

“Sikhism an original distinct and revealed Religion”

March 8th 2013

Submitted By Jasbir Singh Mann MD.

For

**Center for Sikh Studies at Claremont Lincoln University,
Deans office,
1325 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711**

“Sikhism an original distinct and revealed Religion”

PART-1

March 8th 2013

Submitted By Jasbir Singh Mann MD.

For

**Center for Sikh Studies at Claremont Lincoln University,
Deans office,
1325 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711**

INDEX

1. "Mission Statement" By Dharma Academy of North America/ DANAM(pages3-7)
2. Feb 8th 2013 Letter to President Dharma Academy of North America/DANAM "Accept our Invitation for scholarly Academic discussion/debate on Mission statement in May 2013 Conference for clarification of this serious ideological controversy which will disturb the peaceful Hindu Sikh Community relation in North America OR Remove of Sikhism Entry from DANAM, s web" (pages 8-15)
3. Feb 19th 2013 Letter to Rita Sherma and officers and trustees of DANAM removing all Sikh references from its website, and from its future programming. THIS CONVERSATION SHOULD NOW BE CLOSED (pages 16-26)
4. Harnam Singh Shan, "Sikhism original distinct and revealed religion" (pages 27-61)
5. Daljeet Singh, "Sikhism: its identity" (pages 62-69)
6. Daljeet Singh "Guru Nanak The Prophet of A Unique Ideology" (pages 70-81)
7. Daljeet Singh "Sikhism, Vasnavism, Vedanta and Nathism-AComparision" (pages 82-94)
8. Daljeet Singh, "Sikhism and Interreligious dialogue" (pages 95-103)
9. Daljeet Singh, "Issues of Sikh studies" (pages 104-112)
10. Judge Mewa Singh; "SIKHISM: An Independent and Separate World religion" (pages 113-137)
11. ARTICLE 25B INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND DANAM,s MISSION STATEMENT "DANAM Mission statement appears to be an academic tool and new creative idea for Scholars and North American public for absorption of Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists into Hindu fold. This debate is going on in India Since 1949 and still going on." (Pages 138-173)
- 12 "SIKH VIEW OF OTHER FAITHS" Dr. Ranbir Singh Sandhu 2012(pages 174-190)
13. "ACROSS FAITH BOUNDARIES -THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB'S MESSAGE" By Dr.Ranbir Singh Sandhu (pages 191-203)



MISSION

- MISSION STATEMENT
- MEANING OF DHARMA
- CONTRASTING DHARMA & RELIGION

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Dharma Academy of North America (DANAM) is to identify methodologies for intersubjective understanding of, reflection on, and critical-constructive interpretations of Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh traditions— what DANAM has termed the Dharma Traditions— in reference to the contemporary global era. We seek to foster scholarship that simultaneously works with the common ground and interconnected histories of these traditions, and uncover the rich diversity of Dharma philosophy and theology, within the context of common or similar categories of theology, philosophy, observance, and practice. DANAM aims to cultivate methods for the study of these traditions using hermeneutics indigenous to these traditions within the framework of internationally accepted standards of scholarship. We further seek to examine the complexities caused by the juxtaposition of religious and national identities within given cultural contexts by using the category of Dharma, in contrast to that of 'Religion,' as the lens through which to view the Dharmic systems of thought and tradition. DANAM seeks to cultivate discourse on new approaches to pedagogy, epistemology, spiritual practices, theology, arts, ethics, and hermeneutics of the Dharma

Traditions. It is hoped that DANAM can explore the possibility that the academic study of these traditions can begin to view the conventions of descriptive methodologies not as limitations but as starting points in order to engage the conceptual depth and intellectual applicability of these traditions in an inclusive forum. Since 2002, DANAM has supported cultivation of a new field of inquiry that we call Dharma Studies. This endeavor is rooted in the hope that the dialogue, debate, and mutual illumination between these related but unique traditions that have marked their interrelated histories can be honored and continued under these auspices.

MEANING OF DHARMA

The term 'Religion' is derived from the Greek word 'religio,' meaning 'to bind back,' that became interpreted as being bound back to sets of doctrines (or laws) and their respective founders, as opposed to God (Theos) alone or the individual's inner self. Thus, each religion requires that adherence to its doctrines and its founder is the only path to attain salvation, as mentioned earlier. The term 'Dharma,' like many other Sanskrit words or terms in other Dharmic languages, has no exact equivalent in English, so its exact translation is rather difficult. It has been variously translated as 'religion' (which strictly is incorrect, as described earlier in this section), 'law,' 'duty,' 'religious rite,' 'code of conduct,' etc. It can mean one or more or all of the latter, depending upon the context. The reason seems to be that the word itself has been used in various senses throughout the ages, and its meaning, as well as scope, has been expanded. However, it is universally accepted that the word 'dharma' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'dhriâ' ('to uphold,' 'to support,' 'to sustain'). That which upholds, supports or sustains this universe, without which the universe would disintegrate, is dharma (Ref. 1).

Hindu Dharma: From the perspective of the Hindu tradition(s), Dharma (please see Footnote below) is associated with the Supreme Being or Godhead (Brahman, Ishvara, or Paramaatma), or what the Upanishads describe as sat or tat, the very essence of one's being. In addition, whatever conduct or way of life helps one to reveal this fundamental principle (that is, one's inherent essence or nature) within, can also be called dharma, though in a secondary sense. Hence, 'religious' rites, ceremonies and observances; fixed principles of conduct, privileges, duties and obligations of a person depending upon one's stage of life and status in society; and even rules of law, customs and manners of society—every one of these (categories) can be included under the term Dharma. It may be instructive to note two more ancient words, rta and satya (truth), that are closely connected with, if not forms of, dharma. The word rta, used profusely in the Vedas, especially Rgveda and Krishna Yajurveda, in its simplest form, seems to indicate 'a straight or direct line,' and hence, 'universal laws of nature, an impersonal order.' When extended to the 'moral' world, rta denotes a 'straight conduct' based on truth, which itself is also 'dharma. Used in the sense of an inner awareness of what is true, as expressed through words and actions based on the scriptural teachings and needs of duties on hand, rta becomes satya (Truth). Thus, the meanings of all the three words, rta, satya, and dharma, more or less coalesce.

Jain Dharma: The word Dharma, in Jain thought includes these major conceptions: (1) The actual nature of a phenomenon; (2) Rational perception, knowing, and action; (3) The Ten Dharmic Qualities (known as the ten forms of Dharma); (4) Nonviolence (Ahimsa) to all living beings as the highest dharma (paramadharm); (5) The two-fold spiritual paths of the monk and the householder. Jointly, Samyak darsana (Rational Perception), Samyak jnana (Rational Knowledge) and Samyak caritra (Rational Conduct) are referred to as the Ratnatraya or the "Three Jewels of Jainism" are

5

seen as constitutive of Dharma. The twofold Dharma of the laity and the monastics/ascetics are known as Sravakadharmā and Sramanadharmā respectively. The religious path for the laity emphasizes charity and worship, in addition to the observance of sacred vows. The Dharma of ascetics emphasizes meditation, scriptural study, and the five Mahāvratas or great vows; they are expected to be informed by right faith, right knowledge, right conduct, sanctified by penances, and capable of great self-restraint.

Buddha Dharma: Dharma (Dhamma, Pali) is the Buddhist ethos which has four interrelated meanings: (1) The Universal Law of Nature (similar to the Hindu *rta*); (2) The teachings of the Buddha which apply an understanding of this law to the conduct of human life; (3) The characteristics/properties of an particular phenomenon (physical or psychological); (4) The 'Truth Body,' or ultimate nature of the Buddha, which is known as the Dharma-Kaya. The term "The Dharma" is often used in the Buddhist Scriptures as a synonym for the Buddha's teachings and their scriptural literary revisions, and can be extended to include the later traditions of commentary and interpretation that the various schools of Buddhism have developed to help explain and expand upon the Buddha's teachings. In relation to this context of being synonymous with the Buddha's teachings, the Dharma comprises one of the Three Jewels of Buddha Dharma in which adherents of Buddhism 'take refuge.' The three jewels of the tradition are the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings and methods), and the Sangha (a community of practitioners who offer support).

Dharma in Buddhism in terms of the 'Nature of Things: In Buddhist thought, the development and realization of clear insight is a major step in attaining wisdom. In order to cultivate wisdom one must understand the nature of things (the dharma of things) and aim of Buddhist practice is the investigation of the nature of phenomena-dhamma-vicaya.

Dharma as the Ultimate Body of the Buddha: The qualities of the Dharma (Law, truth) are the same as the qualities of the Buddha and form his 'truth body' or 'Dhamma Kaya': In the Samyutta Nikaya, Vakkali Sutta, Buddha proclaims to a disciple that: "Yo kho Vakkali dhammam passati so mam passati"—O Vakkali, whoever sees the Dhamma, sees me.

Sikh Dharm: Dharma (Dharm) refers to the "way of righteousness" for Sikhs, which is indicated by the main scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, the proclamations of the Ten Sikh gurus, and the developments of Sikh historical tradition. A dharmic Sikh will undertake *paath*—reading scripture; *kirtan*—singing of hymns; *langar*—a communal meal served to everyone at the conclusion of a Sikh worship; *Ardas*—this is a special prayer done before the performance of any important work or after taking on any significant endeavor; after any religious activity, before and after eating. It is an invocation for blessings and assistance for the one who is praying, but also for the wellbeing of humanity, as well as a prayer of gratitude. Service to God's creation, the promotion of justice, aid to the oppressed, goodwill towards other traditions and their adherents are part of Sikh ethical dharma.

CONTRASTING DHARMA AND RELIGION

The word religion is often employed to refer to the four 'religions' of indigenous Indic origin: Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh Dharma, which may be referred to as what might be called the network of Dharma traditions. The use of the word religion, which arose in the context of non-Dharma traditions, and was subsequently secularized into global use, to denote the religions of Indian origin is, in many ways, problematic. Three features are closely associated with the concept and, therefore, the definition of religion in a Western context: (1) that it is 'conclusive,' which is to say that it is the final revelation; (2) that it is 'exclusionary,' which is to say that those who do not belong to it are excluded from its

embrace and often from salvation; and (3) that it is 'separative,' which is to say that one who belongs to it, separates oneself from allegiance to, and affiliation with, other religions. The religions of indigenous Indian origin—the Dharma Traditions—do not share these features. They are usually non-conclusive, in the sense that they are not the only path to salvation; they are non-exclusionary, in the sense that their membership is a sufficient but not a necessary condition for salvation; and historically, they have, for the most part, been non-separative, in the sense that one need not necessarily negate one's previous identity to join them, or to disown one's culture, ancestry, or name. This is visible not only in ancient India but in China in the concept of Sanjiao or the 'Three Teachings,' referring to the insights of the Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist teachings. It, therefore, makes more sense to refer to these 'religions' by the term 'Dharma' than by the term religion. At this point, the question might arise, what is the need to draw this distinction now. Prior to the emergence of the academic study of religion in the 1860s, most of the communication taking place in religious studies, broadly speaking, followed an 'insider-to-insider' pattern, namely, most Hindus wrote for an audience of other Hindus, Christians, for other Christians, and so on. However, as the West expanded imperially during the 17th and 18th centuries, Westerners began to write about the various religious traditions they encountered for the benefit of other Westerners, so that 'outsider-to-outsider' also became a major mode of communication. With the establishment and spread of imperial educational systems in the colonized world, the colonized peoples themselves increasingly began to acquire knowledge about their own religious traditions through the works of the Western scholars writing about them, resulting in communication being acquired in an 'outsider-to-insider' mode. After the 1960s, with the end of the colonial era, the followers of the religious traditions in the formerly colonized nations began to react to the depiction of their religious traditions by outsiders, causing the emergence of an 'insider-to-outsider' mode of communication. The various branches of postcolonial theory reflect these developments.

Footnote: The Sanskrit word for world is 'jagat', literally meaning that which is continuously changing, which embodies that change occurs in a periodic (cyclic or pulsating) or phase-changing manner without beginning (creation) and without end (destruction), then the question arises what is the foundation on which this jagat is being continuously sustained. According to Chandogya Upanishad 6.2.1-3, 'in the beginning sat alone existed, the One without a Second. It (sat) reflected, "May I become many! May I be born!"'. The 'many' that emerged, needed a central integrating principle, or law; otherwise, chaos would result. This law or principle is 'Dharma', which emerged from Godhead itself, per Shukla Yajur Veda, Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.14, Godhead 'specially created that dharma, in the form of the highest good—therefore, there is nothing higher than dharma—verily, that which is dharma is satya'. This dharma is the firm foundation upon which the entire universe stands ('dharmo visvasya jagatah pratistha' Mahanarayana Upanisad 79.7). Obviously here, dharma means righteous conduct based on truth (satya) and knowledge of the unity in spite of the diversity, and capable of bringing the highest good to the whole of cosmos (jagat). All other meanings, senses and derivations of Dharma in later literature are corollaries of this central idea. The word dharma occurs in the Rgveda fifty-six times (e.g., 5.63.7, 5.72.2, 9.7.1, 9.25.2, 10.88.1, 10.170.2). But in almost all these places it has been used in the sense of duty or action which contributes to the sustenance of the world or cosmos ('jagad-dhāraka-karma'). In the Upanishads, this sense becomes more explicit. Each member of the society has certain duties and obligations that must be discharged by performing the prescribed actions in order to sustain its structure. Similarly, in one's path towards perfection one has to pass through several stages of spiritual development and each such stage devolves upon one certain duties or a code of conduct. This helps to sustain one's inner development and simultaneously contributes to the well-being of the society also. The seeds of this—which is well known as 'varna-ashrama-dharma' in later

7

literature—are to be found in the Purusasukta and in the earlier Upanishads also. (Ref. 1: This and other excerpts above are adapted from “What is Dharma?” by Swami Harshananda, Ramakrishna Mission, Bangalore, India.) From the perspective of Buddhist tradition, the use of the term Dharma is instructive in that, at a basic level, Dharma is taken to mean “the teachings of the Buddha.” But these teachings are seen as embodying Truth itself. Thus, the deeper understanding of Dharma (in Pali, Dhamma) is linked to the foundation of Reality. The Buddhist Abhidhamma literature, for example, does a thoroughgoing enumeration and classification of what it calls the ‘ dhamma-s’ (in Sanskrit, dharma-s). These are the fundamental patterns—including certain groups of spiritual qualities—which comprise the underlying networks that generate the processes of psychological and physical phenomena. The word “dhamma” is used to convey both the ongoing process of the constant arising and passing of events of fleeting duration as well as the events themselves. The Abhidhamma breaks down forms and phenomena into component dhamma-s that form the fundamental patterns nesting within the Greater Network that is the very nature of Ultimate Reality (Dhamma). The concept of pratitya samutpada, Conditioned Arising (also referred to as dependent origination, and co-dependent co-arising), is fundamental to the Buddhist understanding of the nature of Ultimate Reality (Dhamma). The Majjhima Nikaya (1.191) states: “Whoever sees Conditioned Arising, sees Dhamma, whoever sees Dhamma, sees Conditioned Arising.” The experience of Conditioned Arising engendered by meditative disciplines, is key to developing an appreciation for interdependence (or, as Buddhist teacher Thich Nat Han suggests, “interbeing”) of all component functions of physical reality. Thus the term Dharma-kaya (Dharma-body) of the tri-kaya doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism, has a two-fold meaning whereby it refers both to the ultimate “body” or form of Gautama Buddha (and, indeed, all Buddhas), as well as the self-existent form (svabhavika-kaya) of tathata (things-as-they-are, thus-ness, suchness), of sunyata (emptiness) or the non-essential nature that is the true nature of all dhamma-s. As the Astasahasrika Prajna-paramitaSutra (307) proclaims, the such-ness of the Tathagata (Buddha) and the suchness of the all dharma-s are not two separate things but an undivided reality.



[Back to home page](#)

[Back to top](#)

(4)

February 8th, 2013

SENT BY EMAIL, FAX & MAIL

To,

Dr Adarsh Deepak

President, Dharma Academy of North America.

17 Lassies drive Poquoson, Virginia. 23662 USA.

Ref; Remove Sikhism Entry from DANAM, s web or accept our Invitation for May 2013 Conference for clarification of this serious ideological controversy which will disturb the peaceful Hindu Sikh Community relation in North America.

Respected, Dr Adarsh Deepak ji,

Called You on Phone to discuss this issue personally but unable to get any reply. Being involved in Sikh academic affairs for long time the Sikh Community has asked me to write you on this important Academic issue. Our opinion is that your Mission Statement misinterprets and misrepresents authentic Sikhism. Therefore we request you take off any explanation of Sikhism from your web immediately as it appears to be a veiled attempt to downgrade the independent identity of Sikh religion as envisioned by Guru Nanak If you do not take it off your web or explain your position in writing. Then we invite any DANAM,s Scholar to join us in a conference in Southern California in May 6th to May 9th 2013 to present DANAM,s point of view on Sikhism as noted in your Mission Statement for the scholars, Sikh Sangat and General Public. My opinion on the issue is based on the following academic observation.

**Sikhism an Independent Religion; Not part of any Network of Dharma Traditions
(Uniqueness of Sikh Scripture, Sikh Identity & Sikh Ideology)
By Dr. Jasbir S. Mann. California,USA**

This is in reference to the controversy raised in Sikh community by Dharma academy of North America(DANAM) on their mission statement click on <http://www.danam-web.org/missionpage2.htm> describing Sikh religion as Sikh Dharma part of a network of dharma traditions followed by distorted/veiled explanation of Sikhism which suits the academy's Motive. Sikhism does not believe in "law or principle 'Dharma', which emerged from Godhead itself, per Shukla Yajur Veda, Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.14, Godhead 'specially created that dharma-----". It is not a bone of contention that the word "Dharma" has its roots in Sanskrit literature and there is no epistemological problem when this word is applied to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism because these are variations of the same tenets. But Sikh religion has dimensions beyond the concept of Hindu aspect of Dharma. Neither of the Vedic religions, other than Sikhism, totally believes in oneness of God. Numina and phenomena do not have distinct demarcations in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, whereas Sikhism is a religion of Numina. Sikhism is a whole life system whereas other religions do not solely believe in it. Importantly, Sikhism believes in both temporal and spiritual aspects of life. The concept of Khalsa and Rehat Mayada is unique and integral parts of Sikhism. Therefore, it cannot be considered as system or network of other Indian Dharmas.

Sikhism is a revelatory religion, and this claim is made by Guru Nanak himself, "O Lalo, I speak what the Lord commands me to convey." Other Gurus have also spoken similarly. In the Siddh Gosht he says in reply to a question that his mission in life is, with the help of other Godmen, to ferry people across the turbulent sea of life. As to the Guru's concept of God, it is recorded, "Friends ask me what is the mark of the Lord, He is All Love; rest He is ineffable." He is also called: 'Ocean of Virtues' 'Benevolent', 'Gracious', 'Eyes to the blind', 'Milk to the child', 'Riches to the poor', etc. He is interested in the world. For, "True is He. True is His creation". God created the world and permeated it with His light". "It is the innermost nature of God to help the erring." "God created the world of life and planted Naam in it, making it the place for righteous activity." All above is well recorded in Guru Granth sahib on pages 722,739,459,830,463,930. 828 and 468.

The Dharma Academy of North America (DANAM) appears to be an outfit principally based on Sanatana Dharma. They are using academic parameters in an attempt to justify a self-established ideology, by redefining 'Religion', 'Dharma', and 'Religious Traditions'. This phenomenon is Well-known among several Hindu sages and swamis. In fact there are several websites that are promoting such views under Sanatana Dharma.

It is interesting, but not surprising, to note that DANAM essentially is resonating ideas that are constantly discoursed by Swami Jnaneshvara Bharati in entirety. On his website it is clearly explained that Sanatana Dharma is: "Experience based rather than belief based without any ideological divisions. Beyond any historical date of founding. The process of growth, which comes from the seed. Inherent in, and inclusive of all. Applicable to all people of all places and times. In the world, while above the world. God-centered rather than prophet-centered. Devoid of sectarianism or denominationalism. Both immanent and transcendent. The whole and the parts. Loving of all and excluding of none. The universal flow of Dharma, regardless of what name you call it, whether Dharma or some other name, has eternally existed. It has been before any of the great teachers were born. It is not better than, or alternative to, but is inclusive of all.

Dharma is that out of which our earth and humanity itself emerged. Dharma not only is, but always was, and always will be. To live in alignment with, and to know the true nature of that Sanatana Dharma is one of the ways of describing the higher goal of life". Click on <http://www.swamij.com/sanatana-dharma-what-is.htm>

Also, on the same website it goes on to explain the differences of 'Religion' and 'Dharma' by Swami Rama. According to whom: "The words "religion" and "dharma" denote two entirely different concepts and perspectives. Religion is comprised of rituals, customs, and dogmas surviving on the basis of fear and blind faith. Dharma--a word, unfortunately, with no English equivalent--encapsulates those great laws and disciplines that uphold, sustain, and ultimately lead humanity to the sublime heights of worldly and spiritual glory. Established in the name of God, a religion is an institution that requires a growing number of adherents for its expansion and future existence. A religion discriminates against human beings who do not belong to its particular order and condemns their way of living and being, whereas dharma is eternal, looking for no followers for its propagation. With no discrimination whatsoever, it leads a human being beyond the realms of man-made, institutionalized dictums. Instead of creating fear of God, it

makes God manifest in the human heart, not in an anthropomorphic form, but as the absolute and universal One in whom all diversities reside in perfect harmony.” Click on <http://www.swamij.com/sanatana-dharma-what-is.htm>

The definition of a Sikh is given in the Guru Granth Sahib and Sikh Reht Maryada. It is not what DANAM is reinterpreting for the world with help of ill-informed scholars supported by few rich trustees (who may not be aware of that they are being used by some conspirators to start new HINDU-Sikh Controversy In peaceful North America). Sikhs had multitude of enemies since Guru Nanak,s Cosmic Enlightenment. The word Khalsa is missing altogether which differentiates the Sikhs from non-Sikhs. The Sikhs do not need definition of a Sikh from an outsider/DANAM. Sikhism is a universal religion, and is NOT a part of "network" of religions. Sikhs respect and carry high regard for all other religions including Hinduism. Guru Nanak started a new and pristine religion - Nanak Nirmal Panth Chalaya. Few scholars are being used under the umbrella & influence of western liberal and imperial education systems to further the agenda of Hindutava; enfolding Sikhism into Hinduism. Our request is for maintainance of peace and harmony in the world as enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib.

If Sikh religion is only a network of Dharma tradition and has no original, independent/unique and separate identity then ‘ Trustees, Academic advisory board members and steering committee members’ has to explain the following historical facts:

- History of Guru Period (Sri Chand , Mohan, Prithi , and Ram Rai transgressed Sikh beliefs in early Sikh history and were isolated)
- Sikh Scripture delineating independent Sikh identity. Guru Granth sahib is very clear “although the Six Hindu systems are prevalent everywhere but the Guru system is profound and unequalled”.
- Martyrdom of the 5th and 9th Guru to uphold religious freedom
- Testimony of Moshan Fani (Muslim Chronicle, 1645)
- Execution of Banda and 740 Sikhs in New Delhi (not even one desecrated while given the choice to do, 1715-16)
- First sikh Ghalughara in 18th century when governor Yahiya Khan issued proclamation killing all Sikhs
- Why prices on Sikh heads were fixed by Mughals?
- Misal Raj
- History of Maharaha Ranjit Singh period (His government was know as Sarkar-i-Khalsa; he issued coins in the name of the Guru and all his princes were addressed as Khalsa. He was made to appear at Akal Takhat and was granted Tankhah.)

Sikhism	Vaisnism	Vedantism	Nathism
1. Spiritual experience is that God is Love-Ocean of virtues. A dynamic experience.	Sach Chit Anand – Blissful and Quiet.	Sach Chit Ananad – Blissful and Quietist	Blissful Isolation Quietist
2. World Real-Arena of	Maya	Mithya (Illusion)	Real but a place

spiritual growth.			
3. Life Affirming	Life-Negating	World does not exist.	Death to the world.
4. Monotheism	Pantheism	Monotheism	Pantheism
5. God interested in the world. He is milk to child, eyes to blind, riches to poor and Helper of the weak. This means combination between spiritual and empirical life of man.	Dichotomy between spiritual and empirical life of man. Hence monasticism & Sanyas.	World an illusion – activity delusion. Sanyas	Yogi vows to withdraw from the world.
6. Householder's life with full social responsibility.	Celibacy and Sanyas	Celibacy and Sanyas	Vow of celibacy and never to work
7. Equality of man and woman. Women in charge of missionary districts.	Woman not fit for Vaishnava path.	Woman a hurdle in spiritual Path.	Vow of celibacy. Naths do not even eat with Nath woman.
8. Equality and brotherhood of man.	Hierarchical caste – Sudras not fit for Bhakti	Accepts caste	Accepts caste. Low castes not admitted.
9. Man's spiritual assessment of his virtuous deeds. By our deeds we are near or away from God. Higher than Truth is truthful living.	All morality is supernal-moral. To do only one's caste duty or ritual acts.	No deeds ritual acts for man of low intellect.	Vows never to work
10. Work and sharing essential	Sanyas	Sanyas	Vows never to work
11. Methodology of remembering God and of virtuous deeds and social responsibility.	Ritualistic, formal, or emotional dancing, meditational.	Meditational. Also value of ritualism accepted.	Hath Yoga and Kundalini Yoga
12. Use of force accepted if other means fail	Sex-methodology accepted. Ahimsa.	Ahimsa	Sex-Methodology also accepted
13. Goal is to be the instrument of Gods Will.	Merger in Brahman	Realization of I am Brahman	Vow of Ahimsa, blood sacrifices done. Merger in Siva

<p>14. Jivan Mukta active and accepts social responsibility. IN the above context Guru Nanak did three things. He created a panth and appointed a successor to continue the mission. He identified the social problems of caste and that of the political oppression. Rejected Ahimsa as an inviolable rule. Finally Panth was created and Guru Granth was appointed as Guru in pursuance of the doctrine of Miri and Piri.</p>	<p>Individual salvation. Ritual duties performed.</p>	<p>No interest in the world. Unconscious of the world.</p>	<p>Individual Salvation. No interest in the world – A place of misery.</p>
---	---	--	--

Sikhism: A Religion of Numina (Naam) and not Phenomena

Guru Gobind Singh himself directed the Sikhs to follow **guru granth** and no other book nor any human being. Numinous experience is inherent in Frie’s Ahndung (longing), Schleiermachar’s Feeling, Kant’s Things in Themselves (numina) and Kapur Singh’s Antithesis of phenomena. It stands for the holy minus its moral factor and without any rational aspect. It is irreducible to any other factor. Numinous consciousness involves shaking fear of repulsion and an element of powerful fascination. It can only be understood by “ideograms” i.e. not through logic, but only symbolically. The core of religious experience is inherent in the awareness of non-moral holiness as a category of value. The numinous experience is the core and base of Sikh religion and its ingredients i.e. religiously sensitive mind in relation to his/her apprehension of himself/herself and universe around him/her. The ultimate reality is not comprehensible through the sensory motor perceptions and speculations. Sikhism is a religion of Naam (neumina), which is asserted through 30,000 hymns of Sikh scripture through revealed statements, literary similes and allusions. Naam is God, and God is Naam, and the practice of religion revolves around the Naam. Sikh religious thought cannot be interpreted through any phenomenal process. Guru Ganth is a unique scripture and Sikhism has its own identity as follows:

1. Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Scripture is purely monotheistic. It accepts only one God and rejects all other deities, spirits, angels, etc. Only God is immortal. All other deities are mortal and prone to death.
2. The religion of Guru Granth Sahib, being free from inhibitions of any kind regarding the way of life and its adaptability in all the religions of the world vouches its universality. It is not a religion of the chosen people (like Judaism), but instead, it is the religion of the entire humanity. It raises above all the regional barriers.
3. It rejects all ritualism, formalism, and symbolism. It has no belief in any sacrament.

4. It focuses all its attention on the enfoldment of discipline for the attainment of the unity of the soul with God. The emphasis has been laid on the adoption of godly qualities by the seeker.
5. It repudiates the prevalent theories of Creation and scans the universe as the work of the Creator, whose existence pulsates everywhere in His Creation. The extent and expanse of the Creation of the Infinite Lord cannot be delimited.
6. It lays great emphasis on honest and sincere labor. Its religion is the religion of workers and householders. Therefore it decries the renunciation and all types of ascetic practices.
7. It advocates the equality of all human beings, irrespective of birth and sex. The woman is in no way inferior to man. It rejects all distinctions of caste and color.
8. The State has to play its part in the provision of food, shelter, and clothing to the members of the society. There can be no devotion, if the individual is not carefree about his requirements.
9. It presents a balanced combination of action, devotion, and knowledge. Whereas the body has to work for the well-being of family and society while the mind has to remain in tune with the Lord. Service is, thus, the motto of an adherent of Guru Granth Sahib. His best service toward the Guru and the Lord is the remembrance to the Name.
10. The religion of Guru Granth Sahib is most practical. The devotee overbrims with love and devotion. The whole world appears as a family to him. The earth is an abode of Dharma for him.
11. Breaks dichotomy between spiritual and empirical lives.
12. Rejects Ascetism.
13. Rejects Varnasharm Dharma which incorporates basic caste system.
14. Rejects Ahimsa.
15. God Never incarnates. He is Un-Incarnated and Transcendent.

World-View and Guru Granth

Both the surveys of Maxwebster and Schwitzer bring out that all Indian religions are life-negating and suggest withdrawal from life. This is quite true of Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnavism, Vedanta and even the Sant Tradition. All these Hindu systems as indicated above, involve withdrawal from life, and denial of social responsibility. Evidently, systems that recommend Ahimsa, asceticism, monasticism, Sanyasa, celibacy or withdrawal from life, reject every kind of social involvement, much less social responsibility, as an unwanted bondage. S. K. Mitra, who has surveyed the ethics of all Hindu systems, says "that the common feature of all doctrines of the ideal life, or Moksha, is the conception of ideal as strictly moral idea." It is so, because all these systems accept a clear dichotomy between the spiritual path and the empirical path, and, thus life-negation is a natural and logical consequence of all these religious systems and their world-view. But Sikhism, as the hymns and lives of the Gurus express and demonstrate very clearly, has a world-view of life-affirmation, since in the Sikh ideology there is an inalienable combination between the spiritual life and the empirical life of man. For, whatever is within the domain of God, is also within the sphere of operation of the Godman. In short, Sikhism is a whole-life religion with a world-view entirely opposed to that of other Indian religions.

Guru Granth as a New Scripture with New Ideology with New Religious Experience

Vedas and Upanishads are without doubt the scriptures of all Hindu systems. But Sikhism completely denies their authority, and Guru Nanak even calls some of their injunctions to be wrong. The Sikh Gurus were so clear and particular about the independent and separate identity of their religious system and the complete originality and newness of its character, that they took very significant stage which no other religious leader in the world had done. They specifically compiled and authenticated the Sikh Scripture. Secondly, since the time of its compilation in 1604 A.D., it is the complete repository of and the final authority on the Sikh ideology and its doctrines. Since the Gurus called it revealed Bani, it has been regarded as the Shabad having the sanction of God. The Tenth Master took two important steps in this regard. First, he introduced the Nash doctrine, thereby making a complete and final break with all other Indian ideologies. Neither the Vedas and Upanishads, nor any other religious systems is given any sanction or accepted as authentic. We all know that the Bani of Bhagats in the Guru Granth is a selection. It is accepted only to the extent it is in consonance with the doctrines of the Gurus. And even where differences seem to be suggested, the Gurus have made adequate comments and clarifications. The Bani of Bhagats outside the Granth Sahib is not given any authenticity. Secondly, he made the Sikh Scripture not only as the exclusive vehicle of the Guru's message, but also gave it the status of the Guru, Guide or Teacher of the Sikhs. The creation and sanction of Guru Granth as the sole scripture of the Sikhs reveals that the Gurus were very clear and conscious of its independent and separate character, and wanted their ideology to remain as such without chance of any addition, alteration, or any departure from its authenticity or contents.

Therefore request is made to DANAM immediately take their opinion on Sikhism from your web. Or issue an immediate statement to Sikh community by giving their opinion based on academic evidence that 'Sikh religion is not an independent religion but rather it is a part of network of Dharma Traditions per DANAM Mission ' with their academic basis of supporting their argument.

This issue touches the heart of community. Therefore if you do not provide clarification in writing or remove Sikhism entry from your web. Then I am inviting two DANAM, s Scholars for public forum which we will arrange in southern California in 2nd week of May 2013(May 6th to May 9th 2013) any day depending on the suitability of DANAM, s scholars. Will pay for the Travel and Board Expense. We will also invite Head of Guru Granth sahib department Panjabi university Patiala and Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar respectively. Please email me the contact email and telephone Numbers of the DANAM, s scholars who will like to present DANAM, s opinion in this meeting in May 2013 conference. Specifically will like to invite the scholar who wrote the mission statement for DANAM, s Web.

Suggested Topics focusing on the issue in suggested May 2013 public forum:

1. 'Sikh religion as a Network of Indian Dharma Traditions'; DANAM, s Scholar #1.
2. 'Sikh religion as a Network of Indian Dharma Traditions'; DANAM, s Scholar #1
3. 'Sikhism as an Independent Religion" Prof & Head, Dept. Shri Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.
4. 'Sikhism as an Independent Religion" Prof. and Head Dept. Guru Granth Sahib Studies, Panjabi University Patiala.

15

Each Speaker will have 30 minutes speaking time. Will prefer Written Papers or will Record will video presentations of the lectures? Speaking assignments will be followed by one hour answer and question session from the audience.

My sincere hope and request is that DANAM should stop this Hindu- Sikh ideological Controversy immediately by removing Sikhism explanation from their web or come forward honestly to explain their position in writing and accept our Invitation for May 2013 Conference for clarification of this serious ideological controversy. In my opinion DANAM,s starting this controversy by advice of few ill-informed scholars who hide behind the walls of academics and float nontraditional 'Traditions' in order to put bread and butter on their table and support their families. They do not care even if it is at the cost of disturbing and dividing the Hindu Sikh Community relation which has been so for existing peacefully in North American continent.

Jabir Singh Mann MD. D., lit (Honoris causa)
President, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Foundation, Anaheim. California.
Res 714- 526-5349. Office 714-895-1774.

