

**SIKH IDENTITY AND ITS IMPACT ON SIKH
SOCIETY**

A

THESIS

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled “**SIKH IDENTITY AND ITS IMPACT ON SIKH SOCIETY**” is an original research work carried out by Subhdeep Kaur, student of Doctor of Philosophy under my supervision and guidance. This dissertation represents independent and original work that it is worthy of consideration for the award of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES**.

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CHAPTER – 1

WHAT IS IDENTITY AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN SIKHISM

The word, ‘identity’ which has as an absolute form the word ‘idemtittie’, derives from the late Latin word *identitas*, which is "peculiarly formed from *ident* (i), for (the Latin) *idem* 'same'+ *tas,-tatem*". Its meaning is given as the "quality or condition of being the same, essential sameness, oneness...the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else."¹ Identity is a keyword of contemporary society and a central focus of social psychological theorizing and research. In current times, however, the concept of identity carries the full weight of the need for a sense of who one is?

So, identity is a term that is widely used and as a consequence, can vary differently as per things and people.

1. Meaning of Identity-

In Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary write that identity is the characteristics, feeling or beliefs that distinguish people from other: a sense of national, cultural, personal group identity.²

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

- i. The state of being identical or absolutely the same, self-sameness.
- ii. Sameness or character or quality Identity may be of two sorts: absolute, which involves exact quality with itself, or self-sameness, as the equation a-a; and relative, a less rigid sense,

¹ John, P. Muller, *Beyond the Psychoanalytic Dyad Developmental Semiotics in Freud, Peirce and Lacan*, Routledge Publisher, New York, 2013, p.140.

² *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2010, p.770.

which implies a close material resemblance or similarity. The distinctive character belonging to an individual; personality; individuality. The state of being what is asserted or described.

- iii. The distinctive character belonging to an individual, personality, individuality.
- iv. The state of being what is asserted or described.¹

When reduced to even more basic wording, we can say that 'identity is the everyday word for people's sense of who they are'. Thus, identity is a sense of uniqueness, a feeling of continuity over time.

2. Definitions of identity-

- Hogg and Abrams writes that "Identity is people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to other".²
- According to Deng, "Identity is used to describe the way individuals and group define themselves and are defined by other on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language and culture."³
- Jenkins describes that, identity "refers to the way in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relation with other individuals and collectivities".⁴
- Bloom explains that, "National identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbol."⁵
- Wendt writes that, "Identity are relatively stable, role-specific

¹ *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language*, Trident Press International, USA, 2004, p.627.

² Hogg Michael and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identification: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relation and Group Processes*, Routledge, London, 1988, p.2.

³ Deng, Francis M., *War of Vision: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan*, The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 1995, p.1.

⁴ Jenkins, Richard, *Social Identity*, Routledge, London, 1996, p.4.

⁵ William Bloom, *Personal Identity National Identity and International Relation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, p.52.

understanding and expectation about self."¹

- Wendt writes, "Social identities are sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of other, that is, as a social object."²
- Herr Gel explains that, "By social identity, I mean the desire for group distinction, dignity and place within historically specific discourses (or frame of understanding) about the character, structure, and boundaries of the polity and economy."³
- Katzenstein writes, "The term (identity) references mutually constructed and evolving images of self and other."⁴
- Kowert and Legro said that, "identities are a prescriptive representations of political actors themselves and of their relationships to each other."⁵
- According to Taylor, "My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose."⁶
- Clifford writes that, "yet what if identity is conceived not as a boundary to be maintained, but as a nexus of relations and transaction actively engaging as subject".⁷
- According to White, "Identity is any source of action not explicable

¹ Alexander Wendt, *Collective Identity Formation and the International State*, American Political Science Review, 1994, p.397.

² Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1999, p.395.

³ Gary Herrigel, *Identity and Institution: The Social Construction of Trade Unions in the United States and Germany in the 19th century*, Studies in American Political Development, U.S.A., 1993, p.371.

⁴ Peter Katzenstein, (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996, p.59.

⁵ Paul Kowert and Jeffery Lergo, *Norms, Identity and their Limits*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996, p.453.

⁶ Charles Taylor, *The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1989, p.27.

⁷ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1988, p.344.

from biophysical regularities.¹

- Berger and Lukmann said that, "Indeed, Identity is objectively defined as location in a certain world and can be subjectively appropriated only along with that world."²
- Stuart Hall, writes that, "Identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space, or an unresolved question in that space, between the members of intersecting discourse. Identity is a process, identity is split. Identity is not a fixed point, but an ambivalent point. Identity is also the relationship of the other to oneself."³

Being religious can be a central notion of one's identity. Identity is a wide prospective which is largely concerned with the question: 'Who are you?' What does it mean to be who you are? Identity relates to one's basic values that make the alternative we make (e.g., relationships, career). The given options reflect who we are and what our worth is. Lack of a coherent sense of identity will lead to uncertainty about what one wants to do in life.

3. Sikh Identity-

The word Sikh has its origin from Sanskrit word Shishya, meaning a learner or disciple. In Pali, Shishya became Sissa. The Pali word 'sekha' (Also *sekkha*) means a pupil or one under training in a religious doctrine (sikkha, siksa). The Punjabi form of the word is Sikh. The term Sikh in the Punjabi and elsewhere came to be used for the disciple of Guru Nanak (1469-1539) and his nine spiritual successors.⁴ But if we consult Prakrit word for Sikh, then it is originated from Sanskrit 'Shiksh' (शिक्ष) instead of Shishya word and its meaning is not confined to a mere follower of Guru

¹ Harrison C. White, *Identity and Control: A Structural Theory of Social Action*, Princeton University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p.6.

² Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Second Construction of Reality*, Anchor Books, New York, 1966, p.132.

³ Stuart Hall, *Ethnicity: Identity and Difference*, Radical, America, 1989, p.20.

⁴ Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1988, p.129.

Nanak, but a person who believe in teachings of the Sikh Gurus and dedicate his life to attaining true knowledge.

In Sikh RehatMaryada definition of a Sikh is written as any human being who faithfully believes in one immortal being, Ten Gurus (from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh), The Guru Granth Sahib and the utterances and teachings of the ten Gurus and the baptism bequeathed by the Tenth Guru, and who does not owe allegiance to any other religion is a Sikh.¹

A Sikh in ‘Mahan Kosh’ is one who is the follower of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji and one who considers Sri Guru Granth Sahib as his religious Granth and ten Satgurus as same body and spirit.²

The issue of Sikh identity dates back to the time of the Gurus and has not been resolved 500 years later. SardarKhushwant Singh writes, "it is still disputed whether Guru Nanak (the Founder) intended to reform Hinduism or form a third community or bring Hindu and Muslim together. It would appear that, in his earlier times he tried to bring the two communities closer to each other. But as the years went by and his message caught on among the masses, he decided to give his teachings permanency through a sect of his own."³ Mcleod has stated that the need for an identity amongst the early community became greater in the light of offspring born into the Sikh faith.⁴ He writes that, ‘The Janam Sakhi is reveal something of this struggle for identity and of the tension which it involved.’⁵ Pashaura Singh is also of the opinion that ‘The process of Sikh– definition began in Guru Nanak’s lifetime during the period when

¹ *The Sikh Rahat Maryada*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1945, p.7.

² Bhai Kahn Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, Punjab Language Department, Patiala, 1930, p.5.

³ Birbal Nath, *The Undisclosed Punjab*, Manas Publication, Delhi, 2008, p.64.

⁴ W.H. Mcleod, *Early Sikh Tredition: A Study of the Janam Sakhis*, Clarendon Press, Amritsar, 1980, p.260.

⁵ *Ibid.*

he settled at Kartarpur.¹ In Guru Nanak's philosophy He said-

Na koi Hindu, Na Musalman.

It is in itself indicative of the already recognized separateness of the followers of Guru Nanak from the two dominant traditions of that time.²

The early followers of Guru Nanak were known as the Nanak Panthis. The Nanak Panth, therefore, had no need to be concerned with a sharp distinction, externally, from the other beliefs of the time. There was no urgent need during this period for Sikhs to identify themselves as being distinct from Hindus, and they shared the same festivals, as well as the same philosophical belief such as Karma and Samsara.³ But in differentiating his followers from Brahmanic Hindus, Guru Nanak continuously stressed the irrelevance of rituals that dominated popular Hindu devotion. He also denounced the prejudice of the Hindu caste system, himself refusing to wear the sacred thread.⁴

The first move towards a distinct Sikh identity was taken by Guru Amardas by the period of his Guruship he constructed a Baoli (well) at Goindwal, (later to become a pilgrimage').⁵

Significantly, it was to be reached by 84 steps indicative of the popular Hindu view that an individual is reborn 8400000 times (84 lakhs) before *Mukti* is gained. In contradiction to the suggestion that the Baoli was a pilgrimage in the Sikh faith, is the view that it was constructed for thirsty Sikhs who visited the center of Goindwal. Nevertheless Guru Amardas had established a *Tirath* (pilgrimage centre) for Sikhs at

¹ Pashaura Singh, *Sikh Identity: Continuity and Change*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 1999, p.76.

² D.S. Dhillon, *Sikhism: Origin and Development*, Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 1988, p.171.

³ Opinderjit Kaur Thakkar, *Sikh Identity an Exploration of Groups Among Sikh*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, England, 2005, p.5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.9.

Goindwal.¹

This impurity of Ego can't washed off, even though one may have ablution at hundreds of places of pilgrimage.² But this is one sided narration of Goindwal Baoli's importance. If this was constructed for the necessity of only drinking water, then why Guru Ji specifically built 84 steps. When Guru Ji constructed 84 steps of Baoli, infact he declared that there is no need to wander at Hindu Tiraths for salvation. The holy dip of Goindwal Baoli is the perfect means of salvation from 84 lakh rebirths. This was the revolt against Brahmnic concept of salvation, rebirth and practice of holy dip at Tiraths.

After that Guru Ramdas, Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Hargobind taken initiatives for Sikhs to provide them distinct identity. The Sikh institutions have played an important role to make Sikh Identity not as a sect of Hinduism, but as a complete distinct and perfect religion, different from Hindus in all aspects. Guru himself made the institutions of new born religion, which reflect the Sikh's unique identity in history. Guru Nanak himself established the institutions of Dharamsal and Langar. Where as establishment of Dharamsals was revolt against Brahmnic system of worship, Langar was against the caste system. Both institutions were aimed to preach equality of mankind. Guru Amardas started the Manji system. Manji system grabbed the preaching of religion from priest class and handed over this pious task to the common, but noble persons, without any distinction of caste and class. To build an independent economic base, Guru Ram Das introduced Masand system. This way Guru forbidden their followers to fall in trap of economic exploitation by priest class. Guru Arjan Dev compiled *The Adi Granth* and laid out a Sikh temple at Amritsar known as Harimander Sahib. Guru Hargobind had

¹ *Ibid.*, p.9.

² *Adi Granth*, p.39.

taken major steps to transform the Sikhs into a political power. He embraced two swords on his body. In front of Harimander Sahib, Guru Hargobind constructed another building in 1609 A.D. He named it Akal Takhat, or the eternal throne, from here he conducted the secular affairs of the community.¹ In order to protect Sikh religion, the tenth Guru Gobind Singh took many revolutionary steps and he transformed the Sikh organization to Khalsa Panth. J.S. Grewal compellingly argues that Sikh identity was visibly sharpened by the institution of the Khalsa.² The term Khalsa was used by that time for the Sikhs initiated into the Sikh faith by the Gurus themselves. Before he passed away in 1708, he terminated the line of personal Guru and installed the Adi Granth as the eternal Guru for the Sikhs.³

In this way we can say that Guru Nanak Dev founded Sikhism and all Sikh Gurus were aware of their mission and gave Sikhs a distinct identity. Sikh Gurus provided an effective functional organization for the propagation and spread of the creed, symbolized the essential character of the Sikh movement, institutionalized the fundamentals of its teachings and made them easier to be imprinted on the minds of the devotees. They also imparted to it a hallmark of distinction and thereby smoothed the way for the development of its separate identity.

Perhaps the most visible aspect of the Sikh identity is the turban, which can be worn by men and women alike. The turban was historically worn by royalty in South Asia, and the Gurus adopted this practice as a way of asserting the sovereignty and equality of all people. For a Sikh, wearing a turban asserts a public commitment to maintain the values and ethics of the tradition, including service, compassion, and honesty.

¹ Harbans Singh, *An Introduction to Indian Religions*, Publication Bureau, Patiala, 1996, p.233

² J.S. Grewal and S.S. Bal, *Guru Gobind Singh A Biographical Study*, Publication Bureau, Punjab University, Chandigarh. 1987, p 30.

³ Pashaura Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.89

Faith is a central part of the religious identity. Every religion presents a profound description and projection of particular identity. Thus, faith is a basic requirement of religious identity. Prophets or spiritual personalities propagated every faith. In the Sikh faith, Guru is the central personality, which illuminates the seekers and creates faith towards Ultimate Reality.

4. Main features of Sikh Identity-

All religions and societies have their own identifying features that differentiate them from other religions or societies. Sikhism also have identical features like five kakars (Kesh, Kangha, Kaccha, Kara, Kirpan), Sikh ceremonies, Sikh festivals, Sikh Gurudwaras, Sikh symbols (Nishan Sahib, Khanda, Ek Oamkar), Sikh slogans (Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh) and Sikh greetings etc. Here some important features are discussed in details-

4.1. Five Kakars-

The five sacred Sikh symbols prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh are commonly known as 'Panj Kakars' or five k's because they start with letter 'k' representing 'kakka' in the Gurmukhi script. Tenth Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh commanded his Sikhs to wear five Kakars on Baisaki of 1699 at Anandpur Sahib, when they were baptized with Amrit by the Guru himself. An Amrtdhari or initiated Sikh is required to wear all five Kakars compulsory during the Sikh baptism, or initiation ceremony of Amrit and thereafter. Because he wanted to give his *Panth* a different identity.¹

We also found references of five *Kakars* in Hukamnamas written by Guru Gobind Singh. For example Guru ji addressed the people of Kabul and said-

All the *Sangat* of Kabul

¹ Padam Piara Singh, *Rehatnama*, Chatar Singh Jivan Singh, Amritsar, 1974, p.9

My blesses are on you
You have to initiate
From five Sikhs, keep hair
Kacch, Kirpan and Kara.¹

- **Kesh:** Kesh which means hair is one of the five *Kakars* of the Khalsa brotherhood. One of the injunctions imposed by Guru Gobind Singh at the time of setting up to Khalsa brotherhood in 1699 A.D. It was forbidden to shave or trimming of hair on any part of the body. As such, the long uncut hairs and a natural uncut beard in case of man are the most visible feature of Sikh. The practice is one of the most distinctive and cherished symbol of Sikhism.²

Guru Nanak Dev never cut his hair from any part of body and he asked people to keep their hair uncut. One time Ajmer Chand inquired what the marks of the Guru's Sikhs were, that is, how they could be recognized, then Guru Gobind Singh replied, "my Sikh shall be in their natural form that is without the loss of hair from any part of the body, in opposition to ordinance of the Hindus and Muhammadans."³

The Chaupa Singh's Rehatnama text also instructs that Khalsa Sikh don't keep any relationship with those who cut or shave their hair. The text stresses on the importance of maintaining Keshas as a method to preserve honour, strength and vitality for Sikh males.⁴

The Daya Singh Rehatnama outlines practical ways in which to look after the Kesh as including ways in which it should be tied

¹ Kartar Singh, *Kesh Philosophy*, Shri Guru Nanak Mission, Faridkot, 1960, p.189.

² Harbans Singh, vol.II, *Op. cit.*, p.465.

³ M.A. Macculiffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1909, p.99.

⁴ Bhai Chaupa Singh, *Rahat Nama*, *Op. cit.*, p.9.

up under the turban. He said hairs are the stamp of Guru on his Sikhs.¹

The Desa Singh's Rehatnama imparts a theological justification for the preservation of Keshas. The text regards cutting Keshas as a sin because human hair is a sacred gift from the God.²

- **Kangha:** The second Kakar which every Sikh must keep with him is 'Kangha' (comb). It is required for keeping the hair clean and tidy. Guru Gobind Singh had desired the Sikh to comb their hair twice every day and therefore made the possession of a Kangha in the head hair compulsory by way of forbidding keeping the hair in a matted condition as was the practice among ascetics which was disapproved by Sikhism.³

According to scientific research keeping a wooden Kangha in your hair reduces the level of a static energy building up metal or ivory comb is not to be used as a substitute. Comb the hair twice a day, covering it with turban that is to be tied from fresh.

- **Karha:** A Karha is a steel or iron (*Sarabloh*) bracelet worn by all initiated Sikhs. It is one of the five Kakars that identify a Sikh as dedicated to their religious order. The Karha was instituted by Guru Gobind Singh at the Baisakhi in 1699.⁴

Guru Gobind Singh gave importance to iron bracelet instead of gold and silver. Guru ji asked his Sikhs that with this Karha you will always remember that God gives you hand for help the needy people and this Karha will protect you from enemy in battle.

The Karha is a symbol of unbreakable attachment and

¹ Bhai Daya Singh, *Rahat Nama, Op. cit.*, p.139.

² Bhai Desa Singh, *Rahat Nama, Op. cit.*, p.129.

³ Harbhans Singh, *Op. cit.*, p.118.

⁴ Harbhans Singh, *Op. cit.*, p.431.

commitment to God. It is in the shape of circle which has no beginning and no end. Like the eternal nature of God. As Guru Granth Sahib says "In the tenth month, you were made into a human being. O my merchant friend, and you were given your allotted time to perform good deeds."¹

- **Kirpan:** Kirpan which means 'sword' is one of the five Kakars. Kirpan was made obligatory for the Khalsa brotherhood set up by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 A.D. basically it is the mark of identity and belonged to the Sikh Panth.²

The general belief is that word Kirpan is originated from two words the first is Sanskrit word 'kirpa' which means 'mercy, grace, kindness, and the second is Persian "Aan", which means 'honour, grace, dignity.'³ But this is an absolutely wrong explanation of word Kirpan. Actually this is only one Sanskrit word *Kirpani* and its meaning is sword or dagger.

Guru Gobind Singh has clearly explained in his own words the meaning of the 'sword' as he uses it. His sword "scatters the wicked" has "dazzling splendor of the sun". It is "the protector of saints; "scourge of the wicked," "refuge of hers and heroes".

Guru Gobind Singh writes in the beginning of Bichittar Natak-

ਤ੍ਰਿਭੰਗੀ ਛੰਦ

ਖਗ ਖੰਡ ਬਿਹੰਡ ਖਲ ਦਲ ਖੰਡ ਅਤਿ ਰਣ ਮੰਡ ਬਰਬੰਡ।

ਭੁਜ ਦੰਗ ਅਖੰਡ ਤੇਜ ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡ ਜੋਤਿ ਅਮੰਡ ਭਾਨੁ ਪ੍ਰਭੰ।

ਸੁਖ ਸੰਤਾ ਕਰਣੰ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਣੰ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਹਰਣੰ ਅਸਿ ਸਰਣੰ।

ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜਗ ਕਾਰਣ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਬਾਰਣ ਮਮ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਰਣ ਜੈ ਤੇਗੰ।²

(ਤਲਵਾਰ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਟੁਕੜੇ ਟੁਕੜੇ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਦੁਸ਼ਟਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਸ਼ਟ

ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਯੁਧ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਸਜਤਿ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ, (ਅਜਿਹੀ) ਬਲਵਾਨ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਅਖੰਡ ਤੇਜ

¹ *Guru Granth Sahib*, p.76.

² Harbans Singh, Vol.-II, *Op. cit.*, p.37.

³ *Ibid.*, p.38.

ਵਾਲੀ ਭੁਜਦੰਡਹੈ, ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡ ਤੇਜ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਸੂਰਜ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੋਭਾ ਦੀ ਜੋ ਤਿਨੂੰ ਫਿਕਿਆਂ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦੀਹੈ। (ਇਹ) ਸੰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਖ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੀ, ਮਾੜੀ ਬੁਧੀ ਨੂੰ ਦਲਣ ਵਾਲੀ, ਪਾਪਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਾਸ਼ ਕਰਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ, (ਮੈਂ) ਇਸਦੀ ਸ਼ਰਣ ਵਿਚਹਾਂ। ਹੇ ਜਗਤ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਣ ਸਰੂਪ! ਤੇਰੀ ਜੈ-ਜੈਕਾਰ ਹੋਵੇ, (ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਤੂੰ) ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਉਬਾਰਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਕਰਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈਂ, (ਤਾਂਤੇਤੇਰੀ) ਹੇ ਤੇਗ! ਜੈ ਜੈ ਹੋਵੇ।¹

(Translation of above Punjabi Text : Sword perfectly cuts(demons) into pieces, It demolish the toops of the enemy, leads the war such powerful it is. Its sharpness issupreme and power enlightened and unconquered. Which diminishes the grandeur of supreme light of sun. It gives immense pleasure to the saints and overcomethe evil minds, and destroys all kind of evil. I am under the bower of this. Oh the Lord creator of this wordly! May you worshipped everywhereas you are the one that makes world exist and upbringer of mine. Victory is of Sword. I salute this symbol of absolute victory).

Professor Puran Singh rightly opines, every Sikh to wear his sword. Not his own. Kirpan is a gift from the Guru. It is not an instrument of offence or defense. It is mind made intense by the love of the Guru.²

Hence, as a symbolic weapon it shall only be wielded in compassion (to protect the oppressed) and for upholding righteousness and human dignity.³

Kachhera: *Kachhera* or '*kachh*' is specially designed short shalwar like loose undergarment with a tie knot (naala) worn by baptized Sikhs. It is also one of the five Sikh articles of faith called the five Kakars.⁴

It is symbol of restraint of passion, of chastity, and a constant reminder of the prohibition of adultery, both in lusting and deed. Bhai Gurdas II writes– "the sign of true chastity is the *Kachhera*, you must

¹ Guru Gobind Singh, *Bichittar Natak*, Salok-2, S.G.P.C, Amritsar, 2000, p.1.

² Puran Singh, *The Spirit Born People*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2005, p.94.

³ Harbans Singh, *Op. cit.*, p.38.

⁴ Harbans Singh, *Op. cit.*, p.39.

wear and hold weapon in hand.¹

Bhai Desa Singh also writes in *Rahatnama* about *Kachhera*– "The *Kachhera* and *Kirpan* are never to leave the body."²

This garment allows a Sikh soldier to operate in combat freely and without any hindrance or restriction. It serves its purpose effectively and is easy to fabricate, maintain, wash and carry. In 'Gurmat Martand' Bhai Kahan Singh 'Nabha' writes that "*Kachhera* is a loose long undergarment with a tie-knot that cover body comfortably."³

5. SIKH CEREMONIES-

All religions and societies have their own distinct rites, customs and ceremonies for all occasions. Being a religion of unique ideology Sikhism too has its own customs and ceremonies related with various phases of life. Sikh ceremonies are not rituals or occasion for display of affluence and ego. But acts of thanks giving and prayers suited to the concerned occasion. All Sikh ceremonies are simple and are held in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. Sikhs are advised to do all ceremonies related to birth of a child, marriage, death etc. by reciting *Gurbani*.⁴ These ceremonoes are called as *Janam Sanskar*, *Anand Karaj* and *Mirtak Sanskar*.

Sikh ceremonies are devotional in substance and congregational in character. The concerned Sikh house hold either arranges for an *Akhand Path* or *Sahaj path* followed by *Kirtan* and *Ardas* or just depending on the circumstances. At all ceremonies they invite their friends and relatives to join the celebration. Sikhs do not believe in a particular auspicious time like Hindus, but most of the Sikh religious ceremonies start in the morning and are over by afternoon.

¹. Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, Var 41, Pauri 15.

². Bhai Desa Singh, *Rahatnama*, *Op. cit.*, p.147.

³. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Gurmat Martand*, *Op. cit.*, p. 233.

⁴ Dr. Jagraj Singh, *A Complete Guide to Sikhism*, Unistar Book Pvt. Ltd., Chandigarh, 2009, p.79.

- **Birth Ceremony (Janam Sanskar):**

The Sikhs have their own rituals and customs regarding birth of a child. According to Hinduism the mother of a new born baby has to remain confined in her bedroom for 11 to 40 days (depending upon the caste of mother), because for them a woman remains polluted for some days, after the birth of a child. There are some restrictions in Islam too. In Sikhism, there is no concept of any type pollution of woman. She can leave her bed as early as it is possible for her, keeping in mind her health condition. It is also written in Guru Granth Sahib that we don't believe in any misconception about birth and death.¹

Beginning of this ceremony:

Once a Sikh named Shia, was blessed by God with a son. He took the child to Guru Angad and begged for his blessings. The Guru recited Japji, sprinkled holy water in his eyes, face and head and selected a letter from Japji to name the child. This was the beginning of Sikh tradition regarding birth ceremony.²

Like other people when a male child is born in Sikh family, it is an occasion for great rejoicing. Some relatives or friends of the family recites the invocation to the Almighty which is given as preamble to Japji. After some days the Granthi Singh visits the concerned home and prepares Amrit by mixing sugar with water and recite five stanzas of Japji Sahib. After performing the prayer, Amrit is dropped into the lips of child and the mother is given to drink the remained. Karah Prashad is distributed among the family members and friends.³

- **Ceremony of naming the child (Naam Sankar):**

Sikh code of conduct says that the birth of any child, boy or girl,

¹ *Guru Granth Sahib*, p.472.

² S.S. Kapoor, *The Life, Teachings and Hymns of Guru Angad Dev*, Hemkunt Publishers, New Delhi, 1997, p.54.

³ Surinder Singh Johar, *Handbook on Sikhism*, Vivek Publishing Company, Delhi, 1977, p.145.

should be welcomed equally as a gift of God. There is no place of any gender bias in Sikh ideology. When the child grown a little, his/her naming ceremony takes place. It can be held either after performing Akhand Paath, Saptahik Paath or even after simple Parkash of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.¹ The child is presented before Guru Granth Sahib and Ragis sing thanks giving Sabads for spiritual benefit of gathered people. Some Sabads are of historical importance and Guru Arjan Dev Ji composed on the birth of his son, Hargobind and these are related to expression of spiritual joy and thankfulness to Akal Purukh-

"pameshar dita bana" (Sorath M.5)²

"Satguru Sache diabhej" (Asa M.5)³

After reciting six stanzas from Anand Sahib, the prayer should be offered. A passage is read out from the holy book and parents are asked to suggest a name of the child beginning with the first letter of the Holy Hukamnama.⁴ Parents decide the name of child and Granthi Singh pronounce that name in gathering and ultimately the name is approved by the Sangat in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. To a boy's name the word Singh and to a girl's name the word 'Kaur' is always being added. The surname of Singh and Kaur was bestowed upon the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh on the day of Baisakhi at Sri Keshgarh Sahib in 1699. Then *karah prashad* consecrated with a Kirpan always being distributed among all those present.⁵

- **Vidya Sanskar (Starting education of the child):**

Like other religions in Sikhism education (Vidya) has very important role in the life of a Sikh follower. Vidya simply means knowledge stemming from the Sanskrit Vedas. In Sikh ideology the

¹. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p.628.

². *Ibid.*, p.396.

³. Sir Joginder Singh, *Sikh Ceremonies*, Punjabi University Press, Patiala, p.3.

⁴. Jagraj Singh, *A Complete Guide to Sikhism*, Unistar Books, Chandigarh, 2009, p.83.

⁵. *Ibid.*, p.84.

concept of knowledge is not limited to only bookish knowledge, but wide to even learning and practicing the weapons for self-defense and protection of weaker sections from any kind of oppression. Sikhism believes in a balanced education system, comprising Shastar (weaponry) and Sashtar (theology). As the parents should get their children educated in accordance with the Guru's teachings, or Gurmat and in the language of the scriptures or Gurmukhi. Learning Gurmukhi is essential for a Sikh. In Rehatnamas this is clearly written that all Sikh should try to educate Gurmukhi to their children. This is also written that religious education must take from a pious person, an impious person didn't know the meaning of religion.¹ Sikh should pursue other studies also. It is a Sikh's duty to get his children educated in Sikhism.

- **Dastarbandi (Tying Turban):**

A Dastar (turban) is an important part of the Sikh culture. Wearing a turban is mandatory for all *Amritdhari* Sikhs. The Turban is mostly identified with the Sikh male, although some females also wear turban. The Khalsa Sikh regards the turban as an important part of his unique identity. Sikhs are easily recognized by their distinctive turbans.

A very important and exciting event in the life of a Sikh boy is when he starts tying the turban. In many families when a boy is between 11 to 16 he is taken to Gurudwara and there in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib, his first turban will be ceremonially tied on by the Granthi Sahib or another Sikh elder. This ceremony designated the respect with which the turban is regarded. It is called Dastarbandi. Sometime the family will have a special function inviting close friends and relatives to celebrate the occasion.

History of Turban:

Turban is regarded as mark of respect and privilege of the ruling

¹. Piara Singh Padam, *Rahatnama*, *Op. cit.*, p.148.

class in that part of the world (Punjab). During the Muslim rule in India, Hindus were forbidden to grow long hair and wear turban. For the sake of identification from the Muslim (the ruling class), the slaves Hindus were required to wear a cap (Topi) and keep the head and beard shaved (Hajamat). In defiance of the imperial orders all Sikh Gurus maintained unshorn hair on head, wore turban and grow long unshaved beard. Turban is and has been an inseparable part of Sikh's life for centuries. From the time of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, Sikhs have been wearing the turban. Guru Angad Dev ji honored Guru Amar Das ji with a turban (Siropa), when he was made the Guru. Similarly, the turban (Dastar) has remained the key aspect in Sikh's honour. Those who have selflessly served the community are honoured with turbans.

Turban is a symbol of spirituality and holiness in Sikhism. When Guru Ram Das left for heavenly abode, his elder son Prithi Chand wore turban which is usually worn by an elder son when his father passes away. At that time Guru Arjan Dev ji was honoured with the turban of Guruship.

Marne di Pag Prithiya Badhi

*Guriyae di Pag Arjan Ladhi.*¹

Wearing of turban was made religious obligation for the Sikhs by Guru Arjan Dev by writing in the holy Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib-
*"Napak paak kar hadoor hadeesa, Sabat soorat dastaar sira."*²

Guru Hargobind wore turban with a crown girded two swords around his waist and ordered all Sikhs to keep long unshorn hair. After Guru Hargobind, all Sikh Gurus maintained this tradition. The covering of hair with turban was made official by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of Sikhs. The main reasons to wear turban is to take care of the hair,

¹ Principal Satbir Singh, *Partakh Hari: Jivani Guru Arjan Dev ji*, New Book Company, Jullandher, 1977, p.47.

² *Guru Granth Sahib*, M.5, p.1084.

promote equality and preserve the Sikh identity Guru Gobind Singh wrote-

*'Kangha dono vaqt kar Paag chune kar bandhai.'*¹

(use comb at both times (morning and evening), to cleanse hair and tie your turban beautifully).

Bhai Jivan Singh (known as Bhai Jaita) risked his life to recover the head of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib after the Guru's martyrdom. On presenting the head to Guru Gobind Singh, Bhai Jaita narrated to Guru ji how the Sikh devotees watched the martyrdom quietly and helplessly for fear of death. The young Guru Gobind Singh then contemplated "why the Sikhs of Delhi did not stand by their Guru, why they did not feel ashamed at their inaction, why the Muslims could not recognize the Sikhs as different."

Bhai Jaita replied, in crowd of many Sikhs did not recognize easily. So Guru Gobind Singh then vowed to make a single Sikh distinguishable amongst thousands, and with this aim he created the Khalsa Panth, who have distinct identity. In creating the Khalsa Panth Guru Gobind Singh ordered, "A Singh should not cut his hair and by tying a turban over his head he should be ready in the complete form."²

The Sikh *Rahat Maryada* specifically says that all Sikhs must wear a turban. According to the Rehatnama of Bhai Chaupa Singh ji

"Kachh, Karha, Kirpan, Kengha, Keski,

*Ih panj Kakar rahat dhare Sikh soi."*³

In Punjab removing a turban from a person's head is considered a sign of mourning. Bhai Gurdas, a great Sikh scholar who was contemporary of the several Sikh Gurus write in his Vaars-

Thhaddhay khoohahun nhaai kai

¹. Bhai Nand Lal, *Tankhanama, Op. cit.*, p.53.

². Raj Kumar Hans, *Bhai Jaita's epic Sri Guru Katha; A New Milestone in the Sikh Literature, Paper for Confrence on Sikhism*, Hofstra University, New York, 2012, p.5.

³ Harbans Singh, *Op. cit.*, p.474.

pag visaari aaiia siri nagai

Ghar vichi rannaan kamaleeaaan

*Dhusee leetee daykhi kuddhangai.*¹

ਠੰਢੇ ਖੁਹਰੁੰ ਨਾਇ ਕੈ ਪਗ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ਆਇਆ ਸਿਰਿ ਨੰਗੈ !

