

A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

# **A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism**

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### Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	4
Foreword	
Introduction	5
	Chapter 1
What is Sikhism?	9
What is Hinduism?	29
Who are Sikhs?	30
Who are Hindus?	33
Who is a Sikh?	34
Who is a Hindu?	35
	Chapter 2
God in Sikhism.	48
God in Hinduism.	49
	Chapter 3
Theory of creation of universe---Cosmology according to Sikhism.	58
Theory of creation according to Hinduism	62
	Chapter 4
Scriptures of Sikhism	64
Scriptures of Hinduism	66
	Chapter 5
Sikh place of worship and worship in Sikhism	73
Hindu place of worship and worship in Hinduism	75
Sign of invocation used in Hinduism	
Sign of invocation used in Sikhism	
	Chapter 6
Hindu Ritualism (Karm Kanda) and Sikh view	76
	Chapter 7
Important places of Hindu pilgrimage in India	94
	Chapter 8
Hindu Festivals	95
Sikh Festivals	
	Chapter 9
Philosophy of Hinduism---Khat Darsan	98
Philosophy of Sikhism-----Gur Darshan / Gurmat	
99	
	Chapter 10
Panjabi language	103
	Chapter 11
The devisive caste system of Hinduism and its rejection by Sikhism	111
	Chapter 12
Religion and Character in Sikhism-----Ethics of Sikhism	115

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

Sexual morality in Sikhism	
Sexual morality in Hinduism	
Religion and ethics of Hinduism	
Status of woman in Hinduism	Chapter 13
	127
Various concepts of Hinduism and the Sikh view	Chapter 14
	133
Rejection of authority of scriptures of Hinduism by Sikhism	Chapter 15
	135
Sacraments of Hinduism and Sikh view	Chapter 16
	142
Yoga (Yogic Philosophy of Hinduism and its rejection in Sikhism)	
	Chapter 17
	145
Hindu mythology and Sikh view	Chapter 18
	147
Un-Sikh and anti-Sikh practices and their rejection	
	Chapter 19
	149
Sikhism versus other religious systems	
Glossary of common terms used in Sikhism	154
Bibliography	160

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**Jagraj Singh**

## Introduction

- Of all the religions of the world Sikh religion / Sikhi / Sikhism is the youngest whereas Hinduism is one of the oldest.
- Sikhism is a prophetic religion based on a definitive revelation like Semitic religions of the west, where as Hinduism, has an anonymous mysticism as its source of validity.
- Sikhism believes in the oneness God and is strictly monotheistic faith, where as Hinduism believes in Trinity of God and is polytheistic.
- Sikhism believes in universal brotherhood and equality of all human beings. It strongly denounces the divisive Hindu caste system. Guru Nanak says, “ਏਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰਗਈ॥-*Ek pita ekas kay ham batik toon mera gurhai*” i.e; “We are all children of the same God who takes care of us all (GGS, p.611). Guru Gobind Singh says, “ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ॥-*Manans kee jaat sabay ekay pehchannb*” “Treat all mankind alike”. All other Indian religions, except Buddhism observe caste system and ‘*Varan Ashram Dharma*’ forms the bedrock of Hinduism. Buddhism did away with ceremonies of Hindus set aside the Brahmanical priesthood, abolished sacrifices and dethroned the Gods of the Hindus. Buddhism and Jainism stand for ‘*Moksha*’ or ‘*Nirvan*’ through penance. Jainism on one hand condemns sacrifices, denies divine origin of the Vedas, rejects the Hindu doctrine of immunity from punishment through alms-giving and invocation of Gods and attaches no importance to the spirits of the dead. On the other hand, it recognizes the priestly institutions of the Brahmans, adheres rigidly to the Hindu caste system and has rules connected with purification, weddings, death, inheritance, the worship of Gods closely analogous to those of Hindus. The Jains revere cow and consider killing of any living creature an unpardonable sin.
- Sikhism believes in reality (existence) of the God and reality of the world, “ਸਚਾ ਆਪ ਸਚਾ ਦਰਬਾਰ॥-*Schcha aap sachcha Darbar*”-(GGS, M1, Japji, Pauri 34, p.7). Hinduism believes in God, but regards the world as *Maya* (illusion). There is total confusion about God in Hinduism. Sikhism is strictly monotheistic. It does not believe in Polytheism or henotheism. It does not in the Hindu Trinity of God, Brahma (The Creator), Vishnu (The Sustainer) and Shiva (The Destroyer).
- Sikhism does not believe in the incarnations (*Avtaars*) of God, Gods (*Devtas*) and Goddesses (*Devis*). Hinduism believes in incarnations of God (*Avtaars*), Gods (*Devtas*) and Goddesses (*Devis*).
- Sikhism is based on ethics, morality and knowledge (*Giyan*). It strongly denounces all ritualism. Hinduism strongly believes in ritualism. Hinduism is based on Chanakiya neeti of Saam, Daam and Dand Bhed in which morality and ethics have no place.
- Sikhism believes in equality of all human beings irrespective of gender, colour or any other such denomination. Whereas the divisive caste system forms the very bed rock of Hinduism and it is also known as Varn Ashram Dharma.
- Sikhism strongly denounces all ritualism. Hinduism strongly believes in ritualism.
- Hinduism believes in *Karma* and *bhog* (Cause and Effect), transmigration, the concept of Heaven and Hell. Buddhism and Jainism do not believe in the existence of God, but accept the concepts of transmigration of soul and that of *Karma* and *bhog* and they regard the world as misery or a suffering.
- Sikhism believes in now and here and does not believe in the concept of after life and thereby rejects the existence of *Narak-Surag* of Hinduism (Hell and heaven). As per Sikh thought, heaven and hell are not places for living here-after, they are part of spiritual topography of man and do not

exist otherwise. They refer to good and evil stages of life respectively and can be lived here in our earthly existence. According to Gurbani: “Truthful living in the noble fear of God is heaven. Having no faith in God and leading an unethical life is hell” (GGS, p. 24).

- Sikhism does not subscribe to the mythological Hindu theory of creation. Guru Granth Sahib, the holy Sikh scripture gives a very definite theory of creation.
- Sikhism does not believe in miracles, whereas Hinduism believes in miracles.
- Sikhism strictly forbids Idol, picture, grave, tomb and *Baba* worship. Hinduism believes in Idolatry, samadh and *Baba* worship.
- Sikhism is a whole life system because it does not accept any dichotomy in life, whether it is ‘personal and social’, ‘spiritual and material,’ ‘faith and reason,’ or any other such differentiation. It involves an integral combination between spiritual and empirical life of man. This constitutes the foundation of *Miri-Piri (Bhagti and Shakti)* doctrine of Sikhism. Other Indian religions: Vedanta (Hinduism), Radical saints, Buddhism, Jainism etc; consider spiritual path and empirical (worldly) paths, separate and distinct and there is a clear dichotomy between the empirical and spiritual life of man, hence they are dichotomous systems. They address devotion (*Bhagti*) and force (*Shakti*) as separate entities.
- Sikhism unlike Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism takes a more positive view of the human body. Man, the acme of God's creation is not merely a handful of dust, but repository and medium of the message of the lord. The body is not an unclean vessel, a seat of worms, but ‘Temple of God’ worthy of adoration and reverence. Anything unnatural or tortuous has no excuse for acceptance. Standing on one leg, living on roots, practicing contemplation in different postures, undergoing self suppression in a hard way and doing penances were too weak to avail man in the path of realization, but they are considered necessary in other eastern religious systems for the purification of the body and attainment of enlightenment. Buddhism and Jainism stand for *Moksha /Nirvana* through penance. Gurbani denounces any such practices, “ਨਾਨਕ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਿਮਰੀਐ ਤਿਸ ਦੇਹੀ ਕੋ ਪਾਲ॥-Nanak so prabh simri-ay tis dehi ko paal” i.e “The Lord should be meditated on by serving the body first” (GGS, p.554).
- Sikhism believes in *Ahimsa (Ahinsa)*, but according to its own philosophy. It does not believe in Ahimsa that stood as a bar against the religious man or a religious society trying to confront socio-political aggression. A society that has to accept the social responsibility of confronting injustice cannot remain wedded to the hurdle of Ahimsa. According to Sikhism it is righteous to use sword, when all other peaceful means fail, “ਚੂੰ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਾਂ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜ਼ਸਤ॥ ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬਾ ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੀਰ ਦਸਤ॥-Choon Kar Az Haman Heelte Dar Guzashat, Halal Ast Burdan Ba Shamsheer Dast” (Zafarnama, Guru Gobind Singh). In Vedanta (Hinduism including radical saints) and other eastern religions (Jainism, Buddhism) Ahimsa is deemed to be a cardinal virtue and meat eating is a prohibition. Guru Nanak says, “ਮਾਸ ਮਾਸ ਕਰ ਮੁਰਖ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਧਿਆਨ ਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ॥ ਕੋਣ ਸਾਗ ਕੋਣ ਮਾਸ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪ ਸਮਾਣੈ॥-Only fools argue whether to eat meat or not. Who can define what is meat and what is not meat or who knows where the sin lies, being a vegetarian or non-vegetarian?” (GGS, p.1289). And that “ਜੇਤੇ ਦਾਣੇ ਅਨ ਕੇ ਜੀਆਂ ਬਾਝ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥-every food grain that we eat has life in it,” (GGS, p.472). He further adds, “ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਵ ਹੈ ਜਿਤ ਹਰਿਆ ਸਭ ਕੋਇ॥-Water is the source of all life, which assists the growth of all living beings human beings” (GGS, Var Asa, M1, p.472). Also, “ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਆਹਾਰੁ ਜੀਅ ਖਾਣਾ ਏਹੁ ਕਰੋਇ॥-Jeeaa kaa aahaar jee khana eh karay i.e; Living beings feed on living

beings”(GGS p.955), hence there is nothing unnatural or ungodly in eating flesh.

- Among all ancient Indian religious systems salvation (*Mukti / Moksha / Nirvana*) means deliverance from the cycle of life and re-birth (Samsara) and individual salvation is their ideal. Sikhism denounces this concept. Enlightenment not redemption is the Sikh concept of salvation. For Sikhs '*Mukti*' is replacement of ignorance by spiritual enlightenment, now and here and not after death. Gurbani says, “ਮੂਏ ਹੋਇ ਕੇ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਦੇਹੋਗੇ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇਲਾ॥ – *Moo-ay ho-ay ko mukat deo gay, mukat na janay koela*” i.e, "O, God who will see that salvation, which you will grant me after death" (GGS, p. 1292).

According to Gurmat:

- (1) “ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਮਨੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਹੋਇ॥ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਵੈ ਸੋਇ॥--By realizing the self, the mind becomes purified Such one is emancipated in life and obtains the Lord (GGS, p161).
- (2) ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਆਤਮ ਹਿਤਾਵੈ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਸੋਊ ਕਹਾਵੈ॥--He, who in his heart loves Lord's command, is said to be the man, having salvation while alive (GGS, p. 275) .
- (3) ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਸੋ ਆਖੀਐ ਮਰਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਮਰਿਆ॥ He, who effaces his own self (ego) and is dead in life, is said to have been emancipated while alive” (GGS, p.449).
- (4) “ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤੁ ਸੋ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਹਉਮੈ ਜਾਇ॥--He alone is said to be emancipated in life, who has eliminated ego from within him” (GGS, p.1010).

In Sikhism there is nothing like private or personal salvation. It is universal religion catering for the spiritual well-being of socie [ty as a whole, “ਆਪ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸ ਜਨ ਕੇ ਸਦਾ ਨਮਸਕਾਰ॥ – *Aap mukat mukat karay sansar Nanak tis jan kv sada naskar*” (Ibid, p293). Hinduism, Buddhism, Sufism, Christianity seek personal salvation catering to the needs of individuals. They are not concerned about evils of society and barbarities of rulers of time.

- Sikhism believes in shouldering full social responsibility and rejects a life of escapeism. It denounces asceticism and renunciation (Sanyasa / Bhikshuhood) for achieving salvation as propagated and practiced by Hinduism, radical saints, Buddhism and Jainism. Sikhism propagates the life of a householder, “ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪੂਰਾ ਭੇਟੀਐ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਹਸੰਦਿਆਂ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆਂ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆਂ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆਂ ਵਿਚੈ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ॥ – *Nanak satgur poora bhetyay, poori hovay jugat, hasandian, khelandian, penandian, khavandian vichay hovay mukat*” (GGS, p522). Guru Nanak says, “He knows the way who earns his living and shares his earning with others” i.e “ਘਾਲ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥੇ ਦੇਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਸੋਇ॥ – *Ghaal kha-ay kichh hathon day Nanak rah pachhanay say*” (GGS, p.1245).
- Sikhism does not believe in celibacy (Brahmacharya) as a means to achieve bliss, but condemns it in strongest terms. According to Gurbani, “ਬਿੰਦ ਰਾਖਿ ਜੋ ਤਰੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਖੁਸਰੋ ਕਿਉ ਨ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ॥ – *Bind raakh jau yaeey bhai khusray kion nap arm gat pae.* - i.e; If one was to be saved by celibacy, then the eunuchs should attain the highest bliss” (GGS, p.469). Celibacy before marriage is a part of Sikh ethics, but it is mandatory for a Sikh to get married. In Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Christianity, celibacy (Brahmacharya) is the rule for achieving bliss.
- Sikhism believes in ethical equality of woman with man. Before the birth of Sikhism the plight of woman in the Indian subcontinent was highly deplorable. She had most inferior position in the society. In Hinduism Manu the Hindu law-giver has attributed all that is good and great to males and on the contrary, assigned all that is bad and obnoxious to females. Tulsi Dass in his Ram Chrit Manas says, “ਢੋਰ ਗੰਵਾਰ ਸੂਦਰ ਪਸੂ ਨਾਰੀ॥ ਯਿਹ ਸਭ ਤਾਣ ਕੇ

ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ॥-*Dhor gamvar, shudar, pashu, nari, yeh sab tarin kay adhikari*". In Buddhism a male Bhikshu is not supposed to touch and rescue a drowning woman even if she was his mother. Dighambra Jains believe that a woman cannot reach Kavalya and has to achieve first male incarnation. In Sikhism the position of woman has been raised to an exalted status and she is regarded as principle of eternal creation, "From woman is our birth; in woman's womb are we shaped. To woman are we engaged; to woman are we wedded. The woman is our friend and from woman is the family. If one woman dies, we seek another, through the woman are the bonds of the world. Why call the woman evil who gives birth to Kings? "ਸੋ ਕਿਉਂ ਮੰਦਾ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤ ਜੰਮੈ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥-*So kion manda akhi-ay jit jamein rajaan*. From woman is the man, without the woman there is none"(GGS, Var Asa M1, p.473).

- Sikhism does not believe in the *mon-varat* (fast of speech) of Hinduism. It believes in constructive dialogue during our stay in this world, "ਜਬ ਲਗ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਛ ਕਹੀਐ ਕਿਛ ਸੁਣੀਐ॥-*Jab lag dunia rahi-ay Nanak kuchh kahi-ay kuchh suni-ay* (GGS, p.611).
- There is no priestly class in Sikhism any initiated Sikh, male or female, can perform the Sikh religious service. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam all have priestly class.
- Sikhism differs as regards the authenticity of its dogmas from most other theological systems. Many of the great teachers of the world has known, have not left a line of their own compositions and we know only what they taught through tradition or second-hand information. But the compositions of Sikh Gurus are preserved and we know at first hand what they taught.

This need for the comparative study of Sikhism and Hinduism arises because for the last hundred years or so, some scholars have tried their best to prove that Sikhism is not a self-contained religion but a synthesis of other religions. Sikh traditions are being targeted by Brahminic forces. These traditions are inseparable from Sikh life. They need careful guarding. Sikhism is based on Gurmat. Any tradition, which fails to conform to the philosophy of Sikhism, must be discarded without reservation. Gurbani says, "*Aklee Sahib saveeay, aklee payeeay maan*—With thoughtful logic should one worship God, with same logic should one seek honour" (GGS, p. 1245).

The status of Guru Granth sahib in Sikhism and among the Sikhs is synonymous with the Sikh Gurus. Therefore, all doubts, controversies regarding Sikh religion must be settled in the light of Gurbani of this supreme scripture and the Guru. The ideas and views which conform to the Gurbani should alone be accepted as valid and authentic. All other versions should be discarded. Prevalent Brahmanical practices and rituals should be tested on touchstone of Gurmat principles. All those practices which violate the spirit of Gurmat and which create contradictions between belief and conduct must be done away with.

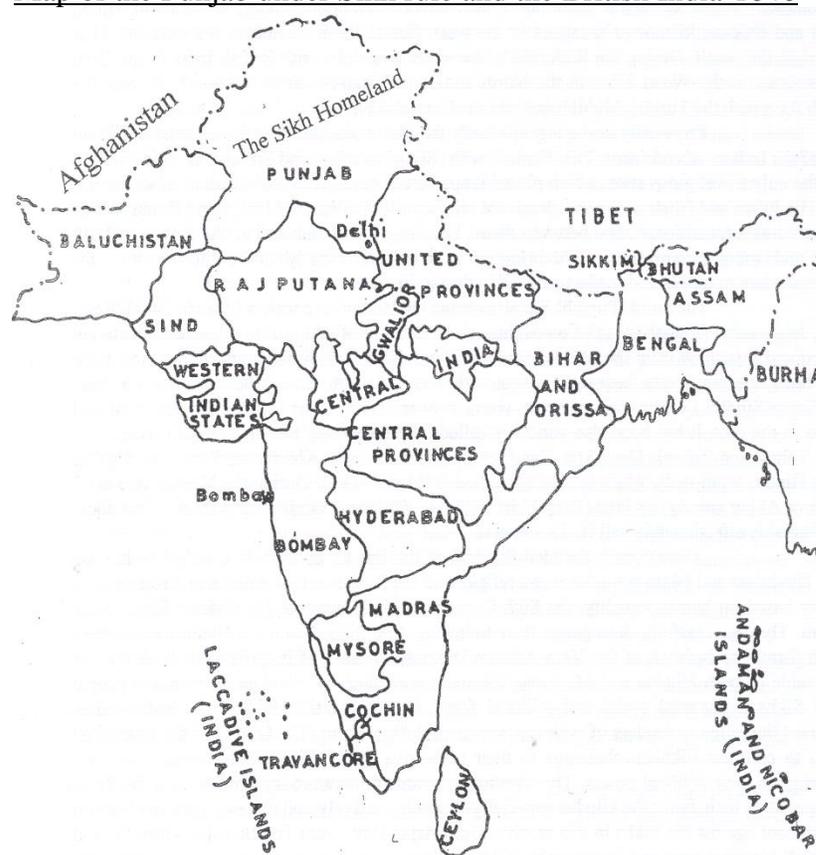
I have been careful not to offend our Hindu brothers by making any adverse comments on their beliefs, history or doctrines. Still , if any statement causes an offense to any body. I would be too happy to change it in the next edition. Suggestions for the improvement of this book will be gratefully acknowledged

Jagraj Singh  
1.5. 2018

### What is Sikhism?

Sikhism (Sikh Dharma) is a major religion of India and fifth largest faith in the world. Its followers are called “Sikhs”. Presently it has about twenty three million adherents in the entire world, out of which about fifteen million live in “Punjab”, a region in the north-west of India that has long served to connect South Asia with Middle East and Central Asia and was a sovereign country ruled by the Sikhs, till its annexation by the British in 1849 AD.

Map of the Punjab under Sikh rule and the British India-1846



About six million Sikhs live outside the Indian Punjab (in India) and at least two million live in the rest of the world. Of these about half a million Sikhs are located in the United Kingdom, another half million are in North America out of which around three hundred fifty thousand are residing in Canada and about one hundred fifty thousand in the United States of America. They are present in substantial numbers in Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, Newzeland, Germany, Norway and other Asian, African and European countries. To say it in another way, they are found all over the

world.

Wherever they have gone, they have built their own religious places of worship, 'the Gurdwaras', which in addition to being place of worship, also serve as centers of the Sikh culture. Sikh Gurdwaras built in Sikh style all over the world stand uniquely different from the Hindu Mandirs, Muslim Mosques, Christian Churches, Jewish Synagogues and Buddhist Monasteries. Gurdwara literally means Guru's door, but religiously in Sikhism it means Guru's house / Guru's abode / The house of the divine. It is the Sikh center of spiritual, social, educational and political activities. Usually there are four parts of the complex: The main hall for worship purposes, Langar (The community kitchen), Serai (inn i.e; residential area) and the school. All major Gurdwaras have all these facilities, but in small Gurdwaras one or more of these facilities may not be available. Every Gurdwara, besides religious worship, is expected to provide food and lodging to visitors / travelers, free of cost. The Sikh national flag called *Nishan Sahib*, one of the sings of Sikh sovereignty is hoisted in front of every Gurdwara ever since the Sikhs lost the Sikh State in 1849 CE. It is made up of a triangular piece of deep yellow (Basanti) colour cloth with insignia of Sikhism (Deg Teg Fateh) imprinted on it and hoisted on a wooden or metal pole having *Khanda* (double edged sword) surmounted on the top. It is always taller than the Gurdwara building and the visitor can spot it from a distance and can assure himself that he will get free boarding and lodging here.

