

# **VEDIC THOUGHT AND SIKH THEOLOGY - A NEW DEPARTURE**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled **Vedic Thought And Sikh Theology - A New Departure** has been completed by me under the guidance of Dr. Paramvir Singh, Department of Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, Punjabi University, Patiala. This thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or its equivalent to any other University or Institution.

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June, 2012

# CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Raminderjeet Kaur** has written the research work **Vedic Thought And Sikh Theology - A New Departure** under my supervision for the Award of the Degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Punjabi University, Patiala. It has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree and that it is her original work done independently. Such material as has been obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged in the thesis.

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# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

According to New Catholic Encyclopaedia, Theology is "Discourses about God either from the point of view of what can be known about Him from the created world by the natural power of reason or from the point of view of a revelation given by God and received by man in faith."<sup>1</sup>

It is the methodological elaboration of the truths of the divine revelation through reason enlightened by faith. According to Christian theology, in revelation God speaks to man, personally inviting him to share His own divine life to protect humanity from sin and destruction. He enables His people to hear His revealing word, whom we call as prophets or seers. Further these enlightened souls transfer this revelation to the masses in the contemporary languages. Thus, scripture of every religious tradition remains the source of theology of that particular tradition. So theology serves the purpose of Hermeneutics of the scripture and it is pre-requisite of the theology that it must be a reinterpretation of the central symbols of a particular religious tradition for the contemporary world. Secondly, a new paradigm for theology must be so formulated that the interpretation of a tradition can no longer be grounded in older, classicist base, but must rely on new foundations that incorporate both past traditions and the present religious pluralism.

Thirdly a theologian must keep in mind emerging globalism and pluralistic world and be ready to answer the problems of upcoming societies on theological grounds because merely abstract, unambiguous or uncertain response would not satisfy the present scenario.<sup>2</sup>

Theologian interprets the truth in the religious classics of a particular tradition for a new situation. Theology attempts to find out the answers to fundamental questions from some of religious dimension in the contemporary situation. Theologians are required to give solution by keeping in mind both the 'situation' and the 'tradition'.

A comparison can be made on the basis of theologies of different traditions which is termed as comparative theology and the proposed study is an effort to compare the theologies of two major religious traditions of Indian sub-continent i.e. Vedic tradition and Sikhism.

Ancient Indian lore is a vast ocean in which, it is held by many a scholar that all the concepts and doctrines under the sky are available and since then nothing new could be added in the socio-religious thought of the ancient thinkers. It is widely felt that Vedic thought and its off shoots Upanishads and Shastras are such a banyan tree of knowledge that all recent Indian religious ideologies and their respective literatures are nothing



but the branches and flowers of that old grand tree having nothing new in them.

However, while accepting the greatness of the medieval religious thought and literature one might feel surprised to think that if this was the factual position then why people could not join hands for fighting the socio-religious oppressions in the medieval period. Why ancient learning could not bind the people to push back the invaders and looters coming to India like a wave after wave. As follows, we will take up some of the relevant points here pertaining to this situation.

Vedas are considered to be the repository of the earliest philosophy of India.<sup>3</sup> All the Upanishads and Shastras are extension of the Rig Vedic thought. Throughout Vedic works speculative philosophy about the absolute Brahman, higher and lower knowledge etc. are discussed but much emphasis is given upon cumbersome rituals of *yajnas* and sacrifices. *Brahmana* part of Vedas consists of elaborate system of sacrifices. Rituals and rites were made so rigorous that a single minor mistake in accent of the *mantra* through out the process was enough to ruin the whole sacrificial activity. Hierarchy of gods and goddesses were set up and man in comparison to these so-called gods was deemed to be too weak to support his own existence. During *Brahmana* period, the scattered monistic ideas in the Rigveda were almost over looked.<sup>4</sup>

The *Aranyakas* marked a shift from emphasis given on rituals to philosophic thought in the Vedas and remote places were suggested for meditation and cultivation of philosophical thinking which later on culminated in Upanishadic literature. Sacrifices got transferred to symbolic representation and now the sacrificial horse got transferred into mind and sun etc.

In the concluding portion of Upanishadic period the great Badarayan Vyas reconciled some contradictory passages in the Upanishads and his *sutras* are known as the Vedanta *sutras* or Brahm sutras comprising sum total of Upanishadic thought. However here also by and large, the disciples were chosen on class/caste basis relying upon one of the hymns in *Rigveda* where *brahmins* are created through the mouth of Purusha and so were at the apex of this creation and hence were only eligible people to get such higher knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

Now the knowledge about Brahman became centre of attraction and purpose of meditation. Various Upanishads including *Isha*, *Kena*, *Katha*, *Prashna*, *Mundak*, *Mandukya*, *Taittiriya*, *Aitareya*, *Chhandogya* and *Brahdaranyaka* etc. offered the vivid and detailed interpretations of doctrines of Vedic theology.

Shankaracharya is considered to be the most effective interpreter of Vedic thought. He not only denied duality between

Brahman and Atman but also rejected concept of Bhagati (devotion) and tried to prove that there is no need of Karma (action), as actions will produce *samskars* which will push *jiva* to take birth in the same world again and again. Advaitism (monism) of Shankara tends to prove Maya as the root cause of delusionary nature of this world and to get out of its dilemma Nivrtti Marga (asceticism) was prescribed by him. Only *Sannyas* and cultivation of knowledge was the aim of his philosophy. His commentry on the Gita also lays much emphasis on knowledge.

However, this was challenged by Bhagati reformers, whose chief exponent was Ramanuj who refuted the doctrines of Shankaracharya and established that devotion is the main aim of life.

Though the medieval period was a period of philosophical discussions about the Jiva, the nature of knowledge and Brahman, but most of the stalwarts of this period were strict adherents of *varnashram* dharma which further produced and deepened sectarian outlook of people and fragmentation of the society.

Simultaneously there were philosophies of Sankhya and Yoga which considered *Prakriti* as all powerful consisted of the three Gunas i.e. *rajas*, *satva* *tamas*, and declared Purusha almost incapable of doing anything while being in the clutches of *prakriti*. Renunciations of three *gunas* of *Prakriti*, and liberation of Purusha

from the clutches of *prakriti* were considered as the aims of human life. For this very purpose Patanjali's *yoga sutra* catching hold of human psychology offered a down to earth line of yogic praxis known as *ashtang yoga* around which *mantra yoga*, *hathyoga* and *kundalini yoga* or *layayoga* also evolved dividing yogis into many sects and sub-sects. Now difficult yogic exercises were invented and remote places in jungles and caves were chosen. Twelve sects of yogis were operating in the medieval period in India. Such individualistic approach gave birth to irresponsible attitude towards society and the yogis though had emerged to fight the evils of caste hierarchy in India, themselves started thinking that they were more superior to all. However they were feared rather than respected.

Buddhism and Jainism belonging to Shramanic culture, were very potent critics of Vedic socio-religious patterns of life. Both revolted against brahmanical Vedic tradition of ritualism and the Supreme Reality. Buddhism considered life as suffering and offered the doctrine of four noble truths entailing the Ashtang Marga for shedding off all sufferings. Monks and Bhikshus, further got divided into Hinyanis and Mahayanis having different view points towards social life. Complete asceticism and extreme Ahimsa became the cause of the fall of Buddhism in India and Jainism also tended to relapse into ritualistic activities which were prevalent in the Vedic life and lore.

Historically seen this subcontinent was invaded at different times from all sides, In the end of fourteenth century before the advent of Sikhism, invaders had devastated India several times<sup>6</sup> and just due to lack of sense of responsibility and togetherness, masses had become mere spectators and poor victims of destiny.<sup>7</sup> To quote Dr. Jodh Singh,

"The story of Hindu butchery starts with the invasion of Sindh by Mohammad bin-Qasim (712 A.D.) who demolished the Hindu temples and put 6000 Hindus to sword at Rewar alone. According to Taj-Ud-Nassir, Qutab Din Aibak (1206-10) demolished 700 temples and replaced them by mosques at Meerut when he conquered that territory. At Banaras he destroyed nearly 1000 temples and raised mosques on their foundations. At Kaityar he put 1,32,000 Hindus to sword and sent 50,000 as captives to Ghajani."<sup>8</sup>

However, no such arrangement was ever done in India to unite the people together and face temporal oppressions with moral as well as physically united force.

Guru Nanak travelled far and wide, saw this malady minutely and conceived the idea of a society in which people could come close to each other. He created many useful and altogether new socio-religious institutions like Sangat, Pangat, Seva and the ethical doctrines of the dignity of labour<sup>9</sup> (*kirat karna*), sharing with others (*vand chhakna*) and remembrance of God (*nam japna*), to concretise the idea of equality among the so-called high strata people and low

castes. Says Guru Nanak - *Ghal khai kichha hathahu dei. Nanak rahu pachhanahi sei.*<sup>10</sup> These institutions became pillars of Guru Nanak's new theology and successor Gurus used them to create such a *halemi raj* (kingdom of gentleness) where every one made efforts together by combining both physical as well as spiritual energies for common purposes - *huni hukamu hoa miharvanu da. pai koi na kisai rajnanda. sabh sukhali vuthia ihu hoa halemi raju jiu.*<sup>11</sup>

Eighteenth Century Misal period is the best example of these efforts of togetherness, where the new theology of Guru Nanak responded to the 'situation' according to the 'tradition' taught to the Sikhs. Sikhs during this period took guidance from their scripture and a new innovative theology emerged where the doctrines of Equality, Unity, Brotherhood, Justice took new shapes. Such were the reasons for which the shrinking boundaries of India could again be stretched up to Afghanistan during this time and especially during the reign of Sarkar-i-Khalsa of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The Gurus lived at a time and in a society where life and liberty of masses was not safe and a multi-dimensional struggle for new society was needed. All the Gurus had shown themselves as model by living the practical life what they had taught to their followers. Guru Angad and Guru Ram Das put forth the power of service and devotion; Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur had set the example of how to die with dignity for a principle.

Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh asked this new emerging society to adopt weapons but to use them only if absolutely necessary for justice and righteous cause.

Every Guru extended and strengthened the theology of Guru Nanak. They created leaders and brave soldiers out of almost dead and powerless population of India. Their doors were open for all those who revolted against in-equality of caste system, female infanticide, practice of Suttee, untouchability etc. The creation and compilation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib was also a wondrous task accomplished by Guru Arjan Dev wherein to make people realise the oneness of all human beings irrespective of caste colour or creed, the Guru collected the voices of truth of Kabir, (a weaver) Ramanand (brahmin), Ravidas (a leather worker) and Namdev (a calico printer) et al. The followers were taught to develop maturity, judgement to realise the dignity of man and further the Gurus added temporal concerns to spiritual development so that the life of man could be a balanced life. The ultimate measure of one's divinity lies in one's humanitarian outlook and not in mere philosophisation of theology.

This work is an attempt to study the theologies of Indian traditions while being detached from personal convictions and is further done from the stand point of theological and philosophical value-judgement.

The study is divided into five chapters. In the first Chapter Introduction Vedic thought and other pardigms around are given, the second Chapter deals with the New Innovative Theology of Guru Nanak, its nature and formulations. In the third Chapter we have analysed the social expression of theology of Guru Nanak through practical implementation in the form of various Institutions. The fourth Chapter shows the effect of the practical implementation of New Theology of Guru Nanak.

Concluding this work through fifth Chapter we have tried to show that there is a marked distinction between the ancient religious thought and down to earth Innovative Theology of the Gurus expressed through the practical ideology of Sikhism.



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# CHAPTER - I

Vedic Lore and Other Paradigms around

## Chapter - I

### VEDIC LORE AND OTHER PARADIGMS AROUND

Vedas are known as antique treasure of the ancient literature and all the Indian philosophical traditions can be easily traced in the Vedas. The word 'Veda' rooted in 'Vid', means 'knowledge', which can be of any object or the way of life. Vedas are not any particular compositions rather they convey the meaning of knowledge which may pertain to anything. However, we know very little about the Vedic times because let alone the history writings, the ancient rishis have nowhere appended even their names to the literature created by them. The period of Vedic literature spreads from three to four thousand years, though it is difficult to decide when the Vedas were created. However, the philosophers like Max Mullar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak stretch their time from 4000 B.C. to 1200 B.C.

It is a well known fact that no record was maintained by the ancient people of their religious and literary works and the Vedas also were carried forward by next generation to generations orally. That is why they are known 'Shruti' also. One more belief is prevalent in Indian society that Veda Mantras were never created by any human being and either they were taught to *rishis* by God Himself or the *rishis* happened to visualize them in their trance (*samadhi*) and hence the rishis are known as the '*mantra drishta*' as well.

Since the Vedic literature represents the complete working of the ancient mind that is why this is essentially a literature having all sorts of diversities in it. Grossly one can divide the whole Vedic literature in four different categories, 'Samhita' is known as the collection of *mantras* and the remaining categories are known as *Brahmanas*, *Aranayaks* and *Upnishads*.

Four collections are available in the Vedic *mantras* and these are: *Rig*, *Sama*, *Yajur*, and *Atharva*. These four collections are called the four Vedas and *Rig Veda* is held as the oldest one. In this collection the compilation of *mantras* pertaining to Agni, Indra, Varuna, Usha, Savit, Vishnu, Rudra, Marut have been done. In *Yajurveda* the compilation pertaining to sacrificial *mantras* has been done and many a *mantra* in this Veda are of the *Rig Veda*, though some of the prose writings of this Veda are also there in. The mantras of this Veda are sung on religious occasions of different sacrifices. Two further collections of this Veda are known as '*Krishna Yajurveda*' and '*Shukla Yajurveda*'. *Shukla Yajurveda* is known by the name of '*Vajsnayi Samhita*' also.

Practically there is not much relevance and importance of *Samveda* because by and large in this Veda the *mantras* from the *Rig Veda* have been repeated to explain that in which exact notation these are to be sung. That is why this Veda is known as 'Book of Chants' also. To alleviate the sufferings and attainment of pleasures many rituals have been defined in the *Atharva Veda*. In this Granth many methods and *mantras* have been given for

the appeasement of the ghosts and witches and that is why this work is known for the exposition of the lower life style of Indian life in the earlier times. For the *Vedic Yajna* or sacrificial activity four main *purohitas* are required; *hota*, recites the *mantras* to eulogise the gods and invokes the presence of the gods for that sacrificial act; to please gods through melodious voice *udgata* sings the *mantras*; *adhvaryu* in fact maintains this whole ritual through set rules and the fourth Brahma who is supposed to be quite adept in the Veda Vedangas takes care of whole of the *yajna*.

The above mentioned four collections are supposed to have been created for the four *purohitas* mentioned above; Rig for *hota*, Sama for *udgata*, yajur for *adhvaryu* and Atharva for Brahma.

### ***Brahmana Granth***

These Granthas explain the *mantras* of the Vedas. In Brahmana Granth the description of the method and required material for Yajna is described in detail. *Mantras* are only poetry but the Brahmana Granthas are prose writings. In the collection of Mantras are prayers for gods whereas in the Brahmana Granthas different methods of performing the Yajnas are given. These Granthas treatises explaining theology of the 'Rik' Samhita and these Granthas are distinctly different having a literary style. These prose writings explain sacred significance of rituals of vedic *yajnas* for those who are not already familiar with them. To quote Prof. Macdonell, "they reflect the spirit of an age in which all intellectual activity is concentrated on the sacrifice, describing

its ceremonies, discussing its value, speculating on its origin and significance.”<sup>1</sup>

These works are full of dogmatic assertions, fanciful symbolism and speculations of an unlimited imagination in the field of sacrificial details. Says S.N. Dasgupta, “The sacrificial ceremonies were probably never so elaborate at the time when early hymns were composed. But when collection of hymns were being handed down from generations to generations the ceremonials became more and more complicated which required the distribution of different sacrificial functions among several distinct classes of priests.”<sup>2</sup> One may imagine that it was a period when the caste system was getting established and sacrifice and elaborate rituals required to engage wise and religious minds who belonged to higher castes only. In fact, speculative thinking and philosophical understanding was thus subordinated to service of the sacrifice and as a result the production of most fanciful sacramental and symbolic system unparalleled anywhere was evolved. The closing period of Brahman treatises is believed to be not later than 500 BC.<sup>3</sup>

Some famous Brahmana Granthas are *Aitreya Brahmana*, *Taitraiya Brahmana*, *Gopath Brahmana*, *Shatpath Brahmana* etc. ***Aranyaks and Upnishads***

When Brahmana Granthas were compiled explaining the details of ritualistic worship, the further development came into being in the form of ‘Aranyaks’ or ‘forest treatise’. One could

imagine that probably these works were composed for old men who had retired to the forests and were thus unable to perform elaborate sacrifices requiring a lot of energy and articles to be used and in the forests the people were unable to procure them as well. Now the great merit was derived from the meditations on certain symbols and for example the *manas* (mind) was taken in place of the horse to be sacrificed (Ashawmedh Yajna).

There are directions for meditating upon the dawn as the head of horse, the sun as the eye of the horse, the air as its life and so on. Dasgupta further holds “This is indeed a distinct advancement of the claims of speculations and meditations over the actual performance of complicated ceremonials of rituals.”<sup>4</sup>

This trend shows that amongst a certain section of intelligent people the ritualistic ideas began to give away and philosophical speculations about the nature of Truth gradually substituted the gross animal sacrifices.<sup>5</sup>

Upnishads are 108 in number but the Chief Upnishads are supposed to be 11 only on which the Great Shankcharya has produced his commentaries. These Upnishads are: *Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundak, Mandukya, Taitiraiya, Aitiraiya, Chandogya, Brahadaranyaka, Shvetashvatar*. In the Upnishads the thoughts pertaining to non-dualism in the Vedas have been expanded and developed. When the Brahman Granthas were in the process of formulation and the different explanations were given of the ritualistic worship, the philosophical thought of the Vedas was almost forgotten by the people.

The meaning of word Upnishad is 'to listen to the teacher by sitting near him'. We all know that in the Brahman Granthas the methodology of the sacrifices is described but in the Aranyaks, the main ideas tell us as to how the original act of sacrifice got transformed into symbolic value system.

In *Brahdaranyaka Upnishad* it is seen that instead of sacrifice of horse the whole of universe has been transformed and imagined as a horse. By this time people started thinking that the real meaning of sacrifice in Yajna is totally dependent on the meditation or Samadhi. Now the rishis started making their disciples understand the importance of meditation and this way Upnishads came into being. Upnishads take people on the way of knowledge whereas the rest of Vedic literature takes man to the way of ritualism.

Detailed discussion about lower and higher knowledge has been taken up in Upnishads and at various places the *rishis* have very boldly declared Vedas, grammar, astronomy, art of pronunciation and similar branches of knowledge as the lower knowledge and have further told that that knowledge is higher which links human beings directly with the supreme being. In Upnishads the whole of the cosmos has been accepted as developed from the supreme Being who Himself is beyond all boundaries of time and space. Supreme element is known as *Sati*, Chitt and Ananda also. Objectively this supreme element is called Brahm and when seen subjectively the same has been



named as Atman. In Upnishads the five layers of human personality have been discussed which are known as Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanmaya and Anandmaya Koshas. Detailed discussions about transmigration and liberation are there in the Upnishads.

### ***Shastras***

Six systems in Indian philosophy are known as Shastras which are *Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshik, Purva Mimansa, Uttar Mimansa* or the *Vedanta*. It is difficult to decide about the dates and sources of these Shastras but one fact is definite that we find a penetrative philosophical inquisitive mind set in these writings. These *shastras* are written in such concise aphorisms, that for understanding them a lot of labour and devotional knowledge is required.

*Sankhya* is the theory concerning the origin of universe and Prakriti and Purusha are main characters responsible for evolutionary creation. One is the plurality of selves called Purusha, and the second is unlimited primal matter called Prakriti. Purusha is considered as pure consciousness but inactive and the second (Prakriti) is unlimited cosmic energy devoid of consciousness. The contact between the two gives rise to world of things and beings. Prakriti is said to be made up of three subtle elements Sativika (Virtues), Rajas (passion) and Tamas (dullness). These three elements enter in different portions into the material composition of all things and beings in the world, making each one different in nature and character.

The cause of soul's misery and suffering according to Sankhya philosophy is its mistaken identification with the body, mind, intellect and ego. The dissolution of identification is necessary for liberation of self from bondage of material existence and as it is not so easy Sankhya suggested true knowledge of the true self as a means of salvation from non-self (comprising body, mind and intellect).

Kapil Muni is supposed to be the author of this *shastra*. The *Yoga shastra* is based on *Yoga sutras* of Patanjali, which have four cantos. The first being *samadhi Pad* dealing with nature and aim of concentration, explaining the means to realize this end. The second *sadhna Pad*, the third *vibhuti Pad* deals with supra-normal powers which can be acquired through Yoga and the fourth one *kaivalya Pad* describing the nature of liberation and the reality of transcendental self.<sup>6</sup> Yoga Philosophy is not only theoretical but practical also which takes care of the final liberation of Purusha through eight fold path. Yoga with the growth of religious and philosophical ideas in Rig-Veda one finds that the religious austerities were generally very much valued. *Tapas* (asceticism)- and *brahmacharya* (celibacy) were regarded as greatest virtues and considered as being productive of the highest power.<sup>7</sup>

As these ideas of asceticism and self-control grew, the force of the growing passions was felt to be as uncontrollable, thus the word 'Yoga' which originally applied to the control of steeds began to be applied to the control of the senses.<sup>8</sup> S.N. Dasgupta further elaborated the idea of connecting Sankhya philosophy with Yoga

with reference to Maitrayani in the conversation of *Shakyayana* and *Brhadratha* “where we find that the Sankhya metaphysics was offered in some quarters to explain the validity of the yoga processes and it seems therefore that the association and grafting of the Sankhya metaphysics on the yoga system as its basis, was the work of the followers of this school of ideas which was subsequently systematized by Patanjali.” According to Patanjali, Yoga does not mean union but spiritual effort to attain perfection through control of the body, senses and mind and through right discrimination between Purusha and Prakriti.<sup>9</sup>

*Nyaya Shastra* belongs to Gotam who considers *purusha* as the efficient cause of creation but does not attribute him the quality of being the material cause. *Vaisheshik* is the creation of Rishi Kanad who counts different categories of matter. Both Nyaya and Vaisheshika are regarded as having similar philosophy. Both are complimentary to each other. Vaisheshika develops metaphysics and ontology and Nyaya develops logic and Epistemology. Both agree in viewing the earthly life full of sufferings as bondage of soul and in regarding liberation which is absolute cessation of suffering as the supreme end of life. Both agree that bondage is due to ignorance of reality and that liberation is due to right knowledge of reality. Vaisheshika takes up the exposition of reality and Nyaya takes up right knowledge of reality.<sup>10</sup> Mimansa’s author Gemini has told that which Mantra is to be recited and which methodology to be used at what type

of sacrifice and Yajna. This Shastra tells that Vedas are not the creation of human beings. It is the doctrine of self validity of knowledge which forms the cornerstone in which the whole structure of Mimansa philosophy is based. It advocates that all knowledge excepting the action of remembering is valid in itself.<sup>11</sup>

*Vedanta* is known after the name of Badrayan Vyas and in this Shastra the various thoughts pertaining to Upnishads have been cleared and reconciled by its learned author. These Sutras are known as *Sharirik Sutra*, *Uttar Mimansa*, *Brahmsutras* and *Vedanta*. The other prominent Vedantic philosophers (Acharyas) are Ramanuj, Madhva, Nimbark and Vallabha.