ਘਰ ਵਿਚਿ ਰੰਨਾ ਕਮਲੀਆਂ ਧੁਸੀ ਲੀਤੀ ਦੇਖਿ ਕੁਢੰਗੈ !

Having taken bath on the well, a person forgot his turban and returned home bare headed. Seeing his improper conduct (of being bare headed) the silly women start weeping and wailing. (seeing turbanless master of the house they conjectured the death of some one in the family.)

Turban provides Sikhs a unique identity. Guru Gobind Singh said the Khalsa is my image. Within the Khalsa I reside—

"Khalsa mero roop hai khaas, Khalse main haun karon nivas".²

- **Initiation Ceremony (Amirt Paan Sanskar):**

Khande ki Pahul or Amrit Sanskar is the most pertinent ceremony when a Sikh becomes Singh Khalsa. Khande ki Pahul or Amrit *sanskar* is the name given in the Sikh tradition to the ceremony of initiation. Pahul means an agent, which brightens, accelerates or sharpens the potentialities of a given object. In the history of Sikh faith, the initiation ceremony has passed through two distinct phases from the time of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder and up to 1699.³ Mcleod makes a comment on the production of Rahat (code of conduct of Khalsa) and tries to find some difference between the practice of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. Prior to the formation of the Khalsa brotherhood in 1699, the Sikh Gurus would initiate the faithful through administering nectar, or *Amrit* blessed by the feet of the respective Guru with its holy touch. At the time of Guru Nanak Dev Ji this was a common religious

¹. Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, Var 32, pauri 19.

² Guru Gobind Singh Ji, *Sarbh Loh Granth*, (Ed.) Harnam Das Ji, Ramesh Chander Suri, Ludhiana, 1968, pp.519-526.

³. Harbans Singh, *Op. cit.*, p.263.

exercise among different sects that spiritual leaders wash their feet and followers drink that water. Guru Nanak discarded this dirty custom of religious initiation and he commenced his followers by only touching his foot to the vessel containing water. In 1699 Guru Gobind Singh changed this to the modern day form of initiation, where the nectar is formed through the stirring of the double-edged sword (Khanda), known as 'Khande Di Pahul'. The Guru created this new initiation because the lineage of physical Guru was on end and the Guru Granth Sahib would (later in 1708) be bestowed as the Guru for eternity.¹

Any five initiated Sikhs, male or female can together perform the Amrit Paan Sanskar. They are called Panj Piaras. All Panj Piaras wearing the customary dress of Sikh faith sit in front of Guru Granth Sahib. One of them explains the principles of Sikhism to those who want to be initiated in the faith. After the contenders attired with the articles of Sikh faith have signified their acceptance, the leading Piara offers Ardas. Then all the Panj Piaras sit in *Veer Aasan* (special posture of sitting) around the iron vessel containing fresh water and *Patargas* made of sugar. They recite the five Banis: Japji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, Tav Parsad Sawayas, Chaupai and Anand Sahib. Each one of them recites one of the five Banis jointly holding the steel vessel (Bata). The reciter stirs the water with a double-edged sword (*khanda*), which he holds in his right hand. After recitation of five *Banis* is over the Panj Piaras stand up, holding the steel vessel jointly with their hands. Then each candidate receives five handfuls (*Chule*) of the Amrit in to his cupped hands, which he drinks. Amrit is also sprinkled five times in his/her eyes and five times in hair, and pursuing the Piara he shouts Sikh greetings-

"Wahe guru ji ka kahalsa. Wahe guru ji ki fateh".

¹. Joginder Singh, *Sikh Ceremonies, Op. cit.*, p.78.

Anyone who accepted initiation was strictly restricted to-

1. Removing hair from any part of body.
2. Eating Halal (meat prepared according to the Muslim method).
3. Adultery.
4. Using tobacco in any form.

Above mentioned four sins are unpardonable in Sikh code of conduct. Worship of idols, pictures, graves and tombs are also prohibited.¹ So, Amrit Paan in Sikhism is not just a simple ceremony, but it gives a strict code of conduct to the community and this common code is the foundation stone of Sikh nation. Through this common conduct of an initiated person acquires equal status at the Sikh brotherhood.

- **Marriage Ceremony (Anand Sanskar):**

The Anand form of marriage has been in vogue from the days of Guru Amardas. The four *lavan* (marriage hymns which take place during the marriage ceremony) were composed by his successor, Guru Ram Das. Guru Amar Das started performance of the ceremony of Anand marriage by reciting Anand Sahib and Guru Ram Das supported it through composing particular marriage Bani, Lavan. He composed *Lavan* in Suhi Raag for his daughter's wedding and this Bani is enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.²

The real goal of marriage in Sikhism is union of both souls with Almighty lord. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, puts emphasis, on purity of conjugal love. Pre-marital or extra marital relationship or divorce is not allowed at all.

To discard adultery and promote civilized life in Sikhs, Bhai Gurdas writes-

¹. A.C. Banerjee, *The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Religion*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 1983, p.260.

². *Guru Grant Sahib*, p.773.

"Dekh Prayian Changian Mawan Bhaina dhian Jana."¹

(Meanings that whenever a devout Sikh see a beautiful female he should treat her like his mother, sister or daughter).

Guru Gobind Singh is very particular about adulterous action. He says-

"Love your own wife more and more.

Never go to another woman's bed

either by mistake or even in dream.

Know that the love of another wife is sharp dagger."²

Sikh Marriage originally legislated in India through the passage of the Anand Marriage Act of 1909. Among the Sikhs a marriage is arranged by the parents with the consent of the both male and female and a Sikh daughter must be married to a Sikh. In Sikhism marriage can take place without waiting for an auspicious day. It can take place on any day which the both parties find convenient. On the occasion of marriage, the bridegroom goes to the house of the bride with his parents, friends and relatives. Both parties assemble in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and bride and bridegroom sit on earth in front of the holy book. Then, after short prayer and Kirtan of some Sabads, the four Lavans read out one by one from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. With each part of Lavan both the bridegroom and the bride take a round of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The bride follows the bridegroom. The first lavan emphasizes that the household life is ordained by the Great creator and to follow asceticism is against the law of nature and the divine will. Second part of Lavan emphasize growth of true love and enthusiasm. The third lays stress on restraint and the fourth and last mentions the harmony of perfect bliss derived from the marriage.

¹. Bhai Gurdas, *Varan, Var 29, Pauri 11.*

² Guru Gobind Singh, *Dasam Granth, Op.cit.*, p.842.

- **The Death Ceremony (Antim Sanskar)-**

Originally Antim Sanskar refers to the funeral rites in Hinduism. Sikh don't believe in rituals and for every ceremony they pray to the God. So in Sikhism death ceremony is named as Antim-Ardas means "final prayer" while Sanskar means 'rite'. There is a general belief that the last rites of Sikhs are similar to those of Hindus. But this notion is not correct. The Sikh tradition of last rites can be well illustrated from the Shabad sand discourse of the Sikh Gurus, Which gives sufficient proof that the Sikh tradition was different from the Hindu tradition.¹

In Sikhism no rituals derived from other religions. The Sikh Rehat Maryada has codified the Sikh traditions in its provisions. In Sikhism a dying person should not be taken from his bed and placed on the ground as is the Hindu custom. Contrary to Hindus, no lamps should be burned and there should be no giving of alms of cows. Comfort should be derived from reading the Guru Granth Bani. Sikh ideology describes death as unavoidable law of nature and affected persons are advised to bear this happily, as no one can avoid death. Deliberate exhibition of grief or mourning such as the beating of breast or screaming are contrary to Sikh teachings. Cremation may be carried out at any convenient time.² In Sikhism the dead body is bathed, clothed and equipped with the five symbols of the Khalsa and then taken in a procession to the cremation ground by singing Gurbani. At the cremation ground hymns of KirtanSohila are recited, after the body is put on fire. As per the convenient day the relatives of the dead go to the cremation ground and collect the charred bones of the dead. These bones and ashes are submerged in preferably river water. There is no such restriction of submerging them in a specific river. But mostly Sikhs submerge them in

¹. Johar Surinder Singh, *Op. cit.*, p.18.

². Sikh Rehat Maryada, *Op. cit.*, p.25.

river Satluj at Kiratpur, where the ashes of Guru Hargobind was first submerged, but this custom is only for the love towards great Guru, Shri Hargobind, otherwise ashes could be immersed in any river or canal and this is being practiced in the areas situated far away from Kiratpur. On the 7th, 11th or 13th day, as convenient to the members of the bereaved family, Bhog of Sri Akhand Paath or Saptahik Paath is being performed when friends and relations of the bereaved family gather and pray to God to give the solace to the grief stricken family and for the peace and salvation of departed soul. In these days people don't stick to particular days, even they finish all customs in 4-5 days. After the usual prayer, Karah Prashad is distributed and assembly disperses.¹

In Sikhism death is the 'Bhana of Waheguru (will of the Almighty) so everybody should bow before the will of God and usually Guru's hymn is repeated-

“ਤੇਰਾ ਭਾਨਾ ਮਿਠਾ ਲਾਗੈ”

"Thy will is sweet, my lord".²

6. GURUDWARA:

The origin and development of Gurudwara was a landmark in the history of Sikhism. Gurudwara, a Sikh temple, means a holy place established for preaching the tenets of Sikh religion, where the Adi Granth is installed. Bhai Kahan Singh 'Nabha' is of the view that these Sikh religious places were formally called Dharmshal as from the time of Guru Nanak to Guru Arjan. These holy places were meant to hold discourses where the congregation were held either in the presence of Guru or a pious Sikh devotee who performed religious functions in the absence of the Sikh Guru.³ Under the ages of Guru Arjan Dev, the Dharmshalas which were built for the purpose of preaching Sikhism, later

¹. Asa Ki Var, Guru Granth Sahib, p.447.

². *Ibid.*, p.475

³. Bhai Kahan Singh, *Guru Shabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh*, *Op.cit.*, p.415.

on became proto-types of Gurudwara.¹

The word 'Gurudwara' in its theological meaning came into prominence when Guru Arjan Dev constructed Harmandir and installed the holy book there.²

In the holy Granth, Gurudwara (door of Guru) implies 'through the Guru' or 'through the help of the Guru'.³ According to I.B. Banerjee, Gurudwara signifies temple built on a place visited by a Guru. Under the pontification of Guru Arjan Dev, several such places had already come into existence.⁴

As we know, Gurudwara was previously known as a Dharmshala which implies a rest house for travellers. But when the Sikhism was in its infant stage, it denoted a room or building which was utilised for performing the Kirtan and prayers.⁵ Guru Nanak himself founded the village of Kartarpur and there he erected the first Dharmshala. These Dharmshalas later developed as centres of religious preachings. Bhai Gurdas writes that-

“Centres of worship were established where Baba (Nanak) set foot.”⁶

All the Sidh centres (Religious) in the world became centres of Nanak's teaching. As if it was an unending Baisakhi festival.⁷

Guru Angad established Dharmshala at Khadur and Kartarpur to spread Sikhism. The Dharmshala which functioned at Khadur had some peculiar features; it served a school where 'Gurmukhi' script was taught.⁸ Guru Amar Das also opened a Dhamshala at Goindwal which became a

¹. I.B. Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol III, *Op. cit.*, pp.261-262.

². D.S. Dhillon, *Sikhism in sixteenth century*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, p.191.

³. *Adi Granth*, pp.351-54.

⁴. I.B. Banerjee, *Op.cit.*, p.261.

⁵. Parkash Singh, *The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread*, D.P.C. Amritsar, 1964, p.13.

⁶ Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, Pauri 27.

⁷ Bhai Kahan Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.415.

⁸ I.B. Banerjee, *Op.cit.*, pp.261-62.

famous centre for all Sikh religious activities under the guidance of the Guru.¹

Guru Arjan Converted the old Dharmshala into Gurudwaras. He made good efforts in the foundation of many new Gurudwaras. The Gurudwara attracted big assemblies of Sikhs and became important centres to preach principles of Sikhism. This period witness a new phase when a chain of Gudwaras was set up among the important Gudwaras built during the period of Guru Arjan Dev were at Tarn Taran, Ramsar, Kartarpur, Goindwal, Khadur, Amritsar and Lahore and become important centres of Sikh missionaries in Punjab.²

Gurudwara mainly fall into two categories- community Gurudwaras and historical Gurudwara. The first type of Gurudwara is built by the Sikhs to meet their social and religious requirement. The second type is concerned with historic Gurudwara.³ These buildings erected on sites which are important in the history of Sikhism. The historical Gurudwara came into existence in sixteenth century. We can cite the example of Sis Ganj in Delhi marks the place where Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred and the Keshgarh where Guru Gobind Singh, instituted the Khalsa. In this way Gurudwara played a significant role in the development of Sikhism and spread the message of Guru far and wide. Gurudwara greatly boosted the status of Sikhism. Gurudwara was seen as the symbol of hope for the depressed, destitute and miserable. It developed as sacred place to give moral and spiritual strength to the people.

7. NISHAN SAHIB:

The Sikh flag and symbol is called the Nishan Sahib. This flag always flies outside a Gurudwara. It is a triangle of saffron or orange

¹ G.C. Narang, "Transformation of Sikhism", *Tribune Press*, Lahore, 1912, p.34.

² Sarup Das Bhalla, *Mahma Parkash*, pp.347-349.

³ Taran Singh, *Guru Angad Dev Ji*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1975, pp.7-8.

cloth. On the flag is the Khanda. The flag is treated with great respect and is renewed each year at the festival of Baisakhi.¹

The Nishan Sahib is the most popularly associated with Guru Hargobind. Under him, the colour and insignia of the Nishan Sahib appears to have been altered. Guru Hargobind's standard colour was saffron, a colour borrowed perhaps from Rajputs and one that become identified with self-sacrifice and martyrdom, particularly in the Khalsa Panth.²

Nishan Sahib was first hoisted by Guru Hargobind Sahib at Akal Takhat Sahib, the Sikhs throne of authority. There Guru Hargobind installed two Nishan Sahib first in 1606 at Akal Bunga and Satguru ka nishan (the standard of the external guru). Next Guru ji installed Nishan Sahib at Harmandir, Golden Temple, at Amritsar in 1609.³

The flag on the top of the Harmandir was first installed by Sardar Jhanda Singh of the Bhangi clan in 1771. In 1783, Udasi Mahants Santokh Das and Pritam Das brought from Dera Ram Rai (Dehradun) a tall tree in one piece and using it as the flagpost raised for Nishan Sahib in front of a Bunga (a hospice or resting place) next to the Akal Takhat, hence the Bunga acquired the name Jhanda Bunga. In 1820, Sardar Desa Singh Majithia, whom Maharaja Ranjit Singh had entrusted with the management of Darbar Sahib, replaced the wooden flag post with a steel one covered with gilded copper sheets.

8. Khanda-

The word Khanda originated from "Khadag" in Sanskrit is a double-edge straight sword. Khanda is very important symbol of the Sikh faith. It is the emblem of the Khalsa. It consist of a two-edged sword,

¹ Jon Mayled, *Sikhism*, Heinemann Eduactional Publisher, Oxford, 2002, p.3.

² Pashaura Singh, *The Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, p.196.


³ Surinder Singh Bakshi, *Sikhs in the Diaspora*, Sikh Publishing House, Birmingham, 2008, p.18.

circled by a Chakkar and the two being flanked by two swords. The two-edged sword at the center of the Khanda symbolized disintegration of false pride and vanity and demolition of the barriers of caste and other inequalities. The Chakkar being a circle without a beginning or an end exhorts the Sikhs to make the whole creation as the object of their compassion and activities.¹ Philosophically, Khanda represents the Advaitism (non-duality) as central point of Sikh philosophy. Its two edges symbolize good and evil, truth and falsehood, light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, but these two contrary elements are manifestation of one supreme being. Infact Khanda is declaration that Sikhism believe in no-duality.

The two *Kirpans* (swords) flanking represent the two swords of Guru Hargobind. Left sword is the symbol of spiritual sovereignty (Piri) and the right should symbol of political sovereignty (Miri).²

Guru Gobind Singh used Khanda to prepare "Amrit" when he created Khalsa Panth fraternity to saint-soldiers to fight against tyranny and injustice, ever ready to take up arms for the protection of weak and righteousness. Khanda the symbol of oneness, of unicity of justice and humanity and immortality. Almost all Sikh warriors used to wear it in eighteen century. It is still worn on the turban by Sikh soldiers of the Sikh regiment in the Indian Army.³

9. EK Oamkar-

Ek Oamkar is an important ecclesiastical word symbol in Sikhism. This symbol  pronounced Ek Oamkar symbolizes the 'one supreme reality' or 'one God'. The Punjabi term Oamkar in reality is a Sanskrit term

¹ Rocky Pendergrass, *Mythological Swords*, p.10.

² Dalbir Singh Dhillon, *Sikhism, Origin and Development*, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, Delhi, 1988, p.232.

³ Trilochan Singh, *The Turban and the Sword of the Sikh*, Chatter Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2001, p.236.

and this is being used in Hindu literature for God from Vedic period. Now, Hindu used its short form Oam. By putting the word Ek (one) before Oamkar, Sikhism has emphasized the oneness of God, one of the most important features of its concept of God. Thus Ek Oamkar is the symbol for the transcendental and absolute Supreme Being. It means that there is only one God. He is one without an equal.¹

Quite appropriately Ek Oamkar are the opening words of Guru Granth Sahib, infact, the opening words of the Mul Mantra with which every section of it based on a Raga begins. Every sub-section in each Raga also begins with Ek Oamkar Satgur Parsad. The Sikh general prayer, called Ardas also begins with Ek Oamkar Waheguru ji ki fateh.² That was the message which Guru Nanak spread to his followers and all human beings. All Gurus practiced this Philosophy in their conduct of life. Guru Arjan Dev says 'ek pita, ekas ke hum barak.'³

CONCLUSION-

The importance of one's identity lies in the true essence of identity. The identity to Sikhism solely began with first guru of Sikhism Guru Nanak Dev, who started the religion and preached common masses of the contemporary society about the realities of the world beyondus. With the passage of time the same teachings were spread by his followers. The tenth guru of Sikhs bestowed Sikhism with one new religion and new identity. This new identity of Sikhs gave them separate recognition in the world.

¹. Harbans Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.103.

². *Ibid.*, p.103.

³. Ranbir Singh, *The Sikh Way of Life*, India Publisher, New Delhi, 1968, p.36.

CHAPTER – II

DEVELOPMENT OF SIKHISM

The birth of Sikhism was not a sudden development, but the result of political, social and religious conditions prevailing at that time. On the eve of Guru Nanak's birth the political, social and religious conditions were worse. In order to have a view about the birth of Sikhism and its development, it is very vital to understand condition prevalent at that time.

Timur, the robber ruler of central Asia had left India seventy years before Guru Nanak was born, yet, the affects of his massacre and destruction were still visible in Punjab. In the years from 1421 to 1434 greater destruction was caused in Punjab by Jasrath Khokhar of Jhelum, Foulad Khan and Turkbachcha of Bhatinda and Sheikh Ali of Kabul.¹ After the departure of Timur "All semblances of government were destroyed in upper India" and extent to which Punjab suffered during the prevailing disorder may be viewed from the fact that when Mubarak Shah, the second Sayyad monarch arrived at Lahore in 1421, he found the city in ruins. He constructed a wall around this ruined city and gave the name to the city Mubarak-Abad.²

After Timur the Lodhi's determined the destiny of the people of Punjab. They adopted the same policies and practices, exploited and looted the people and nothing was safe from their avarice and lust. The villages were burnt, women were abducted and dishonored, children slaughtered, temples were demolished and the priests were killed. The art and learning was wiped out.³

¹. H.R. Gupta, *History of Sikh Gurus*, U.C. Kapur & Sons, New Delhi, 1973, p.2.

². Fauja Singh, *History of Punjab*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, p.167.

³. H.R. Gupta, *Op. cit.*, p.21.

Because of the resentment and resistance of the Punjabi Hindus, the foreign rulers adopted very harsh attitude towards the Hindus and started discriminating them and provided privileges to the Muslim. Hindu had religion but not temple; they had ideas but no schools. The unending resistance offered by the Hindus forced the foreign rulers to change their strategy. Along with never ending forcible conversion to Islam, they offered relief, if the Hindus paid a special personal tax called Jazia, a pilgrim tax to visit their holy places and several other duties which were exempted to the Muslims.¹

Under the Lodhis, Punjab was divided into seven divisions each under a Governor.² There was not homogenous unity in the divided provinces. The political instability in the state, as matter of fact, provided opportunity to Babur and he came to India.

Earlier too Babur had made some attempt to conquer India. In 1519 having possessed effective artillery and competent gunners, he attacked Bajaur, which fell after a spirited struggle. He looked upon this as the first step on the road to Hindustan. Here he ordered the complete massacre, not because it was of his liking, but because he was to set an example. However, when he proceeded further to Bhera on Jhelum, he acted with great restraint, possibly because his object was to possess the country, if possible by peaceful means. In the same year in September, Babur again marched through the Khyber Pass, in order to conquer the Yusafzai and province of Peshawar for future operation in Hindustan, but he was recalled by disturbing news from Badakhshan. In AD 1520, Babur attacked for the third time and after crossing the river Chenab captured Sialkot without much resistance. Then he marched on Sayyidpur which

¹. H.R. Gupta, *Op. cit.*, pp.2-3.

². *Ibid*, p.3.

was taken by assault and put to sword.¹

Guru Nanak and his companion were, to all probability near the scene. The warren and indeserade destruction of property and life hurt Guru Nanak so much that he depicted the terrible scene in his verses. Apart from the massacre, the destruction of houses, mansions, palaces and dishonoring of women gave strong jerk to Nanak's tender feelings which he expressed in *Adi Granth*.

Guru Nanak draws a clear scene of the terrible situation of people. The wealth and sexual beauty which had intoxicated those (invaders) became their enemies. The invaders had forgotten their human nature and they dropped morality and religious duties and looted the people forcibly. Guru Nanak had drawn a picture of the situation in his *Babur Bani* verses as under-²

Babur with the wedding party of sin
From Kabul rushed down.
And for forcibly demanded surrender of
Indian womanhood,
Then went modesty and righteousness
Into hiding,
And falsehood was strutting about in glory set
aside were Kazis and Brahmins, and Satan
went about solemnizing marriages.
Muslim women, reciting the Koran, in their
affliction called on Khuda,
Other women of lower castes and of the Hindus in
this suffering too include in your account.

¹. J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1969, p.6.

². G.S. Talib, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Tr.)*, Vol.II, Punjabi University, Patiala, p.1502 (*Adi Granth*, p.722).

Babur started his visit to attack India again in 1525; he got this favorable opportunity when Daulat Khan Lodhi and Alam Khan Lodhi invited him. He came ten miles and encountered Behar Khan Lodhi, who had been sent by Ibrahim Lodhi against Daulat Khan. Behar Khan was defeated. And Lahore was blundered and captured.¹ The destruction was made, the houses were put to flames and inhabitants were plundered by his soldiers, after the massive massacre Nanak observed the sacking of city by Babur-

"Lahore Shahar Zahar Qahar Sava pahar".²

(Lahore City was given over to death and violence for four hours).

The people felt insecure, invaders treated Indians inhumanly and special kind of terror was let loose by the rulers. Guru Nanak has explained the situation:³

The Lord from Babur's invasions protect Khorasan,
And on Hindustan let loose the terror.
The Lord Himself if punishes not.
So the Mughal Babur he sent down,
Dealing death as Yama.
As in their agony of suffering the people wailed,
Dist thou feel no compassion for them?

As a result of Babur's invasion, future of the Punjab became more uncertain and political instability was a far cry. The Punjab became a cockpit of the struggle of three political powers— Afghans, Mughals and Sultans.

In this triangular contest the Mughal emperor ultimately came out

¹ R.P. Tripathi, *Rise and Fall of Mughal Empire*, Central Book Depot, Allahabad, 1963, p.32.

² G.S. Talib, *Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision*, Guru Das Kapur & Sons, Delhi, 1969, p.91.

³ G.S. Talib, *Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol-I, *Op.cit.*, p.769 (*Adi Granth*, p.260).

victorious, although the people suffered a lot. In the atmosphere of political disturbance and instability many cracks appeared in the political machinery. The kings, knights and administrators became corrupt and they lost their morality. The public was living under the shadow of dark cloud and no path in this darkness is visible, Guru Nanak comments on the age¹:

Kali-Yuga is turned Knife, rulers butcher;
Righteousness on wings on flown,
This is dark night of evil,
The moon of truth is nowhere visible, nor risen.

The king and Knights did not perform their duties to the people. They were not giving the protection but exploiting the public, talking about them Guru Nanak has said.²

The Rajas are lion and the muqadams Dogs,
they fall upon the rayiyat day and night.
Their agents inflict wounds with claws (of power)
and the dogs lick blood and relish the liver.

A contemporary Sikh scholar of Guru Arjan Dev while drawing a picture of the age remarked that it is a strange thing that the people in Kali age developed the attitude of a dog, they take pleasure in swallowing ill-gotten things. The rulers commit sins and those who are herdsmen are killing the sheep themselves. The people being ignorant are not in a position to differentiate between falsehood and truth.³

The judicial system of that time was also very corrupt. The officials indulged in mal-practices and made discrimination with those who were not in a position to approach them or to give them some

¹ G.S. Talib, Vol.I, *Op.cit.*, p.299, (*Adi Granth*, p.145).

² *Adi Granth*, p.1238.

³ Bhai Gurdas, Varan, Var I, Pauri 30.

amount in order to get their work done. About this mal-practice, Nanak stated-¹

The Kings administer justice only,
When his palm has been greased.

Bhai Gurdas also talked about the Qazi who were judges at that time; they used to give one's right to other, by receiving wealth.² Nobody can expect of justice from judicial class in this system.

Due to the prevailing political anarchy and continuous foreign invasion the Punjabi society was ruined and suffered a lot in every sphere. The political condition always reflects the social condition of the society. The change of rulers and the repeated attacks of foreigners brought many evils in the society of Punjab. The Muslim rulers were against the Hinduism and even they forced the masses to embrace Islam. The local masses suffered from both sides, firstly, they became victims to the invaders and secondly, the higher caste people (Brahmins) exploited them by many false conventions and traditions in the name of religion. It was the common belief that one takes birth in higher caste like Brahmin through the grace of God. Bhakta Namdeva said that "the birth in the lower caste is understood as the curse of God".³

The caste system prevailing at that time divided the masses into classes and the people of lower class were made victims of the will of higher class. They were denied their fundamental rights and other facilities.

The demoralized population instead of making adequate changes in the socio-political pattern in order to counter the effect and tyranny of Islam took a rigid stand clung tenaciously to the old values and old

¹ M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol.I, Clargedon Press, Oxford, 1909, p.5.

² Bhai Gurdas, Varan, Var I. Pauri, 30.

³ *Adi Granth*, p.1164.

hackneyed and out model pattern of life. They were divided into four traditional classes viz. Brahmins, Kashtryas, Vaishs and Sudras. Each caste group was divided into many sub-groups. The evil of untouchability existed in the society. The Brahmins and other upper classes quite submissive and tyrannical in their attitude towards their co-religionists called Shudras and untouchables. These untouchable people lived a completely isolated life from the rest of the Hindus. The Hindu priests did not officiate at the house of an untouchable and they were not allowed to enter his temple. The Hindu barber did not shave him and the Hindu washman did not wash his clothes.¹ Guru Nanak raised the voice in favour of Shudras and called, ‘all the human beings created by one and his light is in every person although he belongs to any castes’.²

The religious condition on the eve of Guru Nanak's birth was also worse. Many superstitions were prevalent in people. In the Hindu religion, many evils were existing and they can be noted sufficiently for giving an account of the socio-cultural conditions at the advent of Guru Nanak. The Hindu religion was divided in many sects, which had their own beliefs and norms of worship. The people of these sects, often, considered their methods of worship and the way of living to be the supreme as compared to those of other. This internal factionalism led to religious bitterness among Hindu society. As a matter of fact, there was no way to save the people from these false beliefs and contradictions.

Bhai Gurdas has drawn the clear picture of division of religious sects and their internal factional fightings in his verses³-

ਭਈ ਗਿਲਾਨਿ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਰ ਵਰਨ ਆਸ਼੍ਰਮ ਉਪਾਏ ॥

ਦਸ ਨਾਮ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀਆਂ ਜੋਗੀ ਬਾਰਹ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾਏ ॥

¹ S.S. Gandhi, *History of the Sikh Gurus*, Guru Das Kapur & Sons, Delhi, 1978, p.30.

² *Adi Granth*, p. 469.

³ Bhai Gurdas, Varan, Var 1, Pauri 19.

ਜੰਗਮ ਅਤੇ ਸਰੇਵੜੇ ਦਗੇ ਦਿਗੰਬਰ ਵਾਦ ਕਰਾਏ ॥

ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਬਹੁ ਪਰਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਸ਼ਾਸਤ੍ਰ ਵੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਲੜਾਏ ॥

ਖਟ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਬਹੁ ਵੈਰ ਕਰ ਨਾਲ ਛਤੀਸ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਚਲਾਏ ॥

The priestly classes were dominating in every sphere of life. The down-trodden were considered inferior to the Brahmins and they had to worship them.

Like Hindu religion, the Muslim religion was also divided into many sects. The majority of Muslims in Punjab were of Sunnis. Besides the Sunnis, the Shias, Sufis, Ismailies were the sects of Muslim society. These sects had their own norms and methods of worship, and had acute contradictions on many issues regarding religion. Besides the belief that Muslim society was based on the idea of social equality, the society was divided into many classes and social groups. These classes were the nobles, the clergy, the peasantry and the slaves.¹

At the time of Guru Nanak the Hindus and Muslims had no faith and love among each other. They had developed an attitude of distrust and saw each other with an eye of doubt. The Muslims called Hindus Kafirs and they forced them choose either death or Islam. A Hindu avoided eating and marrying with Muslim.²

The Muslim rulers started converting Hindus into Islam forcibly. The Muslim considered it their religious duty to convert and humiliate Hindus and they demolished all the institutions belonging to Hindu religion. Sometimes a temple was demolished or an idol was broken and its pieces given to the shopkeepers to use them as weight. The mosques were constructed in place of destroyed temples and also used the demolished material in construction.

¹ H.R. Gupta, *Op.cit.*, p.15.

² *Ibid.*

In short, at the time of Guru Nanak's advent, both the religions of India-Hinduism and Islam, had become corrupt and degraded, they had lost their previous purity and glory. According to Bhai Gurdas¹-

ਬਾਂਝਗੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਬਾਰਿ ਹੈ, ਹੈ ਹੈ ਕਰਦੀ ਸੁਣੀ ਲੁਕਾਈ

There was no true religious leader to lead the people.

In such adverse conditions Guru Nanak felt the need of reformation and he started Sikhism with distinct features.

ORIGIN OF SIKHISM-

About the origin of Sikhism Harbans Singh maintains that "The origin of Sikhism lies in its historical necessity when India was passing through a critical period in which the masses suffered greatly from the ignorance, injustice and intolerance."²

Khuswant Singh holds that Sikhism is "born out of wedlock between Hinduism and Islam".³ Sikhism arose as a protest against the cultural and political conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. Observing this, Everyman's Encyclopedia stated about the aim of Nanak as "Nanak a humanitarian aimed at combining Hindus and Muslims into one brotherhood by a unique blend of Sufi beliefs."⁴

Sahota observes about the birth of Sikhism as Nanak's "outright condemnation of the ritualism and farce of Brahmanical religion and bigotry of the followers of Islam was so retirement and so vehement and so effective that a large number of the adherents of both these religions became Guru Nanak's followers and gradually evolved themselves into a new sect which was ultimately transformed into a full fledge religion."⁵

¹ Bhai Gurdas, Varan, Var I, Pauri 24.

² Harbans Singh, *The Massage of Sikhism*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1968, p.vi. (Introduction).

³ Khuswant Singh, *A History of The Sikhs*, Vol.I, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1977, p.17.

⁴ *Everyman's Encyclopedia*, Vol-xii, (Ed.) D.A.Girling, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1978, p.89.

⁵ S.S. Sahota, *The Destiny of the Sikhs*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1971, p.48.

