

NATURE OF THE SIKH RULE: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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CERTIFICATE

It is certify that Ms. Kiranjeet Kaur a student of Ph.D. in Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala has worked under my guidance and supervision in the preparation of her dissertation entitled: "**Nature of The Sikh Rule: An Analytical Study**" which is a partial requirement for the degree of Ph.D. This Thesis is worthy of consideration for evaluation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The period of eighteenth century is important for the study because this age had marked a distinctive phase in the history of the Sikhs as this was the time when the Sikhs established themselves as a political power of North India. The eighteenth century Sikh polity is matter of interest and historical importance because it represents the formative stage of the Sikhs as a political power. During this time, the Sikhs played most important role in the politics of Punjab. By overcoming all obstacles created by the Abdali and Mughal government, they established their own states (missals) in which they ruled as an independent ruler and emerged as the bravest and liberal leaders.

The Sikhs were highly motivated by the *Guru Granth Sahib* during 1710 to 1762 which established their reputation, identity and future in politics. Enthused by the spiritual presence of the Guru, the Khalsa paved the way for the rise of new socio-political order in eighteenth century and they had become capable of establishing their rule over Punjab. In the present study we have made an attempt to understand the nature of the Sikh rule.

Though some work has been done on this topic but as E. H Carr states that “facts speak only when the historian calls on them; it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor and in what order or context.”¹ Thus facts (which are the basis of history) are speechless and they only represent historian’s expressions toward subject. So we have selected an analytical study of this topic.

1. Research problem

This study has been prepared in a special context as its title “Nature of the Sikh Rule: An Analytical Study”. It is not history of the Sikhs which record political events of the Sikhs. Nor it is the history of Sikhism in which we concentrate on doctrinal aspect of the Sikhism. Instead, it is the study of the source, foundation and nature of the Sikh rule during eighteenth century. We have selected this topic because:

1 E.H. Carr, *What is History?* Palgrave publishers, London, 2001 (reprint), p. 5.

- 1.1 On this topic, no direct work is available. Though, Dr. Jaspal Singh in his PhD work has presented concept of Sikh State. This study deals with the nature of Sikh rule.
- 1.2 Many historians namely George Forster, John Malcolm, Horace Hayman Wilson, J.D.Cunningham, N. K. Sinha, Hari Ram Gupta, G. C. Narang, I. B. Banerjee, Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, Bhagat Singh, J. S. Grewal have written on this issue but they merely commented on the Sikh rule. A detailed study is missing on this topic.
- 1.3 History which is available to us, that is also not final as E. H Carr presented. History is full of bias. For example if the author is an official historian like Qazi Nur Muhammad Din, he cannot write anything against the king or government to gain promotion. This made historian partial and all his statement are colored by his attitude. So we carefully studied historical writings.
- 1.4 About the purpose behind their (Sikh's) will of creating a state, source of foundation of their state and legacy behind this remain untouched issues. In this study we have discussed all these issues.
- 1.5 Generally, two opposite views are prevalent about the nature of the Sikh rule; first, it was based on religion named theocracy. Historians namely George Forster (*A Journey from Bengal to England*), John Malcolm (*Sketch of the Sikhs*), Horace Hayman Wilson (*Civil and Religious Institutions of the Sikhs*), J.D.Cunningham (*A History of the Sikhs*), A.C. Banarjee (*Anglo-Sikh Relation*) and Sayad Mohammad Latif (*History of the Punjab*) highlight the connection of Sikh State with religion. Secondly in contrast to the above there are other historians who do not find directly religious elements in the nature of Sikh rule such as Col. Polier (*The Siques*), John Gordon (*The Sikhs*), Ganesh Das Bادهhra (*Char Bagh-i-Panjab*), Teja Singh (*Sikhism, its Ideals and Institutions*) and Bhagat Singh (*Sikh Polity In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries*).

Chamber's Dictionary defines theocracy as the constitution of a State in which God is regarded as the sole sovereign and the laws of the realm are divine commands rather than human ordinances, the priesthood necessarily becoming the officers of invisible rulers.

Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia also defines theocracy in details. In his own words "the term theocracy is usually interpreted in three distinct but correlated senses. Firstly, it refers to the subordination of the temporal to the spiritual, ecclesiastical sovereignty or to the coalescence of the two powers focused on a single person or a single institution. Secondly, a theocratic state is meant a polity discriminating on grounds of religion, so that the votaries of the state religion are given higher, preferential treatment... Thirdly a theocratic state is taken to mean a polity in which secular laws are deep rooted in and derived their legitimating from religious edicts and injunctions."²

These reasons encouraged us to do work on this topic. For this purpose we will try to understand the origin and development of Sikh rule. Secondly, according to theory of state in Sikhism, we will try to analyze the nature of Sikh rule in the historical course of the Sikhs.

2. Aims and objectives

To deal with these issues we have main three objectives of this study. These are as under

- 2.1 To understand the ideological bases of Sikh rule.
- 2.2 To explore the origin and development of Sikh rule.
- 2.3 To trace the nature of Sikh rule.

3. Review of literature

Few studies are available which directly deal with the nature of the Sikh rule. However, historians have noted this as a part of Sikh history. In the first section we are trying to understand historians who made a detail account on concept of state and

2 J. S. Ahluwalia, *The Sovereignty of Sikh Doctrine*, Bahri Publication, New Delhi, 1983, p. 87.

interrelationship between the religion and state. In the second section we have mentioned those historians who describe about the nature of the Sikh state and system of their rule.

3.1 Meaning and definition of the State

State exerts very old and represents legal rational authority which maintains law and order in a society, protects human life and enables the human beings to make all round development. "The word 'State' has its origin in the Latin word *Status* which means 'standing' or 'positions' of a person."³ Generally it becomes a synonym of the Government. But in political Theory, it has technical expression implying a human association having four essential elements-Population, Territory, Government and Sovereignty. The last element is a contribution of the modern age.

In the western world the term state has very old history. "The Greeks used the word 'Polis' that implied 'City-State'. The Roman employed two terms 'Civitas' and Republics' for this purpose. While the first term 'Civitas' connoted the idea of the 'Polis' the later term implied not merely the idea of citizenship but also the case of public welfare. Thus, the two terms probably conveyed to the Roman mind of the fifth century ad, a meaning very similar to our modern nation of State. After the disintegration of the great Roman Empire, the Teutonic tribes established their principalities and they use the word 'status' from which the English word 'state' is derived. As Christianity become the official religion and as authority was given a sanctified character by the touch of the Church, the writers used the term 'Republica Christiana' for the state. Credit, however, goes to Machiavelli who used the Italian word 'state' in his *Prince (1513)*. Thereafter the words 'State' 'Etat' and 'Staat' appeared respectively in the English, French and German languages, though in 1576 Bodin of France preferred the term 'Republique' (Republic). In the seventeenth century terms like 'Realm' and 'Regnum' were also used. Hobbes used the word 'Commonwealth' that included within itself Society, State and Government. Locks identified state with

3 N.D. Arora, *Theory of State*, K.K. Publications, New Delhi, 2006, p. 7.

‘Community’ endowed with supreme power and having its instrument in a Government with limited authority for the effective protection of natural rights of a man. Rousseau has also preferred the term ‘Community’ but unlike Locke, he made it an organic whole with a will of its own. Thus a new term ‘Body Politic’ came in to being.”⁴

Various statements on state have appeared since the days of the ancient Greek. For Plato, a state is a system of relationship in which everyone does his own business and where the job of the rulers is to maintain and even promote such relationships.⁵ Aristotle defines the state in his *politics* as an association of households and villages sharing in a life of virtue and aiming at an end which consists in perfect and self-complete existences.⁶

St. Augustine defines the state as an assemblage of reasonable beings, bound together by a common agreement as to the objects they desire.⁷ Niccolò Machiavelli regards state as an end itself existing for its own, for its own preservation and for its own advantages.⁸ Thomas Hobbes speaks about the state when he says, “the final cause, end or design of men is the foresight of their kin own preservation and of a more contented life... when there is no visible power to keep them in awe and tie them by fear of punishment to the performance of their covenants and observation of the laws of nature and that power instituted as a result of the founding of Commonwealth.”⁹

John Locke writes, “The great and chief end therefore, of men’s uniting into Commonwealth and putting themselves under Government, is the preservation of their property; to which in state of Nature, there are many things wanting.”¹⁰ Jean

4 J.C. Johari, *Principles of Modern Political Science*, Sterling Publishers Ltd., New Delhi, 1989, pp. 54-55.

5 Plato, *The Republic*, (trans. by Desmondlee, Penguin Books, London, 1987, p. 221.

6 R.G. Mulgan, *Aristotle’s Political Theory*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977, P. 55.

7 R.G. Mulgan, *History of Political Thought*, (ed. By) Lawrence L. Wanlas, Surjeet Publication, Delhi, 1981, P. 101.

8 Ibid; P. 146.

9 N.D. Arora, *Theory of State*, P. 129.

10 Ibid; p. 160.

Jacques Rousseau speaks of the state, in saying “This public person, so formed by the union of all other persons, formerly took the name of the city and now takes that of *Republic* or *body-Politic*. It is called by its Members state when Passive, sovereign when active and power when compared with other itself.” Rousseau’s state, “based on the general will, is sovereign: whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than he will be forced to be free.”¹¹ G.W.F. Hegel considers “the state as divine and moral entity which alone is capable of bestowing all spiritual reality.”¹²

Thus these are definitions of western thinkers on the concept of state. Whereas Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Hegel and like who want the state to achieve some ethical moral and spiritual aim, there are Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau who hold that state is an artificial creation, though there are also men like Machiavelli who seen in the state its own end.

3.2 Origin of State

While discussing the origin of the state, we cannot relate it with a single cause or to a single moment in history. The state has emerged out of primitive communities in different parts of the world in different times.

Theories which explain the origin of state namely- the theory of force which holds that the state came in to existence as a result of the forced subjection of the weak to the strong. “The natural theory viewed man as a political animal and state as a natural result of the instinct of sociability, it justified the state as a necessity determined by the very nature of man, it was not the creation of man but an inevitable and natural result of human nature.”¹³

The divine theory holds that “the state was created directly and deliberately by God, man has not been the major factor in its creation although the state has been

11 Ibid; p. 268.

12 William Ebenstein, *Modern Political Thought — The Great Issues*, Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. New Delhi, 1960, p. 335.

13 R.G.Gettle, *Political Science*, The world press, ltd, Calcutta, 1950, pp .71-72.

made for man, in early oriental empires rulers claimed a divine right to control the affairs of their subjects; the social contract theory holds that man created the state in the form of a social contract as men got together and agreed upon a contract establishing the state.”¹⁴

3.3 Nature of State

The nature of the state has been studied by different thinkers in different ways “ranging from the social contractualists Hobbes and Locke who regarded it as a more artificial contrivance based on the will of people; to the idealists like Plato and Rousseau who adulate it as the embodiment of objectified human reason; to the student of sociology like MacIver it is primarily a social fact; to the historians like Bruke, it is product of historical development; to an ethicist like Aristotle it is a moralizing agency or a ‘partnership in virtue’; to a psychologist like Wallas it is an organization which manifests its will according to psychical laws, while to a jurist like Duguit, it is an association established for the purpose of maintaining peace and security.”¹⁵

According to Juridical theory “state is a legal person; it is the maker and enforcer of law. No other agency has the power to make and enforce law unless so delegated by the state itself.”¹⁶ Organism Theory is based on an idea of establishing an analogy between natural and social organism. “In the Roman age, Cicero drew an analogy between State and the individual and likened the head of the State to the spirit which rules the human body. The Church Fathers also did it. In modern times Hobbes and Rousseau likened the state with human body with a result that a new term *body politic* became very popular. But this theory also suffers from certain weakness because there may be some elements of commonness between natural and social organisms, but the point of analogy should not be taken such a magnified extent.”¹⁷

Marxian Theory holds that “the state is neither a product of human

14 Ibid; pp- 72-73.

15 J.C. Johari, *Principle of Modern Political Science*, p. 66.

16 Ibid; p.67-68.

17 Ibid; p.68-70.

consciousness nor an artificial institution based on the consent of people, nor it is a more consequence of a very long evolution affected by the factor of Kinship, religion, consent and force nor it is an instrument of positive good. It is nothing else than an instrument of exploitation and oppression by one class over another.”¹⁸

Idealistic Theory having its earliest expression in the ideas of Plato and Aristotle of the ancient period and its recent expression in those of Rousseau, Kant, Fichte and Hegal and then of Green, Bradley and Bosanquet, this theory justifies “the state as sacred as a ‘divine institution, a representation of the real will of man in an objectified form, a moralizing agency and an infallible authority, an objectification of reason and all above an institution that alone can provide ‘good life’ to men.”¹⁹

3.4 Functions of State

There are four theories regarding function of the state- Individualistic theory holds that “the state is an evil, necessitated by the selfishness and rapacity of men. Its main business is the suppression of violence and fraud. The guiding principle of this theory is maximum possible individual freedom and minimum possible State action.”²⁰ The Socialistic theory regards “the state as a positive good. Therefore, instead of minimum possible state action, it wants the maximum of it. It believes that this is the only way by which social justice can be made possible for the bulk of mankind.”²¹ The idealistic theory takes an exalted view of the state, regarding it as the embodiment of the best in every man. “The state is to them an ethical institution and in obeying it we obey ourselves.”²²

General Welfare underlies “the actual operation of government in the most modern state includes all those activities which the state can pursue more efficiently and thoroughly than individuals or private organizations. It includes the protection of the weak, establishment of a minimum standard of living, maintenance of the

18 Ibid; p.71-74.

19 Ibid; p.74-75.

20 Eddy, Asirvatham, *Political Theory*, P.132.

21 Ibid; p.139-141.

22 Ibid; p.142-143.

minimum conditions necessary for a healthy and decent living, encouragement of industry, trade and commerce, conservation and development of human capacities, education and general promotion of the cultural life. In undertaking these activities the state should take care not to repress the inner springs of conduct.”²³

Thus whereas individualistic theory holds that state is an evil and believes in minimum possible state action, there are socialistic and idealistic theories which regards the state as a positive good and believe in maximum functions of the State.

3.5 Relation between State and Religion

From the beginning two important institutions- state and religion, played vital role in the society in their own ways and greatly influence on each other. It is not possible for religion to exist in isolation.

“The growth of Christianity during the first three centuries of its existence is from every point of view an astonishing phenomenon.”²⁴ In the classical tradition, the unity of ethics and politics presumed the existence of the morally autonomous individual. According to this tradition, the State is like ‘a partnership in Virtue’ or a supreme association having its end in the realization of good life.

Plato believes that “a true State can only exist on the foundation of such religious belief and through the acceptance of such articles of religion. Apart from such belief, and if agnostic principles are allowed free play, the State becomes a chaos.”²⁵ Similarly Aristotle also “does not know ethics as a separate science: he has no words for ethics as a branch of study distinct from politics. Politics is ethics.”²⁶

In the fourth century, “Christianity becomes the official creed of the Roman State; the general tone of the writers who treated of doctrinal matters was that of Jesus and the apostles. Humility, Political indifferentism and other-worldliness were dominant. By this time the church had become a huge social, quasi-political

23 Ibid; p.148-154.

24 William Archibald Dunning, *A History of Political theories — Ancient and Medieval*, Central Book Deoot, Allahabad, 1970, p. 132.

25 Ernest Barker, *Greek Political Theory*, Methuen & Co. Ltd, London, 1970, p. 426.

26 Ernest Barker, *Political thought of Plato and Aristotle*, Dover Publication, New work, 1946, p. 240.

institution.”²⁷

According to William Archibald Dunning:

After Christianity becomes the State religion many circumstances conspired to hasten the complete and precise adjustment of the ecclesiastical organization. But the decisive authority in questions touching this matter was, under the new conditions, the Emperor. Councils of the church passed upon questions of creed and of organization, but it remained with the imperial authorities to confirm and execute the anathemas against recurring heresy or the decisions as to conflicting claims of power and precedence. For good or for evil the Church was in politics.²⁸

The obligation of Christians to respect constituted authority had been embedded in Christianity even by its founder. When the Pharisees had attempted to entrap Jesus in to opposition to the power of Rome, he had uttered the memorable words:

Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's
and unto God the things that are God.²⁹

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul had written the most influential political pronouncement in the New Testament:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisted the power resisted the ordinance of God and they that resist shall receive to themselves domination. For rulers is not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good and thou shall have praise of the same: For, he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid for the beareth not the sword in

27 W.A. Dunning, *History of Political Theory*, p. 155.

28 Ibid; p. 133.

29 Georg H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, Oxford & IBH Publication, New Delhi, 1973, p. 177.

vain: for, he is a minister of God, a revenge to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must need be subject, not only for wrath but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for, they are God's ministers, attending continuity upon this very thing. Render therefore, to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom, fear to who fear; honor to who honor.³⁰

St. Ambrose of Milan in the second half of the fourth century, St. Augustine in the beginning of the Fifth and St. Gregory in the second half of the sixth were expressed views which formed an essential part of Christian conviction and which became an integral part of Christian thought upon the relations of the two institution (Church and State)³¹ St. Ambrose Clearly asserted that “in spiritual matters the Church has jurisdiction over all Christians, the emperor included for the emperor like every other Christian is a son of the Church; he is within the Church not above it... In yet another case he steadfastly refused to surrender a Church for the use of Arians upon order of the Emperor Valentinian. ‘The palaces belong to the Emperor the Churches to the Bishop.’ He admitted the authority of the emperor over secular property, including the lands of the Church, but Church buildings themselves, as being directly dedicated to a spiritual use; he denied the right of the emperor to touch.”³²

According to St. Augustine, “Man's nature is two-fold: he is spirit and body and therefore at once a citizen of this world and of the Heavenly city. The fundamental fact of human life is the division of human interests, the worldly interests that center about the body and the other worldly interests that belong specifically to the soul... St. Augustine, however, made a distinction a key to the understanding of human history, which is and always must be dominated by the contest of two societies. On the one side stands the earthly city, the society that is founded on the

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid; p. 182.

32 Ibid; p.183.

earthly, appetitive and possessive impulses of the lower human nature; on the other stands the city of God, the society that is founded in the hope of heavenly peace and spiritual salvation... only in the heavenly city is peace possible; only the spiritual kingdom is permanent. This then is Augustine's interpretation of the fall of Rome; all merely earthly kingdoms must pass away for earthly power is naturally mutable and unstable; it is built upon those aspects of human nature, which necessarily issue in war and the greed of domination.”³³ Thus St. Augustine not only depreciates the earthly State as compared with the State of future life but denies to non-Christian earthly States all social Virtue.³⁴

Two centuries after St. Augustine, Gregory the Great, stress on the Church, the priesthood and the things of the spiritual life. “Yet Gregory is the only one of the Fathers who speaks of the sanctity of political rule in language that suggests a duty of passive obedience. It seems to be Gregory's view that a wicked ruler is entitled not only to obedience-which would probably have been conceded by any Christian writer but even to silent and passive obedience, an opinion not Stated with equal force by any other Father of the Church.”³⁵

During this time the concept of two swords had developed. About this, G.H.Sabine has written that “this conception is often spoken of as the doctrine of the two swords or two authorities, which received authoritative statement at the close of the fifth century by pope Gelasius I...It follows that the Church, through its own rulers and officials, must have jurisdiction over all ecclesiastics, for obviously in no other way can it be an independent and self-governing institution.”³⁶

Pope Gelasius holds that “Christ himself was King and Priest, but knowing the sinfulness and weakness of human nature, he divided the two officers, assigning to ecclesiastical authority the spiritual and religious welfare of man, and to political authority the care and administration of temporal matters. Both ecclesiastical and

33 Ibid; p. 184.

34 W.A. Dunning, *History of Political Theories*, p. 153.

35 G.H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, p. 187.

36 Ibid; p. 188.

political power derives their authority from God; each is independent and therefore supreme in its own sphere, the Church in religious matters and State in Political affairs.”³⁷ “As the contest between the papalists and the imperialists sharpened, particularly from the eleventh century on, the extreme anti-papalists suggested that office of the king or emperor was, in it, higher than that of bishop and pope and that secular authority was supreme in worldly and spiritual matters.”³⁸ According to St. Aquinas “secular Government is subject to the Church because the former is concerned with intermediate ends whereas the later is concerned with the ultimate end, the Salvation of souls.”³⁹

Thus during Middle Ages the standards of ethics and politics were governed by the principles of Christian theology. But in modern times, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke did not believe in unity between ethics and Politics but Rousseau and Hegel appreciate the normative aspect of man's life in politics.

In this context, for Machiavelli “While it is most praiseworthy for a prince to be good, nevertheless one who wishes to maintain authority must be ready to lay aside his goodness at any moment and in general to employ it or not according to circumstances... The prince must appear all sincerity, all uprightness, all humanity, all religion, but he must have his mind so disciplined that when it is necessary to save the State, he can act regardless of these... Moral judgments thus are wholly subordinate, in Machiavelli's philosophy, to the exigencies of political existence and welfare. He is not immoral but unmoral in his politics.”⁴⁰

For a materialistic like Hobbes the spiritual becomes a mere ghost, a figment of the imagination. He does not deny that there is such a thing as revelation or as spiritual truths but he is clear that there is nothing to say about them. A Church, therefore, is for Hobbes merely a co-operation. Hobbes holds that it is duty of the

37 William Ebenstein, *Great Political Thinkers*, Oxford & IBH Publication, New Delhi, 1969, p. 187.

38 Ibid; p. 189.

39 Ibid; p. 217.

40 W.A. Dunning, *History of Political Theories*, p. 298-99.

Church to teach but he adds that no teaching is lawful unless the sovereign authorizes it. Excommunication or any other ecclesiastical penalty is inflicted by the authority of the sovereign. Obviously enough, then, as Hobbes concludes, there cannot be any conflict between divine and human law. In every sense that counts religion is completely under the sway of law and government.”⁴¹

John Locke also argues that

From its very nature no Church has a right to persecute, nor has it a right to use the civil power for this purpose. A Church is a voluntary society of men. To that extent, it is, in Locke's view, analogous to State, but it differs from the State in one important respect. When a State comes in to being the individuals composing it, give up their own powers of executing punishment and entrust this power to the State. Now when individuals join a Church they do not give it any powers of this sort. A Church has no powers to use force in religious matters. The purely religious sphere is not political. The care of the citizen's body and of his property is the proper concern of the civil magistrate, but no one, neither God nor man, has entrusted the care of the citizen's soul to him. Accordingly, a Church has no right to persecute through its own agents, nor again has it a right to persecute through the civil power.⁴²

With Rousseau there begins a new era of classical influence on political philosophy which was extended through Hegelianism. Rousseau got a general outlook from Plato. “It included, first the conviction that political subjection is essentially ethical and only secondarily a matter of law and power. Second and more important, he took from Plato the presumption, implicit in all the philosophy of the city State, that the community is itself the chief moralizing agency and therefore represents the highest moral value.”⁴³ On other hand Hegel also holds that the State is the march of God on earth. The State is good itself. It represented the last individual will. It has its

41 G.H. Sabine, *A History of Political theory*, p. 437-38.

42 Richard I. Aaron, *John Locke*, Oxford University Press, London, 1965, p. 293-94.

43 G.H.Sabine, *A History of Political theory*, p. 580-81.

own will and personality, superior to the wills and personalities of individuals who formed it.⁴⁴ Thus the central point of their ideas is that the State is self-sufficing and that in it alone is the individual capable of living the good life and of realizing the highest ends of his existence.”⁴⁵ Thus excluding Rousseau and Hegel in modern times Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locks did not believe in the unity of ethics and politics.

4. Foundation of Sikh Rule

Gurbani (*Guru Granth Sahib*) is the base of Sikh state. The founder Guru Nanak has created a new society named Sangat on the basis of Bani. He visited prominent religious places and gave message of God through his Bani and people used to congregate in Sangat. It was also Guru Nanak who raised his voice against cruelty of the government of that time.

Those who merely live shall depart in dishonor;
Everything they eat is impure.⁴⁶

Guru Nanak's these words had greatly affected the minds of his followers. Before the coming of Guru Nanak, they had lived a very deplorable and miserable life. Rigid and fanatic Muslim Government only bothered about their Muslim people. Government had exploited Hindus (*Kafirs*) in every way. The non-Muslims were discriminated in the Muslim state. In this kind of state, they (Hindus) also lost their self-respect and honor; they just lived their life like deaf and dumb. Because whoever raised voice against the rigid Government, he had to lose his life. During this time of anarchy, Guru Nanak raised his voice against persecution with the poor and innocent people. He preached the lesson of liberty, equality and recognized only sovereignty of God. Guru awakened their sleeping self respect and ego.

Guru Nanak made the people aware for their rights. People understand the value of liberty, equality and self respect. The Sikhs learned from the Gurus that how raised voice against exploitation. During the period of Guru Hargobind, they had

44 N. Jayapalan, *Comprehensive History of Political thought*, Atlantic Publication, New Delhi, 2011, p. 221.

45 J.W Garner, *Political Science and Government*, p. 229.

46 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; p. 142.

become able to protect their self- respect and honor. When tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh had come to Gurugadi (Guruship), the Sikhs became Singhs. Guru has made them Loins. With the grace of the Guru, a Singh alone was equal to one lac twenty five thousand men. Later on, these Singhs had created their own state and became the sovereign ruler of Punjab. Thus they (the Sikhs) struggled for their honor and protection of the poor people. The state is, according to them, an institution which protects the honor and property of their subjects, but instead of this, the state of that time had exploited their subject on the name of taxes and religion.

In the state, they had established a rule in which everyone got equal rights and honor. There was no place for discrimination on the name of caste (as did by Hindu religion) or religion (as did by rigid Muslim Government) in the Sikh state. An ideal state had created by the Sikhs during eighteenth century in which they provided a secular justice.

4.1 Nature of The Sikh Rule in History

Some historians have commented on this issue in their writings. Here we have mentioned that what they said about nature of the Sikh rule. James Browne *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks* is the earliest historical work on the Sikhs from western point of view. His work has two aspects, first is about the rise of the Sikhs; second presents state of the Sikhs. The second portion covers the period from 1764 to 1785. He gives a lot attention to the nature of their Government. He has viewed that

It is aristocratical but very irregular and imperfect, for the body of the people is divided under a number of chiefs, who posses of country either by former right as zamindars or by usurpation. These chiefs enjoy distinct authority in their respective districts, uncontrolled by any superior power, and only assemble together on particular occasions for the purposes of depredation or of defense; when in a tumultuous Diet, they choose by majority of votes a leader to command their joint forces during the expedition; generally from among those chiefs whose zamindaries are most considerable.⁴⁷

47 James Browne, "History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks" In Ganda Singh, *Early European Account of the Sikhs*, Indian Studies Past and Present, Calcutta, 1962, p. 555.

Thus Browne finds elements of aristocracy in the Government of the Sikhs. Henri Polier the author of *The Siques* who was a Swiss engineer and entered the service of East India Company in 1757 and arrived in India in 1758. In a brief paper consisting of a few pages only it would have been passed over but for two reasons: divergence of approach, corroboration of some of Browne's observations. According to Polier "it was an aristocratic republic."⁴⁸ He further states that "they (Sikhs) formed themselves into a kind of republic and in the course of a few years possessed themselves of the full government of the provinces of the Lahore and Multan."⁴⁹

George Forster's *A Journey from Bengal to England* is actually a travelogue comprising the compilation of a series of letters written during his journey which were published in two volumes in 1798. He writes that the Sikh believed in theocracy at least in theory. When Forster asked to a Sikh the name of his Sardar, the Sikh seemed convulsed and revolted against the idea of servitude. "He disdained an earthly superior and acknowledges no other master than his prophet."⁵⁰

John Malcolm's *A Sketch of the Sikhs* has been divided in to three sections namely: religious institutions, usage, manners and character of the Sikhs; Sikh countries and government; religion of the Sikhs. Malcolm has viewed that the government of the Sikhs was theocratic and the "chief preserves his (Sikh) powers and authority by professing himself to be the servant of the Khalsa or government... and the national council... is supposed to deliberate and resolve under the immediate inspiration and impulse of an invisible being who, they believed always watches over the interests of the commonwealth."⁵¹ Thus Malcolm finds the elements of theocracy in the Sikh government and thinks of their apparently theocratic-constitution as in reality "an oligarchy".⁵²

Horace Hayman Wilson, the author of *The Civil and Religious Institutions of the Sikhs*, arrived in Calcutta in 1808, in the medical services of the East India

48 Col. Polier, "The Siques" From Ganda Singh's *Early European Accounts to the Sikhs*, p. 5

49 Ibid; p. 5.

50 George Forster, *A Journey From Bengal to England*, R. Raulder, London, 1798, p. 330.

51 John Malcolm, *A Sketch of the Sikhs*, John Murray, London, 1812, pp. 114-115.

52 Ibid; p. 145.

Company. In this article, author considered the eighteenth century Sikh polity as a “sort of theocracy.”⁵³

John Gordon, the author of *The Sikhs*, was closely followed the official thinking of the Curzon administration, writes that “these Sardars did not exercise absolute supremacy over their Missals, the constitution of which was very democratic and the authority of the chiefs limited.”⁵⁴ He further states that “the chiefs and men all sat down together to eat and drink on a footing of equality.”⁵⁵ He calls the missal organization “an oligarchy based on republican principles.”⁵⁶

Joseph Davey Cunningham considers the missals as a theocratic confederate feudalism. In the words of Cunningham, the organization of the Missal was theocratic in nature because “God was their helper and only judge, community of faith or object was their moving principle and warlike array, the devotion to the steel of Gobind Singh, was their material instrument.”⁵⁷

Arnold Toynbee’s *Study of History* in 10 volumes is a comparative study of the history of civilizations. Sikhism presents to Toynbee an outstanding example of self-stultification through resort to force. A would be synthesis of Hinduism and Islam was led astray to become the sectarian faith of militant founders of a successor State of the Mughal Raj. Sikhism thus became “little more than the distinctive mark of a community that had virtually become another Hindu caste.”⁵⁸

But presenting Sikhism as synthesis of Hinduism and Islam, he does not understand spirit and identity of Sikhs properly because Sikhism has its own identity. Even Qazi Nur Muhammad, an enemy of the Sikhs, also defines their different identity in these words “the Sikhs’ religion and its practices originated from the teachings of Nanak, who founded their new religion. Gobind Singh, who was a

53 H.H. Wilson, *The Civil and Religious Institutions of the Sikhs: A Symposium*, Calcutta: Sushil Gupta Private Ltd., 1958, p. 61.

54 John Gordon, *The Sikhs*, Blackwood & Sons, London, 1904, p. 72.

55 Ibid; p. 98.

56 Ibid; p. 77.

57 J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, S. Chand Publishers, Delhi, 1966, (reprint), p. 94.

58 Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vol. vii, Oxford Press, London, 1971, pp. 414-15.

successor of Nanak, conferred upon them the title of Singh and thus the Sikhs became the Singhs, the lions. These dogs are not Hindus by religion or persuasion. Theses evil- doers have a way of life entirely different”⁵⁹. Thus Toynbee failed to understand the real nature of Sikhism as present it synthesis of Hindu and Muslim religion.

Also another place while Toynbee is right that the Sikhs were goaded into militancy by the tyrannical oppression of an aggressive Mughal Government, he is not correct in stating that they had “renounce (d) their spiritual birth right by turning militant.”⁶⁰ Because turning into soldiers did not imply that they gave up their saintly character.

Hari Ram Gupta gives a lot of attention to the nature of the Sikh rule. According to him the missal organization was a combination of six factors- autocracy, confederacy, democracy, feudal, secularism and theocracy. It was autocracy because the Sardar possessed absolute power which as a rule was benevolent despotism. It was a confederacy because the system was founded on an alliance of all the missals for national and Panthic purposes. It was democracy as each individual in the missal enjoyed social equality and full freedom of thought and expression. It was feudal in character because it was a system of landholding but with a difference. The feudal system of the Sikhs was not the result of a gift from the Sardar. The heads of missals did not create and endowed their followers. On the contrary the chiefs were created and endowe by them. The *Sardars* were elected by their soldiers. The head of a Missal was under him with a number of minor chiefs. They had their own subordinates, going down to the common troopers. It was secularism because the Sardars were staunch Sikhs, but they were not fanatics. The Musalmans had been their persecutors and extirpators, yet as rulers, the Sikhs never ill-treated them and frequently employed them as writers and administrators. It was a theocracy as it was based on the principles of Sikh religion. The Sikh Sardars owed allegiance to the

59 Kapur Singh, *Parasaraprasna*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1989, p. xvi.
60 Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vol. 5, pp. 666-667.

Gurus and the Panth. The decisions taken at Akal Takht, Amritsar, before the holy Granth, called Gurmatas, were binding on all and could not be defied with impunity. The main emphasis was on the covenants between God, Guru, Granth and the Khalsa.⁶¹ Thus Hari Ram Gupta has highlighted the theocratic element in the Missal organization of the Sikhs.

N.K. Sinha's *Rise of the Sikh Power* is a small volume but he consists on the Sikhs struggle for supremacy and rise of the Sikhs in Punjab. He also points out that in its starting phase Sikh polity was based on theocracy. He states that "the seeds of this polity were sown by Guru Gobind Singh, when he created the Khalsa in 1699: He gave the Sikhs a new name, new dress, new equipment and new ceremonies. He told his followers to regard the sword as principal stay in the world. He declared that Khalsa is the Guru and the Guru is the Khalsa."⁶² Sinha finds an element of theocracy along with a strong sense of brotherhood.⁶³ Like Cunningham, Sinha also accepts the Sikh Polity as "*Theocratic Confederate Feudalism*."⁶⁴

G.C. Narang's *Transformation of Sikhism* presents a different view of Sikhism. In the words of G.C. Narang, "now that the number of followers multiplied, the resources increased and the Church was developed into a sort of State, Guru Arjan Changed the mode of living so as to suit the present condition of the community over which he presided."⁶⁵ So he also presented the Sikh state as based on religion.

Historians of Punjab also concentrate on this issue. In this context, we have studied the earlier writings of the Sikhs as well as modern. Bhai Gurdas, the known Sikh exegesis, whose verses are universally taken as key to the understanding of *Guru Granth Sahib*. In his *Var* 26 Pauri 25, after describing what the critics and slanders were saying about Guru Hargobind, has tried to give reasons for the step taken by the

61 Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Munshi Ram, Manohar Lal & Publishers Pvt., Ltd., Vol. IV, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 351-352.

62 N.K. Sinha, *The Rise of the Sikh Power*, A Mukherjee & Co. Pvt., Ltd., Calcutta, 1936, p. 107.

63 Ibid; p. 108.

64 Ibid; pp. 116-118.

65 G.C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, New book Society of India, New Delhi, 1960, pp. 60-62.

Guru. His explanation seems to make out that the position of the Sikhs with the Guru was like the position of a crop for the farmer. When predators threaten the crop, just as it was appropriate for a farmer to put a fence to save the crop, so was the act of the Guru for the protection of the Sikh *Sangat*. The other simile that he has used is that just as the snake protects the sandal tree and just as the master of the house, in order to sleep in peace in the night, keeps a dog that remains awake while he sleeps, the Guru had desired the Sikhs to get armed.⁶⁶ So he justified the policy of *Miri Piri* adopted by Guru Hargobind as protection of the Sikhs.

Rattan Singh Bhangu, author of *Sri Guru Prachin Panth Prakash* was a poet who wrote about the Sikh's struggles and their rise in power in North India. In the beginning of the 19th century the British East India Company approached the Punjab frontier. They wanted to know about the Sikhs and their rule in Punjab. That is why Rattan Singh Bhangu was requested by Capt. Murray to write the history of the Sikhs which he did under the title of *Sri Guru Prachin Panth Prakash*.⁶⁷ However he speaks truth that all power of the Sikhs belongs to God who is true sovereign.

While talking about the importance of Akal Takht, he writes that Nawab Kapoor Singh had created five *deras* or camps at Amritsar along with the flags of these *deras* hoisted at Akal Takht. Again, at the *Akal Takht*, the money received from the campaigns was equally distributed. During *Diwali* and *Baisakhi*, the assemblies of Sikhs called *Diwan* would take collective decision at the *Akal Takht*. Also at times, cremation of warriors was also done at the *Akal Takht*.⁶⁸ Thus, the *Akal Takht* occupied a central role by virtual of its high status and sacred nature. It was destined to play a more important role in resolving conflicts of religious, social or political nature.

66 Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, Ed. Hazara Singh and Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1972, Var 26, Pauri 25.

67 Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Praksash*, Ed. Jeet Singh Seetal, Sikh History Research Board, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1984, p. 15.

68 *Ibid*; pp. 287-288.

In *Sri Guru Panth Prakash*, Giani Gian Singh also says that the *Akal Takht* was visualized as a seat of political power where the Guru performed functions related to the state such as the policies for the welfare of the people, international relations, principles of governance and diplomacy.⁶⁹ In *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* while talking about the partition of the territories of Sirhind among the Khalsa, he states, “each sardar and each horseman occupied the *pargana* or the villages as he liked and no other Singh questioned his right to do so.”⁷⁰ Indeed as it generally accepted, the occupation of the provincial capital of Lahore was affected by three Sardars, who partitioned the city and its environ among them.⁷¹ Therefore Giani Gian Singh highlighted the spirit of cooperation among the Sikhs.

In his book *Spirit of the Sikhs*, Puran Singh also writes about the nature of the Sikh rule. He states that

The Khalsa made democracy its daily practice driven by the inner feeling that is reborn of the spirit of the Guru that all men are brothers, democracy is not conceived as a social system, but as a true inner spirit born feeling. Democracy is the moral feeling that naturally wells up informed ones. The humbler brick-lifter has equal rights of joy and life with king. A laborer who feels richer than a king and a king who feels poorer than a laborer- this is democracy of the spirit. Their self, I was realized as the Guru's self in every Sikh.⁷²

There he indicates the spirit of democracy in the Sikhs infused by the Gurus. Further he also describes that how the Sikhs gave away kingdoms to the humble. He explained it by giving example. In his own words

Once in the tangled jungles of the Punjab sat the Khalsa reciting the hymns of the Guru. It was a divan of men with kingly spirits. The agent of Nadir Shah

69 Giani Gian Singh, *Sri Guru Panth Prakash*, Punjab Language Department, Patiala, 1970, p. 118.

70 Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, (part II), pp. 205-06.