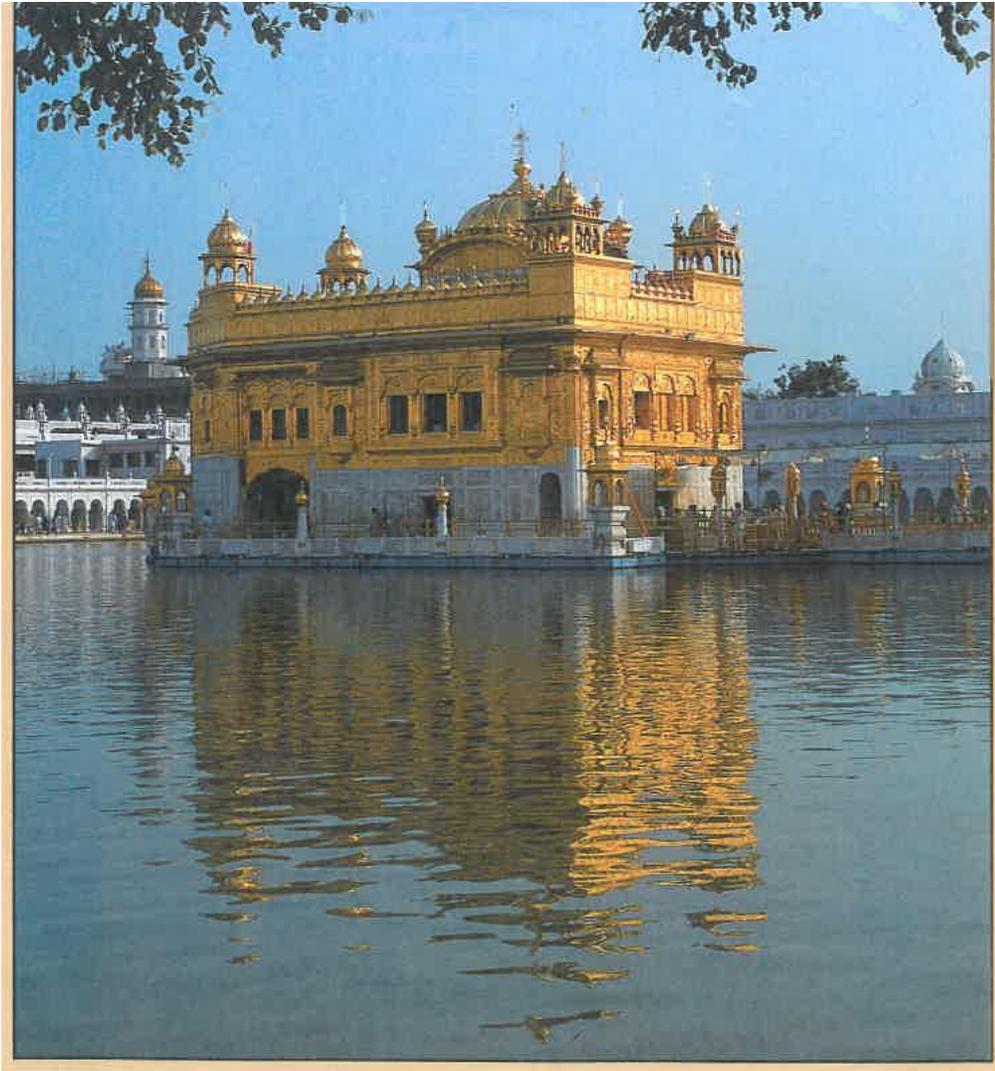


Shoes are not allowed inside the Gurdwara, because the Sikhs consider shoes ceremoniously unclean. The visitor has to go bare foot inside the Gurdwara .Every Gurdwara has a Jora Ghar (shoe house) outside the main complex for depositing the shoes. The Sikh worship is congregational therefore the main structure in the Gurdwara is a big hall, where the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib wrapped in fine Rumalas is seated over a small raised platform in a Palki (Planquin) with a small tent called Chandoa / Chanani, hanging from the ceiling. Except when being read, it is kept covered. The Granthi (Sikh priest) waves Chaur (fan made yak hair) over Guru Granth Sahib.

Chanani and chaur are symbols of royalty and their presence is not functional but Guru is Sachcha Paadshah (True king).

In a Gurdwara there are no images, altar or pulpit, the object of Sikh reverence is the scripture (Guru Granth Sahib) itself. Outside the inner premises there is provision of clean water for washing hands and feet. In Punjab and India the visitors / devotees go inside the Gurdwara bare feet after washing their hands and at the entrance. The devotees enter the main hall and bow before Guru Granth Sahib, make obeisance (offering) and offer prayer, walk around it and if they wish, find a space in the hall, sit cross legged on the floor in a position facing Guru Granth Sahib to listen the Ragis (religious musicians) proclaim verses from its sacred pages. Generally, a Gurdwara remains open to every visitor through out the day, so that worshippers can offer prayers at any time convenient to them. However in Punjab and India two services are held daily in every Gurdwara, one in the morning and one in the evening. Every day early in the morning, before sun rise, Guru Granth Sahib is brought in the Gurdwara hall from its resting place. All present stand up with bowed heads and folded hands, as mark of respect. In the Gurdwara hall Guru Granth Sahib is placed on Manji Sahib with nice bedding on a raised platform. Guru Granth Sahib is covered with fine rumalas. Then Ardas (Sikh national prayer) is offered. After this Hukam (The order i.e; command) from Guru Granth Sahib is read. It is followed by Asa dee vaar. For the rest of the day the Ragis perform kirtan or a Sikh scholar may perform Katha i.e religious discourse. In a Gurdwara, only hymns from Guru Granth Sahib, Dasam Granth or verses written by Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal can be sung. In the evening after recitation of Rehras and Anand Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib is closed (unless continuous un-interrupted recitation of Guru Granth Sahib—Akhand Path is going on), Ardas is offered, Karah Parshad is distributed and then Guru Granth Sahib is ceremoniously wrapped in Rumalas and taken to its special place for the night.

Sikhs do not have a special day of worship. They can do on any day and all days of the week. Outside Punjab and outside India, most Sikhs visit the Gurdwara on the rest day of the particular country they live, for example in Muslim countries it takes place on Fridays, while in other countries such as Britain, Canada, and United States of America, the main service is held on Sunday. Any one, Sikh or non-Sikh may visit Gurdwara, attend congregation and dine in Guru ka langar (the community kitchen) but proper protocol has to be maintained. Carrying of tobacco, alcohol or any other intoxicant is strictly prohibited inside a Gurdwara. A head covering is mandatory inside a Gurdwara. This is a mark of respect to the Guru Granth Sahib.



**Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Amritsar also known as Hari Mandir in Punjab and India and Golden Temple in the western world, is the world seat of Sikhism as the Kabba in Mecca for Muslims, Vatican in Rome for Christians and Varanasi in India for Hindus. Akaal Takhat in Amritsar is the Supreme Seat of Temporal Authority in Sikhism and Amritsar itself is the Theo-political capital of the Sikhs and Sikhism. The Sikh doctrine, “Deg Teg Fateh” is found imprinted in Emblematic form on the Sikh National Flag called *Nishan Sahib*, letter heads of Sharomani SGPC and Sharomani Akali Dal.**

### **Emblem (Logo) of Sikhism**



**“Deg Teg Fateh”**

Sikhism took its birth at the fag end of the fifteenth century in Punjab in the

Indian subcontinent, among two already well established religions of Hinduism and Islam. Punjab at that time was under Islamic rule, with Hinduism as dominant religion. Religion in both communities (Hinduism and Islam) was limited only to ritualistic practices, rather than inner illumination. The religious leaders of both communities, Mullahs and Brahmins, themselves did not by and large practice what they preached. There was great cultural decadence in all facets of the society. The Hindu had divided the society into four castes (groups) and the lowest in the hierarchy were called *Shudras* or untouchables who were treated worst than animals. The plight of women was no better. The Hindu addressed the non-Hindus as *Malechhas* (unclean). The Muslims called non-Muslims as '*Kafirs*' (non-believers) and observed that the Muslim society was to be enlarged and strengthened progressively through the policy of "enforcement of Islamic laws through sword"—"*as shara tahat us-saif*". The Islamic rulers also were very unjust and oppressive in their governance and had demoralized the entire Hindu society.

Guru Nanak founded Sikhism, as revealed to him by 'The Supreme Eternal Reality'—(God) in 1496 CE, at Sultanpur Lodhi in Punjab, in the Indian subcontinent, to fill the vacuum of cultural decadence and religious confusion. He declared oneness of God and universal brotherhood of man. He said, "*Na koe Hindu na Musalmaan*—There is neither any Hindu nor any *Musalmaan*. He (God) is our common father, we are all His children and he takes care of us all—"*ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹੰਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰਗਾਈ*।।—*Ek pita ekas ke ham barik toon mera gurhaae*" (GGS, 611). Being children of the same father we are all brothers and sisters.

Sikhism believes in equality of all human beings and forbids discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, class, religion and gender and guarantees equal rights/opportunities to all. It strongly denounces the divisive Hindu caste system (*Varan Ashram Dharma*), which limits one's right to worship, learning (education) and choose a profession. It grants everyone the right to become a warrior / soldier and a priest. Guru Gobind Singh in Dasam Granth says, —"*Maanas kee jaat sabay ekay pehchanbo*"—"Treat all mankind alike". Hinduism is divisive in character and divides the society on the basis of caste, which forms the bed rock of the Brahmanical religion also known as *Varn Ashram Dharma*.

In order to establish equality in the society Guru Nanak stepped beyond the frontier in defiance of the 3000 years old divisive caste rules of Hinduism. He laid down the fundamentals of Sikhism and founded its basic institutions. The fundamentals of Sikhism are: *Naam Japo* (Remember God in words, mind and actions), *Kirt Karo* (Work hard honestly to earn your living), *Wand ke Chhako* (Share your earnings with the needy). He also founded the basic institutions of Sikhism based on equality, social justice and tolerance. The basic institutions of Sikhism are: *Sangat*, *Pangat* and *Langar*.

*Sangat* (Holy congregation): is the first and foremost basic institution of Sikhism founded by Guru Nanak in order to abolish caste, establish equality and propagate love and affection among people. Sangat literally means association / company. Religiously in Sikhism, the gathering of the Sikhs for the remembrance of God / Practice of *Naam Bani* is called Sangat.

*Pangat*: The second basic institution of Sikhism established by Guru Nanak is *Pangat*, which literally means row, religiously in Sikhism it means sitting together in a row as equals. It was also meant to abolish caste, remove un-touch-ability, establish equality, inculcate love and teach humility before each other. After meditation he asked people to sit in a row on the ground and eat together, irrespective of their social background or economic status.

*Langar* (Communal meal): The third basic institution established by Guru Nanak to remove caste, establish equality, teach sharing with the needy and inculcate love among people is langar, the sacred food, cooked in community kitchen (*Langar khana*) and served free of cost in the Langar Hall attached to the Sikh place of worship (Gurdwara). All who visit Gurdwara sit down together in a row (*Pangat*) and partake of the simple food offered with loving care as equals, regardless of distinction of caste, creed, colour, country or status in life. Only vegetarian food is served in *Guru ka langar* so that it could cater to the people of all faiths.

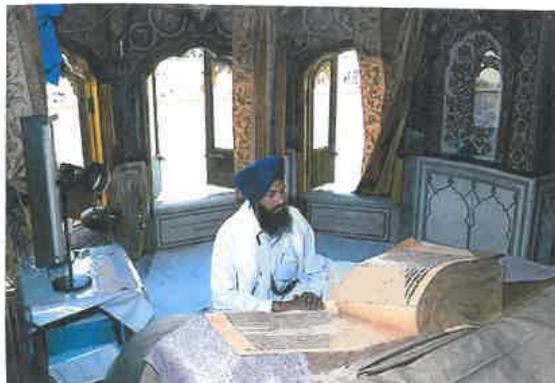
Guru Nanak preached in the vernacular (language) of the people of the Punjab (Punjabi) and composed sacred religious hymns in it, in preference to Sanskrit, which till then was the traditional medium for religious poetry or philosophy. The vernacular of the Punjab region, now called Punjabi till then was only a dialect and did not have its own script for its real pronunciation and expressions. Guru Nanak developed the script for local vernacular, which was named 'Gurmukhi' by his successor, Guru Angad Dev. Thus Guru Nanak gave to the Sikhs a script for their spoken language which was different from Hindus (Sanskrit--Vedas) and Muslims (Arabic-Quran). Thus he broke the monopoly of Brahmin over learning, who boasted about his knowledge of Sanskrit.

Guru Nanak denounced polytheism, henotheism, idolatry, superstition, renunciation, asceticism, celibacy, hypocrisy and ritualism to appease the deities. In his utterances he severely criticized the religious leaders of all the then prevalent faiths in India for their short comings. Of Islam's specialists in jurisprudence, he said, "The qazi sits to administer justice. He turns his beads and mutters the name of God (Khuda). He takes bribe and denies justice. If questioned, he reads out something" (GGS, p.951). For Mullahs, the religious leaders of Islam, he said, "For an ignorant hungry (destitute) *mullah* mosque is a means to satisfy his hunger i.e, worldly needs (GGS, p.1245), to which the pious poor would come bringing donations. About the Brahmins he said, "Those who wield throat cutting knife wear sacred thread (Janeu)" (GGS, p.471). Then he says, "Leave aside the Qazis and Brahmins the marriage rituals are performed by 'Satan' (GGS, p.722). He was highly critical of Jogis and Siddhas who led an escapist life of renunciation, asceticism and celibacy. He praised the householder's life, who served the society. He preached, "Do not touch his feet who calls himself a Guru or Pir and goes for begging. O Nanak only he knows the right path who earns his livelihood through hard labour and shares it with others (GGS, p.1245). He also up-braided the rulers of his time and said, "The kings

are tigers and the courtiers are dogs, they go and harass the sitting and the sleeping ones--" (GGS, p.1288).

People subdued under rigors of caste system, the oppressive alien rule and religious bigotry, could not be expected to take over the social responsibilities and adjust to the liberation offered by the new society over-night. The infant Sikh society had to be nurtured for some time to prevent its relapse into the parent societies. So he introduced the system of succession to carry his mission forward. The message of Nanak was transmitted through his nine successors. The Sikh Gurus were:

1. Guru Nanak, born in 1469 and died in 1539.
2. Guru Angad, born in 1504 (Guru 1539 - 52).
3. Guru Amar Dass born in 1479 (Guru 1552 -74).
4. Guru Ram Dass, born in 1534 (Guru 1574 - 81).
5. Guru Arjan Dev, born in 1563 (Guru 1581 - 1606).
6. Guru Hargobind, born in 1595 (Guru 1606 - 44).
7. Guru Har Rai, born in 1630 (Guru 1644 - 61).
8. Guru Har Krishan, born in 1656 (Guru 1661 - 64).
9. Guru Teg Bahadur, born in 1621 (Guru 1664 - 75).
10. Guru Gobind Singh, born in 1666 (Guru 1675 - 1708).



The holy scripture of Sikhism, "Aad Granth" (now Guru Granth Sahib),

the world seat of Sikhism (Gurdwara Darbar Sahib/ Golden Temple) in Amritsar were created by the fifth Guru Arjan Dev in 1604 AD, thereby establishing separate religious identity of Sikhism. He declared the independent position of Sikhism by writing in Aaad Granth (now Guru Granth Sahib), in Rag Bhairo, on page 1136---I do not keep the Hindu fast (Vart) or observe the Muslim Ramadan. I serve only the One Supreme Being who alone is my refuge. I serve the One Master who ministers justice to both Hindus and Muslims. I neither worship like the Hindu or like the Muslim go to Mecca. I serve Him alone and no other. I do not pray to idols nor say the Muslim prayer. Taking the formless One in my mind I make obeisance there to the Supreme Being, for we are neither Hindu nor Mussalman.

Of all world religions, Sikhism alone can, with fullest justification, claim to possess the gospels of its founders in their original purity. Truths revealed to Prophets and seers have been often mixed, in course of time with spurious and imperfect additions through the ignorance, prejudices or ill-conceived zeal of their followers and lost their purity. The sagacity and the foresight of the Sikh Gurus envisaged the possibility of such a situation in respect of their own scriptures and they took steps to ensure against this eventuality. Guru Arjan compiled the holy Granth embodying the Sikh teachings under his personal supervision and created for all times the imperishable and yet visible embodiment of the Gurus as also of their wisdom. He started the compilation in 1601 and completed it in 1604. He thus placed all mankind under a permanent debt of gratitude by bequeathing to it the highest moral and spiritual Truths in the purest form as were revealed to the Gurus. These were clothed in various dialects and languages of the people of the land of their birth and were thus made accessible to every person without any distinction of caste, creed, colour or race. It was recensed by Guru Gobind Singh in 1706 when he entered the Gurbani of 9<sup>th</sup> Guru, Guru Teg Bahadur, at Talwandi Sabo, now called Damdama Sahib. It was installed as Guru Eternal on October 5, 1708 by Guru Gobind Singh and since then it is called 'Guru Granth Sahib'.

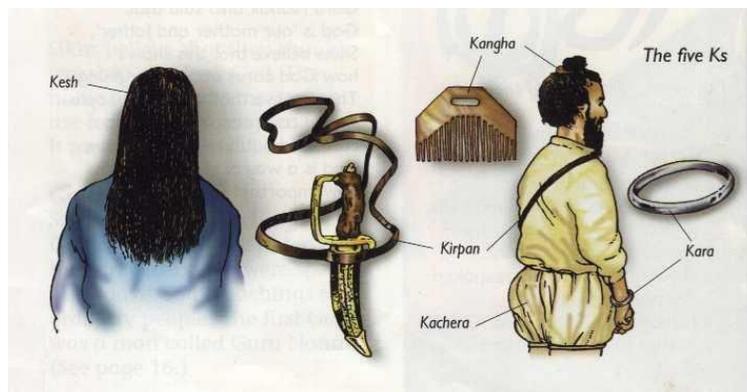
The Sikhs believe Guru Granth Sahib as 'living' embodiment of ten Gurus and it is the only focus of Sikh faith. Guru Granth Sahib is treated with same respect as the human Gurus received. In addition to the hymns of the Sikh Gurus it contains the writings and hymns of saints and preachers with different religious backgrounds, whose philosophy conformed to the spirit of Sikhism. It is a literary classic and a spiritual treasure. It throws light on the path leading to the highest goal of spirituality. It contains eternal truth, proclaims God, and shows the way of His realization. It lays down moral and ethical rules for the development of soul and religious commandments for the progress of morality and attainment of salvation. In it philosophy is propounded through the songs of love and devotion. The message of love, truth, contentment, humility, fatherhood of God, brotherhood of man,

restraint of passions, mercy on living beings, purity of mind and body and clothing, search for the self and Higher Soul, equality of man and equality of man and woman, service to others, liberalism in the matter of food and clothing, and references to the political, economic and social life of people of Hindustan during the fifteenth century and sixteenth century constitute the main contents of Guru Granth Sahib. It is a guide to Sikh way of life. References to *Veda* (Hindu scriptures) and *Katebas* (Semitic scriptures) are also found in it. Guru Granth Sahib rejects all types of *Karam Kandas* (ritualism) and formalism for spiritual attainment and propagates a life of inner illumination. It lays stress on selfless action performed in the best interest of the society. It condemns asceticism, which has the effect of negativism. It lays stress on the dynamic attitude towards life. It supports normal family life (Grahisti jivan) and social commitment. It recommends leading of a pure life whilst fighting temptations and imperfection of the world. It is the only scripture where each and every conceivable aspect of human life has been addressed, discussed and analysed. Mythological references are only illustrative and do not indicate any Guru's belief in mythological personages or their actions. In its present lithographed diction, Guru Granth Sahib contains about 5894 Hymns and verses mainly in Punjabi, Hindi, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Sindhi, Lehndi, Dhaki, Bengali and Marathi in Gurmukhi script on 1430 pages, composed and arranged in well known 31 Ragas i.e; tunes / musical settings (Gurmat Sangeet), except for the initial 13 and last 78 pages. It is the treasure of Indian languages and musical Ragas. Guru Granth Sahib is the only scripture in the world, which mentions with respect Ram, Gobind, Hari, Allah, Karim etc; (names for God) used by different religions and which includes writings of holy people born in other religions (Hinduism, Islam) in addition to the Sikh Gurus. It is the only source of Sikh philosophy that has been written by the Gurus themselves and whose authenticity has never been questioned. It is the only scripture, which has travelled through the generations without the change of a single letter. It is final and unalterable scripture. Guru Granth Sahib is treated to be the presence of the Guru himself in the Sangat. It is the presiding deity in every Gurdwara (Sikh place of worship) and every visitor there bows before it in reverence before assuming his / her seat. When moved it is carried on the head accompanied by five initiated Sikhs.

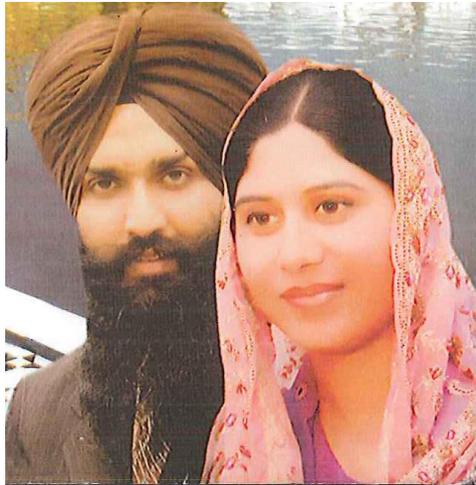
Till the creation of Granth, preaching of Sikhism had been carried out by Sikh Gurus through the word of mouth and it had no separate religious existence distinct from Hinduism and Islam. Because of its principles, Sikhism was acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. The erosion of their faiths surprised the religious leaders of both Hinduism (Brahmins/Pandits) and those of Islam (The Qazis/Mullas). Therefore, they regarded it as threat to their respective faiths. The Muslim administration, in addition, perceived it as threat to its political power. The tensions that followed between the Sikhs, Hindus and the Muslim government resulted in the execution of

Guru Arjan Dev at Lahore and the consequent move of the Sikh center from Amritsar to Kiratpur in the Shivalik foot hills in the 1635 CE. Guru Arjan Dev was succeeded by five more Gurus.