DEVELOPMENT OF SIKHISM:

Regarding the development of Sikhism, Mcleod states that 'the beginning period of Sikhism started from Guru Nanak and ended with the death of the tenth Guru Gobind Singh in 1708'. This period was of fundamental importance, because three important events happened during this period. The first one was the formal engagement of a successor by Guru Nanak to the leadership of the community. The second important event of the period was the compilation of the authentic canonical scripture; Adi Granth (First Book) by the fifth Guru Arjan Dev. Of these three important events of this period, the third one was the founding of the Khalsa (Pure) in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh.¹

Dhillon divided the development of Sikhism into two phases. The 'first in the sixteenth century when the faith originated, second is the seventeenth century when it blossomed and finally became a third entity among the Hindus and Muslims'.²

In the evolution of Sikhism, we can trust a two fold development. The first phase of development i.e. from "Guru Nanak down to the years 1604 when the compilation of the Granth Sahib was completed, the movement ran on peaceful lines.³ But from the execution of the fifth Guru Arjan the Sikhs Gradually becomes a military order. The first idea of militarism arose within Sikhism during the Guruship of the sixth Guru Hargobind. The beginning and end of the seventeenth century was important for two important institutions 'Miri & Piri' and Khalsa in Sikhism. In the word of Benerjee "The whole character of the movement changed as a peaceful sect was gradually turned into a military order and

¹ W.H. Mcleod, *Who is a Sikh?* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p.8.
Khushwant Singh, *Op.cit.*, vol-I, pp.83-84.

² D.S. Dhillon, *Op.cit.*, p.154.

³ I.B. Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol.I, Mukherji & Co., Calcutta, 1963, p.3.

the devotee development into the soldier saint".¹ The second stage of development ran from 1605 up to the year 1699 when the Khalsa was created by Guru Gobind Singh.

GURU NANAK DEV

Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikh religion, was a man of dynamic character. The reformatory role of Guru Nanak is comparable to the role played by Martin Luther and John Calvin in the Christian world.

The Most intense part of Nanak's thought was to find in the ineffable union with the Supreme Being God, and the Path leading to this union with God. Fundamental teachings of Guru Nanak are contained in the verses known as Japji Sahib, which is the morning prayer of the Sikhs. Japji presents the spiritual, ethical principal for the realization of higher realms of reality. It is a unique expression of the identity of metaphysics and ethics achieved by a thinking mind.

Guru Nanak was accepted by the Hindus and Muslims alike as a representative of God who had revealed himself in human form to guide humanity. Nanak was much popular among the Hindus and the Muslims alike. It may be recorded from the following conversation between Guru Ji and Mardana- "Before he breathed his last, the Guru asked him as to how should his mortal remains be disposed of and it is then that Mardana replied that he was neither a Mohammadan nor a Hindu and therefore his remains should neither be treated according to Mohammadan rites nor according to Hindu rites but should be thrown into the river."²

About the intention of Nanak, *The Everyman Dictionary of Religion and Philosophy* states, "Nanak's intention has been not to unite Hinduism and Islam, but to begin a new religious outlook and to find a

¹ *Ibid*, p.2.

² S.S. Sahota, *Op.cit.*, p.77.

new community to clean the corruption of both and while blending the insights of both, expressing itself in simple celebration of the name of one God." ¹

As a supporter of strict monotheism. Guru Nanak believed and preached the oneness of God. Guru attached great importance on Naam (recitation of God's name). By repetition of Naam, according to Nanak, one can conquer his evils. Three important commandments of Nanak are 'Kirt Karo', i.e. 'do your duty, Naam Japo, i.e. repeat the Name of God' and Vand chhako' i.e. give in charity.²

Nanak rejected the distinction of castes in society and established 'Langar' or 'community Kitchen' as a practical step to break the barriers of castes in society. 'Sangat' or 'holy assemblies' is also an important institution started by Guru Nanak Dev. Another most notable point of Guru Nanak's religion is that by living in a house holder's life one can attain salvation. Guru Nanak rejected the orthodox view of laws of *karma* and reinterpreted it by providing more room for freedom of man.³

The works of Guru Nanak not only provided the doctrinal base of Sikh religion, but also promoted the institutional growth and development by setting up Sangats (holy-conclaves) during his extensive travel for over thirty years in India and abroad. He visited Arabia, Mesopotamia, Afghanistan, Tibet, Burma and Ceylon.

Guru Nanak died on September 22 in 1539. Before his death he nominated his successor Angad as the second Guru. And this custom of selection of Guruship was followed until the time of the fifth Guru Arjan Dev.⁴

¹ Geddes Mac Gregor, *The Everyman Dictionary of Religion and Philosophy*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1990, p.572.

² D.S. Dhillon, *Op.cit.*, pp.203-205.

³ *Ibid*, p.198.

⁴ A.C. Banerjee, *Op.cit.*, p.76.

SRI GURU ANGAD DEV

The nomination of Guru Angad to the Guruship is a fact of profound importance in Sikh History. It placed the movement under guidance and control of a definite and indisputable leadership and gave it a distinctive turn at the very outset of its career.¹

When Guru Nanak had stressed the necessity of 'Guru' he was making no new departure, because this had been recognized by almost all the teachers of the medieval schools. But the really vital movement came when he appointed a successor. As Trump says, "the disciples of Guru Nanak would no doubt have soon dispersed and gradually disappeared as well as the disciples of many Gurus before Nanak, if he had not taken care to appoint a successor before his death".²

Similarly, G.C. Narang says, "Had Nanak died without a successor there would have been no Sikhism today".³

Lahina as Guru Angad was called before becoming the successor of Guru Nanak was born, on the 11th of vaisakh in the Samvat year 1561 (A.D. 1504) at Matte di Sarai, a village six miles from Mukatsar, in the Frozepur district of Punjab in the family of Pheru Mal and his wife Sabhrai (Lateron called Nihal Kaur).

Lehna was married to Khivi and the couple was blessed with a daughter and two sons named Dasu and Datu.⁴ The early Sikh sources state that before coming in contact with Sri Guru Nanak Dev, Bhai Lehna was an ardent devotee of the Goddess Durga. He would organize Jathas of devout Hindus of the area around Khadur to pay annual visits to Jwalamukhi, a Hindu pilgrimage centre near Kangra where flames are

¹ I.B. Banerjee, *Op.cit.*, p.146.

² Trumpp, *Adi Granth*, W.M.H. Allen & Co., London, 1970, p.IXXVII.

³ G.C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, New Book Society of India, New Delhi, 1960, p.25.

⁴ M.A. Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.1.

supposed to spring forth from the mountain.

Once, while he was on his way to Jwalamukhi, he heard for the first time some faqirs and sanyasis eulogizing the spiritual personality of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.¹ Their remarks aroused Bhai Lehna's curiosity to know more about the Guru and his mission. Back home, he by chance met a Gurusikh, Bhai Jodha, who introduced him to the bani of Guru Nanak Dev. So profound was the impact that he becomes restive to have an audience with the Guru.²

While serving the Guru he identified himself with the master so completely that according to tradition, Sri Guru Nanak Dev is reported to have said, "Thou art verifying Angad a part of my body". And thenceforth instead of Lehna, he came to be known as Angad.³

There no doubt he was one of the few Sikhs who happened to be with the Guru during the most eventful and significant period of his life at Kartarpur. He was instrumental in establishing the scribal tradition of Gurbani.⁴

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Soon saw that Bhai Lehna alone deserved to be his Spiritual heir. To set at rest any controversy about his successor, Sri Guru Nanak Dev during his very lifetime bestowed the Guruship on Angad, which was quite amazing for the people as it was contrary to the age old custom of hereditary succession prevalent amongst the Hindu and the Muslim society.⁵

The date of pontification was the 13th of Maghar in the Samvat 1596 (A.D. 1539)⁶ on this day Lehna became Guru Angad the next Nanak. Bhai Gurdas later described the time of Angad's pontification as

¹ Kesar Singh Chhibbar, *Op.cit.*, p.17.

² Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Language Department, Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p.285.

³ M.A. Macauliffe, Vol.II. *Op.cit.*, p.14.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, p.287.

⁶ *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, p.291.

follows- 'Angad got the same tilak the same umbrella over his head. The seal in Guru Nanak's hand entered Guru Angad's and proclaimed his sovereignty'.¹

Guru Angad did not remain at Kartarpur for long after becoming the Guru. He felt that he could perform the task bestowed on him by the founder better at Khadur and shifted there.

Guru Angad changed the head-quarter of the faith founded by Nanak but not the pattern of work laid down by the latter. He continued with the daily congregations. Balwand and Satta, the two famous minstrels of the Guru, sang hymns of Guru Nanak in the evening and morning and the number of the Guru's followers began to increase. "All that Guru Angad received as offerings was sent to his Kitchen for the support of pilgrims and way fares. There was continual preaching, singing and repetition of the name as in Guru Nanak's time."²

The introduction of Langar started by Nanak was continued by Angad. The followers were made to sit in a line for the meal in the Langar irrespective of their caste and creed. Soon the Langar became a regular and the most important feature of the organization of the Sikh religion, which hastened the process of the evolution of the Sikh religion as a distinctive entity. The Guru exhortation to his followers to remain satisfied with the will of God with an emphasis greater than in other religion also added to the growth of the distinctive entity in the evolution of Sikh faith and organization.³ Of course, Guru continued like his predecessor to insist on his followers to be humble and serve others.

Like Guru Nanak Angad too, had religious discourses with the yogis, who regarded themselves as Superior to other because they knew

¹ Bhai Gurdas, *Op.cit.*, var-I, Pauri, 46 (Eng trans. By macauliffe)

² M.A. Macauliffe. Vol-II, *Op.cit.*, p.15.

³ *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, pp.294-295.

Yoga, whose practice prolonged life, increased wealth and bestowed supernatural power.¹

Among the steps Guru Angad took for the consolidation of the Sikh community was his propagation of the Gurmukhi script. Much has been said regarding the 'Invention' of the Gurmukhi alphabet by him. But it can be exclusively established that it was not invented in the time of Guru Angad. Thus, for instance, in the Rag Asa in the Adi Granth we come across of 35 verses of Guru Nanak. Actually Guru Nanak coined the new alphabets for Punjabi language and Guru Angad fixed shape and exact sequence of those alphabets. For preaching new script Guru Angad populated writing in Gurmukhi and started teaching new alphabets to children.

According to some writers Gurmukhi alphabets existed before Guru Nanak's time and were not invented by the second Guru, even though the name Gurmukhi may have replaced its original name.²

Trump says, "Guru Angad was altogether unlettered and could himself neither read nor write".³

There is little reason for us to believe these statements. But there are definite indications that Landay a popular script of the Punjab existed at that time. Guru Angad Dev finding it imperfect in vowel sounds which were frequently omitted, improved it by borrowing signs from the Devanagari alphabet and after polishing it named it Gurmukhi.

Macauliffe writes, "Guru Angad deeming that the compositions of Guru Nanak were worthy of a special written character of their own, adopted and modified a Punjabi alphabet called Gurumukhi. To give

¹ *Ibid.* pp.300-307.

² I.B. Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol-1, *Op.cit.*, p.154.

³ Trumpp, *Adi Granth*, 1970, p.LxxxVIII.

expression to what fell from the Guruship.¹

The significance of the adoption of the new script by Guru Angad lies in the rejection of the foreign Persian script. He realized that unless the people adopted a script which was their own and which suited to their language, their culture could not grow. Dr. Narang says "Gurumukhi, the very name of the modified script, reminded those who employed it, of their duty towards their Guru, and constantly kept alive in their minds the consciousness that they were something distinct from the common mass of Hinduism."²

One of Guru Nanak's two sons, Sri Chand, had renowned the world. He and his disciples practiced celibacy and asceticism, which were criticised by Guru Nanak. They professed to belong to Sikhism, but Guru Angad emphatically declared that there was no place for the passive recluses in Guru Nanak's religion, as it concerned the active householders'.³

He asserted that the followers of Sri Chand have no connection with Sikhism. Thus he preserved the purity and distinctive character of the Sikh faith. Besides the spiritual awakening, the Guru paid full attention to the physical development of his disciples.

He declared that human beings were created in the image of God and the human body was the temple of God. It was the duty of his Sikhs to keep the body quite fit to the last.⁴

When the end appeared near, Guru Angad, keeping in view the selfless devotion of Amar Das, appointed him his successor, in A.D. 1552. In doing that he followed the example of Guru Nanak in ignoring

¹ Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol.II, 1963, p.56.

² G.C. Narang, *Op.cit.*, p.29.

³ H.R. Gupta, *History of Sikhs Gurus*, Vol-I, Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher, New Delhi, 1973, p.84.

⁴ *Ibid.*

the claims of his sons Datu and Dasu. The two sons resisted the claims of Guru Amar Das to pontification but no one avail. Guru's followers appreciated the Guru not taking any chance with future of the evolving Sikh panth by allowing the filial feeling to have the better of him.¹

GURU AMAR DAS

Guru Angad's successor Amar Das was a Bhalla Khatri who was born on 5 May, 1479 in the family of Tej Bhan and Bakht Kaur, in Basarke, in the present district of Amritsar. He was the eldest of the four brothers. There is a controversy on the date of the birth of Amar Das. But majority of the scholars are agreed on the year 1479.²

Amar Das married a lady named Mansa Devi at the age of about twenty four and continued in his father's profession of agriculture cum trade. Amar Das a devout Hindu, was zealous follower of the Vaishnav faith and used to bathe in the Ganges every year.³

But despite all his practices of pious Hindu he could not get solace and pined to get a spiritual teacher who could guide him to the right path. One morning while he was engaged in his reflections he heard the voice of some person from his brothers' house chanting the hymns of Guru Nanak.

It was Bibi Amro daughter of Guru Angad, who was chanting the hymns had recently been married to the son of Amar Das's brother. This aroused Amar Das's emotion and he immediately approached Bibi Amro to enquire as to who was the author of those hymns. She told him that they were composed by Guru Nanak, but that she got them from her father, Guru Angad. Amar Das immediately developed a desire to see Amaro's father and requested her to accompany him. They proceeded

¹ D.S. Dhillon, *Sikhism Origin and Development*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1988, p.86.

² Mohd. Letif, *History of Punjab*, Central Press Limited, Calcutta, 1891, p.587.

³ *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, p.311.

there and on reaching the Guru's house Amar Das fell at Guru Angad's feet and there after began to lead the life of devotion and service to him.¹

Guru Angad who had watched Amar Das's selfless devotion, endless love and sincerity for the last twelve years, finally decided to entrust him the responsibility of propagating the message of Nanak after him. He sent for five copper coins and a coconut, bathed Amar Das, clothed him in a new dress and installed him in the Guru's seat.

He placed the five copper coins and the coconut before him while Bhai Buddha affixed to his forehead the tilak of Guru Ship.² Guru Amar Das decided to settle at Goindwal, where he had already lived for some time on the suggestion of his master.

It is said that immediately after the death of Guru Angad, Amar Das confined himself, in solitary room meditating on God and pondering over Guru Angad's instruction. He continued to do so till the devotees approached him and requested him to meet his followers.

Amongst the first whom the Guru now met were the minster's Satta and Balwand. They sung in praise of the Guru in Such eccentric vein that this was subsequently incorporated in the Adi Granth.³

Guru Amar Das henceforth never forgot his devotees and regularly held his daily congregation at Goindwal.⁴

The institution of Langar and Sangat began to develop further and added to the popularity of the Sikh order under the Guru Amar Das. But that made it an eyesore to Datu, who inspite of the fact that his father, Guru Angad asked him to serve Guru Amar Das, began to oppose his father's successor.

¹ Sarup Das Bhalla, *Mehma Prakash*, Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1971, p.50.

² M.A. Maculiffe, *Op.cit.*, vol.III, p.43, Fauja Singh, *Guru Amar Das*, Sterling Publishers, Delhi, 1979, p.56.

³ *Adi Granth, Rag Ramkali, Tikke di Var*, Pauri, 6, pp.96-68.

⁴ Fauja Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.63.

Datu went to the extent of building up his own 'Guru dam' at Khadur.¹ He even did not hesitate to say: "Amru (Guru Amar Das) is old. He is my servant. I am prince of the Guru's line".² However nobody paid him much attention and this increased his frustration. His jealousy for the new Guru went on increasing and crossed all limits of decency.

One early morning seeing the Guru seated on the Guru Gaddi, he kicked the Guru off his seat and showed his bitterness with the remark: "only yesterday thou went a water carrier in our house and today thou seated as a Guru".³

The Guru humbly answered, "O Great King, Pardon me. Thou must have hurt thy foot."⁴ When the Guru's devotees started getting restive and the insult shown to the Guru by Datu, he pacified them and advised them not to get provoked. Guru Amar Das thoroughly organized the Sikh Gurudwara, and remained the religious leader of the Sikhs for twenty-two years. He concentrated on social reforms. Guru Amar Das introduced new ceremonial forms for birth and death. He strictly forbade the practice of Sati and tried to liberate woman from the practice of Parda.⁵

Other social reforms made by third Guru Amar Das were remarriage of widows, inter caste marriage etc. He divided the whole country inhabited by the followers into twenty two missionary units or Manjis as they were called. The literal meaning of the word 'Manji' is 'charpoy' or 'cot'. Guru Amar Das, also preached his sermons by sitting on charpoy or cot.

The necessity of the 'Manji System' was explained by Dhillon as in

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid*, Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, Vol-II, p.63.

³ Fauja Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.62.

⁴ M.A. Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, Vol.-II, p.64.

⁵ D.S. Dhillon, *Sikhism: Origin and Development, Op.cit.*, p.95.

those days it was not possible for them to visit the Guru frequently for the Sake of joining the Sangat. Guru therefore appointed his pre-eminent devotee to impart his teachings to the followers who were at far off places.¹

Guru Amar Das took an important step which went a long way in giving the Sikhs a congregation character. This was when he took the imitative for the collection of bani or composition of the previous Gurus. Guru Amar Das strongly urged upon his followers to spurn all false or spurious hymns and to accept only those which were genuine and authoritative.

It gave a distinct look to the Sikh order and besides giving a great fillip to the evolution of a distinct society of the rapidly increasing Sikh community.²

Guru Amardas held his durbar at Goindwal, and not at Khadur, this precaution was considered necessary in view of the fact that his sons Datu were not well disposed towards Guru Amardas.³

As a result of the vigorous preaching of the idea of the Guru by Guru Amardas, there were great increases in the number of devotees who came to Goindwal to seek his blessings. Many people from the surrounding villages had also settled at Goindwal, including a band of Muslim families and orthodox Hindus.

They felt upset over the growing popularity of the Guru's teachings. The tension led to some clashes between the disciples of the Guru and the Mohammadans and Hindus. But Guru Amardas intervened and solved these problems patiently.⁴

¹ *Ibid.*

² Fauja Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.136; Sarup Das Bhalla, *Op.cit.*, p.208.

³ Harbans Singh, "Guru Amar Das ji: A Brief Biographic Note", *Punjab Past and Present*, 1979, p.334.

⁴ Fauja Singh, *Guru Amar Das Life and Teaching*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1979, p.65.

One of the significant acts of Guru Amardas of Goindwal was the construction of Baoli (water well). The increasing number of devotee coming to Goindwal created scarcity of drinking water. The population of Goindwal as whole was also increasing.

As the town was situated on the highway and was also a crossing point for people over the river, many people would stay there for the night.¹

Some people from the lower castes often complained to the Guru that they were not allowed to draw water from the common well. By digging a Baoli he wanted to provide an alternative common well, so that people belonging to all castes were able to get water without restriction imposed by caste conscious bigots. He also wanted the people to understand that it was useless to go to holy places for purification baths.

Meditation on the Guru's word and contemplation of true name alone could lead to their salvation. The devotees of the Guru flocked to Goindwal and rendered service at the project of the Baoli which became a great unifying force. The devotees were convinced that with the help of the Guru's shabad and True name they would get rid of the cycle of Births and Deaths and attain salvation.²

Macauliffe says, "The Guru had declared that whoever should attentively and reverently repeat the 'Jap ji' on every step (of the Baoli) should escape from the wanderings in the wombs of the eighty-four lakhs of the luring creatures".³

For the Sikhs, there was no longer need to go to the Ganges or other holy places of pilgrimage. They got their own centre of spirit-

¹ Jodh Singh, *Life of Guru Amardas ji*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1953, p.56.

² Satbir Singh, *Parbat Meran Jivni Guru Amar Das Ji(Punjabi)*, New Book Co., Jalandhar, 1978, p.56.

³ Macauliffe, Vol-II, *Op.cit.*, pp.96-97.

vanity. This proved to be the step which helped the Sikhs to develop a distinct identity of their own.

The Guru's disciples mooted a suggestion that there should be one common place of general meeting for the Sikhs, and special fairs should be organized periodically when they could assemble and fraternize with one another. Upon this the Guru proclaimed that gatherings of the Sikhs should be held on the first day of the month Baisakh as well as Magh, and also on the traditional festival of Diwali. The instructions of the Guru were implemented with promptness, and on the occasion of the Baisakhi that followed.

Goidnwal assumed the festive look of a large fair, as it was decided to make it an annual feature. The holding of these yearly assemblies at the centre under the personal care of the Guru turned a new leaf in the evolution of the Sikh Panth.¹ A.C. Banerjee Says, "These festivals of the Sikhs made Sikhs independent of other communities and helped them in acquiring a distinct entity".²

Guru Amar Das had two sons Mohri and Mohan, all agree that Jetha was more obedient to the Guru either of these two. Guru Amar Das died at a ripe age. After his death Jetha succeeded to the pontificate in 1574 under the name of Guru Ram Das.³

GURU RAM DAS JI

Guru Ram Das whose early name was Jetha was born in Lahore in October 1534. His father, Hari Das, was a Khatri of the Sodhi tribe, and his mother, Anup Kaur, who was called Daya Kaur after her marriage was pious lady given to the life of devotion and prayer. Jetha was given

¹ Fauja Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.130.

² A.C. Banerjee, *Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, Rajesh Publication, New Delhi, 1978*, p.108.

³ D.S Dhillon, *Op.cit.*, p.97.

religious and virtuous activities from his very childhood.¹

Jetha when quite young is said to have fallen with a company of Sikhs who were singing the Guru's hymns and were proceeding on their way with great rejoicing. On enquiry he learnt that they were going to have the sight of great Guru Amar Das.

Who was the third in succession to Baba Nanak the great philosopher saint. Being impressed with them and the hymns they sang, Jetha decided to accompany them. Reaching Goindwal Jetha surrender himself to Guru for life long service with full devotion. Jetha was a young man of as much exterior beauty as of interior devotion.²

Guru Amar Das married his daughter Bibi Bhani to Jetha on 22nd of Phagun, Samvat 1610, when he was 19 year old. The couple led a happy married life and blessed with three sons- Prithi Chand, Mahadev and Arjan Dev.³

After his marriage with Bhani, Jetha settled down at Goindwal. He considered the Guru as his spiritual mentor and himself only his ignorant disciple. His attitude towards the Guru was not the one normally shown to a father-in-law, a relation who was then ordinarily treated with scant respect by Indian bride grooms. Jetha served Guru Amar Das as his Guru, and engaged himself in the regular service of the congregation.

He did not hesitate doing manual work when the Baoli was being constructed at Gobindwal. Guru Amar Das observing Jetha's selfless devotion began to call him Ram Das. His choice for a successor fell on him in September 1574.⁴

It is however, very much debatable that the construction of the tank

¹ M.A. Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.88.

² Giani Gian Singh, *Shri Guru Panth Parkash*, Murtaja Press, Delhi, 1880, p.615.

³ M.A. Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, vol.II, p.91.

⁴ Giani Gian Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.615.

of Amritsar commenced in the time of Guru Amar Das as Suraj Prakash believes. The miracle connected with a pool which later formed the tank of nectar, around which the city of Amritsar developed, and in which a lame man by taking bath became perfect, is placed by Suraj Prakash itself in the time of Guru Arjan. This would suggest that the tank and the city should have been built only in the time of Guru Arjan. But the fact that the city was previously known as Ramdaspur, raises a strong doubt regarding the authenticity of this account as well.

Forster and Cunningham, are of the view that the grant of the land at which city of Amritsar developed was made by Akbar to Guru Ram Das and it was the latter who funded the city.¹ 'Sikhan De Raj di Vithia' supports the view that the city was founded by Guru Ram Das.²

M. Gregor writes that Akbar visited Guru Ram Das and was impressed with his dispositions and issued an order "that a certain portion of Ground should be granted to Ram Das, which was accordingly done and the ground thus bestowed, being of circular form was named Chukk Guru Ram Das.

In this enclosure the Gooroo built Amritsar and went occasionally from Goindwal to reside there, and his disciples and followers settled at that place".³

The attendant activities in the construction of the holy tank at Amritsar helped in the growth of the cohesion of the Sikh community.

With large number of followers and admirers helping the Guru in the excavation of tank, it becomes difficult to meet the expenses of the Guru Ka Langar. It becomes necessary for the Guru to send his agents

¹ Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol-I, R.Faulder, London, 1978, p.25.
Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, S. Chand and Co., Delhi, 1955, p.45.

² Shardha Ram Philauri, *Sikhan De Raj Di Vithia*, Trans. by. M.H. Court, Language Department, Patiala, 1888, p.20.

³ W.L.M. Greger, *History of The Sikhs, Vol-I*, James Madden, London, 1846, pp.50-54.

called Masands, to different areas. They were to collect the offering of the faith as well as from the Manji holders while simultaneously speeding the Sikh teachings. These Masands were honest men and confident disciple who restrained themselves from the lust of wealth or maya.

Moreover the money collected by the masands was in the form of offering and purely voluntary. Later on the Masand system deteriorated as the trusted devotees indulged in corrupt practices and the institution was put to an end by Guru Gobind Singh.¹

During the Short period of his Guruship of about seven years, Guru Ram Das provided a well knit community with a form and content. He inducted new institution of Masand in the Sikh fold. He laid the foundation of a sacred tank called Amritsar pool of nectar. He attracted a number of devotees to come and settle with him. Guru Ram Das laid the foundation of a new township at Amritsar, which subsequently becomes a place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs. In the beginning this new habitation around the tank was popularly called 'Guru Ka Chak'. "Some petty traders and shop keepers settled near the tank to meet the requirement of the people, particularly of those were digging the tank".

This commercial place came to be known as 'Guru Ka Bazaar', "Soon after Guru Ram Das started construction of another tank called Santokhsar but was not destined to complete it."²

GURU ARJAN DEV

Guru Ram Das's successor, Arjan Dev had, parental legacy of long service to the Sikh faith. He was born at Goindwal on 18th Vaisakh, Samvat 1610.³ He was the third and the youngest son of his parents. His mother Bibi Bhani was the daughter of Guru Amar Das. All Sikh

¹ *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa, Op.cit.*, p.358.

² Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikh Gurus, Op.cit.*, p.88.

³ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa, Op.cit.*, p.359.

chronicles are agreed that-

Guru Ram Das declared that the Guruship was the reward of merit...saying this the Guru sent for five paisa and a coconut, placed them before Arjan, and descending from his throne seated Arjan on it in presence of the holy congregation. He got the responsibilities of a religious leader, in suppression of his senior brothers.¹

Guru Arjan Dev spent his early days at Goindwal with his Parents and was ever ready to obey the commands of his father as the Sikh Guru. As a growing child he had sat at the feet of a Sikh of high intellect like Bhai Buddha. He had shown great interest and love for the Sikh tenets, well established into practices under the pontification of Guru Ram Das. Little wonder he proved himself an "original thinker, illustrious poet, practical philosopher, great organizer, eminent statesman and the first martyr to faith".²

The first task before Guru Arjan Dev was the completion of the tank at Amritsar, the sanctity of which was increased by the construction of Harmandir or the temple of God in its midst. According to the Sikh records, while the Hindu temples are closed on three sides and opened only towards the east or the rising sun, the great Sikh temple at Amritsar was purposely opened on all the four sides which meant that the Sikh worship was open to all and not concerned with only one type of worship.

After completing the temple, in his characteristic manner the Guru attributed all his success to the grace of God and in this connection he composed many hymns. Thus he said, "the creator stood in the midst of the work and not a hair of any man's head was touched."³

The Guru also proclaimed on the sanctity of the tank as-

¹ M.A. Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, Vol-II, p.280.

² Hari Ram Gupta, *Op.cit.*, p.90.

³ *Ibid*, pp.33-34.

"He who bath here in, having meditated on his God,
shall gain absolute(physical and spiritual) health.
He who bathed in the tank of the saints
shall obtain salvation".¹

The Guru also transferred his residence to Amritsar and the place developed soon in to a city and the central place of the Sikh pilgrimages. Much has already been said regarding the importance of this tank and the temple in the Sikh history.

There is no doubt that ever since the completion the city of Amritsar has always acted as the spiritual capital of the Sikhs. He also built a large temple at Taran Taaran, and the place became very important place of pilgrimage.²

He also founded the towns of Taran Taaran in Amritsar district and Kartarpur in Jullundur District. Guru Arjan also founded another town known as Hargobindpur, after the name of his son Hargobind. But besides these contributions Guru Arjan crowning work was the compilation of the Adi Granth, the authentic holy scripture of the Sikhs.³

Adi Granth contains the writings of the first five Gurus and the ninth Guru including Guru Arjan's composition the Sukhmani Sahib, the writing of the sixteen Hindu and the Muslim Saints and the composition of two Sikhs and eleven bhatts (bards).⁴

After the extreme tortures by the orders of Moghul emperor Jehangir, Guru Arjan breathed his last on June 1606. The martyrdom of Guru Arjan was the turning point in the history of the Sikhs. Guru Arjan was the first martyr of Sikh history.⁵

¹ *Guru Granth Sahib*, M. III, p.13.

² G.C. Narang, *Op.cit.*, p.42.

³ Khushwant Singh, *Op.cit.*, pp.304-309.

⁴ *Ibid*, p.306.

⁵ Ganda Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.33.

GURU HARGOBIND

Guru Hargobind was born on 21 Haar, Samvat 1652 (June 1598) at wadali in Amritsar district.¹ After spending some time at wadali, Guru Arjan along with Hargobind, the young heir to Guruship, returned to Amritsar. At Amritsar, Hargobind was put under the guidance of Baba Budha, who was entrusted the task to impart education to the future Sikh Guru. According to some Sikh traditions, Guru Hargobind had three wives.² He had one daughter, Bibi Veero and five sons namely Baba Gurdita born in A.D. 1613, Ani Rai in A.D. 1616, Suraj Mall in the year A.D. 1615, Atal Rai in the year A.D. 1619 and Tegh Bahadur in the year A.D. 1621.

Hargobind ascended the throne of Guruship on 9 Haar, Samvat 1663, (June 1606) at the age of 11 years.³ Guru Arjan before his death left a message to his son and successor, Hargobind, in the following words: "Let him sit fully armed on his throne, and maintain an army to the best of his ability."⁴

Immediately after the news of Guru Arjan's martyrdom, Hargobind was appointed by Bhai Buddha who had the rare privilege of appointing the first five successors of Guru Nanak. The normal ceremony consisted of tying a turban and offering him a *Seli* a woolen cord worn as a necklace or hoisted around the head of the Guru.

In accordance with the departing wishes of his father and the changed circumstances, Guru Hargobind chose to wear sword belts and turban with a royal curette. The wearing of two swords, representing Miri and Piri, temporal and spiritual sovereignty and therepresentation royalty

¹ Sohan Kavi, *Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevein*, Ed. Giani Inder Singh Gill, Amritsar, 1968, p.26.

² Giani Gian Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.44.

³ Sohan Kavi, *Op.cit.*, pp.146, 149-50.

⁴ M.A. Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, Vol-III, p.99.

were significant.¹ The ceremony was performed on the mound in front of Harimandir where later Akal Takht was built.

Sikhism henceforth in the words of Guru Hargobind was to lay equal emphasis on development of physical and spiritual facilities. Tegh (Scimitar) and Deg (Community Kitchen) were to go hand in hand.

That was within the frame work of Guru Nanak mission and that was Guru Hargobind's instant and spontaneous response to the threat posed by the state tyranny.² Guru Hargobind under the advice of leading Sikhs chose to move over to the thickly forests and hill connected Malwa tract.

Guru Hargobind accompanied by his mother Ganga and wife Damodari arrived in village Daroli in pargana Dargu (Near Moga in Ferozepur District) at the house of Bhai Sain Das on Jeth Sudi, 8 Samvat 1663 i.e. June 4, 1606.³

Guru Hargobind stayed at village Daroli for over a year and a half i.e. up to the end of the year 1607. Guru Hargobind got a well dug at Daroli and held regular diwan, congregation at a site outside the village where sangat from Malwa and beyond also came.⁴

He was the first Guru to visit Malwa. His presence made big dent in the area which followed religious cult Sakhi Sarwar. The Sikh movement became a torrent under his successors.

Guru Hargobind on return to Amritsar began in a big way the implementation of his new-look policy. He got full support from Bhai Gurdas who in his compositions dwelt upon the necessity to resort the sword by men of God to check the evil.

¹ Sohan Kavi, *Op.cit.*, pp.150-51.

² *Ibid.*

³ Piara Singh Padam and Giani Gian Singh (ed). *Guru Kian Sakhian by Swarup Singh Kaushik*, Patiala, 1970, p.26.

⁴ Kahan Singh Nabha, *Mahan Kosh*, Delhi, 1990, pp.557-58.