71 Ibid; p.210.

72 Puran Singh, *Spirit of the Sikh*, Punjabi University, Patiala, Vol. I, 1978, p. 83.

approached them with a robe of honor from the great conqueror and emperor, in lieu of some service rendered to him, but there was no one to receive the honor. The Khalsa sat rap in God. The agent stood for a long while in an awkward position, much embarrassed and feeling slighted by the indifferent attitude of the Sikhs. The Khalsa was engaged with a king higher than any earthly potentate. At last one of them announced that a robe of honor had come from Nadir Shah; on who should it conferred? The divine assembly heeded not, but someone replied: let it conferred to the servant of Khalsa who attends to the shoes of the assembly. The robe of honor was conferred to the servant. The agent of Nadir Shah returned puzzled and put out. He reported to the emperor what had happened. Said the perspicacious Nadir Shah, the heart of this nation comes the rich perfume of some great sovereignty.⁷³

While describing *missals* as a confederacy of the Sikhs,⁷⁴ Principal Teja Singh states that “it was their peculiar democratic organization that in the days of *missals* developed amongst them a federal form of government. Every Sikh was free and was a substantive member of the Khalsa but his positions and his abilities were different unequal. Therefore, feeling that all could not lead, they unconsciously developed a confederate system, in which different groups of people elected willingly to serve under different leaders.”⁷⁵ He presents organization of *missals* as a federal form of government. But it was not federal rather an independent form of states.

Ganda Singh in *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia* presenting missal organizations republican in character finds that each missal elected its own supreme chief and sub-chief and every horseman had his rights and his share in the common conquests. The combined missals formed the Khalsa or Sikh commonwealth. But while describing the protection system of the Sikh missals, he also highlights the democracy in the

73 Ibid; pp. 93-94.

74 Teja Singh, *Sikhism its Ideals and Institutions*, orient Longmans, Calcutta, 1964, p. 97.

75 Ibid; p. 42.

organization of the Sikhs in these words, “this (protection system or *Rakhi*) to the expansion of parameters of the Sikh Missals and the foundation of the Sikh democracy become stronger.”⁷⁶

According to Bhagat Singh, “the democratic traditions of the Sikh Gurus and their political and social ideas formed the basis of the Sikh polity. Under Banda Singh, the Sikhs introduced, though for a short time, certain distinct political institutions. Under the missals the Sikh polity with its various aspects like the gurmata, the Rakhi System, the republican pattern of their government, ruling in the name of the Khalsa, with coins in the name of the Gurus, non-sectarian nature of the government, with the chiefs declaring themselves to be not infallible, came to be adopted.”⁷⁷

He is of the view that the institutions of the Sikhs of eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries have neither been judged by modern standards nor criticized for the lack of modern ideals and conceptions therein. He says that

This study begins with the idea that the constitution and the form of a government, its functions and its scope of activities are determined to a large extent by the political condition of the country and by the ideals, character and heritage of its people. The institutions of a particular community at a particular period, together with the measure of support given or resistance offered to them, are like a mirror in which are reflected the ideals, intellect, character and the general standard of that people. The great conformity of these institutions to the needs of the country, whether military, political or economic, the reader would be its acceptability’s by its people.⁷⁸

The applications of the political institutions introduced by the Sikh rulers and the reaction of the people have been studied by him. About Sikh polity, Bhagat Singh suggests that Sikh Polity was not a theocracy because

76 Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1990, p. 81.

77 Bhagat Singh, *The Sikh Polity in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, p. XXI.

78 Ibid; p. XXII.

They (Sikhs) had no consecrated priesthood to rule, no sacred law to apply and thus no question of a ruler promulgating the sacred law. The advisers or ministers were all laymen who claimed no sacerdotal immunity from errors. The Sikh administrators were not required to master the holy Granth Sahib or Rahitnama before their appointments or during their period of services. There was no school of theology or the stronghold of orthodoxy that were subsidized by the Sikh state at the cost of others. No doubt, the Sikh rulers made offering at Harimandir Sahib and Akal Bunga at Amritsar but that was just a token of respect for the place and the sacred scriptures, there rather than with a view to maintaining orthodoxy at state expenses. The Sikh Sardar made personal offering to the Akalis or other individually and not as a class.⁷⁹

Thus for Bhagat Singh, all the fundamental elements which are essential for the theocracy are absent in the constitution of a Sikh state as such as it cannot be termed as theocratic.⁸⁰ J.S Ahluwalia writes that

Sikhism does not envisage a theocratic State for the following reasons. First, in its secularizing role Sikh doctrine has distinguished between spiritual and temporal concerns. Sri Harimandir Sahib is distinct from Sri Akal Takht. There is correlation but no fusion or coalescence of the ecclesiastical and the temporal (political) authorities. The institution of religion and the institution of State have been deemed as distinctive from each other, each autonomous in its own domain without subordination of the one to the other. Secondly in the Sikh dispensation, the source and the sanction of secular laws lie in the democratically expressed will of the people and not in religious edicts and injunctions. Thirdly Sikhism does not discriminate against any individual or any other ground. The Sikh polity does not imply preferential treatment on any level for votaries of Sikh religion; there is no such politico- constitutional distinction as that of *Dar- Ul- Harb*. All are equally entitled to

79 Ibid; p. 321.

80 Ibid; p. 322.

a place in Sach Khand via any religious path. In fact Sikh polity is neither communal nor Unitarianism as well as religious totalitarianism, is repugnant to the spirit of Sikhism.⁸¹

Thus like Bhagat Singh he also opposed that Sikh polity is a theocracy. J.S. Grewal in his article 'Eighteenth-Century Sikh Polity' states that "this is not to suggest, however, that the religious faith of the Khalsa had no relevance for their policies. The perseverance with which they pursued power inspired by their firm belief in the mission of Guru Gobind Singh as they understood it they were hopefully convinced of their destiny to rule as the elect of God through their acceptance of the Pahul. The belief in their common destiny coupled with a sense of communal kingship gave them a solidarity which was strengthened by the external circumstances. In the sense, the bound of union between them was that of their firm faith. But to look upon their religious faith as a motive force in politics is not the same thing as to postulate the translation of their religious ideals into their political institutions."⁸²

He notes that the faith of the Khalsa gave them a sense of solidarity which conspicuously expressed itself in the collective action of a large number of the Sikh leaders for the maintenance and acquisition of the means to political power but the governmental arrangements of the Sikh chiefs were not deprived from the religious ideals of the Khalsa.

Indu Banga states that "Sikh polity may be understood as the mode of government and administration within the general socio-political context during the eighteenth century. So far Sikh Polity has been studied in terms of the faith of the Sikhs and the process of acquisition of power. Both are relevant as the motivating force and instrument of power but they do not cover the political and administrative organization after the assumption of sovereignty."⁸³ Referring to the establishment of

81 J.S.Ahluwalia, *Sikhism the Crisis Today Within Without*, Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Chandigarh, 1954, p. 51-52.

82 J.S. Grewal, *Sikh Ideology, Polity and Social Order*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, Delhi, 1966, p. 95.

83 Indu Banga, "The Sikh Polity during the eighteenth century", in *The Proceedings of the Punjab History Conference*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1981, p. 105.

the missals, the author states that “their public policies were, therefore, seldom guided by religious consideration although their Catholicism was as much a product of their practical good sense as of their faith.”⁸⁴

Gurbachan Singh Nayyar in his book *Sikh polity and political institutions*, about the nature of Sikh rule, states that

The missal was a group. In the first phase of the organization of these groups, faith in Guru Gobind Singh and future greatness of the Khalsa united the volunteers. A spirit of mutual co-operation and the understanding kept alive during the struggle against the religious foes. The leader was a person who was acceptable to the members owing to his qualities. The conflict of the Khalsa with cotemporary authorities affected the nature of the missal organization and helped its transition from non- territorial grouping to territorial acquisition. The possession of territories changed the very organization of missals. The leaders of the missals exercised full control over the territories under their control. They exercised autonomous powers. Gurmata, which had once been conspicuous in the solution of political problem, was now receding into the back ground. Cooperation among missal was considered necessary only in the face of common danger.⁸⁵

About the nature of the missal he does not find it accurate that this organization was theocratic, in second phase, “when the chiefs began to occupy territories and become rulers in their respective spheres, they issued orders under their seals and were aspire to conquer more territory. There was a feeling of mutual jealousy, vaunting ambition and no theocratic element would seem to exist in such circumstances.”⁸⁶

Thus earliest scholars of Punjab like Rattan Singh Bhangu, Giani Gian Singh and Puran Singh understand this issue from spiritual aspect. But majority of modern historians of Punjab, though find some elements of theocracy in Gurmata and Sarbat

84 Ibid; p. 110.

85 G.S.Nayyar, *Sikh polity and political institutions*, Oriental publishers, New Delhi, 1979, p. 142.

86 Ibid; p. 139.

Khalsa but they have denied that Sikh Polity was theocracy. Instead of present it theocracy, Teja Singh has presented it as a federal form of the Sikh Government, Ganda Singh present it as republican in character and Bhagat Singh present it as a curious blend of limited aristocracy, limited democracy and absolutism with modified form of theocracy. For J.S Grewal and Indu Banga both are relevant as the motivating force and instrument of power but they do not cover the political and administrative organization after the assumption of sovereignty. G.S.Nayyar also found it non theocratic State.

Regarding this issue, the historians of Mughal India did not find any link between the faith of the Khalsa and their polity. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, for instance,

Congratulates the Mughal government for successfully breaking up Guru Gobind Singh's power and for having robbed the Sikhs of a common leader and a rallying centre. Thereafter, the Sikhs continued to disturb public peace, but only in isolated bands. They were no longer an army fighting under one chief, with a definite political aim, but merely moving bodies of brigands, extremely brave, enthusiastic, and hardy, but essentially plunderers uninspired by any ambition to build up organized Government in the land.⁸⁷

Ganesh Das author of *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* gives primary importance to the political ambition of the Khalsa. He notices also the Khalsa's firm belief in the use of crimes as a religious duty. But he does not look upon the faith of the Khalsa as relevant for their political activity. He does not discern any mystical entity in the collective body of the Khalsa. For him, "Khalsa were merely an aggregated of individuals, Singhs who were politically active."⁸⁸ Sayyad Mohammad Latif finds elements of theocracy in missal organization. He says that "a Missal may be aptly termed a theocracy."⁸⁹

87 Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *A Short History of Aurangzeb*, p. 168; quoted by J.S. Grewal in *Polity and Social Order*, pp. 87-88.

88 Ganesh Dass Bادهhra, *Char- Bagh-i-Punjab*, (ed. by) Kirpal Singh, Amritsar, 1965, pp. 124-126.

89 S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab from the Remotest Antiquity to the Present Time*, the Calcutta Central Press Company, Calcutta, 1891, p. 291.

Thus, whereas the Mughal historians like Jadunath Sarkar and others do not find any link between the faith of the Khalsa and their polity, there are other historians like John Malcolm, J.D. Cunningham and S.M. Latif who throw light on theocracy in Sikh polity. On the other hand, Col. Polier presents it as an aristocratic republic and John Gordon finds element of oligarchy based on republican principles. The author of *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab* also does not look upon the faith of the Khalsa as relevant for their political activity. Earliest historians of Punjab like Rattan Singh Bhangu, Giani Gian Singh and Puran Singh present this issue from spiritual aspect. But majority of modern scholars of Punjab denied that Sikh Polity is theocracy. Instead of present it theocracy, Teja Singh presents it as a federal form of the Sikh Government, Ganda Singh presents it as republican in character and Bhagat Singh presents it as a curious blend of limited aristocracy, limited democracy and absolutism with modified form of theocracy. For J.S Grewal and Indu Banga both are relevant as the motivating force and instrument of power but they do not cover the political and administrative organization after the assumption of sovereignty. G.S.Nayyar also presents it non theocratic State. Historians like Teja Singh, Ganda Singh and Bhagat Singh present this matter in deferent perspective. Indu Banga and J.S. Grewal look upon the faith of the Khalsa as relevant for Sikh polity but more in the sense of a motivating force.

Therefore the above scholars have seen Sikh polity in different perspectives but we have studied this issue by concentrating on religious perspective. For this purpose first we have studied the *Guru Granth Sahib* or other Sikh writings for proper understanding the philosophy of Sikhism. Though the early scholars like Rattan Singh Bhangu, Giani Gian Singh and Puran Singh present this issue from spiritual aspect but we, by following these historians, we will study every issue relating to Sikh rule which throw a clear light on nature of the Sikh rule.

5. Research Methodology

This research has descriptive nature and mainly based on the primary sources as well as contemporary writings. The main objective of this study is to understand the nature of Sikh rule. We have started our work with the collection of relevant

historical material from different sources. Because no direct work available on this topic so for finding references relating our topic, we have taken help of independent works on bibliography (for example Ganda's *Bibliography of Punjab*), descriptive catalogues and bibliographies given at the end of standard works. After collecting relevant data on our problem, we have arranged it in a systematic manner. We have correlated various facts and established relationships between them.

To understand the ideological base of model of the Sikh rule, we have concentrated on *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, *Varran Bhai Gurdas*, *Dasam Granth* and other primary sources of history of the Sikhs. For proper understanding of origin and development of Sikh rule, we have also studied writings of Mughal historians and British historians who came to India during that time and commented on the life and manners of the Sikhs. We have made an attempt to analyze and coordinated these writings with other sources relating to the model or nature of eighteenth century Sikh rule.

Lastly, on the basis of Sikh ideology or facts we have collected, we have built a model of the Sikh rule and understood the origin and development of the Sikh rule in the history of the Sikhs. After that on the basis of Sikh ideology of state and historical course of the Sikhs, we have traced nature of the Sikh rule. For this purpose, the proposed research work has been an analytical research.

In the present study we will try to make an attempt to understand the meaning and definitions of the state, reason behind the establishment of state by the Sikhs, basis of establishment of Sikh state, first encounter of the Sikhs with state and origin and development of the Sikh state. For this purpose we have divided present thesis in six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which introduces us to the topic by providing the definition, meaning and evolution of the state. Also the views of different scholars will be analyzed.

The second chapter is Idea of Sikh state: theoretical Issues. In this chapter we will try to understand the ideological bases of the Sikh rule. For this purpose we will concentrate on *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, *Dasam Granth* and other

cotemporary writings of the Sikhs. We will try to understand this topic from Sikhism. This work is also aimed at tracing the inter-relationship of the two most important aspects of history of the Sikhs- State and religion which greatly controlled and directed the progress of cultural life and achievements of the Sikhs.

The third chapter is origin and development of the Sikh rule. In this chapter we will try to understand the origin and development of the Khalsa State. We will try to say that the political dynamism of the Sikh Gurus transformed the Sikh society which was an outcome of the spirit of defiance, against oppression and injustice. So it was the political ideology of Guru Nanak and His successors which become the hub of the Sikh State and Sikh rule had been originate and developed.

Fifth chapter is Nature of the Sikh Rule. In this chapter we will make an attempt to understand the nature of the Sikh rule. We will concentrate on the depiction of the struggle of the Sikhs that what aim they have for struggle and how they have performed their duties in the political sphere. For this purpose we will study their political organization and institutions which played an important role in the Sikh polity. In the last we will trace a model of their rule on the basis of their political organization and activities. Last chapter is conclusion.

CHAPTER- 2

IDEA OF SIKH STATE: THEORETICAL ISSUES

The idea of Sikh state is different from theocratic and modern state. In this Chapter we have made an attempt to understand the idea of the Sikh state according to Sikh thought. We have mainly concentrated on origin, nature, functions of state and relation between state and Sikhism. For this purpose, we have focused on *Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Varan and Dasam Granth*. Firstly we will try to understand nature of Sikh rule from Sikhism and after that we have made an attempt to understand that how it is unique from theocratic and modern State.

1. State in Sikhism

The Sikh thought, especially *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* presents the concept of an ideal State namely *Nanak Raj, Haleemi Raj* and *BeghumPura*. Compassion, moral values and welfare are the basis of Sikh state. Guru Nanak has presented the concept of state in which He holds that God's empire was like the town of truth. In His own words:

Nanak established the kingdom;

He built the true fortress on the strong foundation.¹

The concept of *Haleemi Raj* has presented by the fifth Nanak Guru Arjan Dev in these words:

The merciful Lord has now given the command,

That no one will domineer over

And given pain to another,

And all will abide in peace

Such o dear is the rule of my compassionate God.²

Guru Arjan Dev gives an idea of a state where human behavior is governed by courtesy, modesty, humility and other human virtues and where there is no suffering, poverty, domination and exploitation. Such state in *Gurbani* is *Beghumpura*. Bhagat

1 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; p. 966.

2 *Ibid*; p. 73.

Ravidas describes its features as:

Griefless is the name of my town, Where abide not either pain or care
No anguish there of tax on goods, neither fear, not error, not dread,
nor decline, Oh! How wondrous is my fatherland!
Where there is always peace and claim, O friend!
Ever-enduring is regime of my Lord over that land,
and there is neither second nor third there,
but my only Lord. Populous as ever, its repute is eternal;
and, there abide only rich and the content,
and there men go about as and where they wish,
they know the mansion of their Lord, so no one prevent,
Ravidas, a mere tanner, has been emancipated in this land,
And, he, who's his fellow citizen, is also his friend.³

Bhagat Ravidas wishes for a state without fear or grief, where everyone was free from tension, worries, sufferings and pains. Where the citizens are not forced to pay the taxes nor do they face injustice. Both rulers and ruled keep themselves away from lust and greed. Justice is the main aim of this state and there is no discrimination between the low and the high. Bhagat Ravidas calls the state an ideal one where there is proper distribution of wealth. He calls such a State as *Beghumpura* or griefless state. Furthermore love, empathy and justice are the bases of Sikh state.

Comparing to present system of state we find that modern state is based on levying taxes. So many taxes are paid by common people either they are poor or rich. Rich people are not affected by these taxes but the life of poor and mediocre has been adversely affected. Other side of modern state is domination of majority. Resultantly minority people face injustice and discrimination. In this context, concept of state in Sikhism should give the right path to modern state which is formed on the basis of love, empathy and equality.

3 Ibid; p. 345.

2. Origin of Sikh State

The origin of Sikh state is connected with the idea of God. Sikhism has its own theory of its origin named *Akal origin*. As per *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the real King is God. Guru tells that:

The Lord King created this worldly drama to please Himself
and He enjoys in seeing its function as it please Him.⁴

Gurbani presents that there is only one King. But King is not a human being. He resides in all:

The Lord is beautiful and charming
and there is no other king except Him.⁵

As per Sikhism, only God is the main source of all powers:

He is a perfect King and is independent of all other powers,
the servants of such a master have full faith
in the strength of their Lord and Master.⁶

In *Rag Maru*, Guru Nanak writes that welfare of people is the main task of King God:

O Lord, You are the only King Emperor of the world,
abiding in Your aloofness, who helps everyone
in completing His (functions) worldly chores successfully.⁷

Gurbani also presents the concept of *Nihchal Raj* of God which can never be originated nor ended, in these lines:

O Lord! I am always enamored by the True name;
moreover Your Will is always Supreme and permanent,
which could not be changed by anyone.

Your kingdom is *Nihchal Raj* and always control everything

4 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; p. 433.

5 *Ibid*; p. 936.

6 *Ibid*; p. 184.

7 *Ibid*; p.1039.

And functioning through Your Will, being permanent
which could not be suffered by any change.⁸

Bhai Gurdas, also compares God with king. He refers to the functional divinity of the king God and of the view that whoever degrades Him surely visited with divine punishment. He writes that “the Lord is the emperor of the emperors, the true and beautiful. He, the great, is nonchalant and his mystery cannot be understood and his court is also anxiety free. The feats of His powers are unfathomable and impervious.”⁹

He further notes that “True Guru (God) is true emperor and Creator of the worldly emperors. He sits on the throne of truth and resides in holy congregation, the abode of truth. Truth is His mark and truth He utters and His command is irrefutable. His Kingdom is also the kingdom of truth.”¹⁰

In this respect Bhai Gurdas highlights the dual personality of the Guru as presenting Him God and King. He writes that “the true Guru is the greatest emperor and full of all qualities of a master. His name is cherisher of the poor; neither has He attached with anyone nor is He dependent on anybody. The mastery of the true Guru is eternal because all the Vedas (scriptures) are always present before Him. The true Guru is judicious; dispense justice and in His kingdom no atrocity and tyranny is exacted.”¹¹

He has used the term of *Abachal Raj* for the kingdom of God which is always stable. In his words: “the Lord is the true emperor of the emperors whose rule is stable and His kingdom is greatly large. His throne, palace, and court are also greatly large. The expense of His treasure and territory can’t be imagined. Uncountable soldiers and armies are there in His service. Everything is under His order but order is so much organized and powerful that no carelessness is there. He asks none to arrange all this.”¹²

8 Ibid; p. 567.

9 Jodh singh, (eng. trans) *Varran Bhai Gurdas*, Vision and Venture, New Delhi, 1998, *Var 21, Pauri 1.*

10 *Var 26, Pauri 1.*

11 *Var 24, Pauri 3.*

12 *Var 18, Pauri 12.*

On another place Bhai Gurdas has used term *Nihchal* for the throne of God in these words “His (God) throne is immovable (Nihchal) and kingdom everlasting; they cannot be moved in spite of efforts.”¹³ While praising the superiority of the God king He made a clear distinction between usual temporal king and God king in stating “the temporal king has dies after handing over the kingdom to his son. He establishes his sway over the world and qazis or mullas testify for him. He controls the property and sits on the throne caring for none. However the tradition of the House of the Guru is that the high way shown by the earlier Gurus is followed. In this tradition only the one Lord is applauded; the mint (holy congregation) is one here; and the true throne (the spiritual seat) is also one here. Justice of the Lord is such that this fruit of pleasure is given to the gurmukhs by the supreme Lord.”¹⁴

The study of *Dasam Granth* reflects that there are two main senses in which the concept of state legitimately be used by the Guru. First may mean a divine state or a state God. According to Guru everyone and everything is under this divine state. It is, for Him, “a command issued by God and must recognized as binding by human being. This submission to the will of God is a life of peace and obedience.”¹⁵ The second is state of individual means present form of State which comprise four elements (Population, Territory, Government and Sovereignty), “survives on power and live for the lust of more wealth, territory and force.”¹⁶

As per *Dasam Granth*, only the God is King of the kings and ultimate sovereign of this whole world:

God is the overload of the canopied kings; He is in beautiful form, is the master of the earth, the creator of the universe of universe and the granter of the shade, and is chanted as the canopied monarch. He is the master of the universe, the sustainer of the world, the Lord of the Vedas, the creator of wealth, the player of tricks like a juggler and the distinguished archer; He is

13 Var 24, Pauri 8.

14 Var 26, Pauri 31.

15 Jodh Singh, (Eng. trans), *Dasam Granth*, Heritage Publication, Vol .I, Patiala, 1999, pp. 9- 10.

16 Ibid; p. 127.

described as having no fetters. Those who perform *neoli* (a yoga practice), subsist only on milk, the learned scholars and celibates, all contemplate on Him but cannot find even a grain of His attention or glimpse. One who is the king of the kings and monarch of the monarchs who else is more suitable to remember (mediate), forsaking such an Emperor.¹⁷

In *Bhachitar Natak*, writer praise God as bearer of weapons, a great warrior who protects the helpless from the evils in these words: “You (Lord) are with bow and arrow and like great warriors you have double- edged sword in your hands. When the people gather for war and fierce battle goes on. At that time O merciful Lord You are always benevolent. Forever you are one, king of all the worlds, unborn and helper of the person who has come to your shelter. The sword is blazing in your hand and you are great donor is giving gifts to the people. O devoid of all heats of present and future I bow before you.”¹⁸

Everything in this world is under His State and law. As per *Akal Ustati*: that easterners fail to fathom Thee, of Himalayan side sing Thy eulogies; people of Gour Gardej and Arabic also recite Thy name... Bengalies of Bengal, English of England, Delhities also function as per Thy will; Ruhelas of Ruhelkhand, brave Maghals of Magadh, Bundelas of Bundelkhand wash off their sins by remembering Thee. Gorkhas of Nepal eulogies Thee, Chinese bow before Thee, Tibetans erase all their evils by remembering Thee. He who remembers Thee got full honor.¹⁹ Thus people of any region or religion recognized His sovereignty. Hence sovereignty of God is supreme and stable. This divine state is above from all worldly institutions.

After analyzing theory of origin of state in Sikhism we may say that *Akal Purkh Wahe Guru* is their supreme King or power. Man is not judge or king here. Psychologically, a human being is unable to dispense justice. A bias always exists in human nature which prevents him to be impartial. It is only *Akal Purkh Wahe Guru*

17 Ibid; p. 374.

18 Ibid; P. 116.

19 *Akal Ustati*, p. 98.

who cares every living or non living thing in this universe without any discrimination and impartiality. That is why he is the Supreme King and the source of all powers. So in the concept of state in Sikhism such as *Halemi Raj* or *Beghumpura*, sovereignty held only by Akal Purkh and service by human being. In this way, the state in Sikhism has its own theory of origin named *Akal Origin*²⁰ in which sovereignty and power has derived from God.

3. Theory of divine origin and Sikhism

Theory of divine origin took form of the divine rights the kings. “This is particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth century England. The leading exponents of the later doctrine were James I, the first Stuart King and Sir Robert Filmar. Bousset in France elaborated this theory in supporting the despotism of Louis XIV, who proudly declared that I am the state.”²¹ Thus in the whole sense, even if the king be wicked, the subject has no right to rebel against him. To rebel against him is to rebel against God Himself, for the king is God’s Chosen Vessel. A wicked King is to be regarded as a plague for people's sins sent by God.

Therefore, it is unlawful to shake off such a burden. The Salient features of the doctrine of the divine right of kings are: - “Monarchy is divinely ordained; hereditary right is indefeasible; Kings are accountable to God alone; and resistance to a lawful King is sin. Later, the theory was used against the growing political consciousness of the people and rises of democratic ideas and was made to support royal despotism. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century that it was rejected as unsound in theory and dangerous in practice.”²²

The Sikh thought does not support that the king is above the people as well as above the law. As per Sikhism human being is not supreme. If the king turned wicked,

20 Rattan Singh Bhangu, the author of *Prachin Panth Prakash*, has also supported this statement while he made it clear to Captain Murray that we (the Sikhs) got sovereignty from Sacha Sahib (God). Episode 2, p 17, (Eng trans. By Kulwant Singh, institute of the Sikh studies, Chandigarh, 2006, p XXIII.

21 Eddy Asirvatham, *Political Theory*, The Upper India Publishing House, Pvt. Ltd., Lacknow, 1971, PP. 49-50.

22 Ibid; p. 52.

people have right to rebel against him.

In fact, in Sikh practice sacred legitimacy is must, but at the same time, there is equal emphasis on the rights of freedom and justice. Sikh thought presents concept of true king which is a symbol of respect to the God. By presenting God and Guru as king, a king should observe his duties without wrath and malice and should not abandon kindness. Moreover, the king bestows virtue, wealth and pleasure. Gurus and their teachings stand for the justice and freedom and if a human king deviates from the path of justice and duty, the people have the right to rebel and overthrow him from the position of power.

Sikhism stands against the idea of over rights of kings and supports responsible governance. Bhai Gurdas condemns those kings who enjoyed unlimited power and has no worry about the protection of their inhabitants. In his own words

Among the eighty four lakh species of life, the human life is the best one. Having even the best mind, speech and action, man goes on transmigrating in the ocean of the life and death. But human being made a king to rule over them and become themselves their subjects. By doing so they filled their lives with sorrows. Because dog, even if enthroned, according to its basic nature goes on to lick the flour at the fall of darkness.²³

Therefore in actual sense, we can't relate origin of the Sikh state with the theory of divine origin as it support divine rights of the kings but on the other side Gurbani gives a right to fight against the wicked Kings.

4. Responsibilities and State

The Sikh Gurus preached and practiced the principles of equality, liberty and humanity. They created new formation for social justice named sangat, many people of different castes and creeds joined the Sikh sangat. Khalsa is the developed form of sangat. The Sikhs fought against the tyrant rule of the Mughals and established supremacy of Khalsa.

23 *Var 15, Pauri 19.*

The writer of *Dasam Granth* describes that without the agreement of protection of the inhabitants, institution of state will fail in its working and the main source of power is the people who stand behind the king like a rock. Without their cooperation and support, it is not possible for any king to rule over them. In his own words:

Through the grace of the Khalsa,
I have achieved the victories in the battle field;
through their help,
I am enabled to be compassionate to all men;
through the grace of these Sikhs,
my sufferings and travails are mitigated.
And through their grace, the war replenish.
By their grace I acquired science and learning.
By their aid my enemies were destroyed.
My spiritual dignity and status is wholly due to the people.
Otherwise there were countless millions of
worthless men like me in this world.²⁴

Gurus awakened the people of cruel state and soon these people had learned the lesson of individual freedom. Later on these people, inspired by the teachings of the Sikh Gurus, took the weapons against the persecution of the Government and established a new Sikh state. Jagjit Singh writes “It was for the first time in Indian history that the masses were inspired to capture political power for their own interests and in their own hands. And, the people were convinced and aroused because the Sikh Gurus and other leaders of the movement were always in the forefront in making supreme sacrifices for the revolutionary cause.”²⁵

He further notes that “the political power under the Khalsa passed in to the

24 Jodh Singh, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. 1, p. 881.

25 Jagjit Singh, *The Sikh Revolution*, Bahri Publication Pvt. Ltd., Chandigarh, Chandigarh, 1981, P. 200.

hands of, what the bourgeois mentality of the historians of that time had described as ‘asses’, *qaum-arazil* (the down trodden), ‘the meanest to the mean people.’ Coming as it from critical sources, there cannot be a greater testimony about the plebian character of the Sikh Revolution and it was not an accident of history. Guru Nanak had identified himself about 250 years earlier with such ‘lowest of the low’ and Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh had blessed these very people with sovereignty. The Sikh revolution was, thus not only an egalitarian social revolution, it was also a plebian political revolution.’²⁶

The Gurus bestowed temporal sovereignty on the common people and involved them in state, a liberal order where temporal power was vested in the *Khalsa* and the spiritual power in the holy *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Thus there has to be a proper balance between power and command so that none controls the other. Thus state in Sikhism is an instrument of service which has responsibility of protection of their people. Thus though sovereignty and power has derived from God but it strongly supports a welfare state in which all inhabitants are lived equally, happily and with safety.

5. Nature of State in Sikhism

In Sikh thought, the theme of the origin and nature of state both are interdependent. The theme of the nature of the state can be related with idealistic theory. Because as this theory justifies state as a sacred and divine institution, the Sikh thought has also regarded the state as divine institution (*Nihchal Raj* of God which never be ended). But whereas on one side Sikhism considered state as a sacred and divine institution, on the other side it denied the divine right of the human king. The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak condemned the Lodhi emperors of Delhi and their tyrannous administration.²⁷ He had not tolerated anti- people attitude of State because instead of protecting the people, such state butchered them. He instilled a new political consciousness. The opposition of a tyrant state shows that Guru Nanak's

26 Ibid; p. 246.

27 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; p. 1288.

anguish over the political conditions of his times and reflections on the conduct and behavior of the ruler of the times.

The state, according to Guru, should be based on justice. He called upon the rulers to stick rational to rule in the wider interests of the people. He told that the king had no right to exercise and enjoy absolute powers. Guru Nanak challenged the divine rights of human Kings. He denied the notion that the king was ordained by God to rule over the people. He emphasized that only a person who is virtuous and moral, fair and just has the right to rule.²⁸ He proclaimed that the “real power lies not with the king but with the people, as the king is rule in accordance with the wishes of the people.”²⁹

Tenth Nanak Guru Gobind Singh suggests that there is no other caste or religion than humanity. As per *Dasam Granth*:

Some people in this world becomes *mundia* (a Ramanandi monk), or a sanniasi (ascetics); others happen to be Yogis and some are assessed to have barahamcharis or celibates. Some are Hindus and others are Muslims. Some is rahphzi (a Shiah- follower of Ali) and another Imam Safi (Sunni- adherent of the prophet). But the entire human should be recognized one.³⁰

By recognize all human beings are the creation of one, the Guru preaches equality which respects other people’s right to be different. He does not believe in imposing his thoughts on others. Moreover, Sikhism does not claim itself a religion of selective people, but instead it is a religion of entire humanity.

Mughal rulers tried to expand their religion with the power of sword and wanted to convert Hindustan, land of Islam. The Muslims thought of that to convert Hindus into Islam was their sacred duty. On the other side, Guru Gobind Singh preached the lesson of unity of mankind. Akal Ustati notes:

Karta (the creator of the Hindus) and Karim (the beneficent of the Muslims) is the same Lord; let none make the error of making distinction between His

28 Ibid; P. 992, 1080.

29 G.S. Deol, *Social and political Philosophy of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh*, New Academic Publishing co., Jullunder, 1976, P. 49.

30 *Akal Ustati*; p. 54.

names. The Temple and Mosque are the same; there is no difference between them. Neither is there any dissimilarity between the Hindu worship and the Muslim namaz. The demigods, the demons, the Muslims and the Hindus all appear dissimilar as they adopt customary dresses of their own country. Allah (God of Muslims) and Abhekh (the Grab less God of Hindus) are the same; Purans (the Hindu's religious books) and Kuran (the Muslims' Holly book) are the same and all man are alike and their formation (and their doctrine) is the same.³¹

Guru said that the ideal state is that where everyone lives without any discrimination on the basis of religion or caste. For making this ideal state role of the king is most important who must bind their inhabitants with the thread of love like a necklace of pearls. Sikhism teaches that it is duty of a king towards the people to dispense justice, to treat them with equality and to protect their life, property and honor. And if the rulers does not behave properly and does not perform their duties honestly, the people had the right to throw them out. Consequently whereas Sikhism justifies the State as sacred power, at the same time it also presents the concept ideal king who has responsibilities more than he has powers.

6. Relation between State And Religion

In *Zafarnama* which was an address to Emperor Aurangzeb, the Guru mentioned that God is the true Emperor of earth and heaven and He is the master of both the worlds. He dilated on this point clearly when he said:-

The Successors of both Baba Nanak and
Babar was created by God Himself.
Recognize the former as a spiritual
and the later as a temporal king.³²

As per Sikhism, religion and politics are not two contradictory forces rather they are complementary to each other. Though for the Sikh tradition religion and

31 Ibid; p. 54.

32 M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. V, p. 305.

politics are not two contradictory forces but it also denied the theory of papalist during medieval Europe which believed in extreme supremacy of Church and stand for a limited government. “Guru Gobind Singh believed in the divine origin of authority, but he had made it sufficiently clear that while the person in authority exercises this power as a mandate from God, in order that he may continue to enjoy this boom he must always act according to the dictated of God. If he does not abide by God’s mandate, if he annoys the if he plunders the weak people, if he engages in activities prejudicial to general welfare, if he puts the fulfillment of material pleasure as the prime motive of life and if he incuse the wrath of God who may then deprive him of his position and bestow the same on someone else.”³³

Thus unlike the thinkers of medieval Europe, the Guru supports certain limits on the Government, “which it must not transgress, it must be just, it must be impartial and it must in no way, oppress its subjects.”³⁴ Relationship between religion and politics in the Sikh perspective has received different explanation. Puran Singh states that

No man or society that has risen from dead in to the life of the spirit can tolerate political subjugation or social slavery to unjust laws or rules. Political, in the sense of fighting against all social injustice, all tyranny, all wrong taxation of the poor, all subjugations of man to man were the politics of the Guru... The Guru did not eschew politics- in fact he made the liberation of the people the cause of the assertion of his heroism; but surely, if the Sikh lives on the surface only, like the Englishman, for mere politics, votes and such inanities, one straying from Guru’s path forthwith becomes a traitor to his case. All freedom is but a spiritual tradition of the life of the Khalsa if the Khalsa spirit is dead all freedom fails.³⁵

So by defining the politics of Guru, Puran Singh clears that only for the

33 J.S. Bains, *Sikhism and Indian Society*, Rashtrapati Niwas, Simla, 1967, p. 120.

34 I.B. Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, A Mukerjee & Company, Calcutta, 1972, p. 156.

35 Puran Singh, “Sikh Spirit and Politics,” in Kehar Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on Sikh Polity*, Dawn Publishers, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 84-85.

betterment of the downtrodden, Guru selected the way of revolution. In this context Sirdar Kapur Singh has viewed that

The Guru does not assert that this perpetual dichotomy and antagonism of the Church and the State must be resolved or even that it is capable of being resolved, by the suppression or subjugation of the one by the other; rather, he appears to recognize their eternal antagonism and character and in this antagonism sees the hope and glory of man, the social and political context in which the Sikh way of life is to be practiced. The Church must perpetually correct and influence the State without aiming to destroy or absorb it, for, as the History shows the attempt of the one to oust the other, meet with no lasting success, and each of the two antagonistic entities arises again after having been crushed in vain and both appears anew as if bond together. This is what the Guru means, when he declares in the text, that “the House of Baba Nanak and the house of Babur, God make both of them” and that “those who repudiate their allegiance to the House of Nanak suffer grievously, without hope, at the hands of the State.”³⁶

Therefore Sirdar Kapur Singh also gives stressed on the unity of two institutions in Sikhism. Nihar.Ranjan.Ray writes that “To be able to achieve the integration of temporal and spiritual seems to me to have been the most significant contribution of Guru Nanak to the totality of the Indian way of life of medieval India. Indeed he seems to have reared up a new image of socio- religious community given at once to temporal and spiritual pursuit of life.”³⁷ According to J.S Ahluwalia,

In Sikhism, the correlation between the two authorities, both doctrinally and empirically, is of a different kind. Guru Hargobind wore the two swords of Miri and Piri; but this has been the prerogative of only the Guru person who as the Divine –medium partook of the spiritual and temporal sovereignty of God on earth in history. The spiritual sovereignty of God (Piri) was bestowed by

36 Kapur Singh, *Parasaraprasna*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1989, p. 199.

37 Nihar.Ranjan.Ray, *The Sikh Gurus and Sikh Society*, p. 86.

Guru Gobind Singh on the Adi Granth (the word) which became as such Guru Granth while the temporal sovereignty (Miri) was vested in people hood with the Panth as its concrete sociologically determination, the Panth became Guru Panth, Khalsa Panth and was institutionalized as such through the baptismal amrit on the day of Baisakhi year 1699 at Sri Anadpur Sahib.³⁸

In other words, J. S Ahluwalia clears that through this sacrament the ethnological evolution of the Sikhs got institutionalized in to a corporate identity of ethno political character. J.S.Grewal has stated that,

This is not to suggest, however, that the religious faith of the Khalsa had no relevance for their policies. The perseverance with which they pursued power inspired by their firm belief in the mission of Guru Gobind Singh as they understood it they were hopefully convinced of their destiny to rule as the elect of God through their acceptance of the Pahul. The belief in their common destiny coupled with a sense of communal kingship gave them a solidarity which was strengthened by the external circumstances. In the sense, the bound of union between them was that of their firm faith. But to look upon their religious faith as a motive force in politics is not the same thing as to postulate the translation of their religious ideals into their political institutions.³⁹

Thus J.S Grewal has denied that Sikh polity is theocracy. He presents religion as a motivating force for the Sikhs. Therefore relationship between religion and politics in modern historical writings has received different explanations from different scholars. The connection of the Sikh polity with the religion of the Sikhs makes the whole issue very controversial. Whereas Puran Singh, Sirdar Kapur Singh, and Niharranjan Ray present Sikh polity with an ethical base and need of time, there are historians like J.S. Grewal, who denied that Sikh polity is theocracy. Instead of present it theocracy, he is of view that the faith of the Khalsa under towed their politics and gave them a sense of solidarity which conspicuously expressed itself in

38 Kehar Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on Sikh Polity*, p. 70.

39 J.S. Grewal, *Sikh Ideology, Polity and Social Order*, p. 95.

the collective action of a large number of the Sikh leaders for the maintenance and acquisition of the means to political power, but the governmental arrangements of the Sikh chiefs were not derived from the religious ideals of the Khalsa.