### ***Puranas***

These are 18 in number namely *Brahm Purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Padam Purana*, *Vayu Purana*, *Bhagvata Purana*, *Naradiya Purana*, *Markandeya Purana*, *Agni Purana*, *Bhavishya Purana*, *Brahmvaivarta Purana*, *Linga Purana*, *Kurma Purana*, *Varaha Purana*, *Matsya Purana*, *Skand Purana*, *Vamana Purana*, *Garuda Purana* and *Brahmanda Purana*.

The number of Shalokas in all these puranas is supposed to be four lakh six hundred and out of these Brahm Purana is the oldest one. In almost all these Puranas cosmology, creation after dissolution, the geneology of sun and moon, gods and great deeds done by the dynasties of sun and moon are described. Because in these *puranas* attractive stories are described, they are also known as Vedas of the masses.

## ***Tantra***

Tantras are also the ancient heritage of Indian subcontinent but in the tradition built by the Vedas, Shastras and Upanishads we find that great commentators and grammarians have flourished and by and large one can hold that they have tried their best to mould the concepts and rituals of the aborigines, directly or indirectly in their own thought frames and in this work they have succeeded also. The biggest example of this enterprise are the Tantra Granthas, which are mostly kept away from general masses by telling people that they are obscene and they pamper low instincts in the human beings. Perhaps that is why the Tantras are even today for most of the readers nothing but paradoxical literature which is just related to magic sorcery and occult powers. Many Indian and foreign scholars have written about the Tantras but whatever could come before the people is that *Tantras* do not teach us more than the supernatural powers and the maximum we know about them is that many a king had tantrics at their disposal for the sake of sex pertaining medicines and elixirs. Very little has been thought about the fact that what was the objectives of the scholars who presented the Tantras in such an abominable shape and in fact what is the meaning of Tantras. Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj, Sir John Woodroffe, P.C. Bagchi, S.N. Dasgupta, Harprasad Shastri, M.P. Pandit, Mercea Eliade and N.N. Bhattacharya, et.al. are such scholars who have deeply studied that heritage which is even older than the Vedas or at

least is a parallel heritage and they have given to the people the right perspective of the *tantra* and its role in the life of the masses. While discussing tantric doctrines Sir Charles Eliot avers that apart from the ceremonial which they inculcate, the general principles of Tantra breath a liberal and intelligent respect. Caste restrictions are minimised; travelling is permitted; women are honoured; they can act as teachers; the burning of widows is forbidden, widow can remarry and murder of women is peculiarly heinous. Prostitution is also denounced. Whereas Christianity is sometimes accused of restricting its higher code to Church and sundays, the opposite may be said of Tantrism. Outside the temple its morality is excellent.<sup>12</sup> A few important names of Tantra Granthas are *Kularnava Tantra*, *Sharada Tilak*, *Mahanirvana Tantra*, *Tara Tantra*, *Hevjra Tantra*, *Rudrayamala Tantra* and *Yoni Tantra* etc.

### **Bhagvad Gita**

Gita also called 'Gospel of Humanity', 'Lord's Song' is the most popular and sacred book of Hinduism contained in *Bheeshma parva of Mahabharata*, the greatest sanskrit epic. It is believed that Arjuna was horrified at the thought that he has to fight with his relatives and friends. When he refuses, Lord Krishna instructs him that it is his duty as a prince, as a warrior, as a righteous man to fight against evil and restore peace and order. Lord Krishna imparted him that soul is indestructible, eternal, immovable, unmanifest, immutable and only bodies are

destroyed, not the soul. Gita tries to build up philosophy of Karma based on knowledge and supported by Bhakti in a beautiful manner. And in the end when the teachings have been imparted the Lord simply says - Do as you please.' In this way Gita represents a unique synthesis of Action, Devotion and Knowledge.

### **SHRAMANIC TRADITIONS**

Religious history of India tells that *Shramanic* tradition was older than the Vedic thought which became prevalent in India with the entry of Aryans into this subcontinent. The seals and coins excavated at Mohenjo-dero and Harappa also tell that long before the advent of Aryans into India many Munis undergoing typical penances were the inhabitants of this land. Some evidences are available in *Rigveda (Keshi Sukta)* also, in which an Aryan holy man looks to be very much full of wonder on looking at a naked Sanyasi with long matted hair.

In *Rigveda*, it is shown that these naked ascetics actually not only belonged to *shramanic* culture but they were in fact native people who were conquered and vanquished by the hordes of Aryans flowing into India through Punjab.

With the establishment of Aryan dominance, it is needless to say that *shramanic* culture of this land had to maintain a very low profile. This culture again emerged in the times of Buddha and Mahavira who were contemporary of each other along with the Upanishadic period. Indian history tells that many Indian kings and Emperors like Ashoka were deeply influenced by the Non-

violence principle of this movement and did their best to spread Buddhism far and wide.

However, as we know that Vedic culture represented the fighting and imperialistic interests of Aryan culture but side by side we can feel proud of Vedic lore in which naturalism, pantheism, polytheism, monotheism, and even monism are abundantly available. Not only this, the Vedic thought envisaged in its texts inspired Govindpada, Gaudpada, Shankracharya of southern India around ninth century and needless to say that the Great Shankracharya upto this day is known as the main representative exponent of Advaita Vedanta. After Shankracharya we see the emergence of great thinkers like Ramanuj (*Vishistadvaitvad*), Madhavacharya (*dvaitavad*), Vallabha (*Shudha dvaitavada*) and Nimbarka (*dvaitadvait vada*). These great scholars and saints have made people even today, proud of their religious heritage which was brought to light by these great men of learning and sterling character.

Later on based on Vedic thought, various commentaries on *Brahmsutras* and the *Gita* etc. were written and further this Vedic thought inspired many others to write upon the Vedic lore.

Punjab was the main centre for the study of Vedic lore and history tells us that around 600 B.C. to 500 A.D. the Taxila University situated in Qandhar province of erstwhile Punjab, was a great centre of education where the students from distant places such as Varanasi, Rajgriha, Pataliputra, Mithila, Ujjain,



etc. would come to learn about the literature, medicines and surgery. It is mentioned in Dhammpada that prisenjit the king of Koshal and a king of Lichhvi dynasty were classmates at Texla. Bimbsara the king of Maghdha sent Jivak Kumar Bharatya to learn about the medicine and the Kapal mochna Vidya (Head surgery). Everyone knows that Kautiliya also known as Chanakya is also supposed to have remained here as Professor of Political Science and from him Chandragupta Maurya learnt the art of militancy and diplomacy.<sup>13</sup> It was Vedic lore which made India known to the whole world. Similarly, the Gita is also a product of Punjab and Vedic lore became the repository of doctrines of Gian (knowledge), Bhagati (devotion) and Karma (action). In this longer hymn the Great synthesis of all these three doctrines was made by Lord Krishna who ultimately prevailed upon Arjun for fighting the atrocities perpetrated by those who were cruel towards the “have nots”. It is the Gita which is also the fountain head of Indian mental make up showing the balance among the attachment, detachment and the righteous action. Hundreds of commentaries were also produced by great scholars on this great text.

Simultaneously Buddhism and Jainism representing the *shramanic* traditions were also emerging. These both religions were based on ethical values and their great exponents, the Buddha and Mahavira were contemporary of each other. Their thoughts were totally opposed to the Vedic violence and excessive

indulgence into ritualistic activities. Buddhism put greater emphasis on individual morality and revived that non-violent culture which was operative here even long before the advent of Aryans. Through their precepts Buddhist disciples not only talked about the religion of kindness, humanity and equality but also through their actions spread their religion which was precisely known after the name of Lord Buddha, Buddhism. Whereas the Vedic tradition sanctioned animal sacrifices to make happy their gods, on the other hand Buddhism stood firmly against such sacrifices. The chequered history of Buddhism puts forth, that, under the influence of Buddhist thought many kings abandoned violence and made Ahimsa (non-violence) as a guiding force of their life. Buddhism pondered upon the freedom from individual and collective suffering and the Bhikkhus of Buddhism after their master Gautama Buddha the Great, discussed about it when they met in their first and second councils at Rajgir and Vaishali. Here Buddhism got bifurcated into two bigger sections known as Hinayana and Mahayana having different views about teachings of Vinaya. They both were preaching Buddhism and authenticated their theories in the name of same Lord Buddha.

Buddhism produced great philosophers such as, Vasubandhu, Sanghabhadra, Kumarlat, Vasumitra, Asang, Dinnaga, Dharmakirti, Nagarjuna, Chandra Kirti et al. These philosophers contributed a lot for the development of Indian philosophy.

When *Huns* invaded India Buddhism suffered a serious setback and by seventh and eighth century A.D. the Vaisanava and Shaiva tradition of Indian subcontinent almost uprooted the Buddhist ideology from India and with the advent of Muslim invasions on India Buddhism was almost fully annihilated and a neo-Hinduism emerged in which many sects and religious groups came to the forefront.

However, one can not deny the fact that it was Lord Buddha alone on Indian soil who simply based on ethics and without the props of God and *atman* could establish such a strong tradition, which though was made null and void in India flourished in China, Japan, Sri Lanka and many other countries of world.

### **SHAIVA AND SHAKTA TRADITIONS**

While discussing Shaiva Sidhanta and history of Tantras Prof. C.D. Sharma and Prof. Kamlakar Mishra both agree that the worship of Shiva or Rudra goes back to the Vedas<sup>14</sup> and the tradition of Tantras (Agamas) enjoys the same status as the Vedas. Glorification of Rudra whose this whole universe has been accepted the manifestation is found in the Aranyakas, Mahabhartta and some Puranas etc. The sacred literature of Shaivas puts forth four schools of Shaivism - Nakulish-Pushupati, Pratyabhijna and Raseshvara. Shaivism is further divided into *Virshaivism*, and *Shaiva Sidhanta*. Vir Shaivism is also known as *Lingayat* which is practised these days in Southern India. Pratyabhijna school or Kashmir Shaivism is known as the representative of *Northern*

Saivism. Kashmir Shaivism is known as most authentic and prominent with regard to interpreting the Tantras and the first name in the history of Kashmir Shaivism is *Vasugupta* who flourished in Eighth Century A.D. He discovered the *Shivasutras* which presents the gist of *Shaiva sadhna* based on non-dualistic philosophy of the Tantras. In Shaiva Sidhanta Shiva is supreme reality and is called 'Pati' or 'Lord' who possesses the attributes of being self existence, essential purity, intuitive wisdom infinite intelligence, freedom from all bonds, infinite grace or love, omnipotence and infinite bliss. As put up by C.D. Sharma, just as "the Potter is the first cause, his staff and wheel are instrumental cause and clay is material cause of the pot, similarly Shiva is the first cause, his Shakti is the instrumental cause and Maya is the material cause of this world."<sup>15</sup> The relation of Shiva and Shakti is known as that of 'Identity' though the *shakti* is the power of the Lord. The Shakti is consciousness, unchanging and eternal energy. In Shaiva Sidhanta the individual souls are called *pashu*, because like cattle they are bound by rope of *avidya* to this world. The bound souls mistake themselves as infinite and limited in the will, thought and action and in liberation are restored to their original nature - the Pati or the Lord. After the removal of bondage the soul becomes one with Shiva and shares His glory and greatness.

In Kashmir Shaivism Shiva is the only reality, "The one without a second." He creates everything by mere force of his

will and He is the Subject as well as the object rather He makes the world appear in himself as if it was distinct from Him, though it was not really so. Shiva in Kashmir Shaivism, is known as the transcendental eternal background of this universe and in the immanent aspect, He is called Vishvatmic having in himself the Shakti conceived as a power of self consciousness by which Shiva manifested Himself as this universe on his own transcental background. His *shakti* has many aspects such as *chit* (knowing), *anandu* (delight), *ichchha* (will), *jnana* (knowledge) and *kriya* (action). Maya in Kashmira Shaivism is neither the material cause of the universe nor the principle of illusion, it is that aspect of power (*shakti*) of Shiva through which He manifest Himself as many. For attaining liberation the recognition (*pratibhijna*) of this reality is essential. A love-sick woman cannot get any consolation and joy even though her lover may be present near her unless she recognises him. The moment recognition dawns she becomes all joy and puts off her all bondages and becomes one with Shiva.

The most important name in history of Kashmir Shaivism is Abhinava Gupta (between 10th and 11th Century) who wrote famous commentary *Vimarshini* on the *Pratibhijna Karikas*. His renowned work *Tantraloka* is a systematic and rational account of the tantric philosophy and religion, wherein one finds that Abhinava Gupta gives a complete picture of the Shaiva thought.

Prof. Kamalankar Mishra in detail has pondered upon the historicity as well as authenticity and the theory that the Tantra

is post Vedic in his work “Significance of Tantric Tradition”. He says “The language of tantrics is post Vedic Sanskrit which was systematized by Panini. Moreover there is an internal evidence, namely, that in Tantra itself there is mention of Veda. All this indicates that Tantra is post Vedic and therefore many scholars guess that the time of Tantra roughly ranges from 1000 B.C. to 500 A.D.<sup>16</sup> There is another theory that the tantric system (Shaivism) originally belongs to Dravidians. Dravidians are considered as original natives of India prior to advent of Aryans.

They are said to have been worshipping Lord Shiva and were following tantric way of life. The Vedas were composed by Aryans who came later. In other words, the Vedas are of the Aryans and Tantras are of the Dravidian and since the Dravidian inhabited India before the advent of Aryans then, the Tantras have to be placed prior to the Vedas. Regarding language of Tantras one could say that the Tantra literature existed in the form of oral and practical tradition from the pre-vedic time and that it was put into writings only later<sup>17</sup> (after the Vedas).

However, it is at least certain that the tantric culture is a part of ancient culture of India and existed side by side with the Vedas. If study of ancient Indian culture may reveal the impact of Tantra on the Indian life, then if not older than Veda, we can accept that the Tantra (Shaivism) is as old as the Vedas.

## YOGA TRADITION

The Upnishadic philosophy tried to prove that the knowledge of the Vedas and its allied literature is the lower kind and is known as the *apara vidya* - lower knowledge. They call only that *vidya*, *para vidya*, or *true knowledge*, which gives direct realisation of Absolute Truth and that is *yoga-vidya* - the spiritual approach to Absolute Truth. This spiritual approach covers those physical and psychical processes which are employed to discover man's Supreme inner essence through *samadhi*. *Samadhi* is nothing but the realisation that the *jivatman* is Parmatman and yoga is not this *samadhi* or realisation, but the means by which it is attained.<sup>18</sup>

Medieval India consists of three types of people of which one were fanatical Muslims, second were orthodox Hindus and third were the yogis, who tended to threat the God fearing innocent Indians with their occult powers. Yogis had emerged on the ground of revolt against the stiff caste classification and orthodox attitude of society, but they too could not maintain any equality among themselves and with other fellow beings. Externally, the yogis struck at the caste system fiercely and rebuked the superiority derived out of it, but internally every follower of the *yoga-marga*, considered himself superior to the low creatures of society. He pitied the extroversion of others, ridiculed them through many complex dialogues and hoped that the people should feel taken

aback after seeing his magical feats. On the other hand, the devoted *bhakta* accepted wholeheartedly the four fold classification of society, and its hierarchy. He obligingly felt himself as a drowning passenger in the world-ocean and repented grossly for the sins committed by him. He was, however, hopeful that the all-pervading God might listen to his cry one day and liberate him from the bondage of the life. Among the yogi and the Bhakta one was proud of his knowledge and the other of his own ignorance. One was confident of his own self, the other relied on Rama. One considered love as a weakness, the other considered knowledge as harsh.<sup>19</sup>

These extremes were the fertile grounds for the suspicions and superstitions in society. People faced a spiritual and social loss and the result was not healthy. Two reactions of this were evident among the common men. A doubt was created in the heart of the devoted householder by the teaching of the yogis. The common man started thinking that maya is horrible, which in no way would free the mortals from bondage and the way of achievement is tedious; the man without yoga practice shall be led to tortures known only to God; God knows how long he would wander in the cycle of transmigration. The world-ocean is devouring us, illusions of maya are infinite and the way of practice (of yoga) is very rough and tough; the batallions of impediments



are there obstructing the way and the lot of the poor householder is bound to be hopeless. on the other side, the *bhakta* had made the common man totally carefree. Even by mistake if anybody happened to recite Hari-nama, he need not do anything else; the gates of heaven are obliged to be opened if once the mark of Vishnu is put on the forehead; if somehow you get the Tulsi beads, your place in *goloka* is reserved. *Kaliyuga* is the best of all the ages because mental sins breed no fruit in it, yet the mental sacrifices bring full harvest of happiness. Ram's name is greater than Rama himself; hence there is no reason for any worry. Yoga left the householder to be more suspicious than required whereas *bhakti* made him excessively optimistic.<sup>20</sup> Tulasi Das is also annoyed when he says that Gorakh gave the call for Yoga and thus forced *bhakti* to run away.<sup>21</sup>

Dr. Radhakrishnan observes that according to the *Vedas* we find it necessary to meditate upon the Divine Light in order to attain sacredness. There is mention of Munis in the olden scriptures and in the *Atharvaveda* it is quite clearly stated that with practice of austerity, supernatural power can be attained.<sup>22</sup> Indians have always remained eager for more and more knowledge and its assimilation in practical life. For this purpose thousands of people devoted their lives to this high deal. Ancient literature is replete with such descriptions of austere life and asceticism.

Mukti being the ultimate aim of Indian philosophy can be attained by two methods. One method takes recourse to knowledge and the other to action. The way of knowledge is a pure intellectual process which pushes man on the way of quietism and renunciation of action (*sanyasa, vairagya*). Yoga on the other hand in the *Gita* is supposed to be disciplined and unselfish activity, which is quite in contrast to quietism or the way of knowledge.

Unfortunately Yoga has been considered as mortification of body (flesh) only, which is not true, rather it was all about the control of body. The aim of Yoga was to set the individual free from *Prakrti*. The highest form of *prakrti* is *chitta* and yoga directs the way through which man can free himself from the bondages of *chitta*.<sup>23</sup>

Yoga gives the psychic power over the physical aspects, solitude, meditation and finally ecstasy is attained.<sup>24</sup>

The *Bhagvad Gita* says that those who lack the higher plane of the intellect, should not be taken away from active life and they should not be confused by the elite. The scholar is urged to get engaged in desireless action and he should inspire others also for the same.<sup>25</sup> But the yogis on the one hand, had bade goodbye to the struggles of life and on the other, prompted many kings also to leave their kingdoms and become Yogis. Raja Gopi

Chand and queen Mainamati of Bengal, Bhartrihari of Ujjain, Puran Bhagat (Chaurangi Nath) and king Rasalu of Sialkot are few examples of those who in spite of being kings and queens abdicated their thrones in favour of *yoga-marga* and Gorakh, Jalandhar, et al are said to be their initiators. Kings gave up their thrones to preach the doctrine of the Natha sect. The renunciation of king Gopi Chandra of Bengal, in the eleventh century created a sensation all over India, which even at the present time continues to be echoed in poems, dramas and popular ballads sung by minstrels amongst rural folk. Bhartrihari was initiated by Jalandhari who according to the traditions of the yogis was himself the prince of Hastinapur in Northern India. Chaurangi Nath, another Nath Yogi initiated by Matsyendranath, was the son of king Devapala of the Pal Dynasty of Bengal.<sup>26</sup>

Yogis considered Kundalini as the source of *shakti*, which is to be awakened through six *chakras* and is considered as rare and most difficult practice. Guru Nanak also hinted in his hymns about these *chakras*.<sup>27</sup> Guru had talked about the Naval Lotus which when illuminated 'Niranjan' is realized.<sup>28</sup> Similarly in Raga Sorath in the Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Arjan Dev is surprised to see the vanished things that were great cause of his anxiety. Now he sleeps in peace as his inverted heart lotus has bloomed. In the heart (with the blooming of lotus) he has seen the Lord whose

knowledge is spoken of as unfathomable.<sup>29</sup> The way of the blooming of this lotus is described by Guru Nanak by saying that when with the help of 'Guru-Sabad' (the precept of the Guru) the desires are spent and the mind becomes satiated, the lotus blooms.<sup>30</sup> In Siri Raga it is said that the man by obtaining the water of God's *nama* through the Guru, should quench the four fires of cruelty, worldly love, anger and greed and remain dead in life. Thus the heart lotus blooms and fills with nectar which makes one contented.<sup>31</sup> The Guru inspires the followers to weed out evil, wickedness and sins. Leaving these, and becoming singleminded, one should meditate on the Lord and when Lord's meditation, arduous service and control of evil passions become guides, then does the heart lotus bloom and nectar trickle.<sup>32</sup> Obviously one finds here a direct and firm departure by Guru Nanak who never forgets ethical aspects of his theological doctrines.

