQ pUjw ] eyko syvI avru n dUjw ]2]  
pUjw krAu n invwj gujwrAu ] eyk inrMkwr ly rdY nmskwrAu ]3]  
nw hm ihMdU n muslimwn ] alh rwm ky ipMfu prwn ]4]

Sikh Gurus created a new called the third path of spirituality. The conceptualizations of Sikh identity such as Ultimate Reality, universe and being are much distinct rather than other faith; while in practice, the foundations of institutions, sacred pools, and the other praxis make a distinct history. But, Harjot Oberoi like McLeod is not ready to accept the Sikh identity in the context of whole unity. He accounts Sikh identity gradually as per historical marching. In his view, Sikh identity is in process. He makes comment upon the above verse of Guru Arjan. As he says that, 'Guru Arjan is only reinforcing Kabir's thought. In the line with a dominant theme in the medieval sant poetics, both Kabir and Arjan speak of rejecting the received Hindu and Muslim orthodoxies, of not taking part in their formal modes of worship and pilgrimage, of finally asserting that the mystery of the Supreme Being is to be resolved in one's heart.....The quest of early Sikh identity is clearly full of pitfalls'.<sup>324</sup>

He also writes that, 'a narrative tradition which represents an image of Nanak in constant flux thus has manifold ramifications for early Sikh-identity. Just as there is no fixed Guru Nanak in the Janam-sakhis, there is no fixed Sikh identity in the early-Guru period'.<sup>325</sup> Oberoi observes that the early Sikh identity was unfixed. He also make a statement upon Bhai Gurdas that he is not completely aware about the distinct identity of the early Sikhs. With the reference of an anthology of poetry which was compiled in Rajasthan, he points out the Sikh identity on behalf of the compilation of Guru Granth Sahib. J.S. Grewal says that, 'his insistence on 'unfixed' identity of the Sikh Panth does

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khu kbIr iehu kIaw vKwnw ] gur pIr imil Kuid Ksmu pCwnw ] (SGGS;1136)

<sup>324</sup> Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, Oxford, New Delhi, 1997, p. 58.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid, p. 56.

not appear to be an inference drawn from empirical evidence but a prior assumption. His interpretation of the evidence used becomes forced and far-fetched. The statement that 'identity' of the early Sikh Panth was fluid and unfixed essentially means that the Sikh Panth was not distinct from the 'Hindu' society. This poses the problem defining 'Hindu' society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and of placing 'religious communities' or Panth in that society. But Oberoi does not do this. His conception of the 'Indic' blurs the issue. Consequently, the term 'Nanak-Panth' or 'Sikh-Panth' appears to lose all meaning for Oberoi though it carried a lot of significance for the contemporaries, both Sikh and non-Sikh'.<sup>326</sup>

Bhai Gurdas is completely aware about the Sikh identity. He writes that Guru Nanak made his *panth* distinct.<sup>327</sup> It can never be mixed. 'The way of life of *Gurmukhs* is invaluable. It cannot be purchased; on weighing scale it cannot be weighed. Stabilizing in one's own self and not getting frivolous is his way of life. This way is distinct and does not become defiled even when joined with someone else. Its story is indescribable. This way transcends all omissions and all anxieties. Absorbed in equipoise this gurmukh-way of life gives balance of life. The gurmukh quaffs from the tank of nectar. The end result of lacs of experiences is that the gurmukh never exhibits his ego'.<sup>328</sup> Why did Harjot Oberoi ignore these facts?

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<sup>326</sup> J.S. Grewal, *Recent Debates in Sikh Studies : An Assessment*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2011, p. 112.

<sup>327</sup> kIQosu apNw pMQu inrwlw[

Bhai Gurdas, *Vaaran: Gian Ratanawali*, Amar Singh Chakar (ed.), Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Sri Amritsar, 2005, 16.

<sup>328</sup> muil n imlY amolu n kImiq pweIaY[ pwie qrwjU qolu, n aqulu qulweIaY[  
inj Gir qKqu afoul n foil folweIaY[ gurmuiK pMQ inrol n rly rlweIaY[  
kQw akQ abolu n Boil BulweIaY[ gurmuiK pMQu alolu sihj smweIaY[

Bhai Gurdas describes about the distinctness of *Panth/Sikh/Gurmukh*. About the distinct experiences and practices of a *Gurmukh*, he writes that the person having attained the status of *Gurmukh* in the holy congregation does not mix up with any bad company. The way (life) of *Gurmukh* is simple and enjoyable; he does not enrap himself with the concerns of the twelve sect (of *yogis*). *Gurmukh* go beyond the castes, colours and go about in equanimity like the red colour of betel leaf. *Gurmukh* behold the Guru's school and put no faith in six schools (of Indian tradition). *Gurmukh* has steadfast wisdom and do not waste himself in the fire of duality. *Gurmukh* practice the (Guru) *Sabad* and never forsake the exercise of touching the feet; i.e. he never abandons humility. *Gurmukh* abounds in loving devotion.<sup>329</sup>

In the whole context, we observe the terminology and connotations coined by Guru Nanak and his successors have declared the third path. Bhai Gurdas clearly and insistently announces that in this mundane world, Guru Nanak has coined the new path that is *Nirmal Panth*.<sup>330</sup> Guru Nanak creates the symbol of *Ek oankar* (ੴ) for His faith. There is no doubt that every religion has its own faith, structure and practice, which make it different among the other religions. Dharam Singh writes that 'different religions have genuine differences, for each religion is a different historical

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aimAu srovr Jol gurmuiK pweIaY[ lK tolI iek tol n awpu gNweIaY[  
 ibid, p. 36.

<sup>329</sup> gurmuiK hovY swDsMgu horqu sMig kusMig n rcY[ gurmuiK pMQu suhylVw bwrh pMQ  
 n Kycl KcY[  
 gurmuiK vrn avrn hoie rMg surMgu qMbol prcY[ gurmuiK drsnu dyKNw iCa drsN  
 prsN n srcY[  
 gurmuiK inhcl miq hY dUjY Bwie luBwie n pcY[ gurmuiK sbdu kmwvNw pYrI pY  
 rhrwis n hcY[  
 gurmuiK Bwie Bgiq chmcY[  
 ibid, p. 53.

<sup>330</sup> mwiraw iskw jgiq ivic nwnk inrml pMQ clwieaw[  
 ibid, p. 23.

manifestation of that reality and it presents visions of God, world and humanity from a localized, historically particular perspective. In other words, it can be said that the essence of the Divine revelation is universal but when shared by the receiver-prophet with mankind in a mundane language in a specific historic-religio-cultural context, it acquires limitations as well as the apparent differentiations'.<sup>331</sup>

Guru Nanak through many *Sakhis* gave the symbols of his new path. One of the *sakhis*<sup>332</sup> which describes Guru Nanak's visit to Multan is very important for understanding this phenomenon. In Multan, Guru Nanak was offered a symbolic bowl of milk by the Sufis. They were curious of his path. Guru Nanak replies symbolically and mixes the flower of jasmine in milk. Through this, Guru Nanak was saying that I have my own path like the distinct fragrance of jasmine.