Though for the Sikh tradition religion and politics are not two contradictory forces but it also denied the theory of papalist during medieval Europe which believed in extreme supremacy of Church and stand for a limited government.

Guru Gobind Singh believed in the divine origin of authority, but he had made it sufficiently clear that while the person in authority exercises this power as a mandate from God, in order that he may continue to enjoy this boom he must always act according to the dictated of God. If he does not abide by God's mandate, if he plunders the weak people, if he engages in activities prejudicial to general welfare, if he puts the fulfillment of material pleasure as the prime motive of life and if he incuse the wrath of God who may then deprive him of his position and bestow the same on someone else.⁴⁰

While we have compared this relationship with other religion then we have found that in orthodox Islamic polity was theocratic with the Caliph commanding and demanding allegiance of the State to the Caliphate. In classic Hindu polity, the religious sovereignty operated indirectly through the Brahmin priestly caste that put the seal of worldly authority. In Christianity there has been the practice of two swords donned by the Pope; one sword represents spiritual authority and the other stands for political authority over the State. But in Sikhism, the correlation between the two authorities is of a different kind.

Guru Hargobind wore two swords of *Miri-Piri*, but this has been the prerogative of only the Guru - person who as the divine medium partook of the spiritual and the temporal sovereignty of God on earth in history. For the first time in the annals of world civilization Sikh religion introduced a qualitatively new and unique concept of divine spirit becoming determinate in history, in

40 J.S. Bains, *Sikhism and Indian Society*, p. 120.

historical time, through the Guru medium. Spiritual sovereignty of God (Piri) was bestowed by Guru Gobind Singh on the Adi Granth which became such Guru Granth, while temporal sovereignty (Miri) was vested in people hood with the Panth; the Panth became Guru Panth, Khalsa Panth and was institutionalized as such through the baptismal amrit on the Baisakhi day of the year 1699 at Sri Anandpur Sahib, in other words through this sacrament the ethno- religious evolution of the Sikhs got institutionalized into a corporate identity of ethno- political character.⁴¹

Therefore the Sikh Panth has a tradition of combining *Miri- Piri*, spiritual and temporal entities, but “the vital issue is that of priority that when it is a temporal issue, the spiritual considerations are subdued. The relation between spiritual and temporal is organic, not mechanical.”⁴² The Sikh concept is not a theocratic State. There is no such thing as sacred laws and the order of priesthood. The establishment of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh was not designed to communal outfit.

In the spiritual presence of Guru, the Khalsa paved the way for the rise of new political rule in eighteenth century. Power of the Sikhs driven from ethical sanction restored justice and ensured positive social functions. The Sikhs stood firmly against the cruel government of the Mughals. The Sikhs protected the innocent inhabitants of Punjab from foreign invaders. So Sikhism had performed dual role i.e. spiritual as well as political. It is a movement against social and political oppression for the creation of political power for downtrodden people.

7. Functions of State

In Sikhism, the ruler and the State are inseparable so when the Gurus discuss or criticize the ruler, they uphold the voice of people or describe the State in its functional manners. Guru Nanak strongly condemned the Lodhi rulers for not impart the justice in the inhabitants. His Gurbani gives firsthand information about the

41 Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia, *The Doctrine and Dynamic of Sikhism*, Patiala, 1999, pp. 99-100.

42 K.S.Duggal, *Understanding the Sikh Psyche*, South Asia Books, New Delhi, 1993, p. 45.

miserable condition of the people under Lodhi rulers and corrupt nature of ruling class. For example:

Kali-yoga is turned in knife, rulers are butchers,

and righteousness on wings is flown,

this is the dark night of evils;

the moon of truth is nowhere visible, nor risen.

For light, I have searched to distraction;

no path in this darkness is visible.

Humanity in egoism involved, in suffering wails.

This Nanak seeks to know: How may liberation then is found?⁴³

About the tyranny and injustice of ruling class, he writes: “rulers are turned beasts of prey, their officer hounds; none do they allow in peace rest. You dogs! Lick on the blood and marrow of the poor. Know, that there, where creation will be judged. All such will be disgraced and branched as false.”⁴⁴

Guru Nanak held that justice is a fundamental right of a person who should not be deprived to these rights. He writes:

To grab what is another’s is evil,

as pig’s flesh to the Muslim and Cow’s flesh to the Hindus.⁴⁵

Guru Nanak says that He (God) is the true judge. So that when the king sits on the throne he has to do justice in accordance with the divine spirit: impartial, selfless, and conscientious. To quote him:

Himself he sits on the throne to judge with justice.⁴⁶

The fourth Guru Ramdas endorses the above observation of Guru Nanak, he adds that when the king acts as a judge, he should be fearless and the fear flows from divine grace. He writes:

When Thou alone art true, when Thy justice too is true,

43 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; p. 145.

44 *Ibid*; p. 1288.

45 *Ibid*; p. 141.

46 *Ibid*; p. 1022.

whom shall then we fear?⁴⁷

The Guru further warns the ruler that unless he is not just, he will face the wrath of God. As his words put it “Injustice has no place in God's order because he is absolutely just.”⁴⁸ According to the Guru:-

One can run away from man's court,
but where is one to go if runs away from the Lord?⁴⁹

The fifth Guru Arjun preaches that the evil deeds should be suppressed and purity of character promoted. He writes:

Whoever over the humble and the meek vows to tyrannies,
the supreme Lord in flames burns him.⁵⁰

Bhai Gurdas describes the condition of contemporary society and termed this period as *Jug gardi* (the down fall of an age). He states that

The people setting aside the duties of the age and behave contrary to their nature. The world gets engrossed in remorseful activities and sin and corruption prevail. Different sections (castes) of society developed hatred for one another and finish themselves through squabbles as bamboos, due to their mutual friction, producing fire burn themselves as well as others.⁵¹ Further, he depicts the picture of the society that

In the *Kaliyug* the mentality of the human being has become like the mouth of dog which always seeks the dead to eat. The kings are sinning as if the protective fence was itself devouring the (crop in the) field. Bereft of the knowledge, the blind people are uttering falsehood. Qazis enjoy bribes and getting the same they have lost their high regard and position. Man and woman love each other for riches, may they come from anywhere. The sin has become ubiquitous in the whole world.⁵²

Thus Bhai Gurdas has strongly condemned the kings and qajis who did not

47 Ibid; p. 84.

48 Ibid; p. 146.

49 Ibid; p. 591.

50 Ibid; p. 199.

51 *Var 1, Pauri 17.*

52 *Var 1, Pauri 30.*

treat their subjects with justice and by doing so they had lost their regard and respect. Guru Gobind Singh compares justice with the *dharma* (religion) of the king and considers that the king, who did not impart justice to the inhabitants, goes to the hell. In *Zafarnamha*, Guru Sahib strongly criticizes the injustice of Aurangzeb. In his own words:

You have occupied the throne but your justice is really strange and your qualities equally wonderful. Whatever justice is being by you, practiced by you, and religious zeal you are showing all around is really strange. Your doings are most deplorable. Alas! It is all sorrowful and shameful to think of your kingly behavior.⁵³

Guru Gobind Singh very strongly destined discrimination or injustice on the basis of sect, religion, and even nationality. There is true spirit of internationalism in his compositions. As quoted earlier, in *Akal Ustati* he writes:

Karta (the creator) and Karim (The beneficent) are the same; Razak (the provider) and Rahim (the merciful) are the same; let no man even by mistake suppose there is a difference.⁵⁴

Sikhism condemns the exploitation of the subjects through heavy taxation. The fifth Guru Arjun Dev condemns such rulers who amassing wealth by exploiting their subjects. To quote him:

Becoming a king, one has dominion over all,
and through oppression one gathers riches.
But God (in his Justice) snatches it away and gives it to another.⁵⁵

Bhagat Kabir also criticizes such rulers who impose over taxes on their inhabitants. To quote him:-

O Saints, the tax-gathers torture me each day.⁵⁶

Sikhism treats that it is duty of the ruler to fulfill the basic needs such as

53 Piara Singh Sandhu, *Selections from Sri Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 910.

54 M.A. McAuliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Clarendon Press, Vol. V, London, 1922, P.275.

55 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; P. 392.

56 *Ibid*; p. 793.

livelihood for his people. The subjects of such ruler are always satiated because they are fed to the full and they always enjoy life. According to Guru Nanak:-

Only His is the true Government
who nourishes the people day and night.⁵⁷

Therefore, he commends such ruler in whose dominion everyone is happy and has no scarcity of any of the basic necessities.⁵⁸ Just the king is supposed to provide for the minimum needs of his subjects such as food, clothing, shelter and work. So that nobody sinks below the line of starvation, ill-health and income to support life. In this regard the fifth Guru says:-

In every home rings the praise of this king,
in every home are men zealous of Him.
He first provides succor and
thereafter createth He the creatures.⁵⁹

Guru Nanak criticizes such rulers who do not maintain proper circulation of wealth and hoard it themselves. In his own words:-

Gathers the world's riches, thou the egoistic king.⁶⁰

The fifth Guru writes that the kingdom of a discontented ruler is of no use.⁶¹

He condemns the accumulation of wealth through untruth means by the rulers:-

Becoming a king, one has dominion over all
and through oppression, one gather riches.
Gathers he the bagful, bit by bit,
but God (in his justice),
snatches it away and gives it to others.⁶²

He advised the people to stay away from such rulers who run after wealth. To quote him:

57 Ibid; p. 1331.
58 Ibid; p. 1190.
59 Ibid; p. 1235.
60 Ibid; p. 1342.
61 Ibid; p. 745.
62 Ibid; p. 392.

I will abandon the wealth accumulating king.⁶³

The fourth Guru Ramdas says:

The earth and water abide in one place and
the fire is locked in wood.

The sheep and the lion,
The Lord keeps in one place.⁶⁴

As per Sikhism, the ruler or the King must keep the people of different belongings united just like the different pearls of a necklace. The fifth Guru says:

He has sting the whole world with
breath and has kept the fire along with
the wood. He has kept the water and the
earth together and no one bears enmity with
(or harms) each other.⁶⁵

Guru Nanak's reaction to the political conditions of his times was directly intended to condemn Lodhi's as tyrants. "When the Lodhi suffered from the defeat at the hands of the Mughals, Guru Nanak rebuked the master of the herd for not having offered stiff resistance to the enemy in the defense of their subjects and allowing the foreigners to snatch away such a precious gem so easily."⁶⁶ Thus Guru Nanak made it clear that main duty of the State or ruler is to protect the people.

The fifth Guru Arjun Dev illustrates with the symbols of water and earth, fire and wood which are kept together and due to ruler's control, these do not harm each other.⁶⁷ It is the duty of the ruler to protect the honor and ensure security of his subjects. He writes:-

To whom van Thy servant now pay obeisance
When Thou, the king, preserve His honor.⁶⁸

63 Ibid; p. 811.
64 Ibid; p. 1235.
65 Ibid; p. 735.
66 Ibid; p. 360.
67 Ibid; p. 1235.
68 Ibid; p. 376.

Guru Gobind Singh also suggests to Aurangzeb in *Zafarnamah* that “do not wield the sword remorselessly to shed the blood of innocents. The sword of the mysterious power will fall on your neck to drop your blood.”⁶⁹ He again warns the Aurangzeb that “if you are very powerful do not torment the destitute. You should protect them and become an honest and truly religious person.”⁷⁰ As per Sikhism raj (rule) is not for personal enjoyment rather it is Dharma or Yoga. Bhai Gurdas describes about *Raj yoga* and consider it as supreme yoga.⁷¹

Real *rajyogi* is a Gurmukh, Bhai Gurdas describes political duties of Gurmukhs as “he (Gurmukh) ought to treat beautiful women of other as his mothers, sisters and daughters. Others wealth for him is as beef for Hindu and pork for a Muslim. Out of infatuation for his son, wife or family, he should not betray and deceive anyone. While listening to the praises and slander of others, he should not talk ill of anybody. Neither he should not count himself as great and glorious nor should he out of his ego, snub anybody. Only Gurmukh of such nature has deserved to practice *Raj yoga* (the highest yoga), lives peacefully and goes to sacrifice his self unto the holly congregation.”⁷² Bhai Gurdas has also presented several examples of best kings from the history such as king Bali⁷³, king Ambarik⁷⁴, king Janak⁷⁵, king Ram.⁷⁶

Bhai Gurdas suggests the qualities of an ideal king and rejects egoistic kings. About egoistic kings, He writes that “many enemies unwittingly go on increasing their enmity. They (the kings) march for fighting’s and thus they show their ego. From youth, though, they step in old age yet their egotism is not affected. Only the contented and the humble lose their sense of egocentricity.”⁷⁷ Bhai Gurdas further

69 Ibid; p. 376.

70 Ibid; p. 918.

71 *Var 24, Pauri, 11.*

72 *Var 29, Pauri 11.*

73 *Var 10, Pauri 3.*

74 *Var10,Pauri 4.*

75 *Var 10, Pauri 5.*

76 *Var 31,Pauri 20.*

77 *Var 21, Pauri 12.*

notes that

Rivers go to meet the sea. Seven such seas merge in to oceans. But still the oceans are not satiated. In the nether world, such oceans look like a drop of water on a hot plate. To heat this plate, millions of heads of the emperors are used as fuel. And these emperors staking their claims on this earth go on fighting and dying.⁷⁸

According to him the best king is one who is humble and egoless. As per Dasam Granth, an ideal King must be less from ego because “many kings like Mandhata (a king of solar dynasty and son of Yuvanashava) and many sovereigns having a parasol like Dilip (a king of solar dynasty and father of Raghu, ancestor of Rama) who were very proud of their mighty arms. And kings like Darius (a Persian Emperor) and egomaniac monarchs like Duryodhan, all of them reveled in mundane pleasures and ultimately they merged with the dust.”⁷⁹ King should be God fearing and always remember Him because without worshiping the name of Lord all mighty kings will ultimately fall prey to death.⁸⁰ By giving example of this king, writer of Dasam Granth has cleared that if a person endowed with such qualities as listed by above then the world get honored by proclaiming such a person as the king.

Guru Gobind Singh criticizes the bad deeds of Aurangzeb in *Zafarnamah*, According to Guru Sahib:

A man ought to be such that he keeps his word. He has not one thing in the heart and another on the tongue. By taken an oath of Quran Aurangzeb’s officials had promised that if the Guru and his followers leave Anandpur Sahib Fort, no harm will come to him. But as soon as the Guru and His forces left the Fort, the oath of Quran was broken and Mughal force attacked on the Guru.⁸¹

78 *Var 25, Pauri 15.*

79 *Akal Ustati*, p. 52.

80 *Ibid*; p. 40.

81 Piara Singh Sandhu, *Selection from Sri Dasam Granth*, p. 906.

Then Guru Gobind Singh writes about Aurangzeb that “I did not know that this man (Aurangzeb) is a perjurer; the worshipper of mammon and the breaker of faith. You neither recognizes God, nor does you believe in Mohammad because he who observes the tenets of his faith, he does not waiver even a bit from his promise.”⁸² Guru also warns the Aurangzeb that it is your duty to full fill your promises in these words “*Shuma ra chu farz ast kaare kuni. Bamujab navishatah shumare kuni*”⁸³ Thus for Guru Sahib it is must for king to stand on his words or promises.

The king cannot do the multifarious duties without the help of his ministers and officials. But ministers remain to their posts till the mercy of the king who appointed them. Their most essential duty to advise the king in such a way that the objectives might be achieved. They took part in formulation of policies. But it was not a kind of check on the authority of kingship, because it was not necessary for the king to accept the advice given by the ministers, yet verses instruct the king to follow it as his dharma.

Bhai Gurdas regarded ministry or council of advisors as a very vital part of the political entity and the king cannot rule perfectly without the help of competent ministers. He suggest that the king has to be very careful in the selection of the ministers because the king cannot control all the departments himself alone, but he allocates the port-folios to the ministers according to their capabilities. These ministers work as a link between the king and his subjects. So it is necessary for the king to choose right and honest people for the post of minister.

Bhai Gurdas describes about Vajir (minister) who was the second constituent of the State. It was the Vajir who formulated the State’s policies and advised the king to act accordingly, though the king was not bound to do so. He has to supervise the assigned work. In his own words:

82 Ibid; p. 904.
83 Ibid; p. 906.

Servants, addict as well as teetotalers came to the king's presence. Those present are marked present and those absent are declared absent. The intelligent king selected a few to be his courtiers. He, a clever person, made both the clever and the indifferent happy and put them to work.⁸⁴

Bhai Gurdas suggests about the relation between *vajir* and *patisah* in these words "the affection between the king and his minister is such if the same one life current is moving in two bodies. This relationship is also like the relation of the sword in the sheath; the two may be separate, yet they are one because sword in the sheath is yet called sword only."⁸⁵

In *Bachitar Natak*, Guru Gobind Singh states about his aim in these words: "*Dharm chalavan sant ubaran. Dust sabhan ko mul uparn.*"⁸⁶ It is clear that aim of the Guru was to spread the *dharm* (truth) and to save the holy men in the world. Guru has again cleared His purpose of war:

O Shiva shower blessing on me:

I should never hesitate doing noble deeds.

I should have no fear as I enter the field to fight the enemy:

I should be determined to win.

With a view to teaching myself,

I should ever continue to eulogize you.

When my end approaches,

I should die fighting (in the cause of Dharma) in the field of battle.⁸⁷

Thus for establishing a state on the basis of religion and morality Guru Sahib justifies a war for justice against oppression and tyranny. In *Zafarnamah*, Guru justifies the use of arms and strongly condemns the officials of Aurangzeb while they broke the rule of war (broken the oath of Quran) and attacked Guru Sahib and their forty Sikhs while leaving the fort of Anandpur Sahib. In His own words: "what could

84 *Var 39, Pauri 8.*

85 *Var 39, Pauri 7.*

86 Jodh Singh, (eng. trans) *Dasam Granth*, p. 160.

87 *Ibid*; p. 276.

my forty starve Sikhs accomplished when an army of ten lakhs (a million) pounced on them unawares? Your promise breaker forces attacked them, all of a sudden. Thus in the above lines Guru Sahib has told that war is justified when it is fought on the principle of equality. The fight between forty starving Sikhs and million forces of Aurangzeb cannot be called a war but a fraud or an offence.”⁸⁸

So the functional aspect of the state in Sikhism comes closer to the general welfare aspect of the state because it gives protection, delivers justice, remove exploitation, provides basic needs, safeguard the rights of the subjects, distributes wealth properly, preserves unity and ensure integrity.

8. Objectives of the Sikh Rule

From the above references it is clear that Sikhism wants to enable people to unite and capture power. It also wishes to set an ideal model before those who would be forming the Government. From Sikh thought we get much valuable knowledge from which state take directions in enacting laws.

8.1 Social

In Sikhism the State has been directed to strive to promote the welfare of people by securing and protecting a social order in which justice- social, political, economics will dispense.

8.2 Minimization of the inequality

The state has been asked to strive to minimize the inequalities on the basis of caste, creed and color. It should endeavor to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities amongst individuals and groups of people.

8.3 Unity and integrity

At early phase Sikhism was inhabited by people of different regions, religions, castes and sections. Such diversities without spirit of unity can prove harmful for the integrity of Sikhism. So at that time to inculcate in the minds of the new arrivals a spirit of unity and to uphold and protect the integrity was the main duty of every Sikh.

88 Ibid; p. 276.

8.4 Protection of the weaker section

From ancient time Punjab was frequently attacked by the several invaders. So Gurus preached the Sikhs that it is obligatory for the young able bodied subjects to get military training so that in times of emergency their services may be utilized. When Babur attacked on Punjab Guru Nanak urged that every person have to give a strong resistance to the Babur's soldiers. So according to Sikhism it is the main duty of the Sikhs to defend the country from invaders.

8.5 Social brotherhood

As we mentioned earlier that at early phase Sikhism was inhabited by people of different regions, religions, castes and sections so with a view to create a unity in the midst of diversities among the people it is the pious duty of every Sikh to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood.

8.6 Dignity of women

In social set up with the passage of time the dignity of women had been deteriorated. During Guru Period the condition of women was not so good. She was only considered as the slave of men. But for the empowerment of womanhood and to make the women equal partner in the task of reconstruction of society, the dignity of womanhood must be assured. The Sikh Gurus give an equal status to women. They make it clear to every Sikh that women must be considered as bliss full creation of God. So it is the duty of every Sikh to protect and respect the dignity of women.

8.2.1 Economic justice

Sikhism specially requires the state to direct its policy towards securing the following principles:

- Equal rights for men and women to adequate means of livelihood.
- Ownership and control of the material resources of the community and its distributions should be based on impartiality so as to serve the common people.
- Equal pay for equal work for both higher and lower groups of society.

- Every person should be protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

8.3.1 Political justice: Peace and security

Sikh philosophy directs the state to endeavor to promote peace and security within the state. The state has to maintain the just and honorable relation with other states and fostering law and treaty obligations and encouraging settlement of disputes by negotiation.

Thus these principles laid down by Sikhism cannot be set aside by the government in casual manner. They are the valuable activities of the state. They are the guidelines in the light of which the authority of the state has to work. They also provide for general well being of the people including the welfare of weaker section of the society. Taken as whole these guidelines remind the authority that they must form an ideal state in which every person be saved from exploitation.

8.3.2 Duties of citizens

The Sikh sources also throw light on duties of the general people towards state. In Sikhism every person has some responsibilities toward state because proper use of rights is also a duty. Some of these duties are given below:

8.3.3 To cherish the noble ideals:

The Sikh Gurus has laid down the strategy for the Sikhs by giving self examples. The Sikhs had learned the ideals of patriotism, communal goodwill, equality and fraternity from first four Gurus, Non-violence from Guru Arjun, patriotism and courageousness from Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh. Following these ideals taught by Gurus as the main duty of the Sikhs.

8.3.4 To safeguard public property and to Avoid Violence

When Babur attacked Hindustan and won the battle of Panipat from Ibrahim Lodi, his victorious army got right to plunder and loot the inhabitants of India. Same happened in Punjab when they demolished and spoiled their rich property. At that time Guru Nanak raised their voice against their violence and brutality and

encouraged the people of India to protect the country.⁸⁹ So according to Guru this is the duty of every citizen to protect and preserve the public property.

8.3.5 Rights of the Citizens

According to Guru all beings are born free and equal in respect of dignity and rights. So every person should treat each other in a fraternal manner. No discrimination approved in Sikhism on the grounds of race, color, gender and religion. Such conditions assure the faith in the freedom of the mankind right from the birth and the equality of all in regard to rights as a whole.

8.3.6 Right to gender equality

The gender based discrimination is everywhere. However, in Indian society also women do not enjoy their full rights of living. They face discrimination and exploitation by men and society. Sikh Gurus gave an equal status to women and preached against the gender inequality. The Guru developed a culture which provides a secure and safe atmosphere for women. Thus, in the Sikh state women get right to live an honorable life with equality.

8.3.7 Right to live

In spite of Guru Nanak's spiritualism, he espoused the right of life. At that time worldly State had only bothered about their Muslim inhabitants. Government had exploited Hindus (Kafirs) in every way. The non-Muslims had no rights in the Muslim State. In this kind of state, they (Hindus) also forgot about their self-respect and honor, they just lived their lives like deaf and dumb. Whoever raised voice against the rigid Government, he had to lose his life.

During this time of anarchy, Guru Nanak preached that "without self-respect and dignity life is equal to death."⁹⁰ Guru aware and enlighten people about their rights so as to inculcate the values of equality, liberty and fraternity amongst all communities irrespective of their different cast and creed. From these teachings of

89 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; p. 360.

90 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; p. 142.

Guru Nanak, people got aware for their rights, they understand the value of liberty, equality and self respect. Right now a will of such state in which they got equal rights and honor was created in their minds.

8.3.8 Right to liberty and security

Sikhism believes that everyone must have the right of liberty and security. In order to restore these rights, it prohibits the slavery, slave trade and servitude in any manner. Sikhism also stands against inhuman treatment. It provides that no person shall be subjected to torture, cruelty and humiliating or harsh punishment. It is enshrined in Sikhism that everyone is equal in the court of God so every person must be treated with equality in the state and he must have the right of equality before law.

8.3.9 Right to protest

Unlike theory of divine origin of state, Sikhism does not consider that ruler has divine powers. It condemns that kings who do not bother about the welfare of their subjects but exploit them in the name of God and misuse their powers for their individuals interests. In Sikhism, an individual who suffers at the hands of others, cannot dispense justice and equality to his fellow beings. It is the *Akal Purkh* (God) who is ultimate and supreme power in this world. Living creatures got everything such as life, livelihood, honor, pride and justice. So in Sikhism a human being is never considered as a supreme power but just a humble servant of public and if he does not provide justice, he is replace by the people. In this way Sikhism ensures full rights of living to everyone in the society.

8.3.10 Right to freedom

Sikhism does not stand with rigid policies of state but it supports a state of democratic nature. Right of the liberty of faith and worship is enshrined in the Sikhism. By accepting the request of Kashmiri pandits, Guru Teg Bahadur confirmed that every person has the right to adopt any religion or idea. So in Sikh state inhabitants have the rights to establish and maintain religious institutions and to manage its own affair in matters of religion.

8.4 Religious peculiarity

People of different religions live in India. The respective cultures of various religions and various sects of the people have their own distinct features. But Mughal Badshah Aurangzeb decided to finish all religions and cultures from Hindustan. At that time Kashmiri Pandits, went to ninth Guru Teg Bahadur for safeguard of their religion. The Guru did not believe in Brahmanism but he did not refuse their request and for the protection of their religion and culture he became ready for self sacrifice. So by setting example an example he gave message for the protection of culture and heritage.

So from the Sikh sources and examples set by the Gurus these are the sum of duties meant for the Sikhs. These duties restored a sense of responsibility among the Sikhs. The responsibilities promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people developed the feelings of patriotism and loyalty in the Sikhs.

Summing up

Idea of Sikh state can be safely summed up in three words: unity, equality and fraternity. Its ideology of beliefs and principles is totally different from modern as well as other religions. For example about the belief of God, God is trinity in nature in Christianity. The Bible teaches us God/Lord/ the father, Jesus the son and the Holy spirits are all the same God from which all worldly kings get dive powers and rule the subject. So public has no right to protest against the king because protest against king is considered protest against God. In this way people had become God fearing not God loving.

But in Sikhism there is one God; He is the supreme truth, He is the creator and fearless, He is omnipresent and omnipotent. He is beyond birth and death. According to Christianity God is Lord or father for Christians who give sovereignty to king and king has ruled on inhabitants on the name of God. But in Sikhism, Sikhs are not God fearing but God loving people. There are many references in Gurbani in which the words: *Khasam* (husband), *Pritam* (lover), *Nayek* (hero) *Sajan* (spouse) etc are used for God. It shows one's deep profound allegiance toward God.

Sikhism creates a direct relation with God and there is no middle man (king or priest) as in Christianity. All the Sikhs believe that there is only one emperor and i.e. God or *Har Pritam*. On other hand in Sikh thought king is selected on the basis of his virtues and he has no divine powers as in Christianity but have many responsibilities for welfare of inhabitants. As a whole human King is consider only as a servant of their subjects.

Modern welfare view holds that the functions of state include all those activities which the State can pursue more efficiently and thoroughly than an individual or private organization. It includes the protection of the weak, establishment of a minimum standard of living, maintenance of the minimum conditions necessary for a healthy and decent living, encouragement of industry, trade and commerce, conservation and development of human capacities, education and general promotion of the cultural life. In undertaking these activities the State should take care not to repress the inner springs of conduct.

The model of the Sikh rule also is such which advocates supremacy of religion (truth) over the state. It is a model of a new social-political order characterized by the value of equality, liberty and justice without any discrimination on the ground of creed, caste country, race, sex and social position. It is a model of an open society based on brotherhood, democracy and freedom. It modernized society on the foundation of equalitarianism and egalitarianism where neither there any exploiters nor exploited.

The Gurus bestowed temporal sovereignty on the common people and involved in statecraft, a liberal order where temporal power was vested in the *Khalsa* and the spiritual power in the holy *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Thus there has to be a proper balance between religion and the state so that none controls the other. It is a combination of spiritual and democratic polity where the consciousness of the common people reached a level where they are their own master and the state is an instrument of their service. This principle makes Sikhism finer and unique from general welfare view. In this respect, model of the Sikh rule ensures social security,

employment, health, education and shelter. But it transcends the welfare state in the sense that the state is not considered as an artificial device of acquiring power but a divine manifestation of love and compassion.

CHAPTER- 3

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SIKH RULE

The first sovereign Sikh rule was established by Banda Bahadur but theoretically it was founded by Sri Guru Nanak. His spiritual thought shows path of truth. The *bani* of the Gurus encouraged the Sikhs to form a new society in which everyone should get equal position and no one should face injustice and exploitation. The Sikhs finally formed a new society (Sangat) and they established their own sovereign Khalsa state. In this chapter we will try to understand the origin and development of the Khalsa state or commonwealth. There are two phases of origin of Sikh state, first in Guru Period and second after the Guru Gobind Singh. So we have divided this study in two parts. In the first part we have concentrated on the sanctity and state and in the second part we have studied the state after Guru Period.

1. Foundation of Sikh Rule

Guru Nanak was founder of Sikhism. He was spiritual personality and has been mainly depicted as a great socio-religious thinker. He has changed the old institution with his spiritual message. The spiritual movement of Guru Nanak has socio- spiritual concerns but historians have not tried to understand the objective reality of Sikhism. For instance Sir Charles Gough writes that the Guru founded a “sect entirely religious without any political aim or organization.”¹ Charles Gough seems unknown about the political aim of Sikhism or he does not try to understand the political role of Sikhism.

The original Sikhism was according to John B. Noss “essentially a code of philanthropy, honesty and holiness but the subsequent development was distressingly strange because the Sikhs introduced military ardor in the full strength by self dedication to the arbitrament of the sword.”² Considering Sikhism only as a code of philanthropy, honesty and holiness, John B. Noss failed to understand that the lesson

1 Sir Charles Gough and A.D.Innes, *The Sikhs and the Sikh wars*, A.D.Innes & cov ., London, Vol. V, 1897, p. 18.
2 John B. Noss, *Man's Religion*, New York, 1980 p. 282.

of valor and freedom was taught by the Gurus. So it should not be strange for anybody that the Sikhs, by following the teachings of Guru Nanak, later introduced themselves in military activities for protection of freedom.

Arnold Toynbee regards the “transformation” of the movement as sinister³ and according to him “the Sikhs renounced their spiritual birth right when they allowed themselves to be goaded in to militancy by the tyrannical and oppressive policy of the Mughal Empire. He is of the view that Sikhism instead of establishing itself on the ruins of the decaying Hindu civilization invested its spiritual treasure in the perverse political enterprise of founding a mundane Empire.”⁴ For Toynbee the political concerns of Guru Hrgobind and Guru Gobind Singh as well as the later political activities of the Sikhs appeared to be a deviation from the teachings of Guru Nanak.⁵ This statement of Toynbee does not match with Sikh thought. In fact Guru Hrgobind and Guru Gobind Singh never move away from the teachings of Guru Nanak. They had same spirit of Guru Nanak.

C.H. Payne, who did not understand the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, found it unreadable and had no access to Guru’s word, nevertheless observed that Guru Nanak did not “profess the founder of a new nation (formation), his purpose was ethical not political.”⁶ J.D Cunningham notes that Guru Nanak probably did not process any clear idea of “political advancement” and his reforms “in its immediate effects” were only religious and moral.”⁷ Same views have given by General J.H.Gordon (*The Sikhs*) and W.L.M.Gregor (*The History of the Sikhs*).

W. H. McLeod also follows the same idea. On other hand, John Clark Archer (*The Sikhs*) while asserting that “Guru Nanak himself seems to be given no thought to political unless to reject it, felt inclined to express the view that yet there was something in Him (Sri Guru Nanak), in His movement and in His time as He effected

3 Arnold Toynbee, *Study of History*, Oxford University Press, London, 1935, Vol. VII, p. 537.

4 Ibid; Vol. V, pp. 665-666.

5 Ibid; p. 666.

6 C.H.Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Thomas & Nelson sons, London, 1930, p. 29.

7 J.D.Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, John Murray, London. 1966, pp. 41-42.

them which was destined to be tested by political affairs of the State.”⁸ Western scholars have given erroneous interpretation about Guru Nanak because according to Sikh thought it is Guru Nanak who laid foundation of Sikh State.

According to G.C. Narang “sword which covered the Khalsa’s way to glory was undoubtedly forged by Guru Gobind, but the steel had been provided by Nanak; that the seeds which blossomed in the time of Guru Gobind had been sown by Nanak and watered by His successor Gurus and that by the time of Guru Arjun Dev, a State peaceful and unobtrusive, had been slowly evolved and with Guru at its head as ‘*Sacha Padshah*’, the Sikhs had already become accustomed to a form self-Government within the empire and they were fast becoming a factor in the political life of the province.”⁹ As a result G.C Narang assumed Guru Nanak as a base of Sikh polity.

Similarly Indu Bhushan Banerjee is of the view that although the apparent ramification of the Sikh movement might have seemed perfectly religious motives but at the same time looked at from the point of view of the established state, the new community was already reaching a position when it could no longer be treated with indifference and the prospects of a conflict between the forces of the State and those of Sikhism were thus in making for want of an approach “less liable to be misunderstood.”¹⁰ So Indu Bhushan Banerjee while agreeing that the future Sikh nation grew on the foundation provided by Nanak would not agree on that “Guru Nanak had some original distinctive which alone could provided the basis of the nation.”¹¹

Kapur Singh in *Parasarsprasna* observes about the formation of the Khalsa that “it was a logical development and entelechy of the teachings of Guru Nanak.”¹²

8 J.C.Archer, *The Sikhs*, Princeton University press, Princeton, 1946, pp. 3-4.

9 G.C.Narang, *Transformation of the Sikhism*, New Book Society of India, New Delhi, 1960, pp. 35-36.

10 I.B. Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Mukharjee & company, Calcutta, 1963, Vol.1, pp. 265-66.

11 Ibid; p. 19.

12 Kapur Singh, *Parasaraprasna*, Hind Publishers, Jullundur, 1959, p.12.

Ganda Singh considers that Guru Nanak was “the founder of the militant Church of Sikhism.”¹³ Puran Singh describes Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth master as “Guru Nanak at climax of His glory.”¹⁴ Fauja Singh stresses that “while trying to understand the political ideas of the later generation, it is imperative that we should never lose sight of their heritage coming down from the preceding period of the Gurus.”¹⁵

J.S. Grewal while not supporting the line of attributing direct political motives of Guru Nanak’s concern over the people’s problems arising from the exiting political milieu, when was fairly discernible in many of Guru Nanak’s observation. He asserts that Guru Nanak’s verses “suggest a serious concern was intimately connected with his deeper concern for salvation.”¹⁶

Consequently Guru Nanak’s vision of the contemporary political milieu, his awareness and attentiveness toward the malaise of the polity is more comprehensive and deeper than any other medieval personality. The Sikhs have established their rule after a long course. To understand the nature of the Sikh rule we have described it in two phases. First is origin of state in Guru Period and second after Gurus.