Sikhism developed, matured and became established to work its way in the world at the end of two centuries under the guidance of its ten Gurus. It was formally consecrated by its tenth Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day 1699 AD at Anandpur Sahib in the Shivalik foot-hills in the Punjab, through his Sikh initiation ceremony-`*Amritpaan* (Sikh baptism). On this day Guru Gobind Singh gave finishing touch to Sikhism. He laid down distinct Sikh religious code of conduct (Sikh *Rehatmaryada*) and gave the Sikhs a distinct corporate identity.



He called the initiated Sikhs 'Khalsa' (Arabic word literally meaning Sovereign), who now represent and spearhead the tasks of Sikh religion and are recognizable throughout the world as bearded and turbaned Sikhs, supporting the articles of their faith, called five K's—Kesh (unshorn hair), Kangha, Kachh, Kara and Kirpaan. Religiously turban is a must for a Sikh to keep the unshorn hair on the head covered.



Before his departure from this mortal world in 1708 AD, Guru Gobind Singh abolished the personal human Guruship and transferred the authority from individual leaders to the scriptures and the community itself. He vested the Eternal Guruship into the holy Sikh scripture, "*Granth Sahib*" and granted it the status of Eternal Guru of the Sikhs, which since then is known as "*Guru Granth Sahib*" (GGS) and is the symbolic head of Sikhism. He vested the temporal leadership into the community itself under the patronage of Guru Granth Sahib and named it "*Guru Khalsa Panth*". Thus from the moment of its initiation by Guru Nanak to its ritual consecration by Guru Gobind Singh, a period of barely 200 years, Sikhism not only acquired its distinctive church and institutions, songs and scriptures, signs and symbols, but also, an unmistakable form or stance.

Presently Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism are the major religions of the world, with Sikhism being in the fifth place followed by Judaism in the sixth with a following of about fourteen million. However, Sikhism is the youngest among all of them.

Sikhism is the latest religion for the present space age and answers the problems of modern man. It satisfies the scientific and juristic minds of today, being without any myth and superstitions in which man had been made to indulge by some previous faiths and systems. It is a religion of comprehensive moral and ethical values to elevate the man spiritually, morally and socially. Its aim is to convert the self-centered mind to God tuned by Name of God in the mind and the control of mind from the narrow egoistic tendencies to higher conscious to be activated for all the socio-political affairs during one's life and finally unite the individual soul with the Supreme Soul. There is no scope for miracles and mysteries in Sikhism.

Sikhism is a practical way of life to overpower the evils of the day and to lead a truthful life. Sikhism instructs the Sikhs how during life one

should conduct oneself and how one should exert influence on the society for a moral and altruistic change. The meditation in the name of God (the one and only one), the Creator of the entire creation as to be included in one's mind and the total submission to His will and commandments while doing pious deeds is the way of life in Sikhism. It teaches love between man and God and love between man and man, to earn one's livelihood with one's hard labour and honest means and share with the needy, selfless service to the needy, equality and dignity of every human being.

Sikhism is a revealed religion based on a definitive revelation like Semitic religions of the West and therefore, it can be clearly distinguished from the earlier Indian religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc, which have an anonymous mysticism as their source of validity. It is not simply a set of views or doctrines, but a way of life according to a definite model, 'The Guru', for which the Sikh Gurus gave lessons for over a period of two hundred years and themselves, led the life of that model. Those who perfected it came to be known as Sikhs (literally meaning, the learned). 'ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰ-Sikhi\* Sikhia Gur Veechar" i.e "Sikhism is the teaching of the Guru (Gurmat) (GGS, Ml, p.465)".

Sikhism is a religion of knowledge both spiritual as well as temporal wisdom and not a blind faith, "Aklee Sahib saveeay aklee payeeay maan—with thoughtful logic should one worship God, with same logic should one seek honour" (GGS, p. 1245). It strongly denounces ritualism (*Karm kand*). It lays stress on the practice of religious life of inner illumination and not on formalism or ritualism. It is independent and distinct from all prevailing religions in this world. It is not an offshoot of one faith or syncretic blend of different and often conflicting faiths. Sikhism is basically a religion of action and human freedom. It is a religion with comprehensive ethical system based on moral laws, which no science has ever challenged. It elevates mankind spiritually, morally and socially with its deep ethical system. It teaches the highest and purest principles that serve to bind man with man.

The philosophy of Sikhism is different from the philosophy of all the previously existing religions of the world. It envisages that a true Sikh loves all humanity, earns his livelihood by all fair means, shares his earnings with the deprived and strives for the realization of God by abiding His Will and seeking Grace. Sikhism believes in the doctrines of *Karma*, transmigration, reincarnation, salvation-(Mukti), *Surag* (Heaven), *Narak* (Hell), *Hukam / Raza* (Will of God) and Grace, but according to its own way. Because of theistic kinship with other religious systems the Sikh Gurus did not quarrel with the religious terms used by earlier religions rather they deliberately used them and redefined them in the light of their own philosophy and Sikh mystical experience.

Sikhism believes in law of *Karma* but according to its own ideology. Good actions have good results and bad actions have bad effects. A person has to

suffer for his / her unsatisfactory behaviour. Guru Nanak says, “Do not blame others for your sufferings, it is a result of your actions. You have harvested whatever you sowed, why should you embroil others?” (GGS, p.433). The soul is the farmer. It has been given a field in the form of body. When the seed of action is sown, the consequences must follow. Whatever the seed of actions is sown in the body, the harvest is reaped accordingly, “As you sow so shall you reap” (GGS M5, p. 134). Gurbani says, “Having sown *Acasia Arabica*, the farmer searches for juicy grapes. He weaves wool but wants to wear silk” (GGS, p. 1379). Gurbani further says, “Man’s every action will be taken into account—i.e, “Man will be accountable for the words he speaks, the food he eats, the path along he walks. He will be accountable for what he hears and see. His every breath will be accounted for” (GGS, p.15). Gurbani also says, “Do the deeds by which thy face shines” (GGS, p. 397). It also says, “One should do actions by which he may not feel ashamed in the presence of the Lord (GGS, p. 1381).

Sikhism does not believe in the Hindu theory of ‘Law of *Karma*’. In Sikh religious terms *karam* means action, which could be in the form of a ritual or a positive effort. Sikhism vociferously rejects all ritualistic practices of Hinduism, “*Karam dharm pakhand jo deesy tin jam jaagati lootay. Nirban keertan gawoh kartay ka nimkh simrat jit chhootay*—The ritual poses of piety and hypocrisies, which are seen, them plunders Yama, the tax collector. Sing thou the pure praise of the Creator, contemplating whom, even for an instant, thou shall be saved” (GGS, p. 747). Sikhism only believes in making a positive effort to earn one’s living and remember God in order to lead a comfortable and worry free life, “*Udham kareindian jeeo toon kamawandian sukh bhunch dhiaindian toon Prabhu mil Nanak utri chint* (GGS, p. 522). According to the ideology of Sikhism ‘*Karma*’ is not independent of God. Everything happens under the Will of God. God’s Grace becomes a means of release from the ‘Law of *Karma*’. The chain of ‘*Karma*’ obviously cannot bind God rather His Grace breaks this chain.

Sikhism believes in God’s Grace. God’s grace according to Guru Granth Sahib is that quality of God’s nature, which is the source of man’s undeserved blessings particularly those which have to do with his realization of God, “Nanak says, God is realized through the Grace of God--*Nanak nadreen nadir pachhhan*” (GGS, p. 1343). “Nanak says no one is redeemed without the Grace of God” (GGS, p. 661).

Sikhism believes in Divine Will (Cosmic law) to which the Sikh Gurus gave a generic name as ‘*Hukam*’, which literally means command. The holy scripture of Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib says:

- The whole creation is the product of *Hukam*, which is indescribable (GGS, p.1).
- By Lord’s order all are created and by His order they do businesses (GGS, p. 55).

*Hukam* as Supreme or Infinite Will (Cosmic Law) is mentioned at many places in Guru Granth Sahib. It existed before the creation when there was

complete nothingness. Being the “Infinite Self-consciousness of God”, *Hukam* is supremely one with Him. It is as infinite as God. In another sense *Hukam* is supreme command. The universe moves, according to it, “Everybody and everything is controlled by His command, which none can escape” (Japji)

Sikhism believes in a life of prayer and service of humanity (*Sewa* and *Simran*). It expounds *Anrang Bhagti*, which is purely devotional and rejects *Behrang Bhagti*, which is ritualistic. It is essentially a religion of devotion whereas the body has to work for the welfare of the family and society, the mind has to remain in tune with the Lord (GGS, p.1376). Its approach to life is realistic therefore it is most modern, practical and rational among all the world religions. Basically it is anti-ritualistic and has no ordained priestly class. It is highly critical of all intermediaries exploiting the masses in the name of religion. It does not foster blind faith. It is a life affirming religion and there is an integral combination between empirical and spiritual life of man. It does not accept any dichotomy in life whether it is ‘personal and social’, ‘spiritual or material’, ‘faith and reason’ or any other such differentiation. It believes in now and here and does not believe in the other worldliness. It has a positive attitude towards world and emphasizes that normal family life (*Grahisti Jiwan*), lived with virtuous conduct leads to salvation.

The concept of salvation in Sikhism is different from other Indian religious systems in which it means liberation / deliverance from the cycle of birth and death (*Samsara*). Sikhism does not subscribe to this view. It believes in liberation from ego, ignorance and spiritual emancipation now and here i.e; *Jiwan Mukti*, meaning salvation while being alive and not redemption from rebirth and death. The holy book of Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib says, “O, God, who will see that salvation, which you will grant me after death” (GGS, p.1292). It is concerned with the current life and rejects concept of past or next life and so also the concept of hell and heaven. Gurbani says, “He alone is said to be emancipated in life, who has eliminated ego from within him (GGS, p. 1009). Moreover Hinduism, Sufism (Islam) and Christianity seek personal salvation catering to the needs of individuals. They are unconcerned about the evils of society and barbarities of the rulers of the time. In Sikhism there is nothing like private or personal salvation, just as God is benevolently looking after the entire world, in the same way God man’s sphere of and responsibility is equally wide and un-hedged by any self-created barriers. It caters for the spiritual well being of the society as a whole, “He himself is emancipated and emancipates the world, Nanak says to that slave of Lord, one may ever make an obeisance” (GGS, p. 295). This is the fundamental difference between a salvation religion and a universal salvation religion catering for the spiritual well-being of society as a whole.

Followers of all major traditional belief systems except Sikhism seek

salvation by practicing asceticism, renunciation, celibacy, worshiping various deities and observing various rituals etc. In order to achieve it the seeker escaped into a monastery, slipped into a forest or retreated into some mountain cave. It was believed that world was a snare and one must run away from it in order to save himself. Sikhism does not want its followers to be escapists. It wants them to be active and responsible participants in everyday life and attain salvation from within the hubbub of the world. Guru Nanak says, "Salvation is not incompatible with laughing, eating, playing and dressing well" (GGS, p. 522). Unlike Yogis, Siddhas and Sadhus (ascetics) who had developed an escapist attitude towards life and had no worthwhile interest in the problems of the society, Sikhism is a religion of workers and householders and preaches dignity of labour, "*Udham karaindian jio toon kamawandian sukh bunch, dhiaindian toon Prabhu mil Nanak Utri chint*"(GGS, p.522). It forbids renunciation and all types of ascetic practices and accepts householder's life as the forum of all spiritual activities and growth. It condemns the escapist life of jogis, siddhas and sadhus and their way of living on alms (*Biksha-Bhikhia*). It believes in shouldering all social responsibilities by leading householder's life (*Grahisti jivan*), earning one's living through hard work and sharing it with the needy and less fortunate", (GGS, p. 1245). It treats this world as field of action and regards its renunciation like a soldier running away from the battlefield. It preaches a life of truth, right actions and controlled desire, "Truth is highest virtue, but higher still is truthful living" (GGS, p.62). It strongly denounces ritualism. Sikhism believes in obedience to God, "*Hukam rajaein chalna Nanak likhia naal* i.e, Nanak says, "It is ordained that one should follow the Divine Will" (GGS, p. 1). But simultaneously it believes in making positive effort, "*Udham karaindian jeeo toon kamavandian sukh bhunch*" (GGS, p522).

Sikhism believes in peaceful means (*Ahimsa-Ahinsa*) and not violence, but in Sikhism it is not unconditional like Buddhism. It has its own philosophy. It does not believe in Ahimsa that stood as a bar against the religious man or a religious society trying to confront socio-political aggression. A society that has to accept the social responsibility of confronting injustice cannot remain wedded to the hurdle of Ahimsa. According to Sikhism it is righteous to use sword, when all other peaceful means fail. Guru Gobind Singh says, "When all peaceful means fail it righteous to put your hand on the hilt of sword". Among Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and radical saints, *Ahinsa* is deemed to be a cardinal virtue and meat eating is a prohibition, but according to Guru Nanak, only fools argue whether to eat meat or not who can define what is meat and what is not, who knows where the sin lies, being a vegetarian or non-vegetarian (GGS, p.1289). Also: "Living beings feed upon living beings"(GGS.p955). He further says, "Every food grain that we eat has life in it"- ". He further adds, "Water is the primal source of life, which assists growth of all living beings" (GGS, Var Asa, M1, p.472).

### Democracy, secularism, proselytisation

Sikhism like all major religions of the world has some basic theological concepts which are supreme and inviolate. Belief in the existence of God is the basic theological concept of Sikhism. It is a monotheistic faith and strictly forbids polytheism and henotheism, "*Ika bani ik guru ika shabad veechaar*" (GGS, p.646). It proclaims that there is one Supreme Eternal Reality not of any particular religion, but of all mankind, under whatever name He is remembered: God, Rama, Allah, Jehova, *Waheguru* etc, all mean the same, "*-Koi bolay Ram Ram koi Khuda-ay koi sevay gosanyan koi Allahay*" (GGS,p.885). Sikhism does not believe in the Hindu theory of trinity (*Trimurti*) of God: Brahma (The creator) Vishnu (The sustainer), Shiva (The destroyer). In Sikhism, *Ishta* or the chosen ideal is God Himself and none of His incarnations or substitutes. It proclaims fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, "*-Ek pita ekas ke ham barik toon mera gurhaae*" (GGS, p.611). It says, God is *nirgun* (Transcendent) as well *sargun* (Immanent), *Nirgun aap sargun bhi uhi*-He is absolute as also Personal Reality" (Ibid, Gauri Sukhmani M5, p287). Dualism of God in heaven and men on earth has no meaning in Sikh thought. It is a faith concerned with the realization of God within us now and here. He (God) resides in every heart and the so called diversity is an illusion: "Why goeth thou to the forest in search of *God*. He liveth in all and is yet distinct. He abideth with thee also. As fragrance dwells in a flower or reflection in a mirror so doth He (God) dwells inside everything, seek Him, therefore, in thy-self" - Ibid, Dhanasri, M9, p684). Whoever, through grace, becomes aware of the inner activity of the immanent God as Guru, and responds to that voice in obedience to God's command (*hukam*), attains spiritual liberation while in body. At death the soul (*atma* or *jot*) will live in the divine presence, never to be reincarnated.

Sikhism believes that this universe is God's creation and it operates under His order (*hukam*). Unlike Vedanta (Hinduism), it believes in the reality of God and reality of the world and does not dismiss world out of hand as mere *Maya* or illusion. Guru Nanak says, "God is a reality (exists) and his creation is a reality - Ibid, M1, Japji, pauri 34, p7). It regards the world as house of God and He lives in there. "*Ih jag sachchay ki hat Kotharee sachhchay ka vich vaas* (GG,S,p463)".

Sikhism explicitly rejects the authority of the Vedas and their Brahmin interpreters, because these neither reach nor preach the reality of God but only speak of materialism, leading the man to blind deeds and not to emancipation in the fourth stage of grace of god. Sikhism does not believe in its concepts of hell, heaven and reincarnation etc as preached by Vedanta i.e; Hinduism. As per Sikh thought heaven and hell are not places for living hereafter, they are part of spiritual topography of man and do not exist otherwise. They refer to good and evil stages of life respectively and can be lived now and here during our earthly existence. Sikhism does not believe

in after life. It believes in now and here. Truthful living in the noble fear of God is heaven. Having no faith in God and living an unethical life is hell.

Sikhism rejects the myth based gods (Devtas), goddesses (Devis) and incarnations (avtaars) of God of Hinduism and the consequent superstitious practices. Unlike Hinduism, Sikhism is rooted in history and not in Mythology, rather it frowns at mythology. It strictly forbids idol (*Moorti*) worship, stone (*Saligram*) worship, grave and tomb worship, picture worship, worship of sun, moon, earth, trees etc. Sikhism totally rejects all the outward symbolism of Hinduism—its sacred thread (Janeu), frontal mark (Tilak), cutting of body hair etc. Sikhism totally rejects the rites, rituals and customary traditions of Hinduism—The pilgrimage to Hindu holy places, pilgrimage to the sacred rivers and tanks (*Taalab*), the ritual baths in some rivers and tanks, observance of Shradhs (giving the gracious feasts), performing penance and worship enduring bodily pain and self tortures, yogic asanas and futile exercises and many more practices of Hinduism to wipe out sins and achieve salvation. It also strictly forbids ritual fasting (*Varat*). It does not believe in the notion of auspicious and in-auspicious days, magic, miracles, occult powers, superstitions, good and bad omens, *Jantras*, *Mantras*, *Tantras* or any other ritual practices to appease the deities. It does not believe in the Hindu concept of pollution and ritual purification. It also does not believe in vegetarianism, sacredness of cow, sacredness of fire (*Havan*), making burnt offerings and sacrifices. Instead it initiates a moral code distinct from the Hindu ethics among its followers. Mythology, hypocrisy and ritualism have no place in Sikhism.

Sikhism does not agree with the view of Hinduism and Buddhism that human body was impure and must be subjected to ascetic practices, tortuous exercises or to rigorous penances so that its desires were killed and emancipation of the soul attained. On the contrary it regards the human body as "the temple of the God (*Brahm Jot* -Supreme Soul- Ram)" worthy of adoration and reverence. According to Gurbani, Ram (God) resides in human body and the human soul—"atma" and "The Supreme Soul-Ram / "*Parmatma*" are fundamentally same, - "*Atam mein Ram, Ram mein Atam*" (Ibid, Rag Bhairon M1, p.1153). Therefore it is sin against God to torture the body.

Sikhism does not believe that life is sinful in origin or that it was evil and source of suffering inherent in it. On the contrary it believes that having emerged from a 'pure source' was, pure in essence, "*Aap satt kia sab satt, tis prabh tay sagli utpap*" (GGS, p.294). As regards Islam, Sikhism does not believe in doom's day--*Kiamat ka din (yom-e-akhrat)*.

Like all other religions and societies of the world Sikhism too has its own ceremonies related with various phases of life. Sikh ceremonies are not rituals or occasions for display of affluence and ego, but acts of thanksgiving and prayers suited to the occasion. All Sikh ceremonies are simple, but significant and are held in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. They are devotional in substance and

congregational in character. All Sikh religious ceremonies start in the morning and are over by afternoon. Every Sikh ceremony, happy or sad is concluded with recitation of Anand Sahib Bani, Ardas and distribution of Karah Parshad.

Sikhism preaches a secularism, which respects other people's right to be different. It does not believe in imposing its values on others. It is not a religion of chosen people, but instead it is the religion of entire humanity. It rises above regional barriers, "The Guru wishes the well-being of all the creation".

Democracy an important aspect of modern society is the guiding rule of the Khalsa. Every one present in the congregation (*Sangat / Sarbat Khalsa*) is free to present his / her views and it is for the *sangat* (congregation) to accept or reject them through consensus. Democracy in Sikhism does not mean numerical majority, but consensus.

Music in Islam is religiously regarded as illegal (*Haram*), but it occupies prime position in Sikhism. The entire holy book of Sikhism, "Guru Granth Sahib except for the initial thirteen and concluding seven pages is structured on the basis of Ragas.

As regards dancing, Sikhism does not prohibit any sensible hobby, entertainment pleasure or enjoyment (GGS, p.465). However, ritualistic dancing or clapping with hands in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib is strictly prohibited (GGS, p. 364).

Woman, who was given the most inferior place in the Hinduism, is elevated to the highest hierarchy of human beings in Sikhism and she symbolizes "the principle of eternal creation". Guru Nanak says, " *So kion manda akhiay jit jamein rajaan*" - "How we can call them evil who give birth to kings (Ibid, p.473)?" It strictly forbids veiling of women, their seclusion from society, slander, burning of widows on the pyre of their dead husbands (*Sati*) and female infanticide.

Marriage in Sikhism is called '*Anand Karaj*', "A blue print for blissful union". It is not regarded as a contract, but a sacrament--an act of socio-spiritual union of two souls, "They are not said to be husband and wife, who sit together. Rather they alone are called husband and wife who have one soul in two bodies" i.e, *Dhan pir ih na aakhian behn ikathay ho-ay. Ek jot doay moortee dhan pir kahee-ay so-ay* (GGS, p.788).