The compilation of *Guru Granth Sahib* is the major event in the formation of Sikh identity. The *Bani* is the scripture of the Sikhs. Therefore, the Sikhs had based their whole life upon the ideology, philosophy and vision of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. *Guru Granth Sahib* teaches the lessons of kindness, liberation, humbleness, love, honour, sacrifice, help to everyone. The conceptualization of *Kirat Kro/Nam Japo/Vand Chhko* shows the hard work, dedication and honest earning in the remembrance of *Waheguru*.<sup>333</sup> It is much important to know that *Guru Granth Sahib* has a distinct place among the scriptures of the world. The verses of *Guru Granth Sahib* have been written by different traditions of spirituality that makes it distinct. When fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan

<sup>331</sup> Dharam Singh, *Guru Granth Sahib: Guru-Eternal for the Sikhs*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2005, p. 82.

<sup>332</sup> *Bhai Mani Singh Wali Janam Sakhi*, in *Janam Sakhi Prampra: Itihasik Drishtikon Ton*, Kirpal Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 2009, p. 421.

<sup>333</sup> hwQ pwAu kir kwmu sBu cIqu inrMjn nwil ] (SGGS;1376)

compiled *Sri Granth Sahib*, 'he included in it certain hymns and poems of God's lovers who had preceded Guru Nanak or were even singing the praises of God in India. Muslims and Hindus alike were thus honoured, provided their songs did not offend the fundamentals of the Guru's doctrine; and the hymns of Kabir, Farid and Namdev were especially drawn upon to enrich the *Guru Granth Sahib*'.<sup>334</sup>

There are distinct features of *Guru Granth Sahib*. It combines the varieties of music, which comes from various cultures, regions and faiths. To unite the people on the point of higher spirituality, Guru worked a pluralistic way within the multi-languages, multi-cultures and multi-faiths. *Guru Granth Sahib* is the beautiful compilation of various forms of music. Kirpal Singh observes that 'there are various strands of spectrum of ragas in the *Adi Guru Granth*. It is not the music of single people. The thirty-one ragas in the *Adi Guru Granth* make symphony of various ragas of different countries and melodies of various regions. Besides this a large number of folk tunes and meters from different regions and localities have been used'.<sup>335</sup>

It is very important to know that *Guru Granth Sahib* is not a Holy Book or Scripture such as others. It is the living Guru of the Sikh. Sikhs practice in the meditation and realization of the presence of Guru. Khushwant Singh explains that 'despite all this, the *Guru Granth Sahib* is not like an idol in a Hindu temple or a crucifix in a church. It is the source and not the object of prayer or worship. The Sikhs revere it

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<sup>334</sup> Duncan Greenless, *The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Madras, 1960, pp. xxvi-vii.

<sup>335</sup> Kirpal Singh, "The *Adi Guru Granth*: A Vision for Universal Religion", in *Guru Granth Sahib: The Sikh Scripture*, Jaspal Singh (ed.), K.K. Publications, New Delhi, 2010, p. 21.

because it contains the teachings of their Gurus. It is more a book of divine wisdom than the word of God'.<sup>336</sup>

*Guru Granth Sahib* is not also the synthesis of different faiths. But, the experiences of *Sikhi* differ from other. Dharam Singh states that 'it, no doubt, accepts plurality of faiths but this acceptance is not passive, rather it is critical. This critical spirit is quite explicit on at least two very vital points. One, the Sikh Gurus are highly critical of any religion and tradition which sanction and safeguard hierarchical division in our social structure.... Two, the Sikh Gurus and the Sikh tradition condemn the religion that mobilizes mass support in the name of religion to actually serve the interests of the contemporary ruling political class. Sikhism is against religion becoming an instrument of political dominance in the hands of the select few'.<sup>337</sup>

The *Guru Granth Sahib* has its uniqueness due to the above mentioned experiences and realizations. Its multi, pluralistic and faith uniqueness makes the distinct disciples of Sikh spirituality, which is also a big component of Sikh identity. As per view of Pashaura Singh, 'the place and the function of the Adi Granth as Guru has inspired Sikhs throughout history in personal piety, liturgy, ceremonies and communal solidarity. It has given them a sacred focus upon which to reflect and in the process discover the meaning of life as Sikhs. It has provided a framework for shaping a

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<sup>336</sup> Khushwant Singh, *Hymns of the Gurus*, Penguin, New Delhi, 2003, p. xxiii.

<sup>337</sup> Dharam Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.



distinctive Sikh identity. Thus the ultimate authority within the Sikh tradition, for a wide range of personal and public conduct, lies in the Guru Granth Sahib'.<sup>338</sup>

*Kirat Kro, Nam Japo, Vand Chhko* is the central idea of the Sikh vision. McLeod says that, 'the teachings of Nanak and his early successors focused on the nam or divine name, a term which we have already noted as the dominant feature of the popular *nam dan isnan* formula. For entire humankind, the fundamental problem is the suffering imposed by the cycle of transmigration. *Nam*, is the sure remedy offered by Akal Purakh, the 'Timeless One' who created the universe and is lovingly watching over it. Akal Purakh, the Creator, Sustainer, dwells immanently in all creation and, because all that exists is an expression of the divine being, his creation represents the supreme manifestation of the nam. The nam is the ever-present and all-pervading presence of Akal Purakh'.<sup>339</sup>

Guru creates new person that is *Gurmukh*. The recitation of *Nam* makes the person *Gurmukh*, which is the ideal person of Guru's vision. The entire creature, living entities, the skies, the universes, the sacred texts and scriptures exist due to the *Nam*.  
As;

'All beings by the might of the Name are sustained.

By the might of Name are sustained continents and universes.

By the might of the Name are sustained the Simritis, Vedas and

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<sup>338</sup> Pashaura Singh, *The Guru Granth Sahib: Canon, Meaning and Authority*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, p. 281.

<sup>339</sup> W.H. McLeod, *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, Oxford, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 8-9.

Purans.

By the might of the Name are sustained the processes of listening,  
enlightenment and meditation.

By the might of the Name are sustained the skies and nether  
regions;

By the might of the Name are sustained all beings.

By the might of the Name are sustained all habitations and abodes.

All by listening to the holy Name find liberation.