These yogis in the Middle ages had attained many mental powers which were more or less misused by them. The yogis in the 14th and 15th centuries, whom Guru Nanak happened to meet at various places in India, had degenerated into the lowest ebb of their personal gratifications. These Natha and Siddha yogis were required to teach human society to value self-control as superior to physical enjoyment, self-sacrifice as superior to self-

aggrandisement, self-conquest as superior to the conquest of others, spiritual self-fulfilment as superior to materialistic advancement, but in the words of Bhai Gurdas, a learned Sikh theologian and a contemporary of the fifth Guru Arjan Dev, they (the yogis) had fled from society and hidden themselves in the mountains. They did not spare any opportunity of running down the other sects of the yogis as well as the general public in order to increase their own influence.<sup>33</sup> Some of the *Siddhas* were trying their best to find out a *rasayan* which could make them immortal.<sup>34</sup> Their position had greatly degenerated and they were more feared than respected.

Though Upnishadic philosophy had marked a shift of emphasis from practical aspect (reciting of Mantras and performance of various rituals) of Dharma to the philosophical reasoning. But these *yogis* never cared for the call of *Upanishads* that concentration upon the supreme is the best, indulgence only in Shastras is low, achievement through the *mantras* is still lower and wanderings from one place to another for these purposes is the lowest.<sup>35</sup> The true delight as the *Gita* says, is enjoyed by that knower of the self who detaches the senses from the envy of and the attachment to the world.<sup>36</sup> The yogis were unknown to that supreme bliss and were engaged in increasing their respective sects and followers. Their yoga was no more the efforts to meet

the Absolute Truth, rather they had left the world in order to save themselves from turmoils and labours of day to day life. *Karmayoga* of the *Gita* had very slight impact upon them.

This has been delineated by Guru Nanak in his *Sidh Gosti* when asked by Charpat, the Siddha, as to how this world ocean could be swum. Guru Nanak says that as the duck swims the water without allowing its feathers to get wet and as the lotus remains unaffected by water, similarly by remaining amidst the world but without becoming worldly and through the attention fixed on the 'Sabad' with the help of the Nama we can cross the world ocean.<sup>37</sup> The yogis in the medieval period were wanting in this faculty. They only respected those who were superior to them on the basis of the miracles and *tantra-mantras*. That is why they were feared rather than loved.

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## **CHAPTER - II**

### **Emergence of Sikh Theology**

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### **EMERGENCE OF SIKH THEOLOGY**

#### **NATURE AND FORMULATION**

Max Muller in his *Introduction to the Science of Religion* used the term theology to refer to that part of the Science of Religion that analyzes historical forms of religion in contrast to theoretic theology which refers to analysis of the philosophical conditions of possibility for any religion. Sometimes the discipline concentrating on the history of religious doctrines in various traditions is known as venturing in comparative theology.<sup>1</sup> However in this work the history of religious doctrines in different traditions was enumerated. This was a sort of comparative enterprise in which different theologies from different traditions are compared by means of some comparative method developed in the discipline.

By and large theology may be taken to describe a discipline in western religions and especially Christianity but in fact this term theology has its origin in Greek religious thought. According to Encyclopaedia of Religion, historically theology has functioned as a major factor within the religious discourse of Christianity that has been influenced by Hellenistic models and to a lesser extent, within that of Islam and Judaism.<sup>2</sup> In fact to speak of “theology” is perhaps inadequate but historically useful way to

indicate more strictly intellectual interpretations of any religious tradition whether that tradition is theistic or not. To use word *theologia* in literal sense of talk or reflection on God or the gods, suggests that most religious traditions do possess more strictly intellectual self-understanding of their religious system known theoretically as theology.

The major theological question addressed by a theology may be such as to how does a particular religion addresses the human problems like suffering, ignorance, sin and how does that understanding relate to other interpretations of the human situation. What is the religious way according to a religion, of ultimate transformation or the enlightenment, emancipation, salvation or liberation and how this way is related to other ways? Then in a particular religion what understanding is about the nature of Ultimate Reality? Whether it's 'nature' 'emptiness', the holy, the sacred, the divine, God or the gods, and how does this understanding relate to that of other traditions? The theology of any particular religion also goes deeper into the problem of religious pluralism despite radical differences in conclusions with regard to other traditions. This way the method of any theological work reverberates an intellectual self-understanding of that particular religion from within the spheres of many religious traditions and further provides as well as establishes mutually critical correlations between distinct

but related inter-pretations by giving a context of religious pluralism in an emerging global culture.

As is apparent that most of the semitic religious traditions insist upon the exclusivity of divine revelation which further led them to the path of a relative lack of interest in analyzing other religions except for polemical apologetic purposes. However, as the modern scholarship has shown mutual adoptions between semitic religions, more complex scenario has emerged.

Indian religious system was rich in multi-faith traditions at the time when Guru Nanak appeared on the scene. He travelled widely in the Indian sub-continent, and in the West even upto Mecca and Baghdad, in the north up to Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, in the South upto Sri Lanka and the East upto Kamrup, Dacca and Assam etc. He could visualize that Buddhism had already spent its force and had diverged into many branches. A new form of Hinduism had emerged which had become a conglomeration of many beliefs and ways of life with the result that people were gradually becoming indifferent to one another. Scriptures were reinterpreted but these interpretations carried sectarian outlook, which further divided Indian masses into many sects and clans.

Guru Nanak put forth a distinct and new theology in his creedal formula known as the *mulmantra* wherein God is delineated as *Ik Oankar satinamu karatapurukhu nirbhau nirvairu*

*akal murati ajuni saibhan gurprasadi* i.e. He is one, eternal, creator and sustainer of all, without fear and enmity, beyond the sway of time birth and death, self manifested and known by the Grace of the holy preceptor. This Ik Oankar seen as objectively is known as Brahman and viewed subjectively is known as *atman*. *Ik* of the *mulmantra*, itself denotes unicity which in its cosmological forms is known as diversity.

God is creator of the universe which, though propped up by *Nam*, is in time and space and is changing and becoming but not unreal as in the Vedantic sense of the world. God is not identical with and fully exhausted in the universe which of course is limited and conditioned. God is uncreated, free and unlimited and thus distinct from His creation. The creation may be considered in God but not that God exhausts in creation.

God vis-a-vis the becoming universe operating in time and space has been described by Guru Nanak as all by Himself when there was no universe of time and space. Says the Guru: *adi kau bismadu bicharu kathiale sunn nirantari vasu lia*<sup>3</sup> - 'to think of the transcendent Lord in that state is to enter the realm of wonder. Actual space and time are the dimensions of a becoming, relative or changing universe whereas God transcends all these known categories. The Gurus again and again describe Him as wondrous, infinite, unfathomable, unknowable, ineffable and

immeasurable by human categories of thought and perception. Man himself being a part of these dimensions cannot completely comprehend God who is unconditioned and unfettered by those dimensions and limits. God is the creator of these limitations within which man moves, perceives, conceives, lives and assesses. The immanent aspect of God has been variously described as His Will that directs the universe, His Word that informs the universe and His *nam* that not only creates the entire universe but also sustains and governs the creation. 'In water, earth and the ether worlds the creator Master is immanent. He the *ekankar* is diffused variously everywhere - *jali thali mahiali puria suami sirajanhar. anik bhant hoi pasaria Nanak Ekankar*.<sup>4</sup> The Gurus' statements about the immanence of God are just to emphasize the spiritual and meaningful character of life and the universe and its capacity for relationship with God. They envisage only one God who has various characteristics as also indicated in the *mulmantra*. As in any theology, in Sikhism the immanent aspect of God, called His *Nam*, Will and *Shabad* is of great importance. On the one hand, it gives relevance, authenticity, direction and sanction to the entire moral and spiritual life and goals of man, on the other it emphasizes God's capacity for revelation and nearness to man and His deep and abiding interest in the world.

From the immanent character of God comes out one more aspect of God of His being ocean of attributes, values and virtues. This aspect of God is of extreme significance to the validity and direction of moral life in the universe. All the attributes of God being relative, they lay down the standard and ideals for which man has to work. God in Sikh scripture has been described as father, mother, friend, brother, protector and reliever of the sufferings of the down trodden, succour to the succourless - *din darad dukh bhanjana ghati ghati nath anath*.<sup>5</sup> This attributive aspect of the immanence of God inextricably links Him with His creation, wherein Sikh being His creation, is expected to be ready for serving fellow creatures with the sense of full responsibility.

Another conception about God in the theology of Guru Nanak as envisaged in Guru Granth Sahib is that He does not come into the human form and is not born nor incarnates. In the Mulmantra, God has been mentioned as *ajuni* or as one who never takes birth or form. The fifth Guru says: "May that mouth burn which says that God incarnates" - *so mukhu jalau jitu kahahi thakuru joni*.<sup>6</sup> The Gurus have definitely decried belief in the theory of incarnation and in order to dispel such ideas have stated that He created countless Brahmas, Shivas, Krishnas and Ramas. Rather these deities have been shown as singing the praises of Lord at His door. They are considered among those millions who

are bewailing to know the invisible and the infinite Lord - *brahma bisanu mahesu duarai. ubhe sevahi alakh aparai*.<sup>7</sup> In Sikh scripture two celebrated incarnations of God, namely Rama and Krishna have been mentioned just to explain the greatness and omnipotence of the Supreme Lord. But it nowhere means that they have been accepted as God incarnate. They were personalities who occupied the heart and soul of the Indian sub-continent for ages. That is why one finds the regard offered to them by Guru Nanak. In the *Sidh Gosti* Sri Ramachandra has been called *gurmukh* whose name made the stones swim and he killed the demon of lust and greed - *gurmukh sairi pahan tare*.<sup>8</sup> Guru Nanak theology believes that the Supreme Lord who is already omnipotent cannot gain any feather in His cap when He is personified and described as killer of Ravana and Kansa - *pauna upai dhari sabh dharati jal agani ka bandhu kia. andhulai dahsiri mundu kataia Ravanu mari kia vada bhaia*.<sup>9</sup>

The other problem which a theology takes care of is the problem of co-existence and the pluralistic society. If one happens to have a cursory glance upon the life and history of the Gurus and the compilation scheme of the Guru Granth Sahib, the fountain head of Sikh theology, one finds that in the foundation of Sikhism the major communities of India i.e. Hindus and Muslims both have contributed in it their love-inspiring hymns



and the Sikhs when bow their heads before the thought of the Sikh Gurus, they automatically bow before the all denominations of society irrespective of their caste, colour or creed.

History of the Sikh thought brings forth the fact that Hindus and Muslims alike fought for the cause of establishing of the plural society which had the freedom of religious practices and no dogmatic and exclusive approach about the revelation of the Supreme God is there in them. Out of thirty six contributors of Guru Granth Sahib including Muslim saints, Sikh Gurus, *bhatts*, *bhaktas* of various traditions such as Namdev, Kabir, Beni, Dhanna, Ravidas, Sadhna, Jai Dev et al. Perhaps, it is the impact of such a liberal theology given by Guru Nanak which has enabled the Sikhs to settle in any part of the globe easily and comfortably.

### **Upanishadic Theology and the Theology of Guru Nanak**

Vedas remained as the highest authority in the minds of Indian masses right from the beginning and even upto day, all the obligatory ceremonies and rituals to be observed at birth, marriage death etc. are performed according to the old Vedic rituals.

Along with polytheistic, monotheistic and monistic under currents in the Vedas, the 'Sacrifice' and entailing complications of rituals grew elaborately. Rituals and their details developed so much so that the gods got relegated to a relatively unimportant

position. The slightest discrepancy in observing the minutest ritualistic details or mistaken accent of a single word could be sufficient to spoil the whole sacrifice. In fact, sacrifice came to be supposed as the core of Vedic law of Karma which took little note of the grace of God or gods and produced by itself the desired result. *Brahmana* portion of the Vedas stressed on the Sacrifice (*bali*).

Now there was an important transition from the ritualistic to philosophic thought in the shape of Aranyakas. May be the elaborate systems of sacrifices in the *Brahmans* filled the people's heart and mind with so much awe that the seers thought it in the fitness of things that mystic interpretation of the Vedic sacrifices is the need of the day. The values in Aranyaka thought of actual sacrifices got transferred to symbolic representations and particularly the meditations. For example, the horse (for sacrifice) now became the dawn, the sun, the always moving mind etc. and now these became the objects of control and meditation for receiving the benefits as were accrued through the actual sacrifices of different animals. Not only this, in Aranyakas one finds a great desire of the seers for finding out some unity among the visual paraphernalia of the world. Now the knowledge about the Brahman, the cause of all the causes became the centre of attraction and meditation for the seers and hence started the growth of Upanishads.

*Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundak, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya and Brahdaranyaka, Shvetashvatar Upanishads* have been commented upon by great Shankaracharya and hence they are held as authentic and most important. The subject matter of the Upanishads differs much from one another and besides laying great stress upon the monistic doctrine of the self as the only reality they deal with the practice of yoga, asceticism, the cult of Lord Shiva, Vishnu and the anatomy of the body.

Crux of Upanishads is also known as ‘Vedanta,’ ‘Sharirik Sutra’ or Brahamsutra by Badarayan Vyas. These *sutras* were of so abstruse nature that they amply produced divergent interpretations each one claiming to be the only faithful one. Original ideas were given by the great seers of Upanishads but soon their writings found the chain-reactions under the names of various commentaries leaving aside the original formulations.

### **Brahman**

The seers of Upanishadic Philosophy now wanted to delve deeper into the actual nature of ultimate reality, the Brahman, who was earlier known as Prajapati, Purusha et.al. The sages of the Upanishads assured of the existence of supreme controller controlling the man and the universe, were further curious about the nature of the Brahman. The Upanishads are the findings of various sages in this regard. However, they found that the ritualistic worship of sun,

moon, lightening, ether, wind, fire, water etc. is of no avail for the purpose, though it may be the first step of the ladder taking them towards Brahman. In *Chhandogya* Upanishad Narada tells Sanatkumara- I know the *Rigveda*, sir, the *Yajuh*, the *Sama* and with these I know only the Mantras and the sacred books. I do not know the self... I have heard from persons like you that only he who knows the self goes beyond sorrow.<sup>'10</sup> In the *Mundaka* Upanishad the seer is bold enough to enumerate two kinds of knowledge, the higher (*paravidya*) and the lower (*apara vidya*). 'The lower knowledge is that which the Rk, Sama, Atharva, Ceremonials, Grammer give but the higher knowledge is that by which the immortal Brahman is known.'<sup>11</sup> The Supreme Reality (Brahman) has been accepted by Guru Nanak as Truth, the universally unifying factor which is formless, unapproachable and imperceptible Lord. In Guru Granth, it is that Anahat Shunya, Nirguna, unmanifest force which itself turns to be Sarguna. *Sarguna* and *Nirguna* are not different from each other, rather one is interwoven into the other and becomes manifest through the true Shabad.

On the other side, the higher knowledge is that through which that 'Imperishable' is known: the invisible, intangible, unoriginated, colourless, without eyes and ears; without hands and feet, the eternal all-pervading, omnipresent, very subtle, the unchanging which the wise know as the womb of beings.

Similarly, both the kinds of knowledge have been mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib as well, where Guru Nanak says, “O God, your extent and dynamism only you know as who else can dare explain that. You yourself are both unmanifest and manifest and you are the enjoyer of all the stages.”<sup>12</sup> Guru Arjan Dev further elaborates: Lower knowledge perceived and cultivated through physical eyes is not competent to quench the thirst of the soul. Those inner eyes (of higher knowledge) are different, with which the beloved Lord is beheld.<sup>13</sup>

While enumerating the system of Vedanta, Dr. Paul Deussen defines Brahman as the cause, from which proceeds, the origin or subsistence and dissolution of this world which is extended in names and forms. This omniscient and omnipotent cause is Brahman.<sup>14</sup> From Him originates the vital force as well as the mind, all the senses, space, air, fire, water and earth that supports everything.<sup>15</sup> He is the Absolute cause of the world-order without exhausting Himself completely. Whatever creature comes forth in glory, in vigour and in beauty, has sprung but from a fragment of His splendour.

Guru Nanak says that even a fragment of His will can change the nature and working of the whole world. Though, He is the compassionate Lord of incomparable beauty and is contained in all the hearts,<sup>16</sup> yet according to Sikh theology in the Guru Granth Sahib, He remains unmanifest.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Nirguna and Saguna***

It can be safely said, in the words of M.K. Venkatarama Iyer, that as a matter of fact there is no transition from Nirguna Brahman to Saguna Brahman, because what is beyond name and form and consequently '*sui generis*' can not descend to a lower plane and acquire qualities. Since there are no internal differences within the Absolute and He is eternally perfect, there could not be any urge to undergo any modification. It is however, our intellect which breaks up the original unity into a knowing subject and a known object. The Absolute of which we are conscious comes within the relational scheme, when we descend to lower level and view the Highest Reality through the intellect. Now it is no longer a pure spirit but spirit in association with matter. This matter is the last reality of this physical world and this matter requires to be revealed by the spirit. Matter is not therefore, the sole reality but matter in relation to spirit. If this matter is taken in its entirety and is viewed in relation to the spirit, we get the conception of Saguna Brahman.<sup>18</sup>

Various names have been attributed to this unchanging and Supreme Reality which is called Bhagwad by some, Brahman and Paramatman by others. However, on the basis of *Shat Sandharbha*, S.N. Dasgupta says: when the reality is conceived in its fulness in all its proper relations, it is called Bhagwad;

whereas when it is conceived without its specific relations and in its abstract character, it is called Brahman.<sup>19</sup>

Guru Nanak believes that His exact estimation is known by the Lord Himself and none else can narrate anything about it. He Himself is both unmanifest and manifest and enjoyer of all the pleasures.<sup>20</sup> He, the Nirguna Brahman the infinite and the Illimitable Lord was seated in trance for ages long. The Lord was 'Dhundhukar' or mist or like self illuminating fog, before His expansion into the worldly fog of creation.<sup>21</sup> For countless ages there was utter mist without creation of earth and sky. The infinite Lord was there pervading in the form of pure Will (Hukum). From that infinite truth since the times immemorial emanated ether, water and the cosmos, essentially having in themselves the light of the primordial Light.<sup>22</sup> According to Guru Granth Sahib that Unmanifest Brahman then permeated all the hearts<sup>23</sup> and became manifest or the 'Sarguna' as it is called in the Guru Granth Sahib'.<sup>24</sup> But essentially, He remains the one and the only one like a thread in all the beads. Under the strain of intense spiritual urge generally the unmanifest Brahman becomes the subject of man's feelings and Guru Nanak being a devoted Bhagat and a warm hearted mystic has undertaken the Nirguna Brahman as the prime concern of his soul. But he is not a passive Nirgunvadin having no concern with the turmoil and strife of this corporeal

world. At this stage his Nirguna becomes Saguna essentially having the same light and force in it. He invokes that Saguna Brahman always when he witnesses the people of India flooded by the tyranny of the invaders.<sup>25</sup> We find that the main stress of the hymns of Guru Nanak is Nirguna Brahman, which essentially should not be considered as without any quality rather *nirguna* Brahman should be taken as above all the qualities. However, Guru Nanak in order to express his devotional feelings, attributed many qualities to Nirguna Brahman and further held firmly that the Supreme power, already omnipotent can not gain any feather in its cap when it is personified and described as killer of Ravana or Kansa.<sup>26</sup> He is rather a Sultan who is being called as a mere chieftain by Nanak and Guru Nanak being too humble realises also his this lapse on his part<sup>27</sup> and calls Him Guru of all the Gurus.<sup>28</sup>

Guru Nanak very frequently used the terms then in vogue for God. He is not hesitant in calling God as Bhagwant, Gosai, Jagannath, Gopal, Gobind, Narayan, Rama, Vasudeva etc. but departing from the centuries long tradition did not believe in (Avtar) incarnation of God. Gods and goddesses dividing people in various sects not suited to the way of life which according to the theology of Guru Nanak required a cohesive mutual effort for upliftment as well as for liberation, from the bondages or



ignorance, duality, inactivity hatred and sectarian jealousy. He, in the very beginning of his divine longer hymn *Japu* gives the call of 'Ek Onkar' or the only one God who is nothing but the Truth in all the ages and even before the ages. All other deities have been considered by him in the normal categories of men and creatures created by Him. He shows Shiva, Brahma, Indra, as singing the praises of Lord at His door.<sup>29</sup> He considers them among those millions who are bewailing to know the invisible and the infinite Lord.<sup>30</sup>

The Supreme Reality as a whole can not be grasped by senses in the philosophy of Guru Nanak. Secondly, he had no intention of analysing the concept of God from the intellectual viewpoint because he was primarily a devoted mystic actively engaged in the welfare of the fellow beings. Due to his deep love for God, he cultivated many relations with God and made him *sakara* from *nirakara* but wherever he got the opportunity of discussing the Supreme Lord, he clearly called Him Nirguna, Nirakar, Niranjana, detached etc. However, He is *Karata-purakh* the Creator as well in the very opening lines of Guru Granth Sahib. This aspect of God inspires man to be very much active, alive, planned and resourceful in order to maintain clock-like regularity, precision and control in his life. Besides this God is presented as truth and the truthful ways are stressed upon throughout the Guru Granth Sahib.

As we know, in the Upanishads the detailed study of the nature of *atman* and the Brahman has been put-forth. For listening to the Guru, the disciple is required to prepare well to become *adhikari* of the doctrine and has to undertake *tapas* for a sufficient period to delve deeper into one's own self. No doubt that knowledge replaced the *Karmakanda* but somehow people started becoming oblivious to their duty bound *karmas* as well. Consequently, a variety of spiritual experiences abounded and the temporal duties were relegated to the back seat. Already, disintegrated in the name of rigid caste system, the Indian Society could not withstand the onslaughts of external invasions, especially from the north-west borders of India. The earlier invaders were somehow assimilated in Indian society but with Muslims the case was different. They along with their culture thought it fit to settle down here and made India their second home. The spiritual heights attained by Indian ethos crumbled like a pack of cards because the hard earned spirituality could not sustain the burden of heavy and crucial responsibilities of temporal world. Guru Nanak travelled far and wide to have first hand knowledge of the sufferings of the people and one finds him lamenting in one of his hymns recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib, wherein he says that 'his land was a jewel but the dogs have spoiled and devastated it; none will be there to weep for

them - *ratān vigadi vigoe kutin muia sar na kai*.<sup>31</sup> Guru Nanak did not feel satisfied by mere theorizing the great doctrines such as the fatherhood of one God and brotherhood of mankind, equality among one and all and no distinction on the basis of caste, colour or creed; he took special care to give people applied philosophy of spirituality and to translate these doctrines into action. He created institutions of *sangat* and *pangat* which further put on the impetus later on for the creation of Khalsa in which equality and freedom were the cardinal pillars. Guru Nanak formulating his theology has nowhere tried to prove the existence of *atman* and *paramatman* and accepting them as they are, put much stress upon the Truth aspect of the God and devised the down to earth ways and means for becoming truthful - truthful to one's own self, truthful to one another and then truthful to the humanity. His concern for 'truth' is immensely delineated in all of his works and the sole reason for such a concern is that the probing into the Truth transforms the man into a self-respecting and consciously awakened person towards his duties whereas enquiries into the nature of the abstract God, as was done in the earlier centuries, pushes him on the way of repudiation of world and its entailing sorrows and sufferings. Taking new departure from the tradition Guru Nanak through his theology introduced the perfect example of interfaith and intra-faith dialogue when

we find him collecting the voices of truth from all the nooks and corners of India which ultimately reverberated in the shape of Guru Granth Sahib.