Celibacy in Hinduism is regarded as a means to achieve bliss, but Sikhism does not subscribe to this view. Guru Nanak says, - "*Bind raakh jau tareey bhai, khusray kion na parm gat paaee*" i.e If one were to be saved by celibacy, then the eunuchs should attain the highest bliss!" (GGS, p.324). "Those who call them celibates do not know the way and so they leave their homes in search of God, "*Jatee sadaway jugat na jaanay chhad bahay ghar baar*" (GGS, p.469).

Sikhism accords prime priority for the maintenance of sexual morality among its followers, the Sikhs. Adultery is a taboo in Sikhism, "*Jaisay sang bisier*

*sion haiy ray taiso he ih par greh*" i.e; "As is the companionship of a venomous serpent, so is the ravishing of another's wife" (GGS, Asa M5, p.403).

The use of alcohol (*Shrab*) and all other intoxicants is strictly prohibited in Sikhism. Gurbani says, "By drinking which, intellect departs, madness enters the brain, man distinguishes not between mine and thine and is buffeted by his Master. By drinking which the Lord is forgotten and the mortal receives punishment at His court. Drink thou not, at all the false wine, as far as it lies in thy power" i.e, "*Jit peetay mat door ho-ay baral pavay vich aa-ay--*" GGS, p.554). The use of tobacco in any form is a taboo in Sikhism.

It is not irreligious to own wealth in Sikhism provided it is acquired through honest and fair means and is used not only to derive personal comfort for oneself or one's family but also to give comfort to society also. "For a religious man, it is not unholy to get wealth, provided he spends it in God's way and gives and lives in comfort" (Ibid, Sarang ki var iv). "*Daulat Guzran*" - 'Wealth is a necessity of life' (Guru Hargobind-Gurbilas Patshahi chhevin). However, Sikhism is definitely against the exploitive collection of wealth. Guru Nanak says, "*Hak praya Nanaka os sooar os gay, Gur Peer hami taan bharay je murdar na kha-ay*" i.e, "To rob another person of his / her due share is like eating pork for a Muslim and beef for a Hindu (GGS,p141)". It teaches morality. Guru Nanak says, "*-Je ratt lagay kapray jama ho-ay paleet, jo ratt peeveh mansan tin kio nirmal cheet*" - "Cloth is reckoned impure if stained with blood, how may mind of such persons be deemed pure, who suck blood of men (GGS, p.140)?"

Sikhism preaches spirituality and inculcates love for God, truthful living, universal brotherhood, compassion, peaceful coexistence, loyalty, gratitude for all the favours received, justice, impartiality, honesty, humility, forgiveness, charitableness, self-control, courage, contentment, tolerance and all other moral and domestic virtues known to any holiest man in this world.

Sikhism stands for promoting education (*Parrhaee*) among masses. It lays great emphasis on the attainment of knowledge (both, spiritual and temporal) as it dispels the darkness of ignorance. Guru Nanak says, "When sun rises; the moon is not seen, where knowledge appears ignorance is dispelled", - "*ugway soor na jaapay chand. Jeh gian pargaas agian mitant*" (GGS, Suhi M1, p.791).

Sikhism is a religion of hope and optimism with traditions of ever-rising spirits (*Chardi Kala*-active optimism). Pessimism (*Dhendi-Kala*) has no place in Sikh thought. Sikh discipline is a conscious effort to live in harmony with nature and carry out the altruistic divine will. It aims at authentic religious life and demands deeper penetration of one's own religion in thought, devotion and action. It does not believe in religious conversion (Proselytisation) through bait or force, but any body, who likes its ideals, is welcome to embrace it. The glory of Sikhism is its universality which cannot brook sectarianism or narrow loyalties in any shape or

form. It is thus a universal religion having an appeal for all and is most practical in its application. It aims to destroy barriers and to unite all mankind. In Sri Rag the Guru Says "The true Guru is one who unites all (GGS, p.72)".

The essence of Sikh faith then is harmony, universal love, truthful living, universal brotherhood, peaceful co-existence, tolerance, humility, honest labour, complete faith in one Almighty (God) and to resist and fight against social injustice, all kinds of oppression and exploitation. It is the zenith of eastern spirituality and it is the only indigenous revolutionary philosophy of Indian subcontinent, which took birth in 'Punjab'. Thus Sikhism and Sikhs form a unique religion and a unique society, which and who can be clearly distinguished from other religions and political societies of the world.

The global spread of Sikhism has been mainly through migration of the Sikhs from 'Punjab' and not through mass conversions from other faiths. Recently because of its principles, Sikhism has been embraced by many white people and now white Sikhs and even black Sikhs can be found internationally especially in USA.

\*Sikhi: Punjabi word meaning Sikhism.

NB:

GGS is an abbreviation for Guru Granth Sahib

SGPC stands for Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee.

### What is Hinduism?

Hinduism / Brahmanism / Sanatan Dharama has no founder like other religious systems. Only Brahmins are its main patrons. The Brahmin played central role for laying various customs and rites and modern shape of this religion. Vedas, the religious scriptures of Hinduism, have significant portion as Brahmin.

There is total confusion about God in Hinduism. The main God of this tradition is Brahma. The divisive caste system along with ritualism, gender inequality, hypocrisy and mythology form the bed rock of Hinduism in which ethics and morality have no place.

Modern Hinduism formerly called Sanatan dharma/ Brahmanism is represented by its Vaishnava, Ganapatya, Shaivya, Shaiva and Shakta sects whose beliefs and practices, have been jointly described as *Biprn kee reet* in *Gurmat*. All Hindus pay veneration to cow and Brahmin. The Hindus believe that man is re-born after his death and this cycle continues indefinitely unless salvation (*Mukti*) is attained, for which the Brahmin (Hindu priest) told methods in the form of rituals to be performed by the followers of Hinduism. These rituals have been mentioned in the Vedas. The Vedas are divided into four parts viz; *Mantras*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas* and *Upnishads*. The *Mantras* and *Brahmanas* together are known as *Karma-Kanda* i.e the part of Vedas dealing with sacrificial actions (Hom Yag, Shradh, Tarpan and Varat etc), *Aranyakas* are called *Upashana-Kanda* (dealing with the actions performing to worship) and *Upnishads* are called *Gyan-kanda* (dealing with knowledge). The Brahmin laid stress on the *Karma Kanda*, and *upashna Kanda*, because they helped to maintain his importance and enjoy monetary benefits. He did not show much interest in *Gyan Kanda*. The Vedas emphasise upon certain practices and qualities which need to be adopted for Moksha. The Brahmin did not teach the real religion of practicing righteousness and character building to the Hindus and led them into superstition and materialism. Under their wrong direction Hindus began to believe that religion concerned only caste, the ways of eating, bathing and listening to katha. The Brahmin advocated for certain actions and methods of worship, according to Scriptures for the purification of mind, but in fact, his own mind was not pure.

**The Sikh view:** Guru Nanak says:

- ਕਰਮੀ ਸਹਿਜੁ ਨ ਉਪਜੈ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਹਜੈ ਸਹਸਾ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥--*karmee sahaj na oopjai win sahajai sahsaa na jaae*—By ritual acts, intuitive poise (serenity) is not produced and without serenity doubt does not go. ਕਹੇ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਸਹਿਜੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਇਹ ਸਹਸਾ ਇਵ ਜਾਇ॥--Nanak says, by Guru's grace serenity arises and thus in this way the doubt is dispelled (GGS, p. 919).
- “ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਕਛੁ ਸੁਝੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਚਤੁਰੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਪਾਡੈ॥--*Gian dhian kachh soojee naahee chatur kahaavay paanday*--You expect others to call you wise, O Pundit! But you are devoid of (spiritual) knowledge and meditation” (Ibid, M1 p.1290). The Brahmin, who was without any knowledge in the field of spirituality, was well versed in the Pauranic legends. He did not teach the real religion to the Hindus and led them into superstition and materialism. Under their direction Hindus began to

believe that religion concerned only caste, performing certain rituals, the ways of eating, bathing and listening to *kathas*. But Gurbani says:

Sikhism confronts superstition with a scientific argumentative approach. For example the Pandas at Hardawar questioned the Guru's so-called sacrilegious act of throwing water to the West when everybody was throwing to the East. The Guru said, "I am throwing water to my crops at Kartarpur". The Pandas asked, "How can your water reach hundreds of miles in Kartarpur?" the Guru replied, "If your water can reach billions of miles at the sun, why my water can't reach a few hundred miles on the earth?" The lesson went home to the Pandas and the general public that had gathered to see the spectacle.

Similarly he engaged himself with the Pandas at Kurukshetra on the occasion of sun eclipse, the Brahmins at Jagan Nath Puri in the evening at the time of Aarti, The Mullah in Mecca, the Sidhas and Jogis at Sumer (Kailash Parbat), Gorakh Mata (now Nanak Mata) in UP and Achal Batala (Punjab), Sajjan Thag in Tolumba (Multan), Wali Ghandhari in Peshawar, Kauda in Asaam, etc and he carried his point logically. He reformed them and established them at their respective places as preachers of Sikhism. He discoursed with Babur in Ennabad and His Bani uttered on this occasion is found recorded in Guru Ganth Sahib under the heading '*Babar Vani*'.

### **Who are Sikhs?—Genesis of the Sikhs and Sikhism**

The story of human efforts towards a higher life in the Indian subcontinent began on the soil of the Punjab in the Indus Valley during the Old Stone Age and the Sikhs now found globally are product of the plains of the Punjab, a region in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent. It is universally agreed upon now that man evolved in Africa and gradually spread over the entire globe. According to Dr H.D Sankalia, the renowned anthropologist, "it is more or less established that at the end of the First Glacial Period and into the beginning of the Second Ice Age, Early man entered the foot hills of the Northwest Punjab, in the area traversed by the Soan, Haro and other rivers within the Indus-Jhelum Doab. Early man spread into the area comprised by Rawalpindi and Attock districts of the Punjab, and the Jammu and Kashmir States". Recent Genographic studies reveal that these people arrived in India from Central Asia by travelling through the rugged and mountainous Pamir Knot, some 30,000 years ago. Early humans lived as gatherers and hunters, who gradually developed into a great civilization, now known as "The Indus Valley Civilization", which is one of the oldest civilizations of the world. The natives here farmed the lands and were called 'Jatt'-ਜੱਟ', which is the oldest named tribe in India whose name is found even in Mahabharata. After the region was named Punjab by Emperor Akbar in 1590 A.D, the natives of this land came to be called Punjabis. Sikhism took its birth here at the fag end of the 15th century among two already well established religions Hinduism and Islam along with Bhuddism and Jainism. The Sikh homeland, because of its location has been the target of frequent invasions from the Middle-East and Central Asia. The Aryan groups entered here from Asia Minor through the passes in the Hindu Kush mountain range as graziers of cattle and settled in the Kashmir region around 2000 B.C. After centuries of their development and multiplication they descended into the plains of the Punjab and tried to culturally dominate the natives of the Punjab called Jatts, through their Brahman priest. But the Jatts of the Punjab refused to accept the Brahmanical dominance and pushed the Aryans out of the limits of the Punjab beyond Jamna River into the Ganga-Jamna divide. Islamic invasions of the Punjab started in 711 A.D; the Punjabis resisted for three centuries, but the Islamic invaders coming in hordes

occupied Punjab and established their rule here in the beginning of the eleventh century (1001 A.D). In spite of all odds the Jatts never left Punjab, they gathered on both sides of the river Ravi around Lahore and kept resisting the invaders including Alexander the Great. Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in Punjab at the end of the 15th century and he laid down its complete ideology, propagating the oneness of God and oneness of man. At that time Punjab was under the oppressive Islamic rule with Hinduism as dominant religion dividing the society on caste distinctions. Sikhism developed and matured under the guidance of its Gurus over a period of next about two hundred years and it was formally consecrated by Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day 1699 A.D; when he laid down the religious code *Who are Sikhs?* Copyright Dr. Jagraj Singh 7 of conduct for the Sikhs distinct from the followers of Hinduism and Islam and declared the abolishment of the caste system in Sikhism. The 'Jatts' of Majha (Central Punjab) accepted Sikh initiation en masse. Although all the Sikh Gurus were Hindu Khatri, but the majority of the Khatri, (the descendants of Aryans) refused to sip Amrit from the same communion bowl along with the Shudras as it broke caste, which forms the bed-rock of Hinduism also known as Varn Ashram Dharma. The Hindu hill Rajput rulers around Anandpur Sahib joined hands with the Moghul Muslim government at Delhi and vowed to destroy Guru Gobind Singh and his nascent Khalsa. Guru Gobind Singh accepted their challenge and refused to submit and compromise his principles. Guru Gobind Singh left the mortal world in 1708 AD; after vesting the leadership of Sikhs and Sikhism into "Guru Granth" and "Guru Khalsa Panth". The Sikhs under Banda Singh Bahadur declared the war of independence of the Sikh Nation in 1710 A.D, overcame Muslim oppression and domination of both Muslims and Hindus in their motherland and established their own rule after destroying the unjust and oppressive Muslim rule in their motherland-Punjab in the middle of the 18th century. They built up a commanding position on the NorthWestern frontier, checking for the first time the inflow of the invaders who had incessantly swept through the passes in the hills to loot or rule the Indian subcontinent since the earliest Aryan groups had discovered the route about 2000 to 3000 BC. The Sikhs for the first time in the history of this region reversed the tide of attacks and subjugated the turbulent Afghans and recovered from them the Kohinoor diamond and doors of the Hindu temple of Som Nath, which were taken to Afghanistan in the 11th century by Mehmud of Gazni. During the Sikh rule in Punjab, "Sarkare Khalsa" entered into many international agreements with other governments including various kings of Afghanistan, Dalai Lama of Tibet, China and the British. They ruled their country from 1765 to 1849, when it was annexed by the British after many bloody wars not due to the lack of bravery on the part of the Sikhs, but treachery of their civil government dominated by the neo-convert Hindus into Sikhism. A treaty of annexation was signed by the British with the Sikhs. The Sikhs were the last defenders of liberty in India and most difficult nation to fall to the British imperialism in the Indian subcontinent. Disregarding the treaty of annexation with the Sikhs the British at the time of the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, divided the Sikh homeland in two parts, the western part 62% was made over to the newly created Islamic State of Pakistan, while the eastern part 38% was attached to the Hindu India. Since then they are a stateless people. Presently they are internationally recognized as an important and distinct community, but are not identified as a nation in the absence of their separate country. They have been even denied religious identity in India after the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. Therefore, they are most misunderstood people in the world. In order to fully understand the Sikhs of the Punjab who are a distinct ethnic group one has to go to the prehistoric era. The description of their story falls into following well marked periods from:

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

- The entry of man into the Indus valley--Sikh homeland-(Punjab) to the arrival of the Aryans and the aftermath,
- The start of the Muslim invasions of the Punjab to the end of the Moghul rule, • Birth and evolution of Sikhism under the Sikh Gurus from Nanak to Gobind Singh, • Period of struggle (1708-1799).
- Sikh rule (1799-1849) • Annexation of the Punjab by the British in 1849;
- The British Period (1849—1947 A.D) and;
- Decolonization of the Indian subcontinent
- The post independence era.

### **Who are Hindus? Genesis of the Hindus and Hinduism**

Around 4000 years ago the people of the Indus valley had reached a very high level of civilization, when the people of a white tribe who rode horses, reared cattle, ate beef and worshiped fire entered into the Indus valley from Asia Minor--Seistan—Persia—modern Iran region through the passes in the Hindu Kush mountains and settled in the northern Punjab in the Kashmir region as graziers of cattle. They called themselves Aryans and spoke an Indo-European language which originated on the steppes of Eurasia. The Aryan society was tribal in nature. They did not come all at once, but kept poring into the region over a period of many centuries. The first center of Aryan settlement developed in the hills of north Punjab around Taxila in Kashmir region (now in Pakistan). They were called Gujars / Gawalas (Gauwala, herders of cows) by the natives. Because of their white skin they considered themselves superior breed. They contemptuously called the natives as black and also as Dasas (literally meaning slaves). The people among the natives who practiced spirituality were called Jogis. They believed in one Supreme Eternal Reality, whom they called *Brahma* and they had script called Brahmi / Siddhmatrica.

During their stay in the Kashmir region the Aryans developed a slang version of the local Punjabi dialect called Sehaskriti, for worship purposes which to begin with they called, '*Brahm Bhasha*' (lit: language of God). Some of the Aryans learnt spirituality from the Punjabi Jogis and around 1000 B.C; produced scriptures based on the spiritual experiences and revelations of the Punjabi jogis. These scriptures were created in *Braham Bhasha* (later on named Sanskrit) and were memorized orally. They named these scriptures as Vedas literally meaning books of knowledge, which are four in numbers and Rig Veda among them is the oldest. The Aryans having the knowledge of Vedas became the priestly class and called themselves, 'Brahmans' (having knowledge of *Brahma*-God). Aryans worshiped sun (Aditya), moon (*Soma*), air (Vayu), fire (Agni), water (Varuna), and performed bloody animal sacrifices (*Yajna / yagna*) etc. They ate beef. The Vedas gave birth to Vedic Brahmanism. *Braham Bhasha* (Sanskrit), the language of the Aryan scriptures was neither spoken nor understood by common mass of the people and therefore their scriptures could only be explained by the priest i.e, Brahman. Later Aryans here used the Siddhmatrica script of the Punjabi Jogis but called it Sharda. According to Romila Thapar *Rishi* Panini wrote here Sanskrit grammar '*Ashtadhyayi*', in 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C; in Taxilla, in the foot hills of the Punjab (The Penguin history of early India volume I by Romila Thapar). *Rishi* Patanjli wrote his '*Patanjal Darshan*' on Yoga. Around 200 BC, Manu wrote the law book for Hindus, which is known as *Manu Simriti*. Later Kautiliya wrote his '*Arthshastra*', here. The Brahmans and the Vedas gave birth to Vedic Brahmanism. Vedic Brahmanism was also called *Varn Ahram Dharma / Sanatan Dharma*. The Brahmans named the first river on the north-west of India as Sindhu and they called the area between it and Yamuna River as Sapt Sindhu (The land of seven rivers).

### **Hindus\* and Hindustan**

Islamic invasions of the Indian subcontinent started in the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. They called the Aryan Sindhu River as '*Daryae Sindh*'. The Islamic invaders contemptuously called the natives as \*Hindu. They changed the name of the area beyond the Sindhu River from *Sapt Sindhu* to *Hidustan*. Thereafter, gradually Brahmanism came to be known as Hinduism and its followers came to be called Hindus. Thus the names Hindu and Hindustan were given by the Islamic invaders and not by any founder of the so called Hinduism. *Before the beginning of the eighth century, there is no mention of Hindus, Hinduism or Hindustan in the Indian literature.*

**\* Meaning of Hindu: According to Mahan Kosh (Encyclopaedia Of Sikh literature) by Bhai**

**Kahan Singh Nabha:** The foreigners have used this word (Hindu) for the ancient people who lived in the vicinity of the Sindh River and called themselves Aryans. Poets of Arabic and Persian languages have used this word (Hindu) for thief, slave and black.

**Who is a Sikh?**

A Sikh is one who follows the Sikh religion /Sikhism / Sikhi. The Sikh religious code of conduct (Sikh Rehat Maryada), defines a ‘Sikh’ as ‘any person who believes in ‘One Immortal Being’ (God), in the ten Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh; in the Guru Granth Sahib and other writings of the Gurus and their teachings, the Khalsa initiation / Khanday Baatay dee pahul (Amritpaan) ceremony and who does not believe in the doctrinal system of any other religion. Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in 1496 CE; as revealed to him by the Supreme Eternal Reality—‘Akaal Purkh’ at Sultanpur Lodhi in the present day Kapurthala district of the Punjab.. The term ‘Sikh’, was coined by the founders of the new religion—Sikhi / Sikhism for its followers. The word \*Sikh is purely Punjabi in origin and is derived from the term ‘Sikhna’ meaning to learn. As in English and many other languages of the world some words have more than one meaning, similarly in Punjabi the word ‘Sikh’ has many literal meanings, for instance: • It may mean sermon / instruction / teaching (Updesh), "ਜੇ ਇਕ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਣੀ॥--Je ikk Gur kee Sikh sunee --i.e, If one were to act and listen to the instructions of the Guru (GGS, p.2 Japji). • It may mean Choti / Bodi / --Tuft of hair on the shaven head-ਮੂੰਡ ਮੁਡਾਇ ਜਟਾ ਸਿਖ ਬਾਪੀ ਮੋਨਿ ਰਹੈ ਅਭਿਮਾਨ॥--Moond muda-ay jata sikh baandhi i.e, Some shave their heads, some keep matted locks, some wear hair tuft (Bodi--bodI) and some observe silence full of pride (GGS, M1, p. 1013). • It may mean follower of Sikh Religion: 1. "ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖ ਅਖਾਏ॥--Gur Satgur ka jo Sikh akha-ay----jo saas giraas dhiaay mera har har so Gur-Sikh guru mann bhaa-ay (GGS. p.305). 2. "ਆਪ ਛਡ ਸਦਾ ਰਹੈ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਣੈ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ॥ ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਸੰਤਹੁ ਸੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਸਨਮੁਖ ਹੋਏ॥--Aap chhad sda rahay parnay Gur bin avar na janay koay. Kahay Nanak sunho santoh so Sikh sanmukh hoay—By renouncing his ego, he ever remains towards the Guru. Without the Guru he knows not any other. Nanak says such a follower abides in the presence of the Guru (GGS, Anand, p 919). • It may mean learned, “ਸਿਖ ਉਬਾਰ ਅਸਿਖ ਸੰਘਾਰੋ॥--Sikh ubaar Asikh Sanghaaro”--Guru Gobind Singh in his prayer to the almighty Supreme Eternal Reality says, “O Lord increase the number of the learned people and destroy the ignorant (not learned ones)” (Guru Gobind Singh Chaupae). Asikh (ਅਸਿਖ) “Sikh” (ਸਿਖ) in Punjabi, literally means learned and “Asikh” (ਅਸਿਖ) means not learned. Guru Gobind Singh in his prayer to the Supreme Eternal Realty (God) says, “ਸਿਖ ਉਬਾਰ ਅਸਿਖ ਸੰਘਾਰੋ॥--Sikh ubaar Asikh sanghaaro”, i.e, “ O Lord increase the number of the learned (Sikh) people and eliminate the non-learned - not knowledgeable (ਅਸਿਖ)- Chaupai, Guru Gobind Singh (Dasam Granth, p.1387). There are many more similar terms in Sikhism viz: Kaal--Death and Akaal--Deathless, Mrit --dead and Amrit--immortal, Shok--sorrow and Ashok—sorrowless and so on many more such terms.