Whomsoever by His grace to devotion to the Name He attaches,

Saith Nanak, entering the Fourth State finds liberation'.<sup>340</sup>

The Sikh institutions are the practical form of Sikh faith. *Guruship*, *Gurdwaras* (*Dharamsals*), *Baolies*, *Sangat-Pangat* etc. are the manifestations of the *Bani*. About the character and distinctness of the Sikhs, the writer of *Dabistan-I Mazahib* writes that, 'Guru Hargobind could think of giving practical lessons to his opponents in the battlefield in effective use of the sword. The Sikhs did not observe any Brahmanical taboos about food and drink. There was nothing of the worship ('ibadat) and austerities (riazat) stipulated by the law books of the Hindus (shara'-i Hinduan) among the Sikhs. The Sikh belief in transmigration distinguished them from Muslims, and the Sikh

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<sup>340</sup> nwm ky Dwry sgly jMq ] nwm ky Dwry KMf bRhMf ]  
nwm ky Dwry isimRiq byd purwn ] nwm ky Dwry sunn igawn iDawn ]  
nwm ky Dwry awgws pwqwl ] nwm ky Dwry sgl awkwr ]  
nwm ky Dwry purIaw sB Bvn ] nwm kY sMig AuDry suin sRvn ]  
kir ikrpw ijsu awpnY nwim lwey ] nwnk cAuQy pd mih so jnu giq pwey ]5]  
(SGGS; 284)

insistence on the unity of God distinguished them from Hindus. The followers of Guru Nanak had nothing to do with idols in temples'.<sup>341</sup>

The Sikhs have established their matchless character in this world. Sikh thought gives a universal message and because of this, non-Sikh scholars praise the Sikhs. Historically, the practices of Gurus were unique. Although it was the matter of worship of one God, institutions, respect of the others, honour of the women; though it was the fighting against political state etc. The Sikhs made the *Gurdwaras* where they were living and every *Gurdwara* was open to everyone. In the *langar* anyone can take food.

*Gurdwara*, *Sangat*, *langar* and *Pangat* are interlinked in the Sikh vision and practice. *Gurdwara* relates with Guru, there Guru is present. *Sangat* gathers around the Guru and the *langar* is for the *sangat*. This unique combination creates the Sikh identity. Now, these institutions have become the major projections of the Sikh identity because the whole world respects the Sikhs due to their service of free food and the other facilities for everyone without any discrimination. A Sikh has to be a hard worker and he has to share his earning with others who are not able to earn. Like this, a person can find the way of *Waheguru*. *Guru Granths Sahib* states that;

'Some sing song of devotion, yet of illumination are empty.

The starving mulla makes of his house a mosque.

Others, incapable of earning a living, get ears slit like Yogis;

Practice mendicancy, losing their caste respect.

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<sup>341</sup> Grewal, J.S., *op. cit.*, 2011, p. 116.

One claiming to be a religious teacher, and going out to beg, Touch  
not his feet ever.

Those that eat the bread of their labour and give away something in charity,  
Saith Nanak, truly recognize the way'.<sup>342</sup>

The above account shows that how in the pre-Khalsa period; there were clear elements of distinct Sikh identity. Although McLeod and Harjot Oberoi will not acknowledge this reality but there does not seem any gap between Sikh theory and practice. In the sense of Pierre Bourdieu, who tells us about the habitus<sup>343</sup> of a culture, community and group, which makes them distinct from others, the Sikhs followed their own path.

### The Creation of the Khalsa and Sikh Identity

The creation of the *Khalsa* is a climax in the history of the Sikhs. As a quasar<sup>344</sup> the *Khalsa* is the unique personality of the Sikh identity. The *Nirmalas*, the *Udasis*, the *Seva-Panthi*, the *Sehejdhari* and the *Khalsa* are representatives of the Sikh *Panth*. But, traditionally, due to the guidance and direction of Guru Gobind Singh, the *Khalsa* is the

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<sup>342</sup> igawn ivhUNw gwvY gIq ] BuKy mulW Gry msIiq ]  
mKtU hoie kY kMn pVwey ] Pkru kry horu jwiq gvwey ]  
guru pIru sdwey mMgN jwie ] qw kY mUil n lgIaY pwie ]  
Gwil Kwie ikCu hQhu dyie ] nwnk rwhu pCwNih syie ]]] (SGGS; 1245)

<sup>343</sup> "The habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulating improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus".

Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Great Britain, 1977, p. 78.

<sup>344</sup> "A 'quasar' is a distinct heavenly body distinguishable by its extraordinary radio-action., smaller than galaxies, yet emitting many million times of energy released by any ordinary star. A quasar is incredibly luminous though such stellar objects are estimated to be about 5,300 million light-years away from us, while an asteroid or planetoid is just a junior member of our own solar system, just a little planet".  
Kapur Singh, *Me Judice*, Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2003, p. 30.

eldest son of the Guru who is the main representative of the Sikh *Panth*. Although all of the above *panths* are very respectful in the Sikh *Panth* but the *Khalsa*, in the words of Guru Gobind Singh, is his own form. It has already discussed in the last chapter about the creation of the *Khalsa* on the day of *Baisakhi*, March 30, 1699. *Khalsa* is the ultimate manifestation of the *Dhur ki Bani*. In the history, the *Khalsa* practiced his life according to *Guru Granth Sahib*. For examples, the *Bani* says that;

‘Shouldst thou seek to engage in the game of love,  
Step into my street with thy head placed on thy palm:  
While on to this stepping,  
Ungrudgingly sacrifice your head’.<sup>345</sup>

*Khalsa* in the view of Guru Gobind Singh is that *Khalsa* is my persona exclusive. I reside within *Khalsa* the excellence. The *Khalsa* is my front line dependence. I reside within all time of *Khalsa*. *Khalsa* is my Deity intimate. For me *Khalsa* has the heritagial repute. The yearning and the concern of my quest, *Khalsa* is the evidence of my respite permanent. *Khalsa* is the friend superlative. He belongs of parentage concern care-worn. *Khalsa* is my elegance elite, friendly relation but stout always. *Khalsa* is my brother house-holder that absolves me of burden obviety. *Khalsa* is the life time of my

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<sup>345</sup> jAu qAu pRym KylN kw cwAu ] isru Dir qLI gLI myrI awAu ]  
iequ mwrig pYru DrIjY ] isru dIjY kwiN n kIjY ] (SGGS;1412)

bodied feelahle. He is prime source of my vital persona. *Khalsa* is my guru the most perfect. *Khalsa* is my literal being in total.<sup>346</sup>

In history, we see that in the commitment of Guru, the uncouthed Sikhs sacrificed their lives. On the other hand, Guru has also committed his life toward Khalsa. The martyrdoms of Guru Arjan, Guru Tegh Bahadur, four sons of Guru Gobind Singh and the uncouthed Sikhs show the faith and commitment in Sikhism. Baba Deep Singh, near Amritsar, fought with incredible bravery against the Mughal General. He fought with his head on his hand. Bhai Mani Singh was a very respectful personality in the Guru's court and he also became the chief *Granthi* of *Sri Harmandir Sahib* with the ordinance of Mata Sundri Ji. In the service and love of Guru, he gave his great martyrdom. The executioner of Mughal state cut his body in tiny pieces. It was the true spirit and love of the Sikhs for their Guru which continues. The *Guru Granth Sahib* says that;

'In the seat of superconsciousness was struck the kettle-drum

And the weapon hit the target of the heart.