For debates on Sikh Study Issues Click On our web WWW.globalsikhstudies.net

CC;

Dr. Rita D. Sherma, Chair (DANAM vice president) Member academic advisory Board.
Dr. Arvind Pal Singh Mandair , Member academic advisory Board
Dr. Balwinder Singh Bhogal, Member Steering Committee

Feb 19th Thanks to DANAM FOR ENDING THE CONVERSATION

16

Subject: Thanks to DANAM FOR ENDING THE CONVERSATION
Date: 2/19/2013 8:45:04 A.M. Pacific Standard Time
From: jasbirmann@aol.com
To: ritadsherma@aol.com, wowguru2000@yahoo.com, rpgandhi@optonline.net,
ravi@stcnet.com, a.deepak@Taksha.org, contact@danam-web.org,
dilipsarkarster@gmail.com, mahendra@mec.cuny.edu, amandair@umich.edu,
balbinder.bhogal@hofstra.edu, kavi_pannu@yahoo.com
CC: JasbirMann@aol.com

Respected Dr. Rita sherma, trustees and officers of DANAM

Thanks for ending Conversation . I am writing it only for clarification on still issues raised by Dr.Rita in her Email To Anju which reads

“ DANAM has said on its website over and over again that these are unique distinct and specific religious traditions. It has never conflated one tradition with another.If the persons who have requested DANAM to remove any reference to Sikhism on its site, really feel strongly that Sikhi should never be studied in the same forum as Hindu Studies, then they should take up the matter with every department of religious studies in the country as well as every scholarly association on religious studies that involves South Asia and other academic venues. THIS IS A DIRECT LOSS for ACADEMIC Freedom. That is the central issue. Our scholars fear for their lives and livelihood. Most of them, including myself, have never even been involved with Sikh Studies”. ‘DANAM has said on its website over and over again that these are unique distinct and specific religious traditions. It has never conflated one tradition with another”

Dr. Rita Sherma is again misinterpreting and misrepresenting Sikh point of view in the debate. DANAM,s Web site nowhere in mission statement shows “over and over again that these are unique distinct and specific religious traditions” Please note Sikhs promote religious dialogue at university level at all common platforms with all major religious studies including Hindu studies as evidence shows Sikh community has funded seven Sikh chairs for such work in north America with representation in various scholarly associations on religious studies. Sikhs will join any form where Sikh religion is defined as "Sikhism as original distinct and revealed religion “Additionally Dr. Sherma and DANAM,s Trustees should be aware on their central issue THAT “Academic freedom is never unlimited. The general law of society including those concerning – and libel apply also to academic disclosure and publications”. In the United States, for example scientific conclusions on questions of racial difference or similarities have met with hostility in some communities. At such times individual citizens, pressure groups, or even community at large may wish to interfere with teaching or research. University protects the right of freedom of speech of its faculty. But when that freedom is unnecessarily exercised against the community it serves, the freedom becomes an antisocial act. Such acts should not be tolerated. We have recent examples of two professors one at the State University of Colorado and another at the State University of Florida. In the former case the professor equated 9/11 victims to Nazis camps and

17

in the later the professor supported Palestinian cause against the Jews. Religion is personal. "Let the people enjoy and practice and propagate their own respective religions" Thru IRS Code 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Code.

Still awaiting reply from Dr. Deepak president DANAM or any trustee on our question regarding mission statement from DANAM,s interpretation on Sikh religion based on Guru Granth Sahib which is primary source of Sikh religion. We have requested DANAM to send us telephone contact and Email addresses of all scholars who participated and prepared this Mission statement for DANAM.We will like to further correspond with them for academic discourse. So far we have received none. Religion is personal. "Let the people enjoy and practice and propagate their own respective religions"

I am inviting two DANAM, s Scholars, officer and trustees Specifically who wrote the mission statemet of DANAM for a communy public forum which we will arrange in southern California on May 5th, 2013 .Will pay for the Travel and Board Expense. We will also invite Sikh scholars from religious departments from university in Punjab, India and Sikh chairs from North America.

Suggested Topics focusing on the issue May 5th 2013 public forum will be:

1. ‘Sikh religion as a Network of Indian Dharma Traditions based primary source of Sikh religion guru granth sahib’ DANAM, s Scholar #1.
2. ‘Sikh religion as a Network of Indian Dharma Traditions based on primary source of Sikh religion Guru Granth sahib’ DANAM, s Scholar #2
3. ‘Sikhism as an Independent Religion” Sikh scholar#1 from one of Punjab University or Sikh chair from North America
4. ‘Sikhism as an Independent Religion” Sikh scholar #2 from one of Punjab University or Sikh chair from North America.

Each Speaker will have 30 minutes speaking time. Will prefer Written Papers or will Record the presentations the lectures? Speaking assignments will be followed by one hour answer and question session from the audience.

For our Academic position on ‘Sikhism as an Independent Religion” Please click on

1. Harnam Singh Shan, “Sikhism original distinct and revealed religion”

Click on Pages 24-59

http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/Fundamental_Issues_in%20_SikhStudies.pdf

2. Daljeet Singh, “Sikhism: its identity” click on pages 12-32

<http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/invasion%20of%20relious.pdf>

3. Daljeet Singh, “ Sikh ideology” click on pages 8-137

<http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/sd.pdf>

<http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/essentials.pdf>5. Daljeet Singh “Guru Nanak the Prophet of a Unique Ideology” click on pages 179-198 <http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/essentials.pdf>

4. Daljeet Singh “Sikhism, Vasnavism, Vedanta and Nathism-AComparision” click on pages 62-80 <http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/essentials.pdf>

5. Methodology of interpretation.our opinion on issues in Sikh studies pages 11-22

<http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/essentials.pdf>

My sincere hope and request is DANAM shold accept our invitation and respond in written by March 7th 2013 for their readiness to participate in this debate. If DANAM does not accept our invitation and does not send us tel and email contact of scholars who finalized Danam,s Mission statement By March 7th 2013.Then, will conclude that DANAM,s Mission statement was an

(18)

academic tool and new creative idea for scholars and North American public on amalgamation of Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists into Hindu fold. This debate is going on in India Since 1949 and still going on for details see attachment on 'ARTICLE 25B INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND DANAM MISSION STATEMENT'.

Finally thanks again Dr Rita Sherma and DANAM,s officers and Trustees for their understanding on stopping this Hindu- Sikh ideological Controversy as noted in Dr. Sherma,s Email dated february 17th 2013 "DANAM has removed all Sikh references from its website, and from its future programming. THIS CONVERSATION SHOULD NOW BE CLOSED".

Jabir Singh Mann MD. D., lit (Honoris causa)

President, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Foundation, Anaheim. California.

-----Original Message-----

From: Rita Sherma <ritadsherma@aol.com>

To: Tejwant Singh <wowguru2000@yahoo.com>

Cc: jasbirmann <jasbirmann@aol.com>; rpgandhi <rpgandhi@optonline.net>; ravi <ravi@stcnet.com>; a.deepak <a.deepak@Taksha.org>; contact <contact@danam-web.org>; dilipsarkarster <dilipsarkarster@gmail.com>; mahendra <mahendra@mec.cuny.edu>; amandair <amandair@umich.edu>; balbinder.bhogal <balbinder.bhogal@hofstra.edu>; kavi_pannu <kavi_pannu@yahoo.com>

Sent: Sun, Feb 17, 2013 8:27 am

Subject: LET US PLEASE END THE CONVERSATION ON DANAM

Dear Anju,

We have a great deal of respect for the wonderful service oriented work you've done in conjunction with the White House.

And we realize that you are trying to create harmony through this conversation.

However, we must respectfully request that you kindly refrain from discussing DANAM. I've examined why below.

DANAM has removed all Sikh references from its website, and from its future programming. THIS CONVERSATION SHOULD NOW BE CLOSED.
Please do not invoke DANAM in any further conversation.

This is why:

DANAM stands for "Dharma ACADEMY of NORTH AMERICA." That means:

1. It is an ACADEMIC enterprise

and the conversation you are having is moving it out of the academy where it belongs. It does not have community spokespersons from ANY religious community speak for it or represent it.

Therefore, we would be grateful if you would please not try to represent the academic interests of DANAM.

2. DANAM does not claim to represent any religion, which you are bringing into this conversation.

3. DANAM just provides a forum for academicians to engage one theme every year from the point of view of each of the native religious traditions of India and South Asia. This is standard practice in the religion academy and is known as Area Studies. In this case, South Asian indigenous AREA STUDIES (the normative study of religions native to South Asia). This is standard ALL OVER the Academy.

4. If the persons who have requested DANAM to remove any reference to Sikhism on its site, really feel strongly that Sikhi should never be studied in the same forum as Hindu Studies, then they should take up the matter with every department of religious studies in the country as well as every scholarly association on religious studies that involves South Asia and other academic venues. THIS IS A DIRECT LOSS for ACADEMIC Freedom. That is the central issue. Our scholars fear for their lives and livelihood. Most of them, including myself, have never even been involved with Sikh Studies.

5. DANAM is NORTH AMERICAN. It does not have academic presentations by academic scholars from India, although they may be excellent. Your invocation of India and Hinduism completely clouds and obscures the central issue of the North American religion academy scholars losing academic liberty and experiencing real concern for their lives.

6. None of the persons who placed angry diatribes about DANAM have ever been to DANAM. They do not realize that DANAM's effort has been directed to offering a forum for indigenous religions of South Asia which fostered reflection beyond descriptive methodologies---a space that has allowed academic conversation on the unique gifts of these individual religions & their potential for benevolent application to the critical human issues of our time.

7. DANAM has said on its website over and over again that these are unique distinct and specific religious traditions. It has never conflated one tradition with another.

8. The IRONY is that DANAM's project was to DISTINGUISH (make clear distinctions) between the traditions studied, which is exactly the OPPOSITE of what we have been accused of.

ANYWAY, SIKHISM is NOT NOW and WILL NOT be REFERRED to by DANAM. KINDLY END THIS CONVERSATION.

Thanks

-R. Sherma

On Feb 14, 2013, at 8:17 AM, Anju <anjubhargava@gmail.com> wrote:

Namaste

I speak from my own experience. My primary focus is on working together in America. I don't think anyone has an intent to insult another community. Let us have a healthy dialogue rather

20

than assuming anything. Anju

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 14, 2013, at 11:09 AM, jasbirmann@aol.com wrote:

With a desire to have understanding and prevent any divide in Hindu Sikh Community relation which has been existing peacefully in North America. Happy Valentines day 2013 to all.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 16, 2013, at 5:55 PM, Tejwant Singh <wowguru2000@yahoo.com> wrote:

I have a very simple question to the DANAM orgnisers/religious instigators/active participants.

What does Dharma mean in your individual practical life? Please do not give me the meaning based on any Hindutva.

Anju,

You write:

"2. We have a shared cultural and historic past "

No to both. Sikhi rejects caste system unlike Hinduism which is solely based on it and prides itself of this Apartheid values. Historical depends on which side of the history you are on and agree with. If the latter were true, then DANAM would distort what Sikhi is all about on purpose?

What is the agenda of DANAM and the end goal for this purposeful distortion?

"3. We have very similar issues."

Please share the similar issues in details.

4. We are all people of eastern traditions and no one is usurping the identity of another Hinduism is but not Sikhi according to the teachings in the SGGS. Please do not hesitate to ask questions if you have any about Sikhi.

5. Would it not be helpful if we collaborate with each other while respecting each individual tradition

I agree as on the board of the Interfaith Council of Nevada where Hindus are also on the board but they never come to the meetings nor participate in the Interfaith speeches. But they show up during some big event where the Mayor and other heads of community have been invited and want to be front and center. One wonders why! Are these the way and the workings of Hindu Dharma proudly propagated by Danam?

21

"6. Abrahamic traditions have come together and are promoting each other. Can the dharma traditions not do this. It does not make one more dominant than the other. Today one group is taking the lead tomorrow another. Whoever has access can bring others along."

Please give concrete examples what Muslims and Jews (both from the Abrahamic traditions) are doing what you claim above, otherwise it becomes nonsensical rhetoric.

7. Many Hindus like me try to bring all dharma traditions into the forefront as we did with the White House.

Your duty and main objective is to bring Hinduism at the forefront not to distort Sikhi which is shameful. No One religion has the right to bring all dharma traditions in the forefront. That is what the Interfaith Councils are for. Hence, it is nothing but empty rhetoric.

8. I think mixing Indian politics and Indian government activities with Hindus especially in America is counterproductive

Please explain with concrete examples why and how it is counterproductive as the majority of Indian population is Hindu which is a fact and I am sure you are aware of it.

@ Rita,

You write:

"We are only waiting for the web-technician, who is the person who can make any changes, to return from Europe in about three weeks. All references to Sikhism will be removed at that time."

Your above claim makes no sense. It does not take a web-technician to do that. Secondly, if your claim were true, your web-technician would be able to make the changes of distortion required immediately, no matter where he or she is located or based. You should know better.

Hope to hear from you soon with the facts.

Regards

Tejwant Singh

From: "jasbirmann@aol.com" <jasbirmann@aol.com>

To: anjupbhargava@gmail.com

Cc: ritadsherma@aol.com; rpgandhi@optonline.net; ravi@stcnet.com; a.deepak@Taksha.org; contact@danam-web.org; dilipsarkarster@gmail.com; mahendra@mec.cuny.edu; amandair@umich.edu; balbinder.bhogal@hofstra.edu; kavi_pannu@yahoo.com

Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 10:47 AM

Subject: If Hindus are not empowered in India then Why they are not allowing and insult Indian citizens who celebrate Valentine day in India

----- Forwarded Message -----

boxbe jasbirmann@aol.com (jasbirmann@aol.com) is on your Guest List | Delete this guest

With a desire to have understanding and prevent any divide in Hindu Sikh Community relation which has been existing peacefully in North America. Happy Valentines day 2013 to all.

Dear Anju,

You wrote "My opinion - In India Hindus are not so empowered. In fact in America Hindus can speak with their own identity in a way they can't in India. I hope the Hindus and Sikhs can build a bridge and reduce this tension".

1. *Valentine's Day 2013* is to day Feb. 14. Happy Valentines day 2013 if Hindus are not empowered in India then. Why they are not allowing and insult Indian citizens who celebrate Valentine day in India? What is your your personal comment on this issue?.

2. Look at historical facts. Evidence shows "Hindus got empowered in India when Constitution of India was written In India and article 25B section added". No Sikh constituent member signed the constitution of India as the congress failed their promise to Sikhs which they gave before 1947. In fact in America Sikhs can speak with their own identity in a way they can't do in India. Hindus and Sikhs in north America has no divide. It is DANAM,s creative Mission statement and persons like you who are creating this gaps. It will also slowly change the historical facts about pioneer Sikhs in North America.

In two world wars, a total of 169,700 Indians died out of which 83,005 were turbaned Sikhs .Sikh Gadar Movement is only a small part of Stockton and Vancouver Gurudwara's history, whereas Sikhs played larger roles in India's freedom, which remains unrecognized till today. Our aim is to highlight the role of Sikhs who have been accommodating other Indians for regaining and reorganizing lost national unity. Sikhs sacrificed and contributed, in all phases of the Indian Independence movement, more than other Indians nationals though they comprise only about two percent of total Indian population. According to the statistical record: (I) Out of 121 persons hanged to death, 93 were Sikhs, (ii) Out of 2644 persons awarded the sentence for transportation of life, 2147 were Sikhs, (iii) Out of 1300 persons killed at Jallianwala Bagh, Punjab, 799 were Sikhs, (iv) Out of 42,000 persons of Indian National Army, 21000 were Sikhs, (v) On Kamagata Maru, out of a total 376 passengers, 346 were Sikh. Gadri Sikhs had a vision of secular nationalism, perhaps a republican nationalism, similar to that of the United States.

But, what did Sikhs get for their selfless and patriotic role in Indian freedom movement?. They received communal nationalism and lost their unique identity under article 25(Section IIb) of The Constitution of India.

Evidence shows Indians pioneers (majority Sikhs) fought peaceful constitutional means, formed many Hindustani societies, and made armed rebellion and explosive plans from 1907-1914 on

23

the West Coast. Six newspapers supporting Indian freedom were in circulation prior to November 1913. Twenty Nine Sikh religious preachers (also known as Granthis) and 25 Gurudwaras around the globe including in India and Punjab participated in this movement. No Vedanta center participated in this movement although New York, Chicago and San Francisco centers existed at that time. The buildings of Rama Krishna Vedanta centers New York and Chicago from 1902. Sanfransisco Rama Krishna Vedanta center: 2963 Webster street 1905. No political activity against British noted in Vedanta centers. On the contrary In 1913 on January 6th Hopkinson landed in Sanfransisco and met British council Carnegie Ross and MN Guhal an Indian got details of anti-British activity. Swami Trigunatita reported the details of Hardyals Celebration On Christmas day(Harding Bombing case in Dec 1912 in new Delhi). The evidence shows that Gadar Movement between 1907-1918 on the west coast of North America was a Primarily inspired by Sikh thought. Scholars must take into consideration the concept of Sikh Martyrdom along with colonial and pre-colonial Sikh History. Based on above evidence it is affirmed that this movement characterized by British as War against King/Sikh Ghadr in fact was an International War against politically awakened Sikhs and their sympathizers 1907-1918. It was the first declared Indian freedom war fought by majority international Sikhs also known Sikh Gadar. Please note my study is referring to Sikh Inspiration influence on this Indian freedom Movement. It was not a religious movement. Communist influence in this movement is late phenomenon after 1922-1927 as is clearly supported by own writings of Sohan Singh josh and rattan Singh Ajnala. From 1905- 1913 in Europe Shyamaji Krishna Varma,s Arya Smaj thought, Veer Savarkar,s Abhinava Bharat thought and Bhikaiji Cama & Sardar Singh Rana,s Social Democratic thought could not produce any international mass movement in Europe. . Evidence shows that the teachings of Sikh Gurus strongly motivated the consciousness of these Gadarites in west coast of North America along with racial discrimination in employment, finance, civic matters, sense of public humiliation, nagging immigration restrictions and their ultimate exclusion, which compelled them to reimagine their status in light of the Queen's proclamation of 1858.

3. We have requested DANAM to send us telephone contact and Email addresses of all scholars who participated and prepared this Mission statement for DANAM. We will like to further correspond with them for academic discourse. You can join them when we all meet for academic discussion.

4. Will await reply of our question on mission statement from DANAM,s interpretation on Sikh religion based on Guru Granth Sahib which is primary source of Sikh religion. May be you can give your input on this issue also by quotes from primary source?.

5. Religion is personal. "Let the people enjoy and practice and propagate their own respective religions" Thru IRS Code 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Code. We know lot of scholars who are funded by DANAM,s Nonprofit source will be effected by this debate. I hope you are not on of them.

6. Sikhs will join any form where Sikh religion will be defined as "Sikhism as original distinct and revealed religion"

7. Issue raised by you or by DANAMS on Sikhism is not knew. The problem is methodology of interpretation. Growing secularism and encroachment on religions field by non- ontological disciplines. Please read and will discuss when we meet after clicking our opinion on issues in Sikh studies pages 11-22

<http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/essentials.pdf>

Sincerely

Jasbir Singh Mann MD California

24

-----Original Message-----

From: Anju <anjubhargava@gmail.com>

To: jasbirmann <jasbirmann@aol.com>

Cc: ritadsherma <ritadsherma@aol.com>; rpgandhi <rpgandhi@optonline.net>; ravi <ravi@stcnet.com>; a.deepak <a.deepak@Taksha.org>; contact <contact@danam-web.org>; dilipsarkarster <dilipsarkarster@gmail.com>; mahendra <mahendra@mec.cuny.edu>; amandair <amandair@umich.edu>; balbinder.bhogal <balbinder.bhogal@hofstra.edu>

Sent: Thu, Feb 14, 2013 6:08 am

Subject: Re: Removing Sikh References from Website

Hi All

Namaste

With a desire to build bridges of understanding i am sharing some of my thoughts

1. In America we as all minorities.
2. We have a shared cultural and historic past
3. We have very similar issues
4. We are all people of eastern traditions and no one is usurping the identity of another
5. Would it not be helpful if we collaborate with each other while respecting each individual tradition
6. Abrahamic traditions have come together and are promoting each other. Can the dharma traditions not do this. It does not make one more dominant than the other. Today one group is taking the lead tomorrow another. Whoever has access can bring others along.
7. Many Hindus like me try to bring all dharma traditions into the forefront as we did with the White House.
8. I think mixing Indian politics and Indian government activities with Hindus especially in America is counterproductive. My opinion - In India Hindus are not so empowered. In fact in America Hindus can speak with their own identity in a way they can't in India. I hope the Hindus and Sikhs can build a bridge and reduce this tension. Honestly I was not even aware of the hurt feelings of the Sikhs until this past month. I and our Hindu team tried so hard to work with them. In fact for our August 3rd conference at the White House we brought Valerie Kaur and honored Major Khalsi because we wanted Sikh brethren to know your pain is our pain. Then August 5 th happened and we all became Sikh. Most of the youth there were Hindu and Jain. But Valerie saw them as Sikh and we stood with her at that time. You can read our blog in huffington post.

Today we are working with homeland security to better self protect ourselves. Personally I and our Hindu team helped the nj homeland security in reaching out to the south Asian community for the past 2 years. Then after August 3rd we focused on the Sikh community and helped strengthen the gurudwara effort. Now the strategy developed with the Sikh community is shared with Hindu and we welcomed them in the temple on January 26th and learnt from them. No one was disrespectful. In fact we all wanted to help. And are working together to help the poor. After

25

August 3rd shooting all across America temples prayed and reached out to the Sikh community. That is the spirit we should grow and spread. Not the past which is certainly not the future our children see and want.

Can we not better understand and work together and create a dharma identity just like the Abrahamic one? Can we not find common ground? And build our communities in America?

In peace and dharma

Anju

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 14, 2013, at 1:57 AM, jasbirmann@aol.com wrote:

Respected Dr. Sherma, trustees and officers of DANAM,

1. Thanks for your decision to remove all Sikh references from DANAM web site.
2. Please email me the telephone and Email addresses of all scholars who participated and prepared this Mission statement for DANAM. We will like to further correspond with them for academic discourse.
3. Let me reiterate again that Religion is personal. "Let the people enjoy and practice and propagate their own respective religions" Thru IRS Code 501(c)(3) Non profit Code.
4. Sikhs will join any form where Sikh religion will be defined as "Sikhism as original distinct and revealed religion"
5. DANAM Mission statement appears to be an academic tool and new creative idea for scholars and North American public for absorption of Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists into Hindu fold. This debate is going on in India Since 1949 and still going on and will go on until remedied. See attachment.

Jasbir Singh Mann MD

-----Original Message-----

From: Rita Sherma <ritadsherma@aol.com>

To: jasbirmann <jasbirmann@aol.com>

Sent: Wed, Feb 13, 2013 7:48 pm

Subject: Removing Sikh References from Website

Dear Respected Dr. Mann,

Thank you for communications. The good news is that the academic scholars of

26

DANAM, out of respect for the Sikh community, have already decided to remove all references to Sikhism from the website.

We are only waiting for the web-technician, who is the person who can make any changes, to return from Europe in about three weeks. All references to Sikhism will be removed at that time.

Later, you may like to talk personally to some of the principals of the academic association for deeper dialogue to help inspire understanding of the perspectives of the Sikh community.

Many thanks for your helpful explanations of the history and foundations of the Sikh experience. As per our conversation, no disrespect was meant.

Best wishes,
R. Sherma

27

SIKHISM: AN ORIGINAL, DISTINCT, REVEALED AND COMPLETE RELIGION

HARNAM SINGH SHAN

28

SIKHISM: AN ORIGINAL, DISTINCT, REVEALED AND COMPLETE RELIGION

HARNAM SINGH SHAN

29

1

I

The word 'Sikh', as we know, is the Punjabi form of the Sanskrit word *shishya*, meaning a disciple or a learner, especially a seeker of truth. It came to be used for the disciples of Guru Nanak Dev and his nine spiritual successors who graced humanity from 1469 to 1708 A.D. in the Indian subcontinent. Thus, their religion, called Sikhism, literally means the path of discipleship and the new-way of life taught by them.

Their faith is the youngest and the most modern of the world's religions. It originated in Punjab, the land of Five Rivers, about five centuries ago, during the Muslim rule of Lodhis followed soon after by that of the Mughals in India.

II

Soon after the passing away, in 1708, of the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah, issued an imperial ordinance on the 10th of December 1710 from Delhi to "kill and finish them (the Sikhs) wherever they were found,"[1] ordering thus their wholesale destruction. That royal proclamation, outlawing the Sikhs and seeking their complete annihilation, was repeated by Emperor Farrukh Siyar, and it remained in force for three long years in all parts of the Mughal Empire. "According to it, every Sikh or Nanakpanthi, wherever seen, was to be immediately arrested. He was to be offered only one alternative, either Islam or the sword. He was to be executed there and then without any hesitation or loss of time. A schedule of valuable rewards was proclaimed. For every Sikh head Rs. 25/- were to be given, and for a Sikh captive a sum of Rs. 100/- was to be awarded. Their pretty girls were to be reduced to Concubines, and others were to be made maidservants. When a Muslim died, his grave was to be dug by the Sikhs or their Hindu sympathisers. For *begar* (unpaid labour), in place of cobblers, Sikhs were to be employed. The Emperor's orders were strictly obeyed. The Governors of Sarhind, Lahore and Jammu tried to surpass one another in persecution of the Sikhs in order to win the goodwill of Farrukh Siyar."[2] Later, in 1746, according to Syed Mohammad Latif, 'The Governor (of Punjab), Yahya Khan, issued a proclamation for a general massacre of all Sikhs, wherever they could be found. Death was to be the punishment of all persons who invoked the name of Guru Gobind (Singh), and a reward was offered for the heads of Sikhs. Thousands were put to death daily, and their heads brought before the Subedar of Lahore for reward.'[3] It was reported, on three occasions, to the authorities that the Sikhs had been exterminated root-and-branch. The Afghan invader, Ahmad Shah Abdali, during his invasion of India in 1762 and his continued campaign of the Sikhs' extermination, killed about twenty five thousand of them[4] in a single day's battle.[5] Besides, he ransacked their capital (viz. Amritsar), blew up their Harimandar (the Temple of God, better known as Golden Temple), and desecrated its *Sudhasar* (sacred pool) with blood, bones and entrails of cows, etc., and had it filled up with debris.[6]

30

With the establishment, in 1849, of the British rule in Punjab, Dr Ernest Trumpp, a German missionary, appointed by Her Majesty's Government to translate the sacred Sikh scriptures, asserted in 1877 that "Sikhism is a waning religion that will soon belong to history." [7] Joginder Nath Bhattacharya rather prophesied in 1896 that 'Under British rule, Sikhism is fast losing its vitality and is drifting towards amalgamation with the Hindu faith. In the course of a few more generations, Sikhism is likely to be superseded by one of those forms of Vaishnavism which alone have the best chance of success among a subject nation in times of profound and undisturbable peace.' [8] Max Arthur Macauliffe also apprehended such a danger of amalgamation or absorption, when he observed, first in his essays and papers (1881-1906), [9] and later in his magnum opus (1909) : "Truly wonderful are the strength and vitality of Hinduism. It is like the boa constrictor of the Indian forests. When a petty enemy appears to worry it, it winds round its opponent, crushes it in its folds, and finally causes it to disappear in its capacious interior. In this way, many centuries ago, Hinduism on its own ground disposed of Buddhism which was largely a Hindu reformation; in this way, in a pre-historic period, it absorbed the religion of the Scythian invaders of Northern India; in this way, it is disposing of the reformed and once hopeful religion of Baba Nanak. Hinduism has embraced Sikhism in its folds; the still comparatively young religion is making a vigorous struggle for life, but its ultimate destruction is, it is apprehended, inevitable without state support." [10] Gokul Chand Narang posing a self-prophesying question and answering it himself in a self-righteous manner, stated in 1912, 'What is their (the Sikhs) future? It is anything but dark. However, it is apparent that the best days of the Khalsa are altogether behind.' [11]

During the all-out crusade of extermination against its adherents (who are easily recognizable by their strikingly distinctive appearance sporting unshorn hair and colourful headgear) immediately before and after the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan on the 15th August 1947, thousands of them (the Sikhs) were killed at sight. The rest were uprooted, *en masse*, from their homes, lands and historic shrines; and were deprived of all other belongings in an unprecedented way. [12]

The horrendous holocaust reduced nearly half of their thriving community to a homeless, landless and seething refugee population. So much so that of all other persons, one of its own followers, Khushwant Singh, while prefacing his first book about them and their faith, observed in 1953 : "The chief reason for my writing an account of my people is the melancholy thought that contemporary with my labours are being written the last chapters of the story of the Sikhs. By the end of the century, the Sikhs themselves will have passed into oblivion. Before that happens, it is proper that some estimate of their religion, history, traditions and political and cultural achievements should be made by someone identified with them by faith and association." [13] Gokul Chand Narang, a staunch Arya-Saniajist, came out in 1960 with another self-fulfilling statement asserting that the 'Sikhs have no political future as an

independent community.”[14] Fourteen years later, another highly learned Sikh, Kapur Singh, stated while concluding his speech on 7th of October 1974 at Vancouver: “While as Canadian citizens, the Sikhs may look forward to a hopeful and bright future; in India, their historic homeland, they now face the basic problems of their identity and existence, since the control of their own history has been snatched out of their own hands and their historical potential has been submerged and throttled. And I add that the Sikhs want to live, as all living things do not want to die.”[15]

Only ten years after that last pronouncement, the Sikhs had to face still another holocaust in 1984, only thirty-seven years after the independence of India: for the attainment of which their sufferings, sacrifices and contribution far exceeded their numerical strength in their motherland.[16] This too involved not only a multi-pronged attack on their historic shrines and institutions,[17] but also a genocidal campaign to slaughter thousands of innocent Sikhs, disgracing their women and burning their properties all over India, not accounted for to this date.[18]

But in spite of such recurrent persecution and treacherous onslaughts perpetrated on this religion by the rulers and the foreign invaders as well as the ongoing challenges and intimidating prophesies about its absorption, assimilation or disappearance, Sikhism has stood its ground and withstood all tests of the time. All nefarious efforts made from time-to-time to suppress, subjugate or exterminate it have gone up in smoke. All prophets of doom who predicted its extinction had to bite the bullet and their prophesies have proven totally wrong. Even ‘the boa constrictor has failed to swallow it.’[19] The fact remains that it has not only survived, but is very much here to stay. Its followers are flourishing now in even larger numbers, not only in Punjab, its homeland, and in all other parts of India, but also in every part of the world. Despite various limitations, such as their ‘stateless status’ - the Sikhs have achieved a far greater success in all walks of life, contributing a lot to the progress of the communities they live in and wielding ‘an influence much in excess of their numerical strength’[20] everywhere in the world. So much so that according to the renowned historian Arnold Toynbee, “they are the burliest men on the face of the planet, tough and capable, and slightly grim. If human life survives the present chapter of man’s history, the Sikhs for sure, will still be on the map.”[21]

III

This is so and shall remain thus, because the Sikhs, in spite of being about two percent of the population of India, their country of origin, profess one of the ‘higher religions’ of the World which is not only an original, distinct and independent faith, but is also an autonomous, complete and dynamic religion, born of a direct and definitive revelation like other major religions of the world. It is primary in its source and pure in its contents.

32

The authenticity of its dogmas, simplicity of its beliefs, exalted moral code, internal vigour, tenacity of purpose and sustained heroism together with the religious zeal, spiritual energy, unshakable faith and indomitable spirit as well as the enterprising and self-sacrificing nature of its followers have kept it intact and firm on its ground in many such crises during its 500 plus year-old history, raising it up again with greater strength and better prospects after every attempt to annihilate it.

IV

Those who have not been able to study Sikhism properly or objectively, or have been unable to understand rightly its nature, origin, essence, psyche and spirit, have often described it wrongly or misleadingly.

Some of them, like Estlin Carpenter, have considered it not an original and distinct, but an eclectic and 'composed' religion, maintaining that 'the movement of Nanak which culminated in the formation of a kind of church nation, was fed from two sources and attempted to establish a religion combining the higher elements of Hinduism and Islam alike.' [22] According to Rev. F. Heiler, too, it is 'a pure and elevated religion in which the best of Hinduism and the best of Islam unite. Many elements of the religion come near the central truths of Christianity, though these glimpses of revelation are indeed blurred by the strong influence of Vedantic pantheism and Islamic fatalism. Above all, the element which robs the teaching of the Granth (its sacred scripture, Guru Granth Sahib) of any creative power is its eclecticism, its continued oscillation between theism and pantheism.' [23] In the words of Khushwant Singh, 'Sikhism was born out of a wedlock between Hinduism and Islam.' [24] It is "a synthesis of these two faiths." [25] According to Bhattacharya, it may be described briefly as a 'Hinduized form of Mahomedanism or a Mahomedinized form of Hinduism, . . . is a mixture of Hinduism and Mahomedanism minus circumcision and cow-killing, and plus faith in the Sikh Gurus. Even in outward appearance, a Sikh with his short trousers, flowing beard, forehead free from paint and neck without beads, looks more like a Mohammedan than a Hindu. The only visible sign by which he may be distinguished is the iron ring which he wears on the wrist.' [26] The Time magazine has recently described him as 'a member of a casteless religion that combines elements of Hinduism and Islam, but scorns the caste system of the Hindus and the historical expansionism of the Muslims.' [27]

Some others, like Frederic Pincott, have also tried to identify Sikhism with Mohammadanism. According to him, "the religion of Nanak was really intended as a compromise between Hinduism and Muhammadanism, if it may not even be spoken of as the religion of a Mohammedan." Concluding his article on Sikhism, included in the Dictionary of Islam, he observed, 'It is enough for the purpose of this article to have established the fact that Sikhism, in its inception, was intimately associated with Muhammadanism and that it was intended as a

means of bridging the gulf which separated the Hindus from the believers in the Prophet.”[28] Tara Chand has even gone to the extent of asserting that ‘Nanak took the Prophet of Islam as his model and his teaching was naturally deeply coloured by this fact.’[29]

Sri Rajagopalachari has described the Sikhs as “no better than uncircumcised Mussalmans.”[30] Ascribing the theistic character of Sikhism to the influence of Islam, Monier Williams has stated, ‘Nanak was partially Islamised, to the extent at least of denouncing idolatry.’[31] G.T. Baltany has also mentioned this religion ‘having been largely influenced by the growing Muhammadanism.’[32] But the Muslim writers, like Maulvi Insha Ulla Khan,[33] Maulvi Muhammad Ali[34], Khawaja Hasan Nizami,[35] and Shaikh Muhammad Yasuf[36], have gone a step further even by claiming Guru Nanak as a great Muslim Fakir who, according to them, taught a religion which in itself was a form of Muhammadanism.[37]

On the other hand, according to Ernest Trumpp, ‘Sikhism has only an accidental relationship with Muhammadanism. It is a mistake if Nanak is represented as having endeavoured to unite the Hindu and Muhammadan idea about God. Nanak remained a thorough Hindu according to all his views.’[38] ‘Although precipitated by Islam,’ asserts Gokul Chand Narang, ‘Sikhism owes nothing to that religion. It is, on the other hand, a phase of Hindu religious revival, and has in consequence retained all essential features of real Hinduism.’[39] Mahatma Gandhi has even claimed that the ‘Sikhs are a part of the Hindu community. The Granth Sahib is filled with the Hindu spirit and the Hindu legends, and millions of Hindus believe in Guru Nanak.’[40] Gandhi, records Archer, “acknowledged that he had met some Sikhs who held themselves distinct from Hindus, but intimated that he would be pleased to find that the separate tendency is confined to only a very few Sikhs and that the general body regard themselves as Hindus,”[41] thus paving the way for Sikhism to be labelled as an off-shoot of Hinduism.