### **CONSOLIDATION OF SIKH THEOLOGY: SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB**

Sikh Gurus during their life time, added new colour to the religio-philosophical scenario of Indian subcontinent and the Guru Granth earlier known as 'Pothi Sahib' is the example of their open hearted acceptance of existential position of all the religions. Guru Granth Sahib focused on the dignity of man, the sense of self-sacrifice, the theory of *shabad* as the Guru, the philosophy of dialogue on equal footing and the all pervasive truth as the basis of spirituo-temporal life.

Truth in the Sikh scriptural parlance is known as *sati* which is the Punjabi form of *satya*, denoting ever existent consciousness, the immutable nature of the Omnipotent God, and the subtlest basic element of the creation. Truth has always remained as an integral theological value and powerful force in day to day Sikh life. The word *satya*, rooted in Sanskrit as meaning to exist, has been a widely used term in philosophic-religious thought of India. Scriptural texts of ancient India propound *sati* to constitute eternality, continuity and unicity. In Upanishads, out of the three characteristics of *Brahman*, the *Sati* is in the foremost,

immediately followed by *Chit* and *Anand*. In the Guru Granth Sahib the varied and wide use of the cognates of *sati* e.g. *satisangat*, *satigur*, *satipurakh*, *sachkhand*, *sacha patshah*, *sachiar*, etc. establish its predominant role in Sikh theology and ethico-spiritual life.

‘Sati’ became the first attribute to the ultimate in the *Mulmantra* and then became the creedal formula at the beginning of every measure (*Raga*) of the Holy Granth. All other names of God based on his various actions limitize His all-encompassing Omnipotence. Names based on actions (*karmas*) delineate but one aspect of His phenomenal activity whereas *sati* (Truth) represents Him in His wholeness and grandeur, covering all the denominations of time (*kal*) and yet not getting fully exhausted in it. Says Guru Nanak - *adi sachu jugadi sachu hai bhi sachu Nanak hosi bhi sachu*.<sup>32</sup>

Since the *sati* is immutable and beyond time and space, life and death, it never gets old or worn out - *sachu purana hovai nah*<sup>33</sup> and *sachu purana na thiai namu na maila hoi*.<sup>34</sup> According to Sikhism, the universe, which is transitory, is unreal in the context of Truth i.e. real and ever existent but it is not antithetically unreal in the Vedantic sense of appearance and illusion. Changing however does not necessarily means to be unreal because this universe according to Guru Nanak is the creation of the Supreme

Who enjoys it by being present in it - *dui kudarati sajjai kari asanu ditho chao*.<sup>35</sup> This happy blissful joy by sitting amidst the creation is meaningless if this creation is a mere non-existent appearance. In *Sukhmani*, says Guru Arjan Dev, He is Truth and His creation is True. From that Supreme have emanated all - *api sati kia sabhu sati. tis Prabh te sagali utapati*.<sup>36</sup> Truth is rather the ultimate cause behind the creation. In the hymns of Guru Nanak, the creation of the three worlds has been supposed to have emanated from water which has come into existence due to gases whose primordial cause is the Truth, the Supreme *sach- Sache te pavana bhaia pavani te jalu hoi, jalu te tribhavanu sajjia ghati ghati joti samoi*.<sup>37</sup>

Truth the main prop of Sikh theology has been explained in three prominent forms throughout Guru Granth Sahib. First, the Truth is a direct irresistible force which illumines as well as blossoms the *jiva* as spontaneously as the lotus opens its petals with the feel of sunlight. Truth opens the *inner* eyes of higher consciousness which makes one feel the direct touch of the Supreme Truth - God. Man feels pointedly - *bed ketab sansar habhahun bahara. Nanak ka patisahu disai jahara*.<sup>38</sup> Second, when man gets identified with the Truth he goes beyond the illusions of transmigration. Now the *atman* sharply realizes its own separate being from the body and hence remains a mere witness to the actions of the latter, thus, getting totally free from

the clutches of so-called polemical, ritualistic, and schismatic endeavours. The death and decay of body then becomes meaningless and a dialectical relationship of truth and freedom emerges out. This freedom cultivated by intellect and soul pushes the body to act for the dictum: If one loses honour in life, impure is all that one eats - *je jivai pati lathi jai, sabhu haramu jeta kichu khai*.<sup>39</sup> This dimension of Truth embedded in Sikh theology begets sacrifice which is the back-bone of Sikh way of life. Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur and sacrifices offered by Guru Gobind Singh and many a Sikh in eighteenth century are glaring examples for throwing light on the above dictum of Guru Granth Sahib, the fountain head of Sikh theology.

When this mortal body is being controlled by the enlightened soul, then another form of Truthful aspect of ultimate Parmatman comes into focus known as the "Hukam". This Hukam is not any outer imposed command, rather it is present inside right from the very beginning. Guru Nanak, while posing the problem of how to become truthful in the first stanza of *japu*, asks *jiva* to follow this inner voice in the form of *hukam* which has been perennially an integral part of *jiva*. When the alloy of such a truth in all its dimensions is allowed to take shape of sceptre of truthfulness, the creation through the same becomes wondrous and awe inspiring. Says Guru Nanak: "The creation of the sceptre

of truth made by the steel of truth is incomparable, beauteous and infinite" - *sach ki kati sach sabhu sar. Gharat is ki apar apar*.<sup>40</sup> This scepter is called *khadag* or *Tegh* by Guru Gobind Singh from which emerge the gods and goddesses and this whole creation.

*Sach* or *Truth* being basic to the creation, morality and spirituality, Sikh theology expects of a *Jiva* to become *sachiar* i.e. truth oriented. This seems to be the biggest concern of the Sikh Gurus, for, we find in the very beginning of the Guru Granth Sahib that the problem of how to become truthful (*sachiar*) has been raised by Guru Nanak besides his exposition of the erstwhile methods adopted by the people for the same objective. He concludes his *magnum opus Japuji* by explaining *sach-khand* - the abode of truth. His preponderate and pithy propositions regarding Guru, *hukam*, *gurmukh* etc. link the *Jiva* with the society and the world because in Sikhism man is required to pursue the answer to this question through his truthful, meritorious, altruistic actions here in this very world.

The 'Sachiar,' the seeker of such form of truth is also described in *Japuji*. He is not a superstitious being, rather he is a very much aware person looking at everything scientifically. In sixteenth stanza of *Japuji*, it is told with stress that the truth oriented person (*sachiar*) could understand the mystery that it is



not a bull but *dharma* - begotten of compassion and contentment which supports and sustains the whole humanity on earth.<sup>41</sup> One of preconditions for knowing truth is the purity of heart achieved after divesting it of the filth of falsehood. Second, a genuine leaning towards truth and hence truthful life enraptured in *nam* is desired. Third, the *jugati* i.e. the righteous way for temporal as well as spiritual life enunciated in the Guru Granth Sahib is desired to be known by the seeker of the truth. This *jugati* is the culture, mastery and discipline of sense-organs whose one becomes the master and not the slave. Fourth, he is also known to be one with truth who is not repulsive to the true imperatives for being full of compassion and sacrifice. Fifth, he is face to face with truth that does not remain contented only with the horizontal growth of personality but also is equally engaged in his vertical growth through the instruction of Guru by delving deep into his own innerself. Such all dimensional truth is penacea for all ailments and it flushes out the dirt of sins in order to make a balanced personality devoid of any sort of prejudice and debasement - *sachu ta paru janiai ja ridai sachu hoi... sachu sabhana hoi daru pap kadhai dhoi*.<sup>42</sup> Says Guru Amar Das, this truth is overlord of all and is obtainable only to them whom He blesses - *ihu sachu sabhana ka khasam hai jisu bakhase so janu pavahe*.<sup>43</sup>

**Guru**

According to Sikh scripture every human being is potentially capable of infinite power which lies hidden within him. The only step to be taken is to remove from mind, the barriers that stand between God and man. The human body is linked with God through mind and one has to cross difficult barriers to enter the precincts which enshrines God by removing the ignorance and darkness of mind. Guru Nanak showed to mankind a short and straight path to meet God direct. He said if a man during his day to day life walks according to the will of God, he may meet God. The man should make God's Will, his own will and play cheerfully the drama of life as pre-ordained. Such a man will live peacefully and happily compatible with the laws of nature, he will have the complete faith in the formless, omnipotent, transcendental and immanent God.

It is the realm of spirit that has to be entered into. The intellectual views of religion, its dogmas, ceremonies and external forms and symbols are not the way to God or Religion rather all of these have to be subordinated to the actual experiences of the soul or to its insight into things. It is this which really matters and it is here that guidance becomes essential. It is only a Perfect Being who could give this guidance in purest form otherwise there is always the danger for men of being led astray. Those who have

such visions are rare persons indeed, and they invariably have the urge to share their realization with humanity in order to advance human happiness all around; they call it the voice of God. This intuitive inspiration is not a common phenomenon and spiritual truths in their entirety could reach humanity only through perfect souls. These are revealed to them not through mere reasoning and analysing; they come like inspiration through an inner contact of mind with the Universal Mind. Their mental vision goes beyond the reach of mere intellect. Their spiritual convictions are based on their own personal experiences and others have to accept these with reverential faith. But it is not a blind or mechanical faith in ordinary sense. It is always accepted reasonably and the challenge of reason and intellect in this condition work through the processes of logical thought, as there remains no error in it.

If there were any error, it could have been shattered to pieces long ago because all their spiritual truths were in the nature of self perceivable knowledge i.e. knowledge realisable through the self of every person. As these can always be sifted and inquired into through self experience, they will always hold their grounds. In material sciences also, experience comes first to a few and its justification follows afterwards through actual experimentation by others. So also in the field of religion, reliance

had to be placed on the findings of others otherwise no progress in this field would have been possible.

It is pity that science and religion are always seen as if they are in opposite directions. The fact, however, is that they being not contradictory, supplement each other. Neither the remarkable conquests of science are to be decried as materialistic nor the achievements of religion and spirituality are to be dubbed as unrealistic dreaming. The fact should be recognised that science had done a lot for the emancipation of people from narrow mindness. It has promoted the intellectual sincerity through its search for the laws of matter and energy and then knowledge has thus indirectly served the cause of religion and culture.

The researches of spiritual science are our heritage and we must cherish them with love, devotion, faith and reverence otherwise they would not be able to bring any benefit to humanity. The required condition is that, they must reach mankind through a perfect theologian teacher. In the realm of spirituality, it is more necessary that the reliance must be placed only on perfect beings through whom Godly truths had emerged without being coloured by their own prejudices.

Therefore Sikhism declares that ultimate goal is not possible without God's grace and only God's light sparks the soul. The Master Guru gives spiritual light and shows the way and those

who follow him in all sincerity and in complete surrender to God, are saved. However, in the Guru Granth words Guru and *Shabad* (the word of Guru) are interchangeable. During the discussion with the yogis, the yogis ask Guru Nanak as to who was his Guru. The latter answered that he was disciple of the Shabad, the Guru. No one should trust his own capacity and power to find the way. Sikhism affirms that complete surrender to Shabad, the Guru is desirable, because its leadership is flawless and those are blessed ones who have got such Guru.<sup>44</sup>

*jo jo dise so so rogi rog rahit mera satiguru jogi* i.e. whosoever is visible is sick. Sickness free is only my true Guru.<sup>45</sup>

In the theology of Sikhism Guru and God being identical and inter-changeable, the most important thing to be kept in mind is that God alone is the highest and only perfect Guru. He sometimes speaks through prophets and seers and they become Gurus because they reveal God's light. They are His best manifestations as could ever be conceived in human terms. It is only in this sense that they can be identified with God; but they are not to be confused with God whose purpose sometimes they are destined to fulfill. Guru Gobind Singh categorically asserts in the Bachitra Natak -

*Jo ham ko Parmesar Ucharhe. te sabh narak kund mahi par hai*

The Sikh theology therefore speaks of God as the only absolutely true Guru.

*Adi ant ekai avtara. Soi guru samjhiu hamara*

Even Guru Nanak confirms that whatever he speaks are the same which the Divine wanted me to convey *Jaise me ave khasam ki bani tesrha kari gian ve lalo*. Though Bhai Gurdas described Guru Nanak as Healer of humanity by saying that *Suni pukar datar prabh Gur Nanak jagmahi pathaia*.

So, the True Guru is the one who has the capacity to make angles of men *jin manas te devate kie*. And True Guru is he who has realised the True One -

*sati purakh jini jania satigur tis ka nau*

The true Guru is one whose presence provides bliss and mental doubts depart and the supreme state is attained -

*jisu miliai man hoi anandu so satiguru kahiai.*

*mana ki dubidha binasi jai hari param pad lahai<sup>46</sup>*

In Sikh parlance this highest position of the True Guru is given to the word of Guru i.e. the Shabda Guru. Here is a remarkable change brought about by Sikh Gurus in the concept of Guruship. Although the actual human Guruship formally ended with Guru Gobind Singh's method of passing on Guruship to the Granth. However, the word was regarded as Guru in earlier Guru's hymns also. Guru Ram Das says 'bani Guru Guru hai bani.'

And when Sidhas ask Guru Nanak a straight question as to who was his Guru, he categorically replied that the word was His Guru- *tera kavanu guru jis ka tu chela sabad Guru surat dhuni chela*.<sup>47</sup> It was the word of God that comes to those emancipated and illuminated perfect souls, which was collected and scored by Sikh Gurus. It was word taken as true Guru and even before its regular installation as Guru by Guru Gobind Singh, Guru Arjan and successor Gurus never seated themselves on a footing of equality with the Holy Granth.<sup>48</sup>

Every time whenever succession of Guruship passed on next Guru, it was clear to all that it was the spiritual succession that was going on preceded by spiritual transformation. The spirit of Nanak, his soul, his word had become incarnated in Lehna transforming him into Angad. All Gurus were thus one in spirit revealed in word

*joti oha jugati sai sahi kaia pheri palateeai*

### **Nam (Simran)**

Name is an expression of a thing, person, or place, or phrase by which a person, a place or a thing is known. Then what is God's Name about which Guru Granth Sahib is filled with?

*Bin navai jagu kamala phirai gurmukh nadari aia*

i.e. without the *Nam* the world wanders about mad, but the Guru-oriented have seen Him. *Soi Ramu sabhai kahehi soi kautakhar*.<sup>49</sup>

i.e. the *Nam* of God is uttered by all, yet the same name can produce revolutions (in the soul).

It is expression of Nirankar (formless), who is infinite unmanifest and is manifested to us through His works. Guru Nanak called it Nirankar who can not be seen with physical eyes and finite mind. Intellect cannot directly perceive or know the infinite God who has been expressed as both Nirguna and Saguna form by Guru Nanak. It is Nirguna form of God who transformed himself for self expression in Saguna form

*Nirguna api sargun bhi ohi. kala dhar jini sgali moh<sup>50</sup>*

But the God while wielding His might keeps the whole world charmed and still remains unattributed as well as the attributed with his creation remains unmatched with it. He is both the matter as well as the spirit.

It is like a spider who spins its web out of himself but the web cannot be considered without spider. The web is viewed only as a part of it. Similarly all that emanates from Him is in one way or the other, His ownself. The body belongs to the material world but the soul or spirit in it is the essence of it in the form of God. This fact is realized by those whose search is seriously aimed inwardly -

*Jo brahmande soi pinde jo khoje so pave<sup>51</sup>*

The supreme element from which all these (the body, the



universe, the spirit) have born and which is beyond them is the Absolute spirit. However in Sikh philosophy the soul, the universe and God are not only three distinct and permanent realities rather they are interwoven in each other. The soul and universe are real and permanent only in relative sense. There is nothing eternal and self existent and permanent except God.

Now the aim of Guru Nanak's theology is only to remove this illusion of separation in which all these superficial and apparent differences melt away and pave the way for the actual realisation of the oneness of all. Guru again and again emphasises that the separation from Him is the basis of all suffering. And this realisation of separation is the first step towards Him. The spark must merge in the fire, the wave must merge in the expanse of sea and the soul must be reunited with the universal soul.

Guru Nanak had enumerated many reasons also, for this delusion and separation. Some primary reasons are Maya and selfhood (ego)

*eh maia jitu hari visarai mohu upajai bhau duja laia*<sup>52</sup>

*haumai bujhai tadaru sujhai*<sup>53</sup>

*haumai vichi jagu upajai purakha nami visariai dukh pae*<sup>54</sup>

God Himself created this body which has become a limitation for the soul. Even Ego is also His creation. However, if it is the actual position that He Himself is behind all these

obstacles then there must be some purpose behind this scheme. God Himself has created both the sides of light and darkness, Good and evil, poison and nectar, copper and Gold because all these are complimentary and supplementary to each other. In the absence of one, glory of second cannot be realised. Obstacles placed before light create shadows which disappear when obstacles are removed. Similarly when ego is atuned to His will, the same becomes Divine.

*Haumai diraghu rog jai daru bhi isu mahi*<sup>55</sup>

Ego is shadow of universal self and when this I-ness takes refuge in Him its illusion will go and it will shine forth as a true spirit and the individual will then become universal Will. God had created choices of Right and Wrong for humans because trials, tribulations, and struggles promote development of personality and character. Children will make progress only if they are allowed to work themselves. God guides them from within and in his own way. Therefore Ego, lust, greed, anger or any other passion are created because He (God) has to mould and shape man as a living and evolving entity who has realized divinity. Guru Nanak says in Japuji

*Ketia dukh bhukh sad mar. Ehi bhi dati teri datar*<sup>56</sup>

Man starts relating good and evils according to his own tastes, views and desires. He starts imagining that all the natural

processes have been created only keeping man in view and are designed to serve his needs. When life presents problems and difficulties, man tries to associate them with God, forgetting that He is beyond our good or bad and the nature has its own wonderful design for solving are riddles. Man assumes that he is the centre of gravity of whole cosmos and his pleasures are the end of life but in fact he is having partial view of Reality.

A philosopher has truly remarked that God was not good or bad, rather it is the man who is good as well bad also. Gurbani confirms that God Himself is the creator of Himself and He being the Supreme Good can not produce evil. It must be the product of illusion that man sees diversity and plurality and calls it Evil. Men chooses the path of sin only due to illusion; when this illusion disappears all seems very clear and only then man could be redeemed. Guru says that this light could be brought only through Simran (remembrance) of Nam. The Nam is the most valuable possession a man can have. It is panacea for all the ills of man - *sarab rog ka aukhadu nam*.<sup>57</sup>

Literally Simran of Nam means 'remembering but the word remembering is not all that *simran* stands for. The love of God is the nearest approach to what it implies including the uttering of Nam lovingly, remembering Him with devotion meditating on Him through Guru's word or concentrating on His Divine attributes and

surrendering to Him in His love and service. The Guru claims that the highest state of perfection can be attained through His Nam. When this soul comes in possession with its real self, all the soul's actual ingredients like truth, love, freedom, beauty, bliss and goodness start flowing continually and naturally as light and warmth flow automatically from the sun.

In Guru Granth, God is presented both as impersonal and personal form. The Impersonal God is unperceivable, unreachable, without any attributes but when He reveals Himself in His creation He becomes perceivable though in a limited extent. Various people tried to portray Him in their own colouring and that is why, He has been described in various forms with variety of names and attributes. While describing attributes of God in Mulmantra in Guru Granth, the foremost speciality about His description is His Oneness and if at all some name is required to be given to Him, He may be named as the Truth which was in the beginning is at present and will remain in the future as well - *adi sachu jagadi sachu hai bhi sach Nanak hosi bhi sach*.<sup>58</sup>

As said earlier Name is the essence of anything. Now if Truth is His Name (*Nam*) as described by Guru Nanak, that means Truthfulness is His essence and when Gurmukhs understand that they are a part of that Ultimate (i.e. Truth), they in fact tread the actual path.

This unfolds the mystery of 'Nam' and 'Simran of that Nam which is discussed in almost every hymn of Guru Granth. First, the actual Name or essence of God is 'Truth' and man has to realize that he is a part and parcel of that Truth (God). And Guru Nanak also suggested the way to reach that Ultimate (Truth) and the way of truthful living based on the 'Hukam' (divine command) which is also within everyone.

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## **CHAPTER - III**

# **Social Expressions of Sikh Theology**

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#### **BUILDING OF HARIMANDAR**

Guru Nanak while travelling through length and breadth of Indian sub-continent, had felt the social, economic, religious and political pain of common masses of India given by the so-called upper strata of society. This kind of pain was even felt by sensitive hearts of earlier saints also, such as Farid, Kabir, Ravidas, Namdev, et al who also tried to raise their voice against this injustice, but their voice being the voice of lower strata of society went unnoticed due to lack of any such practical institutional arrangement through which people could feel the sense of togetherness among one and all. Guru Nanak realized this failure and to concretize the idea of equality, love and sharing he established Sangats wherever he went during his travels. In Sangat, eschewing the sense of high or low all were required to sit on floor covered by same durrie. This indicated a striking departure from the familiar norms of medieval society.