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<sup>346</sup> Pwlsw myro rUp hY Kws] Pwls h mih hAux krhuM invws] Pwlsw myro muP hY aMg]  
Pwlsy ky hAu bsiq sd sMg]

Pwlsw myro ieSt suihrd] Pwlsw myro kihXq ibrd] Pwlsw myro pzC ru pwd]  
Pwlsw myro suK aihlwd]

Pwlsw myro imqR sKweI] Pwlsw mwq ipqw suKdweI] Pwlsw myrI SoBw SI] Pwlsw  
bMDu sPw sd fIl]

Pwlsw myro sÍjn pirvwr] Pwlsw myro krq AuDwr] Pwlsw myro ipMf pRwn]  
Pwlsw myrI jwn kI jwn]

Pwlsw myro siqguru pUrw] Pwlsw myro sÍjn pUrw]

*Sri Sarabloh Granth Sahib ji*, Singh Sahib Baba Santa Singh Ji Chhianve Krori, Sri Anandpur Sahib, pp. 667-68.

As the hero has taken the field, now is the occasion to wage battle.

The true hero is one who fights in defense of the humble;

Is cut limb after limb, and flees not the field'.<sup>347</sup>

The modern western historians of Sikhism like McLeod could not justify their writing due to their methodological approaches. McLeod tries to find the gap between Sikh and *Khalsa*. Due to this, he understands and writes that before the creation of *Khalsa*, early Sikh tradition was the *Sant* tradition. As he assesses that, 'it was Sant tradition, which provided the basis of Guru Nanak's thought, an inheritance which like Kabir, he reinterpreted it in the light of his own personality and experience. This is not to imply that he should be regarded as in any sense a disciple of Kabir. There is no sound evidence to support the popular tradition that Guru Nanak met Kabir and little to suggest that he knew any of his work. It is however; clear that Sant tradition was by far the most important element in all that he inherited from his past or absorbed from contemporary patterns'.<sup>348</sup>

Historically, McLeod makes demarcations between Sikh and *Khalsa*. For him, the *Rahit* of the *Khalsa* makes him distinct rather than other. He also writes that with the passage of time, the above difference has become inadequate. He says that, 'the *Rahit* lies at the very heart of the *Khalsa* and to be a Sikh of the *Khalsa* one must observe it, at least in a rudimentary sense. Not all who regard themselves as Sikhs would claim to

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<sup>347</sup> ggn dmwmw bwijE pirE nIswnY GwAu ] Kyqu ju mWifE sUrmw ab jUJn ko dwAu ]  
sUrw so pihcwnIaY ju lrY dIn ky hyq ] purjw purjw kit mrY kbhU n CwfY Kyqu  
] (SGGS;1105)

<sup>348</sup> W.H. McLeod, *Sikh and Sikhism: Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, Early Sikh Tradition, The Evolution of the Sikh Community, Who is a Sikh?*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, p. 157.

belong to the Khalsa also, though one should acknowledge that the terms 'Sikh' and 'Khalsa' are becoming synonymous. It is, however, a distinction which deserves to be retained, particularly as so much of this investigation will concern the eighteenth century when many Sikhs in fact did not belong to the Khalsa'.<sup>349</sup>

McLeod do not to assess the spiritual phenomena of the Sikhs, which was generated by the Sikh Gurus. Actually, the *Rahit* of the Sikhs and the *Khalsa* has the base of *Guru Granth Sahib*. McLeod and his team of scholars interpret the Sikh history on behalf of available facts or documents. They did not pay any close attention to the oral and living history, which is manifesting in the experience of Sikh and literature. The philosophy of history is very important to know about any history, which seems missing in the writings of McLeod and his followers. Nicolas Berdyaev says about the philosophy of history that, 'the philosophy of history studies man in the concrete fullness of his spiritual being; psychology, physiology and other spheres of human knowledge study him incompletely in one order of his aspects. The philosophy of history examines man in relation to the world forces which act upon him, that is, in his greatest fullness and concreteness. By comparison all other ways of approaching man are abstract'.<sup>350</sup>

Philosophically, due to the conceptions of time and space, the Sikhs are much distinct rather than being other. It has already discussed in the last chapters about the distinct historical experiences of the Sikhs. To understand the philosophy of Sikh history, Prof. Himmat Singh says that, 'the meta-historical phenomena of the

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<sup>349</sup> W.H. McLeod, *Sikhs of the Khalsa: A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, p. 4.

<sup>350</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History*, George Reavy (trans.), Semantron Press, San Rafael CA, 2009, p. 14.



Shaheedee Fauj, can never be historicised that is why the historiography and historiology in the Sikh way can never be history-oriented but meta-historically recorded. A recorded should not have mentality only, he should be a Surte otherwise he would 'erred' historically. So the people devoid of surte have 'err' but of surte has excelled them all, often in 'accuracy'.<sup>351</sup>

It is important to that the *Sant* tradition of India had dissolved in the main stream of Vedic India after some time. But, the Sikhs have maintain their distinct identity. The *Khalsa* fought for *Dharma* (Divine Cause) according to their Gurus in the *Shabad-Surte* experience. There is no gap between the words and actions of the Gurus. Some historians write that the Sikhs struggled and fought for the land or kingdom. For this, Guru Gobind Singh gave the signs and he was just a spiritual leader. As A.C. Banerjee says that, 'Guru Gobind Singh stressed the need of resistance to oppressive exercise of political power; but he did not specifically repudiate the authority of the Mughal Empire, and he did not formulate the ideal of a Sikh state. However, he prepared the ground for political developments in the eighteenth century...He was the spiritual father of the State established by the Khalsa and raised to political pre-eminence by Ranjit Singh'.<sup>352</sup>

We see here the clear distinction between auto and hetro interpretations which were indicated to us by Kapur Singh.<sup>353</sup> The Khalsa has a direct relation to Akal Purakh, he is himself the Akal Purakh. He must not accept the supremacy of anyone on this

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<sup>351</sup> Himat Singh, "Meta-Historical Treatment to Punjab Historiography", *Punjab History Conference (22<sup>nd</sup>)*, March 25-27, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1988, p. 356.

<sup>352</sup> A.C. Banerjee, *The Khalsa Raj*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1985, p. 28.

<sup>353</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *op. cit.*, 2003, p. 34.

earth. As Rattan Singh Bhangu says that the Khalsa is khuda (Waheguru) himself. His virtues are like God. He never accepted the hegemony of anyone. He just accepts the One Almighty.<sup>354</sup> Also, there is not any difference among the Khalsa, The Guru and the Akal Purakh. As the Sarabloh interprets that who knows about luminous relish of the self, he is the pure spirit. There is not any distance among the Akal Purkh, me and him.<sup>355</sup>

Like this, the Khalsa has the distinct status in the historical age. Khalsa is on the mission of service. It is a gift of Guru to the people of the world. Khalsa shall survive his life for other and to establish the kingdom of truth. In the whole history of Sikhism, the Khalsa is playing a vital role in society. The actions of the Khalsa made a new habit which is going on within the past memories as well as the new achievement. About the marching of the Khalsa, the talk may be understood with the definition of Pierre Bourdieu. As he says that, 'it is just as true and just as untrue to say that the collective actions produce the event or that they are its product. The conjuncture capable of transforming practices objectively co-ordinated because subordinated to partially or wholly identical objective necessities, into collective action (e.g. revolutionary action) is constituted in the dialectical relationship between, on the one hand, a habitus, understand as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past

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<sup>354</sup> KwlsO hovY Kud Kudw ijm KUbI KUb Kudwie[ awn n mwnY awn kI, iek szcy ibn piqSwH]

Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Sri Gur panth Parkash*, Jeet Singh Seetal (ed.), Sikh Itihaas Research Board, Sri Amritsar, 2005, p. 74.