There are still others who, like Muhammad Akbar, have even denied the distinct identity and separate entity of Sikhism by asserting that ‘Guru Nanak did not enunciate any new religion, but only wanted to reform Hinduism.’[42]. According to Guru Datt also, it is difficult to say whether Sikhs have any separate or distinct religion of their own. The faith they profess is the basis of the present-day Arya-Samaj.[43] Nirad C. Chaudhuri has also identified Sikhism with Hinduism and has described it as one of its different forms.[44]

According to some others, like Marian Smith, Sikhism is a religious synthesis. She “finds a similarity between the reforms of Guru Nanak and those of Martin Luther. She calls Sikhism a religious synthesis, pointing out that Guru Nanak offered a doctrinal synthesis which answered the challenge of Islam, and aimed at the foundations of the top-heavy Brahminical social structure.”[45]

V

But those who have studied Sikhism and have understood its origin, growth and gospel have proclaimed, in the words of Duncan Greenlees, the celebrated author of the World Gospel Series, that ‘Sikhism is no disguised Hindu sect, but an independent revelation of the Truth of all sects; it is no variant of Muslim teaching . . . It too is a distinct religion like the other great religions of the world . . . The Sikh is not a Hindu or a Muslim; he is the disciple of the one Eternal Guru.’[46] According to Edward Bittencourt, ‘Sikhism is a wholly new, original and genuinely monotheistic religion. It is an independent religion which naturally may be said to have a background of Hinduism and Islam, much as Christianity has a background of Judaism, and Judaism has a background of Akhnatonism and Zoroastrianism and previous Semitic Paganism.’[47] M.A. Macauliffe, who devoted thirty long years to its study and research and produced a six-volume monumental work about its prophets, scripture, tradition, etc., had already stated, while introducing to the West this religion and its founder as follows: ‘Guru Nanak was not a priest either by birth or education, but a man who soared to the loftiest heights of divine emotionalism, and exalted his mental vision to an ethical ideal beyond the conception of Hindu or Muhammadan. The illustrious author of *Vie de Jesus* asks whether great originality will again arise, or the world be content to follow the path opened by the daring creators of ancient ages. Now there is here presented a religion totally unaffected by Semitic or Christian influences. Based on the concept of the unity of God, it rejected Hindu formulations and adopted an independent ethical system, ritual, and standards, which were totally opposed to theological beliefs of Guru Nanak’s age and country.’[48] Hence, he asserted, ‘It would be difficult to point to a religion of greater originality or to a more comprehensive ethical system.’[49] According to R.C. Majumdar too, the founder of this new and distinct religion, ‘cut himself adrift from all associations with prevailing sectarian religions.’[50]

It even fell away from allegiance to their respective codes, and developed its own, as observed by Sir Lepel Griffin in 1870: ‘The Sikhs had abandoned the Hindu faith and with it the system of law which is the basis of the faith and which was inseparable from it. For a hundred and fifty years they had been governed as far as chiefships were concerned, by another code altogether, and it was as reasonable for them to refer to *Manu* and the *Shastras* as the source of legal authority, as it would have been for Mohammedans who had embraced Sikhism to appeal to the *shariat*.’[51] So much so that in the words of Prof. Indubhushan Banerjee, it ‘forged its own weapon, hedged itself behind newer forms and customs, in short, developed individuality of its own.’[52]

And this is what Guru Arjun Dev, the holy compiler of its sacred scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, has himself stated in unambiguous terms as long back as in 1604 A.D. :

35

7

I observe neither fasting (like a Hindu).
 nor the month of austerity (like a Muslim).
 For I serve God alone.
 Who saves all at the last.
 Gosain of the Hindus and Allah of the Muslims are one to me.
 I have broken free from Hindus as from Muslims.
 Neither I go to Mecca to perform Hajj (like Muslims),
 nor I perform worship at pilgrim places of Hindus.
 I serve only the sole Lord (i.e., God) and no other.
 I neither perform the Hindu worship.
 nor say the Muslim prayer.
 I bow to the One Formless Lord in my heart.
 We are neither Hindus nor Musalmans,
 Our body and soul belong to the One Supreme Being,
 Who alone is both Ram and Allah for us.[53]

A contemporary historian, Mobid Zulfiqar Ardistani (popularly known as Shaikh Mohsin Fani), who happened to stay with his son and successor, Guru Hargobind, at Kiratpur Sahib, and who had been the first non-Sikh writer to record an account of the Sikhs and Sikhism of those days, and that too based on first-hand information, has recorded his statement in his famous work on comparative study of religions, entitled *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, compiled in 1654 AD. Opening his chapter on the subject, Mohsin Fani observes "the Nanak Panthis who are known as the Sikhs of the Gurus, have no faith in idols and temples of idols." [54] Proceeding further, he states "They do not read the mantras of the Hindus. They do not venerate their temples or idols, nor do they esteem their avatars. They have no regard for the Sanskrit language which, according to the Hindus, is the speech of the angels. [55] Indicating (Guru Nanak's own attitude towards avatars and divinities, he tells that Guru Nanak did not believe in divinities and incarnations. 'Just as he praised the Mohammadans, so has he praised the incarnations and the gods and goddesses of the Hindus. But he considered them all to be the created (*makhluq*) and not the Creator (*khaliq*). He denied the doctrines of *Halool* (i.e. direct descent from or incarnation of God), and *Ittihad* (i.e., direct union of the All-pervading God with any particular body)." [56]

Bhai Gurdas, the amanuensis who wrote the Holy Granth at the dictation of Guru Arjun, was himself a great scholar and writer, and his ballads and couplets are regarded as the 'key' to the understanding of the Sikh scriptures, tenets, practices, etc., has categorically stated: The Guru's *Panth* is distinct. And cannot be mixed with others. [57]

36

8

Basine his conclusion on numerous references and statements contained therein, Owen Cole has therefore observed, 'Hinduism at all levels is rejected and replaced by the practices which have come to be the essential part of Sikh ceremonial use of the Adi Granth and celebration of the anniversaries of the Gurus (*gurpurbs*).'[58]

Qazi Nur Muhammad who came to India from Baluchistan in the invaders train to record the events of the seventh (dt. 1764) invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali, and who completed his 'invaluable'[59] *Jang Nama* in 1765. has also expressed similar views which are based upon his personal observations and close contacts. Speaking of the religion of the Sikhs against whom the said expedition had been organised. Nur Muhammad tells us that religiously they were absolutely separate from Hindus:

The Sikhs are the disciples of the Guru and that august Guru lived at Chak (Amritsar). The ways and manners of these people received their impetus from Nanak who showed those Sikhs a separate path (i.e., taught them a distinct religion). He was succeeded by Gobind Singh from whom they received the title of 'Singh.' They are not from amongst the Hindus, and have a separate religion of their own.[60]

J.D. Cunningham (1812-1851), who happened to be the first-ever Westerner to write and publish in 1849 the first full-fledged history of Sikhism after fighting fierce and decisive battles with its followers, therefore, observed in 1849: "The last apostle of the Sikhs did not live to see his own ends accomplished, but he effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people, and filled them with a lofty, although fitful, longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the proper adjuncts of that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak. Gobind saw what was yet vital, and he relumed it with Promethean fire." The result of the miracle that the Tenth Master wrought, tells Cunningham, is that, "A living spirit possesses the whole Sikh people, and the impress of (Guru) Gobind (Singh) has not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds, but has also operated materially and given amplitude to their physical frames. The features and external form of a whole people have been modified, and a Sikh Chief is not more distinguishable by his stately person and free and manly bearing than a minister of his faith is by a lofty thoughtfulness of look which marks the fervours of his soul, and his persuasion of the near presence of the Divinity." Asserting that the people marked by such high spirits and changed features belonged to a distinct faith, altogether different even from that of their other countrymen, Cunningham added 'Notwithstanding these changes, it has been usual to regard the Sikhs as essentially Hindus, and they doubtless are so in language and everyday customs, for Gobind (Singh) did not fetter his disciples with political systems or codes of municipal laws; yet in religious faith and worldly aspirations they are wholly different from other Indians, and they are bound together by a community of inward sentiment and outward object unknown elsewhere. But the misapprehension need not surprise the public nor condemn our scholars, when it is remembered that the learned Greeks and Romans misunderstood the spirit of those humble men who obtained a new

life by baptism. Tacitus and Suetonius regarded the early Christians as a mere Jewish sect, they failed to perceive the fundamental difference and to appreciate the latent energy and real excellence of that doctrine which has added dignity and purity to the modern civilization.”[61] Sir Charles Elliot acclaimed it, therefore, as ‘a religion of special interest (to mankind), since it has created not only a political society, but also customs so distinctive that those who profess it, rank in common esteem as a separate race.’[62] Guru Gobind Singh’s ‘ordinances’, he added, ‘were successful in creating a nation.’[63]

Recognizing and acclaiming this amazing fact of history, the Sage-Scholar of Pondicherry, Sir Aurobindo, has similarly observed: ‘A more striking instance was the founding of the Sikh religion, its long line of Gurus and the novel direction and form given to it by Guru Gobind Singh in the democratic institution of Khalsa.’[64] Explaining it earlier, he has stated: “The Sikh Khalsa was an astonishingly original and novel creation, and its face was turned not to the past but to the future.”[65] Nirmal Kumar Jam has likewise asserted that those who consider this religion as an off-shoot of Islam “are as mistaken as those who think Sikhism to be an off-shoot of Hinduism. Like every original religion, it is born of a direct revelation. It is not based on any scripture. As it does not derive from any established creed, it does not fight any preceding religion.”[66] In the same vein, maintains Ishwari Prasad that ‘Guru Nanak declared that there was no Hindu or Mussalman. He set aside the Vedas and the Quran, and asked his followers to repeat the name of God.’[67] Hence, said Dorothy Field, “Pure Sikhism is far above dependence on Hindu ritual. A reading of the Granth strongly suggests that Sikhism should be regarded as a new and separate world religion, rather than a reformed sect of the Hindus.[68]

It is similarly not a sect or a form of Muhammadanism. It is neither a mixture of both nor a compilation of good points selected from the Hindu and Muslim faiths. It has not been formed, as alleged above, by combining some rational and acceptable rituals, beliefs and dogmas of the Hindus and Muslims. “The teachings of Guru Nanak have,” says Geoffrey Parrinder, the eminent author of the *World Religions*, “commonly been represented as a syncretic blend of Hindu tradition and Muslim belief. This is a gross simplification, and when expressed in terms of a mixture of Hinduism and Islam, it must be totally rejected. The teachings of Guru Nanak do indeed represent a synthesis, but the elements which constitute the synthesis can never be defined, however loosely, as Hinduism and Islam.”[69] Thus, Sikhism can, in no way, be termed as an eclectic religion, composed of selections made from various systems, doctrines, sources, etc.

The order of the Khalsa ‘from its very birth has claimed the status of a new Way of Life, the Third *Panth*, a separate community, and distinct people from the two Ways of Life, already known and largely practiced by the peoples of East and West and the inhabitants of India: the Way of the Aryans, represented by Hinduism and its heterodox forms, Buddhism

38

10

and Jainism; and the Semitic Way of Life, represented primarily by the Christians and the Mussulmans.” [70] ‘That such was the unambiguous claim made for his new order of the Khalsa by the Guru (Gobind Singh) himself, cannot be in doubt, as the Guru’s own assertions on this point amply support the testimony of the contemporary non-Sikh historians and writers.” [71]

This is also quite clear from the proclamation he made in the great gathering of the Sikhs at Anandpur Sahib soon after initiating the first five members of the Order of the Khalsa, knighting them as Singhs and calling them his Beloved Ones, on the historic Vaisakhi day of the 30th March, 1699. ‘According to the Persian historian Ghulam Muhi-ud-Din, the newswriter of the period, sent to the Emperor (Aurangzeb) a copy of the Guru’s address (which) is dated the first of Vaisakh Samvat 1756 (AD. 1699), and is as follows” [72]:

I wish you all to embrace one creed and follow one path, rising above all differences of the religions as now practised. Let the four Hindu castes, who have different rules laid down for them in the Shastras, abandon them altogether, and adopting the way of mutual help and co-operation, mix freely with one another. Let no one deem himself superior to another. Do not follow the old scriptures. Let none pay heed to the Ganga and other places of pilgrimage which are considered to be holy in the Hindu religion, or worship the Hindu deities such as Rama, Krishna, Brahma and Durga; but all should cherish faith in the teachings of Guru Nanak and his successors. Let men of the four castes receive my baptism (of the Double-edged Sword). Eat of the same vessel, and feel no aloofness from or contempt for one another. [73]

The newswriter of the Mughal Court who was present there on the occasion, when forwarding this proclamation to his master, submitted his own report: ‘When the Guru had thus addressed the crowd, several Brahmins and Khattris stood up, and said that they accepted the religion of Guru Nanak and of the other Gurus. Others, on the contrary, said that they would never accept any religion which was opposed to the teachings of the Vedas and the Shastras, and that they would not renounce at the bidding of a boy, the ancient faith which had descended to them from their ancestors. Thus, though several refused to accept the Guru’s religion, about twenty thousand men stood up and promised to obey him, as they had the fullest faith in his divine mission.” [74] About eighty thousand men, say Ahmad Shah Batalia and Bute Shah, received the Baptism of the Double-edged Sword and joined the Order of the Khalsa during the first few days. [75] Their names were changed, and “they were given one family name ‘Singh’ for thenceforth their father was Gobind Singh (so renamed after his own baptism), their mother Sahib Devan, and their place of birth Anandpur. The baptism symbolised a rebirth, by which the initiated renounced their previous occupations (*krit nash*) for that of working for God; severed their family ties (*kul nash*) to become the family of Gobind; rejected their earlier creeds (*dharma nash*) for the creed of the Khalsa; gave up all rituals (*karam nash*) save that sanctioned by the Sikh faith; and stopped believing in superstition

39

11

(*tharam nash*) for belief in One God. Five emblems were prescribed for the Khalsa. They were to wear their hair and beard unshorn (*kesh*); they were to carry a comb (*kangha*) in the hair to keep it tidy; they were always to wear a knee-length pair of breeches (*kach*), worn by soldiers of the times; they were to carry a steel bangle (*kara*) on their right wrist; and they were to be ever armed with a sabre (*kirpan*). In addition to these five emblems, the converts were to observe four rules of conduct (*rahit*) not to cut any hair on any part of their body; not to smoke or chew tobacco, or consume alcoholic drinks; not to eat an animal which had been slaughtered by being bled to death, as was customary with the Muslims, but eat only *jhatka* meat, where the animal had been despatched with one blow, and not to molest the person of Muslim women. At the end of oath-taking, the Guru hailed the converts with a new form of greeting:

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa
Waheguru ji ki Fateh
“Hail the Khalsa who belongs to Lord God!
Hail the Lord God to Whom belongs the victory!” [76]

The very first ordinance issued by the Founder of the Khalsa to the Sikh congregations throughout the subcontinent, Kabul and Ghazni confirms the above, [77] and this definition of the Khalsa corroborates all that further as under in his own words:

‘He whose mind dwells, night and day,
On the Ever-effulgent Light,
And never swerves from the thought of one God;
He who is full of love for God and faith in Him,
And believes not, even mistakenly,
In fasting and worship of the graves of Muslims
Or sepulchres of Hindus;
He who recognises the one God and not another,
And does not believe in pilgrimages,
Ceremonial acts of mercy
And charity, penances and austerities;
And he whose heart is illumined within
By the Light of the Perfect One,
He is to be recognised then
As a pure member of the Order of the Khalsa.” [78]

All that ushered in a complete break with the past of all those who joined the Order of the Khalsa. It also marked ‘the culmination which had crowned Guru Nanak’s revelation.’ [79] It also pronounced the complete independence and distinctiveness of the Sikh religion. ‘That such has been the stout belief, and the basic impulse of the Sikhs and their history can be

40

12

readily ascertained by any dispassionate person who would take pains to enquire with an open mind.”[80] He or she would surely come to a similar conclusion.

Further authentication to this stance has been duly provided by John Clark Archer, who, after conducting a critical and comparative study of the Aryan and Semitic religions and recognising the separate entity and identity of Sikhism, has maintained that, “Indeed Sikhism in itself reveals something of what in the last analysis religion is . . .” It is “an independent and conspicuous order of its own, with a character worthy of comparison with that of Hinduism and Islam, and with Christianity in particular . . . The five centuries of Sikh history provide many lessons in human thought and action which are of more than passing value . . . Sikhs may stand, therefore, as symbols and examples of all who search for God and Truth . . . They preserve among themselves a hardy tradition of religious and political activity, and enjoy among Hindus, Moslems, Christians and other peoples, an extraordinary prestige.”[81] The dispassionate enquirer would also find like an American convert, Ralph Singh, that the followers of this distinct faith “have their own Prophets who brought a new divine revelation to earth which is enshrined in their own sacred scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, regarded as the living Word of God.”[82] But, a biased enquirer, like Hew McLeod, who has, according to Justice Gurdev Singh “attacked most of the Sikh traditions, institutions and beliefs, questioned their validity and striven to create doubts about others.”[83] would, on the other hand, maintain on flimsy props and erroneous conclusions that “Sikhism does not deserve much consideration as it is only a rehash of a minor effete Hindu creed” and that Guru Nanak was not the founder of this religion “as he did not originate a new school of thought or set of teachings.” McLeod has even gone to the extent of choosing not to accept the aforesaid account of the birth of the Khalsa and the five emblems and rules of conduct prescribed for it by Guru Gobind Singh himself on the Vaisakhi of 1699, “not because he finds any evidence to falsify it, but by simply refusing to believe it,” saying, “Our knowledge of this (18th) century is still limited. Traditions abound, but so too do compulsive reasons for scepticism. What we do know, however, indicates that traditions relating to the period of Guru Gobind Singh must be, in some considerable measure, set aside. The slate must be wiped clean and must not be reinscribed until we have ascertained just what did take place during the eighteenth century.”[84]

VI

But the history and tradition of a religion cannot, and should not be “set aside,” “discarded” or “wiped clean” on the mere suspicions or unjustified scepticism of an ex-employee of a Christian Mission. Such scepticism is unwarranted particularly in the case of a religion, viz. Sikhism, which was born just about five centuries back and which has survived so gloriously through this eventful period of the modern world in full gaze of history. More so, when it has been duly recognised not only as an original and distinct, but also as an independent and autonomous higher religion of the world.

Besides, as already stated, this is a prophetic religion. It is born of a direct and definitive revelation like all other great and 'higher religions' of the world, 'Instead of drawing authority and inspiration from any revealed scripture, such as the Hindu *Puranas* and *Smritis*, Guru Nanak depended on his own mystical experience." [85] The revelation did not also come to him as an 'external inspiration' (called *wahi zahir*) which "was used for the production of Quran" during whose process "the mind of Muhammad was passive and the message, an external one, was brought to him by Gabriel." [86] On the other hand, "It seems certain," says Duncan Greenless, "that his (Guru Nanak's) views welled up from the deeps of inspiration in his own heart and owed little or nothing to what he received from others, either through books or through their words." [87] Guru Nanak himself vouchsafed this fact and has himself recorded those experiences and revelations, received directly from God Himself, in his own *lani* or revealed word, preserved till today in its original and undefiled form, singling out his religion, thereby, "from, most other great theological systems as regards the authenticity of its dogmas." [88] He has defined this as *Khasam-ki-Bani* ('Word of the Lord') in one hymn, and *Eh Bani Mahan Purakh Ki*, ('This Word of the Supreme Being') in another. [89]

The spiritual and religious truths which Guru Nanak preached had been revealed to him 'through a direct encounter with God at some level of consciousness', and he preached what he had been told and taught by God Himself. He conveyed only those words to the world which God had wished him to give forth as His divine message, as stated by him in verses such as the following:

'As the Lord's Word descends to me
So I express it, Lalo !' [90]

'I have uttered only what You, O'Lord! Have inspired me to utter." [91]

Guru Nanak has also mentioned in another hymn that he was an ordinary minstrel who was commissioned and blessed by God with His service. Describing his first audience with the Supreme Being, the Guru sang aloud thus:

'I was an idle bard,
God assigned to me a rewarding task,
And commanded me to sing His praises night and day,
He summoned me to His Eternal Mansion,
Bestowed on me the robe of holy laudation,
And feasted me on the holy Name ambrosial
The Supreme Being is attained, says Nanak,
By laudation of the holy Eternal." [92]

As is well-known to students of comparative religion, contents of revealed religion are conveyed to the people by the Supreme Being through His special messengers, either by calling them to His presence, as in the case of Moses, or by communicating His messages to them, as in the case of Prophet Muhammad. As regards Sikhism, God is stated to have been pleased to use direct ways to convey His Words, Laws and Commandments, to its founder, [93] as stated above by the first Sikh Prophet, Guru Nanak, himself in his own words.

His successors in the Apostolic Lineage have not only endorsed this fact, but have also recorded their own experiences and audiences, as under, in their respective writings, compiled in 1604 by the Fifth Master in Guru Granth Sahib, and preserved intact to this day:

I. BY COMMUNICATION:

1. As stated by Guru Amar Das, the Third Master:

‘God is Sole and Supreme,
None is His equal.
I speak as and when He makes me speak,
My utterance is directed by Him.” [94]

2. As confirmed by Guru Ram Das, the Fourth Master:

- (i) ‘To Nanak the Truth was revealed by the Lord. So he relates mysteries of the Divine Portal.” [95]
- (ii) ‘Know the utterance of the holy Preceptor to be pure and true. Disciples of the Master: For, the Lord-Creator Himself makes him utter it.” [96]
- (iii) ‘The Lord has appointed me, the unsophisticated, to His task.” [97]

3. As affirmed repeatedly by Guru Arjun Dev, the Fifth Master:

- (i) ‘Inaccessible, unperceivable, my eternal Lord, Nanak speaks as Thou inspire him to speak.” [98]
- (ii) ‘By myself I do not know what to say: I have stated all by His command.” [99]
- (iii) ‘This servant of the Lord while Conveying the Divine Word, Speaks as the Lord directs him.” [100]
- (iv) ‘What can I utter? I know nothing to utter: As the Lord Wills, so He makes me utter.” [101]



II. BY AUDIENCE:

1. As stated by Guru Ram Das, the Fourth Master:

‘I, a minstrel of the Lord-God,
 Came to the Divine Portal,
 The Lord inside listened to my supplication,
 And called me into His Presence.
 Addressing me, He asked,
 ‘What brings you here, My Minstrel’ I prayed, ‘Confer on me, O, Gracious
 Lord;
 The boon of your ever-abiding Name Divine.’
 The Bountiful Lord granted my prayer,
 Conferred on me meditation on the Name
 And blessed me with a robe of honour.”[102]

2. As affirmed by Guru Arjun Dev, the Fifth Master:

‘As I have attained the sought-after Lord,
 Illumination and joy have filled me . . .
 I have been fully blessed by the Perfect Lord
 Who has come, in His grace; to His servant.”[103]

3. “The Lord-God called me into His Mansion, Wherein I consumed nectar (of Immortality).”[104]

Such important disclosures, solemn statements, persistent affirmations and firm conviction, in the existence and beneficence of God, prove beyond doubt that Sikhism is a revealed religion. It is so, because it has been directly revealed by God through a line of Ten Prophet-teachers, who, after receiving its contents directly from Him, presented it to mankind in word and deed. They reproduced it in exactly the same original form; and also recorded it in their sacred writings. It is so, because it still remains primary in its source, and pure in its contents. It is neither selective or elective in its nature; nor secondary in its source; nor adulterated in its content. Hence, says M. Mujeeb, “the revelation that came to Guru Nanak, must have been as direct and immediate, and as independent of history and social circumstances, as the religious literature of the Sikhs show it to be.”[105]

That being so, Sikhism can in no way be called an admixture or juxta position of various doctrines gathered from this religion or that theological system by its Prophet-teachers who were genuine messengers of God. Its tenets and teachings have been borrowed neither from Hinduism nor from Islam, nor from any other such source, as has been alleged by those who

44

have not been able to study or understand its essentials properly or dispassionately. It is true, in the words of R.C. Majumdar, that "his was the first and also the last successful attempt to bring together the Hindus and Muslims in a common fold of spiritual and social brotherhood." [106] The first words he uttered when called to take up the mission of his life after the aforesaid Audience with God were:

'Nah ko Hindu Nah Mussalman.'

'There is no Hindu, there is no Mussalman.' [107]

On the face of it, this cryptic phrase was "a simple announcement, and yet a significant one in the context of India of his day." [108] To a society torn by conflict, [109] he brought a vision of common humanity - a vision which transcended all barriers of creed and caste, race and country. He reminded men of their essential oneness. The terms, 'Hindu' and 'Mussalman', included Jainas, Buddhists, Jews, Christians and so on. Guru Nanak was asking men of all faiths and denominations to look beyond external divisions and distinctions to the fundamental unity of mankind. In proclaiming the unity, which lay beyond particularisms, Guru Nanak was not overruling any existing religious designation or tradition. His intention was more radical: 'he wanted to point men beyond their accepted condition to a new possibility - a human community with a true spirit of fellowship and justice, with that deep ethical and spiritual commitment which expresses itself in concern for fellowmen. Nor was he seeking a syncretistic union between Hinduism and Islam, or striving to achieve in his teachings a judicious mixture of elements from both to be acceptable to all. His equal attention to Hindu and Muslim identities and use of some of their religious vocabulary have led some to depict him as the reconciler of the two faiths, and to see Sikhism as 'a deliberate mingling of Hindu and Muslim practices. To do so will mean missing much of his individual genius and misinterpreting the historical development issuing from his revelation.'" [108] The beginnings of the Sikh faith, in fact, go back to this revelation which Guru Nanak brought to light around 1496 A.D., soon after his enlightenment and just before his departure for his preaching odysseys in India and abroad.

VII

Sikhism is, above all, a complete religion in all respects like all other original and revealed religions of the world.

1. It is *Ahi-al-Maqam* [111], having its own spiritual and political Capital, viz., the holy city of Amritsar (as Mecca is for Islam), with its world famous Harimandar (Golden Temple) and Akal Takht which are its focal point, and for its followers the highest seat of spiritual and temporal authority, besides being 'the centre of a World religion, meeting ground of the various facets of the human-spirit, and a profound symbol of future confluence of the World cultures into a universal culture for mankind.'" [112]

45

2. It is *Ahl-at-Kitab*[113] possessing its own holy book, viz., Guru Granth Sahib (as Quran is for Islam), which is not only the Guru Eternal of its adherents, but is also unique among the world's sacred scriptures. It has been acclaimed as "the only non-denominational scripture," [114] the "scripture of universal religion" and 'part of mankind's common spiritual treasure," which, according to Arnold Toynbee, "should be brought within the direct reach of as many people as possible" and which also 'deserves close study from the rest of the world." [115]
3. It is *Ahl-al-Milla*[116] being a true religion revealed by Guru Nanak and having its own fellowship of faith and a cohesive community, called *sangat* and *Panth*. The Turkish and Persian connotations of the word will mean a 'nation', a 'people' and a 'state.' [117] Sikhs are a casteless democratic society, assuring equal status and respect for all. It is for this society that Guru Gobind Singh, while expressing his great love and respect for it, declared:

' Whatever is available in my house, my wealth,
My body, my mind, even my head
Are ever at the disposal of my people." [118]

Paying his tribute to their selfless services, contributions and achievements, he also stated without any reservation that:

' It is through their favour that
I have won my battles,
And have gifts been bestowed.
It is through their favour that
I have overcome my troubles
And my stores are filled.
It is through their favour that
I have acquired knowledge
And have smothered my enemies.
It is also through their favour that
I am exalted and have attained this position;
Otherwise, there are millions of
Humble persons like myself going about." [119]

After administering *Khande di Pahul*[120] to the First Five, knighting them as Singhs, [121] and proclaiming them as his *panj piare*[122] the inaugurator of that 'selfabnegating, martial and casteless' Fellowship of Faith, Guru Gobind Singh, himself besought to be initiated by them in the same way as he had initiated them. Having been initiated

and admitted as such to their brotherhood, called Khalsa[123] he later announced that he had created the Khalsa in his own image under the direct command of God, the Timeless Being:

‘The Khalsa is my alter ego, my own image,
The Khalsa is my embodiment.
In it I have my being.
‘The Khalsa is my beloved ideal.’[124]

Hence, there was to be no difference between him, the Guru and the Khalsa, as created and initiated by him in his own image. All this is unheard of in the annals of the religious and spiritual history of the world.

4. It is *Ahl-i-Kalam*[125], having firm faith in the doctrine of the *Shabad*[126] the holy Word, and the *Shabad-Guru*, i.e., the Word is Guru and Guide.[127]

‘God permeates the celestial music of the Word.’
‘The Word is the essence of all meditation and discipline.’[128]
‘God’s Name is cherished in One’s heart by means of the Word. The supreme state, realization and liberation is attained by means of the Word.’[129]
‘The Word alone can ferry us across the Ocean of Existence.’[130]
‘The holy Word is the true Preceptor,
The Guide, the Mystery profound and inscrutable.
And it is the Word, the absence of which
Results in spiritual confusion.’[131]

5. It is *Ahl-al-Zaban*, having its own language, viz., Panjabi (as Arabic is for Islam), with its own specific script called Gurmukhi, in which its scripture, annals and chronicles, etc., stand recorded right from the beginning.
6. It is *Ahl-at-Nishan*, having its own distinct flag or banner, called *Kesri Nishan Sahib*, with *Khanda* (the Khalsa emblem) inscribed and or installed thereon (as the parcham is for Islam). It keeps on waving over all Sikh temples, called gurdwaras.
7. It is *Ahl-al-Shahad*,[132], cherishing a long and unique line of great martyrdoms, like those of its two prophets (viz, the Fifth, Guru Arjun Dev and the Ninth, Guru Tegh Bahadur), the Sahibzadas (Babas Ajit Singh, Jhujar Singh, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh) and their followers (such as Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Mani Singh).
8. It is *Ahl-al-Shamshir*, possessing the ceremonial sword called *kirpan*, as a symbol of power, sovereignty and weapon of defence and justifiable offence in time of need. This specific weapon is a significant part of the required uniform of a member of the Khalsa

Brotherhood, being one of the Five Ks or symbols of the Sikh faith, obligatory for him to always keep on his body. 'Since a member of the Khalsa Brotherhood is pledged not to accept any alien restrictions on his civic freedom, he is enjoined to insist on and struggle for his unrestricted right to wear and possess arms of offence and defence.' [133] According to a quotation attributed to Guru Gobind Singh:

'The political power and the State rest on annaments.
And without political sovereignty,
the good way of life cannot securely prevail in society.' [134]

As he created the Khalsa 'to establish the ever-persisting community of saint-soldiers,' who could assist in the fulfilment of Guru Nanak's revelation and mission, it was considered essential to equip them with an 'instrument of offence and defence and as an emblem of power and dignity which India had lost and which Guru Gobind Singh wanted to restore.' [135]

At the same time, he approved and allowed recourse to the sword as the last resort of a reasonable man for settling conflicts when all other means have failed in due course. In his letter to Emperor Aurangzeb, he therefore, made it quite clear that,

'When an affair is past every other remedy,
It is just and righteous to draw the sword.' [136]

It is obvious that the creator of the Khalsa created this new metaphor of the sword 'to give a new orientation to the minds of men given to passivity.' [137]

9. It is *Ahl-al-Sunnah*[?] as well, having its own usages, customs and a distinctive code of conduct recorded in its scripture, compositions of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal, various *Rahitnamas*[139] and *Rahit-Maryada*. [140]

Describing the Sikh way of life, these works cover not only the spiritual discipline and moral code, but also the social behaviour of the community whose members 'are required to observe a distinctive code of conduct, one which specifies normative behaviour, outward appearance, and social obligation.' [141]

VIII

Sikhism is, thus, a complete and perfect religion, not only because of its having such prominent features, elements and essentials of a 'higher-religion', but also because it was established, as its Founder stated, to carry out a specific command of the Lord-God Who Himself is, as proclaimed by him in the following couplet, All perfection or perfection-incarnate:

'All that the Perfect One has made is perfect.
There is nothing lacking or excessive in its making.' [142]

48

20

It is dynamic, stable and eternal, too, as, according to the holy compiler of its sacred scripture,

‘The holy Preceptor has laid the immutable foundation of the faith
That never and in no way shall shake.’[143]

Rather, it becomes firmer and firmer with the passage of each day, as stated below:

‘The eternal foundation laid by Guru Nanak, Is ever-ascendant.’[144]

According to the following assertion of the contemporary bards, Rai Balwand and Satta,

‘Guru Nanak founded the True Dominion of God.
He raised the citadel of Truth on firm foundations.’[145]

On these foundations was raised a glorious spiritual and temporal edifice by Guru Gobind Singh who imparted his ‘stern Olympian air’ to the followers of his, who are recognizable till today by their distinctive appearance and are distinguished by their everpresent high spirits, particularly in a period of adversity and crisis. That is so because ‘His impress not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds, but contrary to the experience of ethnological experts, it also operated materially and gave amplitude to their physical frames. They came to be regarded as models of physical beauty and stateliness of manner. A tremendous change was affected in the whole tone of their national character. Even those people who had been considered as dregs of humanity were changed, as if by magic, into something rich and strange. The sweepers, barbers and confectioners, who had never so much as touched the sword, and whose whole generation had lived as grovelling slaves of the so-called higher classes, became under the stimulating leadership of Guru Gobind Singh, doughty warriors who conquered fear, and who were ready to rush into the jaws of death at the bidding of their Guru.’[146]

IX

This revealed, distinct and complete religion of such self-sacrificing saint-soldiers is a universal world faith with an all-embracing appeal and elevating message for all mankind. ‘It is the faith of the New Age,’ says Rev. Bradshaw, ‘It is the *summum bonum*[147] for the modern man. It completely supplants and fulfils all the former dispensations of older religions. The other religions contain Truth, but Sikhism contains the fullness of Truth. The older faiths were good in their day, but that day is now past and we are living in the dispensation of Guru Nanak. Just as we appreciate the discovery of modern living and do not want to exchange our modern jet airlines, automobiles and electricity for the horse-drawn carriages and candles of the past, we do not want to exchange the New Age Faith of Guru Nanak for any of the

old age systems and their antiquated philosophies. The Sikh faith is the universal religion for the present space age. The Sikh religion is truly the answer to the problems of the modern man.”[148] And it ‘is the only living faith,” according to Bittencourt, “that gives the healing outlook on life.”[149]

As regards its potential and prospects in the religious domain of the world, it was Macauliffe, who, while addressing the Quest Society in 1910 at London, stated: ‘The Sikh religion (as compared to other religions) presents no mysteries, and embraces an ethical system such as has never been excelled, if indeed it has ever been equalled. It offers fewer points of attack than any other theological system, and if patronized and cherished, as its religious and political importance deserves, by a powerful government, it might become one of the first religions on this planet.”[150]

Dorothy Field observed as follows in 1914, ‘Sikhism is capable of a distinct position as a world religion, so long as the Sikhs maintain their distinctiveness. The religion is also one which should appeal to the Occidental mind. It is essentially a practical religion. If judged from the pragmatist standpoint, which is a favourable point of view in some quarters, it would rank almost first in the world. Of no other religion can it be said that it had made a nation in so short a time. The religion of the Sikhs is one of the most interesting at present existing in India, possibly indeed in the whole world. That it should have transformed the outcaste Indian - a notoriously indolent and unstable person - into a fine and loyal warrior is little short of a miracle.”[151] It was Arnold Toynbee again who prophesied, therefore, as recently as in 1960: ‘Mankind’s religious future may be obscure: yet one thing can be foreseen. The living higher religions are going to influence each other more than ever before in the days of increasing communication between all parts of the world and all branches of the human race. In this coming religious debate, the Sikh religion, and its scripture, the Adi Granth, will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world.”[152]

This will indeed be so, because it will have the opportunity of sharing the sort of experience which the Nobel-laureate Pearl S. Buck had gained when she observed, after going through the 4-volume English translation (by Dr Gopal Singh) of Guru Granth Sahib: ‘I have studied the scriptures of other great religions, but I do not find elsewhere the same power of appeal to the heart and mind as I find here in these volumes. They are compact in spite of their length, and are a revelation of the vast reach of the human heart, varying from the most noble concept of God to the recognition and indeed the insistence upon the practical needs of the human body. There is something strangely modern about these scriptures and this puzzled me, until I learned that they are in fact comparatively modern, compiled as late as the 15th century, when explorers were beginning to discover that the globe, upon which we all live, is a single entity divided only by arbitrary lines of our own making. Perhaps this sense of unity is the source of power I find in these volumes. They speak to persons of any religion or of

none. They speak for the human heart and the searching mind.” [153] And they do speak in verses such as these which, indeed, indicate that unique concept of unity and universality:

‘The One Lord is our Father,
We all are His children.” [154]
‘None is our enemy,
Nor is anyone a stranger to us.
We are in accord with all . . .
The one God is pervasive in all creation
At the sight of which Nanak is in bloom of Joy.” [155]

These and many other hymns contained in Guru Granth Sahib, clearly visualize and preach a religion which knows no ethnical, racial or regional limitations; recognises no distinction on account of birth, sex, caste, creed or colour, embodies universal respect and concern for all, and regards all as equals. This is testified by its first and last prophets, Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh, in the following words:

‘There is Light among all
And that Light is God’s Own.
Which pervades and illuminates everyone.” [156]
‘Some one by shaving his head
Becomes a *sanyasi*, another a *yogi*.
And yet another passes for a monk or ascetic.
Some call themselves Hindus,
Other claim to be Muslims;
Among these some are *Shias* and some are *Sunnis*.
Recognise all as belonging to the one race of humanity
God as Creator (for the Hindus) and God as Good (for the Muslims)
God as Sustainer and God as Merciful
Is all one and the same God.
Recognise not another even in error or in doubt.
Worship that One alone,
As He is the Supreme Lord of us all.
It is only His form, His Light
That is diffused in one and all.” [157]

Hence, the followers of this universal faith conclude their daily prayer to that One God, in the name of their founder, Guru Nanak Dev, with the following couplets:

‘May Your holy Name,
be ever in ascendance.
May peace and prosperity

come to all!
 In Your Will
 By Your Grace !![158]

They, thereby, ask for God's blessings in favour not only of their own community, but also of the entire humanity, for the maximum good of each and every creature in the world.