Part I

2. Origin of State in Guru Period

The Sikhs have their identity because they established new institutions for new identity. These institutions play an important role in the origin of Sikh state. We have also concentrated on the events which occurred during that time and Sikh Gurus had taken important political decisions on them which played an important role in Sikh polity.

Such new institutions namely *Sangat*, *Pangat*, *Gurdwara*, *Guruship* and *Manji* system serve as instrument for generating a sense of equality and classlessness. These institutions also serve the purpose of promoting fraternity among the followers of the faith.

13 Ganda Singh, “The Maratha-Sikh Relation”, in *The Punjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1970, p. 31.

14 Ishar Singh, *Nanakism A New World Order*, Ranjeet Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976, p.132.

15 Fauja Singh, “Political Ideas in 18th, 19th centuries”, in *The Punjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1976, p. 279.

16 J.S.Grewal, *Guru Nanak In History*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1979, pp.165-66.

2.1 *Sangat and Pangat*

Sangat and *Pangat* are two basic institutions which provide new shape to Sikh society as well as polity. Both institutions make a connection in religious and social life. Main aim of *Sangat* is to meditate the *Naam* and *Pangat* provides food (*Langar*) to all. It is getting together of noble people. Where there is a *Sangat* there also a *Pangat*. *Sangat* is meant association and *Pangat* is meant row for equality. The Sikhs ordain to:-

Meditation upon the *naam*

And meditation upon the corn.¹⁷

Corn here symbolizes the subsistence of our lives which is a divine gift. Meditating upon it therefore is worshipful living in gratitude. Honest earning itself is worshipful living. A Sikh shares his earning with others:

He alone understands the real path, says Nanak,

who not just earns his living with honest labor

but also gives others a part thereof from his own hand.¹⁸

Thus *Langar* is an institution which inspires service of mankind. Kapur Singh is of the opinion that “the word *Langar* is from Sanskrit *anagrah* meaning the cooking place.”¹⁹ Sirdar Kapur Singh writes that *Guru Ka Langar* was an Aryan institution which was revived by the Sikh Gurus. According to him “this institution was used by the Gurus as a powerful lever for equalitarian uplift of the people by demolishing caste barriers and the economic apartheid of *varn asram dharama* is a pristine. Aryan institution, non Brahmmic, but having Vedic sanction. A reference to the community kitchen or *Guru Ka Langar* occurs in the Atharva Veda, which says; identical shall be your share of food.”²⁰

Kapur Singh makes comparison between *Langar* system in Sikhism and community kitchen which occurs in the Atharva Veda. But institution of community

17 Ibid; 873.

18 Ibid; p. 1254.

19 Kapur Singh, *Prasharprasna*, p. 339.

20 Ibid.

kitchen which mentioned in Atharva Veda is totally different from *Guru Ka Langar* in Sikhism because Langar is not only a religious institution but it has a strong social and political base. It is a powerful step taken by the Sikh Gurus to create a sense of brotherhood, equality and for respect of humanity and equality. At that time when people were exploited on the name of low caste, Sikh Gurus provided Langar and gave them equal status to high castes. By getting equal status they were filled with self-assurance and later gave a strong competition even to ruling class.

Sangat is also called *Satsangat* (the congregation of Sants). Sangat plays a significant role in the establishment of Sikh community. The Sikhs believe that Guru lives in the Sangat. The company of devotees represents the Guru and can guide the community of various social and spiritual purposes. "Those who join Sangat learn to serve the people and in the company of the true ones disciples get lesson of Love for the Holy name. In holy company we become true and develop love for the word."²¹

When a Sikh joins Sangat, he or she comes in contact with religious fellows. He or she feels a great change in himself/ herself. It helps them to shed their ego. They learn to work in a cooperative and democratic set up and by doing a sense of selfishness vanishes. In Sangat all disciples are equal. They pray together. They serve and share meal with each other. They get pleasure in offerings voluntary service for community development and social welfare. Bhai Gurdas sums up the daily duties of a Sikh in these words:

A Sikh is to rise from his bed in the last watch of the night and take his bath. He should then repeat the Name in silence and absolute concentration as instructed by the Guru. His next duty is to go to the Sangat and there, steeped in true reverence, recite and listen to the holly hymns. And before partaking of his food, he should distribute a part of it to others. At dusk he is enjoined upon to recite the Sodar and before retiring the sohila.²²

21 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; p. 586.

22 *Var 6, Pauri 3.*

Sangat and Pangat though have primarily concerned with religious devotion but it also performs a few secular functions as well. Sangat and Pangat provide a platform for Guru's followers to discuss their common problems and to develop among the Sikhs strong democratic traditions. About these institutions Ganda Singh writes that

Guru Nanak's laboratories, both for the demonstration and practice of His teachings were the institutions of *Sangat* or congregations and *Pangat* or sitting of all people together in rows for community dining. Both at home and outside, wherever He went, He established Sangat or congregation of His followers and admirers. Therein they met daily, generally in the evening, to hear the Guru's teachings and sing His hymns and to pray to God and to discuss and solve their common problems. The forums of the *Sangat* were known as Dharamshalas. These institutions later on developed in to Sikh missionary centers where Guru's work of reformation and transformation was continued by subsequent Gurus and their leading representatives, popularly known as *Mansands*.²³

To quote again

It was in these Sangat and Dharmshalas that Guru's Sikhs learnt practical lesson in Sikhism, freed themselves from the worship of gods and goddesses, idols and images, and recited the hymns of the Master and His successors as the only way of the worship of the one supreme formless God. It was here that the Sikhs as the followers of the Gurus were known to shake of their old prejudices and rubbed their angularities. Here they came closer to one another as brother-in-faith and understand their real relationship as sons of common creators.²⁴

23 Ganda Singh, "Guru Nanak's impact on History", in *The Punjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p. 414.

24 Ibid; p. 414.

In this context K.M.Panikar also gives remark that “they (institutions) also gave the Sikhs a philosophical conception of the community as a body through which the will of God manifests, also giving the Sikhs a conception of State and Church.”²⁵ Thus the institutions of the Sangat and Pangat established by Guru Nanak and other Gurus developed cohesion and uniting the people and strengthen their social, religious and political life.

2.3 Gurdwara

The place where Sangat assembles and *Adi Granth* is set up, is called Gurdwara, “the abode of Guru.”²⁶ At Gurdwara the Sangat apart from reciting the *Gurbani* could also discuss any matter which concerning them. It therefore presented the focal point of Sikh activities. Right from the time of Guru Nanak, Gurdwaras were constructed with devotion and enthusiasm by the Sikhs.

In the beginning the place where Sangat congregated was known as *Dharamsalas*. With the passage of time number of Sangat rose. During the time of 200 years from Guru Nanak till the death of Guru Gobind Singh “Sangat considered as holding equal even higher than the Gurus’ themselves. After the proclamation of Guru Gobind Singh, it came to occupy the status of Guru Sangat and henceforth Guruship shall not vest in human form but in the Panth (expanded form of Sangat) and in *Adi Granth*. Since Sangat began to operate with confidence and with sacerdotal authority naturally sticking to the exalted office of the Guru.”²⁷

After Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikhs had to pass through a period of enormous struggle with Mughals and Afghans. After Banda Bahadur’s death, the Sikhs had to take shelter in hills and forests. So during this period they could not take direct interest in the management of Gurdwaras. However the respect in their minds for Gurdwaras remained ever. “But it does not mean that Gurdwara as an institution lost

25 K.M.Panikar, *The Ideas of Sikhism*, Tract society, Amritsar, 1924, p. 20.

26 Surinder Singh Kohli, *Dictionary of Guru Granth Sahib*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1996, p. 123.

27 Surjeet Singh Gandhi, *Sikhs in eighteenth century*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2000, p. 689.

its important. On other hand it was the only institution which worked at the level of masses.”²⁸

During the turmoil period the Sikhs had taken a moral support from the Gurdwaras. The Sikhs are emotionally attached to Gurdwaras and whenever they found time and resources they would at once repair, renovate or build new ones. When Abdali came to know their attachment to Gurdwaras from Zakria Khan, he decided to destroy the Harimandir Sahib. That is why

Durrani attacked at Amritsar on the eve of Baisakhi April 10, 1762. He took occasion to blow up their sacred temple with gunpowder. The *bunghas* or rest houses meant for pilgrims were destroyed, and the tank after being desecrated with the blood of cows was filled up the refuse and debris.²⁹

But Abdali may forget that Harimandir is the dearest to them than their own lives. So revenge had been taken by the Sikhs in the same year.

On 17 October, 1762 was the Diwali festival and about 60,000 Sikhs had assembled on the occasion at Amritsar, with the resolve to avenge the insult offered to their temple and to retrieve the loss of national honor suffered in the Great holocaust... the Shah marched from Lahore and reached Amritsar on 16th October, the day before Diwali. Early next morning the Sikhs drew up their armies and made a desperate attack on the enemy... The tact and skill of the greatest military genius of the time in Asia gave way before the zeal and determination born of religious fervor and sacrifice. The Shah was compelled to withdraw his forces and escape to Lahore under cover of darkness.³⁰

Thus the Sikhs could have sacrificed everything to protect the Harimandir Sahib. With establishment of Sikh missals in Punjab, institution of Gurdwara was

28 Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1989, p. 160.

29 Ibid, p. 162.

30 Ibid, p. 172.

strengthened because Missaldars granted lands to the Gurdwaras for maintenance. Thus this institution greatly affected the political, social and religious life of the Sikhs.

2.4 Guruship

Guru in Sikhism has a central importance. The Sikhs live in the grace of the Guru. “Guruship is a sanctuary institution of Sikhism which produced solidarity in the Sikhs. Guru Nanak has founded the institution of Guruship to unite the community on sacred bases. Before the Sikhism the worldly guru transformed his authority to his descendants because the Guru belonged to the priest or Brahmin caste. The code or restrictions of caste did not allow changing the hereditary of Guruship. Secondly, there was a gap between Guru and disciples. But Guru Nanak had transformed his spirit to Bhai Lehna (second Guru of the Sikhs). Guru Nanak had given him a new name Guru Angad means part of his mission. This Guruship was a new trend in the history. Guru had chosen his part on the bases of his spirit. Through this new decision he has eliminate the gap and he has changed age- old tradition for the selection of Guru.”³¹

Setting aside the claim of His sons and keeping in view of service, devotion and greatness of Bhai Lehna, Guru Nanak bestowed upon Him the Guruship. This tradition (of appointing the successor Guru) has developed and strengthened the Sikh religion. If Guru Nanak had not started this tradition and Bhai Lehna had not been appointed as Guru by Guru Nanak, then the Sikh religion must be ended with Guru Nanak. From there the tradition of selection on the base of merits has been started. The tenth Guru Gobind Singh completed the tradition Guruship and he gave Guruship to *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

2.5 Manji System

Third Guru Amardas had followed the path of first two Gurus and besides flourished the institutions of Sangat and Pangat, introduced the Manji system for

31 Gurmeet Singh Sidhu, *BEYOND OTHERNESS: Sikhism: New Mystical Experience and Interfaith Dialogue*, Notion Press, Chennai, 2015, p. 157.

spreading the Sikh religion and collect the wealth from Guru's disciple to continue the *Langar* and to build the new centers of the Sikh religion. He established Manjis to spread the message of Guru Nanak in the areas around. The establishment of Manjis is the most important innovative measure of Guru Amardas.

The word literally signifies cot or charpoy, a common Indian bedstead. According to McAuliffe it derives its sacred connotation from the fact that the Guru used to sit on a manji while imparting instructions. K.S Narang goes further and says that the cot on which the Guru sat while preaching was called Manja. He differentiates between the two terms manja and manji by saying that manji being diminutive of the word manja stands for a lower position. Thus manja represents the central authority of the Guru whereas manji stands for delegated authority such as the one granted by Guru Amardas to his eminent Sikhs.³²

In Manji system "Guru Amardas, consequently, divided the whole region inhabited by the followers in to twenty-two dioceses (or Manjis) as they were called and a pious and influential Sikh was placed at the head of each Manji, who acted as a bishop and vice-regent of the Guru and carried on the pastoral work in his diocese."³³

Guru Amardas showed great foresight and wisdom in selecting the manjidars who were assigned charge in of different localities. "The list of manjidars will indicate that Ala Yar, a devoted Sikh and dealer of horses, Sawan Mal who had gone to Haripur to bring timber for building of houses at Goindwal, Manak Chand, who risked his life in digging the Baoli, etc., were the persons who had been tried by the Guru and entrusted with this important task. All these measures widened the Sikhism in an organized manner."³⁴ It was the first powerful step toward the birth of political institutions of the Sikhs. This institution strengthened the Sikhs and they started to think in a term of a common and wide nation.

32 Fauja Singh, Rattan Singh Jaggi, (ed.) *Perspectives on Guru Amar Das*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1982, p.37.

33 G.C.Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 56.

34 Fauja Singh, Rattan Singh Jaggi, (ed.) *Perspectives on Guru Amar Das*, p. 24.

2.6 Sanctity and State

In *Var Asa*, *Var Majh*, *Var Ramkali*, and *Var Malhar*, Guru Nanak has produced many *shalokas* which give us a firsthand account of the miserable condition of the people under the Lodhi rulers and corrupt and exploitative nature of ruling class. For example:

Kali-yuga is turned in knife, rulers are butchers,
and righteousness on wing is flown,
This is the dark night of evil;
the moon of truth is nowhere visible, nor risen,
For light have I searched to distraction,
No path in this darkness is visible.
Humanity in egoism involved,
in suffering wails. This Nanak seeks to know:
How may liberation then be found?³⁵

About the tyranny and injustice of ruling class and authority, Guru Nanak remarks that:

Rulers are turned beasts of prey, their officer hounds;
None do they allow in peace rest.
You dogs! Lick on the blood and marrow of the poor.
Know, that there, where creation will be judged.
All such will be disgraced and branched as false.³⁶

Thus Guru Nanak writes that When Babar invaded Punjab, the misery and wretchedness that followed especially tyranny after the invasion. Guru Nanak was an eye witness of miserable condition of the people. He had given several remarks about the cruelty of Babar's soldiers and the deplorable condition of the masses in bani. Guru Nanak has composed four hymns regarding the invasion of Babar.

35 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; p. 145.

36 *Ibid*; p. 1288.

First is “Though, o creator-Lord has protected Khurasan, and Hindustan though terrified.”³⁷ Second is “They whose lustrous hair shown in plights and were filled with vermilion in the parting”³⁸ Third composition is “Where the stables now, where are the horses, where are the drums?”³⁹ Fourth is “O Lalo! As I receive the word of Lord, so do I utter? (Babar the Moghal) come from Kabul with the sin as wedding party and asked us by force to part with (our motherland).”⁴⁰

Guru Nanak demands justice from God. He does not consider Babar’s invasion a Muslim invasion but a fight between two races: Mughal and Pathans, and for Mughals there were no difference between Hindus and Pathans while they had plundered them and raped their women. Guru Nanak’s heart bled at the sufferings of innocent people at the hands of Babar’s army whom Guru Nanak describes as ‘a marriage procession of sinner’ but at the same time he appealed to the people to fight against cruel State and calm down them by telling them that Babar’s invasion was a temporary phase and that a brave man would rescue them in 1597. Therefore in *Rag Asa* and in *Rag Tilang*, Guru Nanak condemns the lamentation and even poignantly blamed God for the sufferings of lambs at the hands of wolves. But in *Rag Tillang*, Guru Nanak also looked upon Babar’s invasion as an act of God’s wrath meant to punish the sinful Sultan and the sinful people who had forgotten God in their luxurious and corrupt life.

Guru Nanak reacts in his bani to the contemporary politics and suggests his serious concern with humanity. He does not show any regard for temporal power or respect for political authority. “This aspect of His attitude to politics, in which man’s moral commitment has given a clear primacy over his political obligations, is extremely important for its implications if the distinction between moral allegations to the State was to be carried to its logical conclusion.”⁴¹ Like Guru Nanak, Guru Angad was also a man of great courage.

37 Ibid; p. 360.

38 Ibid; p. 417.

39 Ibid; p. 417.

40 Ibid; p. 722.

41 J.S.Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1965, pp.165-166.

As per Sikh tradition, when Humayun, the successor of Babar, had defeated again from Sher Shah Suri he made to flee from Hindustan. He made his way to Lahore and there searched for some holy man, who with his blessings, could restore to him his throne and kingdom. He had advised of the spirituality and sovereignty of the Guru Angad. Humayun took a lot of offerings with him and went to Khadur. When he reached Khadur, he found Guru in deep trance and *ragis* Balwand and Satta were singing Guru Nanak's hymns. The emperor kept waiting. He became extremely angry and put his hand on the hilt of sword with the intention of striking the Guru. The sword however came out of the scabbard, which gave the fugitive emperor an opportunity to repent for his folly. The Guru opened eyes, looked at the emperor and said that he should use the sword against Sher Shah Suri in the battlefield from where he actually fled.⁴²

Humayun apologized and begged for the Guru's blessing. "The Guru said that he should go back to his country and return after a while and then he would get back his kingdom. Humayun bowed and left. He took the Guru's advice, went to Persia, obtained reinforcement from the king of Persia, returned to India and after a pitched battle at Panipat recovered his empire and once again became the emperor of India."⁴³ Thus like Babar⁴⁴ who got blessings of kingdom by Guru Nanak, his son also bowed his head to second Nanak, Guru Angad.

The successor of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad experienced no difficulty in continuing the work and institutions started by His Guru. As Guru Nanak did, Guru Angad also appointed his favorite disciple Amardas as his successor. Then Guru Amardas became third Nanak.

42 "Sher Shah so kachu na keena, eha talwar muth gahi leena." And in the words of *Mahima Parkash*: "*Bhai Mugla, talwar Sher Shah te kadani see ke asa upar?*" as quoted by Kuldeep Singh Ugaani "Teeja netar kholan vale Guru Angad Dev" in Kulwant Kaur, *Guru Angad Guru Ang' te*, P.199.

43 S.S.Kapoor, *The Life, Teachings and Hymns of Guru Angad*, p.43.

44 "*Ta Badshah (Babar) magyea jee meri payshahi kursi ba kursi chali jave, ate jee khise nahi. Guru Babe (Guru Nanak) bachan kita jahe khudai ive hi karega*" in Piar Singh, (ed.), *Shabu Nath Wali Janampatri Babe Nanak ki*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1969, p. 56-57.

Guru Amardas had followed the path of first two Gurus. During his time “the orthodox sections in the Hindu society did not take kindly to the teachings of Guru Amardas and complained to the emperor. At one time they even led a deputation and submitted a lengthy memorandum leveling a series of charges against him.”⁴⁵ The Guru had to depute His most trusted follower Bhai Jetha to the emperor’s court to answer the charges. “The complaint had ultimately dismissed. A few years later the emperor Akbar personally visited upon the Guru at Goindwal and even ate in His kitchen.”⁴⁶

Akbar’s visit to Goindwal showed the emperor’s regard for the Guru. It also added the popularity of the Guru and His mission and brought new followers to the fold of Sikhism because “the Guru utilized the emperor’s visit to manage relief for the suffering peasantry. Akbar is said to have consented to remit land tax for the year so as to mitigate their hardships, Guru Amardas earned the gratitude of the farming community of the Majha and Malwa tracts of Punjab.”⁴⁷

In this framework, next episode is related to the time period of Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, when prince Khusrao’s incident had happened. Akbar was succeeded by Jahagir who was not liberal like his father. He soon got alarmed by growing influence of Guru Arjun as he wrote in *Tuzk-E-Jahagiri*:

In Goindwal, this is on the river Beas, a Hindu named Arjun used to live in the grab of a spiritual master and mystic guide, under the influence of which he had induced a large number of simple minded Hindus and even some ignorant and silly Muslims, to become attached his ways and costumes. He had drummed of his spiritual leadership and sainthood loudly beaten. They called him Guru. From all sides and directions ignorant ones and dervish-grab worshipers inclined toward

45 M.A.Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Clarendon Press, Vol. II, London, 1909, p.107.

46 Sarupdas bhalla, *Mahima Parkash*, (ed.by) Uttam Singh, Bhasha Vibhag, Jullundur, Sakhi.25, p.255-56.

47 Harbans Lal Aganihotri, Chand R.Aganihotri, *The Widening Horizon Guru Amardas and His Bani*, Gopal Parkashan, Hisar, 2002, p. 45.

him. For three or four generations they had kept this business brisk. From long time the thought kept coming to me of either putting an end to this shop of falsehood or to bring him in to the fold of Islam.⁴⁸

The above passage indicates two points. The first is Guru Arjun's original sin was the part which he had been played as a Guru, attracting Hindus and Muslims to his teachings and keeping his business brisk. The second is the idea of putting an end to his shop or bringing him in to the fold of Islam had occurred to Jahagir 'for a long time' before Khusrau's rebellion. Thus Jahangir was irritated from the Guru and wanted to bring him in Islam or mitigated. The letter further declares that:

It happened now that Khusrau was passing by that route. This useless man let wished to attend on him. Khusrau halted at the place where he had his seat and residence. He saw him and conveyed to him some far-fetched things and on his forehead put a finger mark in saffron, which in the usage of Hindus is called *Qashqa* and is held to be auspicious. When this matter brought to the notice of this glorious court and I realized the full extent of his false conduct, I ordered that he be brought to my presence (at Lahore). I gave over his home and houses and children to Murtala Khan (Jahagir's Mir bakhshi) confiscated his goods and ordered him to be capitally punished (*Siyast O Yasa resanand*).⁴⁹

Siyast literally means "punishment and Yasa is a mongol term for law and by extension, punishment under law. In mongol times both words were used for capital punishment. Under the Yasa of Changis Khan, the blood of princes and honored persons was not spilled: such means of killing were employed for them, as to prevent this happening."⁵⁰ Thus the punishment of extreme torture without shedding blood had inflicted on Guru Arjun who was a religious leader even the eyes of Jahagir.

48 Shireen Moosvi, "Guru Arjun's Martyrdom, 1606 From Jahagir, Tuzuk-i-Jahagiri", in J.S.Grewal & Irfan Habib's *Sikh History from Persian sources*, Tulika, New Delhi, 2007, p. 57.

49 Ibid; 57.

50 Ibid; f.n. 4.

Hence a seed of revolution had sown here which changed the whole character of Sikhism. J.S. Grewal states that “the historical situation changed radically not before but after the martyrdom of Guru Arjun. His son and successor, Guru Hargobind, reacted to that event by adopting the encouraging martial interests; he came in to armed conflict with Mughal authorities and eventually left the Mughal territories to found at Kiratpur a safe center in the territories of a vassal chief of the Mughal Empire.”⁵¹

G.S. Nayyar also notes that the martyrdom of Guru Arjun has changed the cause of Sikh movement. In his own words “the martyrdom of Guru Arjun, nevertheless, left deep imprints on the Punjab and opened a unique and noble chapter in the Sikh history. The Sikh turned over a new leaf. The religious devotees of the faith of Guru Nanak prepared themselves for any relinquishment, involved for strengthening their hearths and homes and for defending the claims of consciences trading upon the path of righteousness.”⁵²

Therefore the martyrdom of Guru Arjun had changed character of the Sikh movement and Sikhs became the saint soldiers (*sant sipahi*) under leadership the sixth Guru Hargobind who later challenged the Government and has established a sovereign rule of the Sikhs. The martyrdom of their beloved Guru taught them a lesson that without political freedom it is difficult to obtain spiritual salvation.

The martyrdom of Guru Arjun had made such a deep impression on His son and successor, Guru Hargobind that he decided to give practical shape to the parting message of His father “let him sit fully armed on the throne and maintain an army to the best of his ability.”⁵³ The Guru had perceived that if Sikhism was to survive, it must make certain adjustments in its character and organization and the Sikhs should be physically prepared and trained to bear arms to defend their hearths and homes

51 J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1972, pp. 54-55.

52 G.S. Nayyar, *Guru Hargobind in Sikh Tradition*, National Book Organization, New Delhi, 1998, p. 63.

53 Ibid; p. 77.

against the Mughal tyrants. “Therefore Guru had decided to follow a new policy and the germs of this policy can be traced to the time when Baba Buda, just after Guru Arjun’s death was going to confer Guruship on Hargobind.”⁵⁴

As per the usual tradition, Baba Budha brought the *Seli* (a rosary worn as a necklace by the former Gurus) and a turban, and offered to the new Guru to wear them. But Guru Hargobind putting them aside said to Baba Buda “my *Seli* should be a sword belt and I shall bear my turban with a royal aigrette.”⁵⁵ This act was a symbol to challenge the Government. He told His disciples that in future in the Guru’s house “religion and worldly enjoyment shall be combined- the cauldron to supply the poor and the needy, and the scimitar to smite the oppression.”⁵⁶ Thus Guru took His father’s seat, tied a turban and wore two swords as emblems of *Miri* (temporal) and *Piri* (spiritual) authority respectively the combination of *Bhakti* and *Shakti* or *Deg-Teg*, the vassal to feed the hungry, and sword to protect the weak and helpless.⁵⁷

Miri Piri which ideologically came into existence during the period of Guru Nanak now took an institutional shape. These were the symbols as *Piri* helped Guru’s disciples to work for liberation through moral and spiritual uplift and *Miri* prepared them for the self defense by taking up arms against justice and tyranny. Therefore it turned the Sikh community in to a protective force and with this force, based on Sikh ethics, the Sikhs protected not only themselves but also other innocent people.

Before Guru Hargobind, the Harimandir sahib was the only place where Guru addressed His followers but now Akal Takht had founded in the opposite side of Harimandir by the Guru. In this building, Guru had begun to attend the Sikhs regularly, there He listened their temporal affairs and gave decision on them.

Regarding this Archer writes that “he completed a shrine which Arjun had begun, the *Akal Takht* or Timeless throne.”⁵⁸ For him “Akal Takhat... considerably

54 Ibid; p. 77.

55 M.A.Macalife, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 2.

56 Ibid.

57 Ganda Singh, “Guru Nanak’s impact on History” in *Perspectives on Guru Nanak*, (ed.by), Harbans Singh, Patiala, 1975, p. 423.

58 J.C Archer, *The Sikhs*, p. 174.

changed the Sikh character and organization. About this change, Guru Hargobind told the great Maratha saint, Samarth Ramdas (at Srinagar in Garhwal) in A.D 1634 that arms meant protection to the poor and destruction of the tyrant.”⁵⁹ Khazan Singh calls it “*Akal Bunga* or the house of God.”⁶⁰ In the views of Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, “*Akal Takht* a sovereign seat and symbol of freedom was the first takht of the Sikhs.”⁶¹

The construction of the Akal Takht just near to the Harimandir Sahib has great significance. Harimandir Sahib has connected with religious ceremonies whereas Akal Takht became the seat of temporal authority and the matters relating to the Sikh politics has been discussed here. According to S.S.Johar “each place was visible from the other so that when people were sitting in Harimandir, they could still recall their involvement in secular affairs and vice versa.”⁶² It is also said that Guru addressing His Sikhs that while they were in Harimandir Sahib, they should be deemed as a saint but while in Akal Takht, they should be looked upon as a temporal leader of the community. In this context, Khazan Singh writes that “he (Guru) said that as long as he continued in Harimandir he should be reckoned as a saint and in Akal Bunga he should be looked upon as a king.”⁶³

Akal Takht has political significance because this is not a building rather this is a State of *Akal Purakh* (God). Bhai Santokh Singh writes that at Akal Takht, Guru had received the visitors and heard their complaints.⁶⁴ He further mentions that even the Guru sent envoys to the ruling princes and also received the agents in his darbar which was held at Akal Takht.⁶⁵ Thus this statement of Bhai Santokh Singh has showed the Guru as sovereign chief within the Moghal imperialism. According to Trilochan Singh “the very erection of Akal Takht was a challenge to the coercive

59 Ibid; p. 174.

60 Khazan Singh, *History of the Sikh Religion*, p. 131.

61 Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Mahan Kosh*, Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, Patiala, 1960 p. 427.

62 S.S.Johar, *The Heritage of Amritsar*, Sandeep Parkashan, Delhi, 1978, p. 40.

63 Khazan Singh, *History of the Sikh Religion*, p.132.

64 Santokh Singh, *Gur Partap Suraj Granth*, (ed. by) Bhai Veer Singh, Khalsa Smachar, Amritsar 1965, Ras 4, Asu 44, pp. 2412-13.

65 Ibid; p. 213.

authority of the Mughal emperor, an assertion of supernatural autonomy and of freedom from all fear and despotic rule.”⁶⁶

In the words of Gurmeet Singh, the establishment of Akal Takht “was essentially meant to provide a political centre to the Sikh community and emphasize its sovereignty as a nation, the essence of which is that a man of religion must always owe his primary allegiance to truth and morality and that he must never submit to the exclusive claim of a secular State to govern the body and mind of a man.”⁶⁷

Guru Hargobind had decided to create an army of saint soldiers. Therefore He issued a *Hukamnama* to his followers in which He said that: “Guru Arjun Dev has died and the sixth Guru has been throne. Those who want to visit him at this throne should bring only good horses and good arms.”⁶⁸

McAuliffe could not understand the importance and sanctity of the *Hukamnama*, therefore he mentions it as a letter to the masands in the following words: “The Guru then issued an encyclical letter to the masands to the effect that he would be pleased with those who brought offerings of arms and horses instead of money.”⁶⁹

Guru Hargobind sent this *Hukamnama* through the masands who lived in different parts of the country. Through this *Hukamnama* Guru announced his future program.⁷⁰ Now Amritsar became a kind of place for the Sikhs where besides praying and preaching, discussions were held on questions affecting the welfare of the community.⁷¹

According to Giani Gian Singh, “Guru Hargobind while addressing the Sangat declared he had decided to form an army to fight against the tyranny of Mughal rulers. He also asked his followers to be fully armed because religion could not be saved

66 Trilochan Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur: prophet and Martyr*, Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee, Delhi, 1976, p. 37.

67 Gurmeet Singh, *History of Sikh Struggles*, Atlantic Publishers, Vol.I, New Delhi, 1989, p. 26.

68 Santokh Singh, *Gur Partap Suraj Granth*, Ras 4, Asu 42, p. 2404.

69 M.A.Macalife, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV p. 3.

70 Santokh Singh, *Gur Partap Suraj Granth*, Ras 4, Asu 44, P. 2404.

71 Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikh*, p. 37.

without restoring to arms and also at this place that Guru Hargobind received the presents, offerings of weapons and horses from his followers and particularly from masands who brought the same from his Sangat for the Guru.”⁷²

Khushwant Singh writes that “He (Guru Hargobind) made it known to his Sikhs that thereafter he would welcome offerings of arms and horses instead of money. He trained a body of soldiers and spent much time in martial exercise and hunting. He built a small fortress, Lohgarh (the castle of steel) in Amritsar. Across the Harimandir, he built the Akal Takhat (throne of the timeless God), where instead of chanting hymns of peace, the congregation heard ballads extolling feats of heroism, and instead of listening to religious discourses, discussed plans of military conquest.”⁷³

After receiving Guru Hargobind’s *Hukamnama*, Sikhs from different parts of the country came to Amritsar. McAuliffe states that “the Sikhs who came from Majha, Malwa and Doaba told the Guru that they have no offerings for him but only their lives. In return of their services, they required only spiritual instructions and they also professed that they were ready to sacrifice their lives for the Guru’s sake.”⁷⁴ Sohan Kavi is of the view that “people of all castes like Jats, Chimbhas, Jhivars, Carpenters and Barbers had recruited by the Guru in his army.”⁷⁵

The Guru issued a horse and weapon to each Sikh and “divided them in to five Jathas (groups) under a commander named Bidhi Chand, Pirarna, Jetha, Paira and Langha.”⁷⁶ Zulfikar Ardistani holds that “Guru Hargobind had kept a bodyguard of 52 soldiers, 700 horses in his stable, 300 horsemen, and 60 gunners who always remained in attendance upon the Guru.”⁷⁷ Bhai Gurdas writes that Guru Hargobind was a great hero. According to him sixth Guru was a “*Daj Bhanjan* or the vanquisher

72 Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1970, pp. 118-19.

73 Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 63.

74 M.A. McAuliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV p. 3.

75 Sohan Kavi, *Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin*, p. 153.

76 M.A. McAuliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 4.

77 Ganda Singh, “Nanak Panthis” in *The Punjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, P. 64.

of army and praised his prowess in arms.”⁷⁸ But it was a small beginning later on the Guru visited different places and inspired his devotee to enter his army.

Historians have not tried to understand the spiritual importance of this army. Arnold Toynbee notes Sikhism as a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam was led astray to become the sectarian faith of militant founders of a successor State of the Mughal Raj. Sikhism thus became “little more than the distinctive mark of a community that had virtually become another Hindu caste.”⁷⁹ But he is not correct in stating that they had “renounce (d) their spiritual birth right by turning militant.”⁸⁰ Because turning into soldiers did not imply that they give up their saintly character.

E. Trump writes that the attraction of vagrant life and the hope of booty were enough for some martial race like the Jats who had no higher religious motives. In his own words “every fugitives or oppressed man took refuge in his camp, where he was sure to be welcome without being much troubled about religion and the crams of a vagrant life and the hope of booty attracted numbers of warlike Jats who willingly acknowledged him as their Guru, the more so as he allowed his followers to eat all kinds of flesh that of cow excepted.”⁸¹

But Indu Bhushan Banerjee does not contribute to the idea of armed expeditions as claimed by E.Trump because the Guru, he argues, led actions mostly of a defensive nature and his resistance was the only alternative to disgrace and ruin. Banerjee, however supports Trumps that “the traditional warlike and marauding instincts of the Jats, the backbone of the Sikh community, might have been attracted by the hope of booty and adventure.”⁸²

Banerjee conclusively comments that the Guru had managed to build a strong base of armed force. “In fact, Guru Hargobind’s open struggle with Mughal authority during the early years of the reign of Shah Jahan clearly shows that he had at his back

78 *Var 1, Pauri 48.*

79 Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vol. VII, Oxford Press, London, 1971, pp. 414-15.

80 Ibid; Vol. V, pp. 666-667.

81 E.Trump, *The Adi Granth*, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal , New Delhi, 1997 p. IILXXXIV.

82 I.B. Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 17.

some solid military strength, however insignificant it might have been when compared with the mighty resources of the Mughal Empire.”⁸³ In this context, G.C Narang also mistook the recruitment to the Sikh army by the Guru “as an open invitation to all criminals, fugitives and freebooters.”⁸⁴ But in the real sense, Guru’s policy was not designed to serve any selfish motives, as Dorthy Field asserts. “In fact it was entirely meant to give a new shape to religion, which should suit the changed circumstances and also spread and defend righteousness in fearless manners.”⁸⁵ The emperor wanted to curb the growing power under the Sikh Guru. Such an expression of hostility naturally raised resentment in the adherents of the faith that became enemies of the Mughals. This is how the righteous militancy came to be ingrained in Sikhism. Thus the Guru fought against the oppressive government and for the defense of helpless.

Guru Hargobind was a Guru of spiritual perception from Guru Nanak. But from the beginning, policy of Guru Hargobind had misunderstood by the masands. The masands were important link in the Sikh organization and channel of communication between Guru and his Sikhs. According to Sohan Kavi, “these masands represent themselves to the Guru’s mother, saying that Guru’s deviation from the path of Guru Nanak is bound to earn the wrath of the Mughal King whose might will prove too much harmful to them. They also impressed upon her to restrain the Guru from this cause. But the mother, relishing fully how unfounded their fears had pacified them and allayed their fears.”⁸⁶

In fact, such milled objections were based not really on traditions but on expediency. “The masands merely referred to the military and financial weakness of the Sikhs vis-à-vis the Mughal Empire.”⁸⁷ Referring to such doubts among the Sikhs, Bhai Gurdas writes in one of his var: -

People say the former Gurus used to sit in the temple;

83 Ibid; p. 15.

84 G.C.Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 61.

85 Gurdev Singh, *Ideology of the Sikh Gurus*, Dhode Majra, Roper, 1990, p. 80.

86 Sohan Kavi, *Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1980, p. 150.

87 A.C.Banerjee, *The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Religion*, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, New Delhi, 1983, p. 138.

The present Guru remainth not in any one place.
 The former emperors used to visit the former Gurus;
 The present Guru was sent in to the fortress by the emperor.
 In former times the Guru's darbar could not contain the sect;
 The present Guru leadeth a roving life and fearth nobody.
 The former Gurus sitting on thrones
 used to consoles the Sikhs;
 The present Guru keepth dogs and hunteth.
 The former Gurus used to compose hymns,
 listen to them or sing them;
 The present Guru composeth not hymns or
 listenth to them or singeth to them.
 He keepeth not his Sikh followers with him,
 but takeneth of his faith and wicked persons
 as his guide and familiars.
 I say the truth within him cannot possibly be concealed;
 The true Sikh like bumblebees are enamored of his
 lotus feet, He supporteth a burden intolerable to others
 and assertsth not himself.⁸⁸

Though Guru Hargobind devoted a lot of his time to military activities but this has not affected his spiritual duties. Bhai Gurdas gives details of Guru Hargobind's daily life in these words "Guru Hargobind rose before dawn, bathed, dressed him in fully armor, and then used to go to Harimandir, God's temple, to worship. There he used to hear the *Japuji* and *Asa Di Var* being recited. He then preached to the Sikhs. He was not only a soldier but also a saint."⁸⁹ The militarism of Guru Hargobind was a part of his spiritual duties. But during that time only spiritual duties were not sufficient for the progress of the Sikh fold because Mughal government had not tolerated their religious identity. So Guru had adopted the policy of *miri- piri*.