**Sish / Shishiya Sish / Shishiya** is a Sanskrit term, which in English means disciple and in Punjabi means Chela. According to the Hindu belief progress on the spiritual path was not possible without formally adopting a worldly Guru. Sanatan Dharma / Brahmanism now popularly called Hinduism has a very strong Guru and chela (disciple) tradition, but Sikhism forcefully denounces it. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism was not Chela (disciple) of any worldly Guru. At the time of his enlightenment he was an employee of Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi working as

manager of his food grain stores at Sultanpur Lodhi (district Kapurthala). When the Siddhas / Jogis questioned him in this regard, he replied, “Shabad Guru Surat dhun chela” i.e. Shabad is Guru, consciousness and intention tuned towards it make one its disciple” (GGGS M1, p. 943). When Guru Nanak embarked upon his mission for preaching his message he had with him two companions, a Muslim named Mardana and a Hindu named Bala. When people asked him as to who were his companions. He always replied: Bhai Mardana and Bhai Bala. He never mentioned them as his Chelas (Shish) as is being advocated by the Hindu theologians. Even after Guru Nanak during the period of all his successor Gurus, the word of Bhai was used as title of honour for the Sikhs, for instance: Bhai Buddha, Bhai Mansukh, Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Salo, Bhai Manjh, Bhai Joga Singh, Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Tara Singh, Bhai Taru Singh and so on. Insisting upon the meaning of the Punjabi term-‘Sikh’ as ‘Shishya’--a ‘Sanskrit’ word meaning disciple is invention of Brahmans / Hindu writers / scholars in recent times.

**\* Meaning of Hindu: According to Mahan Kosh (Encyclopaedia Of Sikh literature) by Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha:** The foreigners have used this word (Hindu) for the ancient people who lived in the vicinity of the Sindh River and called themselves Aryans. Poets of Arabic and Persian languages have used this word (Hindu) for thief, slave and black.

### Who is a Hindu?

Till today nobody has been able to define a Hindu, who worships or at least believes in plurality of gods and believes in Scriptures of Hinduism (Vedas, Shastras, Simrities and Purans etc), *Varn wand* i.e. ‘caste system’, ritualism, idolatry, asceticism, celibacy, accepts supremacy of the Brahman, Sanskrit as religious language and physical appearance through *Hajamat, Dhoti, topi, langoti, choti, Tilak* and *Janeu*. He does not eat beef. Worships fire. He looks upon the cow as a sacred and not merely as an economically useful or indispensable animal.

### Hindu according Vishnu Puran

It says: “*Krsnanugrahaato labhadawa manave janam bharte, anyasthane brtha janam nispphlanca gatagatam*” (*Vishnupurana*) i.e; It is exclusive privilege and grace of God that enables man to be born a Hindu in the sacred land called, Bharat, that is India; a birth in other lands, no matter of how excellent a condition and however frequently, is no better than a repetitious frustration and wearisome waste”. This prevented the Hindus from migrating abroad. The Hindus believe in ritual pollution (*डिट्टे नहा*) and purification, and say that man gets polluted by crossing the *Kala Paani* i.e; ‘Sea’.

### Exit of the Aryans from the Punjab

After centuries of their development and multiplication the Aryans descended into the plains of the Punjab. They tried to dominate the natives called ‘Jatts’ of the Punjab through the priest i.e, Brahman. The Jatt spirit of freedom and equality refused to submit to the Brahmanical dominance and pushed the Aryans out of the limits of the Punjab, beyond Jamna River into the Jamna-Ganga (Ganges) Doab. The Aryans pronounced, “no Aryan should stay even for two days, because the ‘Punjabi Jatt’ refused to obey the priest—Mahabhart, viii, verses 2063—2068 (Karna Parva)”.\*\* Henceforth the Brahman developed an extremely hostile attitude towards the ‘jatts’ of the Punjab, which persists till today.

### Development of the Aryans in Ganga Jamna basin

After their exit from Punjab, the Aryans entered in the Ganges basin and set about making India their home. They founded and developed here in the Malwa region a new

town as their cultural center, which they named ‘Ujjain Nagri’-ਉਜੈਨ ਨਗਰੀ and affectionately called it as ‘Devnagri’ (देव नगरी) , because it was inhabited by Brahmans, who were gods (Devtas) in human form. They gradually adopted the existing local beliefs and customs of the region and in turn affected the native culture, thereby producing a distinctly different culture with distinct rituals and customs and beliefs which is known as Vedic culture. It is here that the Aryans seem to have named their language as ‘Sanskrit. As Sanskrit was devoid of any script, the Aryans created Sanskrit literature by using the local script prevalent in the place of its writing. They used Brahmi / Sidhmatica script of the Punjabi Jogis in the Kashmir region and called it Sharda. In the Malwa region they used local version of Sharda script but named it as *Dev Naagri*. Gradually they founded more towns in this Malwa region of India, gained religious and cultural control of the Ganges Valley by blending their own culture with that of the natives and ultimately established their rule in the Ganges basin and named their territory “*Bharat*” after the name of their dominant tribe leader ‘*Bharata*’. Purans describe *Kosala* as the kingdom ruled by solar dynasty to which king Dasratha and Rama of epic Ramayana belonged, whose capital was Ayodhya (Oudh) modern day Faizabad. Kosala was a region in ancient India what is now south-central Uttar Pardesh).

Later they shifted the center of their activity in the easternly direction into the fertile and mineral rich area and built their religio-cultural center on the banks of the River Ganga (Ganges) and named it **Kanshi (Benaras / Varanasi)**. Henceforth Vedic deities (Aryan gods)—Vayu (air), Varuna (water) Agni (fire) Aditya (Sun) Soma (moon) were discarded and they introduced the **Trinity of God** constituted by Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Shiva) jointly represented by ॐ (Om) and propagated the doctrines of Samsara, transmigration, karma and salvation (Mukti) etc. *Bharata* tribe gave birth to two powerful tribes named Kurus and Pandus. The Kurus ruled over ‘Bharat’ i.e, ‘Ganga-Jamna Doab’ built their capital here and named it **Hastnapur (near Merutt)**, while their cousins called ‘Pandus’ came to occupy unproductive sandy tract on the eastern periphery of the Punjab, between Gaggar and Jamna rivers. They built their capital on the western bank of Jamna River and named it **Inderprasth** (now Delhi). Daropati, the common wife of the five Pandus was called ‘Panchali’. The region of Brahmanical culture dominated by the Kurus and Pandus came to be known as ‘**Kuru-Panchala**’.

The epics Ramayna and Mahabharta were created during this period. Ramayana was compiled by the sage named Valmiki in the Punjab. It is the story of the hero Rama, or Ram Chandra, viewed by Hindus as a model son, brother and husband. He is considered to be the seventh Avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu, and his name is often invoked as a greeting. Ramayana narrates the invasion of Celyon by Rama, the king of Awadh (Ayodhiya), whose wife Sita had been abducted by Rawan, the king of Ceylon. A great fight took place and Sita was rescued.

The composition Mahabharta is ascribed to a sage named Wayasa. It describes the great-war between the Pandus and the Kurus. The battle raged with great fury for eighteen days on the plains of Kurukshetra, near Thanesar and the result was total defeat of the Kurus. Lord Krishna sided with the Pandus. Bhagvad-Gita, which forms a part of Mahabharat, is a battlefield conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, the hero of this battle. The battle has been called Mahabharat, because various kings from the entire Indian subcontinent, beyond the limits of the territory of the then “Bharat” participated in it.

The Vedas here were supplemented by *Upnishads* / ‘*Shastras*’ and Purans. Upnishads are treatises that set out the reason for all thought and action, according to Hindu philosophy.

Here the Aryans recorded the local dialect in *Dev Naagri* script and named it *Shastri* (now Hindi).

### Who is a Brahman?

Brahman is the first and foremost caste among the Hindus.

According to Gurbani:

1. ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ, ਜੋ ਬਿੰਦੇ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮ--Brahman is the one who knows about Brahma (God) (GGS, P68)
2. ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੋ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮ ਬੀਚਾਰੈ ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਕਹੀਅਤ ਹੈ ਹਮਾਰੇ--Kabir says, "Brahman is the one who remembers *Brahma*" (God) (Ibid, p.324).

### Qualities of a Brahman

According to Gurbani:

ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਜੋ ਬਿੰਦੈ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮੁ। ਜਪੁ ਤਪੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਕਰਮੁ॥ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਕਾ ਰਖੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਬੰਧਨ ਤੋੜੈ ਹੋਵੇ ਮੁਕਤੁ॥ ਸੋਈ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਪੂਜਣ ਜੁਗਤੁ॥ *So Brahman jo bindai Brahm, jap, tap, sanjam kamavai karm* i.e, A true Brahman is one, who grasps Brahm. Meditation on God and self-control are his daily routine. His religious observances are right conduct and humility. He removes the sensual chains that bind the soul. Such a Brahman deserves all praise and honour (GGS, p.1411).

Duties of a Brahman:

Duties of a Brahman consist of reading of Vedas, performing ritual *Yajnas* for self and others, giving and accepting charity and defending the right to worship.

The Maghada (Modern Bihar)

During the ancient times Indian peninsula was one unit surrounded by Indian ocean in the east and south, Arabian sea in the west and the Himalyas in the north and there were no states or kingdoms, dominant individuals controlled territories. South was controlled by the natives called Dravadians.

Bimbisara of Haryanka dynasty (543—491 BC) became the ruler of Maghda located on the Indogangetic plains in eastern India in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. He led an expansive policy. He attacked the ruler of Anga, defeated him and occupied his territory. He got married himself with the daughter of ruler of Kosala.

Birth of Bhudda and rise of Bhuddism:

Mahavira and Gautma Buddha both were born in Magdha and both were contemporaries of Bimbisara (543—491 BC). Buddhism and Jainism in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C emerged as reform movements in the northeast of India as a revolt against various practices of the Vedic Brahmanism of the Aryans. The founders of both religious movements were non-Brahman Kashatriya princes. Both were critical of the caste system and bloody animal sacrifices (*Yajna / Jagna*) and propagated Ahimsa (Ahinsa).

Bimbisara was succeeded by his son Ajatashatru. Ajatashatru was succeeded by his son Aniruddha as king of Maghda. Patliputra was the capital of Maghda. Shishunaga (413-345 BCE) usurped the throne of Magdha from Anirudha and established the rule of Shishunaga dynasty who ruled Magdha till 345 BC. The last ruler of Shishunaga dynasty was overthrown by Mahapadmananda, believed to be illegitimate son of the last ruler of Shishunaga dynasty and he established the rule of Nanda dynasty. The rule of Nanda dynasty lasted from 321 BCE to 345 CE and its last ruler was Dhana Nanda.

### Chander Gupta Maurya (340 BCE-298 BCE)

Chander Gupta Maurya, became the king of Magdha by deposing the king of Nanda

dynasty in 321BC. Chandergupat Maurya has been described in history as a relative and minister of the Nanda King. He revolted against the king but was defeated and escaped to Punjab where he met his childhood friend Chanakya (also known as Kautilya-350—275 BCE) in Taxilla and sought his help. Chandergupat Maurya returned to Magadha along with Chanakya and with his help and advice raised a small army, allied himself with the ruler of Kalinga (modern day Orissa) and attacked Magadha. Chandergupat Maurya was victorious and became the ruler of Magadha. Ancestry of Chandergupat Maurya is not known for certain. He captured Trans-Indus- region from (Bactrians) the successors of Alexander the Great. Chandergupat Maurya ruled till 298 BCE, when he abdicated the throne in favour of his son Bindusara.

Chander Gupta's grandson **Ashoka** (274-232 B.C) expanded this Mauryan Empire southwards, bringing the greater part of the Indian sub-continent under his rule. During his reign the empire included nearly whole of the Indian subcontinent and reached present day Afghanistan. Buddhism became state religion during Ashoka's rule (272-232B.C). Mauryan period saw respite from foreign invasions. During this period civilization and morality made great progress. He established university of Buddhist learning in Taxilla, in the foot hills of the Punjab, but Buddhism could not influence the natives (Jatts) in the plains of the Punjab, its influence remained limited to urban centres in the hills only in the northwest.

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### **The fall of Mauryan Empire**

After the death of Ashoka in 232 B.C; the Mauryan Empire began to decline. By the second century B.C; it had lost its hold over most of its territory. The last Mauryan king was killed in 185 B.C; and India returned to a collection of small kingdoms. They were over-run in the first century A.D; by nomadic Huns, Shakas, Parthians and Kushanas who swept down from Central Asia into Punjab and established several kingdoms there that survived into the second century. After the fall of Mauryan Empire Punjab remained isolated from the Ganges basin and rest of Bharat (India) for about a thousand years.

### **The Kushan Empire**

The Kushan empire extended over the regions of Afghanistan, Pakistan and western India. It had maximum territorial area under its control under Kanishka. Kushans ruled India from first through third centuries AD. After the death of Vasudeva I in 225 AD the Kushan empire split into western (Afghanistan) and eastern halves--Bactria and Tajakistan. The western half (Afghanistan) was soon subjugated by the Persia and became part of the Sassanid Empire during the third century.

### **Establishment of Gupta Empire and revival of Brahmanism**

The Mauryan Empire and subsequent kingdoms had supported Buddhism and during this period Brahmanism (now Hinduism) was less visible than Buddhism and Jainism. Ashoka's passionate commitment to Buddhism and its expanding hold of the state eventually precipitated a

Brahman revolt. In the fourth century A.D; Magdha once again became the foundation of a great empire under the Gupta dynasty, which controlled major portions of north India, parts of central and western India from early 4<sup>th</sup> to late 6<sup>th</sup> century AD (320—530). It was founded by Chander Gupat 1, in 320 A.D. He was succeeded by his celebrated son Samuder Gupta (Chander Gupat ii). Under the Gupat dynasty, Brahmanical revival took place in the Gangetic basin in *Bharat*. There was a long respite from the foreign invasions and country saw remarkable peace, progress and prosperity for about two and a half centuries. The state sponsorship of Hinduism provided by Gupat dynasty led to the development of great temples in the urban centers. Sophisticated systems of astrology and astronomy were developed to calculate the ritual calendar. Other cultural areas also developed in relation to religion. Art, music, dance and drama focused on myth and ritual. Temple architecture took on new forms and meanings. Hindu theism was marked by ritualism and ascetic practices. In public rituals, the great temples were centers for worship of deities that had been brought within the sphere of Brahmanical authority. These were local deities that had become universal gods through identification with Brahma. Among ascetic traditions, theism merged with yoga to form the esoteric system known as Tantrism. Thus Brahmanism / Sanatanism (now Hinduism) evolved to its present Puranic form, which has remained unchanged till today.

The rulers of western India, the Kshatrapas, had been patrons of Brahmans and first to patronize Sanskrit after Kashmir. Gradually the use of Sanskrit became more widespread when various ruling dynasties gave it preference over the popularly used Prakrit as their official language. It became part of demarcation between cultures using Sanskrit and the *Desi*, using original language- 'Prakrit'. Sanskrit became the language of the court, of classical literature and philosophical works, in short of subcontinental elite. Regional languages remained within appropriate regional boundaries. The Gupta rulers founded the Nalanda university in Magdha, where there was a great Buddhist monastery. Arya Bhatta wrote *Surya Sidhanta*, *Panchtantra* was written by Vishnu Sharma, geometry, trigonometry, astronomy and metallurgy. During the Gupta period there was a phenomenal development in art and sculptural representation of divinities were at their best. During this period many books were compiled on iconography and rules were codified for making of various divine figures, their different poses, hand gestures etc. Ajanta and Allora caves were created during this period. Nalanda prospered under the Gupta Kings. The kings were careful to patronize the Brahmans, who in turn to show their gratitude, composed fictitious genealogies for them to ensure their Kashatriya status.

Another set of writings concerning Hinduism called Puranas or long stories containing many Hindu myths about gods and goddesses as well as Hindu heroes were created. The Brahman gained popularity by combining Upnishadic philosophy with the folk religion. The merger of priestly and popular traditions is evident in the epics of, Mahabharata, Ramayana and the Purans. This gave rise to what has come to be called Puranic Hinduism (Modern Hinduism), which was in many ways a departure from Vedic Brahmanism. Sanskrit epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata were put into writing during this period. The incidents related to the Ramayana refer to a period about 1200 B.C. It was compiled by the sage named Valmiki in the Punjab. It is the story of the hero Rama, or Ram Chandra, viewed by Hindus as a model son, brother and husband. He is considered to be the seventh Avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu, and his name is often invoked as a greeting. Ramayana narrates the invasion of Ceylon by Rama, the king of Awadh (Ayodhya), whose wife Sita had been abducted by Rawan, the king of Ceylon. A great fight took place and Sita was rescued. Mahabharat deals with a period, about 1000 B.C. E. It was compiled between 400 B.C.E. and 300 C.E. Its composition is ascribed to a sage named Wayasa.

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

It describes the great-war between the Pandus and the Kurus. It was a dynastic struggle. Kuru was the senior branch of the family of which Duryodhana (son of Dhritrashtra) was the eldest Kuru but he was younger than Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandu (Pandus's descendent). Both Duryodhana and Yudhishtira claimed to be first in line to inherit the kingdom. The war is supposed to have been fought at Kurukshetra (now in Haryana state of India). Lord Krishna sided with the Pandus. The battle raged with great fury for eighteen days on the plains of Kurukshetra, near Thanesar and the result was total defeat of the Kurus and the Pandus came out victorious in the end. Bhagvad-Gita, which forms a part of Mahabharat, is a battlefield conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, the hero of this battle. The battle has been called Mahabharat, because various kings from the entire Indian subcontinent, beyond the limits of the territory of the then "Bharat" participated in it. The epic ends with the death of Krishna. The epics Ramayana and Mahabharat were put into writing during this period. The Vedas here were supplemented by *Upanishads* / '*Shastras*' and Purans. Upanishads are treatises that set out the reason for all thought and action, according to Hindu philosophy. Here the Aryans recorded the local dialect in *Dev Naagri* script and named it *Shastri* (now Hindi).

During Gupta period the Brahmins (Priestly class of Brahmanism / Santan Dharma / Hinduism) discarded the Vedic deities and propagated the Divine Trinity constituted by Brahma (God of creation), Vishnu (God of preservation) and Shiva also known as Mahesh (God of annihilation), jointly represented by its vibratory aspect called Aum or Om, ॐ. Henceforth Kshatriya Princes Lord Rama and Lord Krishna were introduced as apostles of reformed Brahmanical faith and Female deity Devi was also introduced and worshiped. The Aryans in the area under their control adopted vegetarianism of the natives and prohibited animal sacrifices. Ahimsa, vegetarianism and caste system were propagated very vigorously. Animal sacrifice (Yagna / Yajna) was replaced with breaking of coconut (Naryal) and cutting a straw. Idolatry became dominant religious practice in temples and the homes of Sanatans. The Brahmin gained popularity by combining Upanishadic philosophy with the folk religion. This gave rise to what has come to be called Puranic Hinduism (Modern Hinduism), which was in many ways a departure from Vedic Brahmanism. Mahabharat is an important source of information on the development of Hinduism between 400 BCE and 200 CE.

Although the mention of caste is found in Rig Veda, but it was much later enforced in the Ganga-Jamna doab when the Brahmins secured their social supremacy by a compilation of customary laws known as code of Manu popularly called '*Manusmriti*' (200BC-200 AD) and the caste system was strictly enforced and made hereditary. The Aryans institutionalized the hierarchy of upper and lower classes into the caste system through social engineering, thereby dividing the masses into Brahmins (the priests), Kshatriyas (rulers / warriors), Vaishyas (merchants / traders) and the Shudras (the cultivators / manual workers). Because the texts were written by Brahmins, the concerns of the priests were treated in detail, dominance over both the ruler (Kshatriya) and the merchant (Vaishya) and their legitimate control and exploitation of the Shudras. The dominance came to be exercised through rules, rituals and rigmarole. The Brahmins moulded the social pattern of the caste system to suite their own needs. People professing the professions of cobblers, sweepers and butchers were kept out of the caste order and were designated as *Ashhoos* (Untouchables), cremation ground attendants were called *Chandal*. The Aryans, in this way assumed the exercise of power through social control and

spiritual notions of the sacred and profane, as spelt out by an exclusive class of interpreters, the Brahmans, who are to be found in all locations, literally every village, certainly at every point of dispensation of power.