<sup>355</sup> awqm rs jy jwnhI so hY Pwls dyv] pRBu mih mo mih qws mih rMick nwihn Byv]  
*Sri Sarabloh Granth Sahib ji*, Singh Sahib Baba Santa Singh ji chhianve krori, Sri Anandpur Sahib, pp. 669.

experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks'.<sup>356</sup>

## **Raj Karega Khalsa**

Raj Karega Khalsa is the highly enunciated slogan of the Sikh which is recited every time after the *Ardas*. This slogan presents the multiple dimensions of the Sikh identity. 'A work called *Nasihatnama* (code of guidance of advice), professedly the answer given by Guru Gobind Singh to the questions posed by Bhai Nand Lal about what the Sikhs should and should not do. There is a new feature in the *Nasihatnama*. The duties of the Khalsa include being armed, riding the horse, fighting in the front, killing khans and subduing the Turks. The aspiration is clearly political. Significantly, the well-known lines of the Sikh anthem appear in *Nasihatnama*:

*Raj karega khalsa aki rahe na koi*

*Khuar hoe sabh milenge bache saran jo hoe*

The Khalsa shall rule and none shall remain obdurate. Humbled in the end, all shall join (the Khalsa) and only they shall be saved who take refuge (in the Khalsa). Almost certainly, this prophecy comes from the days of Guru Gobind Singh'.<sup>357</sup> To earn the words of Guru Gobind Singh, the Khalsa *Panth* is much responsible. The responsibility of *Sarbat Da Bhla*, Guru gave to the Khalsa.

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<sup>356</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>357</sup> J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs: Ideology, Institutions and Identity*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2009, pp. 34-35.

Modernity had produced two main systems; Capitalism and Socialism. Unfortunately, these two systems could not fulfill the dreams and the promises of the people. Due to these systems, the political powers have become hegemonic. The West could not actualize the Utopia. Guru Granth Sahib gives the vision of counter-hegemonic state on this planet. *Halemi Raj* and *Begampura* are the dreams of the *Khalsa panth* which have been injected in the supra-memory of the Khalsa. To actualize it, the Khalsa is practicing the *raj karega Khalsa*. Guru Granth Sahb says that;

‘Listening to his holy discourse, to the Master I came;

In devotion, charity and holy bathing has he confirmed all.

The whole world, saith Nanak, embarking the boat of truth,

liberation has obtained.

The entire creation day and night worships Thee! With Thy full mind

listen to its supplication.

The whole world I have tested – Thou alone in Thy grace mayst

grant liberation.

Now is the gracious Lord’s ordinance promulgated: None to another

shall cause hurt.

All mankind now in peace shall abide – Gentle shall the governance be’.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> nwmu dwnu iesnwnu idVwieaw ] sBu mukqu hoaw sYswrVw nwnk scI byVI cwiV jIAu  
 ] sB isRsit syvy idnu rwiq jIAu ]  
 dy kMnu suNhu ardwis jIAu ]  
 Toik vjwie sB ifTIaw quis awpy lieanu Cfwie jIAu ] huiN hukmu hoaw imhrvwN dw  
 ] pY koie n iksY røwNdw ] sB suKwlI vuTIaw iehu hoaw hlymI rwju  
 jIAu ] (SGGS; 74)

Bhagat Ravidas ji writes that;

‘The City Joyful is the name of the city – Suffering and sorrow abide not there.

Neither is there worry of paying taxes, nor does any hold property;

Neither fear of punishment for error nor of decline.

This fine place of habitation have I found: Brother ! there weal  
perpetually reigns.

Eternally fixed is the kingship therein: No second or third are there; all are alike.

Every fully populated, famous is the city. Those abiding therein are  
prosperous, opulent.

There people disport themselves as they please – All are inmates of  
that mansion; none bars any.

Saith Ravi Das, the cobbler, freed from all bonds; Whoever of that  
city is denizen, is our friend’.<sup>359</sup>

Dr. Gurbhagat Singh says that there are three main concerns in the 21st century:

(1) Politically, body as an organized and aware being, (2) conceiving counter-

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<sup>359</sup> bygm purw shr ko nwAu ] dUKu aMdohu nhI iqih TwAu ]  
nW qsvIs iKrwju n mwlu ] KAUPu n Kqw n qrsu jvwlu ]  
ab moih KUb vqn gh pweI ] AUhW KYir sdw myry BweI ] rhwAu ]  
kwiemu dwiemu sdw pwiqswHI ] dom n sym eyk so awhI ]  
awbwdwnu sdw mshUr ] AUhW gnI bsih mwmUr ]  
iqAu iqAu sYl krih ijAu BwvY ] mhrm mhl n ko atkwvY ]  
kih rivdws Klws cmwrw ] jo hm shrI su mIqu hmwrw ] (SGGS; 345)

hegemonic state and praxis, (3) to be active for justice.<sup>360</sup> So, the Khalsa can fulfill these dreams because the creation of the Khalsa Panth had been to counter the hegemonies of the evils in the world. To liberate the people from the culture/political/social/economic/religious hegemonies, the Khalsa established the heavenly kingdom on this earth. It was the time of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur<sup>361</sup> in the 18th century and Maharaja Ranjit Singh<sup>362</sup> in the 19th century. The *Khalsa* got the sovereignty direct from *Akal Purkh*. It is the auto-created attribute of the *Khalsa*. There is no mediate between the *Khalsa* and the *Akal Purkh*.

In the distinctiveness form, the *Khalsa* is not in any bondage to create the political sovereignty which is the part of his complete sovereignty. J.S. Ahluwalia explains that, 'through this institutionalized corporate identity, the Guru wanted to create a mighty force in world history - as a temporal vehicle of the Spirit - for introduction of a new societal order, free from evil, injustice and inequity, free from political discriminations and economic disparities, free from creedal exclusiveness. What

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<sup>360</sup> Gurbhagat Singh, *Vismadi Poonji: Punjab Ate Punjabi Di Maulikta*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2010, p. 60.

<sup>361</sup> "In the conquered territory extending over several Mughal *sarkars*, Banda had virtually supplanted the Mughal empire. He heralded the new state by striking a coin, deriving his authority from God through the grace of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. He issued order under a new seal, again invoking the Gurus as the source of prosperity and power. Following the contemporary imperial practice, he initiated a 'regnal era' from the fall of Sarhind. On a more substantive plane, Banda set up his 'capital', both symbolically and metaphorically, at Mukhlispur.....The ordinary people, including 'a lowly sweeper or cobbler', got opportunities for participation in the new political order".

Indu Banga, "Khalsa Ideology and Politics: Banda Bahadur to Ranjit Singh", *The Khalsa and the Punjab: Studies in Sikh History to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Himadri Banerjee(ed.), Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2002, p. 103.