X

Thus, apart from being such a distinct monotheistic faith, Sikhism is also a social and fraternal religion, standing equally for the common Fatherhood of God and universal Brotherhood of Man, guaranteeing equal status to all human beings and asserting that normal family life, lived with virtuous conduct and firm faith in God, surely leads to the path of salvation.

'Contemplation of the True Lord brings illumination,
 Which enables one to remain unattached in the midst of evil.
 Such is the greatness of the True Preceptor
 (that through His grace and guidance)
 One can attain fullness
 while living with one's wife and children." [159]

Hence, it is the religion of our time, modern in outlook, scientific in analysis, rational in approach and practical in adaptability; suited to the needs, aspirations and conditions of the modern man and his social set-up. It is a religion which is concerned with the creation of a just social order, and is committed to social equality and peaceful co-existence, as proclaimed by its Fifth prophet, Guru Arjun Dev, in the following verse:

'The Gracious Lord has now promulgated His ordinance;
 None shall dominate over others or cause pain;
 All shall abide in peace and happiness.
 As the governance shall be gentle and affectionate." [160]

Sikhism enjoins on its followers social responsibility involving both social service and social action:

'He who does dedicated service in the world gets a place at His Portal." [161]
 'They alone understand the right way
 Who eat the bread of their labour,
 And share it with others." [162]

The above directives of Guru Nanak, (couched in his own pithy aphorisms: *Nam Japo*, *Kirt Karc*, *Vand ke Chhako* are indeed 'the foundation of a spiritually oriented, dynamic social life.' [163] His frequent exhortations to follow the under-mentioned six-sided discipline cultivates and follows the virtues associated with it, and leads further to the enrichment and fulfilment of such an ideal life:

Naam: Devotion to the Divine Name.

Daan: Giving to others, particularly to the needy.

Isnan: Purity of mind, body and environment. [164]

Seva : Service of mankind. [165]

Simran: Contemplation and remembrance of God. [166]

Satsang: Fellowship or company of true believers: Association with holy men. [167]

XI

Sikhism is thus based on humanistic and universal values of the purest form. Human freedom and dignity, self-realization and self-confidence, service and sacrifice have been the essential elements of its ethos.

The history and heritage of this religion, whether in its principles, doctrines, and sacred pronouncements, or in the practical lives of its founders and followers, "has been one of exhortation to liberation from all kinds of degrading bondage, mental, spiritual and social. Long before the modern idea of social freedom was evolved in the West, Sikhism had brought to mankind the message of freedom. In its social aspects, it was a movement of freedom from feudalism and caste tyranny. While socially, it brought to man liberation from feudalism and caste tyranny, spiritually it brought to man freedom from suppression and those false beliefs which enslaved man to a selfish or ignorant priest-craft, whether the priest was called Brahmin, Yogi or Mullah." The founder of the holiest Sikh shrine and the compiler of the Sikh Scripture, Guru Arjun Dev, has himself recorded the impact of this unique movement in the following verse:

'The eggshell of doubt has shattered,
And the mind is illumined:
The Master has freed us from bondage
By cuffing off fetters from our feet.' [166]

This is the verse which Macauliffe, while recognizing its lasting significance, reproduced on the title-page of each of the six volumes of his *magnum opus*, *The Sikh Religion*, published in 1909 by the Oxford University. This is also the verse on the basis of which Banerjee stated, seventy years later: 'The fetters of ritualistic religion were cut off and the captives were freed; and the foundations of the Spiritual Empire were laid. On these foundations was



raised an imposing structure of Temporal Empire, blessed by Guru Gobind Singh's never-to-be forgotten utterance: RAJ KAREGA KHIALSA."

Bibliography

- [1] Its operative clause, in the original, reads as follows "Nanak prastan ra bar ja kib bayaband baqaral rasanand." Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla (cf. A Brief Account of the Sikh People, by Prof. Dr Ganda Singh, Amritsar, 1956. reprint, Delhi, 1971, p. 29).
- [2] Gupta, Prof. Dr Hari Ram, History of the Sikhs, Vol. II, 3rd revised edition, New Delhi-1978, p. 39. See also Browne, James, History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs (India Tracts). London-1788, Vol. II p. 13; M'Gregor, W.L., The History of the Sikhs, London-1846, Vol. I, Pp. 113-114.
- [3] Latif, Syed Mohammad, A History of the Punjab from the Remote Antiquity to the Present Times, Calcutta-1891, p. 213.
- [4] Miskin, Tabmas Khan, Tazkirah-Tahmas Miskin, also called Tahmas Namah, MS. No. 1918 of British Museum, London, dated 1779-80 A.D., Forster George, A Journey from Bengal to England. London - 1798, Vol. I, p. 319.
- [5] That fearful bloody carnage which occurred on 5th February, 1762 at Kup, near Malerkotla, is known as Dooja Wadda Ghalughara, i.e., the Second great Holocaust.
- [6] Nur-ud-Din. Husain Khan, Sayyed, Tarikh-e-Najib-ud-Daulah, also called Ahwal-i-Najib-ud-Daulah, MS. No. 24410 of B.M., London, f. 57a (cf. English Translation by Sir Jadu Sarkar in the Islamic Culture, 1933-34); Khushwant Rai, Tawarikh-i-Sikhan, also called Kitab-i-Tawarikh-i-Punjab, MS. No. Or. 187 of B.M., London, dated 1811, f. 95.
- [7] Trumpp, Dr Ernest; The Adi Granth. London- 1877. p. vi.
- [8] Bhattacharya, Joginder Nath, Hindu Castes and Sects, Calcutta-1896, p. 511; reprint-1968. p. 404.
- [9] Macauliffe, M.A., 'The Sikh Religion under Banda and its Present Condition in the Calcutta Review. Calcutta-1881, Vol. CXIV. p. 168; The Sikh Religion and its Advantages to the State. Simla 1906, p. 28; 'How the Sikhs became a Militant Race?' Simla - 1906, pp. 26-27.
- [10] Macauliffe, M.A., The Sikh Religion, its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, Oxford-1909, Vol. 1, p Lvii.
- [11] Narang, Dr Sir Gokul Chand. Transformation of Sikhism, Lahore-1912; 2nd. ed. Lahore-1945, p. 350.
- [12] For details see Muslim League Attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab by Prof. Gurbachan Singh V Talib. Amritsar-1950; Divide and Quit by Mr. Penderal Moon. London-1961; The Partition of Punjab by Dr Kirpal Singh. Patiala-1978.
- [13] Khushwant Singh, The Sikhs, London-1953, p. 7.
- [14] Narang, 'Transformation of Sikhism, op. cit., p. 350.
- [15] Kapur Singh's speech entitled, Sikhs and Sikhism, Vancouver, 7th October 1974. p. 26.
- [16] 'Of the total number of persons martyred during the Independence Movement, 75

55

BIBLIOGRAPHY

27

- [17] Under 'Operation Blue Star', stated to be "the biggest and the most significant army action against its own countrymen ever taken in the world," and used as the 'Code name for the Indian army's move into Punjab against the Sikhs' during the first week of June 1984. (Gurmit Singh. *Dr. History of Sikh Struggles*. Vol. III, p. 1). * On 5th June 1984, the Indian army began its attack on the complex at Amritsar which housed the two most sacred shrines of the Sikh Community. For some details see Report to the Nation Oppression in Punjab by Citizens the Golden Temple and the Akal Takht . . . tanks were ordered in and the Akal Takht was virtually reduced to rubble." (Mark Tully and Satish Jacob, Amritsar: Mrs. Gandhi's Last Battle, Delhi-1985, p.i.). For some details see Report to the Nation: Oppression in Punjab by Citizens for Democracy, Bombay- 1985.
- [18] *History of Sikh Struggles*. op. cit.. Vol. III. pp. 28-29. 34- 39 For some details refer to the Reports to the Nation published under the auspices of the Peoples Union for Democratic Rights; People's Union For Civil liberties entitled Who Are 'The guilty' New Delhi-1984 and the Citizens For Democracy (entitled 'Truth About Delhi Violence, Delhi-1985); Army Action in Punjab, Prelude and Aftermath, New Delhi-1984; Report of the Citizens' Commission: Delhi- 31st Oct. to 4th Nov. 1984, New Delhi-1985.
- [19] Banerjee, Prof. Dr Anil Chandra, *Guru Nanak: The Teacher of Man*, Chandigarh-1979, p. 23.
- [20] Parrinder, Prof. Geoffrey, *World Religions from Ancient History to the Present*. New York- 1983. p. 260.
- [21] 'The Hindustan Times, New Delhi-2nd June, 1957. See also Kapur Singh, *Sikhs and Sikhism*, op. cit., p. 3.
- [22] Carpenter, J. Estlin, *Theism in Medieval india*, London-1921, p. 489.
- [23] Heiler, F., *The Gospel of Sadhu Sunder Singh*, London-1927, pp. 35-36.
- [24] Khushwant Singh, *The Sikhs Today*, New Delhi-1959; reprint, 1969, p. xiii.
- [25] Khushwant Singh. *A History of the Sikhs*, Princeton-1963, Vol. I, p. 17.
- [26] Bhattacharya, *Hindu Castes and Sects*, op. cit.; 1st. ed., pp. 497, 510; reprint, pp. 393. 403.
- [27] 'Time, New York. dated 12th November, 1989, p. 53.
- [28] Picott, Frederic, *Sikhism in the Dictionary of Islam* by Rev. T.P. Hughes, London- 1885, p. 583 and 594.
- [29] Tarn Chand, Dr. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad- 1946, p. 169.
- [30] Rajagopalachari, Sri, *Vaishnava reformers of India*.
- [31] Williams, Monier, *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, London- 19, p. 64.
- [32] Battany, G.T., *Encyclopaedia of World Religions*, London- 19 p. 246.
- [33] cf. Insha Ulla Khan. *Maulvi, Sikhon aur Mussalmanon Ke Ruhani Tualqat*, Lahore-1909.
- [34] cf. Muhammad Au, *Maulvi, The Founder of Sikhism*, Lahore- 1919.
- [35] cf. Nizami, Khawaja Hassan, *Sikh Qaum aur unke Bani ki ntsbat Mussalmanon ki Muhabbat-amez Rai*, Batala-1919.
- [36] cf. Muhammad Yusuf, Sheikh, *Baba Nanak Ka Mazhab*, Qadian-19 19.
- [37] Quadiani, Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, *Salya Bachan*, Baiala 2nd. ed. 1902. pp. 4377-4504.
- [38] Trumpp, E., *The Adi Granth*, op. cit., ch. ill, p. ci.
- [39] Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, op. cit., p. 379.
- [40] Gandhi, M.K., *Young India*, May-1924, p. 829. Ahmadabad.
- [41] Archer, Prof. Dr IC., *The Silchs, in Relation to Hindus, Moslems, Christians and Ahmadiyas a Study in Comparative Religion*, Princeton-1946, p. 301.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [42] *Ibid.*, p. 302, Akbar, Dr Mohammad, *The Punjab Under the Mughals*, Lahore-1943; reprint, Delhi- 1979, p. 187.
- [43] Kenneth, Wi., *Journal of Asian Studies*, translation Singh Sabha Patrika, Amritsar-January, 1974, pp. 92-94.
- [44] Chandhun, Nirad C., *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, London-1951, pp. 492-3.
- [45] Smith, Marian W., *Synthesis and other Processes in Sikhism in the American Anthropologist*, Vol. 50, No. 3, Pt. I, July-September, 1948, pp. 457-62; Marengo, Ethoc K, *The Transformation of Sikh Society*, New Delhi-1976, p. 24.
- [46] Greenlees, Duncan, *The Gospd of the Guru Granth Sahib*, Madras-1952, p. 216.
- [47] Bittencourt, Dr Edward A.de., in his 'Foreword' to the *Sikh Way of Life* by Raubir Singh, New Delhi-1968, p. vi.
- [48] Macauliffe, MA., *The Sikh Religion*, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. Liv.
- [49] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1., Introduction, p. l.v. Lv.
- [50] Majumdar, Dr R.C., *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. VI, Bombay-1960; 2nd.- 1967, p. 569.
- [51] Griffin, Sir Lepel, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Lahore-1879, p. 338.
- [52] Banerjee, Prof. Indubhushan, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Calcutta-1936, Vol. 1, p. 182.
- [53] Arjun Dev, *Guru, Guru Granth Sahib*, Amritsar-1604 AD., Rag Bhairo, M.5. p. 1136
- [54] Mohsin Fani, Shaikh, (Ardistani, Mobid Zulfikar), *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, dated 1654 A.D. - 1904, p. 223.
- [55] *Ibid.*, p. 233.
- [56] *Ibid.*, p. 223. See also Ganda Singh, Prof. Dr. Nanak Panthis, extracted, translated and edited with notes, Amritsar-1940, pp. 4, 5, 10, 11.; Nanak Panthis or The Sikhs and Sikhism of the 17th Century, in the *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. XIX, Pt. 2.
- [57] Gurdas Bhai, Varan, composed 1600 AD., Var no 3, pauri no
- [58] Cole, W. Owen, *Sikhism and Its Indian Context(1469-1708)*, New Delhi-1984, p. 251,
- [59] "For the history of the Sikhs in particular, and a knowledge of the country and people in 1764," according to Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar in his 'Foreword' to the *Jang Namah*, (fn. no. 58).
- [60] Nur Muhammad, Qazi, *Jang Namab*, Gunjaba-1765, cli. XLI, pp. 156-159 edited and translated into English by Dr Ganda Singh, Amritsar-1939, pp. 158-59 (of the text), pp. 59-59 (of the English rendering).
- [61] Cunningham, Capt. J.D., *A History of the Sikhs from the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of Sutlej*, London-1849; reprint, Delhi-1985, pp. 75-76. See also Elphinstone, M., *History of India; Rise of the British Power in the East*, Vol. II, London- 1887, pp. 561-564.
- [62] Elliot, Sir Charles, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, London-1921, Vol. II, p. 267; reprint-1954, p. 272.
- [63] See also Malcolm, Lt. Col., *Sketch of the Sikhs A Singular Nation who inhabits the Provinces of the Punjab*, London-1812, pp. 129, p. 148, Burnes, Alexander, *Travels and to Bukharu*, London-1834, Vol. p. 285, Vol. II, p. 39; Barth, A., *Religions of India*, Paris-1882; London-1906. pp. 242 and 249.
- [64] Aurobindo, Sri, *The Foundation of Indian Culture*, Pondicherry, 1959, pp. 150-151.
- [65] Aurobindo, Sri, *A Defence of Indian Culture, Religion and Spirituality*, published in *The Arya*, Vol. VI, No. 1-1920.
- [66] Jain, Nirmal Kumar, *Sikh Religion and Philosophy*. New Delhi- 1979, p. 1.
- [67] Islwari Prasad, Dr. *The Mughal Empire*, Allahabad-1974. p. 30.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [68] Field, Dorothy, *The Religion of the Sikhs*, London-1914, p. pp. 34, 10.
- [69] Parrinder, Edward Geoffrey, *World Religions, from Ancient History to the Present*, 1983, p. 251.
- [70] See *Bachitar Natak* by Guru Gobind Singh, Anandpur Sahib-1696, cont. VI; *Chaubis Avtar*, Verses 2-27. 2488; etc.. (Ramkali Var Patshahi Daswen ki, dated 1700 A.D. (7), Stanza No. 16). See also *Panth Parkash* by Giani Gian Singh, Delhi-1880, ch. 85.
- [71] Kapur Singh, *Parasarprasna or The Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh (An Exposition of Sikhism)*, Jalandhar-1959, pp. 8-9; 2nd. ed., *Parasarprasna*, Amritsar-1989, p. 4.
- [72] Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion. op. Cit., Vol. V. p. 93.*
- [73] Bute Shah alias Ghulam Muhay-ud-Din, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*. MS. Ludhiana-1848. pp. 405-406; Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 93-94; Teja Singh, Prin. and Ganda Singh, Prof., *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay- 1950, pp. 68-69; Kapur Singh, *Parasarprasna. op. cit.. pp. 2-3.*
- [74] Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion. op. cit.. Vol. V. p. 94.*
- [75] Batalia, Ahmad Shah. *Tawarikh-i-Hind*, MS. dated 1818; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab. op. cit., 406.*
- [76] Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Princeton-1963; 7th impr.-1987, Vol. 1, pp. 83-84.
- [77] See Saina Pati, Sri Guru Sobha, Anandpur Sahib-171 1, Clis. V and VII; Santokh Singh, Bhai. Sri Gurpratap Suraj Granth. Kaithal-1843. III. 21.
- [78] Gobind Singh, Guru, 33 Swaiyyei, Sw. no. 1. in the Dasam Granth, op. cit.
- [79] Harbans Singh, Prof., *The Heritage of the Sikhs*. New Delhi-1983; 2nd. ed., 1985, p. 95.
- [80] *Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, op. cit., p. 9.
- [81] Archer, *The Sikhs in Relation to Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Ahmadiyahs. op. cit., pp. 1. V. viii.*
- [82] Ralph Singh, *Sikhism*. New York-1988 (c.), p. 1.
- [83] Gurdev Singh, *Justice, Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*. Patiala-1986. pp. 5, 8-9. See McLeod. W.H., *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford 1968; *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*. Delhi-1975; *Early Sikh Tradition*, Oxford 1980. 22-23.
- [84] McLeod, W.H., *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, op. cit., pp. 16-18; Gurdev Singh. *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*, op. cit. pp. 22-23.
- [85] Bannerjee, *Guru Nanak- The Teacher of Man*, op. cit. p. 44.
- [86] Hastings, James, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, New York-19 14; latest ed. 1971, Vol. VII. p.354.
- [87] Greenless, *The Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib*, op. cit., p. 37.
- [88] Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, op. cit. Vol. I, p. iii.
- [89] *Guru Granth Sahib*, op. cit., Rag Tilang, M.I., p. 722 and Rag Rankali. M.I, p. 935.
- [90] *Guru Granth Sahib*, op. cit., Rag Tilang, M.I., p. 722.
- [91] *Ibid.*, Rag Wadhans, M.I., p. 566.
- [92] *Ibid.*, Rag Majh; M.I., p. 150. See also p. 148.
- [93] This has been duly mentioned by the earliest chroniclers of Sikh religion; such as by Bhai Gurdas (1551-1629) in his var no. 1 pauni no. 24; *Puratan Janamsakhi* (1634 c.), pp. 17-18; Sodhi Meharban (1581-1640) in his *Sachkhand Pothi* (dt. 1620 c.), pp. 88-89; Bhai Nand Lal (1633-1741) in his *Ganj Namah*, ch. I, verses 48-50.

58

BIBLIOGRAPHY

30

- [94] Ibid., Raga Sri, M.3. p. 39.
- [95] Ibid., Raga Gauri, M. 4, p. 308.
- [96] Ibid., Raga Gauri, M. 4, p. 308
- [97] Ibid., Raga Asa, M.4, p.449.
- [98] Ibid., Raga Suhi, M. 5, p. 743.
- [99] Ibid., Raga Suhi, M. 5, p. 763.
- [100] Ibid., Raga Sorath, M. 5, p. 629.
- [101] Ibid., Raga Sarang, M.5, p.1203.
- [102] Ibid., Raga Sri, M.4, p.91.
- [103] Ibid., Raga Sarang. M. 5, p. 1237.
- [104] Ibid., Raga Wadhans, M. 5, p. 562.
- [105] Mujeeb, Prof. M., *Guru Nanaks Religion, Islam and Sufism*, in *Guru Nanak His Life, Times and Teachings*, ed. by Prin. Gurmukh Nihal Singh, New Delhi-1969, ch. VII, p. 116.
- [106] Surendra Nath Banerjee, as quoted in *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. IX (ii). Bombay-1977, p. 481, and Majumdar, Prof. R.C., *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, Bombay-1960; 2nd. ed. 1967, p.569.
- [107] For a detailed account see *Guru Nanak The World-Teacher (Jagat Gurubaba)*, Chandigarh- 1979, pp. 30-32; and *Teachings of Guru Nanak*, Chandigarh-1984, pp. 3 1-32 - both by Dr Harnam Singh Shan.
- [108] According to Dr Mohan Singh, "No teacher of the populace had uttered words of that import and significance, since the time of Upanishads. Those few words at one stroke felled the giant structures of caste, creedal, sectional and religious differences." (cf. *Sri Guru Nanak Dev and Nation Building*, Tarn Taran-1934, p. 8.
- [109] Harbans Singh, Prof., *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*, New Delhi-1983, pp. 9-10 That terrible conflict grew from the fact that the "impact of Islam on north-western India in the 11th century had been through military conquest and sword, and this had created reactions in the proud and sensitive Hindu mind such as resulted in impassable barriers of hatred and prejudice between the two World-culture currents, and their mutual contacts have, therefore, left irritating and unfortunate monuments of bigotry and misunderstanding, spiritual and historical, that still mark the Indian scene. The Sikh Prophets, the Nanaks, desired to level down these barriers with a view to discover and provide a common spiritual ground for the two, Hinduism and Islam, where Hinduism gets over its injured superiority and sense of exclusiveness, and Islam, its arrogance and self centricity born out of military superiority. The Nanak V declared Let Muslims rediscover the truth that the true essence of religious practice is compassion and its goal, the purification of soul, and that political utilitarianism and expedience is not basic to Islam as such, and let the Hindus concede that Islam, thus understood, is as respectable and ceremoniously pure as the flowers, the silk, the deerskin and the butter-fat." (*Guru Granth Sahib*, op. cit. Rag Maru, M.5, p. 1084; *The Golden Temple Amritsar*, a paper read by S. Kapur Singh at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, on 24 Oct. 1977, p. 2).
- [110] Harbans Singh, Prof., *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*, New Delhi-1983, pp. 9-10.
- [111] Ahl in Arabic originally meaning those who occupy the same tent, thus family inmates. Therefore, ahl-al-bait means the household of the Prophet Muhammad, his descendents. But this word is often connected with other notions, meaning so much as sharing in a thing, belonging to it or owner of the same, etc. (see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* ed. by M.Th. Houtsma and others, Leyden-1913, Vol. 1, p. 183. Maqam means place or glorious station. (see *Quran*, ch. 17, V. 81).
- [112] *The Golden Temple Amritsar*, op. cit. p. 3.
- [113] Ahl-al-kitab, the people of the Book. Muhammad calls so the Jews and Christians, in distinction from the heathens, on account of their possessing divine books of revelation, (Tawrat Torah; Zabur = Psalter; Indjil = Gospel). See *Ibid.*, p. 184, "According to T.P. Hughes, it is a term used in the *Quran* for Jews and Christians, as believers in a revealed religion." (See his *Dictionary of Islam*, London-1885, p. 12).

59

BIBLIOGRAPHY

31

- [114] Khushwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, Varanasi-1984, p2f.
- [115] Toynbee, UNESCO's *Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, op. cit., p. 9.
- [116] Milla in Arabic means religion, rite, "In Qur'an the Prophet speaks of Abraham's Milla, by which he means the original revelation in its purity . . . with the article, al-milla means the true religion revealed by Muhammad and is occasionally used elliptically for ahl-al-milla, the followers of the Muhammadan religion." (See *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by H.A.R. Gibb and J.A. Kramers, Leiden- 1953, p. 380). According to the *Kitab t-Tarif*, "it is expressive of religion as it stands in relation to the Prophet, as distinguished from Din, which signifies religion as it stands in relation to God, from Mazhab which signifies religion with reference to learned doctors." (See *Dictionary of Islam*, op. cit., pp. 348-349).
- [117] See Glasse, Cyril, *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Francisco- 1989, p.269.
- [118] *Khalsa Mahima*, Swaiyya no. 3. p. 717.
- [119] *Ibid.*, Swaiyya No.2, p.716.
- [120] That is, Baptism of the Double-edged Sword.
- [121] That is, the lions, used as surname by all male followers of Sikhism.
- [122] That is, the Five Beloved Ones. Three out of them belonged earlier to the so-called low castes (viz. Mukham Chand, washerman from Dwarka; Himmat; a cook from Jagannath, Sahib Chaud, a barber from Bidar, the fourth (viz. Daya Ram, a Kshatriya or Khatri by caste, from Lahore), the fifth (viz. Dharam Das, a Jat from Delhi).
- [123] 'Khalsa' means the pure baptised and initiated Sikhs; Sikh brotherhood. The aim of Guru Gobind Singh in founding the Khalsa was to build up a nation of the purified Ones who would be free from the evils of religion and society. (Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, op. cit., p. 72).
- [124] See Sarab Loh Granth. ch. Khalsa Parkash.
- [125] Kalam in Arabic means word; speech. "The first technical use of Kalam seems to have been in the phrase Kalam Allah meaning either the Kuran or Allah's quality (Sifa) called speech." (See *Short Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op. cit., p. 210, *Dictionary of Islam*. op. cit., p. 260).
- [126] "The majesty of the mystic Sabda (Shabad) which we come across in the Sikh scripture," tells Dr R.K. Arora, hardly finds any parallel in its fullness. It has been associated with God without attributes. As the Guru is the repository of all spiritual jewels, so, in him enshrines the Sabda and he also imparts it to the devotee. Sabda is the means by which one gets wisdom and the knowledge of the Lord, 'By the Sabda of the Guru one recognises the abode of the Lord within.' (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 364) He is one with Nama and Sabda, the two most profound concepts in the Sikh faith" (See *The Sacred Scripture Symbol of Spiritual Synthesis*, New Delhi-1988, pp. 35, 45, 103, 109).
- [127] *Guru Granth Sahib*. op. cit., Raga Asa. M1, p. 351.
- [128] *Ibid.*, Raga Dhanasari. M1, p. 661.
- [129] *Ibid.*, Raga Parbhati, M1, p. 1342.
- [130] *Ibid.*, Raga Ramkaii, M1, p.943.
- [131] *Ibid.*, Raga Sorath, M1, p.635.
- [132] Shuhada in Arabic means testimony, evidence and martyrdom. The meaning martyr is not found for Shahid in the Koran. It is only later commentators that have tried to find it in the Sura iv. The development of the meaning of Shahid to martyr took place under Christian influence. The martyr who seals his belief with his death, fighting against the infidels. Shahid through out the Hadith literature and the great privileges that await him in heaven is readily depicted in numerous Hadiths. In the book of Djihad, martyrdom is praised quite in the style of the Hadith. The praise of Shahada (martyrdom) led to a real longing to meet a martyr's death and even Muhammad and 'Omar longed for it' (see *The Dictionary of Islam*, op. cit., p. 571; *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op. cit. p. 515; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 259-60. Penrice, John, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Quran*, New Delhi- 1978, pp. 79-80).

60

BIBLIOGRAPHY

32

- [133] Kapur Singh, *Parasaraprasna*, op. cit., p. 108.
- [134] As stated by Bhai Santokh Singh, in his *Gurpratap Suraj Granth*, Kaithal-1844 aim 7, ansu 36; *Parasaraprasna*, op. cit., p. 41.
- [135] Teja Singh, Prin., *Sikhism Its Ideals and Institutions*, 322, Amritsar-1938, reprint-1978. p. 34, *Essays in Sikhism*, Lahore-1941; reprint-1988, p. 168.
- [136] Guru Gobind Singh, *Zafarnamah*, Dma Kangar-1706, Verse No. 22.
- [137] *Heritage of the Sikhs*, op. cit., p. 90.
- [138] Sunna or Sunnah means 'custom, use and wont, statute.' (see *Another Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op. cit., p. 552)". According to H.P.T. Hughes, "lit, a path or way; a manner of life. A term used in the religion of the Muslims to express the custom or manner of life. Hence, the tradition which records either the sayings or doings of Muhammad. Consequently, all traditional law is divided into (1) what Mohammad did; (2) or what Muhammad enjoined; (3) or that which was done or said in the presence of Muhammad and which was not forbidden by him." (see his *Dictionary of Islam*, op. cit., p. 622).
- [139] By Rahit we mean the distinctive Sikh code of conduct or discipline which is 'feature of fundamental importance to the life of the Panth,' that is, the Sikh religion. The manuals in which this code is recorded are called *Rahitnamas*.
- [140] That is, the Sikh Code of Conduct compiled by a committee appointed in 1931 by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, with Prin. Teja Singh as convenor. It was approved by it in 1945 and has since been accepted as an authoritative manual, and regarded as the standard guide for the whole community.
- [141] McLeod, Dr W. H., *Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism*, Manchester-1984, pp. 3, 73.
- [142] *Guru Granth Sahib*, op. cit., *Slok Varan te Vadhik*, M1, No. 33, p. 1412.
- [143] *Ibid.*, *Raga Sarong*, M.V., p. 1226.
- [144] *Ibid.*, *Raga Gujari*, M.V., pp. 500-501.
- [145] *Ibid.*, *Ramkali ki Var*, *Rai Balwand tatha Sattei Dum akhi st.* 1, p. 966.
- [146] *A Short History of the Sikhs*, op. cit., pp. 71-72.
- [147] That is, the chiefgood, especially as the end on the ultimate determining principle in an ethical system.
- [148] Bradshaw, H.L., *Sikhism*, in the *Sikh Review*. Calcutta.
- [149] Bittencourt, *The Sikh Way of Life*, op. cit., p. vi.
- [150] Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion A Lecture*, London-1910, p. 25.
- [151] Field, *The Religion of the Sikhs*, op. cit., p. 9, 34-55.
- [152] Toynebee, A., *UNESCO's Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, 'Foreword', pp. 10, 11.
- [153] Buck, Mrs. Pearl S., in her *Opinion* as published in Vol. 1 of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, English Version by Dr Gopal Singh, Delhi-1960, p. xiv.
- [154] *Guru Granth Sahib*, op. cit., *Raga Sorath*, M.V., p. 611.
- [155] *Ibid.*, *Raga Kanara*, M.V., p. 1299.
- [156] *Ibid.*, *Raga Dharuzsari*, M.I., p. 663.
- [157] *Guru Gobind Singh*, *Akal Ustat* in *Sri Dasam Granth*, op. cit., Kabit no. 15/85.

61

33

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [158] See Ardas, that is the Sikh congregational prayer to God which is a basic religious activity in Sikh religion. Its version is available in various Gutkas (i.e., anthologies of hymns meant for daily and occasional prayers etc.) and Sikh Rahit Maryada, q.v.
- [159] Guru Granth Sahib, op. cit., Raga Dhanasari, M.I., p. 661.
- [160] Ibid., Rag Sri, M.V., p. 74.
- [161] Ibid., M.I. Rag Sri, p. 26.
- [162] Ibid., Rag Sarang, M.I., p. 1245.
- [163] Mujeeb, Prof. M., in his 'Foreword' to Guru Nanak in His own Words by Dr Harnam Singh Shan, Amritsar-1989, p. xiu.
- [164] Guru Granth Sahib, op. cit., Rag Maru, M. 5, p. 1002.
- [165] Ibid., Rag Asa, M.I., p. 419.
- [166] Ibid., Rag Asa, M.I., pp. 354, 468.
- [167] Ibid., Rag Asa, M.I. p. 9, Rag Ramkali, p. 944.
- [168] Ibid., p. 72; Rag Sorath, p. 598.

for evil, or the very idea of sin, cannot arise and has no meaning. In fact, moral life is the only way to the spiritual achievement after which the superman's responsibility for moral life becomes doubly great. Therefore, it would be just naive to suggest that the concept of the Omnipotence of God and the primacy of God's Will lead to a deterministic movement and the negation of moral life. God's Will is moral, God being the Ocean of Attributes. As it is, nothing would be more contrary to the teachings in the *Guru Granth*, which lays repeated stress on righteous deeds. The entire responsibility for moral life is on man, because in Sikhism moral life and spiritual life are inter-related. The Guru says God created the world and left it free to do as it wills.²¹

Even from the last prayer of Jesus it is evident that Jesus could do his will but he did not want to escape the horror of crucifixion against God's Will. But he had the option which he exercised in favour of God's Will being done. Man has the choice to do his own will or that of God's. That is exactly the difference between a theistic system like Sikhism and a pantheistic or monistic system where man has no responsibility. This is illustrated by the story of a murderer and a sinner. After death, he was barred entrance into heaven by Indra because of his misdeeds. But the man's reply was that God being witness to all his deeds and having made him to do everything, he was blameless. The logic of the argument was accepted by Indra and he was admitted into Heaven. As against it, in Sikhism man is not only responsible for his deeds, but all his assessment is made by God on his righteousness or otherwise. In fact, this freedom of choice becomes the very basis of all moral life, man's assessment and his progress. In Sikhism, higher than Truth is truthful conduct, and thus the validity of the moral life forms the very fundamental tenet of the system. The concept of a God of Will is in no sense conflicting with the concept of the God of Attributes and Values and One who is Ever Creative. The *Guru Granth* repeatedly stresses the responsibility of man to choose good instead of evil. It says, "With torch in hand one falls in the well."²² We have both the freedom and the responsibility to be away from the well. It is the character of the choice we make that indicates the level of our growth and our sense of freedom and responsibility.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SIKH IDENTITY

Introductory

In order to understand the sovereignty and independence of the Sikh religion we shall discuss the subject under the following heads : (1) Spiritual experience and concept of God, (2) Ideology, (3) Class, (4) Scripture, and (5) *Panth* and Its Institutions. Since the subject of Sikh identity is very wide, only a brief reference to the various elements mentioned above, will be made.