The establishment of tradition of passing Guruship by Guru Nanak was innovative step. By nominating Angad his successor he created a tradition which moulded Sikhs into integrated community under uninterrupted spiritual leadership. No doubt,

“the disciples of Guru Nanak would have soon dispersed and disappeared, if he had not taken care to appoint his successor during his life time. It was crucial point of separation of Guru’s disciples from general body of other communities. Guru Nanak resembled other medieval reformers in revitalizing religion and morality, but he was alone in creating a distinct and self conscious community which was destined to play fruitful and glorious role in country’s history.

Although Guru Nanak remained aloof from politics but didn’t ignore the political trends effecting people’s lives. He was fully alive to the impact of politics on society and religion because he was not an ascetic in traditional Indian religious sense. He lived life of a householder and settled in a village Kartarpur during the last days of his life. Guru Nanak’s condemnation of the traditional ritualistic society was practical. He practised far better way of washing off impurities of mind by hearing, obeying and loving the inherent voice of God. In general he prescribed God’s name as the best thing in this Kali age.<sup>1</sup> *Sangat* became the ocean of Nam where the ordinary mind was not gripped under mystic experience alone rather it was activated to realise its aim of serving the mankind and for that to find out the ways to accomplish that. The creed laid down by Guru Nanak was simple and elastic enough to provide a structure within which the Sikh community

could grow for more than a century and half till an entirely new environment was provided by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth master.

Through the teachings received in *Sangat*, the internal darkness is dispelled away and illumination attained. Man gets enlightened in the holy company of others as the iron touched to the philosopher's stone turns out to be gold.<sup>2</sup> Moreover to have this practice, one is not required to go to jungle as was practised in medieval period because the loneliness can take man away from his responsibilities towards his society. And Guru Nanak's *Dharma* is to follow a very responsible attitude towards one's belongings and surroundings. In Medieval religious practices, very few chosen ones were allowed to enter in the fold of spirituality, but Guru Nanak's *Sangats* were for one and all irrespective of their class, colour, creed or status. Social or spiritual position of any one is not fixed, one may become divine or demon on the basis of his own good or bad deeds.

The ideal man of Sikhism of Guru Nanak is *Gurmukh* who knows that Truth is very high ideal but higher still is the truthful living - *sachau ure sab ko upari sachi acharu*.<sup>3</sup> So by treading the path of truthful living any one becomes competent for changing his position from demon to divine or vice-versa. 'Kirat-Karni (working with ones own hands), Naam Japna (remembrance of

God) and Vand-Chhakna (sharing with others your earning)' the three cardinal pillars of Guru Nanak's theology work through the institution of *Sangat*. The sublime thought behind these activities is the idea of *nishkam seva* (duty). Community service in any form is considered essential part of Sikh religio-ethical life. *Seva* includes cleaning shoes of *Sangat*, doing minor works in langar (cooking, serving, cleaning of utensils etc.) and others. Such services give blows to cultivated ego of status, class or caste and this seems to be the perfect arrangement done by Guru Nanak to help society in shedding off deep rooted *haumai* - ego.

The successor Gurus added new chapters to strengthen the institutions started by Mentor Guru, Guru Angad continued the preaching, singing, meditation on *Name* at Khadur Sahib as was his practice in the times of Guru Nanak. *Sangats* were made to sit in line for meal irrespective of their caste as well as status and this *Langar* became regular and most important feature of the organisation of Sikhism. These institutions increased the number of Guru's followers. These institutions began to develop further and added to the popularity of Sikh order under Guru Amar Das also. Along with busy life at Goindwal third Guru strictly declared that he will be accessible only to those who had first partaken of food cooked and served in *Guru Ka Langar*.<sup>4</sup>

Both of '*Langar*' and '*Sangat*' germinated under Guru Nanak had come out as a regular feature and developed as a characteristic shape till the third Guru. The community was now well put on a platform and obtained a strong footing. The distinction began to separate the Sikhs from the other communities despite the hostility of both the Muslim Shaikhs and Hindu Pandits.<sup>5</sup> Both the Shaikhs as well as Pandits of those time started harassing Sikhs and began complaining to the ruling authorities against them and their growing popularity.

The erstwhile Hindu-Muslim clergy hated Sikhs for being against the regular norms of society. They abhorred Sikhs' sitting together, sharing meals and breaking the barrier of caste system through the simple teachings of Gurus devoid of any ritual, deviating the simple minded people from the path of religion.<sup>6</sup> On hearing the complaint Emperor Akbar came to meet Guru and was accordingly taken to the presence of the Guru. After sitting in Langar in one meeting with the Guru, the Emperor was so pleased that he donated land to the community kitchen in the name of Bibi Bhani.<sup>7</sup> This event not only added more people from humble origin but also of higher *varna* into the Sikh fold. Further, the vast range of Sikh community was built with inter-connected '*Manji System*' where Manjidaars were appointed in far off places to convey the messages of the house of the Guru.

Another important step taken by Guru Amar Das was collection of Bani of earlier Gurus. Guru Amar Das strongly urged upon followers to spurn all false or spurious hymns and to accept only those which were genuine and authoritative - *satiguru bina hor kachi hai bani*.<sup>8</sup>

Initiative taken by Guru Nanak was yet to be completed and thus the Guruship passed on to Guru Ram Das the fourth Nanak, who did not deviate in any way from the principles and tenets laid by the predecessors. Sikhism had already opened its doors to all and gave men simple, basic beliefs which all could follow. Guru Nanak's philosophy held the whole universe as incarnation of the Supreme. Guru Amar Das put forth that human self is the living abode Harimandar of Parmatman, full of bliss and God in it becomes visible through the light of the jewel of knowledge.

*Harimandaru ehu sariru hai giani ratani pargatu hoi*.<sup>9</sup>

House of Nanak day by day was becoming centre of unity, equality and brotherhood. The third Guru provided different and simple ceremonies of birth, death and marriage etc. for the community. He constructed a Baoli at Goindwal, establishing a new tradition, that for place to earn status of religious centre, it must be in a position to serve humanity physically also. Two occasions, Diwali and Baisakhi were designated as festivals. On

these occasions, the *sangat* from far and near used together at Goindwal wherein the Guru personally met to know the well-being of the *sangat*. Guru created appropriate atmosphere for the Sikhs to grow into a well-knit community with distinct ideology, belief system and distinct institutional structures.

Further to crystalize the theology of Guru Nanak succession was passed on to fourth Nanak, Guru Ramdas bypassing sons of third Guru. Guru Ram Das shifted his residence to present site of Amritsar on advise of Guru Aman Das to avoid possible unpleasantness with the relatives of third Guru. Guru Ram Das being a pleasant personality, composed hymns with high poetic and musical skills that they act as a stream of love whose cooling melody had immense transmuting potential. In his hymns, Guru re-emphasised the doctrines of predecessor Gurus and made them more clear. God in Bani of Guru Ramdas was posed as friend, a father, a mother, and Guru. Hence, they were not to look for any worldly helper, God in his Guru form was a sure help.<sup>10</sup> This was remarkably a new theology about the concept of God in Sikhism, as earlier God was an unapproachable identity who need special type of status of a disciple or seeker who want to reach Him. But in Sikhism God was as nearer as a mother, father or friend could be. This thing provided optimism to Sikhs. Public reading and listening of Gurbani was practised unlike the



traditional way of secret learnings. By this time, Guru established a new society at 'Chakk Guru Ka' where the so called low castes people including artisans, peasants, traders, petty shopkeepers, labourers were welcomed to join fold of Sikhism without any hesitation and was devoid of caste hierarchy. Guru Ramdas constructed a 'pool of Nectar' Amrit Sarovar in mid of the town and encouraged people of all professions to take up residence in the town.<sup>11</sup>

The mission of Sikhism had been made clear by its founders. It was aimed at establishing a society on the basis of social equality bounded by the ties of faith in the oneness of God and supported by the firm belief of stopping any kind of restriction on the worshipping of Him. Attempts were made by Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, but still the road was long and the goal was distant.

Now the succession was passed on to Guru Arjan and steps which Nanak V taken during his Guru period were completion of Amritsar and construction of Harimandir, raising of cities Tarn Taran and Kartarpur, setting up of Masand system, strengthening of economic base of the Sikhs, and the most important one was compilation and editing of Adi Granth earlier known as 'Pothi Sahib' and installing this compilation in the midst of Amrit Sarovar in 'Harimandir.'

Harimandir now known as the Golden Temple was designed as a symbol of such a faith to demonstrate its universality that has no match in the whole world. This temple is accessible to one and all men and women of all faiths, castes and nationalities. Normally the Indian places of worship were having a single door to restrict the entry of the so-called low caste people but Harimandir was built with four doors opening towards four directions to prove availability of God everywhere in all directions at all times and free entry to people irrespective of their caste, creed and gender. In medieval times temples were opened for people of higher caste only and similarly mosques were also open for worshipping by men only. However, Golden Temple opens its doors to everyone, giving them dignity and equality thus enriching Guru Nanak's theology of one God and unity among his creation.

Earlier temples were erected on a level above the surface of earth but Harimandir was constructed on the surface which was lower than the surroundings, this was again done according to Guru Nanak's theology of proving God residing at the lowest place among its creation and not somewhere on some other world in the sky away from the reach of the normal man.

In other religious places there was a range of idols of gods and goddesses along with their belongings but in Golden Temple no physical manifestation of God is found; it was only the sacred

Granth 'Adi Granth' which when completed was placed in the inner sanctuary and was declared by Guru Arjan, "the abode of True Guru."<sup>12</sup>

Thus was transformed Harimandir into symbolic authority of True Lord because Adi Granth or 'Pothi Sahib' was considered as explicit embodiment of God or True Guru and was installed in Harimandir.

Installation of 'Pothi Sahib,' also speaks of the continuity of thought of the founder of Sikhism because Pothi contained the words of Guru Nanak and his successor Gurus along with bhaktas, bhats and the devotees of Sikh Gurus. By placing the Pothi at Harimandir Sahib Guru Arjan established a landmark in the spiritual history of India.

The primary feature of Adi Granth which makes it distinct is authenticity of its content and variety of its contributors from different socio-religious backgrounds high and low, Hindu and Muslim. Some of them are even represented by only a verse or two while others' contributions are voluminous. While editing the bani of Pothi Sahib Guru Arjan was very conscious about the thought line of the contributors where equal concerns for quality of life in totality has been expressed. All the concerned issues - social, economic as well as political are dealt with in detail. They all tried to visualise a world of equality. One of the fundamentals

of interfaith understanding in the holy Granth is the recognition of capability of other faiths that in dealing with ills of the society all religions are competent and equal. It is only the contributors of the Adi Granth, who recognized that all religious dispensations are capable of elevating human soul though the way could be different. Says Guru Amar Das - O God, this world is burning (in the fire of hatred, jealousy, fanaticism etc.). Save it, O Lord through any gate (of any religion).

*Jagatu jalanda rakhi lai apani kirapa dhari.  
jitu duarai ubarai titai lai hu ubari.*<sup>13</sup>

The Gurus not only accepted the separate identity of Hindus and Muslims with their diverse customs and ceremonies, they rather respected and protected it as we see in the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur who offered his head to the tyrannical emperor for the safety of Hindu brahmin community of Kashmir whose he was neither a member nor a practitioner of their faith. In fact the Guru believed in the freedom of faith to one and all.

In recent times some people advocate that to achieve equality we must have unity even among our philosophies and political systems but it seems as if they are not talking about unity in diversity rather they are stressing upon uniformity of mankind. Sikhism does not believe in this kind of Monomania. Sikhism accepts 'positive differences' among all and not the

negative difference opposed to each other. We are talking about global consciousness today but the Gurus had practised it about 500 years ago. The ideology of Guru Granth advocates brotherhood, fraternity and culture of love creating awakening of new global atmosphere. Long before the dawn of this civilization and establishment of organizations for world peace (UNO) Sikh Gurus had the vision of universal religion for the entire humanity. We are living in polymorphic age where several cultures have to co-exist. Needless to say that if we understand different religions and ideologies from the point of view of Guru Granth we would live in a more dignified and harmonious co-existence. Guru Granth Sahib focussed on the dignity of mankind, the sense of self sacrifice, the theory of Sabad as Guru, the philosophy of dialogue and considers Truth as the basis of spirituo temporal life. Taking truthfulness of Ultimate Reality as granted, the truthful worldly life is the way of reaching Him. It is of utmost importance and the inner core of Guru Granth Sahib wherein Gurmukh is advised to perform concrete good deeds in this world and at the same time constantly to remember the Divine Name.<sup>14</sup>

Guru Granth teaches everybody to be true to his or her faith; a Muslim should be a true Muslim and a Hindu should be a true Hindu because the true spirit of religion teaches mutual respect as declared by Guru Arjan - *sarab dharm mahi sresath*

*dharm. hari ko namu japu nirmal karam.*<sup>15</sup> History is evidence that Sikhism never forced anybody to convert to the fold of Sikhism only because of the fact that Sikhism seeks to unite people belonging to different religious traditions into a broader unity of mind and soul. Sikh Theology emphasises unity in the diversity of mankind and this unity becomes possible only by being truthful to one's own religion.

Thus the sublimity of Guruship in the form of Guru Granth saved Sikhism from splintering into rival sects because the Gurbani became the Guru and the Guru remained the Gurbani.

### **MIRI-PIRI**

The aim of life, in traditional Hindu thought, presents spiritualism above worldliness. The idea shows that a man is much more concerned with his future rather than present.

For the realization of Ultimate Reality people were required to cultivate deep faith in the metaphysical world, but if religion continues to cater only spiritual needs of man ignoring his temporal problems it is bound to lose its hold because the primary concern of individuals mainly lies in their worldly problems.

Guru Nanak delved deeper into this problem and provided a 'unique synthesis' of balanced temporal and spiritual realities of human life wherein 'co-existence' and 'inter-dependence' were advocated.

A rational synthesis of both the needs, physical values as well as values of spirit, is the necessity of the present time because the dependence on any one of them had already shown disastrous results.

Guru Nanak's thought presented the image of man in a unique and different way when he described human life as a 'rare gift' of God, to cultivate divine life and to establish re-union of Atman with Parm-atman. In this way status of the human life even surpasses the life of the so-called gods and goddesses who as per general belief always lived above in the sky and come down very rarely. The whole Sikh spiritual thought reminds man of his 'divine origin' and his implicit resemblance with God.

Ancient traditional faiths of India have treated worldly existence as a transitory phase and advised man to forsake the world to attain higher spiritual life, Paul Brunton gives a brief account of the religious tradition prevailing in India in earlier days in the following words:

"In ancient times, advanced spiritual methods were almost always prescribed only for those who had renounced the world and its temptations, who had withdrawn into the monasteries or convents or who had run away into the desert, the jungle and the mountain caves."<sup>16</sup>

Sikh thought does not sanction renunciation and it also does not treat this phenomenal world as mere 'maya' or illusion;

in fact it calls the world 'true' because the spirit of God prevails in it - *Ihu jagu sache ki hai kothari*.<sup>17</sup>

The reason behind this escapist (renunciation) theory of earlier times was found in the theory of *Karma* where actions keep human soul bound in the continuous cycle of births and deaths. To overpower this process people were required to be actionless so that they could be free from binding results of those actions.

But in Theology of Guru Nanak the theory of *Karma* has been redefined and made consistent with the worldly life on the ground that God himself is active (*karta purakh*) then why should man reverse the process from action to inaction in an unnatural way thus opposing the will of God. Further, if individuals act in sincere and honest way, they become God-like by reciting His Name.

So when worldly life is regulated by moral and ethical principles it does not stand in the way of spiritual development, rather it provides a definite impetus for realization of higher spiritual goals. Sikh thought emphatically upholds moral and ethical principles which are not of a mere theoretical nature but are of practical use in an ideal domestic life. Sikhism stresses upon truthful life through *Kirat*, *Naam* and *Seva* as a way to secure the rewards of this world and of the world beyond - *Halat palat dui lehu suari*.<sup>18</sup>



No doubt that Sikhism stresses upon the purity of 'soul' as a definite means to realize God but at the same time, it asserts that body should be actively used for *seva* to make spiritual efforts fruitful.

Sikhism has suggested a new middle path by telling people to be in the world but not become worldly. In such position one is required to lead a family life in a detached spirit not exclusively indulging in worldliness - *Kahu Nanak guru bhetia parvan girast udas*.<sup>19</sup> So Sikh way favours cultivating higher spiritual values of ascetic life while living in this world - *Nanak satguru bhetia puri hovai jugati. hasandia, khelndian, painandian viche hovai mukat*.<sup>20</sup> According to Sikh thought renouncing of world is unnatural and opposite to the 'Will' of God. The right way to attain spiritual perfection is to lead normal domestic life with *sanjam*, that is, enjoyment of life with restraint or moderation.

The term *grihastha udas* is also referred to as *parviti-nirviti*. Both are Sanskrit-rooted terms and both represent extreme attitude towards worldly life. However, Sikhism rejects both extremes and suggests a middle path of *parviti-nirviti* providing a practical approach to an ideal human life - *Gurmukh parviti nirviti pachanai*.<sup>21</sup>

There is a co-existence of 'divine' and 'worldly' attributes of human beings in a unique manner in the fold of Guru Nanak's theology.

Religion is generally understood to possess divine attributes termed as Bhakti and temporal tendencies as Shakti. Bhakti has been traced to Sanskrit root 'Bhaj' means 'to meditate'. Sometimes *dhyan* is also used in the context of Bhakti. In Sikhism Bhakti is an ideal combination of *Kirat*, *Nam* and *Sewa*. *Nam*, that is, meditation upon God, does not fructify, unless it is based on the practical life of '*Kirat*' and '*Sewa*'.

Similarly the term *Shakti* is derived from the root *sak* meaning "to be able," "to have power" indicating the importance of capacity or activity. This term finds close association with Shaktism (a Hindu cult) that believed in the worship of great goddess (called mother goddess). Where *Shakti* has been considered as the source of all supreme power and all cosmic evolution. The term *shakti* has been defined as "Divine Power" or energy personified as female the dynamic and distinct from its passive aspect.<sup>22</sup> In this sense the term denotes the dynamic aspect of the power and freedom of God.

In Tantric cult *Shakti* is associated with *Shiva* and this co-existence of *Shiva-Shakti* marks the highest spiritual stage of this cult.<sup>23</sup> Hence the concept Ardhnarishvar exists in the Indian philosophy.

In Sikhism the idea of *Shakti* is always associated with the idea of *Bhakti*. In other words Shakti without Bhakti is inconceivable in Sikhism.

This whole cosmos seems to be consisting of opposite elements, complimentary to each other. Day is followed by night, white is complimentary to black, similarly male is complimented by female and vice-versa. As in the views of Prof. Jodh Singh, "At different stages of life male behaves like female and the female as male and this is evident from their behaviour patterns at different age levels because girl behaves like male from 8-15 years of age and the male as vice-versa. And this alternate cycle goes on upto the last moment of life."<sup>24</sup>

In the same way *Miri* or *Shakti* and *Piri* or *Bhakti* both operate through man simultaneously and importance of one can not deny the vitality of other as both are essential for successful life. However, their wrong mixing can be most harmful and balanced use can prove to be of the highest value.

When we peep through ancient religious literature of India, we can clearly see trials of mixing both these faculties by upper two so- called higher classes of society (the Purohit and the Kshatriyas (Kings). Both of them join their hands and exploit the lower classes i.e. the Vaishyas and Shudras as and when they want, resulting in the deepening of the rift among various classes of society. And this proved to be fatal for the healthy growth of society. There was not any kind of security for the common masses. They were exploited at all levels.

Whereas on the other hand, the Indian philosophy which claims to be full of values of humanitarian nature, fails to prove its ideas about fatherhood of God and brotherhood of mankind because the practice of theology of those values could not percolate in society. That remains theory only and could not become theory for practice.

With the advent of Sikhism, the situation was reversed, Guru Nanak while travelling through length and breadth of this subcontinent minutely observed the difference in theory and practice and for that he established *Sangats* wherever he went so that the ego of these so-called high classes should start melting while sitting together with the so-called low classes. Guru Nanak finally settled at Kartarpur and there initiated the other institution of *Pangat (Langar)* and strengthened the institution of *Sangat* and *Pangat (Langar)*. Successor Gurus further firmly established and developed these institutions and the institution of *seva* also sprouted from these institutions. *Seva* further strengthened the bonds of equality among various classes of society. Now onwards the situation took such a turn in the times of Guru Hargobind and the tenth Guru Gobind Singh that saints were not saints alone and soldiers were not only soldiers. It was incumbent upon all to undertake all types of works so that the humanitarian spirit could be aroused to unite the people. By the time of Sixth Guru it became

essential for him to keep aside the earlier signs of Guruship and demanded wearing Kalaghi and two Swords of Miri (temporality) and Piri (spirituality) while accepting the house of Guru.

Guru Nanak's religious system was a radical departure from all the earlier religious systems in many respects. And this blend of temporality and spirituality shows his contrast of perception, methodologies, essentials, goals and the thought process of Guru Nanak and that of the earlier systems. His methods were opposite to every corrupt social functionary and institution whether religious, social, official, administrative, political and the tyranny of the invaders or the failure of rulers. His spirituality was so sensitive to injustice in every walk of life that he even complains to God for allowing the strong to oppress the weak.<sup>25</sup>

However, the imbalance of authority of power only in favour of the upper strata of society was not acceptable to the Guru. So his followers were required to be prepared for such kind of challenges and for that all the successor Gurus followed the path of bravery and devotion to God. At the time of fifth Nanak the Mughal Emperor found that the Gurus can put forth a political challenge and hence their activities are needed to be nipped in the bud. Hence, the execution of Guru Arjan.<sup>26</sup>

The Guru not only accepted the challenge boldly but his martyrdom also prepared his people for the confrontation that

he had initiated. And it was he who left instructions for his son to start military preparations for the ensuing struggle. Here it is significant to state that Guru Hargobind had started joining hunting parties even in the life time of his father.<sup>27</sup> The Period of Guru Hargobind was of open militarisation and conflict with the empire. At the time of his initiation by wearing two swords, he conceptualised a clear idea of the role the Sikh society was to play. Military training was started. There were open clashes with the forces of the state. Akal Takht, the Centre of socio-political activity was created side by side the Harimandir Sahib. Two flags of *Bhakti* and *Shakti* were raised at the common compound between Harimandir and Akal Takht being the symbols of doctrine of Guru Nanak, combining spirituality with temporal life. One must take notice of the height of both the flags where flag of temporarility (Akal Takht) is lower than flag of spirituality (Harimandir). This blend was innovative where temporality should be guided by spirituality and the process should not be reversed otherwise.