Fiftyseven years before the start of Christian Era Calendar the Aryan Brahmans discarded the use of cyclic time expressed in the form of *Yugas* (*Satyuga, Duaper, Treta, Kalyuga*) and *Mahyugas* and started the use of linear time, began their calendar year in the name of the King Bikramadittyia of Ujjain and named it as *Bikrami /Vikrami Samvat*, based on the length of the lunar months.

### **The birth of Rajputs**

The victorious foreigners imitated the native majority masses and picked up their manners and beliefs and thus got assimilated among them. It was easy for them because they had no religion of their own. They forced their entry into higher castes of the Hindu society in the Gangetic Plain. The Aryan Brahmans named them as “Rajputs” and showered upon them various titles viz, Solankis, Prihars, Parmars and chohans, the so called four Agni Kula (Vanshi) class of Rajputs and so on and created their long genealogies. Chinese traveler Fahein makes no mention of ‘Rajputs’ during his visit to India in the 5<sup>th</sup> century hence they are a later product of circumstances / Brahmans, who created their long genealogies and showered various titles upon them. There is no mention of Rajputs in Mahabharata, although we do find a mention of the Jatt tribe of the Punjab there. The Bactrians, Parthians, Shakas and Huns aquired the Rajput status. The tribals could not become Brahmans because they did not possess Vedic scholarship. But nothing could stop these strong men from aquiring Kashatriya status.

### **Brahman Buddhist conflict**

During the Gupta period, which is considered the Golden period of Hinduism, Brahmanism turned the tables on Buddhism. The Buddhist *Sanghas* which had been centers of political power were persistently attacked in the effort to weaken their power. Buddha and Buddhism were subjected to venomous diatribes virtually amounting to a hate campaign in various Smitris, Puranas, and other classical works. To cite an instance, Lord Buddha had breathed his last at Harramba near Monghyr. The Brahmans propogated that if any one dies at Harramba (Monghyr / Maghar), he will straight away go to hell, or be born a donkey. The hatred took many forms. Firstly, Brahmans entered the Buddhist Sangha to subvert Buddhism from within: The introduction of Tantrakism in Buddhism was a case in point. Secondly, Brahmans did not desist from cooperating with foreign invaders like Huns and early Kushans to strike at the roots of Buddhist power. For instance, they cooperated with Hun invader Mihirgul, who not only built Saiva temples but also destroyed Buddhist monastries and *Maths* in his Kingdom. By the time of Fa-Hien’s visit to India in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, Kapilvastu had become a jungle and Gaya had been laid waste and desolate. Saivite Brahman King Sasank of Bengal carried out acts of vandalism against the Buddhists, destroyed the footprints of Lord Buddha at Pataliputra, burnt the Bodhi tree under which he had meditated, and devastated numerous monasteries and scattered their monks. During the next hundred years, because of an intolerant society and constant persecution, there was mass scale migration of Buddhist monks and lay Buddhists to China and East Asia.

### **Fall of the Gupta Empire**

Under Chander Gupat ii, the empire stood at the pinnacle of its power in the fifth century, stretching over all of north India except the plains of the Punjab, but it started declining

under his successors and split into many small kingdoms. The last Guptas in the sixth century ruled over Maghda (Bihar) only.

After Samudergupta's death the dynasty became embroiled in domestic conflicts. The rulers lacked the capabilities of the earlier emperors to rule over such a large kingdom. This resulted in decline in law and order. The caste system, the religious concoction prepared by the Aryans in order to cope with their hostile environment and the doctrine of Ahimsa preached and practiced by the Bhuddhists and Jains rendered the natives of Bharat weak and subject to countless invasions and domination by foreigners. On top this the kings remained more occupied with selfindulgence than in preparing to meet the challenges of their enemies. This put dent on the well being of the empire. Many waring powers emerged in Northern India, the Huns, Shakas, Indo-Greeks and Kushans were among them. The last Guptas in the sixth century ruled over Maghda only. The Huns finally pulled the curtain in 550 AD. The south remained peaceful although partitioned into many states.

Thereafter the history of Punjab and India is a history of foreign invasions and occupations. The weakness of the Indians divided into castes and clans, the doctrine of Ahinsa and the riches of India served as an open invitation to invaders, and the response was unlimited. Situated in the North-West of India and contiguous to the Suleman Hindukush ranges, the Punjab acted as gateway to India. From the earliest times till the end of the eighteenth century all the foreign invaders such as Persians, the Greeks, the Scythians, the Kushans, The Huns, the Turks, the Moghuls, Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali and Shah Zaman passed through the passes of Khyber, Gomal, Tochi and Bolan and entered the Punjab first of all. It was only after the conquest of the Punjab that they could proceed further, to establish their sway in other parts of the country.

### **Resurgence of Brahmanism**

Once more a Brahmanical reaction built up in the ninth century. An Indian Brahman religious leader, Aadi Shankracharya (788-820 A.D), and others directed their deep learning to conceiving a brilliant turn tables on the Buddhists and Jain revolts. During the early 9<sup>th</sup> century the educated Brahmans under the leadership of Adi Shankra Acharya (788-820), a Brahman of Malabar, who achieved fame for his study of Vedic system and as the new interpreter of Vedantic philosophy, rose against Bhuddhism. The rise of Adi Shankaracharya saw the intensification of Brahman-Buddhist conflict, rather an all-out Brahminical onslaught on Buddhism. The Buddhist *Sangha* which frowned upon the killing of animals for food provided Shankaracharya-led Brahmans, then voracious beef eaters, with an alibi to mobilize the lumpen elements to attack the Buddhists and their monasteries. Shankaracharya travelled widely and violently wiped out Buddhist centers (monastries) and established Brahmanical centers of learning (*maths*) in their place. He personally led a motivated group through the Himalayas and proceeded towards the Buddhist center at Badrinath. The alarmed Buddhists chose to abandon Badrinath and escaped to Tibet. The center of Badrinath in the north was taken over by the Brahmans. Shankaracharya named it as one of the centers of Brahmanism. The fate of Buddhist property and their places of worship especially in central and southern India were similar, when Saivism asserted its dominance through the armed strength. Shankra Acharya established his own *Mathas*, parallel to monastries, which are located in north at **Joshi Math / Badrinath** in Himalyas (in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand), **Puri** in Orissa, in the east, **Dvarka** in Gujrat on the western coast and **Rameshwaram** on the southern coast in Tamil Nadu in the south with headquarters at Dwarka in the west. Matha / Math is a Sanskrit word meaning a place of religious seclusion / cloister / monastery / institute.

Since then **Shankracharya** is a commonly used title of heads of monasteries called Maths in the Advaita Vedanta tradition. The title derives from Adi Shankra, the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE reformer of Hinduism. The impact of his militant campaign against Buddhism was all pervasive. Buddhism almost disappeared from India. He appointed four Shankracharyas (akin to cardinals of Christianity—all Brahmans), who are supposed to be guardians of Hindu religion and still are heads of Hinduism.

### **Shankracharyas**

The **Shankracharyas** never made any effort to stop forcible conversions and demolition of temples by Muslims ever since Islam came to India. Instead in total antipathy they guarded the areas under their maths (monasteries). They lived in a selfish manner and were not even on talking terms with each other. Had they been selfless with some insight, they could have called upon numerous Rajput rulers whom the Brahmans had elevated to the number two position in the caste system as guardians of the society to stand against the on slaught of the Islamic rulers. But the selfish Rajput rulers were themselves at war with each other vying to send their daughters to Moghul herms. Since ancient times the marauders not only took wealth of India but thousands of men, women and children as slaves to be sold off as far away as Europe. The gypsies of Europe say, “We came from Bharat Mata”. And when many Indian slaves died crossing the snowy mountains between India and Afghanistan, the Islamic plunderers mockingly named them Hindu Kush, meaning ‘death trap of Hindus’.

Buddhism, which had appeared as a reaction against the shortcomings of Hinduism, lost its force and its devotees returned to the Hindu fold. Petty wars and conflicts afflicted the north Indian society in the Gangetic basin, which disintegrated into many small states. That condition prevailed for centuries and Punjab remained politically isolated from the Gangetic plains during this period of about a thousand years. Brahmanism could neither influence ‘the Jatts’ of the plains of the Punjab nor dare to penetrate into them in a big way and extend its influence beyond Jamna River.

### **Islamic invasions of the Indian subcontinent and establishment of Muslim rule**

Arab forces under Mohammad Bin Qasim invaded Sindh by sea route in 711 A.D. and established Islamic rule in Sindh. Sindh remained under the Abbasid Caliphate until 874 A.D.

The history of Punjab and thereby India is a history of foreign invasions and occupations. The weakness of the Indians divided into castes and clans, the doctrine of Ahinsa and the riches of India served as an open invitation to invaders, and the response was unlimited. After Mohammad Bin Qasim, the Islamic crusaders started attacking the Indian subcontinent through the land route in 711 A.D. The brave people of Punjab resisted for three centuries, but ultimately it fell to the invading Islamic forces coming in hordes in 1001 A.D

Situated in the North-West of India and contiguous to the Suleman Hindukush ranges, the Punjab acted as gateway to India. From the earliest times till the end of the eighteenth century all the foreign invaders such as Persians, the Greeks, the Scythians, the Kushans, The Huns, the Turks, Mohammad Gauri, Mehmood Ghazni, the Moghuls, Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali and Shah Zaman passed through the passes of Khyber, Gomal, Tochi and Bolan and entered the Punjab first of all. It was only after the conquest of the Punjab that they could proceed further, to establish their sway in other parts of the country.

### **Muslim rule and Brahmanism**

Even during the Islamic rule, there was no serious threat to Brahminical privileges. **Nirad Chaudhri** in his book titled, 'The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian' (1951), (London, 1987 p.404) writes, "Paradoxically, Muslim rule was not an unmitigated disaster for Brahmanism. With the overthrow of the bulk of the Hindu rulers, Brahmans gained tremendously as leaders of a decadent society, imposing wholesale caste system and ritualism-priestcraft, dark idolatory, rank inequalities, black superstitions &c-on all classes of non-Muslims, given the nomenclature of 'Hindu' by the Muslim rulers. This helped to buttress Brahmanism which now emerged as Hinduism of modern times. As pro quid quo, Brahmans cooperated with the new rulers to quieten the countryside, in the process, making the temple with images of gods and goddesses, social inequalities and extortion of wealth from a hapless people, as centres of village life. Taking advantage of the Muslim rule, Brahmans also interpolated various Shastras, Smrities, Purans and a whole body of religious texts. They discarded Brahmanism of Vedic Age which had been overtaken by Buddhism and introduced Kashatriya Princes, Lord Rama and Lord Krishna as apostles of reformed Brahmanical faith. That also took care of their alignment with Rajput Princes. That buttressed their theocratic overlordship of Hindu society right from Rajputana to Indo-Gangetic valley to post-Shivaji Maharashtra to Bijapur and Golconda. The only was Punjab which came under the egalitarian influence of Sikh movement of Guru Nanak and his successors

#### **The Demise of Guru Gobind Singh**

Guru Gobind Singh breathed his last on the night intervening October 7-8. Realizing his end near Guru Gobind Singh passed to Aad Granth and granted it the status of, "Guru Granth". He told the Sikhs to seek its guidance after him. The political position of the Sikhs at that time was that of guerillas.

#### **The Sikh destroy the Muslim rule and domination of both Hindus and Muslims Establishment of the Sovereign Sikh State under Sarkare Khalsa Anglo-Sikh wars and annexation of the Sikh Empire**

#### **The Sikhs under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur**

The Sikhs under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur (1708-1715), declared the independence of the 'Sikh Nation' in 1709 A.D. and occupied vast areas of the Punjab between Delhi and Lahore, destroyed Sirhind, killed its governor Wazid Khan, who was responsible for slaughtering Guru Gobind Singh's younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh and appointed Sardar Baj Singh as its governor. The Sikhs issued orders under their royal seal, minted coins, started the Sikh calendar and introduced land reforms granting propriety rights to the tenants of land in the areas under their occupation. Banda Singh was captured alive along with about eight hundred Sikhs on December 17, 1715 in village Gurdas Nangal about four miles away from the town of Gurdaspur (Punjab). They were taken to Lahore and then to Delhi. The Sikh swere offered the choice between acceptance of Islam or death all of them chose latter, not even a single one agreed to apostate. When all attempts to win Banda failed. He was executed on June 9, 1716 A.D.

#### **Persecution of the Sikhs after the death of Banda Singh Bahadur**

After the death of Banda Singh, the Muslim government of Hindustan vowed to elimiate the Sikh Nation from the face of the earth. The Sikhs left their homes and hearths and took refuge in jubgles and mountains of the Punjab and the desrt area of the Punjab and sdjoining Rajputana. The Moghul rlers and their Hindu collaborators perpetrated atrocities on the Sikhs

and their families. Thousands of Sikh men, women and children were arrested, imprisoned, tortured and massacred. For many years being a Sikh was a crime punishable with death, but the Sikhs refused to yield and continued their struggle for survival and independence. The more violent the methods were adopted to suppress the Sikhs, more firm in their faith they became. Two most mighty Empires of Asia at that time, the Moghul Empire of Hindustan in Delhi and the Pathan Empire of Afghanistan from Kabul under Ahmad Shah Abdali, simultaneously vowed to destroy the Sikhs root and branch as both of them considered the Sikhs their arch religious and political enemies. They adopted every possible measure to subjugate and exterminate the Sikhs from the face of the earth but the Sikhs refused to submit and continued their struggle for survival and independence. Against all odds they managed to maintain the organization, which the Guru had built. They were determined to create a land for themselves where they would be free to practice their religion and not be persecuted for their beliefs.

**The Sikhs destroy the Muslim rule and domination of both Hindus and Muslims  
Establishment of the Sovereign Sikh State under Sarkare Khalsa**

After a gruesome, hard and determined struggle of about fifty years, the Sikhs overcame all oppression, destroyed the Muslim rule and domination in their homeland by 1765 and earned a place under the sun and emerged as sovereigns of Punjab. The Sikh leaders (Sardars) established small confederacies in the form of Misals throughout the length and breadth of the Punjab between Afghanistan in the west and Jamna (Yamuna) river (upto Delhi) in the east, Karakoram mountain range in the north and plains of Sindh in the south. In 1799 A.D. all the Sikh Misls on the western side of the river Satluj consolidated themselves under the leadership of Ranjit Singh and formally established Sikh Kingdom based on Sikh traditions, values and principles under the supremacy of Akal Takhat Amritsar with Lahore as their Capital. The government was named "Sarkare Khalsa". The Sikhs for the first time in the history of this region reversed the tide of attacks from Central Asia and Middle East since the Aryans had discovered the route through these hills to loot or rule the Punjab and Hindustan. They subjugated the turbulent Afghans (Pathans) and entered into many international agreements with adjoining countries. The revolution started by Guru Nanak reached its zenith.

**Infiltration of the anti-Sikh forces into the Sikh administration**

Sikh empire was established totally on secular basis and people were recruited on merit basis without any discrimination of colour caste, class or country. It had Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Christian and Europeans and others as ministers, generals and educationists etc. As a result of this liberal policy the Hindu followers of Chankya policy entered into its administration in the garb of the Sikhs and worked their way up in the administration and one Brahman Teju under the adopted Sikhname Tej Singh became Prime Minister and the other Lalu under the adopted Sikhname-Lal Singh became the Commander-in chief of the Sikh empire. The Khatri Gulab Singh Dogra became the governor of Jammu and Kashmir while his son Hira Singh Dogra became all powerful in the Lahore Darbar. These neoconverts followed the Chanakiya policy very discretely after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and brought down the collapse of the Sikh Empire by entering into agreement with the British.

**Anglo-Sikh wars, fall of Sikh Empire and its annexation by the British**

The Sikhs lost the war not on account of lack of bravery on the part of the Sikhs but due to the treachery of the civil and military administration dominated by the neo-convert Hindus.

**Hindu and Muslim rulers under the Europeans**

When the Hindu and Muslim rulers came under the Europeans, the Brahmans

collaborated with them and emerged as greatest beneficiaries. Like Hindu and Muslim rulers, the East India Company derived large annual profits from the management of temples. The English emerged as patrons of Brahmanical priestcraft and idolatry, and of temple-girls to satiate their carnal requirements in the absence of English women from home. **First Governor General, Warren Hastings, establishing Caste Courts, to excommunicate from Hindu caste had devastating effect on recalcitrants who resisted writing of their caste along with their names.** Sir William Jones, appointed judge of Supreme Court in 1784, who emerged as the foremost Orientalist and founder of Asiatic Society, in collaboration with Brahmans, brought out archaic Manu Smriti and other spurious and unjust Shastras, and enforced them as authoritative texts of Hindu law, on all non-Muslims and non-Christians. With the British divesting themselves of religious endowments in 1863, Brahman triumph was complete in taking over the management of Hindu temples, and enforcing a graded inequitable caste and entry system into the temples. That brought to a creaking halt efforts of social reformers to modernize Hinduism. In short, Brahmanism throughout history has used all contrivances including cooperation with foreigners to uphold Brahmanical supremacy and imperialism over the general body of 'Hindus'.

*Cf. Swami Dharma Theerta, The Menace of Hindu Imperialism (Lahore, 1946), chapters xii to xvi and ad passim*".

### **Hinduism / Brahmanism and the Sikhs**

Sardar Sangat Singh in his book, 'The Sikhs in history' writes, "with the Indian independence in 1947, Hindu revivalism underpinned by the state power and machinery resumed its onward march after a hiatus of one thousand years. The first task undertaken immediately after independence by the new government, avowing secularism and composite nationalism, was the decision to reconstruct, at the state expenses, the Somnath Temple which, in the words of K. M. Munshi, had served as a galling reminder of the degradation of the Hindus. And, the Cabinet meeting was presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru. Only a year earlier, in his *Discovery of India* (1946), he had given expression to his atavistic perception of Hindu revivalism and in the words of Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah (*Atish-i-Chinar*), he "regarded himself as an instrument to establish, once again, that old dispensation." It was another matter that he was later acclaimed the apostle of Indian secularism. That was an upshot of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's working on his megalomania, especially after Sardar Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel's death in December 1950. Presently, the mosque constructed at the site in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was demolished. It was contended that protagonists of Allah had migrated to Pakistan, and those who stand up for the mosque would be made to do so. Sikhism which came up during this thousand year interregnum, as a distinct religion, has since been the butt of Hinduism.

The story as to how the Sikhs, who were the third party at the time of Indian independence, have been reduced to a non-existent role, and how using the Hindu card the leadership of the Indian National Congress (which has been in power during the last 43 out of 47 years) has gradually pushed the Sikhs out of the national mainstream which enabled Indira Gandhi to launch her Sikh war, makes a grim reading.

To begin with, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the acclaimed father of the nation, did not accept Sikhism as a religion distinct from Hinduism; and the Sikhs trustingly – a trust that immediately after independence was betrayed – placed all their eggs in the Congress basket without suspecting the Hindus. They are now paying the price for that trust. As of now, thinking Sikhs all over the world are apprehensive of the very existence of Sikhism in India as a vibrant faith. With their back to the wall, Sikhs face Hobson's choice.

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

In retrospect, Hinduism's extermination of Buddhism did not lead to wholesome results. The cost-benefit ratio was in an adverse scale. But the Hindus have learnt one thing from history that they cannot learn anything. This is not the first time that the Sikhs face extinction in India. Attempts have been made earlier as well.

How will the Sikhs fare now? Will history repeat itself? Or will it be rewritten, this way or that? Only time will tell – the gruesome time that lies ahead”.

### References and notes

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### God in Sikhism

According to Sikhism God (*Akal Purkh / Karta Purkh*), the ‘Ultimate Spiritual Reality’ is beyond human comprehension i.e, cannot be conceived or explained in empirical terms. “ਜਸ ਓਹੁ ਹੈ ਤਸ ਲਖੈ ਨ ਕੋਈ” – *Jas oh hai tas lakhay na ko-ay* (GGS, p,340), but can be apprehended and experienced, though he cannot be fully understood, for the ineffable can never be wholly realized or rendered. While time and space, force and change are the aspects of the becoming universe, God is Eternal, Self-existent. He is present throughout the universe. He is both Transcendent and immanent. He exists in *nirgun avastha* (impersonal—Transcendental--abstract state) and manifests himself in *sargun avastha* (personal-functional and creative - immanent state), both being the same, ਨਿਰਗੁਨੁ ਆਪਿ ਸਰਗੁਨੁ ਭੀ ਓਹੀ—“*Nirgun aap sargun bhee ohee*” (GGS, Gauri Sukhmani, M5, p. 287). Guru Nanak has illustrated the attributes of God in his “first discourse”—Popularly called, “*Mool Mantra*” i.e; ‘Basic postulate’ in Sikhism. The Holy Sikh Scripture Guru Granth Sahib begins thus:

ੴ ਸੋਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

ੴ *-Ikk Oankar*-----There is only one God, He is infinit

ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ-*Satnam*-----He is Eternal Reality / Exists / His existence can not be denied.

ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ-*Karta Purkh*---He does everything in this universe-(He is the creator, sustainer and  
destroyer)

ਨਿਰਭਉ-*Nirbhao*-----He is fearless

ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ-*Nirwair*----- He is inimical to none

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ-*Akaal moorat*--He is immortal

ਅਜੂਨੀ-*Ajooni*-----He neither takes birth nor dies

ਸੈਭੰਗ-*Sai-bhang*-----He is self-existent (Created by itself)

ਗੁਰ -*Gur* -----He is \*Enlightener

ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ-*Parsaad* – ----- -He is Gracious.