Spiritual Experience and the Concept of God

It is significant that Guru Nanak clearly claims that he has a mission as ordained by God, "O Lalo, I say what the Lord commands me to convey."¹ This statement about their prophethood and mission has been made by the other Gurus as well, of course, the mission is the same as proclaimed by Guru Nanak. In describing the spiritual experience, the Gurus have unambiguously asserted the existence of the Fundamental Spiritual Reality, and its ineffability. Yet, they have described profusely the various attributes of God, social, political, ethical, metaphysical, etc. Three things they have repeatedly emphasized, first, that He is Unknowable, second, that He is the Source and Ocean of all values and virtues, and third, that He is All-Love : "Friends ask me; what is the mark of the Lord. He is All-Love; the rest He is ineffable."² These important characteristics described by the Gurus, stress the dynamic and creative character of God. Seen in the light of the Indian definition of *Sat-Chit-Anand*, and the characteristics tabulated by Stace³ and William James, this definition is clearly different in the sense that whereas the Guru's spiritual experience, the others indicate a sense of tranquility, blissfulness and passivity.

It is not suggested that the Gurus deny the experience of blissfulness, but they highlight the dynamic aspect of that experience. In fact, the significant activities of the lives of the Gurus and the Sikh religion clearly bear the stamp of that spiritual experience. In this respect the Gurus also stress four aspects of their concept of God. First, that apart from being transcendent, He is also immanent; and being immanent, He is Creative and Directive, i.e., He has a Will. The second quality emphasized is that He is the Ruler, Protector and Sovereign (*Rakha*). The third attribute is His being the source of all values and virtues. And the fourth aspect emphasized is His interest in life and the universe. It is these principal attributes of God and the spiritual experience of the Gurus that give a new shape and identity to Sikhism and its life i.e., its dynamism and ethical activities.

Ideology

The chief elements of the Sikh ideology are based on the spiritual experience of the Gurus, as indicated above, and their definition of God. The subject may be dealt with under the following heads :

(a) *Reality of World* : The Gurus have repeatedly stressed the reality of the world. In fact, the very concept of God being Immanent in the world means the profound importance of the world and life. The Guru says : 'God created the world and permeated it with His Light.⁴ Evidently, the universe in which God is immanent and is working with His Light, could neither be unreal, *Mithya* or a suffering. So that is an important departure which Sikhism has made from the then existing Indian religions.

(b) *Goal* : The Gurus have already defined that God has a Will with which He works the world. This being so, Guru Nanak clearly lays down that the goal of life is to work in line with God's Altruistic Will. He rejects the path of ascetic silence and states that the human goal is to carry out or move according to the Will of God. Guru Nanak puts the question as to how to become a '*sachiarar*' or True Man, and how to break the wall of falsehood (obstructing our vision) ? Then he gives the answer, saying that the goal or the true path is to carry out the Will of God.⁵ This is also a very important departure from the goal prescribed in Indian religions, which is generally of merger in Brahman or extinction in the ocean of Nirvana or Brahman. This

very important departure from the goal in Indian systems, has great implications. For that reason, while it rejects the path of withdrawal and asceticism, it clearly prescribes a life of dynamic activity in accordance with the Attributive Will of God. It is because of this goal that the entire system of Sikhism is different from the other Indian religious systems, in which monasticism, celibacy, Ahimsa are accepted institutions. It is this contrast in goals that makes for the Sikh way of life being entirely different from the paths prescribed in other religions. The goal is so different that the Gurus have used the Semitic words 'hukm' and 'raza' to express their concept of this ideal.

(c) *Methodology* : The world being real, and the goal being to carry out the attributive Will of God, naturally this leads to a life of altruistic activities for the seeker. The Guru says that it is by our deeds that we are assessed by God.⁶ "It is by our deeds that we become away from or near to God."⁷ "Good, righteousness, virtues and the giving up of vice are the ways to realize the essence of God."⁸ Love, contentment, truth, humility and virtues enable the seed of *Naam* to sprout.⁹

"Everything is lower than truth; Higher is truthful living or conduct."¹⁰

In short, in Sikhism, according to the Gurus, it is by one's deeds and this character that one is judged by God.

(d) *Gurmukh or the Ideal Man* : We have already indicated the goal in Sikhism. Naturally, the ideal man is the one who lives God in life, and always carries out His Altruistic Will. In this regard the Gurus have indicated two concepts, one of *manmukh* and the other of *gurmukh*. *Manmukh* is the egoistic man who being unconscious of the universal Will of God, lives and works egoistically. The Gurus have clearly stated that man's problems and maladies, all arise from his egoism and selfish living. Clash, conflicts and wars in life arise, because at the present level of consciousness or our existence, we neither comprehend nor accept the universal character of life and the brotherhood of man. It is this egoistic living that brings us into conflict with other beings. The Gurus do not accept or assume any concept of fall, evil or Satan in life. They only state that at the present stage of development man is egoistic and for that matter imperfect. They prescribe the methodology, as mentioned above, of altruistic deeds, that alone can make for his spiritual progress. They clearly lay down a message of hope, right effort

and progress; "O man you are superior in God's creation; now is your opportunity. You may fulfil or not fulfil your destiny."¹¹ "You have obtained the privilege of human birth; now is your opportunity to meet God."¹² "God created first Himself, then *Haumain* (sense of individuation), third, *Maya*. (multifarious beings and entities), and the fourth higher stage is of *gurmukh* who always lives truthfully."¹³

This concept of *mannukh* and *gurmukh* is fundamental to the understanding of Sikh theology. The Gurus have emphasized three things. First, that at the present stage of development man is egoistic and all his problems of conflict, clash and suffering are due to his ignorant and egoistic living. But they, on that account, neither curse man nor life, rather they hold out hope for man saying that by living a life of virtuous deeds and accepting the universal character of God they can not only alleviate their suffering, but also make for spiritual progress towards their destiny. The third important thing is that the fourth stage of *gurmukh* is not of a man who merges in God, but it is of a *gurmukh* who always lives truthfully. Hence the fourth stage of *gurmukh* is of one who continuously carries out the altruistic Will of God. And God being the Protector of the weak, the Destroyer of the evil-doers¹⁴ and the demonical¹⁵, the *Sachiana*, or the *gurmukh* always participates fully in life and accepts total social responsibility. His sphere of functioning is as wide as the domain of God and no aspect of life is taboo for him. In short, he accepts all challenges of life, and seeks to solve them altruistically. Therefore, the Gurus prescribed for the *gurmukh* an ideal of *Sant-Sipahi*. This concept follows clearly and logically from the spiritual experience of the Gurus, their definition of God and their theology as mentioned above. As God is the Protector of the weak, Just (*Adli*) and Destroyer of the evil-doer, and this being His Will, acting and directing in the universe, the *gurmukh* as the instrument of God must inevitably follow that spiritual course. Hence this ideal of *Sant-Sipahi*, while in perfect consonance with the thesis of the Gurus, is entirely different, and in certain respects, diametrically opposed to some of the principal elements of the earlier religious systems. Accordingly, in no manner can the independent character of Guru Nanak's ideology be doubted or confused with any other identity or religious system.

Class

As following from the spiritual experience of the Gurus and their theology, is determined the class or category of Guru Nanak's system. Broadly, we may classify religious systems into four classes. First is the category of Indian systems which are dichotomous in the sense that logically the spiritual path is different from the empirical path. Therefore, in dichotomous systems monasticism, asceticism, Sanyas and withdrawal are prescribed as a part of their religious methodology. The second corollary of these systems or Sanyasa is that involvement in the world is a distraction and virtually a fall. The third corollary is that celibacy is a virtue and for that matter householder's life is generally discarded and woman is considered to be a temptress. The fourth corollary is that Ahimsa or pacifism is an integral virtue. It is because of this dichotomy between the spiritual and the empirical lives, we believe, that the highly discriminatory and unfair system of caste, untouchability and pollution has continued to be a part of the Indian empirical life. The second category of systems includes Judaism and Islam, which are whole-life systems, because in these, spiritual life and empirical life are combined. But both these systems have two other features. One, they are both exclusive in their character. Second, in both of them in the later part of their history, monasticism and asceticism have appeared and been accepted. This happens in the form of Essenes, Kabbalists, etc. in the case of Judaism, and various sects of Sufism in the case of Islam. To the third category of systems belongs Christianity, which although it accepts involvement in life, strictly prescribes non-resistance to evil, and pacifism. Probably on this account, in Christianity, which was originally a householder's religion, later appeared monasteries and nunneries. It is for the same reason that later still the institutions of secularism and communism have arisen in the Western life, involving thereby a virtual dichotomy between the religious life and the empirical life.

To the fourth class of religious systems, belongs Sikhism. While like Judaism and Islam, it is a whole-life system, it is free from their other two features, namely, of exclusiveness and of accepting monasticism and withdrawal as a part of their religious system. In Sikhism, on the other hand, both these features have been rejected. Sikhism discards monasticism, asceticism and withdrawal. This rejection was made clear both by Guru Nanak

in not allowing Baba Sri Chand to be his successor, and by the subsequent Gurus by excluding Sanyasis and ascetics from the Sikh fold. Obviously, a whole-life system with the concept of *Miri* and *Piri* and the ideal of *Sant-Sipahi*, could not in any manner countenance the presence of recluses and Sanyasis as a part of their flock. For the same reasons, both celibacy and the downgrading of women, were emphatically rejected. Nor could a *Miri-Piri* system accept Ahimsa as a virtue or a part of its religious ethics. Further, the importance of work and sustaining life was clearly recommended, and yogic aloofness condemned. For similar reasons caste ideology was rejected since it militated against the Gurus' basic principle of fairness and brotherhood of man. Lastly, in order to give a clear and visible shape to his new ideology, the Sixth Master created the institution of Akal Takhat at the same place as Harmandir Sahib with separate flags representing *Miri* and *Piri*. An important feature signifying this combination is that the Sixth Master wore two kirpans meaning thereby an integral unity of spiritual and empirical life in the Sikh system. Because *Piri* was represented by a *Kirpan* as much as *Miri* was done. It is significant that in Nathism, which was a very old system, quite alive in the Punjab, the Nath had to take vows for remaining celibate, for not doing any work or business, and for strictly observing Ahimsa.¹⁶ Although these recluses did to an extent accept the validity of the caste system and the Hindu gods, Guru Nanak categorically rejected all these features, and organised a whole-life system of householders participating in all walks of life and remaining socially responsible.

Another important fact which generally goes unnoticed is that the Tenth Master in prescribing the wearing of *Kirpan* for the Sikhs clearly reminds him of his duty against aggression and tyranny, and warns him against any relapse into a monastic or ascetic system of withdrawal from life. Hence in every respect and in the essentials of its theology, Sikhism belongs to a class of systems quite apart and independent in its ideology. For, Guru Nanak and the succeeding Nine Masters clearly demonstrated in their lives what Sikhism stood for and how it was to be lived in a manner emphatically different from not only the Indian systems but also from the three Semitic systems, current in his times. In fact, clear direction was given to see that features that had appeared in some of the earlier whole-life systems did not creep in Sikhism at some later stage. All this shows how clear were the Sikh Gurus in their vision and about

the independence and sovereignty of their system and the mission they were to pursue.

Scripture

Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Scripture, is the most emphatic pronouncement about the distinct and independent identity of Sikhism. Apart from being the embodiment of the words or *Shabad* of the Gurus, and for that matter of the commandments of God and the Sikh doctrines, and being final in every respect, it is the living guide of the Sikhs and has been so apotheated by the Tenth Master. The phenomenon of Sikh Scripture is unique in the annals of religious history of man. In the case of every other religion its scripture was compiled decades, and mostly centuries, after the prophet had left the physical scene. In all these cases numerous problems of authenticity, textual accuracy and advertant additions and interpolations, have arisen, thereby creating many controversies, both among the faithful and the scholars. In fact scholarly debate has arisen in Christianity as to whether or not Christ wanted to initiate a new religion or intended only to reform Judaism. But the step taken by the Fifth Master makes its absolutely clear that the Gurus had a new thesis to give, entirely different from the earlier ones, and for that matter, it required a separate and authentic compilation. By this important measure, the Master eliminated all possibilities of attendant controversies that had arisen in the case of other religions. Secondly, it made it equally explicit that in its message the Scripture was final and complete. And the Tenth Master, while stopping the line of human succession to the Guruship, made it clear what the position of the *Guru Granth* is in the Sikh religion. The Gurus thus created a tradition that not a word could be altered nor any line added to the *Guru Granth*. The story about Ram Rai, Guru's own son, and other similar incidents make it clear how particular the Gurus were in maintaining and securing the authenticity of the *Bani (Shabad)* and how sacred they felt to be its character as the vehicle of Truth.

In this context, one fact is very significant. In the presence of the existing position on the *Guru Granth* neither can there be an alteration in the Sikh thesis, nor can any saint or person, while claiming to be a Sikh, attempt to create any deviation or schism in the Sikh society. It is in this background that one can understand the activities and writings of two writers of long

association with a Christian Mission in Punjab, in making unfounded and misleading statements about the authenticity of the Kartarpuri Bir. The surprising part of such statements, in fact, some misstatements¹⁷, is that those have been made or repeated without a proper study or examination of the Bir or the authentic literature that existed long before these persons raised unwarranted doubts. And the very fact that some of those statements or the intentions behind making them, is being now denied, shows the fishy nature of such attempts. All we wish to emphasize is the great and unprecedented vision of the Sikh Gurus in authenticating the Sikh Scripture, thereby eliminating for the future the possibility of any such controversy. This shows both the clear identity of the Sikh thesis and the intention of the Gurus to secure its purity for all times to come. The Sikh Gurus were fully aware of numerous scriptures in India and outside, and it is in that background that they took the monumental step of authenticating the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The implications of this step about Sikh identity are indeed profound and emphatic.

Panfb and Its Institutions

We have already indicated Guru Nanak's system was a whole-life or *Miri-Piri* system, and for that matter, it envisaged the creation of a society or *Panfb*. For, it was not a salvation religion for the guidance or benefit of a few. In this matter Sikhism is entirely different from the Bhakti religions or the other Indian religions. This intention of Guru Nanak is clear from the very start. For, wherever he went, he created and organised Sikh societies with a place for the regular or periodical socio-religious meetings of his groups. And after the close of his travels, he organised such a centre at Kartarpur. It is clear that his purpose was not of merely giving a new thesis, but he also wanted to organise a society that should live the ideals laid down by him. It is for that purpose that he started the institution of succession, since he knew that although the thesis had been clearly expounded in his *Bani*, the society he had initiated, had still to be nurtured, motivated and developed. Of course, Guru Nanak had laid down the lines on which his society was to work, and the targets it was to achieve. His being a *Miri-Piri* system, it was he who had rejected the doctrine of Ahimsa. Apart from that, the institution of *Langar* was also initiated by him; it was something which was wholly

revolutionary in his times. For, not only *Shudras*, but Muslims also participated and sat at the same platform. In the work and lives of the subsequent Gurus, we can see a clear development and ascent in the organisation of the Sikh *Panfb*. Separate centres of the Sikh societies were created, which were all linked to the central place where the Gurus worked and where periodical meetings of the entire Sikh *Sangats* were held. Apart from that, the institution of *Daswandb* was created. It is significant that both the field centres and the place of the Guru dealt with social as well as religious problems of the Sikh society. The primary object of all this was, on the one hand, to knit together the Sikhs as a separate *Panfb* or People, and, on the other hand, to wean them away from the other religions and cults, which were numerous in the country. The Sixth Master, in pursuance of the instructions of his father, started militarisation of the Sikh society, and raised the institution of the Akal Takhat side by side with the Harmandir Sahib. Almost since the time of the Fifth Master the Sikh society started growing as a parallel socio-political organisation. As it was also militarised, the tension between the Sikh society and the state naturally grew, ultimately leading to open clashes. The Seventh Master promised aid to Dara and the event was evidently not forgotten by the Delhi Emperor. Similarly, the organisation of a Millat, a people, by the Ninth Master came to the notice of Emperor Aurangzeb, who offered¹⁸ to give grant to the Guru, if the latter gave up his political and what he felt to be somewhat rebellious activities. The Guru declined the offer. The intentions of the Gurus became clear and open, when finally the Tenth Master formally organised the institution of *Sant-Sipabis* or the Khalsa with Amrit ceremony. What is very significant is that as an essential component of the Sikh thesis, he prescribed the wearing of *Kirpan*, which indicated that the Sikhs had neither to abandon or relax in regard to their responsibility of reaction against injustice and oppression, nor had this society to relapse into a group of *Sants* unconcerned with the problems of the empirical life and their responsibility to solve them.

The broad indication of the development of the Sikh society from the time of Guru Nanak to the Tenth Master, makes it clear that from the very start the Gurus were aiming at the creation of a people imbued with the ideals of *Sant-Sipabi*,

based on the *Miri-Piri* or whole-life doctrine of Guru Nanak. For, Sainapat records that on the Baisakhi day 1699 was revealed the plan, which, till then, was in the mind of the Master.¹⁹ The question is not of what an arm-chair scholar might feel today, but the important fact is what was the perception of the state during the period from the mid-sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century. The martyrdom of the Fifth and the Ninth Masters and the open military clashes between the armies of the state and the Sikhs showed that the Delhi Empire always took the Sikh society to be an unwanted political entity, which had to be curbed and destroyed. Hence the conflict between the Sikhs and the Mughal state and the ultimate triumph of the Sikh society, is not a phenomenon subsequent to the Guru period, but a continuing war of socio-political interests between two societies of which both sides were fully conscious and working for the success of their respective objectives. So far as the Gurus were concerned, we have already stated that they were developing a society or a people inspired with the values of the *Miri-Piri* thesis of Guru Nanak. Hence the identity of the society was unquestioned by the political rulers of the day, and is, for that matter, unquestionable, both in the field of religion and that of social growth. The institution of the *Panith* started by Guru Nanak, the system of succession and the Ten Masters who nurtured and matured the Sikh society, the institution of *Langar*, brotherhood and equality, coupled with the institution of work and production, can be explained only on the assumption that Guru Nanak had a separate thesis which was calculatedly sought to be implemented. Similarly, the institution of *Daswandh*, the history of martyrdoms and extreme sacrifice by the Gurus themselves, and the institution of Amrit and the Five *Kakars* equally highlight how this society was welded into a people with new motivations and ideals. In fact, this uniqueness is also evident from the failures of some scholars, drawn from pacifist or dichotomous religions to understand the logical unity and integrity of the Sikh thesis. Because according to the logic of their systems the development of the Sikh society from the seventeenth century does not appear to them to be congruous with the doctrines of their pacifist or dichotomous religions. On the other hand, seen in the light of the whole-life thesis of Guru Nanak, the entire history and institutions of the Sikh society appear so natural, logical, necessary, and understandable.

Conclusion

We have discussed the Sikh identity under the five heads mentioned earlier. The spiritual experience of the Gurus being different from that in the case of other systems, their ideology is equally new and different; since, instead of being dichotomous or pacifist, it is a whole-life system that considers the development of a socio-religious society to be essential. But that society has not in any manner to be exclusive, nor the struggle for justice only for a narrow cause. In fact, its history shows that the approach of the Sikh society has always been universal. For, it was the Sikh society which for the first time brought a sense of equality among the different castes and creeds in India. An equally important fact is that although the Sikhs had a long history of struggle with the Muslim state, they, while in power, never tried to convert Hindus or Muslims to the Sikh faith. In fact, both the communities flourished because of respectful regard for their faiths. The treatment the Sikh armies gave to their vanquished adversaries or to the civil populations, can bear comparison with the conduct of any army, contemporary or modern.

It is significant that it was Guru Nanak's call for playing the game of love and sacrifice, which the Tenth Master repeated at the time of the Amrit ceremony. For, just as Guru Nanak wanted a total commitment for the cause of the faith, the same total commitment was desired by the Tenth Master in response to which the Five *Piyaras* offered their heads. And the important fact is that this commitment to the faith was led and sanctified by the Gurus themselves with their own blood. Apart from the five factors mentioned above, the Tenth Master himself emphasized this identity by the introduction of the *Nash* Doctrine,²⁰ while administering Amrit to the Five *Piyaras*. For, he said that break with the earlier religious traditions, with the earlier superstitions, rituals and taboos, with the earlier ancestry or lineage, with the earlier deeds and professions or their immobility, was complete. By this *Nash* Doctrine the Tenth Master endowed the Sikh society with Five Freedoms or Liberations from all earlier traditions and taboos. What we seek to emphasize is that Sikh identity is not in any manner artificial, it is the one that was clearly created and proclaimed by the Gurus themselves.

Chapter XIV
The Sikh Identity

1. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 722.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 459.

314

References

3. Stace, W.T., *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 131-133.
4. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 730.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 1091-92.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 418.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 955.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 913.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 1208.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
16. Briggs, G.W., *Gorakhnath and Karpbata Yogis*, p. 28.
17. McLeod, W.H., *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp. 76-78.
18. Bannerjee, A.C., *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. III (Feb. 1976), p. 61, and *Haqiqat-i-Banau, Uruj-i-Firaq-i-Sikhan* (author not known), pp. 3-6. (Also, *Sikh Review*, February 1991, p. 22).
19. Sainapat, *Gur Sobha* (Edited by Ganda Singh), pp. 21, 32.
20. Cunningham, J.D., *History of the Sikhs*, p. 64; Bannerjee, I.B., *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 116.

opposite system through the blinkers of their own culture or tradition are apt to suffer from this failing. It is on this score that James Lewis criticises the approach of some Western scholars in their study of Sikhism : "Nonetheless, because of the resonances which the Nanak-Gobind Singh contrast elicited from the inner tensions of European Christians, trace of the degenerationist paradigm was retained in discussions, particularly academic discussions, of the development of the Sikh religion. In fact, the theme of the supposed contradiction between early and later Sikhism, often carrying with it the same undertone of moral censure that it originally carried, is repeated in Western discourse about Sikhism to this very day, and will, undoubtedly continue to be present in such discourse as long as scholars from Christian background fail to come to terms with the contradiction in their own culture."⁶¹ One major cause for these conflicting interpretations of different religions is what may be called the modern, mechanical or sociological methodology under which we seek to view different religious growths not as having separate ontological roots but as parts of a single cultural, social or evolutionary development. Such simplistic studies, apart from being academically faulty, cause confusion and conflict, because these are merely phenomenological studies of religions without understanding their ontological fundamentals, base, or contributions. Hence, our stress that different religious systems have to be understood and appreciated as independent and separate growths, these being separately revealed. That alone will make for academic health and integrity and religious understanding.

CHAPTER IX

GURU NANAK : THE PROPHET OF A UNIQUE IDEOLOGY

1. Introduction

In this essay we shall attempt to outline that the religion of Guru Nanak is unique in many ways. For, Guru Nanak is the first man of God to break in India the dichotomy between the spiritual life and the empirical life of man and to establish a clear and integral combination between the two. His was not what is termed a salvation religion; in fact, in his religion he specifically linked the spiritual salvation of man with his social salvation. That is also why in its ideology and its doctrines Sikhism is radically different from all the earlier Eastern and contemporary Indian religions. This linkage is of immense and revolutionary importance which many students of religion have failed to grasp. In this context, we shall explain (1) what is the spiritual experience of the Gurus and what is the kind of reality of God Guru Nanak proclaims, (2) what is unique about the spiritual system of Guru Nanak and what radical departures he makes from the other spiritual systems that had arisen in India, (3) why Guru Nanak chose the householder's life to be the forum of spiritual growth and what are its logical implications, (4) why Guru Nanak started the system of succession, why the system of succession was continued by the fifth Guru even after the Sikh scripture had been compiled and authenticated by him and why the tenth Guru stopped the institution of succession, and (5) why persons belonging to the pacifist religions find it difficult to understand the spiritual system and the historical role of the Sikh Gurus. For this reason, we shall state, as briefly as possible, only those aspects of Guru Nanak's system that are strictly relevant to our present discussion.

2. Idea of God and Spiritual Experience

Guru Nanak is a monotheist; but to say that is to say very little about him because monotheism has a number of varieties, and the classification of his system merely as monotheism would only confuse the issues. First, it is necessary to know what is the nature of the spiritual experience of the Gurus. It is because of a significant variation in this religious experience that doctrinal changes arise. For the Gurus "God is All Love and the rest He is ineffable."¹ In other mystic systems as detailed by Stace, this religious experience is in the nature of blessedness, peace, holiness, universal-consciousness, etc.² In the Hindu systems too it is "Truth, Consciousness and Bliss", (*Sat Chit Anand*). Secondly, it is important to know what is the kind of God Guru Nanak envisages and how he has tried to define his system and more especially to live it and carry out his mission. In fact, it is the lives of Guru Nanak and other Gurus that explain and illustrate the logic of his system, namely, Sikhism. For Guru Nanak, God is both Transcendent and Immanent. "He that permeates all hearts is transcendent too."³ He mentions numerous aspects of God but in this essay we shall primarily be concerned with the Attributive, the Loving and the Creative aspects of God whom he calls the Ocean of virtues, Creative, Benevolent and Gracious. "In the realm of truth is the Sole One, Ever Creative, keeping a Benevolent and Gracious eye on the universe."⁴ This perception of the Guru about God has fundamental implications. Let us just mention five of them. The first inference is that the universe is real and meaningful. For, attributes of God could be expressed only in a real world. Because when God was by Himself the question of the expression of love and other attributes of God could not arise. Thus, this description of God gives both authenticity and spiritual significance to the world of man and his life. This inference is entirely opposed to the earlier Buddhist approach which believes the world to be a place of suffering, involving consequential withdrawal from it to a monastic life. Even the Vedantic approach considers the world to be *Mithya* and world activity to be just illusory. In order to illustrate this point and the contrast between the approach of Sankra and that of Guru Nanak, let us just quote them. **Guru Nanak sings :**

"The sun and moon, O Lord, are Thy lamps; the firmament Thy salver, the

orbs of the stars the pearls encased in it.

The perfume of the sandal is Thine incense, the wind is Thy fan, all the forests are Thy flowers, O Lord of light, what worship is this, O Thou, Destroyer of birth ?

Unbeaten strains of ecstasy are the trumpets of Thy worship.

Thou has a thousand eyes and yet not one eye;

Thou has a thousand forms and yet not one form;

Thou has a thousand stainless feet and yet not one foot;

Thou has a thousand organs of smell and yet not one organ.

I am fascinated by this play of Thine.

The light which is in everything is Thine, O Lord of light.

From its brilliance everything is brilliant;

By the Guru's teaching the light becometh manifest.

What pleaseth Thee is the real worship.

O God, my mind is fascinated with Thy lotus feet as the bumble-bee with the flower; night and day I thirst for them. Give the water of Thy favour to the Sarang (bird) Nanak, so that he may dwell in Thy name."

Sankara writes

"I am not a combination of the five perishable elements. I am neither body, the senses, nor what is in the body (antar-anga: i.e., the mind). I am not the ego-function; I am not the group of the vital breath-forces; I am not intuitive intelligence (buddhi). Far from wife and son am I, far from land and wealth and other notions of that kind. I am the witness, the Eternal, the Inner Self, the Blissful One (sivo-ham; suggesting also, 'I am Siva')."

"Owing to ignorance of the rope, the rope appears to be a snake; owing to ignorance of the Self the transient state arises of the individualized, limited, phenomenal aspect of the Self. The rope becomes a rope when the false impression disappears because of the statement of some credible person; because of the statement of my teacher I am not an individual life-monad (jivo-naham). I am the Blissful One (sivo-ham).

"I am not the born; how can there be either birth or death for me ?

"I am not the vital air; how can there be either hunger or thirst for me ?

"I am not the mind, the organ of thought and feeling; how can there be either sorrow or delusion for me ?

"I am not the doer; how can there be either bondage or release for me ?

"I am neither male nor female, nor am I sexless. I am the Peaceful One, whose form is self-effulgent, powerful radiance. I am neither a child, a Young man, nor an ancient; nor am I of any caste. I do not belong to one of the four life-stages. I am the Blessed-Peaceful One, who is the only Cause of the origin and dissolution of the world."

While Guru Nanak is bewitched by the beauty of His creation and sees in the panorama of nature a lovely scene of the worshipful adoration of the Lord, Sankara in his hymn rejects the reality of the world and treats himself as the sole Reality. Zimmer feels that "Such holy megalomania goes past the bounds

of sense. With Sankara, the grandeur of the supreme human experience becomes intellectualised and reveals its inhuman sterility.¹⁵

According to the Guru the world is not only real but it is a meaningful place where alone God's Creative and Attributive Will works. Secondly, and this is very important, it gives a clear direction as to the way the Attributive Will of God works. It sets the goal for man. Thirdly, God being riches to the poor, milk to the child and eyes to the blind,⁶ the seeker has to follow the ethical path of values and virtues laid down by God and the Guru. This lays down the methodology and ethics for the spiritual path. Fourthly, it shows how intimate is God's interest in the world and its progress. Not only is God the sustainer of life, but He also nurtures it with a loving care. God is described as the Enlightener or Guru. This gives great hope and confidence to man in his spiritual endeavours. Fifthly it lends a clear spiritual character to the ethical and moral life of man. Thus, in Sikhism moral life by itself gains spiritual colour and character. Because, the world being a creation of God, and God being the Ocean of virtues, moral life is in line with the Attributive Will of God. In the *Japuji*, the Guru clearly lays down that the ideal life for man or the *Sachitara* is to move and work in accordance with the Will of God.⁷ Thus, in Sikhism the spiritual life and the empirical life are clearly and closely linked. The dichotomy between these two kinds of lives as it exists in most other traditions is emphatically removed. We shall amplify this point later.

In short, the attributive aspect of God logically generates an attitude of life-affirmation in the religious man. We shall now explain the major implications of this approach and see how widely contrasted these are with the features of other Indian religions.

3. The Path of Love

A revolutionary system in which the dichotomy between the spiritual life and the empirical life of man was emphatically broken.

It was Guru Nanak who laid and led the path of universal love and the emancipation of man without distinction of caste and creed. The call for this mission was given by him in unambiguous terms. "If you want to tread the path of love, come

forward with your head on your palm.⁸ And his mission, as mentioned earlier, was to ferry men across the turbulent sea of life. It is clear that in Guru Nanak's mission of love, two objectives became logically uppermost and these he emphasized unambiguously in his *Bani*, namely, that he was to establish equality and fraternity among men, and that it was the duty and responsibility of the religious man and the religious society he was creating to resist oppression and safeguard human rights and values. It is in this context that the importance of Guru Nanak's criticism of the doctrine of Ahimsa should be understood. "Men discriminate not and quarrel over meat-eating, they do not know what is flesh and what is non-flesh, or what is sin and what is not sin."⁹ "Life he said was in every grain of corn or seed."¹⁰ Again, it is in this background that we have to charter the course of Sikh history from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. After Guru Nanak, the period of the next three Gurus relates mainly to the creation, expansion, and organisation of a cohesive society or *Panth* Guru Nanak had started. The next major landmark was the time of the fifth Guru, who not only compiled the scripture of the new society, thereby weaning it away from all earlier beliefs, sought confrontation with the empire and not only made the supreme sacrifice of his life and set the tradition of martyrdom but also created in his life time what Dr. Gupta calls "a state within a State." No wonder emperor Jahangir took note of this mounting challenge and attacked the Sikh society. For him the movement was of such importance and potentialities that he not only took personal note of it and ordered it to be demolished, but also found this event to be of such great socio-political significance as to be mentioned in his autobiography.¹¹

Guru Nanak brought about a complete reversal of the socio-religious life and values of his time. Against life negation and withdrawal from life, he recommended life-affirmation and complete social participation. Against monasticism and asceticism, he accepted a householder's life and full social responsibility. Against celibacy and a woman being sin-born, he gave religious sanctity to married life and equality to women. Against the rigidity of the *Varan Ashram Dharma* and the institution of caste and pollution, he, from the very first day of his mission, accepted and practised social equality and the brotherhood of man. This act of Guru Nanak after his

enlightenment and his first words that "there is no Hindu nor Muslim" are extremely meaningful. At least, two points stand emphasized. First, that in his thesis and mission deed was of primary importance; and, second, that human equality and consequent social responsibility were to constitute the bedrock of his mission. Against the world being *Mithya* and a suffering, he found it to be real, beautiful and the realm for the spiritual growth of man. Against Tapas, ritualism and meditation alone, he accepted the primacy of work and one's religious assessment being based purely on man's deeds, i.e. moral deeds, in this world. Asceticism and Ahimsa are the fundamental features of all Indian religions. But, Guru Nanak rejected both of these doctrines. We do not think there were any traces of these elements of his system in the earlier traditions. And, considering the times in which he was born, nothing could be more radical or revolutionary. Because it is one of the few systems of the world in which the dichotomy between the spiritual life of the soul and the temporal life of the body has been broken and an inalienable link between the two established. In order to distinguish such a system from a quietist religion, Hocking and Iqbal call it a Prophetic Religion. Otto calls such a system Activity Religion as distinguished from the Vedantic system of Sankara. Here the goal is to work in all walks of life as the instrument of God's Attributive Will and not to withdraw or isolate oneself from the world in order to merge in The Absolute, Void, or Godhead, or to achieve a blissful and tranquil union with God as an end in itself. For Plotinus or Sankara, after the final spiritual achievement, activity is a fall. Even in Mahayana Buddhism after Nirvana there is no return, much less moral activity or expression of compassion which ends at the penultimate stage of Ahrat. But, for the *Sachiana* or the superman, even after being in tune with God, it is essential to carry out His Attributive Will. In fact, he prays not for Moksha but "for millions of hands to serve Him."¹²

4. Householder's life to be the forum of spiritual growth

In Guru Nanak's system, thus, asceticism, renunciation and withdrawal from life were completely rejected. Not only Guru Nanak, but all the Gurus, except Guru Hanikrishan who died at an early age, were married householders. It is significant that after return from his missionary tours, Guru Nanak settled at

Kartarpur as a peasant, sent for his wife, worked and preached there to the end of his days. Again, when he appointed Guru Angad to be his successor, he advised him to send for the members of his family and settle at Khadur Sahib and carry out the mission entrusted to him. In fact, when Guru Nanak later visited him and found him living a somewhat quietist life, he advised him to be active as he had to organise a community and fulfil the mission entrusted to him.¹³ It was Guru Nanak who stated that "his mission was, with the help of other God-conscious persons to ferry everyone across the sea of life"¹⁴ i.e. his aim was social salvation of the society as a whole and not the individual salvation of a few or a group only. It is in this light that we have to understand why the second and third Gurus, while they included anyone in their society, without distinction of class and caste, excluded recluses (ascetic celibates) from being members of the Sikh society, and that is also why the Guru condemned the Yogis for being idlers and their not being ashamed of begging for alms at the very doors of the householders whose life they spumed.¹⁵ In fact, the Guru envisaged all problems of life to be religious problems to be solved in a righteous or truthful way. That is also why Guru Nanak says, "Truth is the highest of all but higher still is truthful living,"¹⁶ and that is also why in Guru Nanak's system moral life is of the highest significance. For, he lays down that all assessment of man will be based on his deeds in this world and, it is by our deeds that we become near or away from God.¹⁷ All these are, indeed, corollaries of the world-view of "despise not the world, it being the creation of God."¹⁸

It is in this context that we should understand why it is Guru Nanak who not only identified and commented upon all the social and political problems of his times but also laid down the principles of his ideology and the foundations of the Sikh society that was created to solve those problems.