88 *Var 26, Pauri , 24.*

89 *Var 26, Pauri , 30.*

Bhai Gurdas, after describing what the critics and slanders were saying about Guru Hargobind, has tried to give reasons for the step taken by the Guru. His explanation seems to make out that “the position of the Sikhs with the Guru was like the position of a crop for the farmer. When predators threaten the crop, just as it was appropriate for a farmer to put a fence to save the crop, so was the act of the Guru for the protection of the Sikh Sangat. The other simile that he has used is that just as the snake protects the sandal tree and just as the master of the house, in order to sleep in peace in the night, keeps a dog that remains awake while he sleeps, the Guru had desired the Sikhs to get armed.”⁹⁰

Bhai Gurdas justifies the policy of *Miri- Piri* adopted by Guru Hargobind as an act of protection of the Sikhs. Thus Guru Hargobind had changed the entire outlook of the Sikhs. He must defend themselves against political aggression with their own power. He “should not look to any supernatural power for this. Permitting a tyrant to commit atrocities is a sin. Force can be met only by force.”⁹¹ Besides bestowing spiritual guidance to their Sikhs, Guru had showed signs of temporal concerns and feelings of non-conformity whenever they face such situation. So policy of Guru Hargobind had proved practical origin of sovereign State of the Sikhs.

After that, another event occurred during the time of ninth Guru Teg Bahadur. Though in early life he had shown his metal as a sword man and warrior of extraordinary prowess but was he was calm and could not easily provoked. He was above from wordily temptation and an embodiment of forgiveness. During that time, “in the war of succession, Aurangzeb defeated his brothers and occupied the throne and started a reign of terror because he was told by his advisers Maulvis and Ulemas that if he wanted to convert India in to Dar-ul-Harb, he should convert the Brahmins of the country first because they were the real rulers of the Hindustan would have no roots.”⁹²

90 *Var 26, Pauri , 30.*

91 P.S. Gill, *History of the Sikh Nation*, New Academic publishing co., Jullundur, 1978, p. 115.

92 M.A. McAuliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV p. 369.

To full fill this dream of Dar-ul-Harb, “Aurangzeb issued orders that the Brahmins of Kashmir, Kashi, Pryag, Kurukshetra and Haridwar should be converted to Islam. The experiment of wholesale conversion was tried in Kashmir first. There were two reasons for this. In the first place, the Kashmiri pundits were supposed to be educated and it was thought that if they were converted, the inhabitants of Hindustan would readily follow their example; secondly, Peshawar and Kabul, Mohammedans countries, were near, and if the Kashmiri offered any resistance to their conversion, the Mohammedans might be tempted by promises of money and government appointment.”⁹³

During that time, Hindus were in great danger and Hindus could not find any powerful chieftain who could protect them. In this situation, the Brahmins from Kashmir had come to Guru Teg Bahadur and requested him for their protection from the Mughal persecution. Though Guru Teg Bahadur did not believe Brahminism and idol worship, but he did not turn down their request and told the Brahmins to go to Aurangzeb and tell him that they were ready to embrace Islam if Guru Teg Bahadur would first be converted. The Brahmins had done so. On this Aurangzeb gave order to assert the Guru. In his court, Aurangzeb had given two options to the Guru that either embrace Islam or show any miracle but Guru refused and bigot emperor gave him punishment. Guru Gobind Singh writes in *Bachitra Natak* about the martyrdom of his father:-

Guru Teg Bahadur was the protector of
the ‘Tilak and Janeau’ of the Hindus,
He performed a unique act in the Kaliyug.
He made the great sacrifice for the safe of man of faith.
He gave his head but uttered not a groan.
He did his deed to defend Dharma.
He gave away his head but weakened not his resolve.

93 Ibid; p. 369.

Casting off his bodily venture to the suzerain of Delhi.
He departed to the realms of the spirit.
None who came in to the world performed such deed as he did.
At the departure of Guru Teg Bahadur
there were mourning's in this world.
Laments of grief filled the world men
In the land of gods rang shouts of adoration.⁹⁴

Majority of the Sikh writers namely Mani Singh, Giani Gian Singh, Koer Singh, Kesar Singh Chibar, etc supported the theory of the Kashmiri Pundits and fanaticism of the emperor was the only cause of martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur. But the Persian texts like *Siar ul Mutakhrin* describes that Guru's temporal authority and opposition of Ram Rai, had become the main cause for his martyrdom. The western historians such as Malcolm and Cunningham also supported the view of Muslim writers and present Guru Teg Bahadur as a rebel and political offender. They held the view that Guru encouraged the refractory elements of the country and enter in his service and incited the people in general to rise against the Government. But before anything substantial could be achieved, he was overpowered, taken prisoner and brought Delhi where he was executed.

M.A. McAuliffe, who did a great tune-up to Sikhism through his work *The Sikh Religion*, is very critical about the Muslim records and especially the *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* about which he writes "the Muhammdan author of *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* states that Aurangzeb had the Guru's body cut in to pieces and suspended in deferent parts of the imperial capital. Whether this be true or not but it is certain that the other circumstances related by the Muhammdan writers are utterly incompatible with the whole tenor of Guru Teg Bahadur's life and writings and cannot be accepted as even an approach to history."⁹⁵

94 *Dasam Granth*, P. 54.

95 M.A. McAuliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 295.

I.B.Banerjee states that “the Guru felt victim to religious bigotry and it is understandable why later Muslim writers sought to colour the issue by giving it a political colour.”⁹⁶ A similar view has been expressed by G.C.Narang. Ganda Singh, Teza Singh, Gurbachan Singh, Harbans Singh and Trilochan Singh have also agreed with this view and accepted the traditional theory of Kashmiri Pundits. The most authentic cause of Guru’s martyrdom has given by his own son and successor Guru Gobind Singh in *Dasam Granth*:

Without a murmur he gave up his life for the sake of holly men.

For the sake of Dharma he gave up his head.

He did not divulge the secret of his nearness of God.

The true devotee of God shuns the magical tricks of a miracle.

Guru Tegh Bahadur did what none else could do.

He defined the ruler of Delhi to the point of sacrificing his life.⁹⁷

Thus the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur was the outcome of Aurangzeb’s policy of converting Hindus to Islam. Rattan Singh Bhangu has also stated:

Henceforth did the power of the Mughals starts declining;

Henceforth the kingdom of Delhi started disintegration.⁹⁸

It is now justified the oppressed people’s right to take to arms to revolt against a tyrannical system. To resort to sword is legitimate in defense of *Dharma* and self-respect but the sword should be used only after all other means have been exhausted (*Chu kar aj hamh hilte dar gujashat, halal asat burdan ba Shamshir dast*).⁹⁹

After the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur his son Gobind Rai (later Guru Gobind Singh) had become the Guru who created the institution of Khalsa. Means of word Khalsa is pure. For protection of religion and downtrodden, Guru had prepared a

96 I.B. Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 63.

97 *Dasam Granth*, p. 54.

98 Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 139.

99 *Dasam Garnth*, p. 1390.

force of sant- sipahis which is called Khalsa. Guru Gobind Singh himself states about his aim for the creation of the Khalsa:

For this task have I come to this world and
The divine Guru has sent me for the sake of Dharma,
Ordering me to spread the faith everywhere
and to subdue the evil-doers.
I make it clear to the holy men that I have taken birth for this purpose;
To promulgate Dharma, to raise the holy
and to caste out the evil-doers from their very roots.¹⁰⁰

To protect the religious freedom, Guru decided to make the wearing of arms a religious duty for his followers. Kavi Senapat, who had spent a long time with Guru Gobind Singh, writes about Guru's purpose of creating the Khalsa that "the Khalsa has been created to annihilate the wicked and the sinful and to remove all adversity".¹⁰¹ In the belief of Senapat, the Khalsa were bound to full fill this purpose, building upon unshakeable foundation.¹⁰² By the institution of the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh established a direct link with his disciples, putting an end thereby to the undesirable agency of the masand. The masands were removed and everyone was made a Khalsa.¹⁰³

Koer Singh also gives a detailed account in *Guru Bilas Patshahi 10* that how Guru Gobind Singh invited congregation, called five Sikhs to come forward for offering their heads, prepared the baptismal amrit and how after baptizing the *Panj Piaras* (five benevolence), the Guru had accepted the baptism at their hands.¹⁰⁴ The Guru associated the Panth with the *Akal Purakh* and equated the fraternity of the Khalsa with himself. The Khalsa was created after abolishing the four castes:

The four castes were welded in to one,
This fraternity was hammed the Khalsa.¹⁰⁵

100 Ibid; p. 54.

101 Senapat, *Sri Guru Sobha*, (ed.by) Ganda Singh, Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, Patiala, 1967, p. 21.

102 Ibid; p. 5.

103 Ibid; p. 24.

104 Koer Singh, *Guru Bilas Patshahi*10, pp. 127-130.

105 Ibid; p. 143.

The purpose of the creation of the Khalsa was the destruction of the enemies and the preservation and protection of the saints so that the saintly soul's lives in peace and the rulers praise the Lords:

The saints live in everlasting peace.

He, who rules, sings thy praises.¹⁰⁶

Secondly Khalsa also aimed at the establishment of an ideal State. The ruler of such state must be attached with the *Waheguru* because God is the source of all powers. The following lines clears that the Guru aimed at bringing about a political change:

May your rule be established,
the virtuous may be live in peace in thy kingdom.¹⁰⁷

He who becomes my disciples
He shall rule and get salvation.¹⁰⁸

The Guru prayed to God
to bestowed power on all his Sikhs.¹⁰⁹

Koer Singh writes that the Guru had set up the ideal of establishing their own rule for his Sikhs. Koer Singh seems to be reproducing the utterance of Guru Gobind Singh himself in some of his lines:

The Sikh rule shall be established
the entire place offering before them.¹¹⁰

Rattan Singh Bhangu mentions that “the Khalsa would not accept any other sovereign because the Khalsa is the embodiment of the divine sovereignty. Thus by connecting the Khalsa with the divine, he has accorded divine approval to the Sikh struggle for establishing for establishing its sovereignty.”¹¹¹ He also describes the purpose which motivated Guru Gobind Singh for the creation of the Khalsa. “The

106 Ibid; p. 114.

107 Ibid; p. 114.

108 Ibid; p. 136.

109 Ibid; p. 139.

110 Ibid; p. 135.

111 Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 74.

Guru tried to bring together the various castes, give them a sense of unity, create in them political awareness. The Guru wanted to give power to the poor Sikhs so that they remember forever the period of Guru's reign."¹¹²

Giani Gian Singh, author of *Panth Parkash*, writes that "the Khalsa worships only the creator. It loves weapons and martial arts. The members of the Khalsa are called Singhs. They attached themselves to a different task."¹¹³ "The Khalsa has the capacity to protect those who seek refuge with them which is also the distinct political purpose of the Khalsa."¹¹⁴ The Guru wanted to make it possible for the weaker sections of the society to share power and decentralization of power started:

I shall make the sparrows overcome the hawks.

I shall make my sons kill the lions.

The Singhs shall rule.

Then only I shall be called the savior of the poor.¹¹⁵

Khalsa is an army of God to save the freedom of mankind. The determination to give political power to neglect backward sections of the society was the main motivation behind the creation of the Khalsa. "The order of the Khalsa is a political with no ambition directly to achieve political power but inspiring and influencing politics for the ultimate establishment of a universal equalitarian global fraternity."¹¹⁶

Some historians find only political aim and felling of avenge his father's death behind the creation of the Khalsa. For instance Ghulam Muhiyud Din alias Bute Shah's version of the Guru Gobind Singh's speech at Keshgarh in which he (Guru) said:

You (the Sikhs) should remember that Musalmans have maltreated us.

They have killed our ancestors and have been uprooted from our

homes; we have taken refuge from their tyranny in these mountains.

112 Ibid; p. 72-73.

113 Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 727.

114 Ibid; p. 1005.

115 Ibid; p. 223.

116 Kapur Singh, *Parasaraprasna*, p. 40.

Now, in accordance with the mandatory wish of my father, Guru Teg Bahadur, I cherish the desire of avenging myself upon my father's murderers.¹¹⁷

But there is no reference of any mandatory wish of Guru Teg Bahadur in *Bachitra Natak* which was composed before Guru Gobind Singh delivered his message at Keshgarh. In this context McAuliffe presents Guru Tegh Bahadur's written message for his son Gobind Rai, from Delhi as follows:

My strength is exhausted. I am in chains and have no recourses.

Saith Nanak, God is my refuge;

He will succor me as He did with the elephant.

My associates and companions have abandoned me;

no one remaineth with me to the last;

saith Nanak, in this calamity God is mine only support.

The Nanak remaineth, saints remain,

Guru Gobind remaineth; saith Nanak,

few are they who in this world follow the Guru's instruction.¹¹⁸

The statement of Bute Shah attributed to Guru Gobind is not correct. However J.D. Cunningham writes that Guru acted ... "under the mixed impulse of avenging his own and his country's wrong... He became an irreconcilable foe of the Mahometan name. His aim was far-reaching; in the heart of the powerful empire he sent himself the task of subverting it."¹¹⁹

Similarly G.C. Narang writes that "the Guru's purpose was to avenge his father's death and strike a blow at the power of Aurangzeb."¹²⁰ Thus, Narang has followed Cunningham and both have depended for their accounts on *Tarikh-e-Punjab* which is also not faithful. However the aim of the Khalsa was not any feeling of avenges but to liberate society from the tyranny of the enemies of the peace.

117 J.S.Grewal & S.S.Bal, *Guru Gobind Singh*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1967, p. 184.

118 M.A. McAuliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 161.

119 J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 75-76.

120 G.C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 76.

On establishment of the Khalsa Panth, Guru Gobind Singh patterned the life of the Sikhs on the concept of the *Miri- Piri* for each individual, which started by the sixth Guru Hargobind as “the spiritual achievement should be combined with physical power, because the one without the other may degenerated in to hypocrisy or ruthless tyranny. Therefore the Guru emphasized that it is only such people as they are at once saints and soldiers who can resist evils or fight against tyranny and help in the creation of conditions necessary to the advancement of the individual and the society.”¹²¹ In Sikhism spiritual and temporal powers are considers as inseparable.

Sikhism co-relates the value of religion and State because whereas the functions of the religion impart moral direction to the State there are the function of the State which provide security for religion and ensuring equality, justice and welfare to mankind.

Guru Gobind Singh created new type of State. To achieve this purpose, “Guru established City State in Anadpur Sahib. It was the first sovereign Sikh City State established by Guru Gobind Singh. This State was sovereign because the Guru was called Sacha Padshah. Ambassadors came to his darbar from many kingdoms; the Guru moved among them like an emperor. A big drum was prepared; it was called Ranjeet Nagara (drum of victory in the war). The drum was beaten early in the morning everyday at about 3 am. When the Sikhs were required to get up for prayer, followed by drill of the soldiers, it was also beaten when Guru went on hunting expeditions. Such practiced were required to get up for prayer, followed by drill of the soldiers; it was also beaten when the Guru went on the hunting expeditions. Such practices were followed only by Rajas. This was the sign of sovereignty or a separate State.”¹²²

However the real object of this City State was to secure a place the Sikhs could protect themselves from the tyranny of the Government. By establishing the

121 Fouja Singh, “Sikh Political Ideology through the Centuries,” in *The Sikh Review*, June, Calcutta, 1965, p. 73.

122 Pritam Singh Gill, *History of the Sikh Nation*, New academic Publishing Company, Jullundur, 1998, p 206.

tradition of *Punj Piaras* and *Gurmata*, the Guru set up democratic institutions.”¹²³ The Guru encouraged the people to protest against the oppressive Government and applied the method of selection by choosing *Panj Piara*. Soon people had learned the lesson of individual freedom from the Guru and gather under the leadership of the Guru. Those people had ready to sacrifice for the sake of Guru or religion.

Guru Gobind Singh bestowed his sovereignty to the Khalsa and gave great respect to the decision taken by the assembly of the Sikhs. In this context, Teja Singh and Ganda Singh state

Let him who wishes to see me (Guru) go to an assembly of Sikhs and approach them with faith and reverence; he will surely see me among them. Although a leader, he nevertheless considered himself a servant of his people: To serve them, he said, pleases my heart; no other service is so dear to my soul. All the substance in my house, nay, my, soul and body are at their disposal. Guru Gobind Singh through his baptism poured his life in to his Sikhs and invested them with his own personality. There was about him a stern Olympian air, which he imparted to his followers. His impress not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds, but- contrary to the experience of ethnological experts – it also operated materially and gave amplitude to their physical frames. They came to be regarded as models of physical beauty and stateliness of manner.¹²⁴

The Sikhs follow the words of Guru by heart. “Even those people who had been considered as dregs of humanity were changed, as if by magic, in to something rich and strange. The sweeper, barbers and confectioners, who had never so much as touched the sword and whose whole generations had lived as groveling slaves of the so-called higher classes, became under the stimulating leadership of Guru Gobind

123 Ibid; p 257.

124 Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1989, p. 68.

Singh, doughty warriors who never shrank from fear and who were ready to rush into the jaws of death at the bidding of their Guru.”¹²⁵

The aim of Guru Gobind Singh in founding the Khalsa was to build up a Panth of the purified ones who would be free from the evils of society. For Sikh ideology, only he is the true and pure warrior who fights against the exploitation of downtrodden. His sword is the mean of protection of weaker section not an appliance of showing their lust and greed. Thus Khalsa is the army of that purified or selective people (*sant- sipahis*) who ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of mankind.

Therefore ideological foundation Sikh State has been laid down by Guru Nanak and with the passage of time it took practical shape. Guru Nanak demands justice from God for cruelty of Babar’s invasion. But at the same time Guru Nanak appealed to the people to fight against cruel State. Thus Gurbani reflects Guru Nanak’s response to the contemporary politics and suggests His serious concern with politics of His time. Dialogues between Guru Angad and Humayun also set up an example of bravery and freedom of Sikhism. The fake allegation of Jahangir on the fifth Guru Arjun also not worked. Instead of bowing head before the authority he accepted the will of God and sacrificed his life. Later on thousand of the Sikhs by following the path of the Gurus sacrificed everything for the cause of religion. The sixth Guru Hargobind challenged the cruel Government and fought against them.

The death of their beloved and innocent Guru taught them a lesson that without political freedom it is difficult to obtain spiritual salvation. The decision of supporting Kashmiri pundits by Guru Tegh Bahadur was also the act of challenge the cruel authority. Later on, creation of Khalsa by tenth Guru Gobind Singh was an open confront with the Mughal Government and establishment of sovereign rule of the Sikhs.

125 Ibid; p. 68.

Part- II

3. Sikh State after Guru Period

After Guru Gobind Singh, the political leadership of the Sikhs came into the hands of Banda Bahadur who came to Punjab and started his military campaigns against the Mughal rule in Punjab. He acquired a large territory of the Punjab and established the first sovereign state. He stationed at Mukhlispur as his headquarters and started repairing its old neglected fort and renamed it Lohgarh or iron castle. He assumed royal authority and started coins in the name of Guru. They bore the following inscription on one side:

*Sikka zad bar har dum alam Tegh-i-Nanak Wahib ast.*¹²⁶

(By the grace of the True Lord is struck the coin in the two worlds. The sword of Nanak is the granter of all boons, and the victory is of Guru Gobind Singh the king of kings.)

The reverse had the following words in praise of his newly founded capital

Zarb ba amaan dehar musavarat sahar.

*Zinat-ul-takhat mubarak vakht.*¹²⁷

(Struck in the city of peace, illustrating the beauty of civic life and the ornament of the blessed throne)

He also introduced an official seal for his state documents and letters patent. It contained the following inscription which was expressive of his deep sense of devotion and loyalty to his master:

Deg o Teg o Fateh Wa nusrat be-dirang,

*Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.*¹²⁸

(The kettle and the sword (symbols of charity and power), victory and ready patronage have been obtained from Guru Nanak-Gobind Singh.) He had started his own regional year from the date of his conquest of Sirhind.

126 Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bhahadur*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2006, p. 56.

127 Ibid; p. 56.

128 Ibid; p. 56.

Ganda Singh writes that he (Banda Bahadur) “introduced his own *Sammat* or year commencing with his victory at Sirhind as the Mughal rulers did with their years of accession. This was done by him to create in the minds of the Sikhs a spirit of equality with the ruling people and to impress upon them that they were in no way inferior to them.”¹²⁹ Thus according to Ganda Singh, for establishment a spirit of equality with the ruling class, he introduced his own *Sammat*. Ganda Singh writes that when “Banda Singh Bahadur established the Sikh rule, the prestige of the Sikhs was raised and their name and sight become a terror to others.”¹³⁰

The history of the Sikhs from the fall of Banda to the establishment of the state in 1765 is a record of the struggle between the Khalsa on the one hand and the Mughals and the Abdali on the other. During this time price on the heads on the Sikhs was fixed for totally finish them. The Sikhs had not only to fight for their lives but asserted their superior right to rule over their own land. Their will to continue struggle for their self- respect and create their own state at that time was a wonderful example which only exist in history of the Sikhs.

During 1758 to 1765 the Khalsa wanted nothing less than sovereignty. After conquering all obstacles raised by Mughals and Afghans, the Sikhs become victorious to establish their own State. The Khalsa looked upon this achievement as a mark of the Guru’s special favor and on the coin; they repeated the same inscription which had already appeared on the seals of Banda Bahadur and the coins of Jassa Singh:

Deg o tegh o fateh o nusrat be-dirang

*Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.*¹³¹

The struggle of the Sikhs with Mughals and Afghans ended with the establishment of the Sikhs as a sovereign power in Punjab. Resultantly accepting the view of J.C Archer, Dorothy Field, I.B. Banerjee, G.C. Narang, Teja Singh, Kapur Singh and Sher Singh, it is not wrong to say that the Steel for the sword of Guru Gobind was provided by Guru Nanak.

129 Ibid; p. 60.

130 Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 101-102.

131 Ibid; p. 128.

Summing up

The founder of Sikhism (Guru Nanak) started the institution of Sangat-Pangat and Gurugadi. Sangat-Pangat had not only leveling and equalizing effect on the Sikhs but they had also strengthened their cohesion as a separate identity and democratized their social religious and political organization. Sangat unites the Sikhs for their common cause. Likewise, Guru Nanak started the institution of Gurugadi and appointed Bhai Lehna as his successor. If He had not started this tradition, the Sikh religion have been ended with the Guru Nanak and if it had happened then Guru Nanak has been recognized only as great reformer not as the founder of Sikh religion.

Then there would be no place of Miri-Piri and Khalsa society in the history of the Sikhs. Tenth Guru established the first City State at Anandpur Sahib and established the signs of sovereignty. Later on this State developed in to sovereign Sikh rule in the form of the missal in all over Punjab. The political dynamism of the Sikh Gurus transformed the Sikh society which was an outcome of the spirit of defiance, against oppression and injustice. The Sikhs had followed the path of the Gurus and continued the struggle against injustice and cruelty. During eighteenth century the Sikhs emerged like protectors of human rights and save the honor of women. With the golden principles of equality, humility and compassion, learnt from the Gurus, the Sikhs had laid down the foundation of their own sovereign rule over Punjab. Thus it was the political ideology of Guru Nanak and His successors, which provide inspiration to the establishment of Sikh State which was remarkably different from the Mughals.

The Sikh rulers by following the teachings of the Sikh Gurus had established a new political and social set up in their States. During this period there is no place for any lust and greed in them for attaining authority. They just followed the idea of service of mankind. They equating themselves with their soldiers and declaring themselves as the humblest servants of their subjects. Though the Sikhs suffered a lot in the rigid Mughal State but when they became ruler, they observed liberal traditions and showed full religious tolerance toward their subjects. They were not revengeful or

intolerance to the Muslims. The Sikh Sardars who were so well versed in the art of war, were no less adept in the art of peace. Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Ala Singh, Lehna Singh Bhangi and Charhat Singh were great soldiers but at the same time they were well knew the value of peace and always trying to create a peaceful environment in their States.

In this new set up a great number of people of lower castes and downtrodden had seen all- round development because of the equal facilities provided to all the backward classes. The concept of political equality were implemented by Sixth and tenth Gurus. From this stunning concept of political equality, people of the lower classes were also allowed entering in the army and with the passage of time they had fully aware of their rights and gave their contribution in the state activities or created their own state (missal). Within the Sikh state discrimination on the basis of gender also abolished. Women also got equal rights to men. They learned about self defense and when need arose they also participated in state affairs. These new social circumstances had changed the nature of society in Sikh state. In short the state established by the Sikhs during eighteenth century is a practical origin of welfare state in which every inhabitant either they were in majority or minority had equal rights to enjoy.

CHAPTER-4

NATURE OF SIKH RULE: POLITICAL ASPECT

In this chapter we have made an attempt to understand the political aspect of the Sikh rule. We have concentrated on the depiction of the struggle of the Sikhs that what aim they have for struggle and how they have performed their duties in the political sphere. In the early eighteenth century the Sikhs fought against the Mughal Government for their freedom. They had to give a large number of sacrifices but they became more committed and powerful. The brave Sikhs were attached to the Guru. Bravery here does not mean merely fighting by brave soldiers in the battle field. It is in the broad sense covering the courage, determination and the heroism shown by these people in and outside the battle field. So the verse from *Rahitnama: Khalsa Soi Kare Nit Jung*¹ should not be misunderstood to mean that a Sikh is a fighter who always fights with everyone. In fact the philosophical importance of this truth refers to the community of struggle. Whereas the weak persons are unable to face the adverse circumstances and situation and try to make a compromise at the cost of their self respect and honor, a Sikh in that sense ever fighter. The Sikhs always follow the teachings of Gurus which taught them to:

Neither frightens anyone, nor be afraid;
says Nanak, who does so, is divinely wise.²

For them:

Who lives without honor and respect,
For him eating anything is forbidden.³

1. Political Aim of the Sikhs

The Sikhism believe that without self-governance, spirituality cannot be survived (as the slavery has no choice but to yield), so for survival of their religion or spirituality, the Sikhs decided to achieve their own State. On this basic principle of the

1 Shamsher Singh Ashok, (ed.) *Guru Khalsa de Rahitname*, Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak committee, Amritsar, 1979, p. 54.

2 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; p. 1426.

3 *Ibid*; p. 142.

Sikh political ethos, the Sikhs had challenged the fanatic government of Mughals. But they did not leave the path of righteousness even in the field of battle also.

During the struggle period they followed principles of the Gurus for warfare in the battlefield. The first and the most important principle was that war should not be for any selfish or greedy purpose. It should be fought only in self defense, or in defense of one's faith or nation or the weaker section of the society. It should be fought against those forces that do not deserve to be rulers because of their policies of injustice and repression. Though the enemy in large number, there should not be any fear while fighting. Because they have the confidence of winning battle which fought for the right cause, should always be there in the mind.

The Guru's words: *deh shiva var mohe ehe* always resound in the ears of the Sikhs. they beg sacred power from the Guru and never think of any pessimistic results. Hope and optimism along with faith in God should be qualities of the fighting Sikhs. All the Sikhs, being Guru's son did not give up their religion for any temptation or out of any fear. Many of them were offered all the comforts and luxuries, but they could not betray their faith of their Guru.

The example of Bota Singh and Garja Singh presented the practical aspect that how they applied their Guru's teaching in realistic life and sacrificed their lives for the model of such State given by the Gurus. They were living in hiding during those days. One day they heard a unknown voice remarking that "now there is no Sikh because Sikhs would never hide themselves."⁴ This remark hurt them and for realized their presences, they started collecting tax on road near Sarai Nur-ud-din near Taran Tarn.

People gave them tax without noticed them but tax collection was not their aim. They wanted to convey a message to the government that Sikhs are Lions. They sent a letter to the provincial Governor which gives an interesting reading and shows boldness and frankness with which the Sikhs lived even in such hard times. The letter reads as under:

4 Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Sri Gur Panth Prakash*, (trans. by) Kulwant Singh, Vol. II, Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, 2010, p. 163.

*Chithi likhi Singh Bota, hath vich sota vich rah khalota,
anna laayea gade nu paisa laaya khota,
akho bhabi khano nu, iyon aakhe Sing Bota.*⁵

Bota Singh writes this letter with club in hand,
on the road do I stand. I levy an anna on a cart
and a paisa on a donkey.

Tell bhabi Khano what Bota Singh says.

The wife of the Mughal governor is burlesqued here using her popular name Khano. Bota Singh calls her his *bhabi*, i.e. brother's wife with whom one could take liberties. The concerned authority could not tolerate such sovereign action of the two Sikhs. Both of them were summoned by the authority but the brave Sikhs refused to go.

Rattan Singh Bhangu gives a detailed account that how the envoy of authority promising "both Sikhs to intercede on their behalf with the Nawab and they would get the Singhs pardoned and be let off. But the Singhs rejected that they would loath to save their skins, since they were desperate to sacrifice their lives."⁶ A contingent of hundred horses was sent for their arrest. This contingent had to fight and the brave Sikhs died a heroic death against heavy odds. During this hard time the Sikhs always remember the teachings of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* which taught them to:

Remain firm, never wobble and
Have the mainstay of the Guru's word.
Then you shall be hailed in the entire world and
Your face shall be bright in the court of the Lord.⁷

Comparing with the Maratha war, N.K. Sinha quotes Ranade's remark that "mere freebooters and plunderers never could have obtained success in such a war against such a foe. It was a higher moral force which brought out all the virtues of the best men of the nation."⁸

5 Ibid; p. 164.

6 Ibid; p. 165.

7 *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; p. 678.

8 N.K.Sinha, *The Rise of Sikh Power*, A. Mukherjee & Co. Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta, 1936, p. 51.

Sinha also quotes the views of Jungnama's writer Qazi Nur Muhammad, who was opponent writer, even he states that "leaving aside their mode of fighting, there is another point in which they excel all other fighting people: – In no case would they slay a coward or put any obstacle in the way of the fugitive.

They do not plunder the wealth and ornaments of a woman, be shed a well-to-do lady or a maid servant.”⁹

According to him “Dal Khalsa and its heroes should not receive a sneer from us merely because they plundered. They also fought most effectively and were largely responsible for stemming the tide of Durrani invasions. They are not to be judged, according to an ideal code of ethics, but by the standard that prevailed in the eighteenth century.”¹⁰

The Sikhs were heroes, like “the corsairs and privateers, the ‘sea beggars’ chartered by William of Orange to prey upon Spanish shipping, who then later laid the foundation of Dutch maritime power or like the buccaneers of the reign of Queen Elizabeth – Drake, Frobisher, Hawkins, Raleigh, who later laid the foundations of British naval power, and in spite of their career of plunder, they were looked back upon as national heroes.”¹¹ “The Sikh freebooters of the period of independence occupied a similar role in the history of the Sikh militarism.”¹²

The Sikh history is full of gruesome tales, “they fought, half naked, without food, without adequate ammunition, without access to places of habitation, without medical aid when injured or sick. They kept in view only their sacred mission and fought on against the tyrants. Their only hope was the benediction of the Guru. This was the *moksha* for them. This was the treasure aimed at. The Sikh history is a long tale of sacrifices, persecutions, martyrdoms, reverses and victories against the enemies. They wished to establish God's kingdom on earth. They saw the individual and society linked together.”¹³

9 Ibid; p. 51.

10 Ibid; p. 119.

11 Ibid; p. 118-119.

12 Ibid; p. 119.

13 Diwan Singh, *Revolution of Guru Nanak*, People Publishing House, Chandigarh, 1993, pp. 128-29.

In the guidance of the Guru the Sikhs got a fighting spirit and they were not afraid even from the death. In fact they became fearless warriors. This was new spirit created by the Gurus. Before the advent of Sikhism, it was the fear of death which provoked the men to yield before the Turk or Mughal tyrants. It was the fear which led the men to bow before injustice. It was the fear of insecurity which made men timid. It was fear of want and humiliation which made the low castes to fall down before the high castes. The Sikhs freed the men from every kind of fear as they learnt from their Gurus. This was the path of Mukti in Sikhism. Guru Gobind Singh had taught them that it was not the power but ethics and must determine the policy of a nation and a nation must consist of a whole people, not a society broken up by caste, color, creed or a superior race.

This “democratic spirit which the Guru infused in the Khalsa brotherhood, in which the highest was equal to the lowest, and where a small, well knit ideas inspired band of men and women fought and acted in the name, and for the sake, of a whole people has made.”¹⁴ Guru Gobind Singh said that the Khalsa belongs to God and so victory also in every field is of God. *Wahe Guru ji ka Khalsa and Wahe Guru ji ki Fateh* is part of Sikh life.

He who only earns but does not share, he who only gathers but does not sacrifice, he who run after the transitory allurements of life but is not dedicated to God for ever and at all times, cannot claim the Guru as his own.¹⁵ His last prayer was as it would also be of those who seek to follow:

O God, there's nothing that's mine in me:
All that is mine belongs to thee,
Then I surrendered to thee what is thine,
O what it is then that belongs to me?¹⁶

As per Sikhism all equal to God, nobody is superior, nobody is prince and none pauper. Sovereignty did not lie in a single man or king but it lay in the Khalsa

14 Ibid; p. 161.

15 Gopal Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, DTF Publishers, New Delhi, 1975, p. 75.

16 Ibid; p. 75.

(community), whether they were low or high. The letter of Mata Sudari also confirmed the fact that Guru had bestowed sovereignty on the whole Panth and not any individual:

*Bande ko khijmat deyi, deyi Patshahi nahin,
Deyi patshahi Panth nij, aap sache patshahi.*¹⁷

Gurus taught the Sikhs that put on the arms for the righteousness is the main duty of human being but they never support the policy of *Sam, Dam, Dand* and *Bhed* which hold that a person can do everything for getting victory means by hook or crook. The Sikhs had followed the instructions of the Gurus and placed a very high standard of war morality at that time.

2. Political Institutions

Political freedom was the main aim of Sikhism because rigid and cruel government of that time did not tolerate the existence of a liberal movement like Sikhism which preached people real meaning of religion. On the other side, Sikh political thoughts were colored by the ideas or principles of religion which was very much concerned with society. The emerging Sikh institutions are based on the ethical doctrines of the Sikh Gurus and the most important and vital institution innovated by the Gurus. The political institutions of *Akal Takhat, Sarbat Khalsa, Gurmatta, Dal Khalsa, Missal* and *Rakhi* had emerged.

2.1 Akal Takht

The Akal Takht is a place of Akal Purakh or God. It signifies Sikh claim to temporal sovereignty (*Miri*). The aim and object of this temporal sovereignty is realization of a new socio- political order characterized by the value of equality, liberty and justice, without any distinctions of caste, creed or race described by Guru Arjun as *Halemi Raj*. The practice of Gurmata which give the direction to the activities of the community was started from here. It also became a seat of the Sarbat Khalsa, a Theo-political body of the Sikhs that retains its validity till the present time.

17 Diwan Singh, *Revolution of Guru Nanak*, p. 275.

While interpreting the concept of Akal Wajir Singh writes that “Akal of the Sikh conception is not consciousness pure and simple, blank and void, but is creative spirit, as the expression ‘*Karta Purkh*’ implies. In other words, creativity is the core of Akal. And it is creativity that shows up in the dimension of Kal.”¹⁸ Further he writes that “the conception of Akal, centre to Jaap Sahib, has percolated to the social, political and cultural life of the Sikh community. Inspired by its theme, they call the Gurus’ Bani ‘Akal Bani’. The political wing of the community is known Akali Dal. The slogan ‘Sat Sri Akal’ has become a form of greeting for the Punjabis in general. The process had been initiated much earlier, half a century before the advent of Guru Gobind Singh on the scene. The sixth Guru had already identified the throne built at Amritsar as ‘Akal Takht’ - the Timeless being.”¹⁹

After the martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev, the sixth Guru Hargobind realized that saintliness must be combined heroism and that it was a supreme duty to bear arms in defense of righteousness. “As the values of Sikh faith initiated by Guru Nanak got more and more crystallized they found concrete expression in the twin doctrine of Miri and Piri.”²⁰ At the time of His installation, Guru Hargobind directed Bhai Budha to amend the ceremony followed on such occasion and adorn him with two swords of Miri and Piri, symbolizing temporal and spiritual authorities.²¹ But here we make one thing clear that “awareness of Guru Nanak and other Gurus toward politics constructed concept of State and concept of Takhat has emerged from the beginning of Sikhism.”²²

The foundation of the Akal Takht by Guru bore a profound basic significant to this doctrine. It represented the temporal power of *Akal Purakh* (the throne of the immortal) and stood close to the Harmandir Sahib. This meant that the Sikhs acted in

18 Wajir Singh, *The Sikh Vision*, Ess Ess Publication, New Delhi, 1992, p. 30.

19 Ibid; p. 31.

20 G.S.Dhillon, *Religion and Politics: The Sikh Perspective*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1989, p. 13.

21 J.N.Sarkar, *A Short History of Aurangzeb*, Calcutta, 1929, p.15.

22 Jaspal Singh, *Raj da Sikh Sankalp*, Navyoug Publishers, New Delhi, 2009, p. 224.

devotion to their creator and professed independence of any earthly authority. As gesture of defiance to the rulers of the times, the Guru held court from there, from a throne higher than that of the emperors. The Guru came to be looked upon as *Sacha Patshah* and the assembly of his followers came to be known as *Darbar* or Court.²³

From here Guru Hargobind administered justice in a court and announced rewards, and honors. "Sitting on throne the Guru would watch the wrestling matches and shooting exercise, with arrows and matchlocks, performed in the open courtyard in the front of the *Akal Takhat*."²⁴ This enthused the Sikhs with fervor and strengthened their valour. Thus the Guru prepared the Sikhs for *Dharam Yudh* (a fight for righteousness). "He made it clear to everybody that fighting against the wrongs was not against the spirit of religion and that hunting and sport were not opposed to religious piety."²⁵ The Guru's fight was not for narrow selfish ends; it was for the deliverance of his countrymen from religious and political bondage for justice and human rights.

The Akal Takhat played active role to unite the Sikhs during their struggles against foreign invaders.