It is significant that the changes initiated by the successor Gurus in Sikh life were deliberate and calculated. These changes were noticed by the outsiders due to lack of understanding of Sikh ideology which is evident from the question raised by Samrth Ram Das of Maharashtra to Guru Hargobind as to how it was,

that while he called himself a successor of Guru Nanak, he was so anomalously wearing a warrior's armour and riding a horse. The Guru's reply as was earlier the reply of Guru Nanak to Naths, was prompt and categorical - Guru Nanak had given up mammon and not the world. My sword is for the protection of the weak and destruction of the tyrant.<sup>28</sup> In fact the ideological revolution Guru Nanak had brought about was so great that some people were unable to grasp the doctrinal unity of all the Gurus.

Similar is the case of martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, whose *bani* epitomises the pain of spiritual depth. He chooses to intervene and protest against religious persecution and attack by the Emperor on the freedom of conscience in Kashmir and was beheaded in Delhi in 1675 A.D.

Later on during the last phase of Guru period, Guru Gobind Singh feeling that Sikh community had now become mature, self reliant and responsible enough to fight the socio-political injustices and battle of life that lay ahead, he passed *Guruship* to the Holy Granth and handed over strength to Guru Panth.

The Mission of Guru Nanak was completed and a religiously motivated casteless and classless '*Khalsa*' had been created to fight for righteousness and to stand against all the socio-political injustice.

## CREATION OF KHALSA

The emergence of Sikh institutions based on the religio-ethical doctrines of the Sikh Gurus proved Sikhism as a well organised distinct culture. The institutions such as *Sangat*, *Pangat (Langar)*, *Guruship*, *Seva*, *Manji System* and above all *Khalsa Panth* founded by the Sikh Gurus gave a new life to the lifeless, docile and timid people of India. The ethical doctrines further developed alongwith the strengthening of above mentioned Sikh Institutions. These institutions not only spread the teachings of the Sikh Gurus but also spread ethical social concerns of Sikh theology. They made people loosen the bonds of social evils like casteism, gender discrimination etc. and infused the idea of universal brotherhood to help social upliftment of the down-trodden.<sup>29</sup>

The creation of Khalsa provided a combination of the ideas of combination of Bhagti and Shakti, of moral and spiritual excellence and the militant valour of highest order.<sup>30</sup> Khalsa was the height of Guru Nanak's mission. Guru Gobind Singh converted the Sangat into saint soldiers and were further taught them not to bow before the rulers except God. The Guru declared that wherever Khalsa will assemble God the Guru will be present there.



The Khalsa was a dynamic institution which transformed the outlook of the Sikh social organization. The Khalsa was a great creative accomplishment of history which wrought a revolutionary change in people's mind and aroused their dormant energies for positive and altruistic purposes. They were made conscious of the disabilities of their state of servitude and abjectness and taught people to stand up on their feet and work ceaselessly and courageously to redeem their predicament. The people who came under the banner of *Khalsa Panth* became proud of their new heroism and emerged as a great motivating force with sword in their hand.

Earlier the use of sword was reserved only for one segment of society. The upper Brahmin class had given an inferiority complex to the lower so-called two *vaishya* and *shudra* castes and taught them to shun the profession of arms. Whatever be the form of Government, they were made to obey. The idea of fighting against injustice was out of their caste oriented psychology and pacifism under all circumstances was preached to them as a religious virtue and they cultivated this *Dharma* (duty) even at the level of cowardice.

Common man could not even think of the use of courage but Guru's reliance was on the sword and he sought to exalt military powers in all possible ways.

Thus to create spiritual socialism in domain of religion need of sword was realised by Guru Gobind Singh. He considered the sword to be the hand of God to punish the wicked.

This transforming effect by Guru Gobind Singh could be seen in total background of Sikh thought. In Sikh way of life God Himself was portrayed as foe of evil and tyranny throughout the Sikh scripture. In medieval mythology also God was incarnated as rescuer, but the difference from Sikh Gurus was only in the portrayal -

Guru Gobind Singh himself portrayed God in various symbolic forms (like Durga, Hari, Khadagpani, Chakrapani) to arouse the spirit of bravery among the common man whom the Guru wished to prepare to take sword against the oppressor. Earlier Gurus also presented the image of God as a succourer of pure and innocent from tyrant. Guru Arjan refers to God as, "Master, the great hero."<sup>31</sup> Guru Nanak enumerates God as *Akal Purakh*, Fearless, without rancour, Hari, Bhagwant, Gosaieen.

Guru Gobind Singh also confirms the faith of ultimate triumph of righteousness by portraying wars among godly and demonic powers. These long battles are drawn just to inculcate faith among common people that ultimate victory will definitely be on the right side though the wars portrayed are multidimensional and miraculous.

The efforts done by heroes are full of dedication, self invited suffering, courage and sacrifice. There are anticipations of such heroism in the compositions of earlier Gurus also. As one of hymn of Guru Nanak indicates that only those should come to this way, who are ready for sacrifice of all types - *Jau tau prem khelan ka chau.*

Guru Nanak even took notice of duplicate life of martial class of that time (the Kshatriyas) who adopted the ways, customs, language of the ruling class just to take favour of them - *Antari puja pare kateba.*<sup>32</sup> The Guru forbade his followers not to follow such path of cowardice. His community was to stand firm against the temptations of the world and endurance in all the sufferings must be like a superhuman. While Guru Nanak himself did not use arms at all but his words continued to be the seed from which emerges the heroic history of Sikh resistance to the tyranny.

Earlier to Sikhism, the need of religious as well as political and social revival was felt but there was hardly any policy or even consciousness of having lost their freedom and all were subjected to the will of arrogant alien conquerors. There was not at all any organized resistance to the aggressions and people had completely failed to respond to the call of the society. Society looked static in its vision and they were waiting for some mythological miracle to take place; no one appeared to formulate

anything for the basic unity of native creeds of India; no one assured them about strength of their unity and victory of righteousness rather demoralization was bound to set in their minds and they were prepared to accept the circumstances as their destiny. There might be some noble dignitaries, who could have been able to take active steps to secure superiority of common people and do something as a mark of national protest against the tyrants, but unfortunately nothing was done in this direction.

Guru Nanak was unique in the spiritual scenario of erstwhile India who showed his sensitiveness on the question of national honour and self respect. He was bold enough even in asking the creator (God) that why He is allowing the tyrant Babar to act mercilessly on the innocent who are shrieking and writhing in pain. Don't you feel any pangs of their's - *Khurasan khasamana kia*.<sup>33</sup>

However Guru Nanak admonished severely to the native people also who, through their merry making and low character had put to dust the jewel like India. He rather loudly said that such leachoures society is bound to be punished and nobody would like to weep over their sufferings.

The shame, the degradation and helplessness of the people, no one has felt prior to Guru Nanak. This is what had

distinguished Sikh movement from all the earlier and contemporary religious as well as revolutionary movements. None had a creative character other than Sikhism who could have created a new history in this subcontinent. The aim of Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus was to take people away from fanaticism, superstitions and in general to help people for their moral upliftment. Gurus advocated universal love, peace and justice and kept themselves away from political matters upto the times of fifth master Guru Arjan Dev, but later on the situation took a new turn when sixth Guru adopted two swords of *Miri* and *Piri* instead of *seli* and *topi* of his predecessors. He just on a small distance from Harimandar created Akal Takhat the "Throne of the Timeless" where spirituo temporal affairs of the fast growing Sikh community were taken care of by the Sixth Guru Himself. Now the Sikh community had to make itself militant in order to survive the onslaughts of Mughal Empire. The concerns of adherents of House of Nanak can be seen in the action of Ninth Guru, who being a person of retiring temperament expressing deep non-attachment to worldly affairs, quit from his saintly life and intervened into the contemporary conflict when Aurangzeb's campaign against Hinduism touched high limits. He stood against the tyrant Mughal Empire for the sake of religious belief of some other faith. This was not at all a general revolt rather was an

assertion and gesture of national honour and self-respect. It was action to raise voice against the oppression and not a revolt in any political or selfish sense. Guru Tegh Bahadur gave his life for the protection of Hindu religious ethos. This was the fruit of teachings of Guru Nanak who had taught that one should accept the existence of other religious traditions and if need be, one should also defend the religious rights of other religious traditions. Similarly Kabir had also said that there is none good or bad because everything had been created by the same Almighty - *Avali alah nooru upaia*.<sup>34</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh created the Sikh way of life by giving baptism of steel to everyone whosoever came into fold of Sikhism. He handed over the sword in the hands of common man and gave them a common platform to fight against tyrant of any type.

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## **CHAPTER - IV**

### **Impact of Sikh Theology: 18th Century**

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### **IMPACT OF SIKH THEOLOGY: 18TH CENTURY**

Social situation is a test, in terms of which it may be possible for us to evaluate whether a person who professes humanitarian outlook is faithful to what he proclaims or he is merely a sentimentalist who is dabbling in emotions but is devoid of action in the moral sense.<sup>1</sup>

While the mystic intuition is subjective and not open to demonstration to others, we can know it in the conduct of the mystic, more particularly in his social actions. It may be plainly assumed that if there is no difference in the motives, direction and implementation in practical life of those who are touched by the grace of God as compared with those who walk alone and does not claim any of such experience then the light the mystic poses to have realised is indeed the light that fails.

The virtues are the qualities of the self as witnessed in its conduct and accomplishments. The virtues cited generally in Sikhism are to be cultivated as permanent traits of conduct. These are comprehensive and all inclusive. These virtues include - wisdom, truthfulness, temperance, justice, courage, humility and contentment. These may be called as cardinal virtues in Sikhism.<sup>2</sup>

However in India, virtue such as courage was generally regarded as specialised virtue (*vishesha dharma*) of specially the warrior class and such virtues were considered as imperative for other castes. Sikhism breaks through this notion of specialised virtue, time to time referred itself as the warrior class created for the protection of others. The Sikhs tried to cultivate all the acclaimed virtues in their heads, minds and bodies. At times (like 18th century) Sikhs showed the martial aspect of their character but it would be wrong to interpret that the whole of Sikh approach to life is merely in the martial terms. Abiding in the *Raza* or Hukam remained the moral principle of duties envisaging the performance of Sikh's function to the best of his progressive ability and '*rahit*' (code of conduct) also stresses on the role of moral duties in Sikhism.<sup>3</sup>

### **Ethical Concerns/Values in Guru Granth Sahib**

Apart from spiritual guidance in Guru Granth with which even the earlier religious literature of India was overloaded, various ethical values are given due place in this unique scripture. Morality is the basis of civilisation. Man instinctively knows that society cannot live without moral base and it would crumble and disintegrate without that basis. But due to imperfections man's moral values go on changing and evolving. Aboriginal tribes, though, had a moral code of their own society yet they did not

consider murder a crime and they even ate human flesh. In civilised societies different customs prevail having different moral norms. Some would insist Purdah (veir) for women as necessary and others would consider it as a sign of disrespect to her. Marrying a second wife is a crime in some places but a lady of strature of Daropadi had five husbands and there was nothing wrong about it at that time. A decoit would refrain from drawing his sword against whose salt he had eaten but civilised nations would have no qualm of conscience in murdering whole nations of men in the name of patriotism. If the conscience of man were in its purest form it should have spoken with one voice always. But the fact remains, that man's moral sense, however imperfect, must have come to him from the source of his being and therefore, that source must itself be the highest moral being. The ethical consciousness of man proves the existence of that moral being and gives to him only a glimpse of that being. Guru Granth, therefore builds up structure of society on intrinsic moral and ethical values.

Man has the Idea of Truth, love, wisdom, goodness and freedom in him. Where have these ideas emerged from? If there is such a thing as love or wisdom which a man has learnt to value, there must be some infinite source from which it has come. There is always a sense of spiritual want in man which is a proof

of his being essentially a spirit. The fact that man tries to run away from pain and suffering, hatred shows that these were not a part of his true being and he is conscious of something good and happy with which he wants to be reunited and which must be his real self.<sup>4</sup> The fact is that there is nothing permanent in the world except the Atman (soul) which is the same in all and one. In conformity with the nature of that pure Atman, the rules of Ethics would be immutable.

Apart from a man being- an imperfect fellow, he must keep some ideal and pure ethical values in mind and only then he could dream about a civilised surrounding. Imperfections could be there but the guiding force must always keep shining. Truth, love, wisdom and goodness in their idealistic form are not mere abstractions, rather these values are to be taken as projections of the Supreme in the perfected human minds.

Similar attributes of love, truth, goodness are given to the God of Sikhism and as God is considered the part and parcel of His creation, all these virtues are bound to be visible in His creatures also. Followers of Sikhism knew these things very well, and they have formulated guidelines based on Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Granth Sahib is the source of guidance for every minute aspect of every Sikh's life, whether it is of spiritual or

temporal nature. Guru Granth is the guide for his political, religious, social and personal upliftment. Various aspects are dealt with in detail such as gender discrimination, political as well as social obligations and spirituo-temporal life etc.

According to Guru Nanak, of all the living beings of the universe, human is alone the ethical subject. He possesses emotions, mind, reason and spirit. He knows that he has relations with the two worlds, one the finite and the other the infinite one. Therefore, the believer in God should love the universe which is the product of God. Excellence in man lies not in self assertion and in an individual striving for his own goals but it lies in offering oneself as a contribution to all the beings of the universe. However, while moving on this path egoism is the greatest evil before man. It stands as a wall between man and God. Love and compassion are the greatest goods. By identifying ourselves with good of all, we truly gain our real end of being one with the creator. Every person must subdue his senses which make for egotistic self-assertion. Pride must give place to humility, resentment to forgiveness, narrow attachment with family to universal benevolence. Guru Nanak says in Sri Raga -

Greed is a cur, falsehood a scavenger;

deceitful earning eating of carrion.

Slander of others is as stuffing the mouth with filth;

Wrath an uncleanfire  
 Craving for earthly tastes, self-praise,  
 such Lord-Creator are my actions  
 With all these tastes engrossing the body,  
 how may the Name find lodging therein.<sup>5</sup>

Sikhism therefore believing in equality, favours and advocates all the feminine virtues such as humility, sympathy, mercy, love and self sacrifice. Guru Nanak preached these feminine virtues along with masculine virtues of power, courage and bravery also. He never refrained from condemning the cruel deeds of the rulers (even Babar).

The Bhaktas, rishis and yogis strongly advocating feminine virtues adopted escape route towards jungles and caves. Guru Nanak did his moral duty towards society when these spiritually lifted persons failed.

Following the example of Guru Nanak, all Sikh Gurus just tried their level best to persuade the political rulers not to commit atrocities on the innocents. These humble virtues reached the peak in the lives of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur. Their sacrifices were unparalleled events in the history of mankind. They offered their lives for the sake of protection of Dharma. But when the Sikhs are convinced that there is no change in the heart of the persecuter, they stop offering him the humbleness. Here

Sikhism departs to say, that there is a limit to persuasion. It is a sin to let the tyrant continue oppressions. Taking up sword against tyrant is implicit in the teachings of Guru Teg Bahadur. The knowledgeable person neither becomes afraid of any one nor he makes anybody afraid of him. o, Nanak such a person is known as a knowledgeable person.<sup>6</sup>

Earlier in Indian philosophy the eagerness to seek God, ignored the interests of general humanity. India produced many a spiritual person but they never showed the real path of humility and service to mankind (seva). Indian history proved that how high an individual can go by spiritual culture and how low a race can fall by remaining engrossed in self-glorification.

Guru Nanak understood this fatal flaw of India and formulated a new community to improve this situation. During the Guru period (from first to tenth) Sikhs were prepared spiritually as well as practically to face this malady.

The concept of social responsibility took firm hold of the Sikh community under the guidance of ten masters. The community was now ready to live more responsible life. The word Singh, given to Khalsa was filled with martial spirit, courage, nobility and distinct character.

The Sikhs have left on the Indian history, a distinct stamp of their creativity. This community may be held as the finest



cultural product of the religiously and socially integrated mankind. The personal Guruship was ended by the tenth master and the succession was passed on to the Guru Granth Sahib. This was the most significant development in the history of a community. The leadership of community was invested in the Panth itself. After the tenth master under the guidance of Banda Singh Bahadur, Sikhs were tutored and surcharged with ethos and culture of their own. They refused to be eliminated or mowed down. They asserted that they owned their primary allegiance to truth and morality and they would never submit to the exclusive claim of the secular state to govern the bodies and minds of men. The raising of the Akal Takht at the time of Guru Hargobind very well proved that 'House of the Guru' was the supreme direction-giving authority. Gradually this authority passed on to the 'Panth' and 'Granth' after the tenth Master and all the people (Sarbat Khalsa) having faith in Sikh religion now began to exercise that authority..

While peeping through the history of Indian subcontinent one may be surprised to see a strongly built Mughal Empire which took around centuries to get established and no one could dare to stand against the Mughals.

It will not be out of place to mention concisely about the spread of Islam and the kingdoms of Muslims created in the

Middle East and as to how the staunch followers of Islam moved towards Indian subcontinent. It will be further interesting that apart from attacks on India by Persians and Greeks how Banda Singh Bahadur a disciple of Guru Gobind Singh after hundreds of years of these attacks, emerged like a great force in north-west India. Leaving apart for the time being the attacks of Persian and Greeks while looking into the history of Indian states, we come to know that a very strong and great Indian king Harshvardhan died in 647 A.D. and with his demise, the political scenario of India started moving from bad to worse situation and within few decades of his death there was an anarchy all around because Rajput kings started their fights against each other fiercely.

Since, we know that most of the wars were fought between the Muslims and the Sikhs in North India, it will not be out of place to know about the attacks of Muslim chiefs on India. In the Macca city of Arab country the birth of Muhammad Sahib took place in 570 A.D. and at the age of forty he preached to the people around him the message of oneness of God and made them understand the deeper meaning of this brotherhood. He told people that God (*Khuda*) is one, I am His Paigambar (Messenger) and all the Muslims are brothers to each other. Therefore, they should organise themselves and have congenial relationship with

each other. His teachings were readily accepted by the Muslim community and whole of the Arab country by following his teachings started accepting Islam as a religion. In the year 632 A.D., the Great Mohammad Sahib left this world for his heavenly abode but the roots of his teachings as a religion went on getting powerful day by day.<sup>7</sup> After Mohammad Sahib 'Khalifas' took the flag of Islam to far off countries with the power of their swords and just after 80 years of the demise of Mohammad Sahib the religion initiated by him spread all over Arab, Palestine, Siria, Persia, West Turkey, Sind, Egypt, North Africa and South Spain. The most surprising conquests by Islam were rooted in the understanding of brotherhood of their religion, military organisation, love for their nation and being always ready to die for their religion.

In the year 712 A.D. the Arabs attacked India from Western side of Sind and the commander of this attack was a seventeen years young man, Mohammad-bin-Kasim.<sup>8</sup> To help him the Chief of 'Babul' offered him navigational help and he tried to conquer the confronting areas. The city of 'Deval' was easily subdued by the Muslims and then they had a close fight with King Dahir of Sind. Dahir had to surrender and soon was killed. After victory of Sind, Islamic troops moved forward and captured Multan and now Mohammad-bin-Kasim started consultations for moving

towards Rajputana. However, due to the stiff opposition of Bappa Rawal of Mewar, he could not materialize his plans. After this, through the orders of Khalifa he was called back to Baghdad and was eventually killed on account of some lapses in his character.

In the North India, in those times Parmar, Parihar and Chauhan kings were ruling their respective areas. In the first and second century when the Northern India was being time and again attacked by Greeks and other invaders, many of the Rajputs after having left the Ganges valley got themselves settled in the Rajputana and Central India. In the sixth and seventh century, in Northern India many Rajput dynasties adopted Buddhism and in fact they went far away from the ancient Indian civilization. However, some of the Rajput kings consistently remained the followers of Hinduism and started looking down upon those Kshatriyas who had accepted Buddhism as their way of life. With passage of time, the difference between these two groups widened and it went up to such an extent that the living style of Rajputs of Rajputana and Central India became totally different to each other.

In the families of Rajputs of Rajasthan and Central India, there was one family known as 'Gahilot' in Mewar, and one of its branch started living at the place named 'Seesod' and after the name of this branch the members came to be known as

“Seesodia.’ ‘Bappa Rawal’ was the originator of this dynasty. The Great Maharana Pratap also belonged to this dynasty. Among the Tomar, Chauhan and Rathod Rajputs, Tomars were ruling at Delhi; Ajmer was ruled by Chauhans and upto 1090 A.D. the Parihar Rajputs ruled at Kanauj. *Rathod* dynasty belonged to Jodhpur and Bikaner and later on they also got settled at Kanauj and their king was Jai Chand Rathod. In Bundelkhand the Chandel dynasty was ruling and their main cities were Mahoba, Kalinjar, and Khajuraho.<sup>9</sup>

Later on Mahoba was conquered by Prithvi Raj Chauhan and he got it included in his own kingdom. Parmar dynasty was ruling in Malwa and king ‘Bhoj’ was their main ruler who ruled his area with a Pomp and Show from 1010 A.D. to 1055 A.D. - During the attacks by Mehmud Gazanavi, the great temple of Som Nath in Gujrat was ran sacked and looted.<sup>10</sup> All these Hindu kings jointly fought against his force but eventually the success remained to the side of Mehmud Gazanavi.