The foundation of Akal Takht or Akal Bunga (The eternal throne) was laid in 1608 in front of the Harimandir. It was built on a raised platform about 3 meters high. To begin with the high mound of earth was leveled, and later the ground floor was built.¹

This was his seat of temporal power. Bhai Gurdas was appointed its first incharge for proper management of routine programmes of the place. Here Guru Hargobind would watch wrestling bouts and Military feasts, including the sword fight of his disciples. He also began to take interest in secular affairs and provided the people quick and cheap justice.²

He invented *Dhad*, an instrument suitable for singing of ballads. And Dhadis sang ballads of heroism. He ordained that when he was in Harimandir, he was a saint, while at Akal Takhat he was a king.³

Soon disciples offered themselves for military training and volunteered to serve as soldiers in return for food and clothes only. Keeping in view the new requirement of militia, he laid the foundation of a fort named Lohgarh at Amritsar in 1609 to house men and horses. Later, a wall around Amritsar also came up.⁴

Guru Hargobind inducted new things in the Sikh social order. The Guru used to wear royal emblem. He was called by his devotees as "Sacha Padshah" i.e. a true King. The Guru Started taking meat diet and indulged in hunting. A new mode started in the congregational worship. The devotees took torches in their hands, while reciting hymns from Adi Granth, and went round the circumbulatory path (Parkarma).⁵ Thus, the Guru maintained not only the army but also inducted organizational

¹ Jahangir Emperor, *Tuzak-i-j-Jahangir*, Trns. by A.Rogers, Ed., H.Beveridge, Vol-I, New Delhi, 1968, p.96.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Sohan Kavi, *Op.cit.*, Vol-VIII, p.35.

changes.

In the year A.D. 1632, Shah Jahan revised his religious policy and issued instructions that no religion except Islam should be permitted to propagate its faith and all the newly constructed temple, especially at Banaras should be demolished. Therefore, many temples were destroyed. It is said in pursuance of his policy, the Gurdwara and a Baoli at Lahore was destroyed and a mosque was erected over its place.¹

After shifting to Kiratpur the Guru felt that his own end was drawing near and decided to choose his successor. His choice fell on his grandson, Har Rai, the second son of Baba Gurditta. Guru ji died on Sunday the third day of the Muharram, A.H. 1055 (A.D. 1645) after a spiritual and temporal reign of thirty seven years and ten months.²

GURU HAR RAI

Guru Har Rai was the Grandson of Guru Hargobind and as above mentioned the son of Baba Gurdita ji. He was born on 1631 A.D.³ Guru Har Rai had friendly relations with Dara Shikoh eldest son of Moghulemperor Shah Jahan. As a result of this friendly relations, Har Rai supported Dara Shikoh, to fight against Aurangzeb. Guru Har Rai offended against his elder son Ram Rai because he explained the verses of Guru Granth Sahib wrongly to appease Emperor Aurangzeb and for this reason Guru Har Rai qualified his younger son Harkrishan as the eighth Guru and disqualified his elder son Ram Rai. Guru Har Rai remained the spiritual leader of the Sikhs for seventeen years.⁴

GURU HAR KRISHAN

Guru Har Krishan was born at Kiratpur in the year A.D. 1656. He

¹ Kahan Singh Nabha, *Mahan Kosh*, p.644.

² Sarup Das Bhalla, *Op.cit.*, p.537.

³ M.A. Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, Vol-IV, p.275.

⁴ D.S. Dhillon, *Op.cit.*, pp.126-27.

was the youngest son of Guru Har Rai. Har Rai's eldest son was deprived of Guruship because of his villainous activities. Ram Rai reported the matter to the emperor Aurangzeb.¹

It was for the first time in history that the emperor had to interpose with the matter of succession of Guruship. Then the Guru Hari Krishan was summoned to Delhi by the emperor. But he was stricken with small pox and died on A.D. 1664.²

GURU TEGH BAHADUR

Guru Tegh Bahadur was the youngest son of sixth Guru Hargobind. He was born at Amritsar in A.D. 1621.³ He was a man of solitary nature and devoted to peaceful activities with religious sermons and discussions.

Tegh Bahadur with his wife and other companions visited the important places of religious importance. He travelled through Agra, Allahabad, Banaras, and Gaya and arrived at Patna.⁴

On his way towards eastern countries Guru Tegh Bahadur stayed at Dacca, (presently in Bangla Desh) for about a year. Guru was in Dacca when he received the news of birth of his son at Patna.⁵ During his eastward journey Tegh Bahadur also visited Assam.⁶

From Bengal Guru Ji went to Assam. He spent nearly three years in the province before returning to Patna to join his family.⁷ Guru Tegh Bahadur accompanied Raja Ram Singh of Amber, who was deputed by Moghul emperor Aurangzeb to make an expedition against Assam.⁸

In Assam, Guru Tegh Bahadur visited Dhubri and Kamakhya.

¹ *Ibid.*, p.130.

² M.A. Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, Vol-IV, p.329.

³ D.S. Dhillon, *Op.cit.*, p.133.

⁴ W.H. Meleod, *Op.cit.*, pp.112-114

⁵ A.C. Banerjee, *Op.cit.*, p.163.

⁶ J.D. Cunningham, *Op.cit.*, p.67.

⁷ Gopal Singh, *A History of the Sikh People*, World Sikh University Press, New Delhi, 1979, p.248.

⁸ Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, p.356.

Regarding Tegh Bahdaur's visit to Dhubri, Khushwant Singh maintains that at Dhubri, the capital of Kamrup, "the Guru informed Raja Ram Singh's officers that Guru Nanak had visited the place and rendered it holy by his footsteps".¹

The Gurdwara of Dhubri is a monument of Assam history which commemorates the love and compassion of Guru for the Assamese people. Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed on November 11, 1675. Guru Tegh Bahdaur suffered Martyrdom for religion and his martyrdom was unique in the history of India or world.²

GURU GOBIND SINGH

After the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Sikhs were left in a precarious condition. The new Guru was a boy of nine years old at the time of given such huge responsibility and the situation was unpleasant and full of difficulties for the Guru. It was the period full of dangers which were looming over Sikhism.³

The schismatic sects within Sikhism and the urge for Guruship have created a trial of unending bitterness.⁴ But the young Guru with a dint of perfect mind and intellect got control over the internal situation. G.C. Narang writes, "Guru had attained a perfect way over the mind of his followers who were now prepared to follow him in the life and death".⁵

Guru Gobind Singh strengthened the militant zeal and zest of his followers and prepared them 'to follow him into the field of battle and regarded it as a blessing to fight and die under his banner'.⁶

Gobind Rai as referred to earlier was born at Patna on 7 Poh

¹ Khushwant Singh, *Op.cit.*, vol-I, p.74.

² *Ibid.*, p.80.

³ I.B. Banerjee, *Op.cit.*, Vol-II, p.64.

⁴ Giani Gian Singh, *Op.cit.*, pp.769-70.

⁵ G.C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p.88.

⁶ I.B. Banerjee, *Op.cit.*, Vol-II, pp.65-66.

(Sudi), 1723 Samvat and become Guru at the age of nine in the year 1732 Samvat, when his father was executed in Delhi.¹ After attaining Guruship, he issued an edict and “the presents of arms and horses began to come in.”² 'The Guru', writes Macauliffe, "delighted to wear uniform and arms and practice, and induce others to practice, archery and musket-shooting".³

Guru Gobind Singh followed that custom of his predecessor and "used to rise in the end of the night and perform his devotions. He particularly delighted to listen to the Asa ki Var. After day break he gave his Sikhs divine instructions and then practiced martial exercises. In the afternoon he always received his Sikhs, went for shooting or horse riding; and ended the evening by performing divine service of the Rahiras".⁴ Such was the daily routine of the Guru. A large number of devotees visited the Guru daily.

The Langar was extended to a much large scale. Guru personally took interest in the proper functioning of Langar. It is said that along with all these activities Guru had shown proper attention to his house-hold life and the member of his family.⁵

Many *Masands* from different places came to visit the Guru and presented a considerable amount of income from the offerings and many came to become the part of his army. It is said that Guru was "daily adding to the number of his soldiers".⁶

Thus, observing the prosperity and progress of the Guru, the Hill Rajas particularly Raja Bhim Chand of Bilaspur, in whose territory the

¹ M.A. Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, Vol-IV, p.358.

² Giani Gian Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.167.

³ Giani Gian Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.171.

⁴ M.A. Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, p.3.

⁵ Giani Gian Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.1292.

⁶ M.A. Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, Vol-V, p.5.

Guru was settled, became jealous of the Guru.¹ As a sequel to this, Bhim Chand, who was already not on good terms with the Guru, in alliance with Fateh Shah, whose daughter, was married to the son of Bhim Chand, and some other Hill Rajas, raised a big army against the Guru. The battle was fought in the year 1686-1688 at Bhangani, a small village near Paonta.²

Guru stayed at Paonta for a few years. Here, the Guru used to sit on the Bank of the river Yamuna, flowing just across the fort, and composed poetry. Paonta is said to be one of the centers for the Guru's literary activities. As many as fifty two prominent poets stayed here with the Guru. Some of the works written in Sanskrit were translated into Braj Bhasha.³

After the battle of Bhangani Guru left Paonta and came back to Anandpur. Sensing odd conditions for Sikhs, here at Anandpur, Guru began to fortify the town.⁴ Gobind Singh built five fortresses, viz "Anandgarh, Lohgarh, Holgarh, Taragarh and Fatehgarh. Some scholars also included Keshgarh in the list and accepted total number of forts as six. Then he sent five of his disciples to "Benares to learn Sanskrit and the Hindu religious texts".⁵

Besides these, the crowning event of Guru Gobind's life was the creation of the 'Khalsa'. On the one day before 'Baisakhi' in 1699, on Guru's order Sikhs especially assembled at Anandpur. A special tent was fixed on the raised platform. After the morningprayer, Guru Gobind Singh went inside the tent and remained there for some time. After some time he come outward with a sword in hand and announced that his

¹ I.B. Banerjee, *Op.cit.*, Vol-II, pp.66-67.

² Koer Singh, *Gur Bilas Patshahi Das*, ed. Shamsher Singh Ashok, Punjabi University Patiala, 1968, p. VI.

³ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh, Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Chandigarh, 1966*, p.50.

⁴ Bachitar Natak, *Op.cit.*, VIII, 37.

⁵ Khushwant Singh, *Op.cit.*, Vol-I, p.74.

sword was eager for blood of five Sikhs. Then five Sikhs one by one rose to offer himself for this sacrifice. After a long time Guru came out of the tent with the five Sikhs. Then the Guru announced that five beloved Sikh's Panj Piyare were to be the nucleus of new community known as the 'Khalsa' or the pure ones.¹

The baptizing ceremony or 'Pahul' (Sikh initiation) was that Guru Gobind poured water mixed with sugar in an iron vessel, stirred it with a Khanada (double edged sword) and recited the compositions of earlier Guru and his own. The members of different castes drink Amrit out of the same bowl.²

This process of drinking Amrit from the same bowl indicates their initiation into the 'Khalsa' and renamed them with the suffix Singh (Lion) to male members and 'Kaur' to female members.³

After giving 'Amrit' to the five beloved Sikhs the Guru asked them to give him the 'Amrit' from the same vessel. They were surprised and expressed their inability to do so. Then the Guru told them "now onward the Khalsa is the Guru, and the Guru is the Khalsa". Then the five beloved Sikhs baptized the Guru with 'Amrit'. In this way Guru Gobind Singh transferred the authenticity of Guru to the panth.⁴

As the outward sign of the Amritdhari disciples, members of the Khalsa were ordered to wear five k's. These five k's are known as Panj-Ka, Kara, Kesh (uncut Hair), Kangha (comb), Kachera (short kachha), Karha (iron bangle) and Kirpan (sword).

The religious symbols according to Neville, "expressing beliefs,

¹ *Ibid.*

² V.A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1919, p.171.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ R.C. Neville, "Religious Philosophies and Philosophy of Religion" in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol.38, London, 1995, p.171.

function in various intentional contexts"¹ Besides these members of Khalsa were asked to follow four rules of conduct, such as not to cut hair, abstain from tobacco, refrain from adultery and to eat Jhatka meat instead of Halal meat.²

From that time onward Gobind Rai was known as Gobind Singh. And the new method of greetinga Sikh was formulated as loudly pronouncing "*Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa. Wahguru Ji Ki Fateh*". (The Khalsa are the chosen of God. Victory be to God).³

The Guru asked his devotees to add 'Singh' to their names after they had been baptized according to the way which was laid down when the Khalsa was created.⁴ After the creation of the Khalsa, thousands of people got themselves initiated into Khalsa brotherhood. These people were imbued with the feeling of courage, bravery and sacrifice.⁵

The Guru's devotees after entering into the Khalsa fold were asked not to smoke, not to drink, to discard idolatry and caste pride and to keep five k's strictly. In this way the Guru created a class of brave Sikh soldiers. The militarism became an important aspect of Sikh faith and the task of saving humanity and preserving self honor was entrusted to it. Guru Gobind Singh molded the Sikh community into a nation of warriors.⁶

After the creation of the Khalsa, a large number of devotees particularly form the peasantry and the people of lower *Varnas* came into the Khalsa Panth. All were ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Dharma.⁷

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Harbans Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.73.

⁵ Puran Singh, *Op.cit.*, pp.27-28.

⁶ G. C. Narang, *Op.cit.*, p.80.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Like the first Sikh Guru, Nanak Dev, Gobind Singh also believed in the authenticity of the Adi Granth and never granted the same sacredness to his own works. The huge literary work of the last Guru, Gobind Singh, is preserved in Dasam Granth.¹ Like the former Guru in Sikhism, Gobind Singh also attached great importance to 'Naam Simran', i.e. repetition of the name of God and rejected the division of castes in society.

Khushwant Singh observes about the change of Guru Gobind Singh as the "only change Gobind brought in religion was to expose the other side of the medal. Where Nanak had propagated goodness, Gobind Singh condemned evil."² From the days of Gobind Singh onwards there arose in Sikhism two main sects as Nanak Panthis or the Sahajdharis (followers of Nanak) and the 'Khalsa' or Keshdharis (followers of all Gurus from Nanak to Gobind Singh)

Guru Gobind Singh the last Guru of the Sikhs died in 1708, and the line of personal Guruship ended with his death. From that time onward Granth Sahib, the spiritual text of the Sikhs, installed as the Guru the Symbolic representation of the ten Gurus. Guru Gobind Singh gave the status of spiritual Guru to Guru Granth Sahib and told the Sikhs to seek their future guidance from it, but also declare Khalsa as Guru in Panthik affairs. Where as a Sikh seek spiritual guidance from Granth Sahib, for communities affairs he abide by the dictate of Khalsa Panth.

Guru Granth Sahib is an unusually rich collection of religious poetry, which is not only educative, but also, philosophically uplifting and aesthetically satisfying.³ The Sikh Guru worked and preached to build an ideal society when the individuals were to acquire the fullest

¹ Khushwant Singh, *Op.cit.*, Vol-I, p.88.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

satisfaction in working for their day to day requirements.

The social thoughts of the Sikh Gurus affected social life even outside the Sikh fold. It loosened the bonds of caste ridden society. The social philosophy ear marked a change in the social structure of section of the community. They not only introduced the idea of equality among the followers by forming the Sikh society, but provided to the people a platform for the elevation of their ethical doctrines.

It can be asserted without exaggeration that the teachings of the Sikh Gurus introduced the ideas of fellow-feeling and universal brotherhood, when these ideas were needed the most. By doing so in the context of the obscurantism of the sixteenth centaury they had necessarily to give birth to a distinct community.

The first five Sikh Gurus or Sikhism in the sixteenth century led the peaceful expansion and development of the Sikh ideal and institutions, which enabled the emerging Sikh community to face the challenges of the turbulent seventeenth century India.

CHAPTER – III

IMPACTS OF SIKHISM ON SIKH SOCIETY

Indian people faced the bad time between 1000 to 1526 A.D. After the invasion of Mehmood, frequent battles were being fought in the Punjab. The Muslim population was gradually increasing and so was its dominance, resulting in enhanced mutual conflict and opposition between Hindus and Muslims. It was a period when people were forgetting the meaning of humanity. The Muslims first established their rule and after that the advent of Islam brought about inevitable Hindu-Muslim conflict.

Islam and Hinduism prefer different ontology's, modes of worship and ethos to rule human conduct in social framework. The Muslims are strict monotheist, whereas the Hindus profess faith in several deities and believe in idol worship. The Hindus of medieval times worshipped the cow, whereas the Muslim relished beef. The Muslims congregational prayer was radically different from the individual mode of worship among Hindus. Music, a part of Hindu worship in temples, was forbidden within the precincts of a mosque. Idol worship form central to the Hindu religion, whereas it was a sin to Muslim. In prayers the Muslim bowed towards the west, the Hindus towards the east. The Muslim were in habit to call Hindus as kafir and whereas the Hindus expressed their hatred by calling Muslims as malechhas, the defiled and trodden ones. Bhai Gurdas, the first Sikh theologian brings out this differences most succinctly-

"The Hindus turns to the Ganges,
The Muslim to the Kabba in Mecca
The Muslimtakes to the circumcision,
While the Hindu stick to their thread and frontal mark.

The Hindus worship Ram, they Rahim."¹

In such an environment the birth of Guru Nanak proves to be a boon for humanity. He brought about the prosperity of the people not only at religious level, but also taught them a lesson of moral values. Guru Nanak Dev found Sikhism, because he desired to create a society on the basis of equality, liberty and fraternity, free of ritualistic practices, tyranny, exploitation and corruption. Guru Nanak Dev Ji and his nine successors (The Sikh Gurus) had an extraordinary influence on society. Their contribution in spiritual, moral, social, economic, cultural and political field was striking and remarkable. They placed simple but high ideals before the people at a time when superstition, fanaticism, and despair reigned, supreme everywhere. They remove false beliefs and fear from the minds of Sikh society and held out before them the prospects of hope, confidence, peace and salvation.²

1. Social Impact:

Sikhism released the soul of people from superstitions. Once the human mind becomes free it endeavours to break all shackles of social domination, political indiscriminate and economic exploitation. The new order in fact marked the growth of nationalism in India. For the first time people forgot their castes, felt a sense of brotherhood, realised their obligation towards society, repelled the external aggression in the desire of disciplined society. Upto then who-so-ever had invaded India from north-west trampled this land easily, ransacked religious places, dishonoured women and humiliated the people. But after foundation of the Khalsa the tide turned its course. Not only the foreign aggression was beaten back, but the Indians re-established their supremacy upto

¹ Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, Var1, Pauri-2.

² Gopal Singh, *The Religion of the Sikhs*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1971, p.2.

Peshawar. Sikh soldiers became proverbial for bravery and self-restraint. People in the Punjab enjoyed themselves religious equality, political stability and economic security.

END OF CASTEISM:

During the early as well as later medieval period, the Hindu society suffered from internal social differentiation. Every individual of the Hindu society/community differed in some respect or the other according to the division of Hindu social organisation. The Hindu society in the mediaeval India was divided not only into four *Varnas* and castes, but also into several sub castes on the basis of occupations.¹ The first *Varna* or cast of Hindu social organisation i.e. Brahmin had established their supremacy by compiling customary laws based on Manu Smriti. This *Varna* was dominant among the Hindu varnas.²

Next to the Brahmins came the Kshatriyas. In the Hindu social structure during the sixteenth century, they had abandoned their profession of arms and adopted services in administration, trade, shop keeping, cultivation and money lending as their profession.³ The *Vaishyas* as formed the third faction of Hindu social organization. They were a miserable section of the Hindu society. They depended for their earning on either cultivation of land or trade. The *Shudras* were the fourth and the lowest caste of the Hindu society. The upper three classes considered *Shudras* inferior. Their position was so miserable that they were treated like animals. *Shudras* were required to perform menial jobs for upper three classes.⁴

But in Sikhism all Sikhs were equal and they were free from Hindu

¹ W.H. Mcleod, *Sikhism*, Penguin Books, London, 1997, p.299.

² J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1969, p.51.

³ D.S Dhillon, *Sikhism Origin and Development*, Atlantic Publisher & Distribution, New Delhi, 1984, p.22.

⁴ W.H. Mcleod, *Op.cit.*, p.229.

caste system. In Sikhism caste does not matter. Sikhism is a casteless and classless society. Guru Nanak was the first Saint in Punjab who denounced the caste pride. He held that in God's court all human beings are equal. BhaiGurdas also wrote in his Varan about impact of Sikhism about caste system-

"Char Varan ik varan hoe,

Gur Sikh warya Gurmukh gote¹

(All four castes have become one. All disciples of the Guru belong to the Gurmukh caste.)

Guru Nanak Dev by serving food to hungry Sadhus established the institution of Langar in 1481, abolishing all the barriers of caste and creed. He rejected the Hindu caste system, where people of different castes do not eat together. Langar is not only to fulfill need of food, but this is also designed to uphold the principle of equality between all the people of the world regardless of religion, caste, colour, creed, age, gender or social status, to eliminate extreme poverty in the world and to bring about the birth of 'caring communities.' Guru Ji designed an institution in which all people would sit on the floor together as equals to eat the same simple food. Another idea attached to langar is that Guru Ji exhorted Sikhs to serve the humanity with their own hands. In Hindu religion service was the Dharma of Shudra, where as Guru Ji created servant of humanity among all castes. This was a major step towards abolishing inequality. Guru Ji himself served food to all castes and used to eat with them on the same floor.² Mata Khivi, wife of Guru Angad Dev Ji, dedicated her whole life to serve in Langar.

Though, all the Sikh gurus were *Khatris*, an 'upper caste' in the

¹ Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, Var 29, Pauri-5.

² D.S. Dhillon, *Op.cit.*, p.203

local hierarchy, but their followers were from all castes, maximum from so-called backward castes. Guru Nanak's companion, Bala was a Shudra and Mardana was a *doom* Muslim, both were from lower castes and different religions. On casteism Guru Nanak said-

"The lowest among the lowly were his
Companions and that he had nothing
to do with so called rich elders"¹

At the time of Guru Angad Dev, Satta and Balwand do Kirtan daily and both were from low caste. Yet they were friends of Guru Angad Dev Ji and his successor Gurus. It shows that in the Sikh society all Sikhs were equal and nobody was high or low. Jaita a low caste Sikh (Rangreta), belong to sweeper class, but at the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution he had taken the risk of his life, when he took up the head of Guru Ji from Delhi and hurried away with it to Anandpur, where he with full respect and devotion handed over it to the Guru's son Guru Gobind Singh. Guru was touched with extreme devotion of the Rangreta and flinging his arms around his neck and declared:-

"Here I embrace through you all
The Rangreta as Guru's own son."²

UPLIFTMENT OF WOMEN'S PLACE IN SIKH SOCIETY:³

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the position of women was distinctly subordinate and was regarded inferior to man. She was treated as degraded part of the society.⁴ Hindu women suffered the most. Beautiful girls were not safe from the lust of the Muslim rulers and their officials. If they were touched by an immoral Muslim their Hindu

¹ *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raag, p.15.

² Teja Singh & Ganda Singh, *A Short History of Sikhs*, Publication Bureau, Patiala, 2006, p.61.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 1970, p.239.

relatives discard them from the family and there was no one to give them shelter. Their miseries were endless. Thus the Hindu women were prey to many social rituals and customs like female infanticide, child marriage, *Parda*, Sati, polygamy, prostitution, and *Sutak* etc.¹

In such a disgusting atmosphere Guru Nanak Dev shocked the entire society by preaching that women were worthy of praise and equal to men in every sphere of life. In Sikhism the issue of status of women has been tackled from many angles. Guru Nanak Dev broke the shackles of women by admitting them into the Sangat (congregation) without any restrictions.²

Sikhism insists that woman is the basis of man's physical existence and his entire social life, so she must be treated with respect and love. Guru Nanak Dev had written in his Bani *Asa ki Vaar* about status of woman-

"From the women is our birth,
In the women womb are we shaped?
To the women are we engaged?
To the women are we wedded?
The women, yea, is our friend,
and from women is the family.
If one woman dies, we seek another (for marriage),
Though the women are the bonds of the world,
O why call women evil who give birth to the kings"³

That time the practice of female infanticide was practiced almost as a social custom. The birth of a girl was an unwelcome event and sometime she was killed immediately after her birth. The parents looked

¹ V.B. Singh, *Economic History of India*, Allied Publications, Bombay, 1945, p.66.

² R.K. Pruthi, *Sikhism and India Civilization*, Discovery House, New Delhi, 2004, p.102.

³ *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.473.

upon her with disfavour and both Hindus and Muslims practiced to female infanticide.¹ Infanticide had created hell on earth for a female sex. The girls were therefore neglected, ignored and allowed to rot, and many of them died prematurely.² Infanticide prevailed among the Rajputs of the hills, the Khattris of Gujranwala, Multan, Jhang, Shahpur, Jhelum and Lahore.³ It was much more prevalent among the Bedis in the Punjab and Chauhans in Rajasthan. They were generally known as *kurhimars*.⁴

The Sikh Gurus raised a voice against the practice of infanticide. It was one of the obligation impasses on neophytes, at the time of their admission to the *Pahul* (baptism) that they should not kill their daughter and should avoid association with all those who do so.⁵ According to Macauliffe, "The tenth Guru laid down five negative injunctions to be obeyed; one of the injunctions was to have no dealing with those who kill their daughter (Kuri mars).⁶

The system of *Parda* (Veil) had become a common feature of the Indian society during the medieval period. It means a cover to hide 'face or body' from the outsiders, especially males.⁷

But the saint poet of medieval Indian did not see any merits in the prevailing custom of adopting *Ghoonghat* or *Parda*. The following hymn of Bhakta Kabir clearly shows the criticism of medieval saints to the custom of *Parda*-

ਘੁੰਘਟ ਕਾਢੇ ਕੀ ਇਹੈ ਬਡਾਈ ॥ ਦਿਨ ਦਸ ਪਾਂਚ ਬਹੁ ਭਲੇ ਆਈ ॥ 2 ॥

ਘੁੰਘਟ ਤੇਰੇ ਤਉ ਪਰਿ ਸਾਚੈ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਇ ਕ੍ਰੁਦਹਿ ਅਰੁ ਨਾਚੈ ॥ 3 ॥⁸

¹ V.B. Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.66

² Dr. Bhagat Singh, "Social Mileu of Guru Amar Das", *The Punjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, Oct. 1979, p.455.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Op.cit.*, p.258.

⁵ M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol III, New Delhi, 1963, p.71.

⁶ Piara Singh Padam, *Rahat Nama (Punjabi)*, Patiala, 1974, p.22.

⁷ K.M. Asraf, *Op.cit.*, p.171

⁸ *Adi Granth*, p.484.

(The only merit in veiling your face is that for few days, people will say, "what a noble bride has come."

Your veil shall be true only if you skip, dance and sing the glorious praises of the lord.)

Kabir also stressed don't wearing the veil on face. He writes that: Stay, stay o daughter in law, do not cover your face with veil.¹

In Sikhism Guru Amar Das also forbid women to veil their faces. Parda (Veil) was a custom strictly enforced among women for two reasons. First, women needed to be covered because they were viewed as 'temptresses' for the celibate priests. Second, it was thought to be a protective shield for women. This indicated a relationship of distrust between the two sexes. However for the Guru, the veil made women anonymous and ultimately powerless. Thus, for the Guru it was to women's fault if men were distracted by them from their spiritual path. Actually, men had to learn to control their desires and for his lustful desires woman is not responsible. So Guru Amar Das proclaimed the strict *hukam* (order) that no woman should enter the Gurdwara covering her face with any type of veil (Parda).

Guru Ji gave us a very simple but very important *Hukam* to both men and women in regards to wear clothes.

As a result the wearing of veil in the Sangat was abolished. For example Guru Amar Das did not allow the queen of Haripur to come into the *Sangat* wearing a veil.

The immediate effect of the removal of *Parda* was that a women was no longer to be viewed as a temptress or a helpless individual who had to be suppressed, but instead as a responsible individual being

¹ *Guru Granth Sahib*, Siri Raag M.1 p.16.

endowed with a will of her own-

False modesty that suppressed is ended.

Now with veil off, am I started on the way of devotion.¹

Instead of wearing a veil, women, like the men, were required to cover their head only as a matter of respect.

In the days of Sri Guru Amar Das, *Sati* also had become very common custom in Hindus and the widows used to burn forcibly on the pyre of their husband. The Guru raised his voice against this cruel system and strictly banned this inhuman practice in Sikhism. According to Guru Amar Das, *Sati* was a cruel ritual, untenable by any ethic. There could not be a more cruel ritual than to compel or lead a widow to immolate herself. The following hymns refer to this brutal custom-

ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੋ ਮੜਿਆ ਲਗਿ ਜਲੰਨਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੰਨਿ ॥ 1 ॥²

(Do not call them *Satis*, who burn themselves along with their husband's corpses. O Nanak !they alone are known as *satis*, who dies from the shock of separation).

In another hymn, Guru Arjan Dev also criticised the ritual of *sati*. He reveals the truth that by performance of *Sati* none can unite.³ The word "Sati" has been used in the *Adi Granth* in different connotations. It implies truthful, moral disciplined, virtuous, generous, pure etc.⁴

In their bani the Sikh Gurus exhorted the people and the women to do away with this barbaric custom. In Sikhism the Sikh Gurus not only condemned the custom of *Sati*, but also permitted the remarriage of widows. The principle of Sikhism state that women have the same soul as

¹ *Guru Granth Sahib*, p.448.

² *Guru Granth Sahib*, p.931.

³ Daljit Singh, *Punjab: Socio-Economic Condition (1501- 1700 A.D.)*, Commonwealth Publisher, New Delhi, 2004, p.111.

⁴ *Adi Granth*, Siri Raga M.3, p.787.

men and thus possess an equal right to cultivate their spirituality. They can lead the religious congregations to take part in the Akhand Path, perform Kirtan, work as Granthi and participate in all religious, cultural and social activities.

Household life in Sikhism:

The traditional Hindu scheme of Varna and Ashrama has been rejected in Sikhism. In the Ashrama system there were four stages of life, like—

Brahmcharya	-	The learners stage.
Grihastha	-	The house holder.
Vaanaprastha	-	the abandoner of worldly things, who take shelter in forests.
Sanyas	-	the anchorite.

Guru Nanak has given the highest place to the Grihasth Ashram. He felt that the duties of last two *Ashrams* can also be performed during this stage.

A householder man or woman while performing the domestic duties can also achieve emancipation.¹ His life ought to remain unsoiled like a lotus in the mud. To quote Guru Nanak-

As the lotus thrusts up words, and does not down in the water.

As the duck swims and does not become wet while swimming.

So can we, safely and unaffectedly, cross the ocean of the world?

By attuning our mind to the word of Guru and

repeating the holy name of God.²

Guru Nanak made it clear that salvation can be obtained while

¹ C.H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Language Department, Patiala, 1970, p.31.

² Guru Granth Sahib, p.938.

enjoying all the pleasures of life and paying duties towards one's family. Guru Nanak appreciated the married life. All the Sikh gurus were married men, except the eighth Sikh Guru, Sri Har Krishan, who died in very young age. Guru Amar Das appreciated the householder's life for through it one can practise charity and serve the needs of the others.

Better than the ascetic pose is the householder wherein is practised charity. Bhai Gurdas, the earliest exponent of the message of Guru Granth Sahib emphasized the importance of household religion and said -

As the sea is the greatest among the ponds and the rivers.

And summer is most respected among the mountains.

As the sandalwood tree is costly among the trees.

Gold is rewarded as precious among metals.

(As) swan is most virtuous among the birds.

Lion is mightiest among the animals.

(As) Sri Raag is primary among the musical measures.

Touchstone is precious among the stones.

(As) knowledge of the Guru is supreme among various forms of knowledge.

(And) contemplation of Guru is (most rewarding) amongst forms of Contemplation.

Similarly the religion of the household is supreme among the religious.¹

So, Sikh Gurus emphasised the institution of family and inspired their followers to get married and perform their duties towards society and family so that degradation of moral values may be removed from the society.

¹ *Guru Granth Sahib*, p.376.

2. Foundation of Sikh institutions:

In the time of Sikh Gurus they developed some new important Sikh institution which play important role in Sikh society. They have further strengthened with the passage of time and convey some message to Sikh society. Every institution works to fulfil certain requirements of the members of a society. The institution, in a way, is the bones and the tissues of a healthy society. They make certain social activities, cultural rituals and rites and some ceremonies obligatory for all. So they impacted the society, some important Sikh institutions are following.

Sangat:

The society which was prevailing at that time was rigid and divided into water tight compartments which were an obstacle in the progress of whole society. In other words, people had no faith in one God. Instead they believed in different religions which caused suffering for them. One of the marvellous steps taken by the Guru was the creation of organisation of the Sangat or an assembly of holy men to bring unity among diverse elements of the society.¹

Dr. Ganda Singh writes, "Guru Nanak felt that the real cause of misery of the people was their disunity born of diversity of belief".²

Guru Nanak gave great importance to the organisation of *Sangats*. He endeavoured to develop a mode of worship which was common to all and a society which was based on equal rights of man. Guru Nanak also made good efforts for the proper running of *Sangats* as each of the *Sangat* was brought under the control of a pious and dedicated devotee called

¹ G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol-I, New Academic Publishing House, Jalandhar, 1971, p.107.