It was the venue for the biannual meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa on the occasions of Diwali and Baisakhi festivals. In these meetings, vital matters concerning problems and dangers confronted by the community were discussed and Gurmata (decisions in the name of Guru) passed. These Gurmata were strengthened feelings of unity and co-operation among the Sikhs and filled their drooping hearts with fresh dynamism and vigor. Like the Harmandir Sahib, the Akal Takhat, too, was made the target of attack by the enemies several times in order to annihilate the Sikhs.²⁶

23 John Clark Archer, *The Sikhs*, Princeton Press, Princeton, 1946, p. 59.

24 Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, Vol. I, Delhi, 1984, p. 157.

25 Ibid.

26 Madanjit Kaur, "The Harimandar Sahib", in Fauja Singh, (ed.) *The City of Amritsar*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1990, p.32.

In the turbulent period of the eighteenth century, the Sikhs assembled at the Akal Takhat to discuss matters of political importance. Meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa were convened to defend themselves against the Mughals threat of extinction and chalk out plans for their military operation. Many great martyrdom and triumphs have been associated with this religious Takhat. In the words of Rattan Singh Bhangu, “no better death is conceivable for a Sikh than that which over takes him while defending the great cause of Sikhism at this centre of Sikhism.”²⁷ It has unique distinction of being the symbol of Sikh struggle for independence over the centuries. Therefore, Akal Takhat stands as a living symbol of the feisty spirit of the Khalsa and of the socio- political urges that have vigorous the Sikhs over the years.

Akal Takhat is the symbol of sovereignty. It is also giver of principle of public interest and protector of the downtrodden. Akal Takhat acted as political authority for the Sikhs. Most important of all, this court had not delayed action like present judicial system. It gave immediate decisions on the problems of inhabitants. Thus it proved a blessing which brought justice within the approach of the downtrodden people.

2.2 Khalsa: Sikh Organization

Khalsa was founded by Guru Gobind Singh on the day of Baisakhi, was the essence of the mission of Guru Nanak. The Guru was keen that “the Khalsa should be distinct from the Hindus and the Muslims. The Guru adopted for himself and his followers the distinctive designation of *Singh* meaning literally a lion and symbolically a champion or warrior. The Singhs were to be saints and soldiers in one; very aptly described as saint-soldiers (*sant-sipahis*) were to be combining the piety of a saint and the strength and severity of soldiers.”²⁸

Guru Gobind Singh looked upon the sword “as a visible manifestation of supreme power to destroy evils. This concept was in consonance with the unity of *Miri* and *Piri* and the combination of the spiritual and temporal power in Sikhism. As there was not any place for caste and creed so everyone has freedom to join Khalsa

27 Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 325.

28 Kapur Singh, *Parasaraprasna*, p. 40.

society. The Khalsa was the visible image of the basic ideas and concepts, inherent in the spiritual thesis of Guru Nanak.”²⁹ The ideals of the Khalsa have been effectively enumerated by Bhai Nand Lal Goya:

Khalsa is one who does not speak ill of others;

Khalsa is one who fights in the front ranks;

Khalsa is one who conquers the five evils;

Khalsa is one who destroys doubt;

Khalsa is one who gives up ego;

Khalsa is one who keeps away from women, except his wife;

Khalsa is one who looks upon all his own;

Khalsa is one who attunes himself with God.³⁰

The Singh who died in the cause of God or Guru or the Khalsa was looked upon as *mukat* (a liberated soul). In the words of J.D. Cunningham “a living spirit possess the whole Sikh people and the impress of Gobind Singh has not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds but has operated materially and given amplitude to their physical frames.”³¹ Therefore, the aim of Khalsa

Envisaged bringing up a basic transformation in the social organization of the people with a view to making it possible for them to become members of a universal culture and an egalitarian society which knew no ethnicity or religion limitation of origin or habitat. The model for such a fraternity grounded in a universal culture, which represents a living synthesis of all the great cultures of the world, was to be the Khalsa, a model for the future world society. The idea of the kingdom of God and brotherhood of man was inherent in order of the Khalsa. It was the passionate conviction of the Gurus that the principles of politics which govern the relations between the rulers and the citizens

29 Ibid; p. 29.

30 Shamsheer Singh Ashok, (ed.) *Guru Khalsa de Rahitname*, p. 54.

31 J.D.Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 64.

should be so revolutionized as to bring them in complete accord with the principles of ethics.³²

According to Kapoor Singh “the founding of the Khalsa was in fact the creation of a common wealth (*Sanghas*) or a party in modern political parlance for the avowed purpose of facilitating the emergence of the global fraternity.”³³ In *Ardas* the Sikhs repeats in congregation throughout the world, every morning and evening and believe that Khalsa shall rule:

*Raj karega Khalsa, aaki rahe na koi,
Khawar hoi sabh milenge, bachei saran jo hoi.*³⁴

Khalsa means a person or group of the people which directly connected with the Guru. Guru lives in Khalsa and Khalsa is a form of Guru. Guru Gobind Singh himself declared that Khalsa is his form. Indeed, Guru created a direct link by Khalsa. The Sikhs everyday prays that the Khalsa shall become the supreme decision maker in human affairs. And all effective opposition shall cease. Those in the opposition camp shall eventually come round to the right way and progress can only thus be assured. In this context, Kapur Singh writes about the political aim of Khalsa that “the order of the Khalsa as divorced from political activity and not dedicated to the achievement of a universal equalitarian global fraternity, has no intelligible connotation”.³⁵ In the words of Bhai Nand Lal, a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh, “the Khalsa has to fight to the end for justice and freedom.”³⁶

The Khalsa is a democratic and fantastic model of social organization based on the convention of adherence to a code of discipline, voluntary association and religious collectivism and commitment for welfare of community. By founding institution of Khalsa, Guru gave freedom to choose the discipline of the Khalsa and become chosen one and to fight the cause of human freedom and righteousness.

32 Kapur Singh, *Parasaraprasna*, p. 40.

33 Ibid; p. 40.

34 Shamsheer Singh Ashok, (ed.) *Guru Khalsa de Rahitname*, p. 55.

35 Kapur Singh, *Parasaraprasna*, p.40.

36 Shamsheer Singh Ashok, (ed.) *Guru Khalsa de Rahitname*, p. 54.

2.3 *Sarbat Khalsa*

In the presence of Guru a meeting of the Sikhs called Sarbat Khalsa, literal meaning is the whole of the Khalsa community. This term came in to vogue after creation of the Khalsa especially in the eighteenth century which played a very important role in Sikh polity. “As the Sikh community developed and expanded, it had to face variegated problems, some at ideological level, some at socio-cultural plane and some at political level. To find out solution to these problems was a Herculean task which could only be accomplished at macro level. Therefore, the whole Sikh community was required to deliberate collectively to forge strategy to tackle those problems at different point of time. Luckily, the Sikhs lost no time in addressing themselves to this purpose.”³⁷

The Sikhs began to assemble mainly twice a year on Baisakhi and Diwali at Akal Takhat and in the presence of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* they started passing *Gurmatas*. These gatherings of the Khalsa acquired the designation of Sarbat Khalsa representing the whole Panth. Sarbat Khalsa often took up the following issues:

- To charter a particular course to meet the emergent conditions.
- To elect a leader for organizing and conducting expeditions.
- To form combination of two or more missals or of the entire Dal Khalsa.
- To resolve disputes among the Sikh Sardars.
- To decide the questions of foreign policy.
- To settle matters regarding the succession of the head of a missal.
- To frame plans of campaigns.
- To take stock of territorial acquisitions.
- To decide upon the punishment of their enemies.
- To erect new Gurdwaras and to reconstruct old ones.³⁸

37 Surjit Singh Gandhi, *The Sikhs in the Eighteenth Century*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1999, p. 331.

38 Ibid; pp. 333-334.

Sarbat Khalsa is unique institution and historians describe its various features from different perspectives. Henry T. Prinsep notes 'Sarbat Khalsa' as an assembly of the chiefs, "there was generally an assembly of the chiefs, called the Sarbat Khalsa, held twice a year at Amritsar during the Baisakhi and Diwali festivals which occur in April and October."³⁹ Cunningham equates Sarbat Khalsa as common meetings of Sikh community. He writes that "Year by year the 'Sarbat Khalsa' or whole Sikh people, met once at least at Amritsar, on the occasion of the festival of the mythological Rama, when the cessation of the periodical rains rendered military operations practicable."⁴⁰ He qualifies the idea of general council or convention by making Gurmata the assembly of the chiefs.⁴¹

Referring Sarbat Khalsa as a plenary session of the Khalsa Teja Singh and Ganda Singh state that "in practice the Sikh congregation would sit together, with the Holy Granth in their midst and deliberating over questions of common interest would give their decisions in the form of resolutions, called Gurmata. All Sikhs were expected to receive them as decisions of the Guru and any attempt made to contravene them was looked upon as an act of sacrilege. Such meetings of whole people called the Sarbat Khalsa were to be held twice a year on the occasions of Diwali (October) and Baisakhi (April)."⁴²

Fauja Singh writes that, "Sarbat Khalsa chose a committee to carry on Gurmata into effect. Such committee was answerable for its work to the parent body which had the power to change it whenever it was deemed necessary. The principle of responsibility involved in this process was useful and necessary to keep the leadership on guard. However, when Sardars met under emergent circumstances in view of a grave situation, taking decisions might have been confined to a few who happened to attend. Generally, anybody could attend the meeting. The resolutions were not voted

39 Henry T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, p. 26.

40 J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 94.

41 Ibid; p. 112.

42 Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 155.

upon individually or passed by majority but carried *nem con...*”⁴³ He sums up that the basic ideas kept before them by the members of the assembly were those of equality, unanimity and responsibility.

According to Bhagat Singh “the Sarbat Khalsa or Khalsa ji was a gathering of the community because it was not any Sardars’s assembly nor were the deliberations of the national problems the monopoly of the chiefs. Each Sardar had his companions sitting behind him and he participated in the deliberations on behalf of his men. If the followers had any point to make, they did it through their Sardar or they could do it direct.”⁴⁴

He states that the “ideas of equality entitled every member of the community including women to attend and participate in the deliberations of the assemblies. This right of participation in the discussions had to be exercised personally and directly and not through elected or nominated representatives. The principle of unanimity was based on the belief that the *Khalsa* was an embodiment of the holy Guru and that all their assemblies were made sanctimonious by the Guru’s presence in them. Therefore, all collective deliberations were conducted in a detached manner.”⁴⁵

Further he states that “the councils of *Sarbat Khalsa* had a variety of problems for their deliberations. The Sarbat Khalsa elected the Jathedar or the chief leader of the Dal Khalsa, chose agents who were entrusted with powers to negotiate with others on behalf of the Sikhs. Secondly by Gurmata the Sikhs decided the foreign policy to be pursued by them. Thirdly, they drew up plans of military operations against the common enemies of the community. Fourthly, they took up the private feuds of the Sikh chiefs; sometimes cases of disputed successions were brought before the diet for its verdict as a judicial body. And fifthly, they took measures for the spread of the Sikh faith and management of the Gurudwara.”⁴⁶

43 Fauja Singh, “Political Ideas of the Sikhs during the 18th to 20th Century,” *The Punjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1976, pp. 198-99.

44 Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity*, p. 112.

45 Ibid; p. 113.

46 Ibid; p. 115.

After 1765 when the Sikhs assumed sovereignty of different parts of the province, “the meetings of these councils became less frequent but they continued to be held occasionally till 1805 when Ranjit Singh had been securely settled at Lahore and there were no problems left confronting the Sikh community.”⁴⁷

He remarks that the Sarbat Khalsa’s meetings held for national concerns, every Sikh had the right to speak and express his views in the debates. Therefore it was the whole assembly that decided the matters. Quoting N.K. Sinha,⁴⁸ he states that a real democratic element was there in their constitution and therefore “in external appearance it was an aristocracy but in spirit it was undoubtedly a democracy.”⁴⁹

As per Bhagat Singh “the Sarbat Khalsa could not be central government of the missals. The assembly had no political, jurisdiction or military sanction over the individual chiefs, nor was it necessary. Their attendance was not compulsory but the chiefs considered it obligatory to attend specially with a view to promoting the general interests of the community.”⁵⁰

He further states that when missals established “the Sikh chiefs became a little indifferent to attend the meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa at Amritsar. Now their meetings were attended by few chiefs. But the absentees never meant any opposition to such meetings or any resistance to decisions taken there. Being busy in their internal affairs, the Sardars, sometimes, just could not attend. There were absolutely no such things as intentionally breaking away of the Sardars from the Sarbat Khalsa with a calculated design to weaken this institution.”⁵¹

Similarly Indu Banga States that “the Sikhs periodically gathered at Amritsar and collectively decided matters of offence and defense. They evolved a strategy for joint military action, combining the forces of different leaders under the general

47 Ibid; p. 111.

48 N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, p. 110.

49 Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity*, p. 117.

50 Ibid; p. 116.

51 Ibid; p. 117.

direction of a single person. Their collective gatherings were called the Sarbat Khalsa.”⁵²

Sarbat Khalsa as an institution worked effectively as long as the dangers threatening the survival of the Sikhs existed. But when such dangers were over, Sarbat Khalsa meets became less and less, and attendance became poor and non-serious. Sarbat Khalsa also served as an instrument of political participation for the Sikhs who never involve in any political activities. Participation of those people in order to achieve the right of liberty that was also helpful to create their own State for the Sikhs. Form this institution, they fought for their rights and wanted to replace the rigid Mughal State. The Sarbat Khalsa also created a sense of collective responsibility in the Panth. So it creates mass awakening about the functioning of the real welfare State.

2.4 Gurmata

The word Gurmata means the instruction of the Gurus in form of resolution of entire Sikh community. “To begin up to the period of Guru Gobind Singh, it was used in this sense that constituted Guru’s instruction was Gurmat or Gurmata. All through, the Sikhs Gurus had been emphasizing that the Guruship had impersonal character and this being so, they could put claim that they were all one in spite of their being different physically. When Guru Gobind Singh expired, the Guruship passed on to the Panth or the community as a whole and to the Granth. Now after the physical disappearance of Guru Gobind Singh, the Khalsa and the Granth were regarded as Guru.”⁵³

Therefore the Gurmata naturally meant the instruction of the Panth (Khalsa) in presence of the Granth. This fact was also made clear by Guru Gobind Singh when he was about to expire and later on widely propagated among the Sikhs. After the death of Banda Bahadur, the Sikhs were put to a lot of hardship, firstly by the Mughal

52 Indu Banga, “The Sikh Polity during the Eighteenth Century”, *The Proceedings of the Punjab History Conference*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1981, p. 105.

53 Surjeet Singh Gandhi, *Struggle of the Sikhs for Sovereignty*, GDK Publication, Delhi, 1980, p. 279.

Government and later on by the Afghans of the country across the hilly area. Under these circumstances, the Sikhs used together at Akal Takhat and their assembly at Akal Takhat came to be called Sarbat Khalsa. The deliberation of the Khalsa always took place in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. Since Panth and Granth together were considered as Guru and the decisions were called Gurmata.

As per K.S. Thapar “there are at least two instances during the life time of Guru Gobind Singh, also when the combined will of the Khalsa, perhaps against his (Guru’s) own judgment. “One such instance is the evacuation of Anadpur Sahib by the hill Rajas. The besieged forces of the Sikhs were suffering privation. When assurances were received from the swamped forces of safe conducted in case town was evacuated, the Sikhs urged the Guru to accept the assurances. But the Guru knew of the perfidy of the enemy, but against His better judgment He accepted the General will of the Khalsa expressed in council in his own presence, subsequent history shows that the Guru was right.”⁵⁴

The second such instance is during “the battle of Chamkaur. After the evacuation of Anadpur, Guru with two of His sons and about forty Sikhs reached Chamkaur and took up his position in a mud hut (kachi garhi) on top of a hill surrounded by a thick forest. They were soon surrounded by imperial forces. One by one, the Sikhs came out of the mud hut and gave battle. By the evening very few Sikhs were left. At a council they urged upon the Guru to leave so that he could go and organize the Khalsa again but the Guru would not agree. The Sikhs then expressed their ‘will’ in a Gurmata calling upon the Guru to leave. Though very reluctant to do so, the Guru had no option but to ‘obey’. In this instance, perhaps the Sikhs made the correct decision. Such was democratic base of the Gurmata”.⁵⁵

Gurmatas known to have been held after Banda Bahadur may be briefly described: “in 1733 the offer of Jagir and title of Nawab received from the Governor

54 K.S.Thapar, “Gurmata: Democracy in Practice” in *The Punjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1975, p. 286.

55 Ibid.

of Lahore was conferred by the Panth on Kapur Singh Faizullapuria; in 14 October 1745 on the day of Diwali, the Sikhs passed Gurmata to recognize the activities of those who had organized themselves into 25 groups to resist the persecution and to carry on marauding raids against Mughal strongholds; in 1747, a Gurmata was passed to erect a fort in Amritsar at the site of *Ram Rauni*; in 1748 there is another Gurmata to establish the Dal Khalsa, chose Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as leader of Dal Khalsa and reduced the number of recognized jathas to 12; Gurmata in 1753 recognized the system of *Rakhi* that had been instituted by the Missals; in 1765 very important Gurmata was passed which emphasizing the supremacy of the sarbat Khalsa over the decision of individual leaders; in 1765 through and formal Gurmata, a coin with the inscription *Deg O Tegh O Fateh Nusrat Be dirang Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.*”⁵⁶

Gurmata has been variously described by historians. The earliest observation on the Gurmata comes from Polier. He thought of it as “the greatest council or Goormotta of the nation, held annually either at Ambarsar, Lahore or some other place. Everything is decided by the plurality by votes taken indifferently from all who choose to be present at it. In this Council or Diet all the Public affairs are debated.”⁵⁷

James Browne used phrase “Grand Diet” for Gurmata and Forster referred to Gurmata as the Grand convention on the Sikhs.⁵⁸ C.H. Payne has used the term “national council”⁵⁹ for Gurmata. About Gurmata, Malcolm states that “the Gurmata was convened by the Akalis.”⁶⁰ Thus, we find that Malcolm was not thinking of Gurmata as a resolution but as a council. Therefore, the term ‘Gurmata’ has been erroneously interpreted by James Browne, Polier, Forster, Malcolm and many others, and applied to the grand meeting or councils of the Khalsa.

56 Ibid; p 289.

57 Col. Polier, “The Siques”, in Ganda Singh, *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, p. 61.

58 George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. I, p. 33.

59 C.H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Thomas & Nelson and sons, London, 1963, p. 63.

60 Ibid; pp. 95-96.

Rattan Singh Bhangu, writing in the early nineteenth century, makes use of the word *mata* at several places in his *Prachin Panth Parkash*. For example: “The Khalsa used to come to Amritsar from their hide outs to participate in the Diwali festival. After bathing in the tank, they all used to sit in the *Akal Bunga* to discuss matters and to take decisions (*mato sabh matayana*).”⁶¹ There is no doubt that Rattan Singh uses the word ‘mata’ in its very ordinary connotation of a decision or a resolution.⁶²

It is highly significant to find that Rattan Singh Bhangu making no distinction in the use of *mata* and *Gurmata* of the Khalsa. For example he states that “They used to come to Amritsar, after their campaigns in the country for plunder, at the Diwali and Baisakhi festivals. They used to listen to the bani of the Gurus in the Harimandir, and in the Akal Takht, they used to hold *dewana* to adopt *Gurmatas*.”⁶³

According to Ganda Singh, “*Mata* literally means opinion or resolution and it is called *Gurmata* opinion or resolution endorsed by the Guru because the Guru is believed to be always presiding over the deliberations of the Khalsa held in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib.”⁶⁴

Fauja Singh states that important decisions (resolutions) taken by the Sikhs, in the presence of holy Guru Granth Sahib, were called *Gurmatas*. About the importance of the *Gurmata* he writes that “no individual or group of individuals could oppose or challenge them because they are considered sanctified by the supposed holy presence of the Guru at the deliberations.”⁶⁵

To define the *Gurmata*, Bhagat Singh remarks that “the word ‘mata’ in Punjabi language means a resolution. When it is passed in an assembly of the Sikhs in the presence of the holy Guru Granth Sahib with a hymn read on its conclusion, it is believed to have been endorsed by word of the Guru.”⁶⁶

61 Rattan Singh Bhangu, in Bhai Vir Singh, (ed.) *Prachin Panth Parkash*, , Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1962, pp. 221 -22.

62 Ibid; p. 459.

63 Ibid; p. 331.

64 Ganda Singh, (ed.) *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, p. 16.

65 Fauja Singh, *Political Ideas of the Sikhs during the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries*, p. 282.

66 Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity*, p. 109.

Bhagat Singh is of view that Gurmata might have been started from the days of Guru Gobind Singh, but it became an instrument of power when the Sikhs began meeting at Amritsar or other places to plan their future course of action. The Sikhs had tried to meet twice in the year during the Baisakhi and Diwali at Akal Takhat to discuss their problems.⁶⁷

Further he mentions that to unite and establish a closer union between different groups, the Sikhs had assembled at Amritsar on the day of Basiakhi March 29, 1748 and discussed the situation facing the Panth. At the suggestion of Nawab Kapur Singh, a Gurmata was passed and Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was chosen for the supreme commander of Dal Khalsa. Other meetings of Sarbat Khalsa also held in 1762, 1765, 1766, 1798 and 1805.⁶⁸ He further states that “as the Sikh Sardar being in Amritsar in high esteem, the decisions taken there had a moral and religious binding on them. The Sardars could not, therefore, afford to go against the decisions taken at the Akal Takhat and run the risk of losing their popularity with the community”. Quoting M. Gregor, Bhagat Singh states that “though the Sardars (at times) quarreled among themselves, all was peace and friendship when they met at the holy tank of Amritsar. There, each independent Sardar had his fort or dwelling house with a bazaar attached for supply of his followers and retainers with food and other necessities of life.”⁶⁹ “The chiefs of the Missal had got their hospices or *bungahs* created round the *Harmandir*, where they stayed during their visit to Amritsar to attend the meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa”.⁷⁰

Quoting Teja Singh, he states that resolutions were not voted upon individually or passed by the majority but was carried nem con.⁷¹ “The individual Sardars did not hinder the proceedings of the deliberations. A safeguard, inherent in the constitution of the Khalsa was helpful in avoiding deadlocks. No resolution could

67 Ibid; p. 110.

68 Ibid; p. 110.

69 M. Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, p. 118.

70 Ibid; p. 112.

71 Teja Singh, *Sikhism : Its Ideals and Institutions*, p. 43.

be put before a meeting of the Sarbat Khalsa unless, as a preliminary condition, a solemn assurance was given by the leaders present that they were positively one in the Guru. If they had any old score still to settle they – as many as had differences – would retire for a time to make them up; and when they had done so they would come forward and announce that they had made their peace and war fit to participate dispassionately in the Gurmata. The presiding officer of the Sarbat Khalsa occupying the place of the reader of the Guru Granth Sahib, would then announced and discussions started. Sometimes very lively discussions were held and participants advanced opposing views but when more people were for a particular decision the persons with dissenting votes yielded and discussions were taken unanimously.”⁷²

Bhagat Singh also highlights the fact that “it is, therefore, historically incorrect to say that Maharaja Ranjit Singh abolished the Gurmata or that it came to be abandoned with the mutual wrangling of the Sikh Missaldars and Sardars, or that it died of itself with the passage of time. The Gurmata is purely a Sikh religious resolution even if it were to solve a political or social problem of the community. No, individual Sikh, however highly placed, could abolish it.”⁷³ It can only be assumed that the need for calling the Sarbat Khalsa to solve the national problems became less frequent.

G.S. Nayyar states, “The Gurmatas formed an essential part of the fighting bodies of the Sikhs in taking decisions regarding fresh expeditions, declaring war, making peace and in setting other important and weighty affairs.”⁷⁴ For him “it was not an assembly, council, convention or diet but a collective resolution passed at a voluntary gathering. The idea, that the Guru was mystically present in the collective body of a Khalsa Sangat, imparted a certain measure of sanctity and authority to the Gurmatas adopted by the Khalsa.”⁷⁵

72 Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity*, pp. 113-114.

73 Ibid; p. 119.

74 G.S. Nayyar, *Sikh Polity and Political Institutions*, National Book Organization, New Delhi, 1979, p. 96.

75 Ibid .

According to Veena Sachdeva “it is clear that the Gurmata was not a council or a government of the Sikhs. It was a decision taken by a body of the Khalsa in a given situation in the presence of the Holy Granth. However, the term Gurmata, that is, the decision of the Guru, was used for such resolutions not merely because their adoption was in the presence of Holy Guru Granth Sahib but primarily because the Guru was assumed to be present among the Khalsa. In fact, since the Khalsa during the eighteenth century subscribed to the doctrine of Guru-Panth, in certain situations even five members of the Khalsa brotherhood could act on behalf of the Khalsa”.⁷⁶ Further she states, “Gurmatas related generally to political activity, to matters to the defense and offence, and to the gratification of religious sentiments. Such resolutions covered temporary alliance, battles to be fought and expeditions to be undertaken.”⁷⁷ Indu Banga has used the term “collective decisions for Gurmata.”⁷⁸

J.S. Grewal states that the resolutions of a considerable number of leaders and their followers adopted at any given place or time was called Gurmatas. Since most of the important resolutions were adopted at Amritsar at the times of the Baisakhi and Diwali when a large number of the Khalsa used to be present the Gurmata, came to be associated with Amritsar. He further states that “a Gurmata was not legally or constitutionally binding even on the members present; but it was morally binding even on those who were not personally present. This was because they all subscribed to the doctrine of Guru-Panth. According to this doctrine, Guruship was vested in the Panth; a Gurmata, therefore, was like the command of the Guru and it had to be obeyed.”⁷⁹

Therefore, the term ‘Gurmata’ has been erroneously interpreted by James Browne, Polier, Forster, Malcolm and many others, and applied to the grand meeting or councils of the Khalsa. Sinha does not equate the Gurmata with the assembly itself.

76 Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 1993, p. 88.

77 Ibid; p. 89.

78 Indu Banga, *The Sikh Polity During Eighteenth Century*, p. 105.

79 J.S. Grewal, *Sikh Ideology, Polity and Social Order*, p. 97.

For him, it was a resolution passed by an assembly of the Sikhs. As per Gupta, Gurmata or Guru's wisdom was superior to the wisdom of man and it must be accepted as a divine decree. For Rattan Singh Bhangu, there is no distinction in the use of Mata and Gurmata of the Khalsa. About the importance of the Gurmata, Fauja Singh writes that "no individual or group of individuals could oppose or challenge them because they are considered sanctified by the supposed holy presence of the Guru at the deliberations.

Bhagat Singh is of view that Gurmata might have been started from the days of Guru Gobind Singh but it became an instrument of power when the Sikhs began meeting at Amritsar or other places to plan their future course of action. For G.S. Nayyar, Gurmata was not an assembly, council, convention or diet but a collective resolution. According to Veena Sachdeva, Gurmatas related generally to political activity, to matters of the defense and offence, and to the gratification of religious sentiments. Such resolutions covered temporary alliance, battles to be fought and expeditions to be undertaken. Indu Banga has used the term collective decisions for Gurmata. For J.S. Grewal a Gurmata was not legally or constitutionally binding even on the members present; but it was morally binding even on those who were not personally present.

To define Gurmata, N. K. Sinha writes that "the meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa, 'resolutions' passed in the presence of the holy Granth were Gurmata."⁸⁰ However, Sinha does not equate the Gurmata with the assembly itself. He makes it quite explicit that "the Gurmata was a resolution passed by an assembly of the Sikhs and generally pertains to decisions about the important expeditions to be undertaken and matters of general concern."⁸¹

Hari Ram Gupta states that "the word Gurmata consists of two parts, Guru and Mata. Guru implies spiritual head of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak as all the

80 N.K. Sinha, *Rise of Sikh Power*, p. 108.

81 Ibid; p. 108.

succeeding nine Gurus called themselves Nanak. Mata means wisdom. It signifies Guru's wisdom expressed through the chosen five Sikhs in general assembly."⁸² Further, Gupta has stated that the Gurmata or Guru's wisdom was superior to the wisdom of man and it must be accepted as a divine decree.

Gupta does not agree with Macauliffe who says that the Gurmata was established by Guru Hargobind. He also does not agree with Cunningham who is of the opinion that the first regular Gurmata was held in 1762. According to him,

The first Gurmata was held at Chamkaur. Guru Gobind Singh reached there on 22 December 1704. He had with him and his two elder sons, five beloved ones and thirty-five other Khalsa, total forty-two. In the days of fighting, Princes, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, three of the five beloved ones and thirty-two other Khalsa laid down their lives at the altar of faith and freedom. The Guru was left with five disciples only. He was contemplating to join the battle of life against his numerous opponents the next morning. In that event his martyrdom was sure and certain. The five Sikhs were opposed to this course. Having Guru Gobind Singh sitting before them, the five Sikhs thought of Guru Nanak and sought his divine wisdom at this crisis. The advice revealed that Gobind Singh's life must be saved. With this Gurmata, they told him that at the moment they were the Guru and Gobind Singh was a Khalsa. The order was that he must escape in the interest of the Panth. The Guru tamely submitted.⁸³

According to Gupta,

Regular Gurmatas were held three times in the year. The Gurmatas passed on Baisakhi day related to the next year's program, gaining territory, realizing tributes, building forts, constructing Katras or

82 Hari Ram Gupta, *The History of the Sikhs : The Sikh Commonwealth*, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, Vol. IV, New Delhi, 1982, p. 381.

83 Ibid; p. 382.

residential quarters at Amritsar and erection and beautification of sacred shrines. The Gurmata passed on Dasahra day concerned military matters, checking the progress of the invaders who visited this country in winter, and leading expeditions in the distant places. The Gurmata approved on the Diwali day pertained to the realization of rakhi or kambli and improving the financial condition of the Panth. Urgent cases could be taken up at any time and at any places.⁸⁴

Further Gupta describes the procedure of holding a regular Gurmata which was as follows: the Sardars with most of their subordinate Sardars at the head of a strong contingent of troops came to Amritsar. "A little before the time fixed for a Gurmata, the Sardars followed by their close associates offered *nazars* at the Hari Mandir. From Hari Mandir, they moved to the open space before Akal Takht. Each greeted the other and embraced cheerfully. All mutual discords and differences were completely forgotten under the shadow of their sacred shrines and all pervading spirit of Gurus."⁸⁵

Quoting M. Gregor, he states that the Adi Granth and Dasam Granth were placed before them. Everybody paid homage to the Holy Scriptures. The Sardars took their seats. Their companions sat behind them. A large quantity of sweet bread kneaded in wheaten flour, clarified butter and gur and baked on fire was brought in a huge basket covered with a piece of cloth. The basket was placed before the Granth. The whole assembly stood up. An *Ardas* or prayer was said by Akalis. After prayer all sit down. The sweet bread (Parsad) was distributed among the congregation, and all ate it joyfully.

The Akalis then announced, 'Sardarji, this is a Gurmata' at this all rose, said prayer again and sat down. A Sardar stood and said: 'The Sacred Granth is before us swearing by our scriptures to forget all internal disputes and be united in one body.' Thereupon all animosities

84 Ibid; p. 382.
85 Ibid; p. 384.

disappeared for the time being and an atmosphere of pure patriotism prevailed. All the big Sardars declared that they were completely united for the Guru and in the service of the Panth. Problems facing the Panth were raised one by one. Discussion was there ample and plenty. During the discussion if any particular point struck any member of a missal, he would convey it to his chief to bring it to the notice of the congregation, though anybody could speak directly. After prolonged debates and arguments five beloved ones were chosen on the basis of service and devotion to the Panth. They sought divine light to guide them. They whispered among themselves and came to a unanimous decision. The spokesman of five beloved one communicated their verdict to the presiding officer of the Akal Takhat. He announced it, and it was unanimously accepted without any note of dissent. There was no question of passing a Gurmata by a majority of votes. After passing a Gurmata a committee was appointed to see that the Gurmata was properly executed.⁸⁶

Gupta also mentions that “the earliest political Gurmata was held by Banda Bahadur before the battle of Sirhind in 1710. The last political Gurmata was held by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809 before the Treaty of Amritsar.”⁸⁷ While discussing the reasons of discontinuance of Gurmata by Ranjit Singh, he states that

Foreign rule and foreign invasions had come to an end, and the main problem for discussion at a Gurmata had disappeared. The missals were in the process of dissolution. The principle of equality which was the chief basis of the missal system was in a state of liquidation. In the Sikh state of Ranjit Singh about half of the population was Hindu, one third Muslim and the rest Sikhs. A Gurmata could be passed at Akal Takhat by the Sikhs alone. Its execution would have been deeply

86 Ibid; p. 385.

87 Ibid; p. 385.

resented by the vast majority of the population. In order to preserve peace and order in the country and to establish a stable government, it was essential that the administration should be secularized. Thus Ranjit Singh was justified in stopping the Gurmata for political and military purposes. Afterwards the Gurmata concerned only religious and social problem.⁸⁸

Gurmata, in which Sarbat Khalsa (congregation of the Sikhs) had taken the decisions, related to the progress of the Panth, is an institution which is also a model of open democracy. Because in this system power has been given to the Panth (the Sangat) and power was exercised by the representatives of the Sikhs. When the meeting of Gurmata held, everyone had right to express their views. Moreover all the Sikhs participated in the formation of Gurmata had passed. There is no trace of this institution of Gurmata in the whole history of the world. During eighteenth century, when only despotism was in practice by all worlds Governments, Gurmata played role as a device of open democracy. It also resembles with the concept of direct democracy which exists in Switzerland.

Therefore Gurmata is a political institution with an ethical base, established by the Guru and restored by the Sikhs in the formative stage of the Khalsa commonwealth in the eighteenth century. There was no military or non-military obedience to Gurmata among the Sikhs. The decision were taken by the Panth in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib were considered to be the decision of the Guru and the Guru was dearer to the Khalsa than anything else in the world.

2.5 Dal Khalsa

The organization of Dal Khalsa was a land mark in the history of the Sikhs because it ushered a new era in which the Sikhs unite their scattered band in organization. They had channelized their energy in the form of Dal Khalsa. About the organization of the Sikhs, historians have different views. According to James

88 Ibid; p. 386.

Browne, the Dal Khalsa was formed by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Charat Singh Shukarchakia and Karora Singh during the govern ship of Mir Manu in 1748. Browne equates the Dal Khalsa with the ‘Army of the State.’ James Browne writes that “Since the Sicks became powerful and confederated for the purpose of conquest, they have called their confederacy Khalsa Gee, or the state, and their grand army Dull Khalsa Gee, or the army of the State.”⁸⁹

T. Henry Prinsep looks upon the Dal Khalsa as “the joint forces of several Missals” for “expeditions of importance or any matters of more than ordinary moment.”⁹⁰ Cunningham refers to the ‘Dal of the Khalsa’ as the army of the theocracy of ‘Singhs’, and he attributes to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia the creation of this new power.⁹¹ Rattan Singh Bhangu tells that “the Dal Khalsa was divided into two wings: the *budha dal* and the *taruna dal*. Each of these dals was formed by a combination of several missals.”⁹² Giani Gian Singh names it as *Khalse da Dal or Khalsa Dal*.⁹³

The Persian writers mainly Ghulam Muhayy-ud-Din, Bute Shah and Ali-ud-din Mufti use the phrase “groh-i-singhan” while referring to the Khalsa.⁹⁴ Khalifa Muhammad Hassan Khan, the author of the *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, associates “the Dal with the Sikhs of the central Punjab and looks upon it as an army of freebooters, temporarily united for the purpose of plunder.”⁹⁵ Sohan Lal Suri gives a clear statement on the formation of the Dal Khalsa: “Sardar Bhag Singh Ahluwalia, along with his deputy Jassa Singh and Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia in the Doaba-i-bist Jalandhar; Sardar Najja Singh and Hari Singh together in the Doaba-i-bari; and Sardar

89 James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks*, (India Tracks), The East India Company, London, 1788, p. 33.

90 T. Henry Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 26.

91 J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 94-95.

92 Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, (Ed. Bhai Vir Singh), Amritsar, 1972 (Reprint), pp. 400-02.

93 Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, Vol. II, Patiala, 1970, p. 209.

94 Gurbachan Singh Nayyar, *Sikh Polity and Political Institutions*, p. 98.

95 Muhammad Hassan Khan, *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, Amritsar, 1878, p. 52; as quoted by Gurbachan Singh Nayyar, in *Sikh Polity and Political Institutions*, p. 98.

Sahib Singh and Sardar Charat Singh in the Doaba-i-rachna strengthened their position and took possession of the entire country. They named their conquering armies as the *Dal Khalsa Jio*.⁹⁶

N.K. Sinha writes that “when Ahmad Shah was in full flight, pursued by Mir Mannu at a distance, Sikh Sardars like Jassa Singh, Chharat Singh, Bharo Singh, Karora Singh gathered a band of six to seven thousand fighters, occupied the Jallandhar Doab and named the band *Dal Khalsa Ji* or the army of the theocracy of the Singhs.”⁹⁷ He further states that “during the next two years Abdali did not disturb Mir Mannu and he could devote his entire attention to the restoration of law and order. The Sikhs were now very hard pressed by the Turani governor. Taking advantage of the commotion, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hara Singh, Karam Singh, Jassa Singh Ramgariha, Naja Singh and Chharat Singh had asserted themselves with their combined host, *the ‘Dal Khalsa Jiu’*. Mir Mannu had appointed Adina Beg Khan as the chastiser of the Sikhs but Adina Beg Khan began, as before, to intrigue with the Sikhs and did not take effective measures to suppress them. The Sikhs built the mud fort of Ram Rouni, afterwards famous as Ramgarh.”⁹⁸

About the configuration of Dal Khalsa, N.K. Sinha states that “the Sikh Dal or army of the theocracy, as organized by Kapur Singh and Jassa Singh Kalal, became a great instrument for the assertion of the supremacy of the Khalsa. It showed a terrible vitality and grew into a mighty tide. It arrived through a series of reverse at a complete victory.”⁹⁹

Hari Ram Gupta writes that for uniting the whole body of fighting Sikhs in the form of a standing national army and for widening the circle of the attachment existing between the soldiers and the Sardars in each group, Sikhs needed a powerful organization. It was also felt that the independent position of as many as chiefs, would

96 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Lahore, 1885, pp. 127-28; as quoted by Gurbachan Singh Nayyar, in *Sikh Polity and Political Institutions*, p. 99.