In the Northern hills of Ghazani the glory of ‘Ghor’ Sultanat was increasing gradually. After some time in the year 1152 A.D. an Afghan Chief of Ghor Alaudin Hasan attacked the Sultan of Ghazni and burnt the city of Ghazni and included this Sultanat in his own territory. After his death his cousin Shahabudin Ghorī succeeded his throne and came to be popularly known as

Mohammad Ghori. He gathered a powerful army and attacked Hindustan through 'Khaiber Valley' and became victorious in Multan, Peshawar and Sind etc. In the year 1184 A.D. Mohd. Ghori, conquered even Lahore and later on all the Muslim states of Hindustan surrendered before him. In the year 1191 he gathered a very powerful army and moved towards Punjab to fight against the Rajputs.<sup>11</sup> In India at that time Prithviraj Chauhan was the most brave and powerful king, whose kingdom spread from Delhi upto Ajmer. In the year 1191 when the news of the attack by Mohd. Ghori reached Delhi, Prithviraj Chauhan immediately moved towards him to fight against the enemy. They all jointly fought against Muslims and near Thanesar in the fields of 'Tarayan' he grappled with Mohd. Ghori and his army. Ghori tried his best but ultimately had to run from the battlefield and was chased by the Rajputs upto a long distance.<sup>12</sup> In 1192 A.D., again Mohd. Ghori with one lakh twenty thousand strong army comprising Afghans, Turkish and Persian soldiers reached Punjab. This time his soldiers were ready to Do and Die. Here, the affair of marriage of Sanyogita, the daughter of Jai Chand divided the Rajput kings in many groups and side by side Afghan soldiers now almost knew the fighting strategies of Rajputs. Therefore in the year 1192 A.D. when they confronted the Rajputs, then after the fierce battle of 12 hours and numerous

casualties, the Muslim army got the success. Prithviraj was captured and after reaching Afghanistan he got killed himself.<sup>13</sup>

Now the Afghan flag was hoisted on the capital Ajmer of Chauhans, but yet Delhi was to be subdued which took further one more year. After handing over the conquered territory to one of his slave Kutub-din-Aibak Mohd. Ghori returned back. In the year 1193 A.D. Kutub-din ransacked Delhi completely and after one year in 1194 Mohd. Ghori again came back and attacked Kanauj, the capital of Jai Chand and further sent his forces towards East where Banaras was also captured by them. Bakhtiar, a Chief sent by Kutub-din subjugated Awadh and Bihar and up to 1200 A.D. the Afghans gradually conquered Bengal also.

On the other hand Mohd. Ghori and his slave Kutub-din-Aibak conquered Kalpi, Gwalior and Malwa. In the year 1203 A.D. Afghans subjugated Chandel Rajputs along with their famous fort of Kalinjar. This way almost in the whole of Hindustan the kingdom of Mohd. Ghori was established.<sup>14</sup> In the year 1206 while returning to Afghanistan Mohd. Ghori was killed and after him the slave dynasty ruled Hindustan for three hundred years. In this slave dynasty 'Khilji' 'Tughlak', 'Sayyad' and Lodhi dynasties were famous who ruled here from 1206 to 1526 when in the battle of Panipat Babar, the Mughal defeated Ibrahim Lodhi and laid the foundation of Mughal dynasty which ruled India for seven

generations. Then Britishers snatched India from their last ruler Bahadur Shah.

In the light of above mentioned historical facts one may imagine the social, religious and political helplessness of Hindustan.

No doubt that there were some good Muslim rulers also but primarily the Indian masses were to face the cruelties which were perpetrated on them from tenth century onwards, and now the glory of Indian people remained in folk tales only.

To fight fanaticism against the Indian people and to tame the cruelties forced on them none other than Sikh Gurus prepared their followers mentally through their personal journeys and contacts with the Indian masses. Guru Nanak was the first religious personality, who toured from North to South and East to West Asia up to Mecca and met the rulers as well as the ruled ones and spread the message of love and mutual respect.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, under the guidance of Sikh Gurus , Sikh Community assumed a distinct personality which made them unbending and unrelenting before injustice and oppression. Guru Gobind Singh took every possible care to promote corporate aspect of the Khalsa brother hood. According to Indubhushan Benerjee, “ It was in Sikhism alone, that a sense of corporate unity gradually evolved”.<sup>15</sup>



Guru Gobind Singh after the creation of Khalsa, advised the Sikhs to take decisions or pass Gurmatas through a council and this measure gave a form of federative republic to the Sikhs.<sup>16</sup>

The Khalsa ideals served as beacon light for the Sikh leaders. They dared not to defy the Sikh ideals. In respect of their duties towards the Khalsa common wealth, no Sikh including the Sikh Chiefs, enjoyed any exemption. None could pose to be above the Panth. No single individual or a group of individuals could be considered as superior or equal to the entire body of the community. The Sikh leaders at times, declared that they are the humble servants of panth, working for the good and pleasure of the Khalsa Common Wealth.<sup>17</sup>

Thus the community was now united and integrated as never before. All members of community enjoyed equal privilege with one another. By receiving Amrit from Panj Piaras Guru had exploded the myth of his superiority to his followers. This equality with one another, common external appearance, common leadership and common aspiration bound the Sikhs together into a compact mass, raising their strength manifold.<sup>18</sup>

Neither the hill chiefs of neighbourhood nor the Mughal government could tolerate the great revolution that the Sikh Gurus had effected with such tremendous success. Before and after the creation of Khalsa, the Government had made many

attempts to destroy the growing power of the Sikhs. But they endured, suffered and survived and the community created and reared by the enduring efforts of the ten Masters and blessed with noble traditions of intrepidity, bravery, sacrifice and virtuous conduct, took up challenge of the Mughal high haedness, persecution and injustice under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur.

After Guru Gobind Singh, the history of Punjab would have been incomplete without Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and Sikhs like Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh, et. al. These blessed souls shook the foundations of strongly built Mughal Empire. Banda Singh Bahadur earlier known as Madho Das Bairagi considered himself as a complete yogi, adept in occult powers before meeting Guru Gobind Singh. But the single meeting with the Guru set aside all his pride and he submitted himself to the Guru. When Guru gave him the true picture of the nation's slavery as to how people were being victimised and were in great anguish, Madho Das suddenly got jolted into a new reality as if he had just opened his eyes after a long sleep. He gave up his Bairagi dress and became a Sikh and came to know about Sikh history from the followers of the tenth Master.

As stated earlier condition of Indian sub-continent was worst, politically, socially and even religiously. Politically, Mughals

had smashed the glory of India and Indians. And the reason behind this condition was disintegration of society at all the levels. Besides having a rich religious heritage, preaching oneness of God, brotherhood of mankind, people were divided socially in compartments on the basis of their birth and caste.

At philosophical level India was preaching unity but practically society was having so rigid classification, that no one could even dare to unite hands together to oppose such injustice being perpetrated over them. Their so called ideals (Brahmins and Kshatriyas) were very much involved in this rigid caste system based on their Dharma, that either they were following some escape route from society, posing being religious or they were busy in their infights for their personal purposes. No one was bothering about the unity, welfare and justice.

Now Banda Singh Bahadur entered Punjab with Panj Piaras (Five beloved ones) and other Sikhs sent with him by Guru Gobind Singh. He sent *Hukamnamas* of the Guru to the prominent Sikhs. Sikhs of Malwa region gathered immediately around him and the Sikhs of Majha and Doaba were blocked on the way by Mughal Chiefs. Soon after passing every hurdle they also joined Banda Singh Bahadur and they started their struggle against tyranny and injustice. On the one hand there were True, just devotee Sikhs seeking welfare of the humanity and on the other,

there were selfish pleasure seeker, unjust rulers and their armies. Banda and his companions acted like hurricanes and devastated the vast network of the oppressions. He founded the democratic set up by making tillers their own landlords. He minted his own coin in the name of the Guru. With these actions there arose a new hope in the hearts of the poor and oppressed people. They began to consider the Sikhs as saviours of values and the country. Banda and his joining Sikh administrators took immediate steps to alleviate their sufferings, thus winning their hearts. Regional armies of Mughals had done their best to suppress this revolution but failed to weed this out. Whenever Mughal forces came in front of Sikhs, they pounced on them and in a flash disappeared after giving heavy losses to the Mughal armies.

First of all Banda attacked Sirhind. Banda Singh had resolved to smash the well knit Mughal Empire stretching from Multan to Delhi, having strong provinces of Multan, Lahore and Sirhind. However, Bahadur Shah was busy in subjugation of the States in the Deccan. The Muslim soldiers having a long history of invasions and conquests on India and in addition to this all having the full support of the hill chiefs against the Sikhs the north India had become invincible. Almost after 500 years of Prithviraj Chauhan only Banda Singh Bahadur could dare to attack well fortified Sirhind, the main citadel of Wazir Khan the

Faujdar of Suba Sirhind who had got the young children of Guru Gobind Singh bricked alive in the wall of the fort. He killed the Subedar and overpowered the city. He abolished all the rules pertaining to agriculture and registered the land in the names of the tillers the ordinary peasants working for the Zamindars. This was a rude shock for the 250 years old Muslim Kingdom of North India backed by the whole Islamic world.

The victory of Sirhind added to the enthusiasm of the Sikhs. Now onwards Banda Singh took journey from Jalalabad, Saharanpur towards faujdar of Jullundur, Shamas Khan.<sup>19</sup> No doubt in the flush of victory, a large number of Hindus also joined the forces of Banda to reap the benefits and enjoy the fruits of success over their Mughal masters.<sup>20</sup> Many of spirited and daring Hindus adopted Sikhism.<sup>21</sup>

The Sikhs after succeeding in Majha and Riarki became masters of Punjab and lay their attention to east of Lahore and their was noblemen daring enough to march from Delhi against them.<sup>22</sup>

According to Malcolm, "If Bahadur Shah had not quitted the Deccan, which he did in 1710, there is every reason to think that the whole Hindustan would have been subdued by these Sikh invaders."<sup>23</sup> On 8th September, 1710, after getting Sikhs on his nerves Bahadur Shah issued an order that "all Hindus

employed in the imperial offices should get their beard shaved” and again on Dec. 1710 he ordered wholesale genocide of Sikhs- wherever found saying, “*Nanak prastan ra har ja kih ba -yaband ba qatl rasanan.*”<sup>24</sup>

Hearing of the alarming news of the Sikh conquests in Punjab, Emperor Bahadur Shah personally came to Punjab to deal with Banda Singh Bahadur. The imperial forces attacked Lohgarh, the capital of Banda Singh.<sup>25</sup> Khafi Khan writes about this battle, “It is impossible for me to describe the fight which followed. The Sikhs in their Fakiri dress struck terror into the royal troops. The number of dead and dying of the imperialists was so large that for a time it appeared as if they were going to lose.”<sup>26</sup> But Banda Singh finding it difficult decided to slip away from Lohgarh. He disappeared to Jammu hills for few years and continued his victories there. During the reign of Farooq Syar he came back to Punjab and conquered its few parts. On the other side, the Mughal forces gathered in a large number and besieged him in Gurdas Nangal. The Sikhs under seige were without food and even blade of grass or grain could not be allowed to enter. The besiegers wanted to starve Sikhs. But Sikhs with blistered feet and empty hands, desplayed every type of bravery.<sup>27</sup>

Ultimately Banda and his companions were captured in Dec.1715 and were brought to Delhi with disgrace and

humiliation. The prisoners were executed in Delhi. As if insensitive to pain of any type they calmly offered their necks to executioner's sword and drank the cup of martyrdom with name of God, "Wahe Guru", Wahe Guru" on their lips.<sup>28</sup> They refused any compromise offered. To them their cause was dearer than their lives. It is said that emperor asked Banda Singh as to how he should be killed. The later replied that he might be killed in the manner in which the emperor proposed death for himself.<sup>29</sup>

Banda Singh shook one of the mightiest empires of the world to its very foundation with such terrible violence that it was never able to re-establish its authority as firmly as before. He established a new state. According to Ratan Singh Bhangu, "The Guru had enjoined upon Banda to serve the Panth. And it was not he but the collective Sikh community that was blessed with the sovereignty by Sachha Padshah."<sup>30</sup> But according to Bhagat Singh, Banda Singh proved equal to the responsibility entrusted to him and he abided by his master's instructions.<sup>31</sup>

Banda Singh issued coins in the name of Khalsa and also introduced seals in the name of Guru showing his deep sense of devotion and loyalty to the Gurus. In his letter of December 1710 for Sikhs of Jaunpur, Banda Singh writes, "The Guru will protect you. Call upon Guru's name on seeing this letter, repair to the presence, wearing five arms. Observe the rules of conduct

laid for Khalsa we have brought about golden age (Satyayuga). Love one another. This is my wish. He who lives according to rules of Khalsa shall be saved by the Guru.” This is significant letter helping us in finding policy of Banda. He strongly recommended that conduct of Khalsa in the liberated country, was to be in strict conformity with the principles laid down by Guru Gobind Singh at the time of initiation into Khalsa. He pointed out towards Golden Age, that a welfare state of their dreams is being established. He meant that unjust officials had been substituted with just, deserving and competent ones.

Besides his war against Mughal political system there was powerful protest against structure of authority also. One most important feature was liquidation of Zamindari system. On Banda Singh's orders the tillers of soil rejected the landlords and peasants were made masters of their land.<sup>32</sup> During the short span of Banda Singh there was both a political and social change in Punjab . During his time many Hindus and even Muslims entered Sikhism but he never used any arm to propagate his religion. It always remained a glowing feature of Sikh History that none of its leader ever allowed their struggle to be reduced to the level of communal strife. Sikh Gurus organised Sikhs to defend their rights and secure freedom of worship and freedom of expression. If they had taken up arms, it was just with object



of self defence. There were 5000 Muslims in his army and they were allowed to perform their way of worship.<sup>33</sup>

After Banda Singh the Sikhs had a record of great struggle against Mughals on the one hand and Afghans on the other. After Abdus Samad Khan, Zakariya Khan (Khan Bahadur) took the charge of assignment of killing Sikhs in 1726. He ordered that the hair and the beards of the Sikhs should be removed. This harsh order drove the Sikhs in thousands to the forests and hills. Zakariya Khan sent out moving columns in all directions to hunt them out<sup>34</sup> and daily bought batches of Sikhs in chains who were publicly beheaded at Lahore (now called Shahidganj). The whole machinery of the Government were set into motion to see that the Sikhs found no shelter within their areas. When captured Sikhs were offered the choice between Islam and death, they chose the latter. Their vow, was to keep the torch of freedom burning even in exile and they reconciled themselves to their lot. Once Zakariya Khan mockingly said about the Sikhs, "By God, they live on grass and claim Kingship."<sup>35</sup>

Government moved against Sikhs, living in villages on very flimsy or false complaints; for example, on a protest by Tara Singh of village *van* against Sahib Rai of Nowshehra Pannuan, letting lose his horses on the green fields of village. The later remarked

“You talk of my horses tress-passing into your field, let me tell you that my scissors will tress-pass into your hair and beards” and shortly there after a contingent from Lahore arrived and extirpated Tara Singh alongwith his twenty two companions.<sup>36</sup> Khan Bahadur fixed prices of heads of Sikhs. A regular and graded schedule of rewards were setup for the persons who co-operated government to liquidate them. A person providing shelter and food to a Sikh, suffered death penalty or was forcibly converted into Islam. The informers relied their odious trade and the captured Sikhs were tortured and killed. Sikh once looted Nadir Shah on his return journey from Delhi to enrich their depleted resources, and get plenty from this booty<sup>37</sup> and on enquiring from Zakariya Khan about Sikhs Nadir Shah warned him “Take care, the day is not distant, when these rebels will take possession of the country.”<sup>38</sup>

High moral values, service, discipline and sacrifice were the ever guiding force of the Sikhs. To them their earthly belongings and bodies were not their own but belonged to the Guru who had merged his personality into the Khalsa. They believed that sacrifice made in the cause of panth would place them in the lap of their Guru. We do not find any instance in Sikh history where a captured Sikh gave up his religion to save his life.<sup>39</sup>

The murder of Jaspat Rai when harassing the Sikhs at Aminabad maddened his brother Lakhpat Rai. He took a vow to destroy them root and branch. Backed up by Yahiya Khan, Diwan Lakhpat Rai adopted a ruthless policy towards the Sikhs, persecuting them, with thousands of tortures.<sup>40</sup> He forbade the Sikhs from reading their scriptures, prohibited the use of the word Gur for Sugar candy as it sounded like Guru and as also of the word Granth.<sup>41</sup>

The Mughal rulers were sure to finish the Sikhs, after Banda Singh Bahadur but the Sikhs too were determined to live a honourable life with full freedom. They had tasted that freedom for a short time at the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> Century. They had not only challenged the fanaticism and religious hypocrisy of priestly class but the religio-political oppressions of contemporary rulers also. They had taken a clear cut departure from contemporary ways of religion, the conventional yardsticks of idolatory, ceremonialism, asceticism etc. Sikhs were now trained for not running away from the battle-field of life. The religion for them was an instrument of liberation, personal as well as social. Their religion had become a potential basis of freedom of man from tyranny, injustice and ruthless religious conversions. They were following a religion which was not a system of philosophy of abstract ideas rather it was a way of life which infused spiritual

and social vitality in its followers and brought about a far reaching transformation in their life and outlook. Religion they were following became a vehicle of promoting values of social harmony, love, equality, freedom and brotherhood of mankind. All of this was practice of the theology of their Gurus.

The Governments of the day took them as without a spiritual or secular leader and tried to suppress their movements but on the other hand they (Sikhs) became more determined to fight slavery and dogmatic slumber of people. They left their homes at the times of invasions and took refuge in the foothills of Himalayas. For the first time Sikhs assembled at Amritsar on the Diwali Day of October 1761 and passed a humane resolution called 'Gurmata' to liberate and save Punjab, the door way of India from foreign invaders. One institution of Sikh confederacy - 'the Misdari' which evolved among Sikhs during this time deserves special mention here. It was such a system in which men from any clan or village or group or from any occupation could form a band under one leader for the sake of single cause i.e. freedom from the tyrant rule while keeping faith and philosophy of Sikh Gurus in their mind and behaviour.

The Sikhs in these organisations (Misls) met at least twice a year under the name of 'Sarbat Khalsa' and passed resolutions called 'Gurmata'. These all Misls operated in such a manner that

the whole Khalsa Panth was given attention and all actions were taken in the light of the Gurmata only. They chose their leaders on the basis of majority of votes. The chosen one's were called 'Khalsa Ji'. All were having social equality otherwise. In the meetings of *Sarbatt Khalsa*, everyone was allowed to express his opinion. The decisions were then taken by the opinion of the majority.

Talking today about such democratic values could be acceptable to us, but can someone think of such a system in 18<sup>th</sup> century when monarchy was attempting to concentrate power in its own hands and was further seeking elevation of everytype. But such democratic values were filled in the minds of the Sikhs during their formative period from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh and now they never cared for power for the sake of power alone.

When Zakariya Khan offered to grant jagir to the Sikhs, which he assumed will attract them, the Sikhs decided to give it to Kapur Singh, a cleaner of the stables of the Khalsa and was considered as the humblest servant of Khalsa. He was invested with Supreme Command of Khalsa and was made 'Nawab Kapur Singh.' There are so many examples in Sikh history which proved that Sikhs never liked monarchy. Their this attitude was due to the socio-political philosophy infused in their minds by their Gurus and the systems they created.

By the mid 18th Century, with the help of being fearless, rancour-free the Sikh community had amply learnt to live always in the ascending spirits through practically its works for the common weal. Sikhs made a habit of meditation upon the Supreme Lord in order to keep burning the inner flame of self-respect and eschewing ego and being the lowest among the lowly always remained busy for the well-being of one and all (*sarbat da bhala*). The person having higher spirit and truthful activities always has his thinking and language of higher level and he never thinks of sinking into the lower tendencies. The thunderous phrases coined by the Sikhs and specifically Nihangs are indicative of their high spirits in those times of turmoils and all around diffused dejections. 18th Century was the horrible time for the Sikhs when they were hunted all around and the prices from Rs. 20 to 80 of the heads of the Sikhs were declared by the Mughal Empire of Delhi.

On the other hand, Pathans under the command of Ahmad Shah Abdali were invading in wave after wave and Punjab was ransacked. In such a situation, the Sikhs were unable to live in cities or villages because their revolutionary ideas and their practices were unbearable for the government and they were considered by the Government as the terrorists and criminals. Terrorist is he who challenges the established political order and

seeks to make the order topsy turvy. If he succeeds in getting the authority into his hands he is known as revolutionary and patriot otherwise he is made known as extremist or terrorist. The Sikh warriors had not got any success in achieving the goal of their own kingdom; they were shunned as extremist Kafirs and were absolutely not allowed to come in the habitats. Therefore, they lived in the dense forests, hilly areas of Punjab or the deserts of Malwa region.

In such a difficult time and in the dense forests the Sikh fighters coined thunderous phrases to keep the fellow beings in the high spirits. Khalsa in those times was surrounded from all sides by the difficulties and they did not have even ordinary facility of eating or lodging properly. Whatever they got they being full of contentment used that and considered it as a very high facility. On the other hand the Pathan attackers were having their pockets full of almonds and other dry fruits (raisin). But these fruits could never be available to the Sikhs. They were satisfied by getting grams whom they called almonds and the green grams were dried grapes for them. Whenever they cooked some ordinary leaves, they called it vegetable pulao- a dish of quality rice cooked in water and clarified butter and seasoned with spices and dry fruits. When once Rahimtullah Beg brought Subedari (authority for ruling) and baskets, full of almonds and raisin etc. sent by Ahmad

Shah Abdali to Sardar Lehna Singh, he refused to accept that and returned some seeds of wheat and grams by saying, “for the workers like us this is everything and these fruits sent by you are the diets of high brows and so only you deserve that all.”

Giani Gian Singh in his *Panth Parkash* very diligently talks about the high character and wisdom of the Khalsa and he further tells about some ‘thunderous phrases’ (Gadgajj Bole) coined by the Sikhs of that time. Some examples will be much interesting:

‘Out of the four fold division of Hinduism whosoever comes to them to merge with them, he is onward known as Khalsa. When somebody adopts their religion he will say Waheguru Ki Fateh i.e. victory be of the Lord God Waheguru. In fights they can run for attacking others even up to 50 *kos* (miles). They are very fond of war and they sleep even when they are on move and they can eat by walking. They would not like to fall flat on earth ... Summer and winter are same to them and whenever they prepare something to eat they loudly announce that if some body hungry is there around please come and eat because *deggh* (meal) is now ready. On this call if even their enemy comes to eat, they will serve him like their dearest friend. Whatever is left at the end they would eat themselves otherwise they would say that *langar* has gone *mast* (over). We have become tired of killing them but they are growing like anything. Their Guru is like a god to them



and he has given them nectar (*abe hayat*) and further he has bestowed them the holy verses reciting which they themselves can prepare that nectar. They offer that nectar to ordinary people and change the jackals into lions... to one person they will call one and a quarter hundred thousands (*sava lakh*) and similarly five persons will be five lakhs for them. If they are suffering they would say enjoying pleasure and plums are grapes for them and grams are enjoyed by them as almonds. To them needle is *jormelani* i.e. which makes things to come close and to a rupee they would say *damra*. They will cook leaves and grass but would call it as a vegetable pulao.