² *Ganda Singh, A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, Delhi. 1978, p.10.

Bhai ji, who conducted the assemblies.¹ According to Teja Singh, "By establishing *Sangat* Guru Nanak provided them with a platform where they could assemble and discuss their common weal and woe."² All peoples who gathered at a place and recite hymns also called "Satsangat". According to Randhir Singh, "Satsangat is the school of true Guru."³

Satsangat was not only beneficial to the true Sikh but even bad and mischievous persons could also be reformed in the company of pious people. It is the best way to achieve salvation. In this connection, Bhai Gurdas says-

In quest of him I have come to realise that without 'satsangat', one cannot achieve salvation.⁴

The original idea of *Sangat* appears to have been that of Satsang of Sudh-Sangat association with the holy men.⁵ Guru Nanak defined *Satsangat* as the society of the holy men where the name of one God is mentioned.⁶ As the Sikhism started developing gradually *Satsangat* become popular which meant association with the *Gurmukh* to speak directly to the Sikhs. Guru Nanak established *Sangat* at various places, including Kartarpur, where the singings of Japji and Asa kii Vaarwas started in the early hours of the morning.⁷

Guru Angad consolidated the work begun by Guru Nanak. The holy assemblies of the Sikhs were continued by Guru Angad Dev at Khadur.⁸ He preached Guru Nanak's hymns. The Guru had two prominent associates, Satta and Balwand, who were well versed in music

¹ G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol-I, New Academic Publishing House, Jalandhar, 1971, p.108.

² Teja Singh, *Sikhism, its Ideals and Institutions*, Khalsa Brothers, Amritsar, 1970, p.21.

³ Randhir Singh, *The Sikh Way of Life*, Caxton Press, New Delhi, 1981, p.93.

⁴ Bhai Gurdas, Var 38, Pauri 12.

⁵ I.B. Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol-1, A Mukherji and Co., Calcutta, 1963, p.256

⁶ M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol-I, Clargedon Press, Oxford, 1909, p.278.

⁷ Bhai Santokh Singh, *SurajParkash*, Vol-IV, 1953, pp.1022-23.

⁸ M.A. Macauliffe, Op.cit., p.15.

and they used to sing Guru's hymns at the sangat.¹

In due course of time the *Sangat* acquired multifarious functions, and interest of the Sikh movement widened. In this way, it was regarded at par with the Guru himself, during the times of Guru Amar Das, the *Sangat* was held at Goindwal, the Guru preached the principle of 'pehlan pangat picche sangat,' first eat together then meet together.² After that all Sikh Gurus give importance to *Sangat*. *Sangat* system, in this way envisaged a classless society based on democratic principles.

Institution of Langar:

The Langar is called the community kitchen. Initially, it was started by Guru Nanak and its practice continued during the period of later Gurus.³ Guru Nanak started Langar system as a fight to resist social injustice, repression and despotism of caste system. In his eyes, all persons are children of God.⁴ Guru ka langar was open to all, irrespective of social status, where people could sit with equality and eat together. The Sikh Gurus laid emphasis to earn one's livelihood with fair means besides sharing it with others.⁵ Bhai Gurdas also writes-

The true disciples are those who are humble and earn their bread by the sweat of their brow and share their food with their brothers.⁶

The Sikh Gurus underlined the significance of the Langar and service provided to others in the following words-

One should serve mankind in this world
for a better life in the next.⁷ And

¹ Bhai Santokh Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.1345.

² Cole and Sambhi, *The Sikhs: Their Religious Beliefs and Practice*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1978, p.21.

³ Kapoor Singh, *Prashar Prasana at the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, Hind Publisher, Jullandher, 1959, p.339.

⁴ *Adi Granth*, p.1245.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.26

⁶ *Bhai Gurdas*, Varan, Var 32, Pauri-I

⁷ *Adi Granth*, p.26.

One should go on serving till the last breath
only then one can meet the Lord.¹

Guru Nanak's main purpose was to bring unity among the people by providing them, common method of worship through institution of Sangat and Pangat. Sangat means association of people and Pangat stands for sitting in row and taking food together in Guru ka Langar.²

Manji System:

'Manji' literally means a common Indian bedstead or cot, but in Sikhism, Manji came to mean delegated authority. When Sikhism was in its infancy, the Guru used to give religious instructions personally to the Sikh devotees in a Sikh *Sangat*. But, with the passage of time, the popularity of Sikhism started increasing and it attracted a large number of followers. At this stage, it became necessary to establish local centres for the convenience of Sikhs. These local centres were set up to meet the spiritual requirements of the people. To meet this challenge, Guru Amar Das introduced the Manji system.³

W.L.M. Gregor writes, "Ummuti Das was a wise **guru** and resided at his native village of Goindwal. He had numerous disciples and from amongst them he chooses twenty-two whom he sent to different parts of the country to preach the teachings of his predecessors."⁴

Macauliffe has summarized the position of Sikh religion as following in his book- Sikhism trunk toward on high and the roots penetrated into the earth during the period of Guru Angad, and its branches spread in every direction under the spiritual reign of Guru Amar Dass. Like, Emperor Akbar who administered his vast empire through the

¹ *Ibid.*, p.883.

² Parkash Singh, *The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread*, D.P.C., Amritsar, 1964, p.12.

³ I.B. Banerjee, *Op. cit.*, Vol-1, p.257

⁴ W.L.M. Gregor, *History of Sikhs*, James Madden, London, 1846, p.65.

appointed governors of provinces, Guru Amar Das divided the Sikh Spiritual Empire into twenty-two parts.¹

According to Khushwant Singh, the number of Guru's visitors increased so much that Amar Dass felt that he alone could not minister to the needs of the thousands of converts who wanted guidance. He increased the number of parishes or Manjis to twenty-two and appointed agents or Masands, who were fully conversant with the doctrines of faith to organize worship and the collection of offerings.²

It became clear that the Sikh faith started developing during the time of Guru Amar Das. Many people from all walks of society came under its fold. So, it became necessary to keep it under effective control, under these circumstances, Guru Amar Das took a bold step to face the situation and he established twenty-two provinces, each of them called a Manji and its further sub-division was called 'peerha'. As already mentioned each of these Manji's was held by a pious Sikh who preached the message of Sikh religion in his locality and he also acted as source of inspiration for the Sikhs. These men of God went from place to place to spread the Sikhism, wherever they went, people sit them on cots and patiently listened to their preachings. It is why that this practice was later on was termed as Manjis.³

So in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Manji system strengthened the Sikh organization. It attracted the people towards Sikhism, besides providing teaching of the Sikh Gurus.⁴ The heads of the Manjis were instrumental to convert many people into the Sikh fold by baptizing 'Charan Amrit'. The Manji holders were required to visit to the

¹ M.A. Macauliffe, *Op. cit.*, Vol-2, p.151.

² Khushwant Singh, *Op. cit.*, p.53.

³ Fauja Singh, *Guru Amar Das*, Jalandhar, 1979, p.117.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.124.

Guru's headquarters at least once a year. Especially, the month of Baisakh was fixed for the Manji holders, when they visited the Guru along with the concerned Sangats.¹

The Manji system proved beneficial in the collection of money, which was utilized to pay for the labors engaged in various activities relating Sikh temples and for the maintenance of the community kitchen.

The development of Manji system to be a milestone in the spread of Sikhism in the seventeenth century. It transmitted the message of the Sikhism to the far-flung areas on the one hand, and it provided sound organization to Sikh on the other.²

Masand System-

Sikhism had reached in almost all parts of the country. Now the fifth Sikh Guru, Arjan Dev felt the need of money for development and other activities of Sikhs like-Langar, build new Gurudwaras and other religious activities. All these circumstances compelled the Guru to effect reforms in the Sikhism and he proclaimed that every Sikh must donate one-tenth of his income to the Guru's funds. He appointed special missionaries in each locality to collect the funds and instructed them to bring to the Guru on the Baisakhi day, when a grand Darbar was being held. These representatives were known as Masands. The Masand system was organized in a systematic manner. A particular area was assigned to each of the Masand for the collection of donation from the Sikhs.³

The basic idea behind the Masand system was to expand Sikhism. This system strengthened the financial position of the Sikh organization, with that it became easy to arrange sufficient budget for the propagation of Sikhism and consolidation of the Sikh faith.

¹ Sarup Das Bhalla, *Op. cit.*, p.133.

² M.A. Macauliffe, *Op. cit.*, Vol.I, pp. 77-78.

³ Ganda Singh, *Op. cit.*, pp.57-58..

Piri and Miri:

After the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Hargobind was installed as the Sikh Guru. On the traditional ceremony, Baba Budha presented him the *Seli* (rosary), *Topi* (special cap) and *Manji* (Cot). Guru Hargobind told him "My seli shall be a sword belt and I shall wear my turban with royal sword".¹ He wore two swords as emblems of spiritual and temporal authority Piri and Miri the combination of Bhakti and Shakti or Deg and Tegh, the kettle to feed the needy and hungry, and sword to protect the weak and helpless.²

The word Miri and Piri can be traced in Muslim culture. Pir means a holy person or a religious head. This word is also related with prophet. In this context, Bhai Gurdas addressed the Sikh Guru as 'Pirs'. The words Piri is derived from the word Pir which means a worldly man. The word Pir also denotes to different meanings such as Sikhs, Mushad, Ustad.³ The term 'Mir' has its origin in the Arabi word Amir. This word is commonly used for a ruler, a commander, a chief a man with double potential.⁴

The demise of Guru Arjan left a deep impression on the mind of the followers of the Sikhs faith. It is believed that even Guru Hargobind wept on the death of Guru Arjan. Giani Gian Singh write-

“As soon as he (Hargobind) heard the news of his father's execution, he became red with rage, he said that measures should devise for destroying the enemy. To achieve this end, he resolved that arms should be used in place of *seli* and *topi* and he started wearing the two swords of Miri and Piri and asked his disciples to supply horses and

¹ A.C. Banerjee, *Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh*, New Delhi, 1978, p.135.

² Harbans Singh, *Perspectives on Guru Nanak*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1975, p.423.

³ James Pastigns, *Encyclopedia Religion and Ethichs*, Vol.10, Charles Scribners's Sons, New York, 1963, p.40.

⁴ Thomas Partrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, Cosmo Publication, New Delhi, 1977, p.14.

weapons, so as to receive the blessings of the Guru.”¹

Guru Hargobind realized that the time had come when the Sikh people should demonstrate their strength to resist the despotic policies adopted by the Mughal rulers. He was in favour of using the arms to remove the civil unjust as a surgeon uses his blade as a last resort to separate and save healthy part of a body from spreading ulcer. So wearing of two swords of Piri and Miri was significant development of the Sikh history which transformed the Sikhs into a belligerent Church and its devotees into saint-soldiers.²

Under the changed circumstances, the Guru adopted the new policy of Miri and Piri. He welcomed the Sikhs for offering arms and horses. He maintained an army and openly declared his policy to punish the tyrant and protect the seeker. He Prepared the Sikhs for self-preservation against bigoted and powerful enemy. He kept 80 horses, 300 trained horsemen and 60 artillery men.³

Through adopting this new changed policy of Miri and Piri, Guru created a government of his own like that of the Mughals. All his disciples formed a separate and independent entity, and had nothing to do with the agencies of the government of the day. Guru Hargobind constructed a wall around the city of Amritsar. He also constructed a small fort named as Lohgarh, (The castle of steel) on the renowned institution of Akal Takhat, Amritsar. Thus, Sikh came to occupy a kind of separate state within the Mughal state.⁴

3. RELIGIOUS IMPACT OF SIKHISM ON SIKH SOCIETY:

Religion always held a dominant position in every sphere of life of

¹ Giani Gian Singh, *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, Language Department, Punjab, Patiala, pp.118-119.

² M.A. Macualiffe, *The Sikhs Religion*, Vol-4, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1909, p.5

³ *Ibid.*, p.110.

⁴ Khuswant Singh, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol-I, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1964, p.63.

the people. It deeply influenced those social activities of the various classes in diverse ways. For the majority of the people, religion was only a matter of ceremonial performance which to a large extent maintained the uniformity of their social system.¹ During the Guru period there were only two religions Hinduism and Islam. The rulers of the country were Muslims and Hindus were the subject people. Muslims invaded India and settled down here with all their cultural and religious ways. They also forcibly converted many Hindustanis into Islam. Three types of persons controlled the religions the Qazis, Brahmans and the Yogis.

But all these persons had lost their character and defiled their religion.² In the religious practices of the time, the nation was witnessing the sharp downfall in religious standards. Thus Bhai Gurdas wrote:

They were not true religious leaders to lead the people.³

In short, at the time of Guru Nanak's advent, both the religions of India-Hinduism and Islam, had become corrupt and degraded. Priest class of both religions was exploiting common people in the name of religion. They had lost their provisioned purity and glory. It was in this age of confusion and chaos that Nanak, the first Guru of Sikhs, was born to show the right path out of darkness, superstitions and formalism. Guru Nanak desired to create a society on the basis of equality, liberty and fraternity, free of ritualistic practices, tyranny, exploitation and corruption.⁴ Thus dispelling with his word the darkness of illusion bigotry and superstition, Nanak took upon himself to wash away the sin and sufferings of the ages which had India in their grip. Restless and indefatigable in the pursuit and propagation of the truth, striving to end

¹ J.A. Dubous, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonials*, Oxford, 1897, pp.30-31.

² *Adi Granth, Gauri*, M.5, p.201.

³ Bhai Gursas, Vaaran, Var I, Pauri 24, ਬਾਝਗੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਬਾਰਿ ਹੈ, ਹੈ ਹੈ ਕਰਦੀ ਸੁਣੀ ਲੁਕਾਈ ਝ

⁴ Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of Sikhism*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2001, p.45.

strife and to show men the path where by the soul be illumined, the heart overflow with love, and life be rendered meaning Mardana and others as his companions, preaching and signing the Divine words.¹ Guru Nanak created the Sikhism and this new religion impacted the Hinduism and Muslims many ways.

1. Reformation of Society:

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, held high spiritual ideals. He took worldly pursuits simply as means to end and out rightly condemned some of the then existing religious customs and practices being hindrance in the way of religious pursuits. He argued that simply the wearing of the scared thread and putting Tilak on the forehead did not lead to salvation as it was not of permanent nature. His advice to the people to inculcate values and virtues in themselves. They should take it as a thread of high morals and that of the name of God. He also rejected Brahminical theory of incarnation, myths and rituals as well as theory of four Varna as well.²

In Sikhism God is Nirgun or absolute as well as Sargun or personal. As absolute, he is present in everything and everywhere. As personal, he listened to one's grievances and helps him. Sikhs philosophy regarding God is that god is one. In Japji we come across the following verse-

ਬਾਪਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਸੋਇ ॥

It means, 'he cannot be established (like a statue), nor can he be created. He is self-existent and pure'.³ Or in other words it means, he cannot be set up as some people saw his image and set him up in the

¹ G.S. Talib, *Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision*, Gurdas Kapur & Sons, Delhi, 1969, p.19.

² J.S. Grewal, *Op.cit.*, p.39, K.M. Ashraf, *Op. cit.*, p.273.

³ Sewa Ram Singh, *The Divine Master*, p.238.

temples or other places of worship with due ceremonies. In his book 'Hum Hindu Nahin', Bhai Kahan Singh quotes a verse from Guru Nanak's hymns to prove that Guru rejected great religious thinker of his age. We may briefly discuss his attitude towards the prevalent system of religious beliefs and practices. His attitude towards Vedas was visible in his very famous composition Jap Ji.¹ From his point of view, mere sanctity of these scriptures without understanding the meaning was completely irrelevant. He repudiated the superfluous practices and modes of worship and attached no importance to pilgrimage.² He imparted regular instructions to his followers and visitors to shed off external forms discard caste distinction, to have faith in brotherhood and equality of mankind and do service of the common people.³

CONGREGATION PRAYER (Satsang):

Congregations were religious assemblies. These religious assemblies served a link between the common man and the Guru. Guru Nanak established dharmshalas or Sikh places of worship wherever he went. In Sikhism Guru Nanak opened the doors of his teachings to all sections of society irrespective of the difference of caste, colour, sex or creed. He made a successful attempt to bring together the Hindus and the Muslims in a common fold of spiritual and social brotherhood.⁴

The holy congregations were having two meaning employed by the Guru as to get rid people of their selfishness and evil passion, and also for their salvation, and for uniting them to God. Congregation was not only beneficial to the true Sikhs but even bad and mischievous persons could also be reformed in the company of pious people. It is the best way to

¹ A.C. Banerjee, *Guru Nanak and His Times*, Patiala, 1974, pp.73-74.

² I.B. Banerjee, *Op.cit.*, pp.146-47; Ganda Singh and Teja Singh, *Op.cit.*, pp.69-71.

³ Garja Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.169, I.B. Banerjee, *Op.cit.*, p.178.

⁴ R.C. Majumdar, *The Delhi Sultanate*, Bombay, 1960, p.569.

achieve salvation. In this connection the Hindu sacred book as useless to help in attaining God.¹ Guru Nanak himself wrote at one place:

"The four books and the four vadas, which came from heaven in this world to grant peace of all kinds as per the order of the god."²

Just as God cannot be realized by mere reading of the Vedas, similarly there is no need of going about on pilgrimage for obtaining religiosity. This was all condemned by Guru Nanak. According to him pure form of God could not be recognized without meditating on Naam. Salvation could be obtained by one and all by constantly and attentively repeating the name of God and by doing good deeds. The Simran may be vocal or silent but it must involve mind internally, so that there is a sense of oneness with god.³

Bhai Gurdas also written about the greatness of congregation in his Vaars.

Congregation is the only path which leads a disciple to the real divine life. He said- "In quest of Him I have come to realize that without Sadhsangat one cannot achieve salvation."⁴

In congregations of Gurmukh Sikhs the basic teaching which is being imparted to Satsangi is fatherhood of God and brotherhood of mankind. The steps taken by Guru Nanak and his successors in this direction led to the growth and stability of Sikhism.⁵

Origin and development of Gurdwara-

Gurudwara is the Sikh place of worship, prayer and piety. After the establishment of Sikhism, a holy place established for preaching the tenets of Sikh religion where the Adi Granth is installed.

¹ Bhai Kahan Singh, *Hum Hindu Nahin*, p.60.

² *Adi Granth*, Bilawal M.1 p.639; *Rag Ramkali*, M.S, p.886.

³ Machaliffe. *Op.cit.*, p.144; *Adi Granth*, p.484.

⁴ Bhai Gurdas, Vol 38, Panri 12.

⁵ J.S. Grewal, *Op.cit.*, p.39; K.M. Ashraf, *Op.cit.*, p.273.

For detail about Gurudwara see page no. 35.

Guruship in Sikhism-

In the Sikh religion, the Guru is regarded as the perfect messenger of God, but he is not God himself, however he is as perfect and similar as God. The Guru knows about God, his mysteries and all about his creation.

The Guru reveals the truth,
It is wealth which is priceless.¹

The Guru commands over all control in every walk of individual Sikh life. The life of a person would be selfish without the presence of the Guru. It may lead him to aloofness, viciousness and fall in the moral values. The Guru by his wisdom and understanding of cosmic world remove the caste, creed, social economic and political position, which are perpetuated by men themselves.² There are some unique features of Guru are given in the 'Adi Granth' as the successors of Guru Nanak called him "Nanak, Nanak, the servant, the humble etc."³

Guru Nanak set up a precedent to choose the successor and spiritual light of the Guru continued from Guru Nanak to the tenth Guru who before his death instructed the Sikhs that Guru Granth Sahib would be their spiritual Guru in future.⁴

COMPILATION OF ADI GRANTH-

Guru Arjan Dev compiled the holy book of Sikhs, Adi Granth with the help of the holy writings of the earlier Gurus and spiritual Saints, both Hindus and Muslims. He made no distinctions between the writings of the Gurus and those of the saints who came from various castes/classes

¹ *Ibid*, pp.77-78.

² Ganda Singh, *Op.cit*, pp.57-58.

³ Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh-i- Guru Khalsa*, Vol.2, pp. 677-681.

⁴ *Adi Granth*, p.1092.

which were considered law in the prevailing Hindu society, e.g. Kabir, who was a weaver (Julaha), Ravidas, a cobbler (Chamar), Sain ji, a barber (Nai), Sadhna a butcher (Kasai), Namdev, a tailor (Darji).¹

All the compositions in Guru Granth Sahib are composed in poetic form. The first compilation of the Adi Granth was completed by Guru Arjan Dev in 1604 and was transcribed by Bhai Gurdas. After completion Adi Granth was installed in the Harimander Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar. The final form of the Granth was edited by Guru Gobind. Adi Granth later on called Guru Granth Sahib after the year 1708 A.D., when the Tenth Guru Gobind Singh bestowed Gurushib on the Granth and commanded the Sikhs to regard Granth Sahib as their spiritual Guru.²

4. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SIKHISM ON SIKH SOCIETY:

In 15th century, agriculture was the main source of the economy of the Punjab. Natural fertility of the soil, adequate rainfall and availability of other irrigation facilities combined to distinguish the province from the point of view of agricultural produce. Agriculture was the largest, the oldest and the most valuable industry in the Punjab. It had ever been the mainstay of the economic life of the people of Punjab.³ More than $\frac{3}{4}$ th of the population lived in villages and was closely connected with the land directly or indirectly. India's economy in general and Punjab in particular during this period as in the ages before was predominantly agriculture.⁴

Village was the basic unit of economic organization. Each member of the village community performed a function which was determined by his birth and upbringing.⁵ The cultivator was the backbone of Indian

¹ Principal Mehar Singh Grewal, "Guru Granth Sahib", *Daily Ajit*, Jalandhar, 5 September, 1986.

² Kahan Singh Nabha, *Gursabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, 1974, p.177.

³ B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab, Under the Great Mughals*, Bombay, 1968, p.145; J.N. Sarkar, *Mughal Economy*, Calcutta, 1987, pp.3-4.

⁴ J.N. Sarkar, *Op.cit.*, p.8 ; R.C. Majumhar, (Ed.), *The history and culture of the Indian people. The Mughal Empire*, Vol. VII, Bombay, 1980, p. 713.

⁵ K.M. Ashraf. *Op.cit.*, p.114.

Economy. He tilled the soil, worked hard throughout the year, but lived in utter poverty and hardship.¹

In his Bani Guru Nanak gave a very high place to the farmer, because he fed the entire world without having any distinction of high and low or rich and poor in his mind. Guru Nank Dev even called the creator a wise and expert farmer in the following hymn-

ਆਪਿ ਸੁਜਾਣੁ ਨ ਭੁਲਈ ਸਚਾ ਵਡ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੁ ॥

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਾਧਿ ਕੈ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇ ਦਾਣੁ ॥

ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਉਪਜੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਏਕੁ ਕਰਮਿ ਪਵੈ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ ॥ 2 ॥²

The Hymn also told us that at the time of Guru Nanak Dev the peasant of Punjab was very conscious about his field work. He had full knowledge about farming. At that time people were suffering from great poverty and financial problems. Rulers were too exploitative in nature and through their officers, exploited their subject and the administration had become absolute corrupt. In the field of agriculture feudalism was the prevailing system. The king had allotted vast lands to his ministers, friends, family members and other landlords. Rulers and their officials tortured the labour and peasant class. In this dark period Sikhism has developed different and distinctive approaches to life. Sikhism as a term stands for the improvement in the materialistic routine and keeping the aim in mind of serving the humanity on the ground of social and economic.³ In Sikhism emancipation is not attained by renouncing the world, but by happily living in it. Thus there emphasis was on worldliness and life of house-holder. Sikh Gurus teachings provided a strong economic base for new society. Along with this the Sikh Gurus had

¹ A.B. Randey, *Society and Government in Medieval India*, Allahabad, 1965, p.250.

² "The Lord, holy master cultivators is not neglectful. First he prepared the soil then he sows holy name (of God) in it." *Adi Granth Sri Rage*, M.I, p.19 ; G.S. Talibi, *Op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.44.

³ J.R. Dass, *Economic Thought of the Sikhs Gurus*, National Book Organization, New Delhi 1988, p.2.

commented upon issues like trade, banking and feudalism. They were very sure that the economic problem could not be solved unless the character of an individual was raised to high level. Their ideal man was a Gurmukh Sikh, who indulged in hard work.¹ Through hard work he earns sufficient economic resources for luxurious livelihood, but never forgets to help the needy people.

Guru emphasized on Kirat Karna (to do hard work) and Vand Chhakna (to help the disadvantaged). In short, firstly 'Kirat Karna' belongs to the theory of production, whereas '*Vand Chhako*' implies the idea of proper distribution and balanced consumption. Through this idealism Guru wanted to mould the economic behavior of their followers. The Gurus laid great emphasis on the training of individuals. In fact, they wanted to create ideal individuals, because ultimately society is composed of individuals. If an individual is improved, society will definitely become better. Their idea of an ideal person was that he should be get rid of his ego, be helpful to others, work honestly and earn his livelihood, cooperate with others and share his earnings with those who are not economically sound.² The individuals, who were so created, were known as Gurmukh, also known as 'Khalsa' i.e., pure. The Guru's emphasis was on hard and honest work. The next component of Sikh Gurus economic theory is that begging is a curse for humanity and an ideal person never indulge in begging. This clearly states that one should earn and live as per the way shown by God and not to be dependent on others. Guru Nanak Said:

Better to live by honest labor
than by Begging

¹ Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, B.I. Chapter-VIII, p.574.

² J.R. Dass, *Op.cit*, p.79.

Those who eat the family at their
Labour and bestow something
O Nanak, recognize the right way.¹

Deg-Teg Fateh is an important idea of Sikhism in economic field. It stands for material prosperity and protection of poor or down trodden's interests. This slogan signifies the dual responsibility. The word 'deg' means 'large cooking vessel' or 'cauldron' or an 'offering' the word 'teg' means 'sword' or 'kirpan' the term 'deg-teg' refers to the concept of 'deg' which is the serving of food to the community as in respect of the Langer, and 'teg' is the protecting of the liberty and rights of each members within the community.²

The Gurus were also in favour of creating and expanding public activities. Wherever the Guru went they advised his followers to erect a Dharamsala, a common property of the people where they could sit jointly to discuss philosophical and religious aspects of life and undertake other common projects. Other public sectors activities which the Guru encouraged and patronized were collective farming, a common kitchen, and digging of well and tanks for water needs of surrounding area.

While taking to Emperor Jahagir, Guru Hargobind spelt out his economic policy. He told the emperor that removal of poverty and misery was the primary duty of the king. He advised the king, "To provide poor person with work to repair a fallen well or bridge, to level an uneven road or plant trees on the road side".³

The guru valued the great contribution of the craftsmen, such as shoemakers, carpenters, pot makers, and other small artisans, who were

¹ M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikhs Religion*, Vol-II, p.85.

² Cole, W. Owen, Piara Singh Sumbhi, *A Popular Dictionary of Sikhism*, Richmond, Surrey, 1997, p.28.

³ Macauliffe, *Sikhs Religion*, Vol-IV, p.18.

main future of the time. To enhance economic activities such as manufacturing, trade and banking, the Guru founded many cities, some of these cities are important on different ground such as Gondiwal, Kartapur, Tarn-Taran, Anandpur Sahib and Amritsar. These cities became centre of trade and commerce and religious congregations.¹

The Gurus encouraged the digging of tank and well. Many baolies (tanks) were excavated to solve the problem of irrigation and urban water supply. They also encouraged travelling. Most of Gurus, especially Guru Nanak, Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh travelled far and wide for the purpose of spreading the divine message. The Gurus patronized foreign trade especially in horses, dry fruits, silk and other merchandise. They sent their agents to the Middle Eastern countries from where they brought profit making goods.

The Gurus encouraged financial cooperation among the artists. At Amritsar, Guru Ram Das invited master craftsmen from all over India in twenty two trades and productive activities, and gave them financial assistance. He encouraged the traders to help to become independent.

5. Political impact on Sikh Society:

It is a known fact that politics and religion are inseparable in Sikh theology. During Guru Nanak's lifetime Bahlol Lodhi (1451-1489 A.D.), Sikander Lodhi (1489-1517 A.D.) and Ibrahim Lodhi (1517-1526 A.D.) ruled over the sultanate of Delhi. It is said that up to 1519, the internal peace of Punjab did not appear to have been seriously disturbed.² But after that Punjab experienced certain dramatic changes. Even since the occupation of Kabul, Babur was thinking to move to Hindustan. Thus during Guru Nanak's life time at first the Afghan empire came to an end

¹ J.R. Dass, *Op.cit.*, p.93.

² J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, p.14.

and then Mughal rule was established. Guru Nanak in some of his compositions has made specific observations about the contemporary politics. Scholars of Sikh history hold divergent views regarding Guru Nanak's attitude towards politics, but all have discerned a close connection between the reforms of Guru Nanak and politics.¹

Guru Nanak introduced the institution of Sangat. The fundamental object behind the organization of the Sangat was to guide the followers of the Guru to mould their lives according to the teachings of their master. Guru Nanak's motive behind Sangat was establishing the equality and brotherhood of mankind. In this way tradition of giving privileged treatment to the ruling class and humiliation and dishonor to the lower class could be stopped.²

Similarly, like Guru Nanak, Guru Angad Dev also observed the entire world was in agony. He said that:-

The Mendicant is given the title patshah (king) fools called Pandit. A blind man is called evaluator; such is nature of the usual parlance. A mischief monger become chief, and a bad woman is seated at the head. Said Nanak by the wisdom granted by the master. Known such to be the way of kaliyuga.³

Guru Amar Das promoted the institutions of Sangat and Pangat and he divided his spiritual domain into twenty two circles called *manjis*. Each manji was headed by devoted Sikhs whose duty was to preach the mission of the Sikh Guru's. Guru Arjan Dev started 'masands' system in order to collect money from Sangat in different parts of the country. He was also very much supported by Sikh Sangat. Emperor Jahangir felt annoyed at the popularity of Sikhism among the people. He ordered the

¹ *Ibid.*, pp.143-145.

² Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity*, pp.24-25.

³ *Shri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.1288.

Guru to close his shop and wanted to bring him into the field of Islam or to put an end to his life. He was tortured to death. He sacrificed himself in defending the religious human rights so; the martyrdom of fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev brought the Sikh people in open defiance of the unjust way of contemporary rulers.¹

After Guru Arjan dev, Guru Hargobind prepared the Sikhs for self-preservation against bigoted and powerful enemy by introducing a dual role of a Miri (an army leader) a Piri (Guru). Guru Hargobind maintained an army created a fort at Amritsar and the institution of Akal Taka, the symbol of Miri and Piri system of Guru Nanak. The Guru had openly declared his policy to punish the tyrant and protect the victims of unjust oppressors. He fought three major battles which were forced upon him by Mughals. This was turning point in Sikh history. He carried two swords one of spiritual power Piri and other for military power Miri.²

After Guru Hargobind the tenth guru Guru Gobind Singh led the people against the might of the Mughal Empire. Guru Gobind Singh felt to start organization of Sikhs to fight against tyranny and injustice. He wanted to strengthen the Sikh community by introducing the establishment of Khalsa.

Conclusion:

We can conclude that existential context of human being is very important factor of Sikh world-view. Development of Sikhs and efforts of Sikh Gurus reflect that they were very conscious about it. Sikh Gurus totally transformed the nature of society. They made efforts to eradicate evils from the social fabric of India and provide Sikhs a healthy society. Thus Sikhism impacted social, religious, economic and political life of

¹ Sohan Singh, *The Miri Piri Doctrine as Perfected by Guru Gobind Singh*, p.31.

² *Ibid*, p.32.

whole society. Sikh philosophy is secular as well as socialist. When it became a political force all the religions were extended an equal respect. The secular life has been spiritualized under the impact of Sikhism. It gives the message of a complete and balanced life, enjoining upon the same person to be a saint, a scholar, a statesman, a merchant, a warrior, a tiller of soil, worker in a factory and along with the performer of menial duties.

CHAPTER – IV

SIKH IDENTITY IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Before getting into Historiography, it is important to know what history is. History is a ‘Greek’ word which means ‘enquiry’, research, exploration of information.¹ In its very earliest known uses in human society, history was simply a narrative account of past events. It has its origin in different languages and came in the language English such as in the language French it is ‘historic’, in Latin language it is ‘historia’, and in Greek etymology it is ‘historia’, which means the sole purpose of this word to make others aware about the knowledge of past.²

Historiography

Historiography can be defined as ‘the art of writing history’, ‘history of history’ or ‘history of historical writing.’³ It is the study of the the history and methodology of the discipline of history.