\*ਅਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਧੇਰਾ ਕਟਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨ ਘਟ ਬਲਿਆਂ॥--*Aghiaan andhera katiaa, gur gian ghat baliaa*

## God in Hinduism

Hinduism is a polytheistic religion and there is total confusion about God in this religion. It believes in Trinity of God constituted by Brahma (The main God--God of creation), Vishnu (God of preservation) and Shiva also known as Mahesh (God of annihilation), jointly represented by its vibratory aspect called Aum / Oam or Om, ॐ. Oam / Om is a word, designating a cosmic sound or vibration that is all pervading. It is the most common name of God in Hinduism.

Consorts of these Gods are known as Goddesses:

**Saraswati**—The wife of Brahma (Goddess of creativity symbolizes divine knowledge).

**Gayatri or Savitri**---Second wife of Brahma—The five faced goddess is said to have domain over the five senses or prans and protects these five forces of those who chant the Gayatri Mantra. In her role as protector, Gayatri is referred to as Savitri.

### Gayatri Mantra:

Gayatri is an invocation of special spiritual efficacy for the Hindus. According to Manusimriti (11. 76), “Brahma milked out the letters A, U, and M from the three Vedas which joined together forming the monosyllable AUM in Gaytry. The three words *Bhur* (earth), *Bhuva* (Sky), and *Svah* (the heaven) taken from the three Vedas each contributed one letter to it. Atherav Veda did not contribute anything to Gaytry although it preached magic. The full mantra is as follows:

*“Aum Bhoor Bhuwah Swaha. Om tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargo devasaya dheemahi. Dhio yo naha prachodayaat”.*

The mantra is also prayer to the “giver of life and light”-Sun (Savitur). Oh God! Thou art the Giver of life, remover of pain and sorrow, the bestower of happiness, oh Creator of the universe, may we receive thy supreme sin destroying light, may thou guide our intellect to lead us in the right direction.

The ideal time for chanting Gayatri Mantra are three times a day: At dawn, mid day and at dusk. These times are known as Sandhyas.

### Other Mantras of Hinduism include:

Lord Ganesha Mantra---For removing obstacles.

Lord Shiva Mantra---For good health and long life.

**Lakshmi**---The wife of Vishnu (Goddess of prosperity / good luck and wealth)

**Parvati**--The wife of Shiva (Goddess of power) who blesses everyone with a happy married life. Her other names are Uma, Sati, who often incarnated as Kali (Goddess of death) and Durga (Goddess of war), Ambika, Bhairavi, Bhargavi, Bhavani, Gauri, Vidya Devi, Rudrani, being wife of Rudra. Her father's name is Himachala. **Kali**: Mother Goddess worshipped very much in the state of Bengal. Most popular devotee of Kali is Sri Rama Krishna Parmhansa. The notorious tribes of India, the Thugs, also worshipped Kali, and due to their extreme fanaticism and killing of people as sacrifices to Goddess Kali, they were exterminated by the British rulers of India.

#### **Other Gods of Hinduism:**

Powers of nature like:

Vayu (Air)

Varuna (Water)

Agni (Fire)

Aditya (Sun)

Soma (Moon)

Also there are semi gods like:

Ananta—Serpant God)

Hanumana (Monkey God)

Indra-----God of heaven

Yama-----God of death

#### **Lord Shiva has two sons, both are gods:**

1. Subramanian---God of astrology
2. **Ganesha** (Also known as Ganpati), the older son of Lord Shiva is the god of knowledge (Vinayak). who has face of elephant and is also known as remover of obstacles (Vighneshwer). He is worshiped at the beginning of any work that the Hindus undertake to do. It is believed that success is ensured after propitiating him. Scriptures dedicated to Ganesha are the Ganesha Puran and Ganpati Athervashirsa.

Shiva actually has two more sons, one is Hanuman and the other is Sri Ayyappan.

**Hanuman** is also known as son of Vayu. Since Parvati, the consort of Shiva transferred her pregnancy to the womb of the Vayu, who delivered Hanuman. He was a great devotee of Sri Ram Chander and was prominent in fighting war against king Ravan of Sri Lanka. According to Shiv Puran (chapter 33) Shiv ji got enamoured of Mohini (also known as Anjni or Anjli) and could not restrain himself. From their union Hanuman was born.

According to Balmik Anjli was enjoying herself on the top of a mountain when Vayu Devta was tempted to rape her. As a result Hanuman was born and came to be known as Pawan Puttar (son of wind)

### **Incarnations (Avtaars) of God in Hinduism and Sikh view regarding Avtaar Pooja (Worship of incarnations)**

In the theology of Sikhism, 'Avtaar' literally means birth: ਮਾਨੁਖਾ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਦੁਲਭ... *Maanukha avatar dulabh* i.e; "Human birth is difficult to obtain" (GGS, p.486), but in Hinduism it means any person or animal serving as the embodiment of God or spirit. According to Hindu thought God descends to earth in the form of an incarnation to restore *Dharma* (righteousness) whenever there was rule of *Adharma* (un-righteousness) and therefore these incarnations are worshiped as God. When Guru Nanak appeared on the soil in the Indian subcontinent, according to ancient Hindu thought there were many Gods. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva formed the trinity as creator, preserver and destroyer. It was held in Hinduism that God took birth not only in human form, but also himself comes into the world in various anthropomorphic forms, such as, The *Hansa* (Swan), *Machh* or *Matsya* (Fish), *Kachh* or *Kurma* (Tortoise), *Varaha* (Boar), *Nar-Simha* (Partly human, partly tiger) and finally in human forms. Twenty-four incarnations of God Vishnu were accepted. Rama the son of king Dashratha and Krishna son of Vasudeva were among them. Countless male and female divinities were also regarded as Gods. The total came to 33 crores.

Contrary to this philosophy according to Sikhism, there is one and only one God and he does not descend on earth and does not assume human form as the *Avtaar Vaad* (Incarnation) theory in Hinduism portrays. Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism says, "ਸਰਬੰ ਸਾਚਾ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ। [-*Sarbang saachaa ek hai dooja naheen ko-ay*]" i.e, "In this whole world there is one God second to none" (GGS, p.660). Sikhism neither believes in the Hindu trinity of God-Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva nor 24 incarnations nor 33 crore divinities. As per Sikh thought there is One God and He is Supreme Eternal Reality. There is no division of functions and no delegation of authority. According to Sikhism, "God does not descend on earth. He neither takes birth nor dies. He is uncreated. He does not assume human or anthropomorphic form as the Avtaarvaad (incarnation) theory of Hinduism portrays". This characteristic has been mentioned in Gurbani repeatedly. Guru Granth Sahib rejects the worship of Gods and their incarnations, because they are all created beings and also prone to death. The Brahmans confused the created beings with the creator. Gurbani lays emphasis on the worship of the Transcendent Almighty (Nirguna), who is Immortal and Infinite. It describes God as '*Ajooni*' (beyond birth and death). Its conception of God is uncompromisingly monotheistic, with no room for the idea of incarnation. Therefore worship should be of One Formless God. It says:

- ਏਕਮ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ॥ ਅਮਰੁ ਅਜੋਨੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਲਾ॥ ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖਿਆ ਖੋਜਤ ਖੋਜਤ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ॥—"*Ekam, ekankaar nirala, amar ajoni, jaat na jala, Agam agochar, roop na rekhia,*

*Khojat khojat ghat ghat dekhia*—The Unique Lord is Peerless, Immortal, Unborn, and without caste and involvement. He is Inaccessible, unknowable and has no form or outline. By searching and searching I have seen Him in all hearts.” (GGS, M1, p.838).

- ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ਕਲਿ ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਦੀਪਾਈ॥—“*Akal moorat ajooni sanbhao kal andhkar deepai*”, i.e; “The one (whose allegoric body) is without any effect of time and space, is free from life and death cycle, is created by itself and gives light to disperse darkness (of ignorance)” (Ibid, M5 p.916).
- ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਨਹੀ ਧੰਧਾ ਧੈਰਿ॥—“*Janam maran nahin dhanda dher*”, ie; “The Almighty is free from birth and death cycle” (Ibid, p936).
- ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ॥—“*Janam maran tay rehat Narain*” i.e; “The Almighty is free from birth and death” (Ibid, M5, p.1136)
- ਤੂ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਜੋਨਿ ਨ ਆਵਹੀ॥—“*Toon parbrahm parmesar joon na avhi*” i.e; “You are the greatest and do not come into life and death cycle” (Ibid, M5, p.1095).
- ਅਮੋਘ ਦਰਸਨ ਆਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਜਿਸੁ ਕਦੇ ਨਾਹੀ ਖਉ॥—“*Amog darshan ajooni sanbhao, Akal moorat jis kaday na khao*”, i.e; “The inexhaustible Bounteous is without life-death cycle and is created by itself. There is no effect of time and space (on its allegoric body) and is never destroyed” (Ibid, M5, p.1082).

According to Gurbani the so called *Avtars* (of Hindus) were human beings and not God in human form, therefore it rejects their worship, because they are all created beings and also prone to death:

- “ਜੁਗਹ ਜੁਗਹ ਕੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੀਏ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਕਰਿ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ॥ ਤਿਨ ਭੀ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਕਰ ਆਖ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ॥—*Jugah jugah ke raaje kee-ay gaavah kar avtaaree.tin bhee ant na paa-i-a ta ka kiaa kar aakh weechaaree*-i.e-The kings created by Thee in different ages are sung as Thine Avtaars (incarnations). Even they have not found Thy limits. (Ibid, p.423).
- ਅਵਤਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਅੰਤੁ॥ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬੋਅੰਤੁ—*Avtaar na jaanah ant. Parmeshar paarbraham beant* i.e. The incarnations know not His extent. The Lord is supreme, transcendent and limitless (GGS,p.894)
- ਹੁਕਮਿ ਉਪਾਏ ਦਸ ਅਉਤਾਰਾ ਦੇਵ ਦਾਨਵ ਅਗਣਤ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥ ਮਾਨਹਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਸੁ ਦਰਗਹਿ ਪੈਝੈ॥ ਸਾਚ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਸਮਾਇਦਾ॥ *Hukame upaae das aotaaraa. Dev daanav aagant apaaraa . Maanai hukam su dargah paijhai saach molaee samaaidda* i.e. By His order God created ten incarnations, innumerable gods and numberless devils. Whoever obeys Lord’s command is robed in honour at the Divine Portal. By uniting him with the True Name, the Lord merges him in Himself (GGS, p.1037)
- ਸਹੰਸਰ ਦਾਨ ਦੇ ਇੰਦੁ ਰੋਆਇਆ॥ ਪਰਸਰਾਮੁ ਰੋਵੈ ਘਰਿ ਆਇਆ॥ ਅਜੈ ਸੁ ਰੋਵੈ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਖਾਇ॥ ਐਸੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਰਾਮੁ ਨਿਕਾਲਾ ਭਇਆ॥ ਸੀਤਾ ਲਖਮਣ ਵਿਛੁੜਿ ਗਇਆ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਦਹਿਸਿਰੁ ਲੰਕ ਗਵਾਇ॥ ਜਿਨ ਸੀਤਾ ਆਦੀ ਡਉਰੁ ਵਾਇ॥ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਪਾਂਡਵ ਭਏ ਮਜੂਰ॥ ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਰਹਤ ਹਦੂਰਿ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਜਨਮੇਜਾ ਖੋਇ ਗਇਆ॥ ਏਕੀ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਪਾਪੀ ਭਇਆ॥ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਸੇਖ ਮਸਾਇਕ ਪੀਰ॥ ਅੰਤ ਕਾਲਿ ਮਤੁ ਲਾਗੈ ਭੀੜ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੰਨ ਪੜਾਇ॥ ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਮਾਗਹਿ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਜਾਇ॥ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਕਿਰਪਨ ਸੰਚਹਿ ਧਨੁ ਜਾਇ॥ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਰੋਵੈ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਗਵਾਇ॥ ਬਾਲੀ ਰੋਵੈ ਨਾਹਿ ਭਤਾਰੁ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੁਖੀਆ ਸਭ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ॥—*Sahansar daan de indar roaia. Paras ram rovai ghar a-i-aa. Ajai su rovai bheekhia kha-ay. Aisee dargah millai saja-ay. Rovaiy ram nikalaa bha-i-a. Seeta Lakhman wichhur ga-i-a. Rovaiy dahsir lank gava-ay. Jin seta adee daoroo wa-ay. Rovah pandav bha-ay majoor. Jin ki suamee rahat hadoor. Rovaiy janmeja kho-ay ga-i-a. Ekee kaaran papee bha-i-a. Rovah raje kann parae. Ghar ghar magah bheekhia ja-ay. Rovah kirpan sanchah dhan ja-ay. Pandit rovah gian gava-ay. Balee rovai naahe bhataar. Nanak dukheea sabh sansaar.*—With reward of punishment of the thousand marks of infamy, Indar had to weep. Paras Ram returned home crying. Ajai wailed, when he was made to eat the dung he gave in charity. Such is the

punishment, meted out at the God's Portal. Rama wept when he was exiled and Sita and Lachhman were separated from him. The ten headed Rawan, who took away Sita by beating a hand drum, wept when he lost Ceylon. The Pandvas, whose Master lived with them, became servants and wailed. Janmeja wailed as he was gone astray. A single lapse turned him sinner. The Seikhs, seers and spiritual guides weep, lest they suffer agony at the last moment. The kings weep, having their ears torn and they go begging from house to house. The miser weeps when his hoarded wealth parts company with him. The Pandits wail when their learning fails. The young woman weeps for she has no husband. Nanak says, all the world is involved in suffering. He who believes in the Name, becomes victorious. No other ritual or deed is of any account (GGS, p.953). Guru Nanak Dev proclaimed that if Ram had been God, he would not have lost his wife Sita and he would have healed his brother Lachhman, instead calling on Hanuman to do so. It was the Almighty who did every thing not Ram:

### **Sri Ram Chander in Hinduism:**

He is considered the 7<sup>th</sup> Avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu, and his name is often invoked as a greeting. His consort is Seeta. According to Ramayana, Ram Chander was born to human parents in *Treta Yuga* at Ayodhya. His father Dasratha was the king of Ayodhya. He had four sons namely Sri Ram Chander, Sri Lakshman, Sri Bhart and Sri Shatrughan born from different wives. As the princes grew up Dasrath expressed his intention of passing of kingship to Sri Ram Chander but his youngest wife Kaikei raised objection. She demanded Ram Chander to be exiled into forest for 14 years and her son Bharat to be anointed as the next king. The king had earlier given a word to the queen therefore had no alternative but to accept her demand. Sri Ram Chander along with his wife and brother Lakshman, left for the exile. In the forest Ravan's (King of ceylone—Sri Lanka) sister Saroop Nakha approached Lakshman and proposed him to marry her. At this Lakshman got infuriated, drew his sword and chopped of her ears and nose. When the news reached Sri Lanka it angered Ravna beyond control. He crossed over to India and abducted Seeta, the wife of Sri Ram Chander and took her forcibly to Sri Lanka. A war broke out between Sri Ram Chander and the king of Lanka. Sri Ram Chander and Lakshman met Hanuman between India and Lanka. A bridge was built in five days. In the war Ravana was defeated. Since the time of exile was over, Sri Ram Chander returned to Ayodhya. Bharat vacated the throne and Sri Ram was installed as the king. According to Hinduism God has a form. He incarnates as an avatar when things do not go right.

### **Sikh view:**

Sikhism and the Sikhs attach no importance to avatars who take birth and die like other human beings. Without attuning to omnipresent and unborn God nothing spiritual can be achieved. Sri Ram Chander was born when there was nothing wrong and people were happy. Sri Ram Chander fought his own battle for rescuing his wife. According to Gurmat God is *Ajooni* (beyond birth and death). The holy Sikh Scripture Guru Granth Sahib emphatically discards the view of God taking birth in any form. Gurbani says:

- ਰਾਮ ਝੁਰੈ ਦਲ ਮੇਲਵੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਲੁ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ॥ ਬੰਤਰ ਕੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਜਝੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ॥ ਸੀਤਾ ਲੈ ਗਇਆ ਦਹਸਿਰੋ ਲਛਮਣੁ ਮੂਠਿ ਸਰਾਪਿ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰਣਹਾਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਥਾਪ ਉਥਾਪ॥ *Ram jhurai dal melvai antar*

*bal adhikaar. Bantar kee saina seveevai man tan jujh apaar. Seeta lai gaiiaa dah-siro Lachhman moo-o saraap. Nanak karta karnhaar kar wekhai thaap uthaap.*--Rama grieves in his mind, he gathers the army, he has within him the power and authority. The ten-headed Ravana has taken away Sita and because of a curse, Lakshmana was killed. Ram Chand grieves in his mind for Sita and Lakshmana. The misguided demon (Ravana) does not comprehend it. It was Lord God, who did everything, who is carefree and whose writ cannot be effaced, saith Nanak (Ibid, M1, p.1412).

- “ਪਾਂਡੇ ਤੁਮਰਾ ਰਾਮਚੰਦੁ ਸੋ ਭੀ ਆਵਤੁ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਥਾ।।ਰਾਵਨ ਸੇਤੀ ਸਰਬਰ ਹੋਈ ਘਰ ਕੀ ਜੋਇ ਗਵਾਈ ਥੀ।।-*Paanday tumra ramchand so bhee aavat dekhia tha . Ravan setee sarbar hoee ghar kee jo-ay gavaaee thee*--O Puandit! I saw your Ram Chand coming. He had a quarrel with Ravana and lost his wife” (Ibid, Gaund Nam Dev, p.875).
- ਗਾਵਨਿ ਗੋਪੀਆ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਕਾਨ।। ਗਾਵਨ ਸੀਤਾ ਰਾਜੇ ਰਾਮ।। ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ।। ਜਾ ਕਾ ਕੀਆ ਸਗਲ ਜਹਾਨੁ।। ਸੇਵਕ ਸੇਵਹਿ ਕਰਮਿ ਚੜਾਉ।।ਭਿੰਨੀ ਰੇਨ ਜਿਨਾ ਮਨਿ ਚਾਉ।।-People sing the Gopis and Krishna, Sita and Rama, but not the fearless, true transcendent Lord, who is the creator of the whole world, whom only the servants through His grace adore (Ibid, M1, p.465).
- ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਹੋਰਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਰਾਮ ਰਵਾਲ।। ਕੇਤੀਆ ਕੰਨ ਕਹਾਣੀਆ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਦ ਬੀਚਾਰ।।-*Nanak nirbhao nirankar hor ketay Ram raval. Ketia Kaan kahanian ketay Bed bichar* i.e; Nanak God is Fearless and Formless, there are many Ramas lying in dust. There are many stories about Krishna. There may be many thought-provoking Vedas (GGS, p.464).

**Gurbani further says:**

- ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੇ ਸਚਾ ਸੇਏ।।--Nanak God alone is one who is not born of a woman (GGS, p.473)
- ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਅਇਨਿ ਸਚੁ।। ਜੇ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮੇ ਸੁ ਕਚੁ ਨਿਕਚੁ।। Nanak says, truly meditate upon Him who is ever existent, the one who takes birth and dies is false (GGS, p. 463).
- ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ।। “The Almighty is free from birth and death” (GGS, p. 1136).
- ਸੇ ਮੁਖ ਜਲਓ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੇਨੀ।।-- “Burnt be the tongue which says God is born” (GGS, p.1136).

Guru Gobind Singh says:

- ਜੋ ਕਹੋ ਰਾਮ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਅਜੈ ਅਤਿ ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਕੌਸਲ ਕੁਖ ਜਯੋ ਜੂ।। If you consider Ram, the Lord as unborn, then how did he take birth from the womb of Kaushlya?

**Sri Krishna:** Although Sri Krishna is called the 8<sup>th</sup> Avtar (incarnation) of Vishnu and is worshipped throughout India in many ways, he was, unlike the other ethereal gods, born to human parents. His father was Vasudev and mother Devki. He was born in prison in Dwapar Yuga at Mathura. At his birth his life was in danger from king Kans and therefore Krishna was exchanged by Vasudeva Nanda’s newly born daughter Yogindra. Nanda at once removed him to Gokal where he was brought up by his wife Yeshodha. Fearing continued danger to Krishna’s life, Nanda left the place and moved too Vrindaban. Krishna was now a handsome young boy.

He formed friendship with many girls with whom he used to dance every day. According to Brahmvaivarta Puran, his love for Radha was such that her name came to be welded with his name for ever although he was married to Rukmani. It is said that later Krishna's girl friends increased to sixteen thousand one hundred and eight. Krishna's popular consort's popular name is Radha. Mahabharat describes the great-war between the Pandus and the Kurus. It deals with a period, about 1000 B.C. E. It describes the great-war between the Pandus and the Kurus. The battle raged with great fury for eighteen days on the plains of Kurukshetra, near Thanesar and the result was total defeat of the Kurus. Lord Krishna sided with the Pandus. Sri Krishna with his soldiers who survived war abandoned Mathura and went towards the west, reached Dwarka and settled there. As his soldiers were all Gowalas / Gujars, therefore area under their control came to be called Gujrat. Skand Puran tells us that Krishna was killed by a Bheel hunter (named Jara) with an arrow. His dead body lay in the forest until only bones remained. In 1076 Raja Anant Verma erected a temple in memory of Krishna at Jagan Nath Puri (Orissa—India). Bhagvad-Gita, which forms a part of Mahabharat, is a battlefield conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, the hero of this battle. Mahabharat is an important source on the development of Hinduism between 400 BCE and 200 CE.