When we talk about the political and economic picture of that period, we come to know that the government had seized the property of these revolutionary Sikhs who were now content with a coarse cloth only. But they deserved a pat; their ascending spirit was never defeated and they never brought themselves in the descending mental set up. History of that period is witness to these facts and the language used by the Sikhs of that period clearly shows that they had created many code words for different type of messages so that the enemy could not know about their dialogue and side by side no revolutionary should be the victim of any sort of depression. In this codified language at places some bitterness is also there but that can be understood

as a reaction to the cruelties being perpetrated by the rulers. However this was the period of high character of the Sikhs.

The revolutionary Sikhs of those times were not educated for being born and brought up in the jungles but they had their own sharp wisdom and a deep experience. These Sikhs had good flow in Persian and Pashto languages because for many years they had been moving face to face with the Mughals and the Pathans. They understood each other very much.

Mr. Franklin in *The History of the Reign of Shah Alam* writes about these Sikhs:

The Sikhs, in their persons, are tall and of a manly erect deportment; their aspect is ferocious, their eyes piercing and animated; and in tracing their features, a striking resemblance is observable to the Arabs who inhabit the banks of the Euphrates. The dress of the males consists of a coarse cloth of blue cotton thrown loosely over the shoulders and coming down between the legs is confined round waist by a belt of cotton. An ample turban of blue cloth covers the head and over this is frequently worn both in colour and pattern a scotch Tartan. They speak the Aufghauni or Posto language with prolific additions of Persian, Arabic and Hindoovee."<sup>42</sup>

When profusely plundering Delhi in May, 1739, Nadir Shah went back to his country via Punjab he tasted a wonderful

experience in Punjab. The guerrilla contingents of the Sikhs at mid night would emerge suddenly from the mountain caves and after looting the treasures, horses and setting free the captives, especially the women folk of Indians would disappear quickly. He asked Nawab Zakriya Khan of Punjab that who these people are who have bursted into my army lines and looted me many a time. You tell who are they so that I clean up this area by killing them all together. Nawab Zakriya Khan told Nadir Shah that these people are inhabitants of dense jungles and mountain caves and their homes are on the saddle of their horses. Their living style is very typical and their conversational language is also curious. Listening to this, Nadir Shah stood wonderstruck and said - from the working pattern of this community is also smelling the urge of kingship in them (their head) - *a Azim Kaume booi meeayad*.

According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, Diwan Lakhpat Rai ordered the destruction of all the Sikh Pothis and Granths to destroy their sources of inspiration.<sup>43</sup> For the Sikhs a dip in the holy tank of Amritsar and homage at Harimandir were essential parts of this pilgrimage for which they came there from far and near on the occasions of Baisakhi and Diwali.<sup>44</sup> On these occasions, the Lahore Government made special arrangements to capture them.

The period of Muin-ul-Mulk (Mir Mannu) was the darkest in the history of Punjab when Sikh women and even children were also imprisoned, starved and tortured to death.<sup>45</sup> The sufferings of Sikhs were severe indeed because aluring rewards were offered for their heads.

In 1734, Kapur Singh divided the Sikhs into two Dals, Budha Dal and the Taruna Dal.<sup>46</sup> Former was assigned the duty of looking after the Sikh holy places and propagation of Sikh faith. And the later was to undertake the task of defence of the community. Thus a well knit organisation under various leaders were formed. These leaders were not created by some high authority but came to occupy this position as a matter of course on account of their natural ability. If a Sikh, however of humble origin, possessed an enduring spirit, ability to lead, quick perception, rapid decision and undaunted courage, he was sure to gather round himself a number of followers.<sup>47</sup>

Sikh community became able to practice/inculcate all these values and worked so efficiently just because of their firm faith in the teachings as well as theology of their Masters, about Equality, Justice, Humality, Contentment and Self-Control etc.

With the progress of the Dals, a new development took place in their organisational structure. It meant to unite the whole body of the fighting Sikhs in the form of a standing army of the

community. Against the harsh treatment of the Government, Sikhs felt more unity. There was no distinction between high and low. Because of egalitarian theology all could claim to belong to the same Khalsa brotherhood and the same profession of arms. They had the same grievance against the oppressors of their religion and the same bond of union for their faith. Thus the Sardar and the soldier were united over common objectives and they moved from one victory to another.

Sikhs under this organisation, adopted the ideal of unity and disciplined brotherhood. They believed that every sacrifice made for the community was the service to the Guru who had merged his personality into the Panth. This devotion to the Panth and its theology made them a formidable community to contend with, and ultimately the Government of the country could not but accept the Sikhs as the masters of the Province of the Punjab.

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\* \* \*



**CONCLUSION**

## CONCLUSION

India has made an important contribution to the domain of philosophy. Guru Nanak inherited the rich tradition of India and having assimilated it he produced a new ideology which changed the spirituo-sociological scenario of the Indian sub-continent. His greatest contribution lies in the fact that he presented the ancient heritage in altogether a new shape, as in the views of Dr. A.C. Banerjee that "Guru Nanak used his inheritance in a manner which was his own. He transformed it, giving it new form and new content and made it an instrument for integrated development of the human personality."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Sher Singh also testifies by saying that when we talk about the 'NEW' in Sikhism, we do not talk of the raw material, in the shape of the brick and mortar of the structure of Sikhism which laid scattered everywhere. However, it is not the material that matters; it is the mould, and final product produced which is most important and that is all together different and of course new.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of God occupies the pivotal place in Guru Nanak's thought. He lays repeated insistence on the unity of God and accepts only one Supreme Being who alone is regarded as the object of worship and adoration. Sikhism believes in the

formless Almighty God, who being formless, has also been assigned human qualities. As such, many attributes have been ascribed to Him and limitless praises have been showered upon Him. Sikhism emphatically rejects the idea of incarnation and subordinate deities as described in Epics and Vaishnava traditions. Sikhism regards all the deities as a part of the vast creation of God. However, their importance according to Guru Nanak, lies in their being devotees of the one Supreme Being i.e. Brahman.

The peculiar concepts of *Amrit*, *Nam*, *Shabad* and Guru are not only original in Sikh philosophy but they are also adopted as the medium for the unique description of one Supreme Being. The concept of Guru and Shishya were quite familiar to the existing traditions but Sikhism established them in a more vital and original form.

Guru of Sikhism is not merely any academic person but is the one who unites every separated soul with the Lord. Guruship, is not assigned to the men of higher status only, Guru and Sikh are not regarded as poles apart, rather they could form an integrated whole, as we find in the process of passing the test of Guruship by the second Guru Angad. This was a new concept adopted and practised by Sikhism where the disciple was illuminated during the life time of Guru Nanak and while offering

him Guruship, the Guru bowed his head before his own disciple. Sikhism took over the concepts of Atman, Manas, Karman, Rebirth, Liberation etc. in a different manner. The monotheistic approach of Sikhism emphasises the unity of Brahman and Atman. The ideal of Guru Nanak, regarding these two entities is higher than the discriminative attitude towards Purusha and Prakriti of Samkhya philosophy. Here both the principles are equally active. Brahman of Sikhism is the primal creator, unaffected by any illusion. The individual soul is also a part of Brahman. There is none other than Him. Sikhism does not believe in concept of categories and substance (as in Nyaya-Vaisheshik) rather it believes in a God who is ever True, sole cause of creation, who Himself creates, sustains and destroys it. Both Atman and Brahman possess same qualities and are non-dual, remain within each other, but due to ignorance, it appears as different from Brahman.

Sikh philosophy believes in theory of Karma and rebirth, but with some modifications. Karma according to Sikhism are regarded as the principle of birth. Whatever a man does in whole of the life, he remains totally one with that object on his death bed. In Guru Granth Sahib in one of the hymn of Bhagat Trilochan, the ideology of rebirth of a person is defined, by saying - on his death bed if one has his mind totally involved in remembering

about his wealth and money, he is bound to take rebirth as a snake. Similarly, if some one's thoughts remain indulged in wife's amorous activities, he is bound to take birth of a prostitute - *Anti kali jo istri simarai, aisi chinta mahi jo mari. besva joni vali vali autarai*.<sup>3</sup> The idea behind this all is, that whatever we do throughout our life repeatedly, we are bound to remember it again and again in our last time also. This premise makes us understand that we have to undertake all sorts of activities in life but while undergoing pleasures and pains, one should enjoy them in a detached manner and should not get totally engrossed and consumed by these feelings. If we undertake to do repeatedly good works which are delightful for the mind as well as soul then definitely on one's death bed we will be having no such idea, which may bring us the abominable birth and future life.

It modified the idea of performing rituals for Nitya, Naimittiya or Kamya Karmans. Good conduct and Truthful living are regarded as the only sources for the God's grace which bestows the final emancipation to the Jiva. Sikh theology also denounces the concept of the unseen power of the God, rather here the God is beyond all categories and yet omnipresent - *beda kateb sansar habha hun bahra Nanak ka patisahu disai jahra*.<sup>4</sup> Hence there is no need of proving the existence of God. He is all around present in everything on earth. The freedom from transmigration is

possible by performing good actions shedding away the veil of duality, deleting of ego and devoting to one Supreme Being, God.

Similarly liberation is not mere separation of Purusha and Prakriti, but the unity of individual soul with the supreme spirit and this unity is possible only for those in whose mind, dwells the Name of God. The existence of the body is no hinderance in the attainment of liberation and instead, it can be obtained by one during his life time doing egoless activities and is known as Jivan- Mukti. God's grace is however regarded as the greatest means to the achievement of *mukti*. Remaining unaffected by happiness and sorrows, getting free from illusion, duality and other vicious actions and harmonising of the individual soul with the Supreme soul are considered to be the different constituents of the final liberation.

Sikhism regards pleasure and pain as the result of one's own virtuous and sinful actions. Virtues are effective enough to wash off the inner filth but these virtuous deeds are not the dead ritualistic performances as practised earlier. Instead, self restraint, service to others, sharing the earnings with the needy, charity without expectation of any reward, remembrance of Name of God etc. are enumerated as meritorious deeds in the theology of Sikhism. Sinful actions like stealing, falsehood, violence, harsh temperament, egotism are considered the outer signs of

ostentatious life. Virtue and sin are considered as causes of the so-called heaven and hell for men on this very earth, and not in the imaginery regions known as Svarga or Naraka.

Since truthful God is the sole cause of creation and is real in nature, this creation is also real and not imaginary. It is said to be false only with regard to its transitory aspect. The world being a part of that real supreme spirit can not be an illusion. As opposite to the traditional belief of delimited creation, Guru Nanak believes in its infinity. Similarly unlike the traditional notion of four fold division (*andaj, jeraj, svedaj and udbhoj*) of the creation, Sikhism believes into countless divisions constituting the multifarious species. *Japuji* of Guru Nanak puts forth through its realm of enlightenment (Gian Khand) various denominations of life on this earth when he says: Therein are numberless forms of air, water and fire, many are the Indras, spheres of sun and moon, many the accomplished yogis... many the species of gods, demons, ascetics, the sources of creation, speeches and lives of kings. Says Nanak: All such are without end.<sup>5</sup>

Guru Nanak gives a new shape to the idea of devotion. Complete devotion to God leads to the constant and permanent union with Him. A life engaged in virtuous deeds is regarded as essential means of devotion. As in Bhagvad Gita, the tripple Yoga of Karma, Bhakti and Gyan has been taught, same has been in Bani of Guru Nanak

but in a more balanced form. He laid down the three dictums for a happy and successful life. These are: work with one's hands, continuous remembrance of the *nam* of God and sharing of one's earning with the needy ones. These three aspects of life produce a balanced and healthy society. Here the meditation on God's name, is not for the stimulation of psychic powers for meeting any selfish end instead it is the act of concentrating the mental powers which help in acquiring the analytical wisdom (the *babek* - the *vivek*).

Ethically Sikhism is opposite to any kind of special entitlement on account of birth. None being superior or inferior, everyone is capable lifting up his socio-religious position, thus to become one with the supreme. An altogether new philosophy of life was made prevalent by the Gurus who filled the gap between precept and practice. If Guru Nanak said that 'I am lowest among the lowly' he refused the invitation of Malik Bhag Chand and went to the low born carpenter to eat in his house.

All these were the philosophical departures of Sikh theology on the basis of which it chose to follow new paths, departing from the traditional paths of socio-religious realisation. The product of this theology, Sikhism not only provided an all together new and improved philosophy including all the major doctrines related to religio-spiritual life of man, it also provided a favourable atmosphere to cultivate these philosophical ideas. For example,



the ideas of unity, brotherhood, justice, equality, love, service, welfare, protection, devotion etc. are not only abstractions in Sikhism as was prevalent in the atmosphere of Medieval India. Sikh life made them all part and parcel of day to day life, as is evident in Sikh life in the 18th Century Punjab history.

India was having a long and rich tradition of various religions, where all of these traditions preach love, unity, peace, brotherhood of all at philosophical level. But in practice when we look into the society of that period, whether it belongs to Vedic thought, Shramnic traditions, Vaisvanites, Shaivites, or any other sect, the mental condition of common man at the most was fatalistic and not self-supporting .

As every religion has two aspects: one is philosophical and the other is practical. The contemporary as well as earlier traditions of Sikhism are almost poles apart on theological level. As we have understood theology as the study of the philosophical theories of any religion, it is a phenomenon through which the values, morals, guidelines of a religion percolate through actions into each and every corner of humanity to make the expected improvements in the socio-religious behaviour and uplift of the marginalised classes to further bring them into main stream of humanity.

Guru Nanak offered a New Theology in which there were provisions for the low strata of society to mingle with the upper

classes on the basis of Sikh theological formulations. This not only improved the respect of the low, rather it melted the ego of the so-called higher classes also.

Through the practice of sitting together in Sangat form was a novel experiment on Indian society which infused, the sense of equality and brotherhood among the masses and the sense of self-respect got rehabilitated in the heart and mind of the down-trodden and oppressed ones. Now they were ready to take joint stand against any cruelty in the name of high and low stratification of the society.

In the hymns of Guru Granth composed by the Gurus there are explanations of certain philosophical issues raised by their followers which throw light on clear cut path of these new theologians who combined intimately the theory and practice of their teachings. They invented a two fold system-one was the practical institutionalisation of the Sikh way of life and the other was to supply a theological and philosophical background to the institutional doctrines of the religion.

History of religious philosophy is evidence of the fact that some of the learned and well-known saints raised their voice against the compartmentalization of society and took some revolutionary steps also but due to lack of any solid institution their efforts could not bear any fruit and they remained as the one man's voice only.

On the basis of Dharma, society got divided into castes and sub-castes. The separation became so rigid, that shadow of the so-called lower strata was sufficient to ruin the birth of the upper class. Religion at that time had not remained the cure for the maladies of the society, rather the internal divisions based on caste stratification had produced social tyrannies weakening the entire nation which could not stop the onslaughts of the outside invaders.

Sociologically, the oppressed people were forced to live life of degradation. The insulting tyrannies and inhuman treatment meted out to them had killed their self-respect to such an extent that they could never think of offering even a protest. The result of these all man made circumstances were the attacks of foreign invaders, who took full advantage of social, political and religious disintegration of this nation. All these failures were sufficient to attract even the seventeen years old young men like Mohmad Bin Kasim with a band of adventurous boys to loot and humiliate this sub-continent.

Even the so-called warrior class had forgotten their tradition of bravery and valour and started considering it an honour to give the rulers their daughters in marriage. They even started adopting the mode of social, religious and domestic life of the rulers.

Their source of inspiration, their religion had already lost its vitality and was reduced to mere forms and ceremonials. They were indulging in strife, quarrels, mutual jealousies and worshipped the sun, the moon, the earth, the water and the sky. Devotion was offered to cemeteries and cremation grounds. The study of religious literature was restricted to one class of the society only who misinterpreted the message of these scriptures according to their own selfish motives. The shudra class was strictly forbidden from the solace of spiritual inspiration. The natural right of humanity was denied to them. Their touch and shadow were considered polluting. There were some classes who were not only untouchables, but also unapproachable. If any one of them were to hear the Vedic Mantras, his ears must be locked up with molten lead and if he were to read mantras, his tongue must be cut out. This all was happening, yet people suffered all this treatment quietly as if they were made to believe that they were destined that way.

Sikh history had paid heavy prices for practising their new theology. In those cruel times agitations, appeals, were neither possible and were not having any meaning. There was no public or world opinion as we are having today, so it was not any easy task. Non-violence and suffering were only powerful instruments which can be undertaken to produce any change in the heart of

evils. These had been tried in the form of sacrifice of two of the purest souls (Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur), yet these had not succeeded. The base of Sikhism has its roots in the philosophy of love, non-violence and truth, but the Gurus saw clearly that an exception had to be made in the larger interests of humanity. According to them a responsible human can not maintain his own purity in the phase of suffering of the society. Like good doctors, they realised that a poisoned limb had to be separated to save the whole body (humanity).

So Guru Arjan, being the embodiment of love and non-violence instructed his son, Guru Hargobind to be prepared for the struggle and maintain a force. The Idea of Non-Violence is a noble concept but it was not to be toyed with, or not to be experimented in dealing with the problems of life. The high Idealism has to be reconciled with the practical demands of daily life.

On the basis of Sikh Philosophy every Sikh's approach towards life is realistic and therefore it has proved to be the most practical religion. The virtues of humility, forgiveness, compassion, non-violence and love etc. are good but they are of no use if the humanity is suffering due to excessive use of such virtues. Humanity must have self-respect, independence, and honourable living. Earlier to Sikhism strength or power was

considered as the most valuable virtue and monarches of those times used their power to suppress others. But according to Sikh theology powers and duties are correlated and no one should use power without duties attached to them. When a sovereign is gifted with wide powers, he should not abandon his duties and responsibilities towards the subjects over whom he wields his authority. He should see that law and order are maintained in the state and laws are administered equally. He should always give priority to his official duties over his personal comforts and needs, and to practise this type of monarchy, the monarch must be saint by heart, because only a religious mind can have power to change the established order built on wrong values by basing the practice of politics on the principle of religion. Only wise, saintly personality could be really sensitive to the sufferings of society and take these sufferings as if they were his own. So the concept of saint soldier is formulated and practised in Sikh Theology. For the same purpose Akal Takht was erected in frontal vicinity of Harimandir Sahib to combine temporality with spirituality. Guru in Sikhism was the supreme direction giving authority of the both (seen and unseen) worlds. After tenth master the supreme authority of Guru was passed on to the Panth and Granth jointly. Panth which meant the totality of the people having faith in Sikh religion now began to exercise that authority.

During their formative period from Guru Nanak till Guru Gobind Singh, Sikhs were taught that they are the sparkling microcosm of the all pervading macrocosm. By passing physical Guruship to the Panth, the Sikhs were made more responsible and divine oriented. They became fully awakened to their inherent potentials and responsibilities and stood like rocks before any injustice and tyranny. This all resulted in the glory of 'Khalsa Raj.'

Theology is not limited only to analysis of one's own religion rather it is a phenomenon under which all the contemporary religions are also studied and compared to improve one's interpretation of a particular issue. This movement began in the form of sampardai Giani School, Nirmala School of interpretations till the Singh Sabha School of expositions. Sikhism always promoted and gave respect and regard to such theologians right from the time of the first theologian of Sikhism, - Bhai Gurdas, till the present times.

Sikh Gurus prepared well-planned new philosophy and then to make it effective formulated some very important institutions through which these very subtle feelings of unity, equality, harmony, love, acceptance, brotherhood, service, justice could be inculcated in hearts and minds of the people. The practical institutions of Guruship, Sangat, Langar, Seva, Gurdwara,

Gurmata, Sarbat Khalsa, associated with Sikhism are new formulations invented by Sikhism to bring forth an altogether new theology.

These institutions inspired Sikhs to release themselves from the bondage of their ego, and to develop cosmic awareness and divine vision. Philosophy of Sikhism taught them the path of morality as the path of conscious action and self-reliance. It provided them with the orientation of the values of human life and fortified them with the inspiration of rising above their personal interests in order to actively serve the common interests of mankind. The humanism of Gurbani is indicative of love for the Divine on the one hand and love for humanity and welfare of all, on the other.

Therefore the Sikh theology produced a New community who worked on the ground of equality, justice and brotherhood. Sikh history of 18th Century entitled as 'Darkest Period of Sikhism' is the best example of the working of this community fearlessly for the egalitarianism proving its distinct theology. In the period full of turmoils and sufferings Sikhs emerged victorious on the basis of a fresh, flexible, improved, and all together NEW THEOLOGY.



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## **ABSTRACT**

Ancient Indian lore is a vast ocean in which, it is held by many a scholar that all the concepts and doctrines under the sky were available and since then nothing new could be added in socio-religious thought of ancient thinkers. It is widely felt that vedic thought and its off shoots, Upnishads and Shastras are such a Banyan tree of knowledge that all the recent Indian religious ideologies and their respective literatures are the branches and flowers of that old grand tree having nothing new in them.

While accepting the greatness of the medieval religious thought one might feel surprised to think that if this was the factual position then why people could not join their hands for fighting the religious oppressions in the medieval period, why ancient learning could not bind the people to push back the invaders and looters coming to India wave after wave.

Vedic thought along with Buddhism, Jainism were present here with great philosophies but historically seen this subcontinent was invaded at different times from all sides, till the end of Fourteen Century before the advent of Sikhism, invaders had devastated India several times and just due to lack of responsibility and togetherness, masses had become just spectators and poor victims of destiny.

However no such arrangement was ever done to weld the people together and face the temporal problems with united force. Guru Nanak noticed this malady and conceived the idea of a society in which people could come close to each other. He created many useful and altogether new socio-religious institutions like Sangat, Pangat, Seva and ethical doctrines of the dignity of labour and sharing with others to concretise the idea of equality among the so called high strata people and low castes. These institutions became the pillars of Guru Nanak's theology and successor Gurus used them to create such 'halemi raj' where every one made efforts together by combining both physical as well as spiritual energies for the common purposes.