We indicate here his comments and views on some of the major social issues of his times. Allied with the issue of life-affirmation is the matter of the status of women in the society. Before we record Guru Nanak's view on the subject, it would be relevant to state the position of women in the then contemporary world. The Digambara Jains believed that a woman could not attain Moksha or salvation and that she must first be incarnated as a male before she could reach Kavalaya.¹⁹

Buddha very reluctantly agreed to enrol women as Bhikshus. Even after entry in the Bhikshu order, her status remained second rate. The woman Bhikshu even if she were an old entrant in the Bhikshu order was considered junior to a male Bhikshu who joined the order later than she had done.²⁰ The male monk was not supposed to rescue a drowning woman even if she were his own mother.²¹ In the caste order of the Brahmans, a woman had been classed with the *Shudras*. For Sankara woman is the gateway to hell.²² Even in the liberal Vaishnav order of Ramanuja or Shankradeva of Assam, women were not accepted as Vaishnavas. She was deemed to be basically a temptress or sin born. Shankradeva, a liberal saint of the later Bhakti movement, felt that "of all the terrible aspirations of the world, a woman's is the ugliest. A slight sideglance of hers captivates even the heart of celebrated sages. Her sight destroys, penance and meditation. Knowing this, the wise keep away from the company of women."²³ Nathism was another religious cult when Guru Nanak appeared on the religious scene. "A Nath had to take a vow not to marry and they did not even sit or dine with Nath women."²⁴ It is also significant to record that the attitude of a saint like Bhagat Kabir towards women has been considered to be mesogynist.²⁵ Even Christian missionaries had extended their organisation to India in the time of Guru Nanak. In Catholic Christianity women have not been ordained as priests even upto today. It was in this climate that Guru Nanak spoke "why call woman impure when without woman there would be none."²⁶ The contrasted position of women in the Sikh society was such that later when the third Guru created districts of religious administration, women were appointed to head some of them.²⁷

Another major problem of the times was the social ideology of caste which had a triple limitation. First, it was basically hierarchical. Men were deemed unequal by birth, the Brahman caste being at the top of the ladder and the *Shudras* being at the bottom of it. Apart from that, social intercourse between the *Shudra* castes and the upper three castes was virtually barred. In fact, the institutions of untouchability and pollution were a fact of the social life of the times. Thirdly, apart from the fact that a person could take up only the profession of his caste or sub-caste, a change of profession was religiously barred. The *Bhagavad Gita* clearly laid down that it was religiously, more meritorious to do, even inefficiently, the duties of one's own

caste or ancestral profession than to do efficiently the duties of another caste or profession.²⁸ In this background it is extremely significant that Guru Nanak's first statement after his enlightenment was that there was no Hindu or Musalman, meaning thereby that he saw only man everywhere, the distinction of caste and inequality being irrelevant, the impediment in the path of spirituality. When Guru Nanak started his missionary tours, his sole companion was a low caste Muslim. It was, thus, a categoric declaration that in his society or system no one who had any belief in caste prejudices or discriminations could have any place. And when he returned from his tours he established the institutions of *Langar*, *Sangat* and *Pangat* which meant that his disciples not only mixed and worked together, but also sat, and ate together without distinctions of caste i.e. had a kitchen for having common and free meals. In fact, even during his tours he had organised local Sangats (societies) on the above lines. The record of Bhai Gurdas about the caste constitution of the Sikhs shows that all kinds of castes, including low castes were members of the Sikh societies of those times. In the conditions of that period, nothing could be more revolutionary than to establish the brotherhood of man and to say that the Vedas had wrongly laid down the distinction of caste.²⁹

An important corollary of the approach of life-affirmation is the institution of work. It is very significant to find that Guru Nanak, after his return from his missionary tours, regularly worked as a peasant. And this practice of earning one's livelihood was followed by his successors as well. The Guru says, "The person incapable of earning his living gets his ears split and becomes a mendicant. He calls himself a Guru or saint. Do not look up to him, nor touch his feet. He knows the way who earns his living and shares his earning with others."³⁰ A marked work-ethics in the Sikh society is the direct result of the teachings of and the precedents set by Guru Nanak and the other Gurus. For no society can thrive and flourish for long in health unless the dignity and necessity of work are accepted as a virtue and as a part of one's socio-religious responsibility. Consequently, there has, from the very start, been a clear rejection of the institutions of monasticism, asceticism, renunciation and other worldliness.

Lastly, we mention his criticism of the rulers and the

invaders of the time. In the *Babar Vāni*, he notably condemns the oppression of the invaders and also the moral unpreparedness of the local rulers. It is important to understand that this was not just idle criticism; the Guru was very serious and meaningful about it. In his verses he even complains to God, as the Master of the human flock, for not protecting the weak and allowing them to be trampled upon by the strong.³¹ This important criticism displays a fundamental feature of his spiritual thesis. It is, indeed, unfortunate that many of the scholars, and more especially those committed to pacifist doctrines, have completely missed the basic significance of this criticism by Guru Nanak. For when, he criticises even God for allowing oppression of the weak to take place, how could he preclude the god-man from accepting the responsibility of resisting or undoing oppression or encroachment on the basic human rights of man. Guru Nanak's criticism, as we have seen, is loud and significant. It is not an empty rhetoric. Its meaning is clear. Since God is the 'Destroyer of the oppressor or the evil,' 'Slayer of the enemy'³² and 'Helper of the Helpless', this criticism naturally casts a clear responsibility on the god-man with an attitude of life-affirmation to create the wherewithal for resistance. In this connection the clarification given (in reply to a question by Sant Ram Das of Maharashtra) by the Sixth Guru that Guru Nanak had given up mammon and not the worldly life as such, and that his sword was for the destruction of the oppressor and the defence of the weak, is very significant and revealing of Guru Nanak's system and mission.³³ Further, it is important to understand that the doctrine of *Miri* and *Piri* is the natural and inevitable corollary of the path of love and the service of man, of the rejection of asceticism and monasticism, of the acceptance of the householder's life, and of securing justice, equality and freedom for all men. For once the householder's life becomes the forum of spiritual growth and activity, the man of religion has to accept total responsibility for repelling all attacks on the moral life and interests of man, from whatever quarters, whether social or political, those should emanate. It is for this reason that Guru Tegh Bahadur, who was considered by the state to be organising a rebellion against the Empire, spurned the offer of the Emperor that if he gave up his political activities and confined to only religious preachings, he would get imperial grants.³⁴

5. The institution of succession and Ten Masters

This sense of social responsibility in the god-man clearly involves that he has to create institutions and a society with which he could, to an extent, solve the problems of oppression, aggression, discrimination, and conflict. The god-man does no miracles, but, as the instrument of God, he is obliged to create the necessary means and institutions for resisting political and social oppression and social or caste discrimination. But, socio-political oppression and injustice can be countered only by a committed and motivated society and not just by individuals, nor by mere preachings. Accordingly, new institutions had to be created and faulty institutions had to be supplanted. And, obviously, this great task could not be accomplished in one generation. A society with new motivations and ideals, and new cultural patterns, had to be created, wholly divorced from the hierarchical and the divisive caste society of the times. It is in the above context that we have to understand Guru Nanak's organisation of Sikh Sangats at all the places he visited and the appointment of a successor who was given a clear direction not to be a quietist but to organise a *Parith* or a society with the mission as mentioned above. An important feature of Guru Nanak's mission is the appointment of a successor and the line of Ten Masters. If it were a question merely of communication of his spiritual thesis, the *Bani* of Guru Nanak completely embodied the same and no new fundamental was added to it in the *Bani* of the subsequent Gurus. Again, if it were merely the question of personal or individual salvation, or of creating a comprehensive scripture, the role of the last five Gurus cannot be understood. Because so far as the scripture was concerned, the same had been compiled and created by the fifth Guru. The entire objective of his mission becomes clear only if one accepts that Guru Nanak's ideal was equally the social salvation of man and the creation of a God-oriented society that was to resist and combat the evils he had enumerated. That society had to seek to solve the social problems he had identified in his *Bani*. In fact, Guru Nanak's mission would have been unfulfilled, if he had not created the institution of succession in order to create and organise a society, or if the fifth Guru had stopped the succession after the compilation of the *Adi Granth*. For, without the appearance of the Tenth Master and the creation of the Khalsa, Guru Nanak's mission would have remained incomplete.

Sainapat clearly records that the creation of the Khalsa was an important goal of the Guru which was revealed on the Baisakhi day of 1699 A.D.³⁵ It is only in the context of his socio-religious ideals that the role of each of the subsequent Gurus, particularly that of the Tenth Master to create the *Khalsa Panth* and stop the line of further Gurus, becomes clear. The emphatic point that emerges is that for Guru Nanak's religious thesis the creation of a *Panth* or a society motivated with Guru's religious ideals was essential. In pursuance of this mission the institution of succession and the logically integrated work of the nine succeeding masters culminating in the final creation of the Khalsa are parts of a clearly directed historical process. This is also evident from the doctrine of five freedoms (five *Nasb*) gained by the Sikh when he was initiated into the Khalsa and given Amrit (baptised). Guru Gobind Singh clearly stressed the radical departure Guru Nanak's system had made from the earlier religious systems. The five freedoms were freedom from all the earlier religious traditions or systems, freedom from the shackles of the earlier practices and deeds, freedom from the influence of caste or family lineage, freedom from the stigma attached to any profession or the compulsion to follow a hereditary calling, and freedom from any earlier inhibition, prejudices or rituals.³⁶ The Amrit ceremony prominently signified a clear break with the earlier religious systems, customs or practices. Since human prejudices, conditionings, and fixations die hard, the new religious and cultural orientation of an entire society had to take a long time, especially when in most of its religious principles and doctrines it had completely deviated from the path of the traditional systems.

Here it is necessary to mention the important episode of the first Baisakhi day (1699 A.D.). After Guru Gobind Singh selected the Five Piaras (The beloved ones), baptised them, i.e., performed the Amrit ceremony, and created the Khalsa, he requested and insisted that the five baptised Sikh, the select leaders of the Khalsa Panth, should formally baptise the Tenth Master as a Singh. This event is in many ways of a crucial and revealing significance. It happened when the sons of the Guru were still alive. It indicates as recorded by Sainapat, that the event epitomised the culminating act in the mission of Guru Nanak, that the socio-religious Sikh society had become mature enough to carry forward the mission of the Gurus now entrusted to them, that the line of personal Gurus to guide the Sikhs

would end as no longer necessary, and that the Sikh society would be able to play its historical role. The lessons of this episode are too evident to be missed. Guru Nanak proclaimed that he had been charged with a mission. His spiritual thesis stands embodied in the authenticated scripture, *Guru Granth Sahib*, the doctrinal guide. The lives of the ten Gurus amply and completely illustrate how the spiritual thesis had to be implemented. Henceforward the Tenth Master closed the earlier chapter and placed the responsibility of future action squarely on the shoulders of the Khalsa, the 'Guru Panth'. 'Shabad' or *Guru Granth* became the scripture, or the thesis, and the Khalsa, the society created by the Guru, became the instrument.

In the light of the mission of Guru Nanak let us now see the role played by his society in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. In its internal constitution and social intercourses and mobility, it was casteless, with complete fraternity amongst its members. Without a deep cohesion and commitment to its mission, it could never challenge the empire which was out to destroy its root and branch and had placed a price on the head of every Sikh. Significantly, it was a revolutionary religious society, constituted of a committed people, and led by persons who in the Brahmanical society were considered to be the lowest. Rangrettas, Kalals, Shudras were its generals and leaders. The marvel of this achievement can be gauged by the fact that in the Indian society in 1947, after India attained Independence, the Prime Minister of India and the Chief Ministers of practically all the States belonged to the Brahman class. Even in the French Revolution which took place half a century later, the leadership of the revolutionary movement was always with the middle class and not with the peasants or the fourth estate.

Externally, the achievement of the society was the uprooting of the Mughal empire in the north-western India. What we wish to emphasize is the evident relation between the criticism by Guru Nanak in his *Babar Vani* and the achievements of his society in securing complete freedom not only from the Mughal yoke but once for all from the march of invading hordes that plagued the country for almost a thousand years. This explains the dictum that the steel of the sword of Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa was created and welded by Guru Nanak.

Basically, Guru Nanak was not only the prophet of the individual or personal salvation of man, but in his religious system the personal salvation of man and the social salvation of the community of men were intimately and inalienably linked. It is true, that as in the case of Neo-Platonism and Sufism, salvation religions and monasticism arise when cultures are in decay and weary, and men of religion, finding the challenges of life and society to be too great to deal with, seek refuge in renunciation, asceticism, stoicism, and Ahimsa. In fact, all such religious movements involve, by and large, withdrawal from life. But, on the other hand, a religion like that of Guru Nanak distinctly aims at the social salvation of man by the creation of new institutions and culture. A typical instance of the former is Neo-Platonism that arose when Greek culture and character were at its lowest ebb. As against it, we have referred to the system of Guru Nanak and the role of a society that brought about social freedom and salvation of man in north-western India. It is, thus, a religion that seeks to break the dichotomy between the spiritual life and the empirical life of man. It is in this light that we have to understand the natural and inevitable combination between the thesis of Guru Nanak and the role of the Tenth Master in the creation of the Khalsa and its historical operation and achievements.

Even today all misinterpretations of the Sikh religion and its history are partly due to the failure to understand the significance of the institution of succession of the Ten Masters, the creation of the Khalsa, and closing the line of succession by entrusting the Guruship to the *Guru Granth*. The need and the uniqueness of this institution become glaringly clear when the ideology and the mission of Guru Nanak are properly understood as laid down in his *Bani*. For that matter any interpretation of his thesis which fails to grasp these basic points is just naive.

6. A Problem of Understanding

It is Guru Nanak's radical break with all the earlier religious systems in India that has caused, among votaries of other religious or cultural systems, a problem of understanding Sikhism. Persons conditioned by quietist or pacifist traditions or thinking find it hard to grasp the inalienable unity of Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh combination. This lack of

understanding his system occurred first with the Nath Yogis who finding him in a householder's garb asked him why he was pouring acid into the pure milk of spirituality by leading an ordinary householder's life. The Guru's reply to the Naths was that it was they who did not understand even the elementaries of the spiritual life³⁷ because the Guru had in his hymns, unambiguously condemned withdrawal from life, asceticism and other-worldliness. The same problem occurred with Sant Ramdas of Maharashtra when he found Guru Hargobind riding a horse fully armed. He questioned him by saying that being a successor of Guru Nanak how he reconciled his military attire and role with the piety and saintliness of Guru Nanak. The Guru's reply was clear and categorical. 'Guru Nanak had given up mammon and not the world; my sword is for the defence of the weak and the destruction of the tyrant.' In equally emphatic words Dasam Granth repeated the same concept :

"He (Nanak) established religion in the Kali age...

Nanak assumed the body of Angad...

Afterwards Nanak was called Amar Das,

As one lamp is lit from another...

And Amar Das became Ram Das,

The pious saw this, but not the fools,

Who thought them all distinct.

But some rare persons recognized that they were all one."³⁸

Thus, the Gurus themselves have clarified and stressed the radical character and the unity of the Sikh thought and doctrines when some religious men of their times, because of their own education under earlier religions, failed to grasp the integrity of Sikhism. The difficulty of rising above the conditioning of one's own training and tradition is so great that even a historian like Toynbee, with a pacifist Christian background, fails to understand the philosophy of Islam and attacks the role of prophet Mohammad for his politico-military activities. Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Jadu Nath Sarkar have violently criticized Guru Gobind Singh for his militancy and wars with the Mughal Empire. In contrast Pir Budhu Shah, a Muslim saint, was so bewitched and inspired by the spiritual stature of Guru Gobind Singh that he not only joined and aided his struggles but two of his sons also lost their lives while fighting in the forces of the Guru. History hardly records the like instance

of a saint sacrificing the lives of his sons for the cause of a person of an opposing faith especially when his co-religionist should be heading the Empire of the day. For Pir Budhu Shah, it was the cause of God that the Guru was fighting for. This unparalleled event that speaks volumes for the spiritual height of the Tenth Master, the devotees of pacifist or salvation religions are unable to understand, much less appreciate. Again it is a Muslim theologian and philosopher, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, who in the entire panorama of Indian history finds only two tall spiritual personalities, namely, Gautam Buddha and Guru Nanak who have enriched Indian religious thought and life with their light, vision, and wisdom. He says :

"The nation paid no heed to the message of Gautam;

It failed to appreciate the value of its resplendent jewel,

Ah ! the ill-fated remained deaf to the Voice of Truth.

The tree is unaware of the sweetness of its own fruit,

He revealed to man the secret of life;

But, India remained intoxicated with its speculations in philosophy;

For, it was not a society the light of truth could illuminate;

God's mercy rained, but the land was barren;

Ah ! for the Sudra, Hindustan is the house of sorrow,

For its heart is devoid of the sap of compassion.

The Brahman is still intoxicated with the wine of his ritualistic injunctions.

The flame of Gautam is alight but in alien societies.

After ages this house of false gods was illumined again;

And, the light of God (Ibrahim) again radiated in the house of man (Azhar);

Then, arose in Punjab the call for the Oneness of spirit (Tauheed).

And, the ideal man wakened India from its world of dreams."³⁹

James Lewis has also recorded the problem of Western scholars in viewing Sikhism in its proper perspective and light. He writes : "Nevertheless because of the resonances which the Nanak-Gobind Singh contrast elicited from the inner tensions of European Christians, trace of the degenerationist paradigm was retained in discussions, particularly academic discussions, of the development of the Sikh religion. In fact, the theme of supposed contradiction between the early and later Sikhism, often carrying with it the same undertone of moral censure that it originally carried, is repeated in western discourse about Sikhism to this very day, and will, undoubtedly continue to be present in such discourse as long as scholars from Christian background fail to come to terms with the contradiction in their own culture."⁴⁰

A question arises why it is that neither Indian nor Western scholars are able to understand the philosophy of Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh combination and its integrated unity and why only Muslim scholars and saints appreciate it. The reasons are obvious but doctrinal. In the Middle Eastern and the Western religions and culture, it is only Prophet Muhammad who created a clear link between the spiritual and the empirical life of man. In the East it was only the Sikh Gurus who brought about this inalienable combination and did so despite the entire Indian tradition having been ascetic, monastic, other-worldly, pacifist or caste ridden. Both these religions as a necessary corollary of their thesis accept the use of force for a righteous public cause where other means fail to redress the wrong. For the Gurus, reason and force are both neutral tools of man. They have both been used and more often abused by him. But no life is possible without their discreet use for the good of the society. It is no accident that the story of Abu Ben Adam suggesting that those who love man are more dear to God than those who love Him is a product of the Muslim religious culture. The same idea is emphasized by Guru Nanak when he says that "Truth is the Highest, but higher still is truthful conduct or living." The lesson of the parable of Abu Ben Adam and of Guru Nanak's basic statement quoted above is the same, namely, the religious primacy of the goal of service of man. And, this goal can materialize only if the spiritual level of man is raised and strengthened by the divine sap of God-consciousness, and his egoism is increasingly subdued or curbed in the socio-political life.

7. Sikhism and Modernity

A question arises how far is the system of Guru Nanak relevant to the problems of modern man ? Scientism, evolutionism and materialism are the religions of the modern man. During the days of scientific euphoria in the second part of the 19th century and before the First World War, it was felt that the scientific outlook and progress would not only relieve man of his religious opiates and his sense of insecurity but these would also lead him to a future of hope and happiness. But the present day realities are far different, and even dismal, both in relation to his external and his internal environments. As to the external security and peace, the position is that apart from having two major world wars in the first half of this century we

have, a decade before the closing of the century, fought over 50 bloody wars. In fact, man has killed, in the wars of the 20th century, more human beings than he did the world over in the earlier centuries. All this, and the colossal expenditure of about 1,000 billion dollars on armament each year, have, far from diminishing the danger of another war and increasing his sense of security, only added to his fears of the dreaded danger of a nuclear holocaust that might involve almost the death of life on this planet. The prospects of such an eventuality are so haunting that it has not only contributed to mental instability of the youth and to their lack of commitment or zest, but it has also given to them a feeling of the very meaninglessness of life, leading in consequence to the erosion of values and to seeking satiation of the baser instincts of man. No wonder a modern scholar, writing about this approach to life that science and our culture have adopted says, "This philosophy can lead to dead-end, the annihilation of mythology, religion, all value systems, all hope." On the moral side all values have been dubbed as a mere defence mechanism or a reaction formation which appear, they say, in human culture as the result of the impact of the environment on the psyche of man. All this has further led to unbridled materialism and individualism and a serious questioning of the old value systems. For, we are told that all evolution and progress are due to a keen struggle of existence, involving the survival of the fittest. The result is a battered family system, a high rate of divorces, a rising number of mentally disturbed and insecure children, mutilated, lopsided and dwarfed personalities, and a mounting rate of drug-addiction and alcoholism. True, science has given us an amazingly equipped vehicle to drive. But, the tragedy is that the ape in man still continues to occupy the driver's seat.

It is in this context that, we believe, Guru Nanak's message is very relevant. For, he emphasizes that the problems of conflict and war, insecurity and frustration, and poverty and disease cannot be solved till man sheds his ego-centrism. Man, the Guru says, has both the opportunity and the destiny to be a superman i.e. to become God-centred instead of being ego-centred. His progress does not depend on the survival of a chance mutation but in his following the path of altruism; for, God's Will is altruistic. Instead of raising the dark spectacle of purposelessness and pessimism for the future of man, the Guru's message is of hope and meaningfulness. It is a message for God-

consciousness, and for belief in both the transcendence and the immanence of God. The fundamental principle of Guru Nanak's religion is the establishment of a spiritual link between the individual salvation and the social salvation of man, and to emphasize that there can be no social salvation of man till his spiritual level is raised, and that there can be no spiritual salvation of man till it is integrated with his social salvation or till it is reflected in man's social field. Progress in the two fields is inseparable and mutually dependent or connected.

8. Conclusion

The conclusion from our discussion is obvious. In the Indian and the Eastern context the thesis of an inalienable combination between the spiritual life of man and his empirical life was first enunciated, proclaimed and established by Guru Nanak. It is also equally evident that there was nothing in the Indian historical context and the environmental forces that could give rise to such a thesis. This gift to both the prophets, Nanak and Mohammad, was God given. Hence the problem of some pacifists, materialists and psuedo-scientific scholars to understand the world-view of Sikhism. Because the Gurus believe not only in the spiritual dimension of Reality but also that the best periods of human history are those when the spiritual and the empirical or rational dimensions of Reality are combined to lift man to new heights. Collingwood stresses the point aptly, "The discovery of a relation is at once the discovery of my thought as reaching God and of God's thought as reaching me; an, indistinguishable from this, the performance of an act of mine by which I establish a relation with God and an act of God's by which he establishes a relation with me. To fancy that religion lives either below or above the limits of reflective thought is fatally to misconceive either the nature of religion or the nature of reflective thought. It would be nearer the truth to say that in religion the life of reflection is concentrated in its intensest form, and that the special problems of theoretical and practical life all take their special forms by segregation out of the body of the religious consciousness, and retain their vitality only so far as they preserve their connexion with it and with each other in it."⁴¹ In Sikhism the ideal is the kingdom of God not in heaven but on earth, and in the creation of it man has to be the humble instrument of God. The Gurus repeatedly address man to give up his egocentric activities and

rise to be a superman. "Among eighty-four lac of species, man is assigned the supreme position, whosever misses the opportunity suffers the pain of transmigration."⁴² "You have obtained the privilege of human birth, now is your opportunity to meet God."⁴³ And the role of the superman or *Gurmukh* is to follow the path the Gurus treaded and led. For the seeker the path is to shed egoism by the practice of love and virtues and humbly to seek the grace of God to gain the perception of God-consciousness in order to be the instrument of God's Attributive Will. It is also important to understand that Sikhism is universal in its character and distinctly co-operative in its approach to other religions for the spiritio-social progress of man.

CHAPTER X

SIKH RELIGION AND POLITICS

1. Introductory

The basic question in any world-view is whether or not it assumes the existence of a Spiritual Reality; and if the answer to this first question is in the affirmative, the next issue is what is the relation of the Spiritual Reality to the empirical life of man. Since replies to these questions will mostly be theological or ontological in nature, we shall seek in this paper to state the views of the Gurus as explained in the *Guru Granth* and as exemplified in their lives.

2. Sikh Thesis

The rationale of every religious system follows the kind of spiritual reality the author envisages. For the Guru, 'God is All Love, rest He is ineffable.'¹ And, God's love can be expressed only in a real world; besides, Love is both dynamic and the mother of all values and virtues. In the very opening line of the *Japuji*, God is called, 'The Creative Being', and further He is described as 'Ever Creative, watching His Creation with a Gracious Eye.'² The Guru calls the world real and, 'The place for the practice of righteousness.'³ God is the 'Ocean of values and virtues'; 'Eyes to the blind, milk to the child and riches to the poor.'⁴ The Guru, thus, emphasizes four things. First, the world is real and meaningful, being the place for the practice of virtues. Second, God too is deeply interested in it. For, He not only looks after it with benevolence, but also expresses His Love and Attributes in this world. Third, this gives spiritual sanction to the moral life of man. That is why Guru Nanak lays down for the seeker the goal of 'carrying out the will of God'. God's will being altruistic and the fount of all values, the Guru further emphasizes this creative or activity aspect of his system when he

The Prophet of a Unique Ideology

1. Gurn Granth Sahib, p. 459.
2. Saxe, W.T., *Mysticism & Philosophy*, pp. 131-133.
3. Gurn Granth Sahib, p. 294.
4. *Ibid*, p. 8.
5. Daljeet Singh, *Sikhism*, pp. 262-63.
6. Gurn Granth Sahib, p. 830.
7. *Ibid*, p. 1.
8. *Ibid*, p. 1412.
9. *Ibid*, p. 1289.
10. *Ibid*, p. 1290.
11. Gurdev Singh, *Sikh Tradition*, p. 328.
12. Gurn Granth Sahib, p. 78.
13. Bhalla, S.D., *Mehma Prakash*, p. 326.
14. Gurn Granth Sahib, p. 939.
15. *Ibid*, p. 886.
16. *Ibid*, p. 62.

References

17. *Ibid*, p. 8.
18. *Ibid*, p. 611.
19. Zimmer, H., *Philosophies of India*, pp. 222-23.
20. *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. VII, Feb.-August, 1980, p. 38.
21. *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. VII, Feb.-August, 1980, p. 38.
22. Jain, N.K., *Sikh Gurus and Indian Spiritual Thought*, p. 168.
23. Murthy, H.V.S., *Vaisnavism of Shantiradeva and Ramanusja*, p. 212.
24. Ghurye, G.S., *Indian Sadhus*, p. 39; Briggs, G.W., *Gorakh Nath & Kanphata Yogis*, pp. 45, 47, 27.
25. Juergensmeyer, *Sikh Studies*, Berkeley, pp. 83-88.
26. Gurn Granth Sahib, p. 473.
27. *Punjab Past & Present*, Oct. 1976, p. 468.
28. Annie Besant, English Translation of *Bhagavad Gita*, pp. 252-254; Jaisval, S., *Origin & Development of Vaisnavism*, pp. 111-112.
29. Gurn Granth Sahib, p. 1243.
30. *Ibid*, p. 1245.
31. *Ibid*, pp. 360, 417-18.
32. *Ibid*, p. 145.
33. Gupta, H.R., *History of Sikh Gurus*, p. 114.
34. Banerjee, A.C., *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Feb. 1976, GND University, Amritsar, p. 61; *Haqiqat-i-Banau-uny-i-Firqa-i-Sikhan* (1783 A.D.), Anonymous, pp. 3-6. Quoted in an article by Sher Singh in the *Sikh Review*, Calcutta, February, 1990, p. 22.
35. Salnapat, *Gur Sobha*, pp. 21, 32.



37. Bhai Gurdas, *First Var.*
38. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. V, p. 295.
39. Muhammad Iqbal, *Bang-i-Dara*, p. 270.
40. James Lewis, *Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion*, Vol. VI, Oct. 1987, Guru Nanak Foundation, p. 54.
41. Collingwood, R.G., *Idea of History*, pp. 314-315.

61. Vedana Sara, cited by Zimmer, p. 445.
62. Hiriyanna, M., *op. cit.*, p. 72.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
64. Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, *The Vedic Age*, p. 501.
65. Zaehner, R.C., *op. cit.*, p. 155.
66. Zimmer, H., *op. cit.*, pp. 462-463.
67. Daljeet Singh, *Sikhism*, p. 45.
68. Zaehner, R.C., *op. cit.*, p. 169.
69. Zimmer, H., *op. cit.*, pp. 412-13, 448, 455, 458.
Max Weber, *The Religions of India*, p. 186.
Keith, A.B., Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 32, *Religion and Philosophy of Vedas and Upanishads*, pp. 586-87.
70. Swami Sevnananda, *Spiritual Experience*, pp. 222-223.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
72. Zimmer, H., *op. cit.*, pp. 426-427.
73. Mann, J.S., and Sarason, H.S., *Advanced Studies in Sikhism*, p. 51.
74. Gurn Granth Sahib, pp. 853, 939.
75. Saxe, W.T., *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 131-133.
76. William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 370-372.
77. Bergson, in Smullyan and others, *Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. 363-370, 372, 376-77.
78. Aldous Huxley, *Moksha*, p. 115.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
81. Gurn Granth Sahib, pp. 290, 387.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 473.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
84. Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of Saints*, p. 1.
85. Collingwood, R.G., *Idea of History*, p. 178.
86. Gurn Granth Sahib, p. 113.
87. Gupta, H.R., *History of Sikh Gurus*, p. 110.
88. Banerjee, A.C., Timur Shah, quoted by him in *Journal of Sikh Studies*, G.N.D. University, Vol. III, Feb. 1976, p. 61.

(5)

- (i) The Transcendent God expressed Himself in *Naam* that created the world.
- (ii) *Naam* is the Creative and Dynamic Immanence of God, supporting and directing the becoming universe towards (a) a qualityful goal and (b) the emergence of a society of supermen.
- (iii) Gurus' system is monotheistic, since God is both Transcendent and Immanent and the world is His creation.
- (iv) The world is proclaimed as authentic and the sole sphere of *Naam's* deep interest and activity. It is not illusory or of a lower category of reality.
- (v) Accordingly, all human actions have a reality and validity and are immoral or moral, destructive or constructive, self-centred or God-centred to the extent they contribute or not to the ethics of *Naam* or a unitary view of life.
- (vi) The superman is both the knower and the executor of God's Will. After enlightenment, his duties and responsibilities, as the agent of *Naam*, increase and become more purposeful. He cannot be a silent spectator of this world, or a mere enjoyer of bliss; but his bliss lies in being yoked to God's purpose, giving meaning to life and hope and optimism to man i.e. in Sikhism the test, expression and goal of all mystic and spiritual endeavour is life and life alone.
- (vii) The way to establish link with *Naam* is through virtuous participation and deeds in all aspects of life which is the sole arena and test of spiritual and mystic activity both for men and supermen. It is not possible to have link with God by ritualistic, ascetic or escapist practices or even so called salvation or merger.

30. The doctrine of *Naam* gives a clear clue to the understanding of the Sikh Theology and Sikh History. It also explains vividly the ten Gurus' attack on the socio-political institutions of their times, their martyrdoms and military preparations and struggle with a view to creating new socio-political organisations and institutions and how all these were the logical consequence of a single spiritual thesis and the continuous unfolding of a planned process, uninfluenced by local, social or political circumstances or the exigencies or accidents of history.

CHAPTER IV

SIKHISM, VAISNAVISM, VEDANTA AND NATHISM—A COMPARISON

Introduction

The subject of this paper is to understand the uniqueness of the Sikh Religion and why and how Guru Nanak in laying down the principles of his religion and pursuing his mission completely departed from the earlier Indian traditions. In this attempt we shall describe the essentials of Sikhism and briefly compare them with three of his contemporary religious systems.

Sikhism

The bedrock of every religion is the spiritual experience of its founder. Let us see what is the spiritual experience of the Sikh Gurus and how they define God. Obviously, it is this experience that forms the driving force of the mission of a prophet and determines his goal. Guru Nanak says, "O, Lalo, I speak what the Lord commands me to convey."¹ This means two things. First, that God is both Transcendent and Immanent, and, thus, operates in history. Second, that the Guru had a mission to perform. Guru Nanak calls God : "The Sole One, Self-existent and Immanent, Creator Person, Without Fear and Without Enmity, Timeless Person,² Un-incarnated, Self-Created and Gracious Enlightener", "Benevolent", and "Ocean of Virtues". As to the character of spiritual experience, it is recorded, "Friends ask me what is the mark of the Lord, He is All Love. Rest He is ineffable."³ It is this definition of God as "Love" and "Ocean of attributes" that governs the entire structure of Sikhism and the growth of its history. It is in this background that Guru Nanak gave for his mission the call, "If you want to play the game of love, come with your head on your palm."⁴ and Guru Gobind

Singh declared, "Let all listen to the Truth I proclaim, He who loves, attains to God."⁵ We have, thus, to see what are the doctrinal implications of the spiritual experience of the Gurus and their definition of God regarding the various issues we seek to understand. The metaphysical position of Sikhism being a monotheism is clear enough, but much more significant is the inference that the world is not only real but also meaningful. For, the Guru says, "True is He, true is His creation."⁶ "God created the world and permeated it with His Light."⁷ "God created the world of life and planted *Naam* in it, making it the place for righteous activity."⁸ Further, apart from the world being meaningful and a place for virtuous living, God has a deep interest in life and man. "God is eyes to the blind, milk to the child, and riches to the poor."⁹ "It is the inner-most nature of God to help the erring."¹⁰ "This religious experience of the Gurus emphatically lays down the direction in which God wants man's spiritual activity to move. Altruism is, therefore, a direction and the methodology prescribed by the Guru both for the super-man and the seeker. For, "with God it is only the deeds in this world that count."¹¹ "Good, righteousness, virtues, and the giving up of vice are the way to realize the essence of God."¹² "Love, contentment, truth, humility and virtues enable the seed of *Naam* (God) to sprout."¹³ God showers His Grace where the lowly are cared for."¹⁴ "It is by our deeds that we become near or away from God."¹⁵ And finally, the Guru clinches the issue when he says, "Everything is lower than Truth, but higher still is truthful living."¹⁶ "The spiritual path can be trodden not by mere words and talk but by treating all alike, and as one's equal. Yoga does not lie in living in cremation grounds, doing one-point meditation or roaming all over places, or visiting places of pilgrimage, but by remaining God-centred while doing the affairs of the world."¹⁷ "By despising the world one gets not to God."¹⁸ In the *Japuji* the Guru pointedly asks a question as to what is the godly way and himself replies to it saying that by carrying out the Will of God one becomes a *Sachiaara* or God-man. And, God's Will is attributive, God being "All Love" and the "Ocean of Virtues".