Sikh history, which has long been a defining feature of Sikh identity, is of course intimately linked with the history of Punjab. But it is misleading to think that Sikh history is written only in Punjabi language. The available sources of Sikh history are mainly in three languages – Punjabi, Persian and English. In this chapter the researcher is trying to understand the issue of Sikh identity from Sikh studies. So the researcher will discuss sources and scholars who have been trying to describe the various aspects of Sikh identity.

¹ B. Sheik Ali, *History: Its Theory and Method*, McMilan India Ltd., Delhi, 1978, p.3.

² Bill Nasson, *History: The Meaning and Role of History in Human Development*, p.2.

³ Muhammad Akbar Zahoor and Fakhar Bilal, "Marxist Historiography: An Analytical Exposition of Major Themes and Premises", *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, vol. XXXIV/2, 2013, p.29

1. Traditional writings:

Bhai Gurdas:-

Bhai Gurdas was a nephew of Shri Guru Amar Das. He was the first writer in Sikhism and his writings are held in high esteem, next only to Shri Guru Granth Sahib. He has credit to inscribe the first copy of Shri Guru Granth Sahib. As a historical figure, Bhai Gurdas stands among the prominent personalities in the Sikh tradition.

Bhai Gurdas wrote Vaars and Kabit Swaiyas, which are of philosophical nature and give the valuable information about Sikh identity. His spiritual metaphors, symbols, language, ideas and understanding of Sikh vision in his writings make him a renowned personality of Sikhism. Dr. Darshan Singh writes that "Bhai Gurdas and his writings have an authoritative place in Sikh history and religion. He is as important for Sikhs studies as Ved Vayas for Hinduism, Anand in Buddhism and St. Paul in Christianity."¹ Bhai Gurdas explains the Sikh nation as a distinct Panth among the other religions. He says that since the true Guru integrated all the four *varnas* into one, this assemblage of *varnas* has come to be known as the holy congregation. Among Sikh philosophies, the Gurmukh philosophy has been established like the sun. Wiping out all the twelve ways (of yogis) the Guru has created the mighty Gurmukh-way (Panth). This Panth keeps itself away from the boundaries of the Vedas and the Katebas and always remembers as well as sings the unstuck word (Brahm).²

We must also have a closer attention to Gurdas's high opinion of the Sikh community in the context of the divine plan for world history. Bhai Gurdas inspired his co-religionists to spread the Sikh message so that they could conquer the world. He has the potential to bring the Sikhs

¹ Darshan Singh, Bhai Gurdas: *Sikhi De Pehle Viakhiakaar*, Guru Gobind Singh Deptt. of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1986, p.III.

² Var-23, Pauri-10.

into victory in the game that is known as life.¹

Hearing about Sikhi from the Guru, he calls himself 'Gur-Sikh'

Learning Gur-Sikhi from the Guru, the Sikh tells other Sikhs.

Meeting other Gur-Sikhs, Gur-Sikhs celebrate union

Sohan Kavi

Sohan Kavi write *Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin*. It was written in verse in Gurmukhi script by Sohan Kavi in 1718 A.D. It contains detailed information about the life and important events relating to Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Hargobind. It gives a vivid description of the compilation of the Adi Granth and its installation in Harimandir Sahib in 1604 and practices and ceremonies observed on this occasion and also highlights the ceremonies which were to be observed as a part of daily religious routine concerning the Granth and the Granth-Darbar. Though, not contemporary, it is a very important source with regard to the Sikh practices and rituals and the emergence of gurdwera institution.

Mahima Parkash:

There are two versions of Mahima Parkash, one is written in prose and the other in verse. The prose version was written by Bawa Kirpal Singh in 1741 A.D. It has a brief account of the life of Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus. But the Mahima Parkash written in Kavita '(verse)' by sarup Das Bhalla in 1776 is more elaborate in description. Its author was from the line of Guru Amar Das.

Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka:

It was completed in 1779 by Kesar Singh Chhiber and is considered an authentic source because his father and grandfather were closely associated with Guru Gobind Singh fromwhom he inherited the oral information about the events pertaining to the previous Guru.

¹ Var-11, Pauri-3.

Bhai Santokh Singh

Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth is the most elaborated work on the life, teachings and socio-religious practices and rituals as evolved in Sikhism from Guru Angad to Banda Bahadur. It was written by Bhai Santokh Singh in 1840 in Brajbhasha in verse. It is not a contemporary source. It was written and completed after a gap of more than two centuries of the execution of Guru Arjan Dev, it is also based on the oral tradition.

Sainapati-

Sainapati was a poet in the courtyard of the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh. He was the first biographer of Guru Gobind Singh. He is the witness of the wars of Guru Gobind Singh against injustice kingdoms. He saw the creation of Khalsa himself. He wrote all these things in his work Sri Gur Sobha. Guru Sobha is another indispensable source for the life history of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. While Bichittar Natak relates to his early life, Gur Sobha covers later part of his life. Guru Sobha's author is Sainapati, who was a court poet of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. According to Kaur Singh its internal evidence shows that it was completed in 1701 A.D., but according to Dr. Ganda Singh it was compiled in 1711 (Samvat 1798 Vikarmi). Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha and Baba Sumer Singh also in favour of year 1711 A.D.

Sri Gur Sobha is a systematic historical account of Guru Gobind Singh, highlighting the events after the creation of the Khalsa in 1699 CE, and ends with the death of the last Guru in 1708 A.D. It is the only contemporary and authentic historic source of information for the last phase of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's life. It gives, inter alia, a graphic account of the Guru's sending of the Zafarnama to Aurangzeb.

Kahan Singh Nabha :

Theoretically, Bhai Kahan Singh makes a strong claim in favour of the uniqueness of Sikh identity. Discussing the scriptures, prophets,

beliefs, daily routines, rites, rituals, symbols, worships, caste and class structures, he gives the powerful textual evidence to prove his claim. Bhai Kahan Singh does not want to create bitterness between Sikhs and Hindus. He has no objection in accepting the term 'Hindu ' only if this word is taken to be denoting people living in a particular geographical region. For him, using the word 'Hindu' as referring to a particular religion is objectionable for Sikhs. As he says, "If you call Sikhs as Hindus because they live in Hindustan (India), then you should consider Christian, Moslems as Hindus too. If on account of residence they are Hindus we have no objection to be called Hindus, i.e., Indians".¹

One thing is very much clear that the origin of Singh Sabha movement had particular aim to establish distinct and unique identity of Sikh Panth. Secondly Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha summarised essence of Singh Sabha in his all writings. He specifically focuses upon Khalsa identity. Although he respects Sehajdhari Sikhs, but according to him, Khalsa represents Sikh identity in principle. After a long discussion on principles from various aspects, Bhai Kahan Singh represents his actual motif, which is to prove the distinct political identity of Sikh community. For this purpose, he uses the word *quam* (nation) for Sikh community. He states that, ' O brothers, followers of Guru Nanak, I am confident that having read this book, you will consider yourself as a *Qaum* (nation) and will realize that "We are not Hindus" and will consider all Indians as your part."²

This work performed as justification for Singh Sabha and the other organizations (like Chief Khalsa Diwan) which disseminated the message of Sikhs separateness. Although some people believe that this is a one-sided interpretation of the Sikh Panth like other interpretations because

¹ Bhai Kahan Singh, *Sikhs... We are not Hindus*, Jarnail Singh (tr.), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2006, p.32.

² *Ibid.*, p.136

Kahan Singh's terminology emphasizes upon Sikh's distinct political identity. That's why; ultimately, he uses the word Quam for Sikhs in his conclusion.

Syad Muhammad Latif

Muhammad Latif published his history of the Punjab from the Remotest Antiquity to the Present Time in 1891 as an Extra Judicial Assistant Commissioner in the Punjab. His book was presented to Queen Victoria and he was given the title of 'Khan Bahadur' in 1892. His history is divided into five parts. Latif's account of the rise of the Sikhs was based mainly on the works of the European writers. Like them, he gives brief account of the contribution of each of the Guru towards the development of the Sikh community.

Latif places the institution of the Khalsa soon after the succession of Guru Gobind Singh. They were given *pahul* and the Guru took *pahul* from them. He exclaimed that 'the Khalsa arose from the Guru and the Guru from the Khalsa. They were mutual protectors of each other'. Other Sikhs were then initiated, and rules for the Sikh conduct of life were written. The Khalsa were instructed to adopt the '5ks'. The Guru now embarked on his great enterprise. He remodeled 'the religious conduct' and abolished the distinction of caste.

2. Western Writings:

Antonic Louis Henri Polier

Antonic Louis Henri Polier's paper on the Sikhs is perhaps the first known brief but connected account of the Sikh people written by a European. Col. A.L.H. Polier was born at Lausanne in Feb. 1741.¹

Polier came to India in 1757 and entered in the service of East India company as assistant engineer at Calcutta in 1761 and was

¹ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Early European Account of the Sikhs*, pp.53-55.

promoted as Chief Engineer with rank of captain in 1762.¹

Being non-Englishman he could not get further promotion. But at the behest of Warren Hastings he accepted deputation with the Nawabs of Oudh, Shuja and Asaf-ud-daula as architect and engineer. However because of the enemies and background, he had to resign from the job.

He had to seek employment under the Mughal Emperor, for some time. Hastings re-admitted him in company's service in 1782 as Lieutenant Colonel and stationed him in Lucknow.

Lucknow at that time was a great center of cultural activities and learning. There he got interested in Indian history and religions. He collected a large number of manuscripts in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, which he later presented to British Museum, London.

Colonel Polier's paper touches upon almost all the important aspect of the contemporary Sikh society, their origin and progress of their faith, their struggle for independence, their religious and civil institutions, their dress and diet, occupation etc.

It contains a number of factual errors which are quite natural in the face of paucity of authentic information, absence of personal contacts with the Sikhs and ignorance of their language. Its being first ever connected European through brief account of the Sikh people. The paper is also significant for its author's independent point of view about the Sikhs, which secures it a safe place among other contemporary writings.

Polier explains Sikhs in negative terms. On the whole, Polier's information on the Sikhs appears to have been collected from non-Sikhs who were neither sympathetic nor accurate.²

Charles Wilkins

Charles Wilkins was born in 1749 or 1750.³ He was the son of

¹ J.S.Grewal, *Historical Writing on the Sikhs (1784-2011)*, p.19.

² J.S. Grewal, *Op. cit.*, pp.21-22.

³ The account of his life is based on the *Dictionary of Indian Biography* (ed.C.E. Buckland), pp. 451, 452, Ganda Singh,(introduction) *Op. cit.*, pp.69-70.

famous Watter Wilkins. He came to India (Bengal) at the age of twenty, in 1770, and entered into the company's service as writer.¹

He moved to Varanasi and studied Sanskrit there. He was working on the translation of Mahabharata from Sanskrit to English and his translation of Bhagvad Gita was published in 1785. During his one visit to Varanasi he also made a stop at Patna and visited Shri Harimandir Ji. Almost contemporaneous with Polier's is another brief account of the Sikhs. He attended religious programme of Gurdwara and written his account as 'Sikhs and their College at Patna'. He had quoted recitation of Shri Dasam Granth Bani recited by Kirtankars. He had given account of the Sikh's place of worship and study at Patna, the birth place of Guru Gobind Singh, and their prayer and beliefs by a great and pioneer orient list have been ignored by the historians.

But so far as an accurate notice by any western, of the Sikhs religious belief and practices are concerned, this is the first most significant description, based on personal observations. At Calcutta, Wilkins chanced to meet a Sikh gentleman who informed him about the Gurudwara and Sangat at Patna.² For Wilkins this was a college of Sikhs and Satsangi Sikhs were students.

He penned down in a very lively manner his observations and other information about beliefs and origin of the Sikhs, which he could acquire during his two hours stay.

His observations though very brief but very important from the point of view of a westerner's interest in the religion of the Sikhs.

This is infact is the first instance of a Westerner's genuine interest in the religion of the Sikhs, and it is for the first time that the Sikhs attracted the attention of any westerner not as a political power but as a

¹ J.S.Grewal, *Op. cit.*, p.18.

² *Ibid.*

religious community.¹

Major James Browne

Major James Browne, agent of Warren Hastings at the court of Shah Alam II was the first English man to be asked by the authorities to collect every possible information about the Sikhs. During his stay at Delhi Major James Browne succeeded in producing first regular treatise on the Sikhs and submitted it later to Johan Motteux, chairman of the court of Directors for the affairs of united East India company on September 17, 1787, giving it the title 'History of the origin and progress of the Sikhs'.²

Browne's paper 'History of the origin and progress of the Sikhs', which he submitted to the chairman of the court of Directors, was not an original paper. It was based on Devanagri manuscript abridged for Major Browne in Persian language from where he himself translated it into English.

The Persian manuscript according to Ganda Singh was Risale-i-Nanak Shah by Budh Singh Arora of Lahore written in calibration with Lala Ajaib Singh Suraj of Maler Kotla³.

To this translation Browne added a brief introduction giving some general information about the manners and customs of the Sikhs which he collected from independent sources.⁴

His introduction to the translation is more important, because he gives his own observations about the nature of religious and political institutions of the Sikhs in this. His conclusion about the origin, growth and character of the Sikhs are totally different from that of Colonel Polier.

¹ J.S. Grewal, *Op. cit.*, p.19.

² Ganda Singh (ed), *Early European Account of the Sikhs*, p.71.

³ *Ibid.*, p.1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.13-19.

George Forster

George Forster is another contemporary of Colonel Polier and Major Browne who has produced a short but well connected account of the Sikhs.

H.S. Bhatia informs us that George Forster was selected by Warren Hastings for his scholarly aptitude to proceed to Punjab for collecting authentic information and writings about the Sikhs.¹ Bhatia further relates that he passed through the North-Eastern hilly tracts of the Punjab in February, March and April 1783, distinguished as a Turkish traveler for fear of the Sikhs.² The complete account of George Forster's journey is in the form of his vast collection of letters. George Forster's account of the Sikhs is partially based on the information supplied to him by Colonel Polier and partially on his own observations about the Sikhs while travelling through their territories.³ From the point of view of factual history, Forster account is an improvement over the earlier account of Colonel Polier and Major Browne.⁴ His account has found favor among the Sikhs as an objective and sympathetic description.

He was consciously attempting to produce such an impartial account, and has succeeded in it considerable degree. Forster's account begins with the origin of the Sikh faith, but his comments on the contemporary religious and civil institutions, the character of the Sikhs, the strength and the weakness of the community are enlightening. They are based on his deep understanding of Men and manners, and penetrating insight into the truths of history. Forster like Browne and Polier was fully conscious of the close relationship of the religion and politics of the Sikhs

¹ H.S. Bhatia (ed), *Rare Documents on Sikhs and their Rule*, p.12, Fauja Singh, *Historian and Historiography of the Sikhs*, p.13.

² H.S. Bhatia, *Op.cit.*, p.12.

³ George Forster, *Op.cit.*, Vol.II, pp.XII (preface) and p.333.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.41.

and he has tried to describe these two aspects in relation to each other.¹

John Malcolm

John Malcolm was born at the parish of Westerkirk, Dumfrieshire on May 2, 1769.²

Malcolm arrived in Madras in 1783 at the age of fourteen. After a few years' service in the army he was promoted to join diplomatic service. He learnt Persian and devoted his spare time to study books on history and literature in order to make up for his deficiencies in formal education.³ In addition to his skilled diplomatic career, he was also a prolific writer of history. His literary contribution includes Political History of India (1811). History of Persia (1815), Life of Clive, etc. Malcolm came to Punjab in 1805.⁴

He was accompanying Lord Lake following Jaswant Rao Holkar. Holkar had advanced to Punjab to gain the help of Sikh chiefs for his cause. The duty of John Malcolm as a political official was to persuade the Sikh chiefs not to render any help to Holkar.⁵

Malcolm availed of this opportunity to collect materials on the Sikhs. During his visit to Punjab he collected both written as well as oral information about the history, manners and religion of the Sikhs.

He visited Calcutta towards the end of the year 1806, and stayed there for six months. It was there he wrote his 'Sketch of the Sikhs'.⁶

Malcolm wanted to write a detailed history of the Sikhs, but the active nature of his public duties did not allow him much time and leisure for it. He wrote this hasty sketch with the purpose that "It will be useful at the moment when every information regarding Sikhs is of importance,"

¹ Forster, *Op. cit.*, p.x (preface).

² John Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Major General Sir John Malcolm*, vol.I, p.4.

³ C.E. Buckland, *Op. cit.*, p.271.

⁴ Fauja Singh (ed), *History and Historians of the Sikh*, p.17. John Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs: Their Origin, Custom and Manners* (ed. By Subhash C. Aggarwal) p.1 (introduction).

⁵ Khurana, *British Historiography on the Sikh Power in Punjab*, p.18.

⁶ *Ibid.*

and in the hope that, “It may perhaps, stimulate and aid some person who has more leisure and better opportunities, to accomplish that task which I once contemplated. The above quotations also reveal the motive of the author behind the writing of his sketch.¹

He has divided the whole account into three sections dealing respectively with the history and origin of the Sikhs, their customs, manners and their religion. He observes that the Sikhs have ultimate faith in their Gurus and in the effort to keep the words of tenth Guru to establish the power over all nation. As he writes that from....dying words of Guru Govind, the Sikhs believe themselves to have been placed, by their last and most revered prophet, under the peculiar care of God; and their attachment to this mysterious principle, leads them to consider the Khalsa (or commonwealth) as a theocracy; and such an impression is likely to oppose a very serious obstacle if not an insuperable barrier, to the designs of any of their chiefs, who may hereafter endeavour to establish an absolute power over whole nation.² Because of these merits of Malcolm’s sketch of the Sikhs, it has appropriately come to be regarded as the foundation of any serious understanding of the history, culture and religion of the Sikhs.³

William Ward

Another important writer after Malcolm to write on the Sikhs was William Ward. His account of the Sikhs is primarily based on Malcolm’s sketch. Unlike Polier, Browne and Malcolm, it is not an independent study, but forms part of his broader study of ‘the Hindus’.⁴

William Ward was born on October 20, 1769. His father, John Ward, was a carpenter and builder, who apprenticed him to a printer. He

¹ *Ibid.*, p.3.

² John Malcolm, ‘Sketch of the Sikhs’ in Darshan Singh, *Western Image of the Sikh Religion: A Source Book*, National Book Organization, New Delhi, 1999, pp.54-55.

³ Khurana, *Op.cit.*, pp.17-34.

⁴ W.Ward, *The Hindoos (History, Literature and Religion)*, vol-II, pp.342-354.

was baptized at Hull in 1796 and studied at the Rev. Dr. Fawcett's training establishment at Ewold Hall. He was sent to India in 1799 with Joshua Marshman (1768-1837), a great Baptist Missionary, by the Baptist Missionary Committee. They arrived at Serampur.¹ As already hinted Ward's main source of information for his 'Account of the Sikhs' is Malcolm's sketch of the Sikhs. However, he has added to this information from other independent sources. The help of a very learned 'Sikh' who was employed in the Serampur printing office was available to him.² In his study, Ward concentrated mainly on the religious aspect of the Sikh community, including a brief account of the Sikh Gurus, their contribution to the growth of the community and their religious belief and practices. Ward perhaps is the first western writer on the Sikhs who has given a gist of the main ideas of the Japu ji of Guru Nanak. He has also paraphrased many other hymns of Gurbani including the hymns of Bhakat Ravidas and Bhakat Kabir. He is perhaps the first Missionary to have taken a close look at the religion of the Sikhs. After Wilkins, his account is concerned with the understanding of Sikhs from religious point of view, without any political motivation. In the systematic studies of the Sikh beliefs and practices in English, Ward's name will be included among the pioneers.

Joseph Davey Cunningham

What John Malcolm had once conceived but could not executed because of lack of leisure in his otherwise active life had been fully accomplished by Joseph Davey Cunningham. His written detailed history of the Sikhs.³

Joseph Davey Cunningham was born on June 9, 1812 in Lambeth

¹ Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography*, pp.276, 73, 441.

² W. Ward, *Op.cit.*, p.342.

³ J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs from the origin of the nation to the battles of the Sutlej*, John Murray, London, 1849, 1851, 1853, Paice Akhbar, Lahore, 1897, Oxford University Press, 1918, S. Chand & Co. Ltd., 1972, reprint 1981.

in a Scottish family with a literacy tradition.¹ He reached India in 1837. On his arrival in India he was first employed on the staff of the Chief Engineer of the Bengal Presidency. In 1837, he was appointed assistant to Colonel Claude Wade, the political agent at Ludhiana on the Sikh frontiers for the next eight years. He held various appointments under the successor of Colonel Wade and at the outbreak of the first Sikh war he was political agent in the state of Bahawalpur.²

In the History of Sikhs, Cunningham did not make any hesitation in relating the whole truth on the first Sikh war which gave offence of some of his superiors. As a punishment he was removed from his political appointment.³

It was only in 1844 that the idea to write the History of the Sikhs occurred to him, when he was engaged in drawing up reports on the British connection generally with the state on the Sutlej and especially on the military resources of the Punjab.⁴

The history of the Sikhs is divided into nine chapters. Cunningham writes the teachings of Guru Nanak and he had described the background of the Indian tradition. He traces the growth of Sikh faith flourish more among the masses under the leadership of Guru Gobind Singh and later after the creation of Khalsa Panth and the struggles and execution of Banda Singh.

Horace Hayman Wilson

H.H. Wilson was born on September 26, 1786 and was educated in Soho Square, London and St. Thomas Hospital. He arrived in Calcutta in 1808, in the medical service of East India Company, and was attached to

¹ *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol-V, London, 1886, p.31.

² Biographical note on the Cunningham family, J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. XIII.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p.XXIV (Preface to 1st Edn.).

the mint at Calcutta for his knowledge of chemistry and assay.¹ Wilson's account of the Sikh is contained in his religious sects of the Hindus,² the first portion of which appeared in Asiatic Research for 1828 and the second in the volume for 1832.³ Another article by him, 'Civil and Religious institution of the Sikhs' first appeared in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. IX (1848) and was subsequently included in 'The Sikh Religion: a symposium'⁴. The first account includes the Sikhs among many minor Hindu sects and describes the origin, history and main teachings of Sikhism in terms of the beliefs and practices of the various Sikh sects such as Nanak Shahis, Udasis, Gobind Singh is, Nirmalas, etc. The information is primarily drawn from the account of Wilkins, John Malcolm and from his personal participation in a prayer session at Banaras and from the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, XIX, 521-33, and XX, 314-20, 487-502, translation of the 'Bichitra Natak' by Captain G. Siddons.⁵ Atma Ram, a Sikh priest at Calcutta, who had helped Malcolm, was also well known to Wilson.⁶ The article on the civil and religious institutions of the Sikhs is more detailed and comprehensive than the accounts of the Sikh sects. The author has attempted to highlight the uniqueness of Sikh civil and religious institutions, but he is reluctant to give Sikhism as a sign of faith.

Ernest Trumpp

The project of the Punjab Government to translate and preserve the authentic version of the Adi Granth and Dasam Granth planned in 1859 could begin only in 1869. The secretary of state appointed Ernest Trumpp, a renowned German student of Indian languages to carry out the

¹ The Life Sketch of Wilson is based on the *Dictionary of Indian Biography*, p.455.

² H.H.Wilson, *Religious Sects of the Hindus*, (ed.) Ernst Rost, Sushil Gupta India Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta, 1861, pp.149-54.

³ *Ibid.*, p.VII (preface by Reinhold Rost).

⁴ *The Sikh Religion: A Symposium*, Susil Gupta India Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta, 1958, pp.54-70.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.152.

⁶ *Ibid.*

translation work.¹ Ernest Trumpp was born on March 13, 1828 near Besigheim in Northern Wuerttemberg. He was the son of George Trumpp, a peasant and master carpenter and his wife Sera.²

Trumpp's book may be divided into two parts. The first part contains five chapters from pp. vii to exxxviii. In the first chapter, after the brief account of the life of Baba Nanak, the author has included the translation of two of the Janam sakhis of Baba Nanak under heading 'A' and 'B'. A Janamsikhi of Baba Nanak is a translation of the Janamsakhi discovered by H.T. Colebrook and preserved in the India offices library. The other translation marked 'B' is the translation of the Janamsakhi prevalent in the Punjab at that time and published at Lahore in 1871. And also preserved in the India office library, marked 495/2885 bibliotheca leydeniana.³ The second chapter contains the life sketches of the succeeding Gurus up to Guru Gobind Singh. In the third chapter the author has attempted to give a sketch of the religion of the Sikhs. The fourth chapter gives a brief account of the composition of the Granth. The fifth chapter is devoted to the language and the religious tone used in the Granth. The second part contains the translation of the composition of the Guru Granth Sahib. In this part the author has included the translation of the Banis of daily prayer found in the first thirteen pages of the Granth, the translation of the composition of the first four Ragas i.e. Siri, Majh, Gauri and Asa, the translation of the Salokas of Kabir and Sheikh Farid, Swaiye of the Bhattas. Salokas of Guru Teg Bahadur and one *Duhira* of Guru Gobind Singh. The translation covers 708 pages. In the appendix from pages 709-715 the author has given the original text of the Japji.

To Trumpp 'the Sikh Granth is incoherent and shallow in the

¹ N.G.Barrier, Trumpp and Macauliffe, *Western Students of Sikh History and Religion, Historian and Historiography of the Sikhs*, pp.167-68.

² Annemarie Schimmel, *German Contribution to the Study of Indo-Pakistan Linguistic*, Hamburg, 1981, p.84.

³ Ernest Trumpp, *The Adi-Granth*, p.VII.

extreme, and couched at the same time in dark and perplexing language, in order to cover these defects¹. The Sikhism in his opinion is “a waning religion that will soon belong to history”.²

Frederick Pincott

The challenge thrown by Trumpp was subsequently taken up by many western and the Sikh scholars. The first western writer to take up the challenge of Trumpp was Frederick Pincott, a member of the Royal Asiatic Society.³ He made it a special point to refute some of the notions wrongly held by Trumpp about the nature of Sikhism. His paper ‘Sikhism in relation to Mohammadanism’.⁴ This was also published in Dictionary of Islam under the title ‘Sikhism’ aims at refuting some views propagated by Trumpp.⁵ However, he also seems to fail to realize the Sikh vision, idea and practice. According to him, “It (Sikhism) is based on Hinduism, modified by Buddhist, and stirred into new life by Sufism. There seems to be superabundant evidence that Nanak labored earnestly to reconcile Hinduism with Muhammadanism, by insisting strongly on the oneness of God on which both parties could agree, and by subordinating the point of difference.⁶ Such as, Pincott also tries to describe Sikhism as a part of extension of Hinduism.

Max Arthur Macauliffe

Max Arthur Macauliffe was an Irish, born on September 29, 1837;⁷ 1837;⁷ he was educated at Newcastle School, Limerick, spring Field College, and queens College, Galway. He was appointed to the Indian

¹ *Ibid.*, p.vii (Preface).

² *Ibid.*, p.viii (Preface).

³ Barrier, Trumpp and Macauliffe, *Western Students of Sikh History and Religion, Historian and Historiography of the Sikhs*, p.172.

⁴ Frederick Pincott, *Sikhism in Relation to Mohammadanism*, W.H.Allen & Co., London, 1885.

⁵ Frederick Pincott, *Sikhism: A Dictionary of Islam*, (ed.) Thomas Patrick Hughes, Premier Book House, Lahore, 1885, pp.583-594.

⁶ Frederick Pincott, *Western Image of the Sikh Religion: A Source Book*, Darshan Singh (ed.) National Book Organization, New Delhi, 1999, p.177.

⁷ Kahan Singh Nabha, *Mahan Kosh*, Language Department, Patiala, 1974, p.938.

Civil Service at the examination of 1864, and was posted to the Punjab where he arrived in 1864. He reached the grade of Deputy Commissioner in 1882 and became a Divisional Judge two years later.¹ During his stay in Punjab, Macauliffe devoted all his time to the study of Sikhism and its literature and published three articles on Sikhism in the Calcutta review as early as in 1880-81. From now onward much of his time and limited linguistic abilities were focused on the study of Sikhism.² Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha was deputed for two years to teach the Guru Granth Sahib to Mr. Macauliffe on latter's request to Maharaja Hira Singh of Nabha in 1883. Thus we know that Macauliffe devoted many years to study the Sikh scriptures and history before he actually took up the project to translate the Guru Granth Sahib after resigning from the Government job in 1893.³ He worked in close association with the Sikh Gyanis and was fortunate in having the assistance and guidance of some learned Sikh scholars like Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, Gurmukh Singh, Rajinder Singh and Nihal Singh of Lahore, Bhai Sardul Singh Gyani (son of Gyani Gyan Singh), Prem Singh, Fatah Singh and Darbara Singh of Amritsar, Bhai Sant Singh of Kapurthala, Bhai Bhagwan Singh of Patiala, Bhai Dasaundha Singh of Ferozepur.⁴ After years of strenuous efforts and the cost of great expenses, Macauliffe succeeded in finishing the voluminous manuscript by 1908 and made arrangements for its publication by the Oxford University. It was first published in 1909 in six massive volumes⁵.

Macauliffe presents his observations and feelings in his writings about the faith of the Sikhs. He considers Sikhism as different from

¹ The Civil and Military Gazette, Lahore, March 19, 1913 as quoted in the *Mahan Kosh*, *Op.cit.*, p.939.

² M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol.I, p.XXX (Preface).

³ Macauliffe, *The Holy Writings of the Sikhs*, p.17, Kahan Singh Nabha, *Mahan Kosh*, p.939.

⁴ M.A.Macauliffe, *Op.cit.*, pp.27-28, See also the *Sikh Religion*, vol-I, pp.XXIX-XXX (preface).

⁵ Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writing and Author*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1909, vol-6.

various aspects in the tradition of myths. He observes about the authenticity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib that is distinct. As he writes that 'the Sikh religion differs, as regards the authenticity of its dogmas, from most of the other great theological systems. Many of the great teachers the world has known have not left a line of their own composition; and we only know what they taught through tradition or second-hand information, they were written or compiled by his adherents and followers, however, the compositions of the Sikh Gurus are preserved in these volumes, and we know at first-hand what they taught. They employed the vehicle of verse, which is unalterable by copyists, and we even become in time familiar with their different styles. No spurious compositions or extraneous dogmas can, therefore, be palmed off on us as theirs.'¹ To justify his point, Macauliffe gives the example of Pythagoras, Socrates, Buddha, Confucius and the Arabian Prophet, but he does not discuss about Jesus Christ and Bible.

Dorothy Field

One smaller book that may be mentioned in this context is the religion of the Sikhs by Dorothy Field.² It was first published in 1914, in the 'wisdom of the East' series. The book in this series were primarily intended to the 'ambassadors of good-will and understanding between east and west; and this indeed a small book is.'³ This is a brief sympathetic Western interpretation of Sikhism including excerpt from the Sikh scriptures. The book is not an original study; it is mainly based on one source, the monumental work of Macauliffe. It is divided into four chapters. The first outlines the life history of the Sikh Gurus and the fourth includes some selection from the sacred writings of the Sikhs in

¹ M.A. Macauliffe, "The Sikh Religion", in *Western image of the Sikh Religion: A Source Book*, Darshan Singh (ed.), National Book Organization, New Delhi, 1999, pp.329-30.

² Dorothy Field, *The Religion of the Sikhs*, (ed.), Cranmer Byng and Dr. S.A.Kapadia, Essess Publication, Delhi, 1976 (first 1914).

³ *Ibid.*, p.8 (Editorial note).

Macauliffe's translation. Chapter second and third are interpretative in nature and it is here that, the author makes his own contribution by way of further clarifying some of the basic ideals of the Sikh theology. In the second chapter the author make a study of the origin and originality of the Sikh religion in the context of Hinduism and Islam. In the third chapter the author has attempted to elucidate the basic theological ideals of Sikhism. The book, as we have seen earlier, is not an original study but in its organization and presentation it definitely deserves mention.

John Clark Archer

John Clark Archer was from the University of Yale. He came to Punjab in 1937 and stayed at the Khalsa College Amritsar, a great center of Sikh learning at that time, with the renowned Sikh theologian, Bhai Jodh Singh. Archer's studies into Sikhism resulted in the production of a book which was published by the Princeton University.¹ Commenting on the changed state of affairs, Archer says, "studies of the Sikhs are already numerous and materials for study are increasingly accessible."²

The main aim of Archer in the study of Sikhism is to contribute to the discipline of comparative religion. The subtitle of the book, 'A study in comparative religion' makes his aim amply clear. The author has repeatedly maintained this all through the book. Archer's book mainly concerns itself with the study of Sikhism. To the author, Sikhism originated as an attempt to reconcile the Hindu and Muslim religions. This conviction of the author is almost a presupposition of this study. The author says in the beginning, "Their movement, which can be accounted for within the compass of the last five centuries, originated actually in earnest hopeful efforts towards the reconciliation, within India at least of

¹ John Clark Archer, *The Sikhs in Relation to Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Ahmadiyyas: A Study in Comparative Religion*, University Press, Princeton, 1946.