97 N.K. Sinha, *The Rise of Sikh Power*, p. 13.

98 Ibid; p. 15.

99 Ibid; p. 50.

not lead to any solidarity in making them a power without taking such a step. So Sikhs assembled at Amritsar on the day of Baisakhi, 29th March, 1745. He states that on this occasion “Nawab Kapur Singh impressed upon the assemblage the need of solidarity of the Panth and placed Jassa Singh the supreme commander of all Sikh forces. The entire fighting body of Sikhs was given the name of Dal Khalsa. There were eleven leaders of most prominent ability among the various Sikhs. Hence the 65 groups were leagued together in eleven main divisions, each with a distinguishing title and banner.”¹⁰⁰

Further he delineates about the constitution of the Dal Khalsa, though he feels that it is ‘idle’ to give such name to this crude system. This system “was not devised or purposely adopted and therefore it was rather temporary and incomplete. Every Sikh who believed in the tenants of Guru Gobind Singh was considered a member of the Dal Khalsa without any need being felt to secure his willingness. It was thought compulsory for each individual to enroll himself in the Khalsa army in order to wage war against the enemies of his faith and his persecutors and therefore each Sikh who true to his religion, was supposed to have become a member of the Dal Khalsa. But nobody was admitted a member of any Missal which constituted the Dal Khalsa, unless he was an active horseman and proficient in the use of arms. Every individual, even of the meanest birth, had the right of choosing the leader he would like to serve.”¹⁰¹

Hari Ram Gupta describes that the Dal Khalsa was federal union. In his own words:

A kind of federal union was established and the leader of the Dal Khalsa was looked upon as the head of the Church and State. Whenever there was no emergency, each missal acted independently, or in concert, as necessity or inclination suggested. Each Sardar of a

100 Hari Ram Gupta, *The History of the Sikhs: Evolution of the Sikh Confederacies*, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1978, p. 91.

101 Ibid; p. 90..

missal was to lead his followers in warlike activities and act as an arbiter in times of peace. The Sardar did not exercise absolute authority over his comrades. They paid him due regard and treated him with respect; but they were under no obligation to obey him beyond what was required in the interests of the whole Panth, or of their own mutual advantages. The chiefs, therefore, were forced on all occasions, to be very careful in looking to the wants and wishes of their followers, and in treating them with attention and conciliation. It was only in this way that they could retain them in their service; otherwise a little indifference on their part was sufficient to cause their desertion and going over to another chief, who was ever ready to accord them a warm welcome. This was the reason that even the humblest Sikh in the Dal Khalsa was happy because he was free from all kinds of tyranny and violence from his chiefs and therefore even the lowest Sikh horse man usually assumed an independent attitude of mind.¹⁰²

He also highlights elements of democracy while states that the Sardars did not exercise absolute authority over his comrades and even the lowest Sikh horseman assumed an independent attitude of mind.

Hari Ram Gupta gives a lot of importance to the foundation of the Dal Khalsa, “because it united them (Sikh) once again in a compact body after a period of thirty three years. It served the most useful purpose of giving the Sikhs an ideal of unity and power, in keeping them bound together by the common tie of faith in the teeth of severest persecution, and making them a disciplined body. They had realized that obedience to their leader was a religious duty as a commandment of the Guru, imposed upon them by the Panth, in whose body the Guru had merged his personality; and every sacrifice made for the Panth was the real service of the Guru. This singleness of purpose and harmony made them the strongest military body of the day and prepared the way for their establishment as a political power.”¹⁰³

102 Ibid; p. 93.

103 Ibid; p. 95.

Hari Ram Gupta also notes that different scholars gave different names and diverse definitions of the Dal Khalsa. He quotes James Browne who calls it ‘confederacy Khasla Gee’ or the ‘Dull Khalsa Gee’. Sir John Malcolm applies the term Dal Khalsa to the combined forces of Sikh Sardars at a certain place and time; Sohan Lal Suri uses it for the conquering armies of the Sikhs. Cunningham calls it was the army of theocracy of Singhs; Giani Gian Singh named it Khalsa da Dal or Khalsa Dal. Quoting Khalifa Muhammad Hassan, Gupta states that ‘the Dal was an army of Sikh freebooters who moved about in the country for the sake of plunder. H.R. Gupta also quotes the views of N.K. Sinha, who defines it as ‘the grand army’ of the Khalsa confederacy.¹⁰⁴

For Gupta, “the Dal Khalsa was the third organization of the Khalsa. The first organization of the Khalsa was under Guru Gobind Singh, numbering about five thousand, had broken up at the siege of Anandpur Sahib in 1704 after five years, the second organization of the Khalsa was under Banda Bahadur numbering about fourteen thousand and was destroyed at Gurdas Nangal in 1715 after six years and the third organization in 1748, according to Gupta, was destined to endure upto the end of the century when Ranjit Singh established monarchy on its ruins.”¹⁰⁵

Ganda Singh states that “the army fighting for the freedom of Punjab was known as the esteemed Dal Khalsa, and it is under this name this army is referred to in contemporary records.”¹⁰⁶ According to him, “the soldiers of this army were not salaried servants. But they joined the Khalsa army spontaneously in the name of the Guru and of religion. There were no distinctions of high and low, or of cast and creed. Since they were to serve the country strictly according to the discipline of the Guru Panth, the taking of *Amrit (Khande Ki Pahul)* was essential for them. This ceremony of administering ‘Amrit’ to the new recruits in the Khalsa Dal signified the decimation of their original religion. After taking ‘Amrit’ from the same vessel, all of

104 Ibid; p. 93.

105 Hari Ram Gupta, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 95.

106 Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1990, p. 210.

them became one with the Khalsa Dal members of a single brotherhood. They were raised to the status of pure beings of God, and it was for the victory of God or of the moral principle which sustains this universe that they were fully and finally united and entered the battlefield of life.”¹⁰⁷

As per Ganda Singh, *Dal Khalsa* was unique army by its character. He states that “the Singhs of the Khalsa Dal (army) were free to join the jatha (organization) of any Sardar according to their choice and whenever they wanted they could shift to the jatha of another Sardar. The main advantage of this freedom was that the Sardars spared no pains to keep their soldiers happy and contented. This also prevented them from making any kind of distinction or from subjecting the soldiers to any kind of harassment or exploitation.”¹⁰⁸ Thus he highlights the spirit of equality and elements of democracy in this organization as presenting soldiers happy and enjoys freedom under their Sardars.

He further writes that “the Sardars did not maintain a detailed record or register of their soldiers. In view of the paucity of literate Singh, this was not possible either ...At that time the Singhs needed only two kinds of training for their survival – swordsmanship and horse riding. In these two fields the Singhs were fully seasoned and unique in the context of their times, and even the most perfect swordsmen and horse riders hesitate to confront them.”¹⁰⁹ About the cavalry of *Dal Khalsa*, he writes that

The Dal Khalsa consisted only of the cavalry: the infantry was meant for guard duty or for revenue collection... The Singh’s horses respond to individual voice, whistle or pat and the movement they got the signal, they started galloping, came to a stop, fell on the ground; in fact, these horses functioned like machines. The Sikh Sardars including S. Jassa Singh were greatly pleased to accept gift in the form of horses... By following this practice, the Singhs in the infantry could be easily turned in to cavaliers and thus they could be admitted to the Dal.¹¹⁰

107 Ibid; p. 210.

108 Ibid; p. 210.

109 Ibid; p. 211.

110 Ibid; p. 212.

According to him, “in the Dal Khalsa there were neither parades on the European pattern nor any platoon division. The Sardars were the commanders of their respective Jathas (organization) and according to the need of the occasion; they would divide and organize the horsemen in some pattern. The Sardars with smaller organization would fight the enemy after joining the missal of a bigger Sardar. Therefore, there was no question of disobedience or of the violation of the conduct. If they did not approve of any action of a Sardar, next time they would join some other Missal.”¹¹¹ Ganda Singh also cleared that there were no place of any conflict between Sardars and Soldiers of Dal Khalsa but if there were any conflict take the place then *Panj Piaras* intervene and bring the reconciliation between the two parties. Thus Ganda Singh interprets Dal Khalsa as an army which fighting for the freedom of the Punjab. Bhagat Singh also gives a detailed account on the Dal Khalsa, its origin, its constitution and its struggle for political power. According to Bhagat Singh “the word Dal is a Punjabi expression meaning a horde and suggests the notion of a group with a definite mission or objective before it.”¹¹² Bhagat Singh starting his account with the organization of Taruna Dal, and Budha Dal and states that Nawab Kapur Singh had divided the Sikhs in two Dals (groups) in 1734. In the views of Bhagat Singh, Budha Dal was the league of elders, which comprised men above the age of forty and the Taruna Dal was the league of young which consisted of the young Sikhs below that age. About the duties of these Dals, Bhagat Singh mentions that the Budha Dal was assigned the duty of looking after the Sikh holy places and the propagation of the Sikh faith. The Taruna Dal was to undertake the more difficult task of the defense of the community.

About these Dals, Bhagat Singh states that “these groups were united not only by religious ties but also by mutual interests and, therefore, a system of general confederation for self-protection as well as for operation came into being.”¹¹³

111 Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 105-106.

112 Bhagat Singh *Sikh Polity*, p. 61.

113 *Ibid*; p. 62.

Emergence and progress of Dals, according to him, was the harbinger of new development in this organizational structure. Bhagat Singh opines that “these developments although political but was meant to bring unity in the whole body of fighting Sikhs in the form of a standing army. With the measures of government becoming more harsh and stringent, the Sikh felt the need of unity. Since the first division of fighting Sikhs into twenty-five groups under as many Sardars, the number of the groups had risen to sixty-five and it went on increasing.”¹¹⁴

On the formation of the Dal Khalsa he states that “after the exit of Ahmad Shah Abdali from Punjab, the Sikhs met at Amritsar on the sacred day of Baisakhi, March 29, 1748, and on the proposal of Nawab Kapur Singh that the Panth needed solidarity and union, the entire fighting body of the Sikhs was named the *Dal Khalsa Jio* and placed under the supreme command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.”¹¹⁵ The various groups were leagued together under twelve prominent chiefs. Each had a banner of its own; they later on established their principalities.

Bhagat Singh gives several reasons for the lack of an elaborate constitution. He says that “most of the leaders and followers of the Dal Khalsa had been hard pressed, poverty-stricken tillers of the soil. They had undertaken a particular course in view of a particular situation. We cannot expect of them to have planned anything like an elaborate constitution. They only seem to have evolved a crude system to meet the requirements of the organization. The system was not devised or purposely adopted; therefore, it was rather incomplete and temporary. Every Sikh who had faith in the injunctions of Guru Gobind Singh was considered a member of the Dal Khalsa. For every able-bodied Sikh it was thought compulsory to enroll himself in the Khalsa army to fight the enemies of his faith. He was expected to be a good horseman and skilled in the use of arms. Every individual was free to choose the leader he was to follow.”¹¹⁶

114 Ibid; p. 63.

115 Ibid; p. 64.

116 Ibid; p. 64.

Bhagat Singh calls Dal Khalsa as a kind of federal union. “Wherein it’s leader was looked upon as the head of the Sikh Church as well. In times of peace each division acted in an independent manner.”¹¹⁷ He further states that the Sardars did not exercise absolute authority over his comrades and the soldiers paid the Sardar due regard and respect but they were not under any obligation to obey him. Every Sikh Soldier was free to join any Dal and hence enjoyed independent existence. His wages were how much he would collect in robbery. Even the booty, Bhagat Singh says, was divided among chiefs on the basis of number of soldiers. There was no great difference between those at the top affairs and those at the helm. All could claim to belong to the same brotherhood and profession of arms.¹¹⁸

Bhagat Singh hints that there were common ties among leaders and followers. Both were fighting the Mughal tyranny on terms of equality. They had common grievances against Mughal oppressors, they had common bonds of a religion which was based on equality and fraternity, thus the Sardar – follower relationship was based on equality and union over common objectives.¹¹⁹

He gives a detail about the classification of Dal Khalsa into different units, namely cavalry, infantry, artillery, the method of recruitment and discipline of the Sikhs and the mode of payment. He states that “the cavalry was an important part of the army of the Sikh Sardars. The soldiers, in fact, considered it below their dignity to more about without a horse which they generally got for themselves. The infantry among the Sikhs in the eighteenth century was an unimportant and inferior branch of service. It was used for realizing tributes and taxes, garrison and sentry duty. The only infantry that enjoyed and respect were the Akalis. The Sikh chiefs did not possess heavy artillery and few references to the use of guns by the later Sikhs; prove even more clearly that it was never popular among them. Recruitment in the Sikh forces was entirely voluntary and recruits could join the contingent of any chief. No records

117 Ibid; p. 65.

118 Ibid; p. 65.

119 Ibid; p. 65.

of the soldier's names, service, payment etc., were kept. Disobedience to the officers was punished by was councils of five, though such cases were few. The Sikh camp was a very humble affair as compared to that of the Mughals or the Maratha. Life at their camp was noted for frugality, simplicity and austerity."¹²⁰

To him, the organization of the Dal Khalsa functioned in a democratic way. The leader of the national army was elected and in times of emergency the missal chiefs pooled their resources in the common interest of the entire Sikh community.¹²¹ He calls it a turning point in the history of the Sikhs. In his own words "it united them into one compact body as had been done under Banda Singh Bahadur, about three decades before. They adopted the ideal of unity and disciplined brotherhood. They believed that every sacrifice made for the community was the service to the Guru who had merged his personality into the Panth. This devotion to the Panth made them a formidable community to contend with and ultimately the government of the country could not but accept the Sikhs as the masters of the province of the Punjab."¹²²

Indu Banga, G.S. Naryyan, J.S. Grewal and Veena Sachdeva also present views on Dal Khalsa, while presenting it as a fighting force of the Sikhs; Indu Banga terms Dal Khalsa as combined fighting forces. About it, she states that "both the missal and the Dal Khalsa, the fighting collectivities of the Sikhs, were concerned with acquisition of power."¹²³ G.S. Nayyar states that "the Dal Khalsa represented various groups of the fighting men of the Khalsa. A large measure of collective action was attained on many occasions for offence and defense but for occupation of territories, it was generally absent. The activities of the Dal Khalsa generally exhibited lack of organizational unity. The Khalsa repeatedly and frequently resorted to irregular formation and occasionally fought pitched battles."¹²⁴

120 Ibid; pp. 66-70.

121 Ibid; p. 70.

122 Ibid; p. 65.

123 Indu Banga, *The Sikh Polity during the eighteenth century*, p. 104.

124 G.S. Nayyar, *Sikh Polity and Political Institutions*, p. 112.

In this context, J.S. Grewal points out that the term Dal Khalsa was used for a combination of the several units. “The strength and composition of the Dal Khalsa thus changed from one major campaign to another. The purpose of this combination was the same, a united action. During the phase from 1754 to 1765 the different units combined to take united action more often than ever before or after, and this gives the impression as if the Dal Khalsa was a kind of standing army of the Khalsa operating as a single unit.”¹²⁵

Referring to the Dal Khalsa as an appropriate term for the army of every single chief, Veena Sachdeva states that “the Dal Khalsa combined to action of the proved to be great importance not only for defense but also for the occupation of territories. When no need was felt for a combined or joint action, the days of Dal Khalsa were over.”¹²⁶

Institution of Dal Khalsa was a political organization of the Sikhs. It was a body to regulate the functioning of missal. After studying Dal Khalsa, we have found commitment and sincerity in their members and no place for selfishness and egotism. Thus, it can be said that the Dal Khalsa gave the Sikhs an organizational unity. At the beginning of this phase, no Khalsa leader possessed any autonomous territory. But at the end of this phase, nearly the whole Punjab was occupied by the Sikh Sardars.

2.6 Missal

Missal means a group of people or a band who fight for his cause. The term ‘Missal’ has been defined differently by different historians. To David Ochterloney, the missal meant a “tribe or race”.¹²⁷ Prinsep writes “the associations were called missals, implying that they were confederacies of equals, under chiefs of their own selection.”¹²⁸ Payne explains missal as a “clan”.¹²⁹ J.D. Cunningham suggests that

125 J.S. Grewal, *Sikh Ideology, Polity and Social Order*, p. 96.

126 Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab*, p. 91.

127 David Ochterloney to the Government of India, 30th December, 1809. As quoted by J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, f. n. 115.

128 H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, p. 23.

129 C.H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 60.

missal is an Arabic word meaning “alike or equal”¹³⁰ or that the term might be derived from the Arabic word *musalihat* which would equate the missal with “armed men and war like people.”¹³¹

The first writer to use the term ‘missal’ in the history of the Sikhs was Ahmad Shah of Batala. The evidence of Ahmad Shah of Batala suggests that “the Sardar and his associate missaldar made joint conquests and partitioned among themselves the territories they conquered. Each missaldar made his own administrative arrangements without reference to another missaldar, or even the Sardar. For administrative purpose, therefore, there was no difference between the Sardar and the missaldar.”¹³²

According to Ghulam Muhayy-ud-Din alias Bute Shah, “Missal is a territory conquered by a brave Sardar with the help of his comrades and placed under his protection.”¹³³ Latif writes, “The various clans under these respective chiefs were leagued together, and formed a confederacy, which denominated missal or similitude, thereby implying that the chief and followers of one clan were equal to those of another.”¹³⁴

N.K. Sinha points out that missal were confederacies which the Sikhs formed when Timur Shah the successor of Ahmad Shah Abdali, abandoned the policy of subduing the Sikhs.¹³⁵ According to Sinha, the missal organization was undoubtedly a confederate organization and the central governing authority of this organization was very weak. Referring to the origin of the missal, in a natural way, he states that “the individuals joined the ranks of a chief or a Sardar, whom they considered deserving of leadership on the grounds of valor, experience, wealth and birth. The booty was divided in proportion to the contribution of each group of horsemen, of course, the chief’s portion being first divided off. There was again further sub-division among the

130 J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 114.

131 Ibid; p. 114

132 J.S. Grewal, “Ahmad Shah of Batala on Sikh Polity”, From *Sikh Ideology, Polity and Social Order*, p. 79.

133 Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab* Daftar IV, M.S. (1848), G.S.K.C.A., pp. 95-96; as quoted by Bhagat Singh in *Sikh Polity in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 88.

134 S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab from the Remotest Antiquity to the Present time*, p. 290.

135 N.K. Sinha, *Rise of Sikh Power*, p. 57.

individuals composing each group. Each held his portion in absolute independence.”¹³⁶

Sinha also highlights the fact that the missal organization was not feudal by nature because in feudalism there was a supreme commander. The Sikh leaders were not bound to pay any revenue or any other service to chief. Moreover missal members have right to leave and join to any other missal. In this context, Sinha writes that “the missals were the confederacies of equals. A Sikh disdained to acknowledge any earthly superior. The Sardar was no doubt obeyed but there was no obligation to obey beyond what they might consider to be for their own reciprocal benefit or for the well-being of the Missal.”¹³⁷

He observes that “in Rajputana, the chiefs were divided into distinct grades, which showed a highly artificial state. Mediaeval feudal Europe also presents the picture of a graded society. Then again in Rajputana there was a patriarchal element, the greater number of vassal chiefs calming affinity in blood to the sovereign. There was no such patriarchal element in Sikh feudalism, nor do we hear of an elaborate list of feudal obligations as in mediaeval Europe. There was, of course, the obligation of military service. The feudal system of Europe has been described by Gibbon as the offspring of chance and barbarism. The Punjab system was certainly not feudal in the European sense. The all-pervading sense of brotherhood and a super-added theocratic outlook would not, at least in theory, allow distinctions of rank.”¹³⁸

Sinha compares missals with Hindu republic. He looks for Indian origin of the missal by going far back to the period of the republics of ancient times. He states that “these *missals* remind us of the *Ayudhajibin Sanghas* of the Hindu period, mentioned by Panini and confirmed by Kautilya as also by Greek writers. The writer of *Arthasastra*, however, describes them as ‘Sastropajibins.’ The Malavas and the Kshudrakas are mentioned by the Greek writers. In this connection Indian writers

136 Ibid; p. 110.

137 Ibid; p. 110.

138 Ibid; pp. 110-111.

mentioned the names of the following:- (1) The Vrika. (2) The Damani and others. (3) The Trigartta – Six Trigartta : (a) The Kaundoparatta. (b) The Dandaki. (c) The Kaushtaki. (d)The Jalamani. (e) The Brahmagupta. (f) The Janaki. (4) The Yaudheya and others. (5) The Parsva and others. These communities ‘considered military art as the vital principle of their constitution.’ These military republics were in the ‘Vahika country’, interpreted by K.P. Jayaswal as “the country of the rivers, comprising the Sind valley and the Punjab.”¹³⁹ Thus he concludes that these missals or the military confederacies of the Sikhs had their prototypes even in the early Hindu period.

But the nature of the missals was different from Hindu political system. Democratic set up of the missals was inspired from the thought and practices of the Sikh Gurus.

Hari Ram Gupta tries to define the word missal in stating that “Missal is an Arabic word meaning alike, equal or similar. It is closely connected with Persian word Missal implying example, simile, likeness, similitude or picture.”¹⁴⁰ He finds that the word missal was first used by Guru Gobind Singh, who applied the word to a body of troops fighting under a leader of their own choice. He explores the political significance of missal as “the missal system came in to being to eliminate the Mughal rule from the Punjab, to liberate it by the sons of the soil. It was founded on common faith and a common political necessity.”¹⁴¹

According to Hari Ram Gupta, the missal organization was a combination of six factors- autocracy, confederacy, democracy, feudal, secularism and theocracy.

It was autocracy because the Sardar possessed absolute power which as a rule was benevolent despotism. It was a confederacy because the system was founded on an alliance of all the missals for national and panthic purposes. It was democracy as every individual in the missal enjoyed social equality and full freedom of thought and expression. It

139 Ibid; p. 111.

140 Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.II, p. 95.

141 Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. IV, p. 349.

was feudal in character because it was a system of landholding but with a difference. The feudal system of the Sikhs was not the result of a gift from the Sardar. The heads of missals did not create and endowed their followers. On the contrary the chiefs were created and endowed by them. The Sardars were elected by their soldiers. The head of a Missal had under him a number of minor chiefs. They had their own subordinates, going down to the common troopers. It was secularism because the Sardars were staunch Sikhs, but they were not fanatics. The Musalmans had been their persecutors and extirpaters, yet as rulers the Sikhs never ill-treated them, and frequently employed them as writers and administrators. It was a theocracy for it was based on principles of Sikh religion. The Sikh Sardars owed allegiance to the Gurus and the Panth. The decisions taken at Akal Takhat, Amritsar, before the holy Granth, called Gurmatas, were binding on all and could not be defied with impunity. The main emphasis was on the covenants between God, Guru, Granth and the Khalsa.¹⁴²

Teja Singh states that “it was a democratic organization. In this system every Sikh was free and was a substantive member of the Khalsa but their positions and their abilities were different unequal. Therefore, feeling that all could not lead, they unconsciously developed a confederate system, in which different groups of people elected willingly to serve under different leaders.”¹⁴³

As per Ganda Singh, missals were more democratic with true spirit of feudalism. As per him, this was confederation of missals. He notes that “the two Dals had by this time, 1765 AD been divided into twelve important commands, popularly known as Missals or confederacies. They were: to the north of the Sutlej I Ahluwalia II Bhangi III Dallewalia IV Faizullapuria, V Kanhaiya VI Nakei VII Ramgarhia VIII

142 Ibid; pp. 351-352.

143 Teja Singh, *Sikhism its Ideals and Institutions*, p. 45-46.

Sukkarchkia. To the South of the Sutlej: IX Kararsinghia X Nishananwalia XI Phul-Kia, XII Shahid.”¹⁴⁴

Ganda Singh finds that the Sikh missals were republican in character. Quoting Sir George Campbell, he states,

Each missal elected its own supreme chief and sub-chief and every horseman had his rights and his share in the common conquests. The combined Missals formed the Khalsa or Sikh commonwealth. Just in Germany, the tendency was to an elective supreme chief who had very little power and whose place was not hereditary. But the chiefs of Missals and minor chiefs gradually acquired a hereditary footing like the dukes and barons of Europe.¹⁴⁵

Ganda Singh presents the Sikh missals as republican in nature. Fauja Singh calls missal system as confederal system. He states that “the confederal system that they (Sikhs) evolved to meet the new situation was not only a half-hearted attempt. They were earnest about neither democracy nor confederation. The result was debris of the marvelous democracy of the earlier period and the debility of the confederation was their own. The only ideas that survived the ideological collapse of the Missaldari period were those of allegiance to the Sikh commonwealth and benevolence towards the people at large.”¹⁴⁶

Bhagat Singh gives a detailed account about the structure of the missals. According to him “missal has been used to mean loose papers tagged or stitched together forming a sort of file. The Sikh Sardars made a detailed report of the territories occupied by them to their chief leader, who prepared the separate missals (files) of the individual Sardars when they had assembled at Akal Takhat. These records or Missals helped resolve territorial disputes whenever they arose between the two Sardars. Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia started for the first time, the maintenance

144 Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, Sikh Cultural Centre, Calcutta, 1959, p. 50.

145 Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 144.

146 Fauja Singh, *Political Ideas of the Sikhs during the 18th to 20th Centuries*, p. 285.

of missals or files for the individual Sardars because he was then the only person with knowledge of Persian and Urdu among Sardars to do this job. Later the term missal acquired the meaning of the army of a Sardar or the territory under him.”¹⁴⁷

He states that in the beginning, the chieftainship of a Missal was not considered as hereditary property of a peculiar Sardar. Quoting Ahmad Shah Batalia, he states that the founder of the Ramgarhia Missal was Khushal Singh, a Jat and his successor Anand Singh was also a Jat but later the leadership of the Missal had gone into the hands of Jassa Singh Ramagarhia and his brothers who were carpenters by profession. As they were known for their bravery, nobody objected to this change of leadership in the Missal from Jats to Ramgarhias. Thus Bhagat Singh concludes that only personal qualities were the main criteria for the selection or election of a successor. But with the passage of time the chieftainship became hereditary. To illustrate, Bhagat Singh states that as Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had no son, his nephew Bhag Singh became his successor. “Thus democratic practice of electing a leader of the missal comes to be converted into a hereditary succession though the suitability was never ignored.”¹⁴⁸

Bhagat Singh highlights the fact that the overall charge of the Missal was in the hands of the Sardar and not the Missaldar. The Sardar had many Missaldars under him in his missal. But the chief of the Missal did not exercise strict control over his Missaldars.¹⁴⁹ Quoting Ahmad Shah Batalia, Bhagat Singh states that “their obligation was limited to their co-operation with the chief only in such situations that called for armed offence or defense.”¹⁵⁰

So Missaldars enjoyed the right of keeping independent forces and conquering territories. With the passage of time Missaldars had become strong enough to act independently of the Sardars and difference between the Sardar and Missaldars had minimized and all of them became equally autonomous Sardars. In the words of Bhagat Singh, “by the last quarter of the eighteenth century there were strictly

147 Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity*, p. 88.

148 Ibid; pp. 94-95.

149 Ibid; p. 96.

150 Ibid; p. 97.

speaking, no chiefs and no Missaldars, but only so many Sardars of major or minor consequence. Roughly speaking, it was about 1758, when terms missal and Missaldars began to be used by the Sikhs.”¹⁵¹

Quoting Ibbeston, Bhagat Singh states that missal organization was a curious blend of limited aristocracy, limited democracy and absolutism, with a modified form of theocracy. “It was theocratic as the Sikh Soldiers and Sardars fought for the Guru and when they assembled at Amritsar before the Guru Granth Sahib they did what the religious assemblies decided. It was democratic because every soldier and member of the Missal enjoyed social and political equality. But ‘absolutism’ did not mean as we understand it from its modern concept. They could not afford to exercise unrestricted and completely independent authority or rule arbitrarily.”¹⁵² G.S. Nayyar states that

The missal was a group. In the first phase of the organization of these groups, faith in Guru Gobind Singh and future greatness of the Khalsa united the volunteers. A spirit of mutual co-operation and understanding kept alive during the struggle against the religious foes. The leader was a person who was acceptable to the members owing to his qualities. The conflict of the Khalsa with contemporary authorities affected the nature of the missal organization and helped its transition from non-territories grouping to territorial acquisition. The possession of territories changed the very organization of the missals. The leaders of the missals exercised full control over the territories under their control. They exercised autonomous powers... Co-operation among missals was considered necessary only in the face of common danger.¹⁵³

According to J.S. Grewal, “the Khalsa had been divided into a number of units called Deras or Jathas in the 1730s. These units multiplied for the purpose of effective action and occupation of territories in the 1750s. At a large stage, the epithet missal

151 Ibid; p. 97.

152 Ibid; p. 127.

153 G.S. Nayyar, *Sikh Polity and Political Institutions*, p. 141.

came to be applied to such units. They were never static, uniform or formal. In one case, the entire unit could consist of one leader and his followers; in another, it could be a combination of several small units accepting the leadership of one person for a specific purpose or campaign. During the crucial phase of 1754-65, the shifts were rather uncommon, which gives the impression as if the combinations formed for a limited purpose were permanent units of Sikh polity. In almost every case the meaning of the 'missal' as a fighting unit was lost when territories were occupied."¹⁵⁴

Veena Sachdeva states that "the missal was a voluntary combination of Sikh leaders and their followers for the purpose of conquest and territorial occupation."¹⁵⁵ For her "the term 'missal' in its application to the Sikh polity of the late eighteenth century does not possess the kind of significance which is attributed to it. Every Sikh chief in theory, and the majority in practice, was entirely independent of others in the internal administration of territories and political relations. Many of the chiefs occupied territories without associating themselves with others. Those who joined forces for conquest did not extend their association to the realm of politics, government and administration after territorial occupation."¹⁵⁶

Thus, missal was a very significant institution of that time which played a very important role during eighteenth century and because of this organization, the Sikhs had established their own rule on a large part of Punjab. Twelve missals of the Sikhs ruled over the Punjab. New rulers of Punjab, Missaldars did not adopt any old forms of administration namely imperialism or despotism. Instead of they adopted their own means and ethics which lay down by their Gurus. For them Panth was the ultimate source of power so they obtained sovereignty as a duty to serve for the Panth. They acted as servants (Sevadars) of the people.

2.7 Rakhi System

Rakhi is a word of Punjabi language which means protection. While people of Punjab suffered at the hands of foreign invaders and cruel Mughal Government than

154 J.S. Grewal, *Sikh Ideology, Polity and Social Order*, p. 96.

155 Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab*, p. 153.

156 Ibid; p. 97.

Sikhs emerged as protectors (*Rakha*) for them. *Rakhi* system was emerged after the death of Muin-ul-Mulk while Punjab thrust into anarchy and disorders. The cultivator followed the plough with a sword in his hand. During this time of anarchy, the Sikhs offered a plane to individual villages for their safety and security. Under this plane, “the protection was granted to the people against foreign invasion and internal exploitation of Zamindars and government officials and against the depredation of the local adventurers. In return, they received one- fifth of their income twice a year after each harvest, that is *harhi* and *Sawni* or *rabi* and *kharif*.”¹⁵⁷

James Browne writes that “in the districts not occasional incursions they levy a tribute which they call *Raukey* and which is about one- fifth (as the Maratha Chouth is one- fourth) of the annual rent; whenever a Zamindar has agreed to pay this tribute to any Sikh chief, that chief not only himself refrains from plundering him but will protect him from all others; and this protection is by general consent held so far sacred, that even if the grand army passed through a *Zamindari* where the safeguards of the lowest Sikh chiefs are stationed, it will not violate them.”¹⁵⁸

According to Polier, “No further hindrance or molestation will be received from them, on the contrary, the chief to whom the tribute or *racky* is paid, takes the district under his protection and was ready to fight against any of brethren who might think of disturbing it.”¹⁵⁹ Describing their method of operations, Franklin writes, “When having first demand the *rakhi* or tribute, if it be complied with, they retire peacefully, but when denied, hostilities commence.”¹⁶⁰ The Sikhs moved vigorously against those who showed hostility.

Without giving any particular term or name, Wilson discussed the *rakhi* system, in these words, “their necessities made them plunderers and their policy

157 Bhagat Singh, *The Sikh Polity in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 79.

158 James Browne, “The History of the Sikhs”, in Ganda Singh (ed.) *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, p. 16.

159 Col. Polier, “An Account of the Sikhs” Reproduced in *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, p. 62.

160 W. Franklin, *Shah Aulum*, Calcutta, 1803, pp. 76-77; as quoted by Bhagat Singh in *Sikh Polity in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 82.

suggested their forming fixed settlements by constructing forts and compelling the cultivators to pay them government revenues.”¹⁶¹ Thus he seems this institution not in the form of blackmailing. Further, he states that when the Sikhs acquired the territories but not occupy, then they had left this land in the hands of cultivators on the cost of government revenue. In his own words, “it might sometimes happens that the land itself, where left desolate and waste, constituted the allotments, but the usual plan was to leave the Rayats, whether Hindus or Muhammadans, unmolested, on consideration of their acknowledging allegiance and paying the government revenue to their new lords.”¹⁶² Thus he takes the meaning of *rakhi* as blackmail but further he presents it as a revenue or tribute.

H.T Princep presents *rakhi* as ‘*rakha*’ and opines that whenever the joint forces of the several missals fought collectively and collected ‘*rakha* (blackmail).’¹⁶³ Likewise Cunningham is of the view that “from the tracts of country which the Sikhs subdue but did not occupy, ‘*rakhi*’ (literally, protection money) was regularly levied. The ‘*Rakhi*’ varied in amount from perhaps a fifth to a half of the rental or government share of the produce.”¹⁶⁴ Comparing *rakhi* with Marathas system of ‘*Chowth*’, he says, “both terms meant ‘blackmail’ or in a higher sense tribute.”¹⁶⁵ Thus he has almost similar views on the matter of *rakhi* with Wilson. Cunningham also states that *rakhi* was collected from tracts which were subdued but not occupied by the Sikhs.¹⁶⁶ Both Princep and Cunningham refer to it as “Blackmail”, but Cunningham was aware that the literal meaning of *rakhi* is protection and therefore, the amount levied was in a higher sense tribute. Intact, *Rakhi* was not a sort of blackmail but it was a protection providing by the Sikhs to their subjects from the tyrant Mughal government and invasions of Abdali on the cost of fix tax which was called *Rakhi*.

161 H.H. Wilson, ‘Civil and Religious Institutions of the Sikhs’, pp. 93-94.

162 Ibid; p. 94.

163 H.T. Prinsep, *The Origin of the Sikh Power in Punjab*, p. 26.

164 J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 95.

165 Ibid; p. 95.

166 Ibid; p. 95.

N.K. Sinha states that “the Dal Khalsa in its incursions levied a blackmail which was called Rakhi and which resembled with the Maratha *Chauth*. It ensured immunity from plunder. Quoting James Browne, he states that it was one-fifth of the annual rent.”¹⁶⁷ He states that “it was only the absence of artillery that prevented the Sikhs from permanently subjugating the country but they would always invade at the time when the crops were cut and would levy their contribution, whether we term it *Rakhee* or *Kamblee*’.”¹⁶⁸ So, Sinha simply repeats the ideas expressed by the early European writers.

Hari Ram Gupta points out that Rakhi system proved a great development in the rise of the Sikh power, which led them to the final stage of their becoming a political power. He writes that “consequently, in a short time, large slices of territory in as many as four out of the five doabs of the Punjab were taken under protection by the Dal.”¹⁶⁹ Gupta also mentions that the Sikhs had become economically strong, because of this system and they had raised themselves in to territorial chieftains.

Teja Singh and Ganda Singh write about this system that, “the Sikhs took full advantage of the confusion caused by the weakness of the Lahore government and the invasion of Ahmed Shah Durrani. They organized a protective system of influence, called Rakhi, under which they offered full protection to Hindu and Muslim Zamindars against all attacks and disturbances, in return for a levy of one-fifth of the annual rent. This afforded a considerable measure of peace and safety to the person and property of the inhabitants who became happy and contented.”¹⁷⁰ Further they state that “this system was however found acceptable by most of the people in the distracted areas which passed under the control of Sikh Sardar. These leaders set up forts in their respective territories and began to organize some sort of government which became the basis of the administration called missaldari system.”¹⁷¹ Thus they have thought that this system found the basis of the missaldari system.

167 N.K. Sinha, *Rise of Sikh Power*, P-P. 116-117.

168 Ibid; p. 82.

169 Hari Ram Gupta, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol.II, p. 127.

170 Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 144.

171 Ibid; pp. 144-45.

In his book *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, Ganda Singh gives a detail account on Rakhi. He writes that “before launching an attack on anybody, the Khalsa would ask him to accept their protection, and then an area or territory came under the protection of a Sardar for which he received nominal revenue of 5%. No other Sardar interfered with him in any way or demanded anything from him.”¹⁷² Ganda Singh speaks very high of the Singh Sardar regarding their attitude toward landlords who accept to pay Rakhi. He states that “the Khalsa treated the landlords who came under their protection with great respect and the people were happy and prosperous. According to the circumstances, the rate of revenue varied from 1/3rd of the total production to 1/10th. Out of which a sizable portion was given away in charity or in the form of estate to Hindu temple, Muslim *dargah*, mosques, tombs etc.”¹⁷³

Similarly James Browne also speaks very high of the Sikh chiefs regarding their attitude toward zamindars who accepts to pay the Rakhi, in stating “whenever a zamindar has agreed to pay his tribute to any sick chief, that chief not only himself refrains from plundering him but will protect him from all others; and this protection is by general consent held so far sacred that even of the grand army passes through a zamindary where the safeguards of the lowest sick chiefs are stationed, it will not violet them.”¹⁷⁴

Bhagat Singh calls it “a virtual parallel government which sowed the seeds of Sikh political authority in the land.”¹⁷⁵ He mentions that in the early stages, the rakhi was sought by the people from the Sikhs and later, in order to bring more territories under the rakhi system, the offer of rakhi was made to the people of the towns and villages of the Punjab and was actively pursued, by the Sikhs as a regular feature of their activities.