The logic of the above approach of life-affirmation leads to a number of other inferences. Since love can be expressed and virtues practised only in life or social life, the Gurus clearly lived and recommended a householder's life. Except Guru Harkrishan who died at an early age, all the Gurus were married

householders. This inference from the thesis of the Gurus was not just incidental, it was clear and categoric. Because Guru Nanak not only bypassed his son Siri Chand, a pious Udasi, in choosing his successor, but the second and the third Gurus clearly excluded the recluses, ascetics or Sanyasis from the Sikh fold. In short, monasticism, asceticism and other-worldliness were clearly rejected. Instead, the worldly life was accepted as the arena for the practice of virtues for spiritual growth. Similarly, life-affirmation and the rejection of celibacy led to the second inference, namely, that the status of woman should be equal to that of man. The Guru says, "Why call woman impure when without woman there would be none,"¹⁹ and when it was she who gave birth to kings among men. This was the logic of Guru Nanak's path, against the one of celibacy and women being considered sin-born and therefore an impediment in the spiritual path. In Hinduism women were classed with *Sudras*, being generally regarded as unfit for the spiritual path.

Guru Nanak's system leads to a third inference as well, namely, the importance of work and production. He says, "The person incapable of earning his living gets his ears split and becomes a mendicant. He calls himself a Guru or a saint. Look not up to him and touch not his feet. He knows the way who earns his living and shares his earnings with others."²⁰ It is significant that after his long tours Guru Nanak worked as a peasant and started a *Langar* (free food for all and service at one platform) till the end of his days. This practice of earning one's own living continued till, after the Fifth Guru, organizational work of the *Panths* and confrontation with the Empire made the carrying out of a private profession impossible. It is important that all these doctrines of their religion were not only scripturally sanctioned but were also actually practised by the Sikh Gurus. This was very essential because, these doctrines being so radically different from, or even opposed to, the earlier religious traditions and trends, their import and importance would have been completely missed or misunderstood if these had not been visibly lived and demonstrated in practice. For example, it is significant that in order to establish the equality of man and demolish the ugly caste discrimination, Guru Nanak's first act after his enlightenment was to take a low caste Muslim as his sole companion, emphasizing thereby that anyone who wanted to join his path had completely to shed all caste prejudices. That is also why while organizing local *Sangat*s he

wanted them to meet together and run *Langars* so as to eat together and share their food with the poor. For him this was the path to establish the brotherhood of man. The Guru not only recommended work and sharing of incomes but also deprecated the amassing of wealth. He says, "Riches cannot be gathered without sin but these do not keep company after death."²¹ "God's bounty belongs to all but men grab it for themselves."²² Just as in the Indian religious systems of his times monasticism, asceticism, celibacy and ahimsa went together with the acceptance of the caste ideology in the social field, similarly, in Guru Nanak's system all such ideas and institutions were rejected and instead a concerted effort was made to establish the brotherhood of man and give religious sanction to the life of the householder, the need of work, production and sharing, and the acceptance of all kinds of social responsibility. We have seen that the Gurus' experience of God being "Love" and their description of God being "Protector" (*Raakhaa*), "Just" (*Adli*), "Benevolent", "Helper of the weak", "Shelter of the Shelterless", "Destroyer of the Tyrant" enjoins a clear responsibility on the god-men to toe that line, namely, to live a religious life while accepting full social participation and responsibility. It is in line with this wholly radical religious thesis that the Gurus changed the entire methodology and the direction of the spiritual life. "The God-centred lives truthfully while a householder."²³ The God-man has to be the instrument or the soldier of God in this world.

The acceptance of full social responsibility has other implications too. Everything that militates against an honest and righteous discharge of a householder's life has to be tackled. It is in this context that Gurus recommended the rejection of asceticism, monasticism and celibacy and the acceptance of a householder's life of work and sharing of wealth, and the elimination of caste distinctions. But, there is one thing more which most of us have failed to understand. In the life of man there are not only social pressures but there are also what modern life calls political pressures. Evidently, both are problems of living in a society. These societal problems the modern man has artificially divided into three sections, economic, social and political. In actual life these three kinds do not occur separately, nor can these be segregated to be dealt with separately. The religious man is confronted with all of them and it becomes his religious duty and responsibility to tackle

them and to resist and react against injustice and evil forces whatever be the quarters from which those should emanate. It is obvious that socio-political problems cannot be solved individually or by mere preaching; these can be dealt with only by a properly and religiously motivated society. It is equally plain that in order to counter and resist evil political pressures it may at sometime become necessary to use force in aid of a righteous cause. Here it is important to note that Guru Nanak as the prophet of this new religious thesis did three things. He laid the foundations of a society that was to be trained and motivated to react against injustice. Wherever he went, he organized local societies with faith in his system. He chose and appointed a successor to carry on the mission he had started. His was not a religion where the object was just personal salvation as an end in itself, or the salvation of a few. His was not a *Matib* or *Khankab* for a few seeking only spiritual attainments. Guru Nanak taught, as was exemplified by his own life, that the spiritual man has a social mission as well. For that very reason it was he who clarified another principle of his religion, namely, his stand regarding Ahimsa. He says, "Men discriminate not and quarrel over meat eating. They do not know what is flesh or non-flesh and what is sin or non-sin."²⁴ In this and other hymns he exposes the cant of non-meat eating which was based on the principle of Ahimsa. He adds that there is life in every grain of corn or food we eat. In the context of Indian religions, this explanation was extremely necessary for a society for which he contemplated the course of action as indicated in his hymns. For, resistance to aggression or oppression cannot at times be done without the use of force. Therefore, for the execution of the religious mission of Guru Nanak it was essential to create a society, appoint a successor, and clearly eliminate the religious sanction to the curb of Ahimsa in the socio-political field. Thirdly, Guru Nanak clearly identified the socio-political problems of his times. The greatest problems were the tyrannical barbarity of the invaders, rapacity of the rulers, the corruption and misuse of the officials, and the hypocrisy and greed of the Mullahs and priests. On the issue of cruelty, loot and murder by the invaders, he even criticizes the local rulers for their unpreparedness. Nay, he even complains to God for allowing the weak to be tyrannized by the strong. Very often the logic of this criticism has been missed. Guru's criticism was not an empty rhetoric. In fact, Guru Nanak was clearly

laying down the new ideology for his society and identifying the tasks to be accomplished by it. It is in this light that we have to understand the institutions of succession, its continuing even after the doctrinal base had been finalized and the scripture compiled by the Fifth Guru, and its closure by the Tenth Guru only after the creation of the Khalsa. The Sikh does not pray to God for Moksha, but he prays for millions of hands to serve Him. This religious thesis of the Gurus, as well shall see, is entirely different from the earlier Indian religious systems like Vaisnavism, Nathism and Vedantism in vogue in those times. Therefore, the Gurus by their personal examples and martyrdoms, established the validity and the practicality of their religious system. In the absence of it, Sikhism could hardly have been understood, much less followed. In fact, Gurus' spiritual experience of God being all Love involves logically and correspondingly total responsibility towards all beings. In the Gurus' system it is simply impossible for the religious person and his society to avoid responsible reaction against injustice wherever it may occur. Sikhism accepts the "idea that specifically designated organized bands of men should play a creative part in the political world destroying the established order and reconstructing society according to Word of God."²⁵ Guru Nanak, thus, laid the foundations of the doctrines of *Miri* and *Piri* that later fructified in the form of the Harmandir Sahib and Akal Takhat. This doctrine of *Miri-Piri* or Saint-Soldier is so radical in the Indian context that Sant Ram Dass of Maharashtra had to be explained by the Sixth Guru himself that he was pursuing the religion of Guru Nanak and that his sword was for the protection of the weak and the destruction of the tyrant. Similarly, the anti-asceticism and the householder's life of Guru Nanak looked so odd to the Naths that they questioned his very claim to be following the religious path. But, the Guru's reply to them is very revealing of his new thesis because he asserted that it is the Naths who did not know even the elementaries of the spiritual path.

What we wish to emphasize is that it is not just incidental, but it is the very logic of Guru Nanak's system that involved on the one hand the rejection of monasticism, asceticism, celibacy and Ahimsa and on the other hand led to the creation of an organized and disciplined society that accepted total social responsibility. It is in this context that we should understand and interpret the history of the Guru period. We shall revert to this

(85)

point at the close of our discussion. At present, let us give a brief outline of the three religious systems, namely, Vaisnavism, Vedantism; and Nathism, that were prevalent in the time of Guru Nanak. These systems, the Guru clearly found incongruous with his spiritual experience and he clearly rejected them and simultaneously started his own Panth in pursuance of his mission.

Vaisnavism

It is a generally accepted view that Bhagvatism arose as a non-Vedic cult which was for the first time included in the Hindu Complex as an alternative mode of Moksha in the Bhagvad Gita which is admittedly an eclectic compilation. The system is ritualistic and involves (i) visit to the temple, (ii) selection of material for worship, (iii) worship of the deity, (iv) muttering of the Mantras, and (v) Yogic meditation. Similarly, the worship of Hari involves (i) remembering and repeating the name of Hari, (ii) constant worship with devotion, (iii) salutation and resorting to the feet of Hari, and (iv) surrender of the soul with devotion. Two things are significant about this Bhakti; it is entirely ritualistic without any reference to socio-moral conduct. Secondly, it was accepted as only an alternative mode of *Moksha* which was given a low priority. In fact, the *Bhagvad Gita* does not prescribe a unified system. Apart from its different modes of *Moksha* being unintegrated into one unified whole, the metaphysical position is also quite incongruous because the dualism of Yoga and the pantheism of Upanisads exist side by side with the concepts of Vedic ritualism and mysticism. It is, thus, believed that the *Gita* was more concerned in bringing variant systems within the Hindu fold than with their integration into a systematic whole; and that the permission of Shudras and women to the path of devotion was allowed because the Buddhist had admitted them to their monasteries without discrimination. This is supported by the fact that the *Gita* gives full sanction to the discriminatory rigidity of the caste system. It says that the Lord created the four Varnas with their separate specified duties and that it was more meritorious to do, even though inefficiently, the duties of one's own caste than to do, even though efficiently, the duties of another caste. "The *Gita* brought about a compromise between the worldly life of allotted duties and the hermit's life of absolute renouncement." "On the one hand we purify our minds by non-attachment and yet, on

the other hand, we continue to perform all the ritualistic and other duties belonging to our particular caste or state of life, i.e., the prescribed stages of four ashramas.²⁶ Both in the *Bhagavad Gita* and the system of Ramanuja, Bhakti meant only *Upasana* or just meditation with a contemplative union with God as the goal. This Bhakti does not involve a devotional or personal love as later in the time of Sandilya or the Bhagvat Purana.

Later arose the theory of Avtarhood, namely, that God incarnates Himself in order to save man. This is a Vaisnava contribution to the complex of Hindu systems. It is believed, as in the eclectic character of *Bhagavad Gita*, that the doctrine of Avtarhood is only a way of absorbing heterodox and variant cults by declaring their gods to be the incarnations of Vishnu. Accordingly, founders of even dualistic systems like Sankhya and Jainism were also declared avtaras. In the long run twenty-three avtaras were declared, including Lord Rama, dwarf, man-lion, tortoise, Rsabha, Kapila, and others. While this doctrine enabled the absorption of heterodox creeds, and made the new entrants to accept the authority of the Vedas and the Brahmanical ideology of caste, it could evidently never make for the development of a coherent or unified religious or metaphysical system prescribing a uniform or integrated methodology or goals.

The next development in the course of Vaisnavism is the period of Sandilya and Bhagvat Purana. Alvar Saints appeared in the South and Saints like Tuka Ram, Ramanand, Chaitanya, Mirabai and others arose in the north, west and the east of India. Dr. Tara Chand believes that this new development which took place, quite often in the lower sections of the Hindu society, followed the influence and impact of Islam which was non-hierarchical.

Though there are other exponents of Vaisnavism like Nimbarka, or Madhva who is a dualist, Ramanuja is considered to be the best of them. His system is pantheistic, Brahman being both manifest and unmanifest. The individual souls and the material world are the body or the attributes of Brahman. He accepts the presence of *abankara* and explains human activity virtually on the basis of Sankhya. For him *Isvara* exists in five forms, (i) As Narayana or Paravasudeva, wearing jewels and ornaments, he lives in Vakuntha on a throne surrounded by Sesa (serpent), Garuda and other delivered souls, (ii) As in four forms

including that of Vasudeva to enable men to worship him, (iii) As in the Avtaras, fish, tortoise, swan and others, (iv) As the soul of each being even when it goes to heaven or hell, (v) As in the idols kept in the houses. Souls are of three kinds, (i) eternal souls like that of Garuda, (ii) the delivered souls, and (iii) the bound ones.

In his system Bhakti is integrated both with ritualism and Jnana Yoga which are also its essential components. It is significant the Ramanuja considers both Vedic ritualism and Brahm Vidya of Upanisads as of equal importance and validity, so much so that ritualistic acts have to be practised even by a Jnani. It is important to note that his Bhakti is open only to the three higher castes. To Sudras only the system of surrender or *Prapatti* is open. The caste ideology and the ideas of pollution are clearly accepted and practised. Brahmans only can be priests for the purpose of idol worship. The concept of pollution is so important that if while cooking or eating one's food another person casts his glance on it, the entire food has to be thrown away. Celibacy is recommended and women are considered sin-born. They are, therefore, not admitted as Vaisnavas.

In the Bhagvad Purana, nine modes of worship are suggested. These are all formal and ritualistic like listening to the praise of God, repeating the name of God, image worship, etc. without any insistence on socio-moral activity. Padma Purana prescribes seven modes of worship : (i) imprinting of marks on the body and forehead, (ii) repeating mantras, (iii) drinking water used for the feet of the idol, (iv) eating food offered to the idol, (v) service of the devotees, (vi) fasting on designated days of the lunar month, (vii) laying Tulsi leaves at the feet of the idol.

Both Vallabha and Chaitanya accept Bhakti as the sole method of Moksha. In the former system the modes of worship are all formal like singing the praises of God, Arti, image worship, etc. Householder's life is allowed but the devotee visits the temple of the Guru for worship of the idol at fixed intervals. In the case of Chaitanya, Bhakti is an extremely emotional affair, involving ecstatic dancing and singing. While Chaitanya's devotees were from all castes, even Muslims, his followers, except for Bairagi, observed the caste system regarding cooking and other matters. It needs to be clarified that Karam Yoga

meant only ritualistic acts and not socio-moral deeds. In fact, because of the general insistence on celibacy, socio-moral activity is virtually excluded. Maitra, who had made a detailed study of the ethics of all Hindu systems writes that a common feature of the doctrine of the ideal life is "the conception of the ideal as a negation or at least as a transcendence of the empirical life proper and that this state is thus a super moral spiritual ideal rather than a strictly moral idea." It is transcendental state of deliverance from all struggles of life. It is generally and essentially a state of quiescence.¹²⁷

In sum, Vaisnavism has seven fundamentals. Its scriptures, as of all other Hindu systems, are the Vedas and Upanisads. It lays down the doctrine of avtarhood which is a Vaisnava contribution to the Hindu religion. The ideology of caste is accepted fully as also the idea of pollution. Its methodology of worship or devotion is clearly formal, ritualistic, contemplative, or intensely emotional without any reference to socio-moral life. Hooper, who has made a detailed study of Alvar Saints says that moral character is hardly a strong feature of their Bhakti. The reason for it is obvious. The entire approach is other-worldly and for liberation from the tangles of life. Consequently, this is also the reason that except in the case of Vallabhacharya, celibacy is the rule and the position of women is distinctly downgraded. Ramanuja denies Vedic studies to women. They were not allowed to mix with men for devotion nor allowed to become nuns. Shankradeva, a liberal saint, says, "Of all the terrible aspirations of the world, woman's is the ugliest. A slight side glance of her captivates even the hearts of celebrated sages. Her sight destroys prayer, penance and meditation. Knowing this the wise keep away from the company of women."¹²⁸ He did not allow women to join even the religious functions of men. For she was deemed to be a temptress. Murti writes about Shankradeva that he was interested only "in establishing religious freedom and fellowship rather than social overhaul. To trouble about the improvement of social conditions, perhaps, deemed to him as little profitable."¹²⁹ Sixthly, Ahimsa is prescribed as a cardinal rule for all Vaisnavas. Seventhly, the goal is union with or merger in God or Brahman, though ritualistic duties are prescribed till the end of one's days. There is one more point for mention. In Hinduism the sexual or tantrik method is accepted as an alternative system of Moksha and a saint like Rama Krishna also accepts its validity.

Vedanta

Vedantism is a very mixed concept. Basically, Upanisadic thought is the Vedantic thought. This system which is mainly opposed to the earlier Vedic ritualism (Purva Mimansa) is in itself very variant. It can form the basis of materialism, pantheism, monoism, i.e., of the world being the emanation of Brahman or of the world being just illusory and Brahman alone being real. That is why later philosophers like . Shankra, Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka and others have all given divergent interpretations of the Upanisads. Because of the short space available, it will not be possible to indicate all the diverse views on the subject. We have already stated the views of Ramanuja, Vasisti Advaita. We shall here describe briefly the Upanisadic thought and the Vedanta of Shankra which is the most popular Vedanisc system.

It is necessary to note that the Upanisadic thoughts were not meant to be a religious system. These comprise teachings meant only for a small section or an elite most of whom had withdrawn themselves to the seclusion of the forest. The search was for an intuitional, blessed and ineffable mystic experience of unity or identity with Brahman. With the knowledge of it, they say, everything becomes known. Similies of a river merging into the sea, of a seed growing into an oak tree and of a whole of which everything is a part are given. This fundamental reality is not personal like God of theists to whom we pray with devotion and love. It is this that has led to the concepts of "That thou art", "I am Brahman", and of Katha Upanisad saying, "He who perceives diversity in this world suffers the death of all deaths", and of Brahman alone being real the rest being all false and illusory. Upanisads, thus, contain divergent and contradictory thoughts without any attempt to reconcile them into a coherent system. As to methodology, it is primarily meditational with the ideal of four ashramas. The last two ashramas of Vanprastha and Sanyasa are basically other-worldly and ascetic, involving disconnection with the delusive secular life. The final achievement is the result of one's own effort and not the gift of God or his grace. The *Jivan Mukta* has no role to play and is indifferent to all actions whether good or evil. The distinction of good and evil is transcended and it is a liberation from the conditions of worldly existence.

Later the authors of the Upanisads also accepted the validity of Vedic ritualism and its social commands regarding caste. As such, they became a component of the overall Vedic system and gained scriptural sanctity as a limb of the Vedas. Therefore, for any serious consideration of Vedanta, the above-noted factual position about the Upanisads, on which the various types of Vedanta are based, has to be kept in view. Hiriyana writes, "The diversity of teaching noticed in connection with the theoretical teaching of the Upanisads has its reflex in their practical teachings, both in regard to the ideal to be achieved and the means of achieving it."³⁰ For example, "one Upanisad alone mentioning three such different means of attaining immortality—devotion to truth, penance and vedic study and ascribing them to three specific teachers."³¹ Secondly, it is also clear that the Upanisads and the sanctioned social system of the period give clear approval to the caste system. The Chhandogya writes that "the wicked are born again as outcasts, dogs or swine." "The Brihadaranyaka (VI. 2, 15-16) gives a similar account. The rules of punishment in Grih sutras and Dharama-sutras are grossly discriminatory."³² It must be noted that "the rules of punishment are largely based on caste consideration, so that for having committed the same offence, a Brahman may pass unscathed, but a *Shudra* may even receive capital punishment."³³ "The period of Sutras witnessed the gradual hardening of the caste system in general and the deterioration of the position of Vaishyas and Shudras in particular." "The Shudra was denied the privilege of Sanyasa (renunciation)."³⁴ "We see in the Dharam Sutras the beginning of the formal theory of defilement resulting in the taboo of all contact on the part of a pure man of the upper castes with an impure man, namely, a member of the lowest caste."³⁵ "The Dharam Sutras show that the caste distinction has outstripped its proper limits and has even invaded the field of civil and criminal law."³⁶ Evidently, the Upanisadic mystic system, though other-worldly and meditational in its approach, accepts the ritualism and the caste ideology of the Vedas.

Shankara's view

Gaudapada and Shankra pursue that line of thought in the Upanisads which considers world to be just an illusion and Brahman alone to be real. Gaudapada writes, "The manifold universe does not exist as a form of reality nor does it exist of

itself." "Having attained to non-duality one should behave in the world like an insensible object."³⁷ All diversity according to Shankra is false (*Mithya*). Therefore, to work while accepting the phenomenal existence of the world is sheer Avidya. The goal is to realize the truth of Brahman alone being real and to deny the world. Ishvara and individual souls are parts of Brahman. Man is ignorant since he does not realize that all change in the world is without any meaning or validity, thereby denying the very basis of all socio-moral life. Shankra says, "I am not born how can there be either birth or death for me? I am neither male nor female, nor am I sexless. I am the Blessed peaceful one, who is the only cause of the origin and dissolution of the world."³⁸ All changes in the world are due to Maya which is neither real nor unreal nor related to Brahman. All methods of devotion and worship are fruitless, the goal being the Absolute and not Saguna, or qualified Brahman, God or Ishvara which is a lower stage to be transcended by the Jnani. In fact, the path of devotion; he says, is for persons of narrow or poor intellect. Since he cannot deny the scriptural character of the Vedas, he says that the path of ritualism or sacrifices is prescribed out of compassion for persons of low and average intellect and it can gain for them only heaven. As in Sankhya Yoga, withdrawal from the illusory adjuncts of Maya is suggested. Starting with Vairagya and dissociation with the world, the mystic achievement can be made only as a Sanyasin or renouncer of the world, giving up all works good or bad and as one who is unwilling to accept even the grace of God. The method prescribed, as in the Upanisads, is of Vedic study, reflection and meditation. The aim is to realize, "I am Brahman (*Abam Brahman asmi*)."³⁹ It is an intellectual realization accompanied by Anubhava. But the *Jivan Mukta* has no role to play in life. Swami Sivananda writing about the two modern Jnanis, Kalkot Swami and Mowni Swami, says that they were unconscious of the movement of their bowels and the Sevadar (attendant) had to wash their bottoms."³⁹ "Such a Videha Mukta who is absolutely merged in Brahman cannot have the awareness of the world which is non-existent to him. If his body is to be maintained, it has to be fed and cared for by others. The Vidheha Mukta is thus not in a position to engage himself for the good of the world."⁴⁰ For them, self-realization breaks the chain of causation and the world of experience appears false. Even the idea of God being a lower stage has to be transcended

finally, for "God" is only the most subtle, most magnificent, most flattering false impression of all in this general spectacle of erroneous self deception."⁴¹ No wonder Zimmer says that "Such holy magalomania goes past the bounds of sense. With Sankara, the grandeur of the Supreme human experience becomes intellectualized and reveals its inhuman sterility."⁴² Such is Shankra's monoism for which world is Mithya.

Nathism

Nathism was one of the prevalent religious cults in North India in the time of Guru Nanak. He criticized it quite severely. Nath Yogis are Saivites and Saivism has the longest religious history, being pre-Vedic. Pasupata is the oldest Saiva system. Nath Yogis are a part of the Lakula group that developed from the Pasupata. Gorakh Nath is the chief historical organizer of the Nath Yogis. He appears between 11th and 12th centuries A.D. The system involves asceticism, renunciation, Yogic methodology with emphasis on Hath and Mantra Yogas, and the worship of male and female deities. The goal is liberation from the misery of the world through Kundalini Yoga and final union with Lord Siva. Though Nathism is a theistic system, its entire approach and methodology are of Yoga where the aim is primarily to gain power. Both before and after the union the Nath has no interest in the world. Nathism is a monastic system. Each Nath is linked to a monastery headed by a Guru, or a Pir if he is a Muslim. Naths are also called Kanpathas. They are initiated into the group in a rigid ritualistic manner. Their ear lobes are split for the wearing of Mundras. The Nath takes three vows : to remain celibate, not to accept any employment or earn his living, and to sustain himself by begging, and to observe Ahimsa. The Nath goes barefooted on pilgrimage to sacred Hindu places and to Nath monasteries where images and pictures of Hindu gods and Siva in the form of Bhairon are worshipped.

The Naths do observe some caste distinctions. In theory, only twice born are initiated but in practice all except a few low castes are accepted. Hindu Naths do not eat with Muslim Naths nor do they go to the houses of Muslims or of lower castes for begging. The worshipping of the deities, the cooking at monastery higher castes are given uncooked food. Other castes are fed at the monastery hall except low castes and Muslims who are given food outside in the open. Women, except widows, are

not admitted and Naths do not sit or eat with them, even if they were Naths.

The Nath Yogi is a typical ascetic who rubs ashes on his body as a symbol of death to the world from the misery of which he seeks liberation. Secondly, Naths have faith in ritualism. Certain months are auspicious, Mantras are used at the time of initiation and for daily and other use, because these are considered to have mystic potency for spiritual advancement. Fasting is also considered efficacious. May be because of the black colour of Bhairon, black buck, snakes and black dogs are venerated. Animal sacrifices at the temple of Bhairon are practised. At the annual fair of Devi Pattan on one day 20 buffaloes, 250 goats and 250 pigs were sacrificed. Blood mark is applied to devotees. At places Linga and Yoni are worshipped. Naths have belief in Hindu gods and goddesses, good and bad spirits, auspicious and inauspicious days, etc. Nath Yogis mainly use Mantra Yoga and Hathyoga or Kundalini Yoga alongwith Pranayama. Their chief religious texts are Gorakh Sataka, Gorakhsa Paddhati and Hath Yoga Pradipika. These prescribe yogic and meditational practices, asanas, repetition of mantras, stages of progress in raising Kundalini through the Nadis, chakras, etc. By the repetition of mantras 21,600 times a day a Yogi could gain liberation in year or so. The goal is to reach through Kundalini Yoga the top of the head as Sahashara achieving thereby blissful union with Siva and eternal release from the world. The Naths also believe in the combination of male and female energies (Nadi and Bindu) to achieve liberation. For this, sex practices called Vajroli, Sahjoli, or Amroli, conducted in the company of a woman are suggested. About Naths, Briggs concludes in his book, "The essence of Nath Yoga is physical exercise and manipulation, quite mechanical. If it is charged against the exposition found in the earlier pages that it is overburdened with interpretations on too low a plane, it must be said in reply that both the practices and the outlook of the Yogis confirm this point of view....The high religious value to man-woman relations was insisted upon. The first Chaitanya Sahajya movement confirms this point."⁴³ Even otherwise it is necessary to indicate that the use of the sexual method has been clearly indicated in the ancient Indian literature and materials. Datterya, who is a Hindu deity, is one of the chief deities worshipped by the Naths. He is considered an avatara of Visnu, a Jnani and Paramhansa; "Puranic accounts

depict him as always in ecstasy, surrounded by women, drinking wine and indulging in sex."⁴⁴ Hindu Tantras are supposed to be a fifth Veda for Kalyuga. Ghurye believes, "Fundamentally the Yogis represent the oldest school of Indian asceticism."⁴⁵ "The Nath cult, we conclude, is in direct lineage from the oldest pre-Vedic and Vedic traditions through the Saiva system of Pasupata and Kapilkas, with both of which all its essentials are common. It is noteworthy that everywhere asceticism or monasticism, whether Hindu, Saiva, Vaisnava or Buddhist, at some point leads to male and female symbolism and consequent erotic practices which are accepted as a means of salvation. Quite often these degenerate into licentious practices. Where a religious system does not harness creative energies to life-affirming and virtuous deeds and processes the danger of degeneration is obvious."

Nathism is, thus, a life negating and ascetic system which calculatedly avoids social responsibility and prescribes renunciation and withdrawal from the world which is considered a place of misery.

Comparison and conclusion

We have given an outline of Sikhism and of three Hindu systems prevalent in India in the times of Guru Nanak. We have selected the three Hindu systems because scholars ignorant of the *Bani* and the thesis of *Guru Granth Sahib* have confused Sikh doctrines with those of these systems. We shall now make a brief comparison of the essentials of Sikhism with the essentials of the three Hindu systems. For the purpose, we regret, some recapitulation will become unavoidable.

The religious experience of the Gurus is that God is Love. He is the Ocean of Virtues and is deeply interested in the world. The world, thus, becomes not only real but also the arena of spiritual expression and development. Fourth, the system is a monotheism. Fifth, virtuous deeds in the world are the sole measure of man's religious growth and assessment, for, higher than truth is truthful living. Sixth, the householder's life, in all its social aspects, thus, becomes the forum of religious activity involving full social responsibility. Seventh, the idea of the brotherhood of man is alone compatible with the idea of the fatherhood of God, logically involving equality between man and man, man and woman, and a fair distribution of God's wealth among His children. Consequently, the need of work,

social participation, and reaction and resistance against wrongs, both as an individual and as a society become part of one's religious duties. Therefore, the goal is neither *Moksha*, nor merger in, or blissful union with God as an end in itself, but to be the instrument of His Attributive Will directed toward the creation of the kingdom of God on earth (*Haleemi Raj*). Since there could be occasions when the use of force in pursuit of a righteous cause becomes inevitable, the doctrine of ahimsa as an invariable rule of religious conduct has been rejected. The conclusion is that there can be no socio-moral progress without the spiritual growth of man and there can be no spiritual growth in isolation without its simultaneous expression in life. As a model, the role and life of a *Jivan Mukta*, are epitomized in the lives, deeds, struggles and martyrdoms of the Sikh Gurus. Guru Nanak, we find, was the first man of God in the East to proclaim and found a religion with an inalienable combination between the spiritual life and the empirical life of man. Hence his radical thesis and its logic involved a clear rejection of asceticism, monasticism, renunciation or withdrawal from life or any segment of it. In pursuit of his mission he also rejected the idea of avatarhood, ritualism, the caste and Ahimsa, both in theory and in practice. And, he positively created and guided a society that should as a religious duty attempt to combat the evils and to solve the social problems of life.

In contrast, Vaisnavism recommends asceticism, renunciation, withdrawal from life and celibacy. It accepts ritualism, Ahimsa, the caste ideology and the idea of a woman or married life being a hurdle in man's spiritual growth. Socio-moral participation and responsibility are recommended neither for the seeker nor for the *Jivan Mukta*, neither as a methodology nor as a goal. Formal and ritualistic image worship, meditation or emotional singing and dancing are the means of attaining Moksha, involving union with or merger in Brahman. The doctrine of avatarhood is fundamental and, may be on this account, the metaphysical or ideological concepts are quite variant and even conflicting. The Vasisht Advaita of Ramanuja is pantheistic. In sum, we find, that the fundamentals of Vaisnavism are opposed to those of Sikhism.

As in Vaisnavism, the ideological concepts in Vendantism are quite variant, this being the position in Upanisads too. The essentials of Shankara's Vedanta, which is the dominant view, are also in contrast with those of Sikhism. Sankara calls Brahman

"*Sat-Cbit-Anand*", a quietist concept, against God being love, a dynamic concept, in Sikhism. Against monotheism, Shankara's monism implies the world being an illusion (Mithya) and worldly activity of no spiritual value. The system being life-negating, it recommends celibacy and Sanyasa. Woman has been called the gateway to hell. The final realization of "*abram brahm asmi*" is the result of a contemplative effort and not of any grace of God. These ideas are considered heretical and egoistic in Sikhism. Therefore, Guru Arjan rejected the hymns of Bhagat Kanha who proclaimed, "I am the same, Oh, I am the same". Sankara accepts both the caste ideology and the value of Vedic ritualism because he concedes that the latter can gain heaven for the seeker. Sikhism calls ritualism useless and caste immoral. In Vedanta there is a clear dichotomy between the spiritual life and the empirical life; in Sikhism such dichotomy is considered a negation of both. The Vedantic Jnani is wholly inactive, but in Sikhism he is the active instrument of God's Will. The contrast between the two systems is conspicuously evident.

The Gurus have criticized no system more severely than Nathism and its ways. This ascetic cult withdraws completely from the world which the Naths call a place of misery. Nath discipline is purely ritualistic, ascetic, Yogic and formal. They make caste distinctions both in the matter of admission to the cult and in the service of food, etc. Some of the Nath practices are quite abhorrent. Their goal, by the raising of Kundalini is a blissful union with Siva. The meanings of "Sahaj" and "Anhand sound" are very different in Nathism, from that in Sikhism. Both Nathism and Vaisnavism accept the validity of the sexual method for the achievement of liberation. In Sikhism there is not the faintest suggestion of the kind. Guru Nanak's observation that the Naths did not know even the elementaries of the spiritual path, clarifies categorically both the glaring contrast between the two systems and the completely radical nature of his thesis and mission.

Having given a brief outline of the four systems, let us now record the views of some Western and Indian scholars about Sikhism. They write : "the term founder is misleading for it suggests that the Guru (Nanak) originated not merely a group of followers but also a school of thought, or a set of teachings." "It was the influence of Nath doctrines and practice on Vaisnava Bhakti which was primarily responsible for the emergence of Sant synthesis". "This is precisely the doctrine which we find in

the works of Guru Nanak.¹⁴⁷ "The indigenous elements in Sikhism are largely those customs of the tribes of Jats, who made Sikhism their own and the marginal elements are there of the Nath Yogi tradition, which with Vaisnavism Bhakti was primarily responsible for the Sant synthesis."¹⁴⁸ "The teachings of Nanak do not have a direct causal connection with the later growth....which should be understood, largely in terms of historical events of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."¹⁴⁹ "The Sikh Gurus who compiled the *Guru Granth* were marked by the genuinely noble and emancipated trait of appreciating and assimilating all that is valuable in other religions. In this sense, *Guru Granth Sahib* is not a religious text like a holy *Bible* or *Quran* but a treatise on human life and righteous living. Guru Nanak did not seek to build a new religion, etc." "Even Sikh scholars see the *Miri* and *Piri* concept as an inseparable whole in the religious order. Non-Sikhs have come to see a basic religion-politics linkage in Sikhism and deduct the root cause of the current crisis in Punjab to this."¹⁵⁰ "To the extent Hinduism has been influenced by Vedanta, either traditionally or in the modern version of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, it has a tendency to subsume all religions as different aspect of one Large Religion....of which Hinduism is a subconscious if not an overt model. And, of course, in this Religion the closer a person or a doctrine is to the Advaita Vedanta closer to Truth is he or is assumed to be." "But where it comes to the Indians belonging to religions which originated within India, such as Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs, many a Hindu regard these as downright unpatriotic or unspiritual, or both, if they wish to maintain their distinct identity from the Hindus. Distinctions are just not considered a mark of high enough vision and are mere appearances."¹⁵¹ "When dealing with the beliefs, rituals practices of the Sikhs—be they religious or political—it is always worth-while to constantly remind ourselves that we are fundamentally dealing with the peasantry and the world-view of this social class has historically always been very different from the other social classes."¹⁵²

Seen in the light of our discussion and analysis of Sikhism and the three other systems, we find that the above-noted observations of some scholars display a singular lack of understanding of the essentials of Sikhism and of the other three religious systems. This ignorance, we believe, is primarily due to their failure to understand the fundamental thesis of *Guru Granth Sahib*, namely, an inalienable combination between the

spiritual life and the empirical life of man. Guru Nanak was the first prophet who broke the dichotomy that existed between the two lives in all the Indian religious systems. It has been asserted and accepted that the institutions of asceticism and monasticism are the specific contribution of Indian religions and culture to the world culture. This dichotomy was not only broken ideologically and a contrary ideology embodied in the Sikh scripture, but it was consistently practised and clearly proclaimed. Further, this doctrine was externally symbolized and institutionalized in the close and common location of Harmandir Sahib and the Akal Takhat, the installation of two flags at the common compound between Harmandir Sahib and Akal Takhat, and the two swords worn by the Sixth Guru. The chief fundamentals of Sikhism were not only opposed to those of the earlier Indian traditions but there was really no trace of them in those systems. It is, therefore, evident that this sudden and radical change in the essentials of the Indian religious doctrines as emphatically brought about by Guru Nanak and the other Gurus could only be spiritually revealed. For, there was nothing new in the environment to cause such a revolutionary response. Such being the thesis of the Gurus, it is sheer naivety to apply evolutionary, materialistic or sociological methodologies in trying to interpret the Sikh religion. Such studies could only suggest self-contradictory inferences. Hence our stress that the study of a religion requires a discipline of its own. Sikhism believes that there is a higher level of Reality which not only reveals itself to man but also operates in history. Without the acceptance of this concept, no revelatory religion or its history can be studied much less understood and correctly interpreted. The study of Sikhism and the three other contemporary systems clearly leads to the above conclusion.