² Archer, *The Sikhs*, p.VI (preface).

Hindu and Islamic orders and ideals.¹ The author wants to accomplish so many things in this book. Firstly, it is a tradition in relation to other religious traditions; secondly it aims at studying the process of interaction in the development of a reconciler movement, and so on. The first two chapters introduce the foreigner to the Sikhs and their homeland Punjab. The third chapter is devoted to the description of Indian religion background of the religion of Guru Nanak with special focus on Kabir as the fore-runner of the Guru. From third chapter to the eleventh the main concern of the author is to elaborate the history of the Sikh tradition with the exception of the sixth chapter. In the sixth chapter the author has briefly describe the teachings of Guru Nanak including a rendering of the Japuji, a composition of Guru Nanak end the basic text of Sikhism. In the final chapter entitled ‘Timeless Truth and Re-construction’, the author attempts to sum up his study again with multiple concerns.

Duncan Greenlees

After the period of six years Archer’s *The Sikh*, was published the Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib by the well-known theosophist Duncan Greenlees, in the word Gospel series. It is also a comparative study of the Sikh scripture but from the theosophist’s concern.² The present volume includes a very lengthy introduction running to 198 pages. The author is of the opinion that the history of the Sikh Gurus and the Khalsa panth is an indispensable part of their religion. “The Sikh religion” he says “has never been a philosophy of books, the theorists, but a discipline of life, an ideal of brotherhood inspired by passionate devotion to the highest, guided by the example of the Guru’s own life, and interpreted in the life history of Guru Khalsa Panth. Sikh history cannot be divorced from Sikh

¹ Archer, *The Sikhs*, p.V (preface).

² Duncan Greenless, *The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib* (The World Gospel series no. 8), The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1952.

philosophy it is its very life-blood.¹ The main body of the book is divided into two parts and divided into nine chapters. In the first part divided into eight chapters, the author has provided a translation of the selected verses from the Sikh scriptures relating to the basic ideas of the Sikh theology such as ‘The perfect teacher’, ‘The glory of God’, ‘Moral man’, ‘The true Guru’, ‘The Divine Name’, ‘The way to God’, ‘Union with the beloved one’ and ‘The Guru’s Descent’. The second part of the book is a new rendering of the Japji of Guru Nanak, the basic text of the Sikhs. The author has given his own detailed notes along with this translation to elaborate the basic Sikh beliefs and has also furnished many parallels from the scripture of the word in order to illustrate the idea of basic unity of divine revelation in the scripture of the word. In brief, it is deeply sympathetic account of the basic Sikh theological ideas based on the Sikh scriptures and illustrated by the example from the scriptures of the other religions.

Lochlin

Lochlin stayed for more than three decades among the Punjabis, learnt their language and studied their scriptures. Clinton Herbert Lochin graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1920 and earned on M.A. in psychology at Princeton University. He came to the Punjab in 1923 with wife and served for thirty five years in village work. He also taught in Baring Union Christian College, Batala (Punjab). In 1957 he was granted the degree of Ph.D. by Hartford Seminary Foundation with a dissertation on ‘the Granth of the tenth Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa Brotherhood’. For a period of ten years he worked on a team to translate the Old Testament into Punjabi under the Bible Society of India². His studies into Sikhism resulted in the production of two small

¹ *Ibid.*, p. XV (preface).

² C.H. Lohelin, *The Christian Approached to the Sikh*, Edinburgh House Press, London, 1996, p.2

books on the Sikhs and their scriptures. The first one was the Sikhs and their scriptures published in 1958¹ and the second one as we have already seen with his Ph.D. dissertation on the Dasam Granth, which was issued in the book form in 1971.² The Sikhs and their scriptures were subsequently issued in the Christian approach series with minor alterations and additions under the title, 'The Christian approach to the Sikhs'.³

In addition to these two books he has contributed a number of scholarly articles including 'Sikhism and Christianity', 'Some Christian leaders in the Punjab', 'Criticism of the Kartarpur Granth', in their foreword to the Sikhs and their scriptures Ganda Singh and Pritam Singh have observed, "it is an objective study and an admirable introduction to the subject for those who have neither the leisure nor the patience to go into the details of the history and religion of the Sikhs."⁴ The book presents a very brief introduction to the Sikh religion and their history. The author has involved so many aspects in this study that he has failed to deal with any one of these in detail and depth.

In the first three pages the author has attempted to sum up the geographical setting and cultural and political situation before the rise of Sikhism. In the remaining eight pages of the first chapter he has given the whole history of the Gurus period including the special contribution of each Guru to the formation of the Sikh tradition. In the second and third chapters the author has discussed the racial roots of the Sikhs and some of the salient features of the Sikhs and Singhs. The religious background of Sikhism is described in the eighth and the ninth chapters where Hindu Bhakti and Sufism have been discussed in relation to Sikhism.

¹ C.H. Lohelin, *The Sikhs and Their Scriptures*, Lucknow Publishing House, Lucknow, 1974 (first 1958).

² C.H. Lohelin, *The Granth of Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa Brotherhood*, Lucknow Publishing House, Lucknow, 1971.

³ C.H.Lohelin, *The Christian Approached to the Sikhs*, Edinburgh House Press, London, 1966. In the Christian approach series, no.8.

⁴ Ganda Singh and Professor Pritam Singh, Foreword, *The Sikhs and their Scriptures*, p.V.

The development of the Sikh orders related in the tenth chapter. The eleventh chapters very briefly introduce some of the holy places of the Sikhs. In the twelfth chapter the author has given a translation of some selected passages from the Sikh scriptures. In the post script, the scope of further cooperation between the Sikhs and the Christians has been explored. The book includes two appendixes. The first appendix contains five tables relating to the Guru, Bhagats, the genealogies of the Gurus, some similarities and differences of Sikhism with other religious traditions and a glossary. Appendix II includes articles on the Sikhs in California.

The Granth of Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa Brotherhood is a better organized study. The first chapter of this study is devoted to the life and work of Guru Gobind Singh. The second chapter is important as it discusses the status and purpose of the Dasam Granth. The Sikh attitudes to the caste and relation with the Hindu have been discussed in brief. In the concluding paragraph the author had attempted to sum up the new development of Sikhism. The Gurus incorporate the Hindu pantheon in their Granths, and accepted much of Hindu theology, even though they rejected Hindu religious practices, but the form of Hinduism they accepted was not the orthodox Hinduism of the 'Sanatan Dharm' (ancient faith). Chapter third devoted to the study of each individual composition of the Dasam Granth. It is a lengthy chapter and consists of the main fruits of author's labor. In the fourth chapter, the author has offered a contrast between the two Granths of the Sikh. He stated, "The main difference is that of purpose. The Adi Granth aims at peace of mind, the Dasam Granth at readiness for war". The fifth chapter provides a study of the Hukamnamas of the Guru. The sixth chapter traces the similarities between the Bhagavad Gita and the mission of Guru Gobind Singh on the basis of Mohan Singh Oberoi, the author seems to concede that the

Gobind Gita is a commentary on the Gita by Guru Gobind Singh.

In chapter seven the attitude of Guru Gobind Singh towards Islam and Muslims has been studied. The author has concluded that the Guru was not against Islam as such, he was fighting against the evil that has afflicted Islam. This work also includes four appendixes. The first appendix makes a very strong plea for the need of textual and historical criticism of the Sikh scripture with special reference to the Kartarpur Granth. Appendix second includes brief introduction of the Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious studies, Panjabi University, Patiala and the Christian Institute for Sikh Studies, Batala with reference to their prospective role in bringing close the religious communities in the Punjab. Appendix three includes the historical tables as in the sequence of year and volume. Appendix four gives the table of contents of the Granth of the tenth Guru. The author's attitude as revealed from these studies is sufficiently positive and sympathetic.

Norman Gerald Barrier

He was educated at the Duke University where he obtained his M.A. degree in history in 1964. He done the doctoral robes in 1966 and the subject of his thesis was Punjab politics and Disturbances of 1907. His special interest is emergence of sub-national political movements and the biographical problem relating to that period. Barrier knows Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. He spent some time in England, India and Pakistan in connection with his research. He is professor of history at the University Of Missouri- Columbia USA. Although his main interest remains history, his two bibliographies i.e. *The Sikhs and their Literature*¹ were completely banned² containing very useful information for the Sikh

¹ N.Gerald Barrier, *The Sikhs and their Literature (1849-1919)*, Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1970.

² N.Gerald Barrier, *Banned: Controversial Literature and Political Control in British India 1907-1947*, Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1976 (Missouri, 1974).

studies. He is also the co-editor of two very important volumes on Sikh history and Sikh studies with Harbans Singh and Mark Ivergensmeyer. The researcher has already referred on ‘Trumpp and Macauliffe: ‘Western students of Sikh history and religion’. Barrier has thus enriched the field of Sikh studies by collecting very useful information on the lesser known period of its history. His introductory essay on the Sikhs and their literature offers a very scholarly analysis of the Sikh resurgence and its literature.

William Owen Cole

William Owen Cole teaches religious studies at the west Sussex Institute of higher education, Bishop Otter College, Chi Chester prior to this he spent twelve years at Leeds where his interest in the Sikh studies was matured. His interest in Sikhism goes back to 1968 at the time when the Sikhs were preparing for the quincentenary celebrations of Guru Nanak. Later on, he developed so much interest in the Sikh studies that he completed his M.Phil and Ph.D. degree in this area. Cole found in S. Piara Singh Sambhi an immigrant to England and a well-educated Sikh and writer – a dependable companion and mentor in Sikh studies. He published his first book on the Sikh with S. Piara Singh Sambhi as co-author.¹ His M.Phil dissertation is devoted to the study of ‘Guru in Sikhism’² and Ph.D. thesis explores the attitude of ‘Guru Nanak and early Sikhism to the Indian religious beliefs and practices’.³

Cole has also lectured extensively on Sikhism and has contributed many scholarly papers on Sikhism to the reputed journals. He delivered Guru Nanak memorial lecture in 1983, under supervision of Guru Nanak foundation, New Delhi. Cole was also a visiting professor in the Guru

¹ W.Owen Cole and Piara Singh Sambhi, *The Sikhs, their Religious Belief and Practices*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1978.

² W.Owen Cole, *The Guru in Sikhism*, Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., London, 1982.

³ W.Owen Cole, *Sikhism and Its Indian Context 1469-1708*, Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., London, 1984.

Gobind Singh Department of religious studies Panjabi University, Patiala in 1983. Regarding the Sikhs, the author has stated, “the purpose of our book is to provide a multi-dimensional introduction of the Sikh faith, covering practices as well as beliefs. For the most part the approach will be descriptive and explanatory but attention will also be given to various ways in which Sikhism has been regarded by scholars”.¹ The Sikhs briefly introduced the ten Sikh Gurus and the Sikh scriptures. The Guru in Sikhism is the first full length western study of one of the most central doctrine and institution of Sikhism. The nature and role of Guru in Sikhism is varied, and complex. How the institution of Guruship in Sikhism has developed is a very fascinating area of study. In this study the basic concept of Guru has been studied in its varied historical forms.

McLeod

McLeod is New Zealander by birth and now a leading scholar of Sikhism in the west. His objective historical and linguistic analysis of the Sikh writings has taken the western studies of Sikhism for ahead of the previous efforts according to Cole, “McLeod’s purpose in undertaking his research was to subject the early lives of Guru Nanak to the same critical analysis that has been used on other documents of a similar kind, especially the Christian Gospels in an attempt to discover the Nanak of history behind that of faith. His first book in the area of Sikh studies appeared in 1968, and it was the revised version of his Ph.D thesis.”²

The main aim of the study was to discover the Nanak of history by subjecting the traditional Sikh literature concerning Guru’s life to rigorous historical methodology, to provide a systematic statement of his teachings and to make an attempt to fuse the glimpses provided by the

¹ Cole and Sambhi, *The Sikhs*, p.XII (preface).

² W.H.McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968.

traditional biographies with the personality emerging from the teachings.¹ His book came as invoked varied reactions. He was criticized for rejecting many a Sikh traditions and was appreciated for his systematic presentation of the teachings of Guru Nanak. The book sets very high standards of critical scholarship.

The implication of his deep study and conclusions are far deeper and we should be contented here with the above brief introduction. His third book, 'Early Sikh Tradition' appeared in 1980². McLeod had been criticized for his ruthless rejection of the many Sikhs from the Janamsakhi literature as an unreliable source of the life of Guru Nanak. But McLeod never denied the significance of the Janamsakhi literature so far as the later development of the faith in the 17th and 18th centuries is concerned.

Early Sikh tradition is a comprehensive attempt to discuss the origin, formation, nature and function of the Janamsakhi literature. It is a work of a very profound and critical scholarship, unattained by any Sikh or non-Sikh scholar so far in the field of Sikh studies. Any brief comment of general nature about this work would be doing injustice to the merit of the work and labours of the author. The same year (1980) Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, published the B 40 Janamsakhi translated and edited by McLeod.

W.H. McLeod started his academic career by undertaking research on the life of Guru Nanak. While comparing Guru Nanak with Sant Kabir, he states that, 'the system developed by Guru Nanak is essentially a reworking of the Sant pattern, a reinterpretation which compounded experience and profound insights with a quality of coherence and a power of effective expression'.³ He further gives some historical observations

¹ *Ibid.*, p.Vii (preface).

² W.H.Mcleod, *Early Sikh Tradition: A Study of the Janam-Sakhis*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980.

³ W.H. Mcleod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford, New Delhi.

on Sikh identity in his book *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of the Sikh Identity* which is characterized by an excessive reliance upon logics or reasons. Such one dimensional approach (historical) is inadequate to make a sense of spiritual oriented aspects of Sikh Panth. McLeod states that 'Nanak was a Hindu, and although the Sikh tradition subsequently developed its own distinctive features, it remains firmly set within the larger matrix of Hindu belief and social convention'.¹

He divides the development of Sikh identity in phases. According to him, the first phase begins with emphasis upon Nam, Dan, and Isnan. He says that the teachings of Nanak and his early successors focused on the Nam or Divine Name, a term which we have already noted as the dominant feature of the popular Nam, Dan, and Isnan formula.² He further states that Guru Amardas borrowed the practice of compulsory eating in group from the Sufis. According to him caste system was also not denied by the Gurus. On the basis of Janamsakhis, he concludes that early Sikh identity was 'dimensioned by implied comparisons with Vaishnavas, by the suggestion that Nanak might adopt various Panthic identities, and by the occasional claim that he regarded himself as a Hindu. A Panth, which is in the process of self-definition but which has not yet achieved a clear awareness of separate Identity. In the case of the early Nanak Panth the conclusion which follows is that no clear line of demarcation can be drawn in order to separate it from contiguous Hindu tradition'.³

He further writes that Guru Arjan and Bhai Gurdas have given a new face to Sikh identity in early Nanak Panth. He also notes that institutions of Dharamshalas and *Baolis* are also important in the promotion of Sikh identity. After this, he focuses upon Guru Gobind Singh period and explores Khalsa terminology. McLeod projects the

¹ W.H.Mcleod, *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, p.6.

² *Ibid.*, p.8.

³ *Ibid.*, p.18.

image of Khalsa dynamically. His thesis on Sikh identity circles around Khalsa and his Rahit (Sikh code of conduct). He stresses on this point that Khalsa identity is distinct from Hindu and Muslim identities. According to him, 'it is the way of life enunciated by the Khalsa tradition which is summarized in the word 'Rahit' and non-Khalsa Sikhs sustain a separate identity precisely because they decline to observe some key features of the standard 'Rahit'. The 'Rahit' is, thus, the Khalsa way of life, the system of belief and distinct behaviors which all who accept Khalsa initiation are expected to observe'.¹

McLeod locates the formation of Sikh identity in his historical perspective. He examines the Sikh rituals, traditions and institutions as the symbol of Sikh identity. At last, he tries to provide a definition of Sikh identity. He says that 'it seems clear that a very substantial majority of Sikhs now reject the claim that Sikhs are Hindus or that the panth is a Hindu sect. The Panth's origin was Hindu and its partial retention of caste must be acknowledged, but the experience and response of the past five centuries have together generated a sense of separate identity. A few Sikhs may still regard themselves as Hindus, most do not'.²

Above discussion shows that he does not attempt to understand the divine presence of Guru Nanak, and how Guru Nanak and his ideological beliefs are distinct from other traditions of faith. Rather he combines the Sikh panth with Sants and Hindu traditions. He finds some contradictions between the ideology of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, for him Khalsa identity is separate due to its Rahit rather than the better of the Sikhs.

3. National Writers

Harjot Oberoi

Harjot Oberoi is a professor of Asian studies at the University of

¹ *Ibid*, p.30.

² *Ibid*, p.120.

British Columbia. He wrote 'The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh tradition'. Harjot Oberoi's work is known as an extension of McLeod's work. He raises the issue of religious boundaries of Sikh identity. He attempts to give a historical account of the formation of Sikh identity. According to him, historically, in early phase of Sikh history, there was no fixed identity. 'A narrative tradition which represents an image of Nanak is constant flux thus has manifold ramifications for early Sikh identity. Just as there no fixed Sikh identity in the early-Guru period'.¹ Oberoi denies that there was a distinct image of Sikh identity. In his perspective, Guru Granth Sahib under the supervision of Guru Arjan makes a powerful declaration of the separateness of the Sikhs. In the Vaars of Bhai Gurdas, who was somewhat aware of the distinctiveness, we can trace some flashes of Sikh identity.

He does not trace the origin of Sikh identity from Guru Nanak. He notes that the creation of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh is a milestone in the formation of Sikh identity. He says that, 'although we have no contemporary description of Khande ki Pahul, it is certain that it involved the use of a heavy double-edged sword and sanctified water. Whatever it's precise form and sequence, this new image initiation rituals and its distinctive religious imagery gave the Khalsa symbolic grid to proclaim and affirm their new identity'.²

In the perception of Oberoi, Khalsa, it's Rahit and rituals perform the role to make unique Sikh identity. Outlook of the Khalsa with symbols and his practices according to Rahitnamas paints his image distinctively different from others. After this he says that Khalsa identity performs hegemonic and dominant role in the Sanatan Sikh tradition which had pluralistic approach for Sikh belief. He also compares the

¹ Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, Oxford, Delhi, 1997, p.56.

² *Ibid*, p.61.

Khalsa with other sects of the Sikh tradition. Within this, he makes the breach in the Sikh collectiveness. As per him, Khalsa is a new identity but in late nineteenth century the practice of Tat Khalsa as he understands it has been the clear awareness and performance of the Sikh identity.

In his whole work, Oberoi poses a serious question about Sikh identity, and reveals that it emerged from the political crisis. He gives the examples of Khalsa creation and the establishment of Singh Sabha in the late 19th and early 20th century. His work shows clearly misunderstanding of Sikh practices. He creates illusions and gives statements and comments. J.S. Grewal comments that 'does Oberoi suggest that the Sikh regarded themselves as both 'Muslim' and 'Hindu'? Or none, and therefore they had no identity? If 'heterodox textually' means something different from diverse authorship and content, Oberoi does not make it clear. If the implication is that there are doctrinal contradictions in the text of the Adi Granth, Oberoi does not demonstrate. His insistence on 'unfixed' identity of the Sikh Panth does not appear to be an inference drawn from empirical evidence but a prior assumption. His interpretation of the evidence used becomes forced and farfetched. The statement that 'identity' of the early Sikh Panth was fluid and unfixed essentially means that the Sikh Panth was not distinct from the 'Hindu society'.¹

Pashaura Singh

Pashaura Singh deals with the question of Sikh identity and examines who is a Sikh. He applies the western methodology of historiography and divides Sikh history in some places like early phase of Sikh community, institution of Khalsa to fall of Sikh sovereign rule, British Raj, Singh Sabha and Akali movements. For him, Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikh identity and his philosophy of ideal person Gurmukh creates a different era within the concepts of Nam, Dan and Isnan. He also defines the various concepts and institutions to explain the early Sikh

¹ J.S. Grewal, *Historical Perspectives on Sikh Identity*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p.13.

Panth's identity. For him, Gurmukh, Dharmshala, continuity of Gurgaddi, Kirtan, Langar, and Gurmukhi script are main flashes of Sikh identity. He says that '(the) sense of distinct identity was marked by distinctive belief system, modes of worship, socio-religious institutions and an over-arching organization with the Guru as its pivot. Indeed, the institution of Guru carried an aura of divinity for the Sikhs'.¹

He contemplates that the building of Harmandir Sahib and compilation of Adi Granth becomes strong determinates of independent Sikh identity. In his view the early Sikh identity was based upon peculiar doctrines, organizations and institutions and social attitudes including the gumption of spiritual and temporal concerns. In emerging of Sikh identity, Pashaura Singh goes to find out major four elements in his research. He says that 'all four elements combined to produce the mutual interaction between ideology and environment that came to characterize the historical development of Sikhism. Overall, the pre-modern understandings of Sikh identity were primarily based upon correct practices rather than orthodoxy. Although the earlier Nanak-Panth had permeable boundaries with the Hindu society at the popular level, the institution of Khalsa sharpened the process of the emergence of a separate Sikh identity'.²

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

Pashaura Singh observes that Sikh identity begins with Guru Nanak. He mentions some famous concepts of Sikh Panth and describes the shades of Sikh identity in continual historical process till date.

¹ Pashaura Singh, "Sikh Identity in the Light of History: A Dynamic Perspective", in *Sikhism and History*, Pashaura Singh & N. Gerald Barrier (ed.), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2004, p.80.

² *Ibid.*, p.92.

Daljit Singh

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

To project his thesis on Sikh identity, Daljeet Singh marks the five arenas of Sikh thought and praxis. In his observation, Sikh identity is distinct primarily due to a radically distinct concept of God. He deals with this theme the title *Spiritual Experience of the concept of God*.¹ His main concern is to explore the concepts of liberalism, freedom and sovereignty of Sikh religion. Sikh God apart from being transcendent, is also immanent and being immanent. He is creative, directive, ruler, and protector, sovereign and has all values and virtues.²

The ideological difference from other religions, according to Daljeet Singh is the second feature, which explains the uniqueness of Sikh identity. Sikhism derives its ideological different characters from its unique conception of reality of the world and goal of human life is to become Gurmukh. Comparatively, in his view, these attributes distinguish it from other religions. Gurmukh, an ideal of Sant Sipahi is a

¹ Daljeet Singh, *Essentials of Sikhism*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1994, p.255.

² *Ibid*, p.256.

spiritual follower of Guru Nanak and has perfect consonance with the thesis of the Guru, is entirely different.¹ About the third aspect of Sikh identity, he explains about the class distinction in the Sikhs.

He gives the fourth feature of Sikh identity. According to him, 'Guru Granth Sahib the Sikh scripture is the most emphatic pronouncement about the distinct and independent identity of Sikhism. The phenomenon of Sikh scripture is unique in the annals of religious history of man. In the case of every other religion, its scripture was compiled by decades, and mostly centuries, after the prophet had left the physical scene. In all these cases, numerous problems of authenticity, textual accuracy and advert ant additions and interpolations, have arisen, thereby creating many controversies, both among the faithful and the scholars. But the step taken by Gurus had a new thesis to give entirely different from the earlier ones, and for that matter, it required a separate and authentic compilation'.²

In the last, Daljeet Singh marks the fifth element of Sikh identity i.e., Panth and its instincts. He defines that the purpose of Guru Nanak was not just to deliver the idea but also to spread this through practice. To apply this, Guru Nanak established Kartarpur after his world-wide visiting and meetings with the remarkable spirits of that time. Whole life systems of Guru-Panth, Gurudwara, Sangat, Pangat, Miri-Piri, Langar, Sant-Sipahi, Khalsa are based upon Guru Nanak's visionary thought.

Daljeet Singh gives some clues regarding Sikh identity. He emphasizes on Guru Nanak's ideology for exploration of Sikh identity. His research is confined to only dealing with the peripheral aspects of the phenomena of Sikh identity which as a result causes his work to overlook/oversimplify this complex issue. For Daljeet Singh, distinct identity was not only fully formed in the time of the Gurus but it was also

¹ *Ibid*, p.258.

² *Ibid*, p.263.

their creation, resulting from the ideas of Guru Nanak and the ideals, institution, and actions based on them. He is not bothered about 'uniformity' or 'fixity' in his conceptualization of identity.

Gokul Chand Narang

Gokul Chand Narang born in 1878. After getting his Master's degree in 1901-02, he taught at D.A.V. College, Lahore, where he came in class contact with Mahatma Hans Raj and other Arya Samajists. He wrote a small book entitled message of the Vedas. He went to Oxford for research but got the Degree of Ph.D. from the University of Berne in Switzerland. He published his doctoral thesis in 1912 as the 'Transformation of Sikhism'.¹

For Gokul Chand Narang, Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism seems to have thoroughly diagnosed the case of the Hindu community of his time and found out that a religious revival was the only remedy which could save it from impending destruction. During the times of Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikhs were entirely changed or transformed from a body of peaceful religious devotees to a national and political organization committed to strive for the good of the Hindus and having pugnacity and valour as its most important feature According to Narang Sikh religion belonged as much to the Hindus as it did to the Sikhs. Sikhs religion was a reformist movement in Hindustan.

Indu Bhusan Banerjee

The first volume of Indu Bhusan Banerjee's Evolution of the Khalsa was published in 1936 and second volume appeared in 1947. According to Banerjee "Sikhism, no doubt, had its start in a protest but it was a protest against conventionalism and not against Hinduism." He points out that how the peaceful sect gradually turned into a 'military order' under the force of circumstances. I.B. Banerjee had tried to see the rise of Sikh religion from the Nationalistic perspective. According to

¹ J.S. Grewal, *Op.cit.*, 1997, p.351.

Banerjee, “Originally, Sikhism belonged to the great families of popular religion, that made their appearance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.”¹

J.S. Grewal

J.S. Grewal is a prominent scholar of Sikh history. He has written various papers, books and documents, but in Historical perspective on Sikh Identity, he presents historical aspects of Sikh identity. According to him, Sikh identity begins with Guru Nanak which manifests itself through Sikh ideology, various institutions and practices of the Sikhs. But it is the Khalsa Institution, which has given a determinate character to Sikh identity, According to him, 'He (Guru Nanak) told his followers that this mode of worship was the most effective for attaining liberation, and for them it was the only way. His successors wrote their own compositions, which were put together in the Granth compiled by Guru Arjan. The compositions of Guru Teg Bahadur were added later. It is now known as the Adi Granth, and regarded as the Guru Granth Sahib. The adoption of new beliefs, practices, and institutions made the Sikhs conscious of their identity quite early in their history. The institution of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh appears to be a great landmark in the process precisely because it made Sikh identity unambiguously conspicuous. There is a long historiographical tradition in which the Khalsa figure as a community distinct from both Hindus and Muslims'.²

Grewal analyzes the approaches of W.H. McLeod, Harjot Oberoi, Daljeet Singh, G.S. Dhillon, Mohsin Fani and Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha in detail. In its essence, the Singh identity dominated the other Sikh identities like Sahajdharis, Udasis, etc. Before 19th century there was not big rupture but till early 20th century the Singh identity was on its peak. He says that 'for the Sikhs, however, the panth consisted of both the

¹ J.S. Grewal, *Ibid.*, p.297.

² J.S Grewal, *The Sikh Ideology, Institution and Identity*, Oxford, New Delhi, 1990, p.290.

Singhs and the Sahajdharis. This situation began to change in the late nineteenth century when, in response to assertions that Sikhs had no identity separate from the Hindus, the Singh Sabha leaders began to treat the Singh identity as the preferable Sikh identity because of its greater visibility. But, they were also close to the Sikh tradition of the eighteenth century in which the Singh identity was the preferable Sikh identity. Their eventual success marginalized the Sahajdharis within the Sikh panth'.¹

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

CONCLUSION

The complete focus of this chapter is on the role of history in shaping the Sikh identity. There are several historical writers, scholars, and critics as well, who have undoubtedly helped to give shape to the identity of the Sikhs. All above eminent writers, through their distinctive writings have given the different identity to Sikhs. But the factors which are similar in most of these above scholars writings, those are that one who is a reformer, savior of the humanity, peace lover, secular and many more traits come into existence of Sikh identity.

¹ J.S. Grewal, *Historical Perspective on Sikh Identity*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p.75.

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CONCLUSION

Identity means existence of a particular community with different living, its unique ideology, its own religious faith, its affinity to particular language, its distinct cultural activities, and its faith in particular religious book and its religious practices. Different scholars and historians have given different definitions and meanings of the word 'identity ' as per their understanding. Let it be noted that there is always a great importance of the distinct identity in the life of every new born religion/sect and when we talk about a microscopic minority community like Sikhs, the identity becomes the major concern. When we keenly watch the evolution of Sikh identity, it becomes very clear that the first Guru of the Sikh had not only formulated the ideological unique identity of this religion, but also focused his attention on the organize his disciples scattered in different areas far away from Punjab in to sangats (the primal form of Sikh organization). Following directions of the first Guru, Guru Angad Dev ji formulated distinct Gurmukhi script for Punjabi language. This was a historical achievement in the Sikh identity, because the visionary Guru had established the Sikh cultural identity by providing one language with their own script. By consolidating langar, constructing Baoli (the first holy place of the Sikh) at Goindwal, celebrating, Vaisakhi instead of Hindu *parvas*, propagating house-hold life in contrast to yogis and udasis, prohibiting veil for women, preventing childhood marriages, rejecting cruel activities like custom of Sati and forcefully neglecting all the discrimination based on caste and gender, Guru Amardas had given a well organized institutional form to the Sikh movement. Guru Ramdas had given them their central religious city to promote the Sikh culture and identity, Guru Arjan Dev provided them religious book, by editing Guru Granth. After execution of Guru Arjan Dev ji, sixth Guru had taken major steps to transform the Sikhs in to a political power also. He had

constructed Akal Takhat and asked the Sikhs to take political directions from the Guru and disobey the discrimination and repressive orders of Mughal Government. He embraced two swords on his body, when he took the responsibility of Gurgaddi. Now the Sikhs were not only saints, but also becomes a political force also. Now they had rosary in one hand and a brandishing sword in the other hand. They had the name of God on their lips, but forceful determination in the mind to eradicate all types of injustice, inequality and discrimination with the powers of sword, in a case the peaceful means failed. In order to protect Sikh religion, the tenth master Guru Gobind Singh took a revolutionary steps when he transformed the Sikh organization to Khalsa panth. He gave this religion a new dimension and character. He gave a unique and final identity to the Sikhs, which was intolerable for both, the caste-ridden Hindus and fanatic Muslim rulers. Uniqueness of Khalsa was not acceptable to the religious fanatics of both the major prevailing religions of India. So Guru and his followers were attacked by the joint forces of Hindu Raja's of Shivalik and Mughal Empire. On the one side Guru was emphasizing his Sikhs to follow the new identity, but on the other side this identity was attacked by the hawks of both communities with full state might and forceful ideological negation of this new identity.

As we have discussed above that Sikhism originated with Guru Nanak in the last quarter of the fifteenth century and later on it continued developing during sixteenth and seventeenth century, but after eighteenth century this development process was on decline.

Scope:

Modern and recent trends in historiography on Sikhism particularly its original phase under Guru Nanak and other Gurus, needs greater, secular and humanistic approach. Obviously, this thing has a vast scope covering the 16th and 17th century. The present study also dealt with the evolution of the Sikhs and their religion and also impacts of Sikhism on

society.

Aims and Objectives:

- The present study has intended to present a balanced and logical picture of the writings pertaining to the history of the Sikh Gurus with reference to the Sikh identity.
- We have attempted to remove doubts about the false notion pertaining to the identity of the Sikhs- whether the threat was from outside or within the Sikh society.
- We have explored and examined critically, whether at times/intervals there was really any threat to the identity and existence of Sikhism and Sikh society in Punjab as well as in India.
- We have critically examined the various writings and the intention of the authors/scholars behind these writings.

Review of literature:

Classical and modern Sikh scholars also touch this topic. Here we have made an attempt to describe those works which related to this study

John Malcolm in his book 'Sketch of the Sikhs' dealt with Guru Nanak as if he happened to be a radical Hindu reformer. He writes in detail about Sikh Religion.

J.D. Cunningham took Guru Nanak as the founder of a new faith in 'History of Sikhs'. According to Cunningham the cause of the Sikh success in politics was due to the *Khalsa* tradition of continuing with "that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak". In fact, Cunningham did not realize that there was conflict between Race and Religion; hence his emphasis upon the *Jats* or peasants as the makers of military traditions of Sikhism.

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‘Hum Hindu Nahi’, Indu Bhushan Banerjee, ‘*Evolution of the Khalsa*’. In almost all the above works of different historians and scholars the issues of the existence of Sikh religion, their ideology and society have been raised. This always haunted in the minds of the scholars that there was threat to the identity of this new born religion and society.