172 Ibid; p. 214.

173 Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, p. 81.

174 James Browne, “History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks” in *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, (ed. by) Ganda Singh, Calcutta, 1962, p. 556.

175 Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity*, p. 78.

He defines the word 'Rakhi' as "a tribute received by the Sikhs for the protection provided or guaranteed by them against external aggression to the people paying it."¹⁷⁶ He correlates the rise of Sikh power with the creation of rakhi system. Bhagat Singh is of the opinion that the state system had literally collapsed by invasions from foreign adventures.

He states that "during the three years that followed Mir Mannu's death there were swift changes in the governorship of the Punjab that resulted in chaotic conditions in the province. The Punjab was thrown into the trough of such political confusion and conflicting political claims that peace was completely shattered and the stability of this land wrecked. Between the inefficient administration of Mir Manu's widow Mughani Begum and the intrigues of artful Adina Beg the land of the Punjab become a prize for which the hereditary claim of the political authority at Delhi contended with the military genius at Kabul. The people of Punjab were suffering from the evils of a dual monarchy, not knowing whether the province was a part of Indian Empire to be controlled in its administration from Delhi or from Kandhar or Kabul. During these years, the state political apparatus had literally collapsed and such the protection of law and life could not be given to the people by the nominal governments professing to be holding charge of the State. Trade had practically come to a standstill as the highways and trade routes were not safe."¹⁷⁷

Bhagat Singh tries to say that "these circumstances were fit for the Sikh rise. The province had been divided into a number of divisions and there were several authorities who conflicted. Under these circumstances the dire need of people was an institution that should protect them from internal lawlessness and external danger which perpetually loomed large before the people. In such circumstances, the Sikhs provided a better option to the people by providing them protection and a sort of parallel government. In return they received one fifth of their income twice a year after each harvest, that is *Harhi* and *Sawni* or *rabi* and *Kharif*."¹⁷⁸

176 Ibid; p. 78.

177 Ibid; p. 78.

178 Ibid; p. 79.

In economic terms, rakhi was the source of revenue for the Sikh Sardars. This system, according to Bhagat Singh, formed the basis of missals. He states that “the extent of the territory that the Khalsa had to protect was so large that it felt it necessary to divide itself into units or divisions called the Missals. On the territories which had hitherto served as their rakhi grounds they set themselves up as territorial chieftains.”¹⁷⁹

Indu Banga has observed that the system of rakhi did serve as a prelude to annexation but rakhi as a system was not a definite phase in the political history of the Sikhs. “Territorial occupation and rakhi could be established by one and the same chief at one and the same time in two different areas. Rakhi was, thus, a transitional arrangement existing side by side with territorial occupation. The areas one’s brought under rakhi were often, but not always, actually occupied and directly administered sooner or later.”¹⁸⁰

J.S. Grewal states that “the cultivator had to pay only a fifth of the produce from land, instead of the usual one-half or nearly one-half. The Rakhi become more and more extensive as the Khalsa leaders became more and more effective in redeeming the promise of protection. The Rakhi thus became a source of finance, and an instrument of extending political influence, and eventually of territorial occupation.”¹⁸¹ Veena Sachdeva also agrees that Rakhi signified the Sikh chief’s claim to a part of the produce from land in return for protection against all other claimants.¹⁸²

Therefore *rakhi* system played a very crucial role in the history of the Sikhs. Because of this system a large part of Punjab had come under the rule of the Sikhs in a short time. James Browne, Polier and Franklin explain the *rakhi* system in the form of protection, but Princep and Cunningham refer it as blackmail, but Cunningham was

179 Ibid; p. 82.

180 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 27-28.

181 J.S. Grewal, *Sikh Ideology, Polity and Social Order*, p. 96.

182 Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of Punjab*, p. 93.

aware that literal meaning of rakhi is protection. Indu Banga has viewed that rakhi was a transitional arrangement which exists side by side with territorial occupation.

Rakhi system gave protection to insecure people of Punjab. It was more advanced than feudalism. The Sikh Sardars made minimum limit of the land. According to them excessive land possessed by the land lords should be distributed among the landless peasants. This system was strongly in favor of the protection of the peasant from internal and external dangers. Thus, this institution played a very prominent role in the history of the Sikhs during the eighteenth century.

Consequently these institutions were based on the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. The role of Sikh institutions were vital to change the cast system, improved the position of lower people, it also infused the idea of universal brotherhood. These political institutions also played a very crucial role strengthen the Sikh power during the eighteenth century. Only because of these institutions the Sikh had established their own State and claimed their sovereignty which they thought that they received from God or Guru.

After concentrating on the basic principles of these institutions we have found that the Sikhs during eighteenth century hated the politics without principles. By the teachings of Gurus, they believed that politics should be based on moral values and rulers must not indulge in such activities which are against the political morality.

3. Sikhcracy: A New Model

The Sikhism instead of carry the idea of democracy has espoused a new political theory of the Government namely Sikhcracy. The Sikhcracy did not believe in elective method for choosing leaders, in its place it supports the method of selection on the base of merits. Selection on the basis of merits, the bright, sharp and qualified leaders will took the command of the public. This efficient leadership leads the society to the progress. This system gives equal rights and powers to minorities also. Sikhcracy encourage the active participation of the people and protect their rights. It believes in open democracy in the form of Gurmata. In this system common

will have great importance. So it is the more advance concept from democracy. Political, economic and social structure of this system was new and advanced. We have traced some features as under.

3.1 Political Structure: Spirit of Rule

The Sikhs followed Guru's path and did not lose temper even at critical conditions. Faith in Guru gave them spiritual/sacred boost which makes them strong and brave. The fifth and ninth Guru has taught them the principle of accepting the will of God. They (the two Gurus) had to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Sikhi. Later on thousand of the Sikhs by following the path of the Gurus, sacrificed everything for the cause of religion and established a state where they tried their best to provide an environment where nobody suffered from injustice and exploitation.

3.2 Authority of Granth

The Sikh chiefs ruled in the name of the Guru and the Khalsa as apparent from their coins. An important aspect of their victory over their enemies was that it was the triumph not of any individual leader but of the Khalsa. Therefore the Sardars attributed their successes to the Gurus whom they believed to be the real founders and masters. Only for this reasons the Sikh chiefs when assembled at their religious centre Harimandar Sahib or Akal Takhat, they forgot all the personal conflicts with another chiefs and treated very friendly with each other. There they all forgot about the chieftainship and identifying themselves as the humblest servants of Guru.

In this context John Malcolm has written that "when the chiefs meet upon this solemn occasion it is concluded that all private animosities cease and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of general good and actuated by the principles of pure patriotism, think of nothing but the interests of religion and commonwealth to which he belongs."¹⁸³ Similarly M'Gregor also writes that "though the Sardars, at times, quarreled among them, all was peace and friendship when they met at the holly tank of Amritsar."¹⁸⁴ So by the religious regime they overlooked all their clashes and they behaved like brothers. They sat together in Langar and took

183 John Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 120.

184 McGregor, *the History of the Sikhs*, James Madden, Vol. I, London, 1846, p. 118.

meal. Here all their sovereignties were forgotten and they only remembered the supreme power of God and Guru, the Sovereign of the sovereigns. Hence the only link which bound them together was the respect of Panth.

The Sikh chiefs created a close connection with the people and rejected the theory of divine rights of the kings. They ruled under the name of the Guru and took major decisions through the Gurmata. They never disregarded the supreme authority that rested in Gurmata. All this was the outcome of the high political idealism, which was given to them by the Gurus. So the guidelines of Gurus gave the Sikh chiefs a political ideology which was totally different from the Mughals.

3.3 Decentralization of power

The examples of Gurus were the guidelines for their followers. Kapur Singh was tipped by the Sangat for the title of 'Nawab', offered by the Governor of Lahore, when he was fanning the Sikh congregation. Similarly the Sikh Sardars always kept before them the motto that the service of humanity is the service of God. Early eighteenth century is witnessed that they have no lust for power and authority. They equating themselves with their soldiers and declaring themselves as the humblest servants of their subjects.

Idea of sharing power only found in Sikhism. History records that the territories of the Ramgarihas and the Kanaihyas intermingled both in the upper Bari Doab and Jalandhar. The city of Amritsar was open to all. The Sardars of Missals had their Bungas. Similarly, Lahore was under the rule of triumvirate. Two of them were Bhangies and one was Kanaiyas.¹⁸⁵ So in early stage the Sikh Sardars ruled with the mutual understanding and friendly relations.

3.4 Political Tolerance

Though the Sikhs suffered a lot under the Mughal state but when they became ruler, they observed liberal traditions and showed full religious tolerance toward their subjects. They were not revengeful or intolerance to the Muslims. What they had

185 Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Missals*, p. 345.

disliked in the Mughal government, they would not do themselves. Even Qazi Nur Muhammad, an anti Sikh, who calls the Sikhs dogs but at the same time he mentions their heroism and emphasizes upon the fact that “they being good marksmen and very brave, could create havoc while fighting a battle. Thus it is not right to call them dogs because they acted like lions in the battlefield.”¹⁸⁶

He also makes it clear that in the time of peace, “they are so generous and compassionate that even Hatamtai was not match. They observe their religious code of conduct very strictly and very truthful, honest sincere and pure in their feelings they have no bad habits like adultery or prostitution and have a great respect for ladies.”¹⁸⁷ Comparing the Sikh Sardar’s performance with Hatimtai, a great hero of the abbasin stories Qazi Nur Muhammad makes it clear that the Sikh Srardar served their subjects by heart either they were Muslims or Hindu.

While the Sikhs had acquired Lahore in 1765, they showed regard to all citizens. Nobody was plundered and ill-treated by the Sikhs. Their performance had removed the anti- Sikh feelings created by the Afghans, Mughals and Muslim priests for their own narrow political advantage. The Sikhs were treated as their dearest ones rather than anti- Muslims or Kafirs.

3.5 Justice

An important aspect of the Sikh rule was to be the administration of justice. To deliver justice was the personal responsibility of missaldar and he was answerable to God for his conduct. In the words of Malcolm “the administration of justice in the countries of the Sikhs is in a very rude and imperfect state, for though their scriptures inculcate general maxims of justice... and have no fixed code, they appear to have adopted that irregular practice, which is most congenial to the temper of the people and best suited to the unsteady and changing character of their rules of government.”¹⁸⁸ Ordinary cases of village were settled by the *Panchayat* which was

186 Qazi Nur Muhammad, “Jangnama” as quoted by Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1990, p. 215.

187 Ibid.

188 John Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 127.

“always chosen from men of the best reputation” and thus village court enjoyed a high character for justice.¹⁸⁹

Justice was an important source of income and efforts were made to rely on money from both the plaintiff and the defendant. In a case of theft, for instance, a plaintiff was required to pay a sum of money equal to one fourth values of the stolen goods, if recovered, as *shukrana* or present of the thanks giving. The person found guilty was required to pay a heavy *jurmana* or fine. If he was unable to pay the fine, he was thrown in to the *taikhana*.

The Sikh chiefs dealing with serious cases mixed with people and tried to get the true facts about case. In this context Bhagat Singh writes that “though vested with uncontrolled power his (chief’s) administration of justice mild with and equitable... All the offence weather murder or the slightest misdemeanor are under the cognizance of the Kotwal who submits a detail of all cases, that come before him, to chief by whom alone punishments are awarded agreeable to his will. This system of judicial administration seems to have a happy effect.”¹⁹⁰

3.6 Peace and order

The Sikh Sardars who were so well known in the art of war were no less adept in the art of peace. Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Ala Singh, Lehna Singh Bhangi and Charhat Singh were great soldiers but at the same time they knew well the value of peace and always tried to create a peaceful environment in their States. Quoting *Gujarat Gazetteers*, Bhagat Singh states “the name of Sradar Gujjar Singh and Sahib Singh are often in the mouths of the people, who look back to their rule without the smallest bitterness. They seem, indeed to have followed an enlightened liberal policy, sparing no efforts to induce the people, harried by the twenty years of constant spoliation to settle down once more to peaceful occupation.”¹⁹¹

189 Ibid.

190 Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity*, p. 135.

191 Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Missals*, p. 384.

To maintain peace and order, Sikh chiefs established an efficient government in their States. The system of their government had certainly the elements of goodness, justice and humanitarianism in it. William Franklin writes that “the Sikhs, in the interior part of their country preserve good order and a regular government and cultivation of their land is attendant with much assiduity.”¹⁹²

3.2 Social structure

After following exactly the theory of basic social structure of the Sikhs and system of practice in the Sikh State we are enlisting the basic features of the Sikh rule from social aspect. Basic social structure of the Sikhs is based on the principles which have been placed by the Sikh Gurus. Such basic features are discussed below:

3.2.1 Dignity of the women

The Sikhs believe in equality of gender and Sikh tradition give a respectable status to women. Because of this in the Sikh warfare, women played an important role. “In all other wars anywhere in the world, the victorious always took possession of the women in the enemy camp and dealt with them as with other properties or possession. Many a times, the women had to kill themselves for saving their honor by not falling in the hands of enemy. But in Sikhism, neither any such war was ever fought, nor had the women to face any insult, humiliation or lost their modesty or honor even when the Sikhs won the enemy camp.”¹⁹³

The Sikhs had established their political supremacy over Punjab; they emerged as protectors of honor of women and society. Qazi Nur Muhammad was in army camp but he observes that “they (the Sikhs) never harassed the old, infirm and women.”¹⁹⁴ Polier also states that “it is true that they (the Sikhs) seldom kill in cold

192 William Franklin, *the History of the reign of Shah Aulum*, Clerandon Press, London, 1778, p. 77.

193 S.J.S. Pall, *The Story of the Valiant Sikhs*, B. Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, New Delhi, 1999, p. 120.

194 Qazi Nur Muhammad, “Jangnama” as quoted by Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1990, p- 215.

blood or make slaves."¹⁹⁵ And "during any intestine disputes their soldiery never molest the husband man"¹⁹⁶ saying Browne.

In fact, the Sikhs had protected the honor of women. For instance, the founder of first Sikh State, Banda Bahadur

While moving towards Sadhoura his attention was drawn towards the *Zullum*, which the people of the neighborhood were subjected to at the hand of Qadam-ud-din, the ruler of Kapuri. His sowars prowled over the territory, waylaying Hindu marriage parties and snatching away the new brides for the midnight revelries of their lust full master... Banda Singh, therefore, decided to attend to no other business till he had properly chastised the ruler of Kapuri... Early in the morning of next day the Sikhs fell upon Kapuri, overpowered the resistance offered and set fire to the strongholds of Qadam-ud-din's debaucheries, scattering his immortalizing wealth to the four winds.¹⁹⁷

In this way, Banda Bahadur had destroyed the terror of Qadam-ud-din and protected the right of women by securing them from their lustful master. After the death of Banda Bahadur the Sikhs were treated ruthlessly by the Mughal Government.

Their women and children were imprisoned. A large contingent of women and innocent children were taken as prisoners to Lahore. They were locked up in dark dingy cells. Great pressure was exerted on them to accept conversion to Islam but the brave Sikhs women did not yield. They were forced to grind corn continuously. Their hands were full blister by such hard labor but they were given no break from the hard and tortuous task. Still they could not be coerced into accepting conversion to Islam. Their young infants and children were slaughtered

195 Ganda Singh, (ed.) *Early European account of the Sikhs*, p- 61.

196 Ibid; p. 17.

197 Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2006, pp- 31-32.

most cruelty before their eyes and their severed heads cut in to pieces were hung round their necks shamelessly. In spite of all these atrocities the fearless and brave Sikh women would not budge from their resolve to stick to their faith till their last breath. Ultimately they were also killed.¹⁹⁸

Thus Mughal Government treated very badly with their women and children and they had suffered a lot at the hands of the fanatic Mughal authority.¹⁹⁹ But the other side, the Sikhs, even during the cause of struggle with the Mughals, did not entertain any enmity against the women. Their struggle was against the Government and not against the Muslim women. And even when they took control over Punjab, they were not revengeful or intolerant to the Muslims.

Indeed, during the war in any country it is the women who suffered the most. They are sexually exploited by the army men as it happened in Punjab when foreign invaders attacked. "In this age of violence, women are treated as prizes of war and are being captured by the invaders for making slaves. Nobody risked his life for saving the honor of the innocent women. Then the Sikhs had come forward and protected the helpless women."²⁰⁰ Harbans Singh writes that how the Sikhs rescued innocent women from the imprisonment of Nadir Shah in these words,

In early months of 1739, Nadir Shah was returning to Persia after a hearty plunder of Delhi and the Punjab. With a view of avoiding the heat of the plains, he kept close to the hills on the backward journey. The Khalsa Dal lay not far from the route he had taken. Nawab Kapur Singh thought it is a good opportunity of punishing the invader and replenishing his own resources. When Nadir Shah reached Akhnur on

198 Ibratnama; as quoted by Piara Singh Padam, *The Sikh Empire*, National Book Shop, Delhi, 1986, p- 78.

199 Ibid; p. 78.

200 Harbans Singh, "Nawab Kapur Singh", *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. ix, Part- I, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1977, p. 85.

the river Chenab, Nawab Kapur Singh swooped down upon the rearguard relieving him of much of his booty. On the third night, Nawab Kapur Singh made a fierce attack and rescued a number of innocent girls who were being abducted and restored them to their parents.²⁰¹

While Ahmed Shah Abdali attacked on India, he also followed the path of Nadir Shah. He plundered Delhi and Punjab and kidnapped thousand of women for making slaves. About this, Ganda Singh writes that,

In the camp of Durrani Emperor, there were thousands of prisoners whom Ahmed Shah was taking to Afghanistan. These prisoners included nearly 2200 Hindu women. These helpless women were being dragged by the Durranis much against their wishes. But the lamentations of these women did not melt any heart; no one heard their appeal for succor. Even their men folk followed these prisoners crying and shedding tears. When no help came forth from any quarter, some of their spokesmen reached Amritsar. It was the Baisakhi festival. On hearing the lamentations of these spokesmen in the court of the Guru, the blood of S. Jassa Singh began to boil. He thought that the Khalsa was a living embodiment of the Guru, while he himself was the leader of the Khalsa created by the Guru. Therefore, S. Jassa Singh drew his sword and taking a few selected Singhs with him reached Goindwal and attacked the Durranis when they were crossing the river; even before they could imagine what had happened, he freed the bonded women. He gave them pocket expenses and sent them to their respective places.²⁰²

201 Ibid; p. 86.

202 Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, pp. 105-06.

Because of their high moral character, service of humanity and protection of women, the Sikhs became the favorite of the people. Women of Punjab were feeling safe and secure in the presence of the Sikhs. During that time many slogans were famed in folk of Punjab. For example

“Aye ni nihang buha khol de nishang.”

The proverbs tell that people opened the door to welcome the Sikhs. Open doors for the Sikhs were the symbols of safety and security. The people who were not able to save their women from the invaders always requested the Sikhs to protect them:

“Modi baba kach walyea

Chhai ran basre nu gayi”

Thus, Women and children were the object of special respect for the Sikhs and must be protected against all forms of incident assault. The Sikhs provided them a safe and secure atmosphere in which they had got an honorable status and share in the various fields of life. When occasion arose, the Sikh women also actively participated in State affairs. General Gordon also observed that "the Sikh ladies ruled with vigor and diplomacy."²⁰³

In the words of William Franklin, "instances indeed, have not infrequently occurred, in which they (women) have actually taken up arms to defend their habitants, from the desultory attacks of the enemy and throughout the contest, behaved themselves with an intrepidity of spirit, highly praise worthy."²⁰⁴ To quote Griffin, the Sikh women "have on occasions shown themselves the equals of men in wisdom and administrative ability."²⁰⁵

The Sikhs gave space to the women. Therefore many women participated in the functions of State. Mai Desan the widow of Charat Singh Shukarchakia, was a great administrator, an experienced and a wise diplomat who conducted the civil and

203 John Gordon, *The Sikhs*, Blackwood & Sons, London, 1904, p. 82.

204 Ganda Singh, (ed.) *Early European account of the Sikhs*, p. 105.

205 Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1905, pp. 62-63.

military affairs dexterously. Rani Sada Kaur, Widow of Gurbakhsh Singh Kanahiya and Mother-in-law of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were well versed in the affairs of the State and commanded her soldiers in the battlefield. She was a very shrewd lady with a thorough grasp of State craft. Mai Sukha, the widow of Gulab Singh Bhangi, strongly defended the town of Amritsar against Ranjit Singh for some time. Ratan Kaur, the widow of Tara Singh Ghaiba, was a brave and an able lady who kept the Lahore Darbar forces at bay for a sufficient time till the gate keepers were bribed by the Lahore army.

Dharam Kaur, wife of Dal Singh of Akalgarh, after her husband's imprisonment by Ranjit Singh mounted guns on the walls of her fort and fought against the Durbar forces. She was a brave and wise lady who was able for some time, to foil the designs of the Lahore house, was one of the most remarkable women of her age. She possessed all the virtues which men pretend were their own—courage, perseverance and sagacity—without mixture of weakness which men attributed to women. Sahib Kaur was proclaimed as prime minister of Patiala at the age of eighteenth. She managed the affairs both in office and in the battlefield. Daya Kaur, wife of Gurbakhash Singh, ruler of Ambala, succeeded to her husband after his death. She was an excellent ruler and her estate was one of the best managed in the protected territory. Mai Chand Kaur, widow of Kharak Singh and mother of Nounihal Singh and Rani Jinda, widow of Maharaja Ranjit Singh also played a very diplomatic role in Lahore Darbar.²⁰⁶

The Sikh ladies were well known for their administration, grasp of political situation and organizing defense. Thus the active role of these women in the Sikh State shows that they had got an equal and respectful place in the Sikh State. Therefore gender based discrimination had influenced not only women's quality of life but also chances of their survival and the boundaries of gender excluded women from religious and political life. But when the Sikh Gurus had preached against the

206 Bhagat Singh, *History of Sikh Missals*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1993, pp. 381-82.

gender inequality and the Sikhs had provided the women a secure and safe atmosphere then the status of women had been raised in the society and they made great contribution in the various fields of life. Thus, in the Sikh state women got an honorable status.

3.2.3 Social Equality

The Sikh state ensures to the citizens liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. Individual's development is impossible without these liberties. These individual rights are guaranteed to the inhabitants of Sikh state by the Sikh philosophy. The Sikh Gurus have supported the rights of freedom of speech, expression and assemble peacefully for making dialogue with each other. In Sikh state, every person has liberty to choose any religion, faith and profession. Without such freedoms human personality cannot be expected to develop fully. To make these freedoms meaningful, Sikh rulers made them appropriate in their states.

The Sikh state aims to establishing equality of status and of opportunity. Each individual should be ensured of equality of status and opportunity for the development for the best in him. This objective is secured in the philosophy of Guru Nanak in which all discriminations on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex or the place of birth were abandoned. The Sikh rulers assured every person the equality before law and protection.

3.3 Economic structure

3.3.1 Dynamic monetary system

Sikhism has different strategy of balanced growth. A balanced growth means all- round and harmonious development of individual as well as society. In Sikhism, everyone has liberty to enter or leave the occupation as he like. The management of the Sikh society is always on democratic lines. Though in Sikh society, every Sikh was worked for money but they don't forget the motto of service taught by the Gurus. They helped the needy people by giving *dasband*. By reciting Gurbani they never think of any dishonesty or betrayal. They were satisfied with their life and lead their life in Anad awastha (pleasure condition).

If the standard of doctrine of socialism is applied to the Sikhism the truth will come out that Sikhism is more advanced from a socialistic state which preaches the ideas of social justice and equal opportunities to all. Because Sikhism preaches these ideas from the fourteenth century and when the Sikhs came in to power, they made all possible efforts to ensure equitable distribution of sources. By doing this, the Sikh state go advanced from the socialistic State.

3.3.2 Dignity of individuals

At that time there was no fraternity (means a sense of common brotherhood of all human being) and the dignity of individuals was vanished by the rigid Government. The Sikh rulers by following the teachings of the Gurus not only moralized the ideal of fraternity but also assured the dignity of the individuals. The Sikh thought recognizes that the personality of every individual is sacred and for applying this idea the Sikh rulers had given equal rights without any discrimination. The Sikhs were believed in honest labour and they protected dignity of labour.

Summing up

The period of the eighteenth century was a significant stage in the history of the Sikhs as it was during this period the Sikhs strengthened their political position and emerged as rulers of sovereign territories. The Sikhs had to give a large number of sacrifices but the bloodshed by them for the sake of religion made them more committed and powerful. It happened because the Sikhs of that time followed the tenants as enshrined in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

The principle of combining *Miri Piri* 'Bhakti and Shakti' was the strongest base with the Sikhs to face all kinds of tortures and cruelties. In this category, name of four sons of Guru Gobind Singh, Banda Bahadur, Bhai Mani Singh, Baba Deep Singh, Bhai Bota Singh, Bhai Garja Singh, Bhai Mehtab Singh, Sukha Singh, Bhai Subag Singh and Shahbaj Singh has been written with golden ink in the history of the Sikhs. They placed an example of perfect blend of *deg* and *teg* by giving their heads to their faiths that ever seen the world before. We cannot find even a single event in the history of the whole world where someone like Bhai Mani Singh had taught the

executioner that cut his body from the first joint of his finger and not on the hand. It was only happened because they have power of the Bhakti and Shakti. The power of Khalsa was always stand behind them like rock. With this power the Sikhs had acquired political power in Punjab and became ruler. Thus nature of the Sikh rule can be defined in three sentences: sovereignty of the Panth (people), dignity of individuals, and value based politics.

CONCLUSION

Consequently Sikhism has a sole and matchless ideology of the state. In Sikhism, as sovereign, human being is not important. For all the Sikhs there is only one Emperor and i.e. God or *Har Pritam*. On the other hand, in Sikh thought king is selected on the basis of his qualities and virtues and he has no divine powers as in Christianity but has many responsibilities of welfare of subjects. There has to be a proper balance between religion and the state so that none controls the other. It would be a combination of spiritual and democratic polity where the consciousness of the common people reached a level where they are their own master and the state is an instrument of their service. This principle makes Sikhism finer and unique.

This study has been divided in five chapters: Introduction, Idea of Sikh state: theoretical issues, Origin and development of Sikh rule, Nature of the Sikh Rule: political aspect and last one is conclusion. First chapter is Introduction in which we have mentioned the definitions, meaning and evolution of the State. In this study, we have tried to trace the source of Sikh rule from *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and find out that it was Guru Nanak who raised his voice against the cruel Mughal government. During this time of anarchy, Guru Nanak had stood against the persecution of the poor and innocent people. He had preached the lesson of liberty, equality and recognized only the sovereignty of God. Guru had awakened their sleeping self respect and ego.

The Second chapter is "Idea of Sikh state: theoretical issues." In this chapter, we have made an attempt to understand the idea of Sikh state. For this purpose, we have mainly concentrated on *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas and *Dasam Granth*. Firstly, we have tried to understand the nature of Sikh rule and after that we have made an attempt to compare it with political thought. After studying the whole issue, we have found that the idea of Sikh state is different from theocratic and modern state. The Sikh thought, mainly *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, has presented the concept of an ideal state namely the *Nanak Raj*, *Haleemi Raj* and *Beghumpura* which has based on compassion, moral values and welfare.

In the third chapter which is “Origin and development of Sikh rule,” we have tried to understand the origin and development of the Khalsa state. For more clarification we have divided this chapter in two parts:- part first deals with origin of state in Guru period. In second part we have discussed nature of Sikh state after Guru Gobind Singh. In the first part we have studied those institutions which came into existence during this time and helped the Sikhs to establish them as new identity. Sikhism introduced new institutions namely Sangat, Pangat, Gurdwara, Guruship and Manji system which had started to serve as an instrument for inculcating a sense of equality and classlessness.

We have also concentrated on the political events which occurred during that time and Gurus had taken important decisions on them which played an important role in Sikh polity. In this context, Guru Nanak’s *bani* which mention cruelty of Babur, dialogue between Guru Angad and Humayun, allegation of Jahangir on Guru Arjun regarding rebel of prince Khusrau, institution of *Miri- Piri* of Guru Hargobind and establishment of Khalsa are the events of under our study. Above mentioned events have proved that in Sikhism, it is the Gurus who give the model of freedom to the Sikhs. In the second part, we have concentrated on the political practice of Sikh Gurus and Sikhs and find that Sikhism revolves around the beliefs in the existence of God (*Waheguru*). He considers as bravest of all. There is none brave like Him and whosoever considered brave is just a shadow of Him.

The fourth chapter is Nature of the Sikh Rule: political aspect in which we have concentrated on the depiction of the struggle of the Sikhs that what aim they have for struggle and how they performed their duties in the political sphere. For this purpose we have studied their political organization and institutions which played an important role in the formation of the Sikh rule. In the last on the basis of their political organization and activities, we have traced a model of their rule namely *Sikhcracy* which is unique concept from modern politics. From the above references we make some findings as below:

1. Origin of State: Theory of Akal origin

Theory of origin of State in Sikhism is matchless with existing theories. Because the theory of force hold that the state came in to existence as a result of the forced subjection of the weak to the strong; The natural theory viewed man as a political animal and state as a natural result of the instinct of sociability; The divine theory holds that the state was created directly and deliberately by God, man has not been the major factor in its creation although the state has been made for man, in early oriental empires rulers claimed a divine right to control the affairs of their subjects; the social contract theory holds that man created the state in the form of a social contract as men got together and agreed upon a contract establishing the state. But unlike these theories, neither Sikhism considers state as a result of force or as a natural result of the instinct of sociability nor considers it as a form of social contract or divine origin in which king by getting Divine powers.

According to Sikh thought state is a Divine manifestation which was originated by God Himself but unlike divine origin theory it denied the divine powers of human king because Sikhism considers only God as King or sovereign and nobody equal to Him. He alone manages all the system of the earth and all human being has existed in His will. So no human have eligibility to share His duties. Human being has only responsibility to play duty of service of mankind. So in Sikhism state has its own theory of origin which is theory of *Akal origin*.

2. Sovereignty of Akal

According to Sikh thought supreme power or sovereign of the sovereigns is God (*Waheguru/ Akal Purkh*) that is beyond time. All the living and non- living things live in His hukam (order). Except the God, the Sikhs do not recognize any King or supreme power because Gurus gave them sovereignty. While Mughal Government offered a Jagir or *Nawabship* (1745) to them for conciliation, nobody was ready to accept it. Because according to them, Khalsa means to rule freely and they cannot accept the subordinate position under Mughal Government.

Nawabship presented to all leaders of the *Missals* but all of them were rejected. Then lastly it was suggested that it should be given to someone noted for service. Kapur Singh Faizalpuria, who was fanning air in a congregation, was selected for the honor. He accepted it but with one condition that he will continue his services of Gurdwara (*Rattan Singh Bhangu, 197-200*). From this golden event of the Sikh history, it is clear that sovereignty is in the blood of the Sikhs which did not allow them to work under anyone's supremacy.

3. Ruler as Sevadar (A Servant)

Rulers of the Sikh states were not a king or a dictator. They behave like servants of their subjects. They never imposed their will on fellow beings and associates. Everyone was independent and enjoyed equality in terms of right. The assumption of throne by the Sikhs marks the beginning of new era of a strong but a benevolent government. More importantly, the Sikhs forwarded by their actions and the concept of a new type of state which was fundamentally based on the common will and support of the people of all communities, which was basically beneficial for the welfare of hankind. Thus unlike Mughal rulers, they refuse to recognize sovereignty with self pride and tyranny.

As learned from their Gurus, they followed the policy of allowing Hindus and Muslims to practicing their religion. Thus non- Sikhs whether they were Hindus or Muslims were enjoyed freedom to live a life of splendor and honor. Because according to Sikh approach, in practicing the policy of terror was not considering far because it can create fear among the people but on the other side if the ruler is compassionate for their inhabitants, he surely makes place in the hearts of their people forever. So in the Sikh thought, the state was to be based on the willing acceptance of the people rather than fear or threats of violence.

4. Freedom and security

The basis of the Sikh state is the dignity of individuals as an ultimate source of all powers. Principle of significance and equality of individuals, they have enlightened from the Guru. Following teaching of Shabad Guru, the Sikh rulers provided their

inhabitants a safe and sound environment in which they have no danger of any foreign or native assault. In this atmosphere they were free to develop themselves.

For these religious warriors, weapons became the means of the protection of the women, poor and the destruction of the tyrants. Because of their high moral character, service of humanity and protection of women, they became the favorite of the people. During that time many slogans were famed for their morality. For example the people who did not able to save their women from the invaders always requested to the Sikhs to protect them.

Thus, Women and children were given special respect by the Sikhs and were protected against all forms of tyranny and assault. Consequently, the Sikhs provided them a safe and secure environment in which they had got an honorable status and share in the various fields of life. Inhabitants have neither any fear form Sikh rulers nor there are any middle men who had made hindrances between ruler and their subject as it happened in Mughal rule. They can directly communicate their problems to the ruler without any hesitation. They were free to express their thoughts to the ruler. Thus all the individuals whether they were Hindus or Muslims feel free, protected and secure in Sikh rule.

5. Freedom of Religion

Sikhism believes in equality of all human beings. It forbids discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, class, religion and gender. It guarantees equal rights and opportunities to all. Guru Gobind Singh in Dasam Granth says, "*Manas kee jaat sabay ekay pehchanbo*" means treat all mankind alike. It preaches secularism which respects other people's right to be distinct. It does not believe in imposing its values on others. It is not a religion of chosen people, but instead it is a religion of entire humanity. It raises above all regional barriers.

The Sikh rule was model of religious tolerance. For example though Guru Teg Bahadur had no believe Brahmanism and idol worship, but he did not turn down Kashmiri *pundits'* request for protection from fanatic Mughal Government and be ready to give self's sacrifice. So for him to accept Islam is to lose one's faith. He

offered his head rather than accept Islam. Thus Sikhism believes in the respect toward all religions.

6. Women's liberation

In the Sikh state, safe and secure atmosphere was provided to women by Sikh rulers, in which they got an honorable status and share in the various fields of life. When occasion arose, the Sikh women also actively participated in State affairs. There are several examples of liberation of women in history of the Sikhs which proved that women also contribute in Sikh states such as Mai Desan the widow of Charat Singh Shukarchakia, was a great administrator, Rani Sada Kaur, Widow of Gurbakhsh Singh Kanahiya and Mother-in-law of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were well versed in the affairs of the state and commanded her soldiers in the battlefield. She was a very shrewd lady with a thorough grasp of State craft. Mai Sukha, the widow of Gulab Singh Bhangi, Ratan Kaur, the widow of Tara Singh Ghaiba, was a brave and an able lady who kept the Lahore Darbar forces at bay for a sufficient time till the gate keepers were bribed by the Lahore army. These Sikh ladies were well known for their administration, handling of political situation and organizing defense. Thus the active role of these women in the Sikh state not only speaks about their greatness but also shows that they got liberation of development in the Sikh state.

7. Monetary ethics

Sikhism has different strategy of balanced growth. A balanced growth means all- round and harmonious development of individual as well as society. In Sikhism, everyone has liberty to enter or leave the occupation as he like. The management of the Sikh society is always on democratic lines. Though in Sikh society, every Sikh was worked for money but they don't forget the motto of service taught by the Gurus. They helped the needy people by giving *dasband*. By reciting Gurbani they never think of any dishonesty or betrayal. They were satisfied with their life and lead their life in *Anad awastha* (pleasure condition).

If the standard of doctrine of socialism is applied to the Sikhism the truth will come out that Sikhism is more advanced from a socialistic State which preaches the

ideas of social justice and equal opportunities to all. Because Sikhism preaches these ideas from the fourteenth century and when the Sikhs came in to power, they made all possible efforts to ensure equitable distribution of sources. By doing this, the Sikh State go advanced from the capitalist and socialistic State.

Model of the Sikh Rule: *Sikhcracy*

Sikhism instead of carrying the idea of democracy, has espoused a new political thought and model of the Government namely *Sikhcracy*. The *Sikhcracy* does not believe in elective method for choosing leaders, in its place it supports the method of selection on the basis of merits. Selection on the basis of merits, the bright, sharp and qualified leaders will hold the command of the public. This efficient leadership leads the society towards the progress. This system gives equal rights and powers to minorities also because they believe in the teachings of the Guru. As per Guru all human beings are equal to God and he resides in the hearts of everybody.

Sikhcracy encourages the active participation of the people and protect their rights. The *Sikhcracy* is a rule of *Akalpurkh* and his state is *Akal Takhat*. It believes in open democracy in the form of Gurmata. In this system, common people will have great importance. So it is the more advance concept from democracy. Thus nature of the Sikh rule can be defined in three sentences: sovereignty of the Panth (people), dignity of individuals, and value based politics.

Model of the Sikh state (*Sikhcracy*) is a new political system. We cannot compare it with modern political systems. It has advanced vision to protect the human rights. We suggest that there is a need to further studies on this because *Sikhcracy* is a model of futuristic state. Their origins, nature, mode of working are some issues which are very important subjects for upcoming researchers and this topic demands a very careful study as it is an exclusive theme.

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DECLARATION

It is certified that the research work titled "Nature of The Sikh Rule: An Analytical Study" is an original work of the student and is being submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the Doctorate of Philosophy in Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies, at Punjabi University, Patiala. This work has not been submitted earlier either to the University or to any other University/Institution for the fulfillment of the requirement of a course of study. The work has been undertaken under my supervision and guidance. The work is based on the original research of the student.

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