<sup>362</sup> "Maharaja Ranjit Singh endeavoured to usher in an open, pluralistic society characterized by the values of "secularism", justice, liberty and equality. This was a new revolutionary humanistic ethos in the medieval age that otherwise was marked by religious bigotry, communal exclusiveness, sectarian inwardness and compartmentalized value-system. In contrast to the earlier internecine warfare on religio-communal plane, the Maharaja brought in an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence of all faiths ensuring for all the fundamental right to freedom of conscience". J.S. Ahluwalia, *The Doctrine and Dynamics of Sikhism*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2001, p. 81.

was aimed at through the funding of the Khalsa, through the motor force of a new dispensation with a distinctive corporate identity, was the creation of a new world order characterized by pluralism - religious, cultural, economic and political'.<sup>363</sup>

The Khalsa always keeps the vision of peace, love, freedom, respect and equality. There is no explanation in history that anybody had been harmed, discriminated and disrespected by the Khalsa. Guru Granth Sahib states about the respectful identity of everyone. There are many verses in *Bani*, which suggests to a Hindu to be a good Hindu and to a Muslim to be a good Muslim.

It is notable identity of the *Khalsa Panth* that in the whole history, the Sikhs never insisted anyone to be a Sikh. Although the Sikhs ruled over the wide area of south Asia, yet there is not a single example of any atrocity on ordinary and other people. Iqtidar Alam Khan says that, 'some of the families of the Muslim gentry (ashraf) in the Punjab claimed with pride till very recently that their ancestors served in the army of Guru Gobind Singh. One such family of Saiyads of Rawalpindi is reported to have preserved in their possession a manuscript of Guru Gobind Singh's letter to Aurangzeb.... there is only one couplet in the Zafar-nama that may be construed as referring to the chastisement of a particular group for their religious beliefs. These are not Muslims but the 'image-worshipping' inhabitants of the hill states. The relevant couplet would translate into English as follows: 'I have killed the recalcitrant Hillmen who worship images and I am a breaker of images'. This couplet speaks for itself. It

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<sup>363</sup> J.S. Ahluwalia, *Doctrinal Aspects of Sikhism and Other Essays*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2001, pp. 48-49.

does not fit at all with the theory that Hinduism then needed a defender, and that defender was Guru Gobind Singh's Khalsa'.<sup>364</sup>

It has earlier discussed about the *Sakhi* of Multan, where Baba Nanak explained the secret of his spiritual identity. Similarly, when Guru Gobind Singh was born at Patna in Bihar, that day a Sufi saint Saiyad Bhikhan Shah from Punjab did the namaj at the sight of the East. He went to Patna when the Guru was five years old. He presented two bowls in front of the Guru. One was full of water and there was milk in the second. Guru Gobind Singh covered both with his hands and the saint understood mystery that he (Guru Gobind Singh) will protect both traditions of spiritualism, which were prevalent at the time. These traditions were Semitic and Aryan. The actual practice of the Dharma was not being followed, only the rituals have been established by the priest class of both the traditions. Due to this, the imbalance was created in the society by the rulers of the state. They were misusing the religion in their favor and spreading anarchy with hegemonic power. 'The Khalsa Panth, or Guru Panth, was the final answer to the contradiction between unequal power (e.g. between the rulers and the ruled) and the principle of religious equality and plural society enunciated by the Gurus. It was not a conjectural response only... but a structural solution of the problem of the abuse of power. The political intent of the Khalsa, as the Army of God or Dharma was and is to watch over the state and intervene, if necessary through dharma yuddha, to influence

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<sup>364</sup> Iqtidar Alam Khan, "The Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh: Its Soldiers and their Arms", *The Khalsa and the Punjab: Studies in Sikh History to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Himadri Banerjee (ed.), Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2002, p. 30.



and correct it. Dharma Yuddha, as an extension of the principle of service (seva) indeed, is the political ideal or the ideal praxis of the Khalsa'.<sup>365</sup>

Establishment of the holy kingdom in the world is an aim of *Khalsa*. Within due respect of the Other, Khalsa projected the distinct identity of the Sikhs. Not only by its external form, it is also due to its nature, vision and practice. Amarjit Singh Grewal says that it is not just written or verbal form in the Sikh tradition. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur has stamped upon the new pluralistic consciousness of the world to give his life. Aurangzeb wanted to finish the other religion with sword for the establishment of Islam in the whole world but on the other side, Guru Tegh Bahadur challenged this hegemony and insisted upon the distinctness of other religions, faiths and beliefs. With his martyrdom, Guru Sahib has brought out the epistemic change in the world consciousness.<sup>366</sup>

The postmodern approach gives space to present the different identities and respect too. That's why the vision of the Khalsa raj is relevant for the democratic world. In the words of Sirdar Kapur Singh, 'the Sikh doctrine of *Raj Karega Khalsa* is a sane, scientific doctrine and legitimate religious aspiration and to attempt to wean the Sikhs, away from it, is a crime against sanity and Science, Religion and God. To exhort Sikhs to insulate religion from politics and to fall into the fatal error of believing in possibility of a full and genuine religious life without a base of political autonomy and a fulcrum of political power, is an utterly mean, unforgivable thing to do. There is no higher truth

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<sup>365</sup> Bhupinder Singh, "Raj Karega Khalsa: Understanding the Sikh Theory of Religion and Politics", *Punjabi Identity in a Global Context*, Pritam Singh (ed.), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 98.

<sup>366</sup> Amarjit Singh Grewal, "Raj Karega Khalsa", in *Khalsa: A Thematic Perspective*, Gurnam Kaur (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 2001, p. 116.

and more reliable guidance available to mankind than the principles embedded in and implicated by the words, spoken by the 'blessed mouth' of Guru Gobind Singh:

*Raj karega khalsa aki rahe na koe,*

*Khwar hoe sabh milenge bache saran jo hoe.*<sup>367</sup>

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the British state declared annexation. Due to this, in the second-half of 19th century, the Punjab was captured by the Britannia kingdom completely. Under the colonial territory, the crisis of identity spread widely in Punjab. With support of State Christian Mission had become active in Punjab. To begin with, the Christian priests spread the message of Christianity and influenced rich persons of the society and the people who had respect among their folks. In this contrast, three religious organizations came forward to protect their religion and identity. At this time, the Singh Sabha was representing the Sikhs, Arya Samaj the Hindus and Anjuman-i-Islamia the Muslims. These had vast organizational networks scattered over numerous towns in the Punjab. The focal point of their activities was to serve the socio-economic interests of their communities. At the same time, these organizations were involved in defining and asserting the doctrinal basis of their religions. Whereas the resultant proselytizing activities opened debates, preaching generated both intra and inter-communal tension. The development of print culture further accelerated this trend. In fact, press was the most effective medium that was

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<sup>367</sup> Sirdar Kapur Singh, *Raj Karega Khalsa*, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, 2002, p. 16.

deployed by these organizations to assert their respective identities and monitor the activities of each other'.<sup>368</sup>

In the search for identity, the Singh Sabha movement endeavors were appreciable. Singh Sabha, actually, was a reform movement. In this period, there were so many authors of the Sikhs, which were writing literature from various points of views. Bhai Vir Singh, Prof. Gurmukh Singh, Giani Ditt Singh, Prof. Puran Singh, Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, Giani Gian Singh etc. are the most honored and esteemed personalities of the Sikh Panth.