Surjit Hans did his Ph.D. thesis on Sikh history 'from Sikh Literature' published in 1988 and in 2006 he had another book got published under the title 'Our Literature and Religion'. In brief, these two books throw ample light on the question of Sikh identity and the existence of their society.

Irfan Habib also dealt with the *Bhakti* Movement and Guru Nanak by his work on Medieval India (2007). Before this he had written an article on Sikhism by using the language or terms from the Sikh scriptures. While dealing with the Bhakti movement and mingling Guru Nanak with other *Bhaktis* and Saints of this period, raised the issue of Sikh identity which became quite serious issue with the Sikhs even at the present time.

The close relationship between *Bani* of Guru Nanak and the present day Sikh ideas can be seen from a book very recently published by Punjabi University, Patiala (2010). The book is entitled as ‘Guru Nanak and the Origin of Sikh Religion’ and it has been translated by Major (Retd.) Gurmukh Singh but edited at the moment by Prithipal Singh Kapur. It may be said that in his writings he wants to emphasize that there was a great threat to the existence and the identity of the Sikh religion as well as society.

Research Methodology

To study and examine the works of the secular historians, historically and analytically, it is pertinent to compare their writings with the original, contemporary, near contemporary, primary, medieval and the modern writings. So, the historical truth may be traced out. All the above

stated sources have different approaches and interpretations regarding the history of the Sikhs and Sikhism. So it is essential to study these approaches and interpretations comparatively and critically. The material for the present proposed study is largely based on primary sources.

Chapterization:

As already described that the thesis have four chapters. Summary of these chapters is given below:

1. What is Identity and its importance in Sikhism.

This chapter explains the meaning of identity that identity means existence of a particular community with different living, its unique ideology, its own religious faith, its affinity to particular language, its distinct cultural activities, and its faith in particular religion's book and its religious practices. Different scholars have given different definitions and meaning of the word identity as per their understanding. So the identity is something that distinguishes or differentiates one person to another person, one religion to another religion, one community to the other and one thing to the other thing. Next we explained the various definitions of identity; different scholars have given different definitions of the word identity as per their understanding. There is always a great importance of the distinct identity in the life of every new born religion/section and when we talk about a micro minority community like Sikhs, the identity becomes the major concern. We explained meaning and definition of Sikhism and importance of identity in Sikhism. We described how Sikh Gurus expanded Sikhism with their distinguished works, beliefs and personality. Their sacrifices for Sikh identity give more importance to it. Afterward we told in this chapter the different identical features of the Sikhism such as Five kakars (Kesh, kara, kangha, kirpan and kachhera) Sikh symbols such as khanda, Nishan sahib, Ek Onkar, Gurudwara etc.

Development of Sikhism (1469-1699)

This chapter will deal with the Emergence and development of

Sikhism from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. In this chapter I have explained social, economic, religious and political circumstances for the rise of Sikhism. After this how Guru Nanak Dev established Sikhism and all other nine Sikh Gurus continued their mission and spread Sikhism all around the globe. This chapter will deal not only with the evolution process, rather all those issues and problems will be examined critically which were responsible directly or indirectly for the evolution as well as to the rise of threat to the existence and identity of Sikh religion.

Impact of Sikhism on Society

This chapter has explained all types of the impacts and the results in the development of Sikhism. We described in detail social, religious, economic and political consequences rise of Sikhism.

Sikh identity in historiography

In this chapter, we described the views of various scholars. The Sikhs, Muslims, Britishers and the Hindus. All of them have written on Sikh history. Since it was but natural for the Sikhs to write about their religion, so the earliest accounts about Sikh history are those written by the Sikhs. These include vaars by Bhai Gurdas,

The Hindu writers have also written a lot on Sikh history. Some of them are earlier writers while others are modern. There is a difference in approach and interpretation of Sikh history in the writing of both the categories. Although, the earlier Hindu historians have not used any derogatory language against the Sikhs like their Muslim counterparts, yet their writings lack the sense of devotion towards the Sikhs as we find in the writings of Modern Hindu historians. On the other hand, we find both devotions as well as critical analysis in the writings of modern Hindu historians. Among the modern Hindu historians we include Gokul Chand Narang (1912), Sita Ram Kohli, Indu Bhushan Banerjee (1935-47), N.K. Sinha and A.C. Banerjee.

There is another category of historians along with these Sikh,

Muslims and Hindus historians who have influenced the entire Sikh history through their writings. This category belongs to the European historians. Their writings have provided a new technique and new interpretation to the Sikh history. Since these European historians were not thoroughly acquainted with the Punjabi language, culture and tradition, their writings suffer from several inadequacies in the comprehension of real issues involved. But, since they were adequately equipped with educational expertise, historical research methodology and a critical sense of analysis, their works are definitely a class apart from the writings of Sikhs, Muslim and Hindu historians. While the earlier European historians have written about the Sikhs with the object of collecting information, the later Europeans have written from a political point of view. Some of them like Earnest Trump have written from a Christian point of view, while some others like Macauliffe has written to appreciate and to admire the Sikhs without any critical analysis. Generally, the interpretation and approach of the European writers can be termed as a colonial view-point.

Main Findings:

After the study of this topic we conclude some points

1. Sikh identity takes its real form through the institution. Guruship is the most important institution for Sikh Identity. Guru Nanak created Dharamsala/ Gurdwara, the major institution of the Sikhs, which is a center of Sikh spiritual. The Sikh principles take practical shape in Gurdwara. Sikh experience of Naam, Dan, Isnan, Sangat, Sewa, Simran, Langar and Pangat makes an empirical paradigm of Sikh identity.
2. Sri Harmandir Sahib is the unique model of Sikh Gurdwara. Sri Harmandir Sahib, situated in Amritsar (the holy tank) is the place of emancipation from all the evil. The structure, formation, archetype and vision of Sri Harmandir Sahib refer to a unique

formation of Sikh identity. The four doors of Sri Harmandir Sahib indicate the Sikh vision of equality and plurality.

3. Sri Akal Takht in front of Sri Harmandir sahib is the symbol of Sikh religio-socio-political Sikh identity. It is also the symbol of Sikh sovereignty. It creates an awakening in a Sikh, whom is not under any spatial power; instead, he has a direct link with Akal Purkh (the timeless Being).
4. Commitment of the Sikhs in history projects the divine practice of the Sikhs. The uncountable martyrdoms of the Sikhs show the commitment toward Guru. The Khande ki Pahul, which created the Khalsa, is the climax of Sikh identity. A Sikh is blessed through the ceremony of *Khande ki Pahul*, which has been blessed upon Guru Gobind Singh on the day of Baisakhi 30 March, 1699.
5. Khalsa is the Sikh, Gurmukh, who is expressed in Guru Granth Sahib. Khalsa seems distinct not only due to its outlook, which has been beautified within five k's (Kesh, Kangha, Kara, Kirpan, Kachhehra) but also due to its amazing practice. To keep these symbols, a Sikh seems distinct and on the other hand, these symbols realize him for his ultimate mission and duty on this planet. Within these symbols, a Sikh makes the connection with his Guru and memorizes his Divine Word. He is the Sant-Sipahi, who is responsible and dutiful for the world civilization and society.
6. Ardas is the climax combination of Gurbani, Sangat, Sewa, Simran and Kirtan. It memorizes the whole practice of the Sikhs because it explains the great martyrdom, bravery and fighting tradition of the Sikhs. It expresses the whole memory, devotion, commitment, sacrifice and love towards Guru/God/Waheguru. The structure, content and vision of Ardas also make it distinct as compared to other traditions of faith.

**SIKH IDENTITY AND ITS IMPACT ON SIKH
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A

THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

For the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Supervisor:

Dr. Harbhajan Singh
Director (Retd.)
Dr. Balbir Singh Sahitya Kendra
Dehradun.

Submitted by:

Subhdeep Kaur
Subhdeep Kaur
Researcher



**GURU GOBIND SINGH DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
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As already described that the thesis have four chapters. Summary of these chapters is given below:

1. What is Identity and its importance in Sikhism.

This chapter explains the meaning of identity that identity means existence of a particular community with different living, its unique ideology, its own religious faith, its affinity to particular language, its distinct cultural activities, and its faith in particular religion's book and its religious practices. Different scholars have given different definitions and meaning of the word identity as per their understanding. So the identity is something that distinguishes or differentiates one person to another person, one religion to another religion, one community to the other and one thing to the other thing. Next we explained the various definitions of identity; different scholars have given different definitions of the word identity as per their understanding. There is always a great importance of the distinct identity in the life of every new born religion/section and when we talk about a micro minority community like Sikhs, the identity becomes the major concern. We explained meaning and definition of Sikhism and importance of identity in Sikhism. We described how Sikh Gurus expanded Sikhism with their distinguished works, beliefs and personality. Their sacrifices for Sikh identity give more importance to it. Afterward we told in this chapter the different identical features of the Sikhism such as Five kakars (Kesh, kara, kangha, kirpan and kachhera) Sikh symbols such as khanda, Nishan sahib, Ek Onkar, Gurudwara etc.

Development of Sikhism (1469-1699)

This chapter will deal with the Emergence and development of

Sikhism from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. In this chapter I have explained social, economic, religious and political circumstances for the rise of Sikhism. After this how Guru Nanak Dev established Sikhism and all other nine Sikh Gurus continued their mission and spread Sikhism all around the globe. This chapter will deal not only with the evolution process, rather all those issues and problems will be examined critically which were responsible directly or indirectly for the evolution as well as to the rise of threat to the existence and identity of Sikh religion.

Impact of Sikhism on Society

This chapter has explained all types of the impacts and the results in the development of Sikhism. We described in detail social, religious, economic and political consequences rise of Sikhism.

Sikh identity in historiography

In this chapter, we described the views of various scholars. The Sikhs, Muslims, Britishers and the Hindus. All of them have written on Sikh history. Since it was but natural for the Sikhs to write about their religion, so the earliest accounts about Sikh history are those written by the Sikhs. These include vaars by Bhai Gurdas,

The Hindu writers have also written a lot on Sikh history. Some of them are earlier writers while others are modern. There is a difference in approach and interpretation of Sikh history in the writing of both the categories. Although, the earlier Hindu historians have not used any derogatory language against the Sikhs like their Muslim counterparts, yet their writings lack the sense of devotion towards the Sikhs as we find in the writings of Modern Hindu historians. On the other hand, we find both devotions as well as critical analysis in the writings of modern Hindu historians. Among the modern Hindu historians we include Gokul Chand Narang (1912), Sita Ram Kohli, Indu Bhushan Banerjee (1935-47), N.K. Sinha and A.C. Banerjee.

There is another category of historians along with these Sikh,

Muslims and Hindus historians who have influenced the entire Sikh history through their writings. This category belongs to the European historians. Their writings have provided a new technique and new interpretation to the Sikh history. Since these European historians were not thoroughly acquainted with the Punjabi language, culture and tradition, their writings suffer from several inadequacies in the comprehension of real issues involved. But, since they were adequately equipped with educational expertise, historical research methodology and a critical sense of analysis, their works are definitely a class apart from the writings of Sikhs, Muslim and Hindu historians. While the earlier European historians have written about the Sikhs with the object of collecting information, the later Europeans have written from a political point of view. Some of them like Earnest Trump have written from a Christian point of view, while some others like Macauliffe has written to appreciate and to admire the Sikhs without any critical analysis. Generally, the interpretation and approach of the European writers can be termed as a colonial view-point.

Main Findings:

After the study of this topic we conclude some points

1. Sikh identity takes its real form through the institution. Guruship is the most important institution for Sikh Identity. Guru Nanak created Dharamsala/ Gurdwara, the major institution of the Sikhs, which is a center of Sikh spiritual. The Sikh principles take practical shape in Gurdwara. Sikh experience of Naam, Dan, Isnan, Sangat, Sewa, Simran, Langar and Pangat makes an empirical paradigm of Sikh identity.
2. Sri Harmandir Sahib is the unique model of Sikh Gurdwara. Sri Harmandir Sahib, situated in Amritsar (the holy tank) is the place of emancipation from all the evil. The structure, formation, archetype and vision of Sri Harmandir Sahib refer to a unique

formation of Sikh identity. The four doors of Sri Harmandir Sahib indicate the Sikh vision of equality and plurality.

3. Sri Akal Takht in front of Sri Harmandir sahib is the symbol of Sikh religio-socio-political Sikh identity. It is also the symbol of Sikh sovereignty. It creates an awakening in a Sikh, whom is not under any spatial power; instead, he has a direct link with Akal Purkh (the timeless Being).
4. Commitment of the Sikhs in history projects the divine practice of the Sikhs. The uncountable martyrdoms of the Sikhs show the commitment toward Guru. The Khande ki Pahul, which created the Khalsa, is the climax of Sikh identity. A Sikh is blessed through the ceremony of *Khande ki Pahul*, which has been blessed upon Guru Gobind Singh on the day of Baisakhi 30 March, 1699.
5. Khalsa is the Sikh, Gurmukh, who is expressed in Guru Granth Sahib. Khalsa seems distinct not only due to its outlook, which has been beautified within five k's (Kesh, Kangha, Kara, Kirpan, Kachhehra) but also due to its amazing practice. To keep these symbols, a Sikh seems distinct and on the other hand, these symbols realize him for his ultimate mission and duty on this planet. Within these symbols, a Sikh makes the connection with his Guru and memorizes his Divine Word. He is the Sant-Sipahi, who is responsible and dutiful for the world civilization and society.
6. Ardas is the climax combination of Gurbani, Sangat, Sewa, Simran and Kirtan. It memorizes the whole practice of the Sikhs because it explains the great martyrdom, bravery and fighting tradition of the Sikhs. It expresses the whole memory, devotion, commitment, sacrifice and love towards Guru/God/Waheguru. The structure, content and vision of Ardas also make it distinct as compared to other traditions of faith.

SIKH IDENTITY AND ITS IMPACTS ON SIKH SOCIETY

ABSTRACT

Identity means existence of a particular community with different living, its unique ideology, its own religious faith, its affinity to particular language, its distinct cultural activities, its faith in particular religious book and its religious practices. Different scholars and historians have given different definitions and meanings of the word 'identity' as per their understanding.

When we keenly watch the evolution of Sikh identity, it becomes very clear that the first Guru of the Sikhs had not only formulated the ideological unique identity of this religion, but also focused his attention on to organize his disciples scattered in different areas far away from Punjab in to Sangat (the primal form of Sikh organization). Following directions of the first Guru, all other nine Sikh Gurus continued their mission and spread Sikhism all around the globe.

During this long period, several times there was a threat to its evolution progress as well as its existence, especially to its unique identity. Many times it appeared that this newly born religion and its community might disappear due to the hostile conditions, that prevailed in the country. However, Sikhism, Sikh religion and society, faced these odd situations with extra-ordinary courage and fought staunchly with enemies. At that time their only aim was to defend distinct Sikh identity. They were successful in not only defending their identity, but also snatched the political power from Muslim rulers and became the Master of the Punjab.

Objectives: The main objectives of this study are:-

- To present a balanced and logic picture of the writings pertaining to the history of the Sikh Gurus with reference to the Sikh identity.
- To remove doubts about the false notion pertaining to the identity of the Sikhs- whether the threat was from outside or within the Sikh society.
- To explored and examined critically, whether at times/intervals there was really any threat to the identity and existence of Sikhism and Sikh society in Punjab as well as in India.
- To examined the various writings and the intention of the authors/scholars behind these writings.

SIKH IDENTITY AND ITS IMPACT ON SIKH SOCIETY

ਅਬਸਟ੍ਰੈਕਟ

ਪਛਾਣ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਹੈ ਵੱਖੇ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਜੀਵਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਇੱਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਮੂਹ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ, ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ, ਇਸਦੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਸਥਾ, ਖਾਸ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਾਲ ਇਸਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ, ਇਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਵੱਖਰੀਆਂ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਗਤੀਵਿਧੀਆਂ, ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ. ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਮਝ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ।

ਜਦੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਛਾਣ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਨਾਲ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਇਸ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਕ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਬਣਾਈ ਸੀ, ਬਲਕਿ ਆਪਣਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਦੂਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਫੈਲੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਚੇਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵੱਲ ਵੀ ਕੇਂਦ੍ਰਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਪਹਿਲੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਬਾਕੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਨੌਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਇਸ ਲੰਬੇ ਅਰਸੇ ਦੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ, ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਇਸਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਦੇ ਮੌਜੂਦਗੀ, ਖਾਸਕਰ ਇਸਦੀ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਪਛਾਣ ਲਈ ਖ਼ਤਰਾ ਸੀ. ਕਈ ਵਾਰੀ ਇਹ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਨਵਾਂ ਜਨਮਿਆ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਦਾ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਭਰੀਆਂ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਾਇਬ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ, ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ, ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ, ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਵਾਧੂ ਸਧਾਰਣ ਦਲੇਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਖਤ ਲੜਾਈ ਲੜੀ. ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਕੋ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਛਾਣ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ. ਉਹ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਦਾ ਬਚਾਅ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਫਲ ਰਹੇ, ਬਲਕਿ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਸ਼ਾਸਕਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਖੋਹ ਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਬਣ ਗਏ।

ਉਦੇਸ਼: ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਹਨ: -

- ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਤਰਕਪੂਰਨ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਛਾਣ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨਾ।
- ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਝੂਠੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੰਕਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰਕਰਨਾ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਧਮਕੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਬਾਹਰੋਂ ਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ।
- ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਪੜਤਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਂਚ ਕਰਨੀ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਤਰਾਲਾਂ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਂਦ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਖ਼ਤਰਾ ਸੀ।
- ਵਖ ਵਖ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਲੇਖਕਾਂ / ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਨੀਅਤ ਦੀ ਜਾਂਚ ਕਰਨਾ।

DECLARATION

I hereby affirm that the work presented in the thesis is exclusively my own and there are no collaborations. It does not contain any work for which a degree has been awarded by any other University/Institution.

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I also thank my friends (too many to list here but you know who you are!) for providing support and friendship that I needed. I would like to thank my friend Kiranjeet Kaur, Kiran and Sandeep for being supportive throughout my time here in the University.

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Date:

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1-10
CHAPTER - 1	11-40
WHAT IS IDENTITY AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN SIKHISM	
CHAPTER - 2	41-80
DEVELOPMENT OF SIKHISM	
CHAPTER - 3	81-112
IMPACTS OF SIKHISM ON SIKH SOCIETY	
CHAPTER - 4	113-150
SIKH IDENTITY IN HISTORIOGRAPHY	
CONCLUSION	151-158
BIBLIOGRAPHY	159-175

INTRODUCTION

Sikhism, the youngest of the world religions, is barely five hundred years old. It originated in the region of Punjab, in north-west of India. It is one of the most important religions at present existing in India. Sikhism is the youngest of the major prevailing religions of the world. The followers of Sikhism are known as Sikhs. One version is that the word 'Sikh' is derived from Sanskrit word 'Shishya' which means 'disciple'. A.S. Sethi claims that it is "related to the Pali canon, where the word is 'Sekho' meaning a person who is dedicated to truth." Another version is that the word was derived from Sanskrit 'Shiksh' (शिक्ष). Meanings of 'Shiksh' are to learn, to study, attaining knowledge etc. and when in his own Bani Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji defined Sikhism by saying 'ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ', he emphasised that the Sikh is a person who try to attain knowledge whole life. So, he rejected the idea that a follower of Guru is a Sikh, but declared that a person who indulged in learning is a Sikh. This is also a fact that the Prakrit word for 'Shiksh' is Sikh, but for 'Shishya' is Sis'.

Sikh religion came into existence owing to the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev. Since the milieu in which Guru Nanak preached, belonged to pre-dominantly by the Hindus and the Muslims, we find majority of references in his teaching belong to these two communities. While Muslims belonged to the ruling class, the Hindus were politically treated as mere slaves of the ruling class. At that time the situation was worse and there was a historical necessity for the rise of Sikhism. Buddhism had disappeared from the scene, Brahminism had failed to rise above its severe limitations, and Islam had assumed an aggressive posture, all these had upset the entire prospects of a peaceful life in the country. The appearance of Guru Nanak on the scene opened a new epoch for the

misery stricken people of the land.

Guru Nanak not only preached his teachings in the society, but also formed a new religion, Sikhism that was separate from Hinduism and Islam. The early followers of Guru Nanak were known as the Nanak Panthis. In differentiating his followers from Brahmanic Hindus, Guru Nanak continuously stressed the irrelevance of rituals that dominated popular Hindu devotion. He also denounced the prejudice of the Hindu caste-system, himself by refusing to wear the sacred thread. His aim was to create a homogeneous society, free from any class conflict. Therefore, his religion was a people's movement based on the modern conception of secularism and socialism a common brotherhood of all human beings.

The second aspect of Guru Nanak's plan was his adoption of the native language as the medium of his instruction. Therefore, Guru Nanak composed all his divine verses in Punjabi or language of common Indians. His collection of the divine verses of other saints (Bhakats) and Muslim mystics (Sufis) was also preserved after transliterating these into his new found script, Gurmukhi for the Punjabi language. He also adopted the Gurumukhi script for his own compositions. Moreover, Guru Nanak organized his followers in the form of Sangat. So Sangat was the primary form of organization of his followers. Since Guru Nanak's followers listened to his sermons and lived their lives according to the message of his teachings, they came to be known as 'Sikhs'. Gradually Guru Nanak's teachings took the form of Sikh religion (Sikhism) and his followers constitute a Sikh community. Guru Nanak attached great importance to the setting up the concept of Sangat. Dr. Ganda Singh writes, 'Guru Nanak felt that the real cause of the misery of the people was their belief in diversity'. Therefore, wherever Guru Nanak went, he left behind him a Sangat or an association of his followers with the instruction that they should build a Gurdwara, where they should meet

regularly and sing the hymns in praise of Akal Purukh.

Another step of Guru Nanak's work was the institution of Pangat or langar at Kartarpur. Here all the Sikhs of the Guru sit squatting together and eat together, whether they belonged to one caste or the other, to one community or to any other religion.

The most important work of Guru Nanak was that he appointed Guru Angad Dev as his successor in order to carry on his mission. This step further made the Sikh religion an organized religion with a distinct identity of its own. Guru Angad Dev's unique contribution consisted in developing Gurmukhi letters into a regular script. With the creation of this new and distinct script for writing purposes, the distinction between Sikh society and the Hindu society became lucid. Later on, when Guru Arjan Dev compiled Adi Granth in Punjabi language and in the Gurmukhi script and installed it at Harimander Sahib, the distinction between the Sikhs and the Hindus became more prominent. Now the Sikhs, like all other religions, had their own scripture in the form of Adi Granth. This addition provided the Sikhs with a distinct identity. After some time, Guru Gobind Singh with the creation of the Khalsa on the Baisakhi day of 1699 with a definite code of conduct and way of life, transformed the Sikhs into an absolute distinct order. By adopting a Sikh identity consisting of unshaved hair and other Sikh symbols (kakars) after getting initiated by dispensing with the belief of caste system and by reposing their complete faith in Guru Granth instead of in other Gods and Goddesses by the express commandment of The Tenth Guru, the Sikhs had organized themselves into a completely new religion and a new society. The Khalsa way of life had created a consciousness among the Sikhs having a distinctly new faith and a new identity. These were the broad contours around which the Sikh religion and Sikh society had originated and developing during a long span of two hundred and thirty

nine years (1469-1708). These developments had provided a distinctly new religion and social identity to Sikhism and differentiated it from Hinduism.

The present thesis is 'Sikh Identity and its Impact on society'. It is divided into four chapters, namely-

1. What is Identity and its importance in Sikhism-

This chapter explains the meaning of identity, that identity means existence of a particular community with different living, its unique ideology, and its own religious faith, its affinity to particular language, its distinct cultural activities, and its faith in particular religious book and its unique religious practices. Different scholars have given different definitions and meaning of the word 'identity' as per their understanding. So the 'identity' is something that distinguish or differentiate one person to another person, one religion to another religion, one community to the other and one thing to the other thing. Next I will explain the various definitions of identity. There is always a great importance of the distinct identity in the life of every new born religion/section and when we talk about a micro minority community like Sikhs, the identity becomes the major concern. I will explain meaning and definition of Sikhism and importance of identity in Sikhism. Next I will describe how Sikh Gurus expanded Sikhism with their distinguished works, beliefs and personality. Their sacrifices for preservation of uniqueness of Sikh identity give more importance to it. Afterward I will tell in this chapter the different identical features of the Sikhism such as five kakash (kesh, Kara, kangha, kirpan and kachehra), Sikh symbols such as khanda, Nishansahib, Ek Oamkar, Gurudwara etc.

2. Development of Sikhism (1469-1699)-

This chapter will deal with the Emergence and development of Sikhism from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. In this chapter I will

explain all social, economic, religious and political circumstances for the rise of Sikhism. Guru Nanak Dev established Sikhism and all other nine Sikh Gurus continued their mission and spread Sikhism all around the globe. This chapter will deal not only with the evolution process, rather all those issues and problems will be examined critically which were responsible directly or indirectly for the evolution as well as to the augmentation of threat to the existence and identity of Sikh religion.

3. Impact of Sikhism on Society-

All types of the impacts and the results in the development of Sikhism would be taken in this chapter such as social, religious, economic and political consequences in details.

4. Sikh identity in historiography-

In this chapter I will describe the views of various scholars- The Sikhs, Muslims, Britishers and the Hindus. All of them have written on Sikh history. Since it was but natural for the Sikhs to write about their religion, so the earliest accounts about Sikh history are those written by the Sikhs. These include *Vaars* by Bhai Gurdas, *Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin* by Sohan Kavi, *Mahima Parkash* in Prose by Bawa Kirpal Singh and *Mahima Parkash* in Kavita by Sarup Das Bhalla, *Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka* by Kaser Singh Chhiber, *Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth* by Bhai Santokh Singh and Sainapati's *Sri Gur Sobha*.

The Hindu writers have also written a lot on Sikh history. Some of them are earlier writers while others are modern. There is a difference in approach and interpretation of Sikh history in the writing of both the categories. Although the earlier Hindu historians have not used any derogatory language against the Sikhs like their Muslim counterparts, yet their writings lack the sense of devotion towards the Sikhs as we find in the writings of modern Hindu historians. On the other hand, we find both devotions as well as critical analysis in the writings of modern Hindu

historians. Among the modern Hindu historians we include Gokul Chand Narang (1912), Sita Ram Kohli, Indubhushan Banerjee (1935-47), N.K. Sinha and A.C. Banerjee.

There is another category of historians along with these Sikh, Muslim and Hindu historians who have influenced the entire Sikh history through their writings. This category belongs to the European historians. Their writings have provided a new technique and new interpretation to the Sikh history. Since these European historians were not thoroughly acquainted with the Punjabi language, culture and traditions, their writings suffer from several inadequacies in the comprehension of real issues involved. But, since they were adequately equipped with educational expertise, historical research methodology and a critical sense of analysis, their works are definitely a class apart from the writings of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu historians. While the earlier European historians have written about the Sikhs with the object of collecting information, the later Europeans have written from a political point of view. Some of them like Ernest Trumpp have written from a Christian point of view, while some others like Macauliffe has written to appreciate and to admire the Sikhs without any critical analysis. Generally the interpretation and approach of the European writers can be termed as a colonial view-point.

Justification- Of course, there has not been done much on this topic, yet traditional views do exist regarding the identity of the Sikhs. 'There is no Hindu, there is no *Musalman*', Guru Nanak had uttered these words as his first sermon delivered on the banks of river Wein. Indigenous historiography of *Janamsaskhi* took these words to mean the beginning of Sikh humanism implicitly directed against the Muslim priestly and political tyranny and the caste oppression inherent to the *Varna* system of Hindus. *Janamsaskhi* traditions admired the Sikh Gurus for their sympathetic attitude towards the poor, downtrodden and other

marginalized humanity including women. Glorified were those elements of his message that demanded devotion to labour or work and an honest living. Accumulation of wealth by the fraudulent means was denounced by them (Sikh Gurus) exhibited the *Sakhis*. The age old ideas such as (i) goodness ultimately prevails over evil and (ii) the truth triumphs over falsehood were revived for the teachings of layman by the narrators of the *Sakhis* or the stories. Guru Nanak accomplished the restoration of *dharma*, it was said. Interestingly, victory or supremacy became a high mark of the Sikh Guru's life and works in these myth-making narratives. The native writer in Punjabi has presented Guru Nanak Dev as a heroic figure. The fifth, Guru Arjan Dev (1581-1606) and Bhai Gurdas added more heroism to him by denominating Guru Nanak as the *Satguru* and the *Jagat Guru Baba*. The image of Guru Nanak was as perfect, ideal and divine as the ruler of the Hindu antiquity namely Raja Janak. No scientific and rational approach in the writings of the historians in connection with the identity of the Sikhs is found in various writings. There is a need and justification in taking up the present proposed topic, as to the best of my knowledge this type of work so far has not been carried out by any of the scholars related to Sikh theology and history.

Scope-

Modern and recent trends in historiography on Sikhism particularly from its original phase under Guru Nanak and other Gurus, needs greater, secular and humanistic approach. Obviously, this thing has a vast scope covering the 16th and 17th century. The present study will also deal with the evolution of the Sikh identity and importance of the identity in Sikhism.

Aims and Objectives-

The present study intends to present a balanced and logical picture of the writings pertaining to the history of the Sikh Gurus.

- To see the variations among the schools of western writers/scholars and the Indian writers- why, there is such variation in their approach and thinking regarding the history of the Sikhs is to be examined analytically.
- To remove doubts about the false notion pertaining to the identity of the Sikhs- whether the threat was from outside or within the Sikh society.
- To explore and examine critically, whether at times/intervals there was really any threat to the identity and existence of Sikhism and Sikh society in Punjab as well as in India.
- To examine critically the various writings, the intentions of the authors/scholars behind these writings.
- Lastly, to find out the differences in approaches of various schools of thought and their interests in presenting altogether a different picture of the problem of identity in the perspective of historiography.

Review of literature-

Classical and modern Sikh scholars also touch this topic. Here we have made an attempt to describe those works which related on this study

John Malcolm in his book ‘Sketch of the Sikhs’ dealt with Guru Nanak as if he happened to be a radical Hindu reformer. He writes in detail about Sikh Religion.

J.D. Cunningham took Guru Nanak as the founder of a new faith in ‘History of Sikhs’. According to Cunningham the cause of the Sikh success in politics was due to the *Khalsa* tradition of continuing with "that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak". In fact, Cunningham did not realize that there was conflict between Race and Religion; hence his emphasis upon the *Jats* or peasants as the makers of military traditions of Sikhism.

W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, M.A. Maccauliffe, 'The Sikh Religion', Sewaram Singh, '*The Divine Master*', '*The Adi Granth*' as translated in portions by Sewaram Singh, by Gopal Singh and Manmohan Singh, *Vaars of Bhai Gurdas*, Kahan Singh Nabha '*Hum Hindu Nahi*', Indu Bhushan Banerjee, '*Evolution of the Khalsa*'. In almost all the above works of different historians and scholars the issue of the existence of Sikh religion, their ideology and society have been raised. This always haunted in the minds of the scholars that there was threat to the identity of this new born distinct religion and society.

Research Methodology-

To study and examine the works of the secular (nationalists) historians, historically and analytically, it is pertinent to compare their writings with the original, contemporary, near contemporary, primary, medieval and the modern writings, so, the historical truth may be traced out. All the above stated sources have different approaches and interpretations regarding the history of the Sikhs and Sikhism. So, it is essential to study these approaches and interpretations comparatively and critically. As the approach for the present study will be based on historiography and on analytical method, so this method is to be adopted and applied in juxtaposing the writings with the times in which they were produced. The material for the present proposed study is largely based on primary sources. Of course, the present study of these writings will be comparative in nature. The findings will be analyzed textually and contextually to make the study meaningful. In brief, special care will be taken to check flaws, distortions and fallacies in the writings under study.

Conclusion-

The present research project is to deal with the: (i) Traditional methods of Sikh History, including the different forms of Literature, (ii) Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus shall be compared with the

findings of the Western Scholars and British officials like John Malcolm, R.N. Cust and J.D. Cunningham. After 1849 these writers shall be H.H. Wilson and M.A. Macauliffe, (iii) The Punjab Scholars like Prof. Harbans Singh, Dr. Ganda Singh, and J.S. Grewal will be explained in detail, but analytically. In nutshell effort will remain to bring out the true picture of the question of Sikh identity, while citing examples whether there was really threat to the identity of the Sikhs from outside or from within the Sikh society itself.

CERTIFICATE FOR PUBLISHED RESEARCH PAPERS

This is to certify that Ms. Subhdeep Kaur has following papers published in following journals.

1. Kaur, S. Historian's Views on Creation of Khalsa, *Panchbati Sandesh*, January-March 2017, 25-28
2. Kaur, S. Guru Nanak's Social Reforms, *Panchbati Sandesh*, April 2019, 50-58