92

CHAPTER V

THE SIKH WORLD-VIEW —ITS IDEOLOGICAL IDENTITY

Introduction

In order to understand the Sikh worldview, it is necessary to answer a number of questions, namely, (1) what is the spiritual experience of the Gurus about the fundamental Reality? (2) what are the logical implications of that religious experience? (3) how these implications or ideas differ from those in other religions? (4) did those ideas govern the course of Sikh religion? and (5) what is the future the Sikh world-view holds for man? In answering these questions we shall confine ourselves entirely to the *Bani* in *Guru Granth Sahib* and historically accepted facts about the lives of the Gurus. Many of the misrepresentations about Sikhism arise from the failure of writers to understand Sikhism on the basis of its thesis, or to define Sikhism in terms of doctrines in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Obviously, in this short paper, we shall only give an outline of the Sikh world-view. We shall start with a definition of the fundamental Reality or God in Sikhism.

God in Sikhism

The Reality or God has been profusely defined in the *Guru Granth*. Guru Nanak calls Him "*Karta Purkh*" or "Creator Person", the world being His creation. Apart from being immanent in the world, He is the Ocean of virtues, i.e. He is a God of Attributes. In defining the fundamental nature of God, the Guru says, "Friends ask me what is the mark of the Lord? He is all Love, rest He is Ineffable."¹ Thus, the key to understanding the Sikh worldview is that God is Love. And Love has four clear facets. It is dynamic, it is the mother of all virtues

88. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 631.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 913.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 1203.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 1075.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 1179.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 751.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 295.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 942.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 273.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 286.
102. *Ibid.*, pp. 1078, 534.
103. Galloway, *The Philosophy of Religion*, Edinburgh, 1915, p. 654.
104. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1128.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 1243.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 1288.
107. *Ibid.*, 360.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 491.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 1199.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 732.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 861.
112. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
113. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 1245.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 913.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 768.
117. *Ibid.*, p. 1376.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 784.
119. *Ibid.*, p. 828.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 955.
121. *Ibid.*, pp. 343-44.
122. *Ibid.*, p. 866.

123. *Ibid.*, p. 404.
124. *Ibid.*, p. 418.
125. *Ibid.*, p. 878.
126. *Ibid.*, p. 1245.
127. *Ibid.*, p. 684.
128. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Chapter IV

Sikhism, Vaisnavism, Vedanta and Nathism

1. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 722.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 459.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 1412.
5. *Sriyayas Patsbabi Das*.
6. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 294.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 930.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 930.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 830.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 828.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 1091-92.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 418.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 955.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 730.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 962.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 473.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 1245.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 417.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 1171.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 1376.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 1289.
25. Michael Walzer, *Revolution of Saints*, p. 1.

93

26. Hiriyanan, M., *Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, p. 55.
27. Maitra, S.K., *The Ethics of the Hindus*, pp. 244, 263, 265-266.
28. Murthy, P.V.S., *Vaisnavism of Shankraveda and Ramanuja*, p. 232.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-203.
30. Hiriyanan, M., *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 72.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
32. *The Vedic Age*, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, p. 500.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 479.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 513.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 516.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 515.
37. Zaehner, R.C., *Mysticism Sacred & Profane*, p. 155.
38. Zimmer, H., *Philosophies of India*, pp. 462-63.
39. Swami Sivananda, *Spiritual Experiences*, pp. 222-23.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
41. Zimmer, H., *op. cit.*, pp. 426-27.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 463.
43. Briggs, G.W., *Goraknath and Karpbata Yogis*, p. 522.
44. Ghurye, G.S., *Indian Sadhus*, pp. 34-35.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
46. Briggs, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
47. McLeod, H., *Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 5.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.
49. *Sikh Studies*. Editor, Juergensmeyer, Barrier, Berkeley, pp. 15, 21.
50. Narayanan, V.N., Paper read at a Conference held by Council for World's Religions at Srinagar, July 1988, pp. 2-5.
51. Narayanan, V.N., Paper read at a Conference held by the Council for World's Religions at Srinagar, July 1988, pp. 5-9.
52. Uberoi, H.S., Paper read at Berkeley, Feb. 1987, p. 28.

The Sikh World-view

1. *Guru Granth Sabib*, p. 459.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 955.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 859.
6. Stace, W.T., *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 131, 133.
7. Huxley, Aldous, *Moksha*, p. 175.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 222, 223.
9. *Guru Granth Sabib*, p. 830.
10. Zimmer, H., *Philosophies of India*, pp. 222-223.
11. *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. VII, February-August 1980, p. 38.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Jain, N.K., *Sikh Gurus and Indian Spiritual Thought*, p. 168.
14. Jaiswal, Suvir, *Origin and Development of Vashnavism*, pp. 116-118.
15. Murthy, H.V.S., *Vaisnavism of Shankraveda and Ramanuja*, p. 232.
16. Juergensmeyer, Mark, *Sikh Studies*, pp. 83-88.
17. *Guru Granth Sabib*, p. 473.
18. Bhai Gurdas, *Var 1*.
19. *Guru Granth Sabib*, p. 1.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 1412.
21. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. III, pp. 7-8, 419.
22. *Guru Granth Sabib*, p. 7.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 473.
27. *Punjab Past & Present*, October 1976, p. 468.
28. *Guru Granth Sabib*, p. 1243.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 730.
30. Wilson, H.H., *Religious Sects of Hindus*, p. 19.

CHAPTER XV

SIKHISM AND INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

We shall deal with the subject under the sub-heads :

- 1. Sikh Ideology
- 2. Categories of Religions
- 3. Approach of other religions towards Pluralism
- 4. Approach of Sikhism to Pluralism
- 5. Problems of Pluralism and Inter-Religious Dialogue
- 6. Conclusion

The salient points of the issues are discussed below as briefly as possible.

1. Sikh Ideology

Every religion follows the spiritual experience of its Prophet. The Basic Reality has invariably been described as unknowable. And, yet each prophet has given to his followers important principles and doctrines that follow from the spiritual experience that he has gained of the Basic Reality, God or the Transcendent. The Sikh Gurus have profusely defined the various aspects of the Reality, but their emphasis is that He is the 'Ocean of Virtues' and 'Love'. The Guru says : 'Friends ask me what is the mark of the Lord; He is all Love, the rest He is ineffable.' 'Love being creative, dynamic, and the mother of all values, the Sikh Gurus have laid down a system which in its essentials is entirely different from the earlier Indian systems. Gurus' description of God has five corollaries. First, it implies that the world is real, for, love can have its expression only in a real world.² Second, it means a system of life-affirmation, and consequently an inalienable combination between the spiritual life and the empirical life of man. The world becomes a real and meaningful place, since God is working therein with love. Third,

it prescribes a religious methodology of deeds, and gives spiritual sanction to the moral life of man. The Guru says that all spiritual assessments of man will be based on his deeds.³ And, it is by our deeds that we become near or away from God.⁴ Fourth, the goal of spiritual life is not merger or union with God as an end itself, but it is a life of activity, God's Will being Creative and Altruistic. Guru Nanak has in unambiguous words stated that spiritual life means to work according to the Altruistic Will of God,⁵ and that the highest spiritual life is of a truthful conduct.⁶ Fifth, it assures man of God's Benevolence and interest in life, and, for that matter, gives hope, confidence and optimism to man. In short, Guru Nanak's thesis is basically and essentially a whole-life or *Miri-Piri* system.

The above system involves six responsibilities of the spiritual life that have been emphasized by Guru Nanak in his *Bani* and demonstrated by the Gurus in their lives. As a consequence of his *Miri-Piri* system Guru Nanak rejected asceticism, monasticism, life-negation and withdrawal from life, as also celibacy, the caste structure, downgrading of women, and Ahimsa. The first responsibility in a whole-life system is to live in the world as a householder or otherwise; but one has fully to participate in all walks of life. Second is the acceptance of equality between man and woman. In that respect Guru Nanak is the first man of God to emphasize this aspect of his spiritual system. The third responsibility is of equality between man and man,⁸ thereby rejecting the *Varan Ashram Dharna* or the caste ideology of his times. Fourth, he places on man the responsibility of work and production.⁹ He deprecates the life of an ascetic, who is not willing to work and resorts to begging at the door of householders, expecting them to sustain him. Fifth, he stresses the responsibility of sharing one's earnings with others.¹⁰ For, God's bounty belongs to all, and it is men who try to grab it for themselves.¹¹ Sixth, Guru Nanak lays down, and this is an important responsibility which he prescribes for the spiritual man, that injustice and oppression should be resisted. Since large scale injustice, oppression and aggression are a socio-political phenomenon, he took two steps to combat it. First, he organised a society or a *Panth*, and second, he discarded the inviolate character of Ahimsa.¹² He even complains to God for allowing the weak to be trampled upon by the strong.¹³ This hymn of his means two things. First, that aggression and injustice are violative of the Order of God, and,

for that reason, it is the duty of the Godman, the religious seeker or the religious society to resist and confront injustice in life.

Guru Nanak's system has been called the *Naam Marga*, and rightly so. But his concept of Naam is creative, dynamic and full of values. It is God or Naam which is working the world. *Naam Marag* is essentially an effort to tune our wavering egoist psyche to His Will or Flow of Naam. The net result of that effort, with the grace of Naam, is to work actively and truthfully in harmony with the Will of God or Naam, which permeates and guides the world. The Guru at many places states that the role of the *gurmukh* in life is not to be a pacifist or an ascetic, but to live truthfully'. Hence the *Summum Bonum* of spiritual life in Sikhism is to 'live truthfully'¹⁴ or 'to work in tune with Naam'. For, the man imbued with Naam (*Naam Rattie*) lives truthfully, and this has amply and perfectly been demonstrated by the Ten Masters in their own lives.

2. Categories of Religions

Broadly, there are four categories of religious systems. The first category is of dichotomous systems in which the spiritual path is distinct and separate from the empirical path. All Pre-Sikh Indian systems belong to this category, in which asceticism, monasticism, withdrawal from life, celibacy, downgrading of women, unreality of the empirical life and Ahimsa are normal features. In these systems, normally, the spiritual path is just an individual endeavour for personal salvation, without much of societal implications. In contrast, is the whole-life system of Sikhism, which we have described above. To the third category belongs Christianity, in which pacifism and non-resistance to evil are essential ingredients. It started as a societal religion with the direction 'to love one's neighbour as oneself',¹⁵ but during the course of time it became dichotomous by, on the one hand, accepting the institutions of monasticism, nunneries and celibate priests, and by, on the other hand, giving full and complete role to Secularism in the empirical life of man. To the fourth category belong the whole-life systems of Judaism and Islam. These started as complete *Miri-Piri* systems, since both prophets Moses and Prophet Mohammad were, simultaneously, spiritual and empirical leaders. In the earlier centuries of their lives, there was no place for monasticism, pacifism or withdrawal in these religions. But, in later centuries in both of them monastic and ascetic sects arose. For example, Essenes, Kabbalists and others,

in the case of Judaism, and Sufis, in the case of Islam. Actually, Christianity branched off from Judaism at a time when pacifist sects, with non-resistance to evil as originally recommended by Jeremiah, had arisen therein. Although these religions, as such, were originally whole-life, monastic and pacifist sects, have, in both of them, an established religious sanction. These are the four principal categories of religious systems. It would appear to us that historically, pacifism and withdrawal from life appeared in these whole-life religions, when their elan was on the decline. The net result is that for the last over two centuries, as Toynbee declares,¹⁶ in the Christian Societies religion has virtually been discarded from the socio-political culture of the West. The above is the position of the religious life and the empirical life in the present age.

3. Approach of other Religions towards Pluralism

So far as wholly dichotomous or salvation religions are concerned, their approach to empirical or societal problems has always been lukewarm, because withdrawal from life is incongruous with any attempt at solving socio-political problems of man. In fact, for the religious man such an involvement would be a contradiction or an unwanted entanglement. This is also the reason that the inequity of the caste system could survive without check in the empirical life of India for thousands of years. In Hinduism while there is tolerance for any kind of personal belief a man might hold, the outsider has been looked upon as a *Malechha*, polluted or impious and a journey across the seas is virtually taboo. Hence, in these systems spiritual path being only an individual endeavour, inter-religious cooperation has a very limited scope, since the religious problem is reduced to man's individual attempt at salvation or *Moksha*.

Difficulties of inter-religious dialogue are present in Judaism too. It believes that the Jews are the Chosen Community of God, with whom they have a living covenant.¹⁷ This being their fundamental faith naturally problems of inter-religious dialogue, on terms of equality, arise. But apart from its exclusivism, Judaism's long history of persecution in Europe, including the latest holocausts in Hitler's Germany, hardly helps it to maintain a healthy approach to pluralism. The position in Islam is less conservative, since it accepts the prophethood of earlier Western religious leaders. But its exclusivism is there, Prophet Mohammad being the seal of prophets¹⁸, it would not be easy

for its theology to recognize the validity of later or other revelations. The position in Christianity is also plainly exclusive. For, the Roman Catholic Maxim is "Outside the Church no salvation". Similarly, according to the conservative Evangelical Protestant viewpoint salvation is denied to anyone without faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁹ The stand is clearly absolutist.

Broadly, this is the theological position in the case of the four religions mentioned above. However, this is not to say that attempts at inter-faith dialogues have not been made. In fact, Christian scholars have made considerable effort and studied its problems, although their moves have sometimes been looked upon with suspicion by others. We shall discuss the issue further while dealing with the problems of inter-religious dialogue.

4. Approach of Sikhism to Pluralism

The Sikh position on pluralism and inter-religious dialogue is extremely explicit and stands defined by the Gurus themselves. Not only is Sikhism universal in its approach, but the Guru in his *Bani* clearly accepts the possibility of other revelations. For the Fourth Guru prays: "Save by Thy Grace the world in flame. Save it at whatever portal it may be saved."²⁰ The couplet clearly denies any exclusiveness, and accepts that God in His Grace, could resort to more ways of redemption than one. The second statement is by Guru Nanak who in his reply to the Naths, says that his mission, with the help of other Godmen, is to ferry men across the turbulence of life.²¹ This clearly envisages not only inter-religious dialogue, but inter-religious cooperation in the mission of God which the Gurus were carrying out. Third is the specific demonstration of their thesis of universalism in the two historical steps the Guru took. The first is presence of the *Bani* of twenty two Hindu and Muslim saints in the *Guru Granth Sahib* which is the Guru of the Sikhs. This is something extremely uncommon and new in the history of religious scriptures. Second is the laying down of the foundation stones of Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar (Golden Temple), by Sain Mian Mir, a Muslim Sufi, who was invited by the Guru to do so. It is, therefore, clear that the Sikh Gurus not only have laid down a religious system which is universal in its character, but they have also taken clear steps both in their *Bani* and in their lives to demonstrate that universalism and inter-religious cooperation should be an essential component of the spiritual life of man.

5. Problems of Pluralism and Inter-religious Dialogue

We have stated that, because of its universalism, Sikhism presents no problem, nor has it any reservations regarding pluralism and inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. But in some other religions, theological problems of exclusivism are there. Judaism, because of its political history, past and current, naturally raises some hurdles. For, in West Asia it is still locked in a political struggle with the Islamic countries. This bitter strife has also religious complexion and overtones that militate against any healthy or uninhibited inter-religious dialogue. For somewhat similar reasons the position in Islam is no different. Culturally it finds itself on the defensive both in the West-East and South-East. Another snag is that in the West Asia it has a feeling that the dominant Christian West is unreasonably siding with Judaism. Thus, Islam is itself trying to reframe its approach to the Western culture, which, by and large, has become secular in the socio-political field. That is why a Muslim theologian, Sayyad Mohammad Naqib-al-Attas, proclaims that 'Islam still resists secularisation in a way that Christianity has not', and that, he feels, is the reason for 'Islam having a future and a final meaning for humankind.'²²

In Christianity there is a serious debate as between protagonists of its exclusivism and these that suggest pluralism and serious inter-religious dialogue. It is the irony of man that whereas in all the three religions, viz. Judaism, Islam and Christianity, the brotherhood of man is their first fundamental, their churches have become quite exclusive. The learned Hillel when asked to explain the 613 Commandments of Torah, stated "Whatever is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. That is the entire Torah. The rest is commentary; go and learn it."²³ Similarly, the *Bible*, while it commands the Christian to love God with all one's heart, simultaneously prescribes to treat one's neighbour as oneself. In Islam, too, the story of Abu Ben Adam emphasizes that the love of man is synonymous with the love of God. This being the ideological position in the three religions, the problem of inter-religious dialogue has seriously concerned thinking persons of these religions. The Western culture being, by and large, Christian, the greatest debate is naturally taking place among the churches. Adolf Von Harnack therefore, tried to emphasize that the essence of Christianity lay in only three Truths, namely, the Fatherhood of God, the

Brotherhood of man, and the Infinite value of the individual human soul.²⁴ Similarly, men like David Lockhead, Paul Knitter, John Hick, Schuon and many others strongly suggest the shedding of exclusivism, and accepting a theology of Pluralism. Lockhead suggests that the Christians have in the course of history developed four ideologies, namely the ideology of isolation, the ideology of hostility, the ideology of competition, and the ideology of partnership.²⁵ He recommends the last which, he feels, is essential for any ideology of universalism which Christianity prescribes. But the view is criticised because "To be a Christian is to be committed to Jesus Christ. To regard God's activity in Jesus Christ as simply equivalent to ways God may have chosen to act in other religions, seems to destroy the point of our commitment."²⁶ Similarly, Paul Knitter's edited book *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness : Towards a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, and John Hick's thesis of Pluralism of various religions being just human responses to the Transcendent, have both had very strong opposition and criticism, including publications like *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered : The Myth of Pluralistic Theology of Religion*, from the faithful. Pluralists have been accused of undermining the Truth claims of each religion and recommending just a kind of 'religious agnosticism', which in a way destroys the very basis of religious faith, based on a living tradition. Similarly, F Schuon in his classic work, *The Transcendent unity of Religions*, classifies human religious responses into the Esoteric and the Exoteric. He makes a strong case for inter-religious understanding, while suggesting that "exoteric differences, are just due to influences of culture, time and space and should not deter us from appreciating the underlying esoteric' unity. For, "there is unity at the heart of religions."

We need not go further into this internal debate in Christianity, except record two facts. The first is the sceptic reaction of other religions towards Christian inter-faith dialogues, especially because of the colonial background of the Christian world. For, many a time, it is felt, that inter-faith dialogues have been just instruments of conversion. Because the Christian Churches, as a whole, are still far from accepting the ideology of pluralism and partnership. The second point is the problem of Secularism as also of injustice and oppression in the political field. This problem has been a major issue with sensitive Christian thinkers, so much so, that it has been argued "that the

common interest of the religions in resisting secularism is more important than the differences that exist between them.²⁷ In some sections of the Christian world, Secularism, Communism and Individualism have been considered allied problems that are a serious danger to all religions. A corollary of Secularism is the injustice and oppression that are present both in the Christian world and outside it. Jurgen Moltmann, a theologian of liberation, emphasizes that 'inter-religious dialogue is only fruitful, when religions are committed to the task of eliminating common threats such as injustice and oppression.'²⁸ This feeling is more so in Latin American and African countries, where poverty is a major problem, and seeds of Liberation Theology have sprouted. In the same strain Father Camilo Torres declared, "The Catholic who is not a revolutionary, is living in mortal sin."²⁹ Similarly, Catholic Archbishop, Helder Camara states, "that the force of Truth, Justice and love is greater than that of wars, murder and hatred. But he has claimed that the violence of the rich against the poor, and the violence of the developed countries against the under-developed, is more worthy of condemnation than the revolutionary violence that they create."³⁰ It has however, to be stressed that so far these voices in the Christian world are in a small minority. And for the reason, while serious problems of secularism, injustice and oppression are facing all religions and societies, in the Christian world ideas of pluralism have not been able to gain sufficient momentum so as to organise inter-religious cooperation with a view to solving them. This is very clearly evidenced by the statements of Metropolitan Dr. Paules Mar Gregories who has been the President of the World Council of Churches for seven years. Following the multiplying and mounting problems of Secularism, the North American Christian Churches raised a strong voice asserting that Secularism was a common danger and needed to be eliminated as a social force, and that Christianity should seek the cooperation of other religions to combat it. But this voice was throttled in the World Council, because the European Churches felt that "Secularisation, not secularism is the primary process. It is a process in which some of the values of Christian faith have been put in a secular framework, bringing about a powerful force, which is destroying all old ideas. Hence, secularisation is an ally, because it will destroy Hinduism, Islam and other forms of what they consider to be superstition. We should ally ourselves with secularisation and see it as the work

of God". Later it was again repeated, "We do not feel that we have any thing lacking. And so we are opposed to dialogue, unless it is for the sake of testifying to Jesus Christ". "That was it. Then they passed a resolution saying that 'under no circumstances should multi-religious dialogues put Christianity on the same level as other religions, and this is unacceptable'. So because the European Christians had that point of view, the World Council has not been able to engage in multi-religious dialogue for quite some time."³¹ Lest it should be considered that the situation has since then changed in any manner, we quote the statement of Metropolitan P.M. Gregories made in April 1991 at the Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace : "I have been associated with the World Council of Churches and its work in dialogue with people of other faiths since 1954. But I find, particularly on the part of European Christians, that there is still an inhibition about entering into full dialogue with other religions. In the minds of people there is a fear that having conversation with other religions may imply some compromise in one's own conviction. And in the World Council of Churches I can assure you that this view has been a major inhibiting factor. We could have gone much further in dialogue, if European Christianity was less inhibited."³²

Thus, at the present stage Christianity partly because of the theological reasons, and Judaism and Islam, partly because of their socio-political struggles have natural limitations in entering into meaningful inter-religious dialogues. In the Indian sub-continent, too, increasing tensions between Islam and Hinduism are hardly conducive to healthy inter-religious cooperation.

Although Sikhism, because of its universalism, has been traditionally cooperative in the inter-religious field, the present political developments in the Punjab are affecting the recognition of its identity. In 1987, the Council for World Religions arranged a seminar on Hindu-Sikh dialogue. It is somewhat amusing that majority of the Hindu Scholars virtually questioned the very identity of Sikhism. One scholar observed, "Sikh Scholars see the *Miri-Piri* concept as an inseparable whole in the religious order. Non-Sikhs have come to see a religion-politics linkage in Sikhism, and deduce the root cause of the current crisis in the Punjab to this."³³ Ignorance about Sikhism is so great that another scholar felt that as Sikhism had arisen only as a social protest against caste ideology, its relevance as a

separate religion was now hardly there. He wrote, "Untouchability has been abolished by political legislation. Government steps are persistently being taken to uplift the castes considered backward so far. As such, the very point against which original Sikhism had reacted, no longer remains a point of contention. Moreover, the problem of social inequality and the consequent demand for justice no longer remains a province of religious organisation. It is the Government agencies who have to look into the problems in order to eradicate social inequality and provide social justice. As such, the problem has shifted its locale from the religious to the political."³⁴ Another scholar was more forthright in his attack. He stated, "To the extent Hinduism has been influenced by Vedanta either traditionally or in modern version of Ram Krishna and Vivekananda, it has a tendency to subsume all religions as different aspects of one large religion—of which Hinduism is a subconscious, if not an overt model. And, of course, in this religion, the closer a person or a doctrine is to the Advaita Vedanta, the closer to Truth is that person or is assumed to be. It is not entirely possible to include Christianity and Islam, in spite of this philosophical proclivity of the Hindu mind, as branches of the great tree of Hinduism. This is so for obvious reasons of history, language, foreign origins of these religions, and the fact that Hindus have been for centuries ruled by followers of these religions. But when it comes to Indians belonging to religions which originated within India, such as Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs, many Hindus regard them as downright unpatriotic or unspiritual, or both, if they wish to maintain their identity distinct from the Hindus. Distinctions are just not considered a mark of high enough vision, and are mere appearances."³⁵ This gives a glimpse of the self-image and the conditioned approach of Hindu theologians and scholars towards the identity of other religions, especially of Buddhism and Sikhism. Hence, the difficulties and the problem of inter-religious dialogues in South-East Asia.

6. Conclusion

We have attempted to give a bird's eye-view of the position and scope of inter-religious dialogue among major religions of the world. The problems appear to us serious enough for anyone to be under any illusion in this regard. However, it is our view that the solution of man's moral problems lies only in

the domain of religion. There is hardly a trace of inter-species or intra-species morality in the animal world. For, without accepting the Fatherhood of God or the Transcendent Reality, the Brotherhood of man remains only an empty slogan. Sikhism emphasizes that spirituality alone can be the source and elan of the moral life of man. It is for this reason that many thinking scholars in the Christian and the Islamic worlds consider Secularism to be the greatest danger to the modern culture. It has been clearly apprehended that it is Secularism that has led to the demeaning of politics and the social life of man.³⁶ Individualism, Nationalism, Communism, Imperialism, Militarism, Racism, and the break-up of the family are the natural consequences. Marxism and rationalism raised the hope that a secular culture could bring about greater justice between man and man. The crash of the Russian Empire has demonstrated that rational means, howsoever well intentioned, are incapable of creating a moral cohesion to sustain a people, or a society: Uninhibited or unchecked egoist proclivities of man invariably lend to injustice and oppression. The results are the same, whether it is Secular Marxism or Secular Capitalism. The consequences of Secular Capitalism are evident in Latin America and Africa, where Christian priests are fighting it under the banner of liberation Theology so as to close the widening gap between the affluent rich and the miserable poor. It was too much both for the priests and the poor to accept the ugly anomaly that those who for six days of the week practised cruelty and aggression against the weak, on Sunday sat in the Church on the front benches, with the suffering poor on the hind ones. Hence the voices of men of religion like Archbishop Helder Camara, Father Camilo Torres and Jurgen Moltmann quoted earlier. The talk and preachings of the brother-hood of man have no meaning, if the Church of a religion is unable to translate it into deeds in the socio-political life of man. Just as the Christian priests of South America and Africa, in order to make the *Bible* meaningful for the poor, seek to draw on the essence of Christianity that fundamentally prescribes the brotherhood of man, similarly, Islam too, is trying to fall back on its religious roots to sustain its culture. It is no fundamentalism to turn to the essence or elan of a religion to enrich its moral fibre in time of difficulty or crisis. Fundamentalism is essentially a Christian word for those who literally accept the truth of all statements about history and life in the *Bible*. There is nothing

parochial or obscurantist to derive one's moral strength from the spiritual base.

We have indicated above both the secular attack against religion and the difficulties of inter-religious dialogue and cooperation that face the truly religious man. In this context, we should like to stress that in a whole-life religion like Sikhism, the empirical life is essentially informed by the spiritual component, which alone can supply it with moral content and cohesion. Without a spiritual base, Secularism, as we have seen, remains ethically barren. It is this divorce between Secularism and Religion and its attendant dangers which the North American Churches, the Liberation Theologians and Muslim thinkers are lamenting. God being the Source of all virtues, the Gurus have clearly defined many of the attributes of God which are not only relevant in the empirical field but which form the very basis of Sikh ethics. It is they who call God the Shelter of the shelterless, Help of the helpless and Destroyer of the evil-doers.³⁷ He showers His Grace where the lowly are helped.³⁸ The whole-life Sikh ethics that prescribes the responsibility of the Sikh in all field of life, is based on the Gurus' perception of the attributes of God. Schuon suggests the same thing, "If the virtues act as modes of knowledge, it is because they retrace by analogy Divine attitudes; there is in fact no virtue that does not derive from a Divine proto-type, and therein lies their deepest meaning: "to be" is "to know."³⁹ For, "Love of one's neighbour, is so far as it is a necessary expression of the Love of God, is an indispensable complement to Faith."⁴⁰ In Sikhism the highest stage is of the *gurmukh* who does not merely preach but who "Lives truthfully", for God is not only to be loved, but love has also to be lived. In Sikhism there is nothing like knowing God, but knowledge of Him comes both from loving and living. The Transcendent, is also the only Fount of spirituality and love, "The fact that it is thus transcendent, however, means that it can be univocally described by none and concretely apprehended by few. For these few the problem of the relation between the religions is, by it, solved; for the many the problem is unsolvable, because for the many the generic is abstract and the concrete is not generic, and only what is concrete can be loved and worshipped."⁴¹ It is in this context, that Sikhism calls Him to be the only Source of moral life that can sustain the empirical life of man. It, thus, unambiguously believes in inter-religious dialogue and cooperation in this world of God, but that

cooperation can be fruitful only if it is firmly based on the stand-point laid down and lived by the Gurus, namely of Love, which has multiple facets and responsibilities.

In sum, Sikhism prescribes inter-religious cooperation, but that cooperation has to be on the basis of the Fatherhood of God or : The Transcendent and for the goal of establishing the brotherhood of man; and for that end confronting the forces of injustice and oppression, as did the Gurus for a period of over 200 years. They lay down that human salvation lies in accepting His Fatherhood and seeking His Grace to struggle against the so-called evil or the imperfect forces of life. The eternal problem, as also stated by the minority voice in Christianity, is of Secularism (or lack of Faith in Him as the Source of all Morality) and the struggle against injustice and inequality. This struggle for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth has gone on since the dawn of civilisation and may go on for many a millennium more. Therefore, from the stand-point of Sikhism inter-religion dialogue has a meaning, as also observed by Moltmann, if there is a commitment to struggle with faith against 'injustice and oppression'.

3. Stace, W.T., *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 131-133.
4. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 730.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 1091-92.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 418.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 955.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 913.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 1208.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
16. Briggs, G.W., *Goraknath and Kanphata Yogis*, p. 28.
17. McLeod, W.H., *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp. 76-78.
18. Bannerjee, A.C., *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. III (Feb. 1976), p. 61, and *Haqiqat-i-Banau, Uruj-i-Firaq-i-Sikhan* (author not known), pp. 3-6. (Also, *Sikh Review*, February 1991, p. 22).
19. Sainapat, *Gur Sobha* (Edited by Ganda Singh), pp. 21, 32.
20. Cunningham, J.D., *History of the Sikhs*, p. 64; Bannerjee, I.B., *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 116.

Chapter XV

Sikhism and Inter-Religious Dialogue

1. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 459.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 1091-92.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 473, 113
8. *Ibid.*, p. 730.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 1245.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 1245.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 1171.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 1289.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 360, 417, 418.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
15. Bible, John, p. 15, Mathew, p. 22.
16. Toynbee, A., *An Historian's Approach to Religions*, p. 210.
17. Smart, Ninian, *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, pp. 346-47.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 490.
19. *Dialogue & Alliance*, Journal of International Religious Foundation, Vol. 5, No. 3, Fall, 1991, pp. 87-88.
20. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 853.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 939.
22. *Dialogue & Alliance*, Vol. 5, No. 3 Fall, 1991, p. 84. *Review of Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes*, Edited by P.J. Griffiths.
23. Hertzberg, Arthur (Edited), *Judaism*, p. 98.
24. *Eerdman's History of Christianity*, p. 594.
25. *Dialogue & Alliance*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
27. David Lockhead, *The Dialogical Imperative*, p. 24, *Ibid.*, p. 68.
28. *Eerdman's History of Christianity*, p. 600.
29. *Dialogue & Alliance*, *op. cit.* Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 78.
30. *Eerdman's History of Christianity*, p. 610.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 637.
32. *Dialogue & Alliance*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Summer 1987, p. 94-96.
33. International Religious Foundation, New York, News Letter, Vol. VI, No. 2, p. 2.
34. *Theological & Social Issues in Hindu & Sikh Tradition*, Council of World Religions—Seminar, held at Sri Nagar, in July 1987, Paper by V.N. Narayanan, p. 5.
35. *Ibid.*, Paper by Basant Kumar Lal, p. 8.
36. *Ibid.*, Paper by Ravi Ravindra, p. 7.

36. Eerdman's *History of Christianity*, p. 570.
 37. *Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 1208, 224.
 38. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
 39. Schuon, Frithjof, *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*,
 (A Quest Book), p. 145.
 40. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
 41. Smith, Huston, in *Ibid.*, pp. XXIII-XXIV.

I N D E X

- Abdali 210
 Absolute Reality 119
 Absolute Renoucement 67
 Abu Ben Adam 82, 195, 245, 273
 Activity Bhakti 172, 177
 Adi Granth 90, 151, 152, 153, 189,
 215
 Adlee 44
 Advaita Vedanta 276
 Africa 214
 Agression 65, 269
 Aham Brahmasee 224, 242
 Ahamkara 68, 174, 238
 Ahimsa 19, 64, 65, 66, 70, 74, 77,
 90, 91, 95, 114, 115, 116,
 121, 133, 169, 170, 176, 183,
 184, 192, 200, 201, 204, 206,
 235, 240, 243, 246, 257, 259,
 260, 262, 269, 270
 Ahmad Shah Abdali 136
 Ajooni 40
 Akal Takhat 66, 80, 135, 170, 171,
 207, 211, 260, 262
 Akbar 133, 208
 Alcoholism 98
 Al Ghazali 99
 Al Quraishi 99
 Altruism 62, 106
 Altruistic Will of God 129, 137,
 246, 256, 257, 269
 Alvar Saints 68, 70, 174, 238, 240
 Amarjit Kaur, Sardami 10
 Ambedkar 102
 American Churches 215
 Amorites 131
 Amrit 86, 92, 264
 Amrit Ceremony 263, 265
 Amritsar 92, 133, 206, 207
 Anandpur 136
 Anhad 78
 Anna Baptist 131
 Anthropologist 16, 18
 Anthropology 15, 19
 Anubhava 73, 242
 Arbi 99
 Ardas 38
 Arenetti, Hannad 12
 Arti 69, 175, 239
 Aryans 146
 Asa di Var 128
 Ascetic 71, 75, 167, 195, 220, 228,
 229, 241, 260, 269, 270
 Asceticism 14, 19, 80, 82, 84, 97,
 102, 104, 114, 143, 176, 183,
 184, 187, 188, 192, 193, 200,
 225, 227, 228, 243, 244, 246,
 257, 259, 269, 270
 Ashrams 146, 224
 Atonement 116
 Atharva Veda, 144
 Atheist 18
 Attributes of God 83, 112, 175
 Attributive Will of God 172, 182,
 227, 257
 Augustine, St. 88, 126, 236, 248
 Aurangzeb 135, 136, 263
 Avtaras 69, 238, 239
 Avatarhood 40, 53, 68, 173, 176,
 238, 246
 Avidya 73, 242
 Babar Vani 89, 170, 188, 191, 205
 Babylonia 96
 Bairagi(s) 69, 121, 175, 239
 Baisakhi Day 86, 264
 Banda 130, 136, 210, 236
 Bandhan 44
 Barth 21