In the last decade of 19th century, Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha wrote the book *Hum Hindu Nahin* in Hindi, later it was published in Punjabi also.<sup>369</sup> He deals the question of Sikh identity in details. If we see the whole situation of the Punjab at that time, it was a colony of the British. All the above movement of various religions consciously/unconsciously followed the colonial thought of British. Due to this colonial thought, various countries of Europe captured the countries of Africa, Asia and America. Highly respected colonial thinker Frantz Fanon says that, 'the colonized, underdeveloped man is a political creature in the most global sense of the term'.<sup>370</sup>

The postulates of colonial thought were a new and different for the Indians, basically. It was in the favor to analyse the whole life on the base of logic. When the British priests preached the Christianity with support of state, the Indian movements

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<sup>368</sup> Amrit Kaur Basra, "The Punjab Press and the Golden Temple Controversy (1905): An Issue of Sikh Identity", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 24, Nos. 4-6, April-June, 1996, p. 41.

<sup>369</sup> J.S. Grewal, *Historical Perspective on Sikh Identity*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p. 81.

<sup>370</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove press, New York, 2004, p. vii.

tried to counter this. There is no doubt that Singh Sabha tried well to reform and remove the counterfeits among the Sikhs. But on the other hand, Singh Sabha preached about the separate identity of the Sikhs rather than distinct.

Bhai Kahan Singh interpreted the Sikh identity as per *quam*. He explains the separate formation of Sikh identity. He seems much aware about the distinct existence of the Sikhs in the multi-faith society. As he says that, 'but a part of the Sikhs in the Army and the education that is now being received, Sikh religion would have been an historical event, only in papers. In His mercy, *Waheguru* has made the Sikhs aware that taking advantage of the present 'benevolent' rule they need to improve their religious and social conditions. And that believing in the sacred *Bani* of the Gurus they can maintain their existence in the world'.<sup>371</sup>

Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha's ideology about *quam* also reflects the political identity, which creates the idea of separateness. The practice of the Sikhs in history makes them distinct. About the battles of Guru Gobind Singh, Dr. M.S. Gill says that, 'Guru Sahib was living in the distinct form. Khalsa Panth was also created as a distinct entity, which was the result of *Parmatam ki Mauj*. The Singhs were very few in all the battles but they were always in victory. It was due to that the Sikhs were intoxicated with higher objectives. They were creating the atmosphere of freedom and without discrimination world for life and society'.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Sikhs...We are not Hindus*, Jarnail Singh (trans.), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2006, pp. 135-36.

<sup>372</sup> M.S. Gill, "Guru Gobind Singh Duara Lre Gye Youddha Da Mahatav", in *Khoj Patrika*, Vol. 48, September 1998, pp. 116-17.

On the other side, Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha relevantly is indicating the signs of Sikh distinctiveness. One of them is interpretation. The book has been read as per identity perspective. In the view of Dr. Gurmit Singh Sidhu, it is right that the crisis of Sikh identity has been presented with arguments in this book but all the arguments are based upon *Gurbani*. So, this book has much importance in interpretation of *Gurbani* because this interpretation has been done as per the angle of Sikh identity. In the starting of the book, to give the answer of the basic question that the Sikhs are not Hindus, Bhai Sahib presents the reference from the Gurbani (1) Na hum hindu na muslamaan (2) Hor fakkar hindu muslmaanea. After this he gives the references from the Vaaran of Bhai Gurdas Ji as vaar 38, pauri 9 and vaar 39, pauri 10. In this line he gives the references from Gian Ratanavali of Bhai Mani Singh and 33 Swayyas of Guru Gobind Singh. In this extension, to the distinctiveness of the Sikh identity, he mentions Rahitnama Bhai Chaupa Singh, Rahitnama Bhai Daya Singh, Gur Bilas, Panth Parkaash and Gurpartap Suruj Granth'.<sup>373</sup>

At that time, the Sikhs tried to develop the institutions and have control upon their heritage. The Sikh organizations such as Singh Sabha, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and Shiromani Akali Dal brought the awareness of Sikh identity. 'The dominant Sikh response to modernity conditioned by the need to enforce clear definition of authority and community in the face of the double challenge of colonialism and of neo-Hinduism. The main purpose impetus behind

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<sup>373</sup> Gurmit Singh Sidhu, "Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha Di Rachna 'Hum Hindu Nahin' Vich Gurbani Di Viakhiya Ate Sikh Pacchan", *Contribution of Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha to Sikh Studies*, Seminar Proceeding Unpublished (24-25 March, 2011), GNDU, Amritsar, p. 210.

this response was to secure permanent control of Sikh institutions in the Punjab. A government within a government was created as the price of a restored acceptance of the British among Sikhs. In the course of the time, the SGPC became the 'authoritative voice' of the Sikhs. As a democratic institution, it has always represented the majority opinion. As such, it has laid the claim to represent the authority of the 'Guru-Panth'.<sup>374</sup>

Thus, in the history, the Sikhs identity seems qualitative rather than quantitative. In the present context, the Sikh diaspora is taking its new shape. Now the Sikhs are spreading in whole world. Consequently, Sikh diaspora is facing new challenges for their identity. Not only Sikhs but also, the other minorities of the world are struggling for their identities. On one side, the technology and globalization has shrunk the world, on the other hand, it has opened a vast area for the talent. Now everyone has time to actualize the self. About the Sikhs, Dr. Muthu Mohan says, 'the Sikh programme is very much actual. It is to achieve a concrete from a real result in the form of a living or a way of life of an individual and society. Thus, travelling from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, one finds the project of Sachiar or Truthful living realised in the Sant-Sipahi (at the individual end) and in the Khalsa (at the social end). It is thus the concrete idea which took birth in the First Guru, becomes an identity in the Tenth Guru and, the Khalsa comes into existence'.<sup>375</sup>

We have observed that *Guru Granth Sahib* is a main source of Sikh identity. Guru is the pivot of the identity of a Sikh. To actualize it, theoretically he put on the ideas in

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<sup>374</sup> Pashaura Singh, "Sikh Identity in the Light of History: A Dynamic Perspective", in *Sikhism and History*, Pashaura Singh & N. Gerald Barrier (eds.), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 96-97.

<sup>375</sup> N. Muthu Mohan, "The Khalsa : Idea and Identity", in *The Creation of the Khalsa and Indian Culture*, Madurai Kamraj University, Madurai, 1999, p. 44.

Guru Granth Sahib which expresses the commitment of a Sikh with his Guru and faith in *Waheguru*. Through Sikh institutions the emergence of social associations, the historical Sikh identity comes forward. The completely Sikh history is the manifestation of *Guru Granth Sahib*.

### **Conclusions:**

1. We have made and attempted to observe the combinations of Sikh theory and its historical practices and we found that there is no gap between Sikh theory and practice.
2. A Sikh leads his daily life according to *Guru Granth Sahib* and takes directions from Gurus life. Guru is a unique paradigm of Sikh identity. It is also the uniqueness that there is no difference between Guru and a Sikh. In history, a Sikh achieves the position of Guru due to his/her commitment.
3. The Guru gives his powers to the Sikhs and the Sikhs show their commitment towards Guru. A Sikh becomes a great warrior, fighter, knight and martyr. In the love of Guru, uncountable Sikhs sacrifice their lives for to maintain their identity.
4. Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikh identity. It has proliferated by his successors and followers as per his vision. *Khalsa* is the climax of Sikh identity, which is responsible for completing the vision of *Guru Granth Sahib*. He is also creditworthy for establishing the *Halemi Raj* and fighting against injustice. *Sangat* runs all the institutions, which are based upon the Sikh theory. *Sangat*

is the *Panth*, which has the right to take decision for the Sikhs as per *Guru Granth Sahib*.

5. Sikhs always tried to interpret their self as per Guru Vision. At the time of late 19th and beginning of 20th century, the Sikhs faced identity crisis. But, the Sikhs reinterpreted their identity as per *Guru Granth Sahib*. It is remarkable that Guru has been the central pivot in all Sikh literature which shows the Sikh faith and commitment.
6. Ultimately, the Sikhs have their faith, love and commitment with their Guru. In history, when the Sikhs faced any problem, they come under the supervision of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. A Sikh always put in his/her best effort to keep the actual identity which has been gifted and blessed by their Gurus.



## Summing Up

The main objective of this work is to understand the nature of Sikh identity. Secondly, we wanted to know about the religious and historical paradigms of the Sikh identity. We observed that in this endeavour, Sikh thought is a base of its religious identity. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is the main source of Sikh thought. Guru Nanak has given a fresh vision of God by conceptualization and actualization of *Wahegur/Akal Purkh*. He creates the Sikh identity through his noble vision and truthful living. In the Sikh vision, ੴ (*Ek Onkar*) is the Ultimate Reality, which is the source of Divine *Nam*. *Nam* is neither monotheistic nor polytheistic concept of God. It is distinct due to its nature and projection rather than other conceptualizations of Ultimate Reality.

Guru shows the true path of living. Through *Sabda*, he teaches the whole paradigms of both life of mundane and transcendental world. In the Sikh vision, *Waheguru*, the Ultimate Reality is only one truth but its multiple interpretations are possible.

Guru creates *Sangat*, which is a community of religious persons. There is no difference between I and you, self and *other*. Rather, *Sangat* teaches the lesson to serve the *other*. *Other* is not antagonistic in Sikh vision, which is appreciable mark of Sikh identity. The Sikhs have their own originalities and a distinct way of life that is very common to all. Anybody can join the Sikh community (*Sangat*) without any discrimination.

The third objective of this work is to understand the historical or practical paradigms of Sikh identity. Guru makes the luminous history. Sikh history is not a linear process. To build a distinct identity, the Guru creates Sikh institutions. The Sikhs recite *Gurbani* in *Sangat* and they realize the presence of Guru in *Sangat*. *Gurdwara* becomes the major institutional Sikh identity. *Sri Harmandir Sahib* and *Sri Akal Takhat Sahib* are the models of Sikh identity, which are the symbols of Sikh spirituality/sovereignty and religio-socio-political combinations. The sacredness, architecture, philosophy, vision and wisdom of these institutions create distinct identity of the Sikhs.

The tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh creates *Khalsa*, which is a real representative of Sikh identity. The creation of *Khalsa* is a climax of Sikh identity. *Khalsa* wears the five blessed symbols (*Kes*, *Kangha*, *Kirpan*, *Kara*, *Kacchehra*) which are the symbols of distinct Sikh identity. Every symbol has its philosophy/ideology and practicality. *Khalsa* takes care of these symbols forever in his life in the Divine memory of their Gurus.

*Ardas* (personal and collective prayer) represents sacred experiences of Sikh identity, which is a part of daily life. It is just not a formal prayer. It is a marvelous practice to recollect the memories of the past. It is the recitation of Divine *Nam* and gratitude for everything. *Ardas* is the crux of the collective experiences of the Sikh history. *Ardas* is the projection of Sikh faith, sacredness, sacrifices, services, martyrdoms etc. The structure and formation of the verses of *Ardas* is unique. It is not only the prayer of Sikhs rather it is a noble act on the behalf and for the humanity.

Finally, this study shows that Sikh theory and practice have sacred relations. The Gurus make it possible by their noble practices. The Sikh history is the practice of Sikh spirit/vision/ideology as per Sikh thought. In history, the Sikhs made the best effort to keep the Divine words of their Gurus and *Gurbani* and it is a perennial practice. A Sikh vows to imbibe *Gurbani* in the daily routine and commits to conduct life in its guidance. *Gurbani* is a spirit of Sikh identity.

## Main Findings

1. The nature of Sikh identity projects the equilibrium state of Sikh mind. A Sikh has not fanaticism and rigidities in his/her life. He/she is the native of this planet with distinct identity. There are three main basics, which describe the Sikh identity as per whole. First, a Sikh identity depends upon faith on Guru/*Waheguru*. Second, magnetic commitment towards Guru makes it a substantial feature of Sikh identity. Third, the institutions like *Guruship*, *Sangat-Pangat*, *Gurdwara* etc. are the indispensable projections of Sikh identity.
2. Guru, the *Gur-Parmesher* is the founder of the Sikh identity. *Guru Granth Sahib* is the sacred source of Sikh identity. Through *Gurbani*, Guru creates the religious paradigms of the Sikh identity. Guru coins the third path of faith by the conceptualization of ੴ (*Ek Onkar*). The conceptualizations of *Sangat*, *Pangat*, *Seva*, *Simran*, *Kirtan* etc. are the major religious paradigms, which are created by the Sikh Gurus. The creation of the *Khalsa* is the climax of Sikh identity.
3. The practices of Gurus and Sikhs show the historical paradigms of the Sikh identity. A Sikh becomes a great warrior, fighter, knight and martyr as per Sikh

thought. Countless martyrdom and the sacrifices of the Gurus and their Sikhs describe the commitment toward the Ultimate Divine.

4. Guru has made such a design of Sikh community that *Sangat* run all the institutions, which are based upon Sikh theory. *Sangat* or *Panth*, which has the right to take a decision in the presence of *Guru/Guru Granth Sahib*. *Khalsa* is responsible to implement the vision of *Guru Granth Sahib* in practice. *Khalsa* is also committed to establish the *Halemi Raj* and *Khalsa* has an aim of fighting against injustice.
5. Finally, we found that the mediations between Sikh thought and practice are unique. In the love of Guru, countless Sikhs have sacrificed their lives to keep the Divine Word of Guru, which is the core instinct of Sikh identity.

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