**Sikh view:** Bhagvad-Gita, which forms a part of Mahabharat, is a battlefield conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, the hero of this battle. Sri Ram Chander and Sri Krishana were rulers promoted as spiritual giants. Sri Krishna was born when there was nothing wrong except the fratricide war between the members of a family which was a private affair and which took place after his birth. Even if we accept that the society was corrupt in their times, there is absolutely nothing these avatars did to improve the social conditions of their times. Sri Ram Chander fought his own war and Sri Krishna simply egged on a pacifist Pandu to engage in killing his own kith and kin.

Hindu gods are born but according to Sikhism God. does not take birth Gurbani says, ਸੇ ਮੁਖ ਜਲਓ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੇਨੀ॥-- "Burnt be the tongue which says God is born" (GGS, p.1136). Sikhism and the Sikhs attach no importance to avatars who take birth like other human beings. Without attuning to omnipresent and unborn God nothing spiritual can be achieved.

**Regarding Shri Krishna Gurbani says:**

- ਤੁਮ ਜੁ ਕਹਤ ਹਉ ਨੰਦ ਕੇ ਨੰਦਨੁ ਨੰਦ ਸੁ ਨੰਦਨੁ ਕਾ ਕੇ ਰੇ॥ ਧਰਨਿ ਅਕਾਸੁ ਦਸੇ ਦਿਸ ਨਾਹੀ ਤਬ ਇਹ ਨੰਦ ਕਹਾ ਥੇ ਰੇ॥ ਸੰਕਟਿ ਨਹੀ ਪਰੈ ਜੋਨਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਵੈ ਨਾਮ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਰੇ॥—*Tum jo kahat hau nand ko nandan nand so nandan ka ko ray. Dharn akas daso dis nahin tab ih nand kaha tho ray. Pause. Sankat nahi parai jon nai avai naam Niranjan ja ko ray* i.e; You call God as Nand's son, how is he God when there was neither earth nor sky in all directions where was this Nand? God is beyond troubles nor is he born. He is called immanent (GGS, p. 338).

Guru Gobind Singh says:

- ਕਾਲ ਹੂ ਕਾਨ ਕਰੈ ਜਿਹਿ ਕੇ ਕਿਹਿ ਕਾਰਣ ਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਦੀਨ ਭਯੋ ਜੂ॥He, who is said to be the destroyer of death, then why did he become subjugated himself before death?
- ਸੰਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਬਿਬੈਰ ਕਹਾਇ ਸੁ ਕਯੋ ਪਥ ਕੋ ਰਥ ਹਾਂਕ ਧਯੋ ਜੂ॥If you call Him (Krishna) all goodness and without enmity, why did then He become the charitor of Arjuna?
- ਤਾਹੀ ਕੇ ਮਾਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕਰ ਕੈ ਜਿਹ ਕੇ ਕੋਊ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਲੇਨ ਲਯੋ ਜੂ॥ O mind! You only consider him the Lord

God, whose Mystery could not be known to anyone (33 Swayyas, 13)

- ਕਿਯੋ ਕਹੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਿਧ ਹੈ, ਕਿਹ ਕਾਜ ਤੇ ਬਧਿਕ ਬਾਣ ਲਗਾਯੋ॥ How do you identify Krishna, with All –merciful? Why did the hunter shot him with an arrow?
- ਅਉਰ ਕੁਲੀਨ ਉਧਾਰਤ ਜੋ, ਕਿਹਤੇ ਅਪਨੋ ਕੁਲ ਨਾਸ ਕਰਾਯੋ॥ Why did he, who saves the families of others, had his own clan destroyed?
- ਆਦਿ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਕਹਾਇ ਕਹੋ, ਕਿਮ ਦੇਵਕਿ ਕੇ ਜਨਰੰਤਰ ਆਯੋ॥ If he (Krishna) is said to be primeval and unborn, then how did he come into the womb of Devki?
- ਤਾਤ ਨ ਮਾਤ ਕਹੈ ਜਿਹ ਕੋ, ਤਿਹ ਕਿਉਂ ਬਸੁਦੇਵਹਿ ਬਾਪ ਕਹਾਯੋ॥ He, who is considered without any father or mother, why then Vasudev be termed his father? (33 Sawayye—14,)
- ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਮਹੇਸਹਿ ਭਾਖਤ, ਕਾਹੇ ਦਿਜੇਸ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਬਖਾਨਯੋ॥ ਹੈ ਨ ਰਘਵੈਸ ਜਦਵੈਸ ਰਮਾਪਤਿ, ਤੈ ਜਿਨਕੋ ਬਿਸਿਨਾਥ ਪਛਾਨਿਯੋ॥ ਏਕ ਕੋ ਛਾਡਿ ਅਨੇਕ ਭਜੈ, ਸੁਕਦੇਵ, ਪਰਾਸਰ, ਬਿਯਾਸ ਤੂਠਾਨਿਯੋ ॥ ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਸਜੇ ਸਭ ਹੀ, ਹਮ ਏਕਹਿ ਕੋ ਬਿਧ ਨੇਕ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨਿਯੋ॥ i.e., “Why call Shiva God and why speak Brahma as God? God is not Ram Chander or Krishna or Vishnu, whom ye suppose to be the Lords of the world; Sukhdev, Prasar and Vyas erred in abandoning the one God and worshipping many gods. All have set up false religions; I, in every way believe that there is but one God who manifests himself in many ways” (Thirty three sawayyas-xv)
- ਕੋਊ ਦਿਜੇਸ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ, ਕੋਊ ਮਹੇਸ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਬਤੈ ਹੈ॥ ਕੋਊ ਕਹੈ ਬਿਸਨੋ ਬਿਸਨਾਇਕ, ਜਾਹਿ ਭਜੈ ਅਘ ਓਘ ਕਟੈ ਹੈ॥ ਬਾਰ ਹਜਾਰ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਅਰੇ ਜੜ, ਅੰਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਤਜ ਜੈ ਹੈ॥ ਤਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਧਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨ ਹੀਏ, ਜੋਊ ਥਾ, ਅਬ ਹੈ ਅਰੁ ਆਗੇ ਊਹੈ ਹੈ॥ i.e., “Some worship Brahma as God others point to Shiva as God; Some say Vishnu is the Lord of the world and that by worshipping Him all sins are erased; Think on this a thousand times, O fool, at the last hour, all thy gods will forsake thee; Meditate in thy heart who was, is and shall ever be”. (Thirty three swayyas -xvi)
- ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਬਿਸਨ ਸਚੀਪਤਿ ਅੰਤ ਫਸੇ ਜਮ ਫਾਸ ਪਰੈ ਹੈ॥-- “*Brahm, Mahesar, Bisan Sachipat ant fasay jam faas paren gay*” i.e; “Brahma, Shiva and the husband of Sachi i.e; Indra will ultimately be entrapped in the noose of death” (Akal Ustat).

Thus all divinities are prone to death, therefore the Lord God is to be adorned, who is Ever-Existent, ਬਿਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਨ ਕਿਰਤਮ ਮਾਨੋ “*Bin Kartar na kirtam mano*” i.e; ‘Except the Creator do not worship any created beings’ (Patshahi 10, Shabad Hazare).

Gurbani lays emphasis on the worship of the Transcendent Almighty (*Nirguna*), who is immortal and infinite:

- ਬਿਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਤਮ ਮਾਨੋ॥ ਆਦਿ ਆਜੂਨੀ ਅਬਨਾਸੀ ਤਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸਰ ਜਾਨੋ॥-- “*Bin Kartar na kirtam mano, adi ajoni abnasi teh Parmesar jano*—O man, except the creator do not worship anything other created being. Regard God, who was from the beginning Unborn, Invincible and Indestructible as the Supreme Being” (Mukh waak Patshahi 10, Shabad Hazare). This is very important tenet of Sikhism.
- “ਪੂਜਹੁ ਰਾਮੁ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਦੇਵਾ”॥--“*Poojoh ram ek he deva*” i.e, Worship only the One Lord (GGS, p. 484).
- ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਇਨਿ ਸਚੁ॥ ਜੋ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮੇ ਸੁ ਕਚੁ ਨਿਕਚੁ॥-- Nanak says true are they, who meditate the True One. They who die and are reborn, are unbaked and worthless, false (GGS, p.463).

Several names of these incarnations, which were prevalent among the masses for the Supreme Eternal Reality (God), have been used by the Sikh Gurus in their verses, because they

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

were more clearly understood by the devotees viz: Rama, Krishna, Gobind, Gopal, Banwari, Murari, Damodar etc.

**Kali:** Mother Goddess worshipped very much in the state of Bengal. Most popular devotee of Kali is Sri Rama Krishna Parmhansa. The notorious tribes of India, the Thugs, also worshipped Kali, and due to their extreme fanaticism and killing of people as sacrifices to Goddess Kali, they were exterminated by the British rulers of India.

Sikhs believe that the society needs knowledge (giyan) and it is through knowledge (giyan) that things can be sorted out, “ਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਜਾ ਕੀ ਨੇਤ੍ਰੀ ਪੜਿਅ ਤਾ ਕਅ ਸਗਲ ਪ੍ਰਗਾਸਾ॥

(GGS, p 610).

### Theory of Creation---Genesis / Cosmology according to Sikhism

According to the Webster's New World College Dictionary fourth edition cosmology is the scientific study of the universe. It also says, "Cosmology is the branch of metaphysics dealing with the origin and structure of the universe".

#### Precreation stage

It is mentioned in the Holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib that there was a time when there was no universe. Guru Nanak says in Rag Maru:  
 ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਧੁੰਧੁਕਾਰਾ॥ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥ ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੇਨਿ ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਸੁੰਨੁ  
 ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ॥੧॥ ਖਾਣੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਪਉਣ ਨ ਪਾਣੀ॥ ਓਪਤਿ ਖਪਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣੀ॥ ਖੰਡ ਪਤਾਲ  
 ਸਪਤ ਨਹੀ ਸਾਗਰ ਨਦੀ ਨ ਨੀਰੁ ਵਹਾਇਦਾ॥੨॥ ਨ ਤਦਿ ਸੁਰਗੁ ਮਛੁ ਪਇਆਲਾ॥ ਦੋਜਕੁ ਭਿਸਤੁ ਨਹੀ ਖੈ  
 ਕਾਲਾ॥ ਨਰਕੁ ਸੁਰਗੁ ਨਹੀ ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਨਾ ਨ ਕੋ ਆਇ ਨ ਜਾਇਦਾ॥੩॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ॥  
 ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਈ॥ ਨਾਰਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਨਮਾ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਦੁਖ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਇਦਾ॥--"For  
 million upon million countless years there was utter darkness. There was no earth  
 and no sky but only the limitless Lord's ordinance. There was neither day nor  
 night, nor moon, nor sun but the Lord alone sat in profound trance. There was  
 neither mines of creation, nor speech, nor air nor water. Neither creation, nor  
 destruction, nor coming nor going. There were no continents, nor under worlds nor  
 seven oceans nor rivers nor the flowing water. Then there was no heaven, no  
 mortal world or the nether world. Neither there was hell, nor heaven, nor death, nor  
 time (*Kaal*) that destroys. There was no hell, no heaven, no birth, no death nor did  
 anyone come or go. There was no Brahma, nor Vishnu or Shiva. None else was  
 seen but He, the One Lord----- (GGS, p. 1035-36).

#### Genesis--Creation

According to the holy book of Sikhism, "Guuru Granth Sahib" first of all, "The Lord, of Himself created His ownself, He assumed His Name"--"*Aapeenay aap sajio aapeenay rahio nao*"--"ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ"॥(GGS, Asa M1, p 463). It also says, "ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੁ ਉਪਾਇਓਨੁ ਤਦਹੁ ਹੋਰ ਨ ਕੋਈ॥ ਮਤਾ ਮਸੂਰਤਿ ਆਪਿ ਕਰੇ ਜੋ ਕਰੇ ਸੁ ਹੋਈ॥ ਤਦਹੁ ਆਕਾਸੁ ਨ ਪਾਤਾਲੁ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਲੋਈ॥ਤਦਹੁ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਓਪਤਿ ਹੋਈ॥ਜਿਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਿਵੈ ਕਰੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ॥--"When the Lord created His ownself, then there was none else. He took counsel and advice with Himself and what he did came to pass. Then there was no sky, no nether region nor three worlds. Then was only the Formless Lord Himself and there was no creation. As it pleased Him, so did He act, without Him there was no other" (GGS, p 509). Time (ਕਾਲ / ਸਮਾਂ) , began running its course with the creation of day and night.

**When there was no form, nor sign, where was the Word (*Sabad / Naam or Logos/ God?*)**

During a discussion, the Yogis asked Guru Nanak, “ਆਦਿ ਕਉ ਕਵਨ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਕਥੀਅਲੇ ਸੁੰਨ ਕਹਾ ਘਰ ਵਾਸੋ॥ (GGS, p. 940) . The Guru replied, “To think of the Transcendent Lord in that state is to enter the realm of wonder. Even at that time of *Sunn* (void), He permeated that void, “ਆਦਿ ਕਉ ਬਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਕਥੀਅਲੇ ਸੁੰਨ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ ਲੀਆ···*Aad kau bismaad katheealay sunn nirantar vaas leea--*” [ [ (GGS, p.940) .

We learn from the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib that before the universe was created God (*Parmaatma*) existed all alone in His abstract / Transcendent form (*Nirgun avastha*) and He was in a state of *Sunn Samadh*—perfect meditation-deep trance’. It is from this ‘Nirgun (abstract / Transcendent) state of ‘*Sunn Smadh*’ that He willed and created the world, “ਜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਣਾ ਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ॥—*Jaan tis bhana taan jagat upaia*” (GGS, 1036). After creating Himself, the second thing God did was that He created nature (*Kudrat-Cosmos / Universe / Behmand*), “ਦੂਜੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ” ]—*Duyee kudrat saajeeai kar aasan ditho chao*—i.e, Secondly, He made the expanse of nature and seated Himself into it and watches with joy” (GGS, p.463) . Guru Nanak says, ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵਸਿਆ [— “*Balharee kudrat wassiaa* i.e, Sacrifice am I unto Thee, who abides in His creation” (GGS, p.469). After creation He (God) became *Karta Purkh* (The Creator Person) and made Himself manifest in the entire creation. Thus the whole creation reflects his immanent aspect—‘*Sargun Swaroop*’.

The fundamental principle of Sikhism is that, “God was in existence before time began running its course; He has been in existence for ever and shall be in existence for ever, “ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ॥ (GGS, p 1) .

Guru Nanak has very clearly mentioned that He (God) started the process of evolution of the world’s vast expanse with one word / sound / bang and Lakhs of streams of life began to flow, “--“ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ॥ ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ॥--*Keeta psao* (process of evolution), *eko kwao* (one word / sound / bang), *tis te ho-ay lakh dariao*”, lakhs of streams of life began to flow (GGS Japji Sahib pauri 16, p.3). He further says, “ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਈ॥—*Hukmi hovan akaar hukam na kahiaa jae* i.e, By His command, the creation, came into being, the command is indescribable (GGS, Jap ji p.1).

From the absolute Lord emanated three functions: one of creation, another of sustenance and third of annihilation. Nature is one but it has been mysteriously endowed with three properties (of ‘becoming’, ‘enduring’, and ‘disintegration’). He causes the Nature to perform these functions as He desires, “ਏਕਾ ਮਾਈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਵਿਆਈ ਤਿਨਿ ਚੇਲੇ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ॥ ਇਕ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਇਕੁ ਭੰਡਾਰੀ ਇਕੁ ਲਾਏ ਦੀਬਾਣੁ॥ ਜਿਵ

ਤਿਸ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਿਵੈ ਚਲਾਵੈ ਜਿਵ ਹੋਵੈ ਫੁਰਮਾਣੁ (GGS, p.7).

### Birth day of the universe!

When was the universe created?—“ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਕਵਣੁ, ਕਵਣੁ ਥਿਤਿ ਕਵਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ—*Kavan so vela wakhat kavan, kavan thit kavan vaar?* (GGS, p4) . Guru Nanak says, “ਵੇਲ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਪੰਡਤੀ ਜਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਲੇਖ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ॥ ਵਖਤ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਕਾਦੀਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਨਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ॥ ਥਿਤਿ ਵਾਰੁ ਨਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਰੁਤਿ ਮਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ॥ ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਠੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ—The Hindu scholars do not know otherwise we could read in their Purans. The Muslim scholars donot know otherwise we could read in the Quran. The Yogis knew not the date, season and the month of creation. Only the Lord alone, who created the universe knows the answer (GGS, p.4) . –Gurbani says, “ਪਿਤਾ ਕਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਕਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਪੂਤੁ॥ ਸਗਲ ਪਰੋਈ ਅਪਨੈ ਸੂਤਿ—How can the son claim to witness the birth of His father?” (GGS, p.248). Bhai Gurdas says, “ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਆਕਾਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਥਿਤਿ ਨ ਵਾਰੁ ਨ ਮਾਹੁ ਜਣਾਇਆ—God did not leave any record of time, day or month when He manifested His creation (Bhai Gurdas var 18.7).

### Vastness of the universe

According to the holy Sikh scripture, Guru Garnth Sahib, the universe is very vast. It is considered as a harmonious and orderly system. There are innumerable worlds in it. There are a number of suns and moons to give it light and energy. It has been explicitly stated many times by the Sikh Gurus more than five hundred years ago. Gurbani says:

- “ਧਰਤੀ ਹੋਰ ਪਰੇ ਹੋਰੁ ਹੋਰੁ—*Dhartee hor paray hor hor*—There are earths, beyond earths (GGS p.3) .
- “ਪਤਾਲਾ ਪਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ [ [ ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲ ਥਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ॥  
“*Pataalaan pataal lakh agaasaan aagaas. Orak orak bhaal thake ved kehan ikk waat*—There are skies above skies and earths below earths. Human mind gets tired of search. All knowledge simply points to the same one fact that there is no end of the vastness” (GGS, Jap Ji Pauri 22, p.5).
- “ਕਰਤੇ ਕੈ ਕਰਣੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਸੁਮਾਰੁ—*Karte ke karne naahee sumaar*—There is no end to the creation of the Lord” (GGS, p.3).
- “ਕੇਤੇ ਇੰਦ ਚੰਦ ਸੂਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਮੰਡਲ ਦੇਸ॥--*Ketay ind chand soor ketay ketay mandal des*—There are numerous suns, moons and other glaxies” (GGS, p.7).
- “ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਪਾਵਹਿ—*Nanak kartay kaa ant naa pavhay*—O Nanak

the limits of the creator are incomprehensible” (GGS, p.274)

- “ਕਰਤੇ ਕੀ ਮਿਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਕੀਆ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੋ ਤਿਸ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਵਰਤੀਆ॥--*kartay kee mit naa janay keeaa. Jo tis bhaway so warteeaa.* The created being cannot describe the Creator. He does what pleases him. (GGS, p.285).
- “ਏਹੁ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ॥ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਕਹੀਏ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਹੋਇ--*Ihu ant naa janay ko-ay. Bahutaa kahee-ay bahutaa ho-ay*—The extent of his creation is known to none. The more we state the more remains to be stated (GGS, p.5).

### Origin of life according to Gurbani

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag explains that from the ‘Supreme power’, air (gases) came into existence and the gases formed water and from water there was origin of life, “ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ, ਪਵਨੇ ਤੇ ਜਲ ਹੋਇ, ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਨ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟ ਘਟ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੋਇ॥--*Saachay tay pavna bhaia, pavnay tay jal hoay, jal tay tir bhavan sajia ghat ghat jot samoay*—From the Supreme Eternal reality came the air, from the air (gases) formed the water. From the water God created the three worlds and in every heart, He infused His light” (GGS, p.19).

### Source of Life

According to Gurbani water is the primal source of life, “ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਉ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਇ॥--*Pehla ani jeev hai jit haria sabh koay* (GGS, p 472). It assists growth of human beings, animals and plants (both flora and fauna). Every thing is alive because of water. No life is possible on planets, which do not have water on them.

### Death of universe:

Today the scientists are guessing that ultimately this universe will perish one day and will return to its previous state and then again its creation will start afresh. This has already been mentioned in the holy Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib, “ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਾਸਾਰ॥--Many times has the universal expanse occurred. (GGS, p. 276).

According to Gurbani the universe emerged from void and will end up in void. The holy Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib further says:

- ਧਰਤਿ ਅਕਾਸੁ ਪਾਤਾਲੁ ਹੈ ਚੰਦੁ ਸੂਰੁ ਬਿਨਾਸੀ॥--The, the sky, the nether region, the moon and the sun shall pass away (GGS, p.1100) .
- ਜੋ ਦੀਸੈ ਸੋ ਵਿਣਸਣਾ ਸਭ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਬਿਨਾਸੀ ॥--Whatever is seen, that shall perish. All

shall disintegrate and disappear (GGS, p.1100) .

- ਜਗ ਰਚਨਾ ਸਭ ਝੂਠ ਹੈ ਜਾਨਿ ਲੇਹੁ ਰੇ ਮੀਤਿ॥ ਕਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਥਿਰੁ ਨ ਰਹੈ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਲੁ ਕੀ ਭੀਤਿ॥—O my friend, know this that totally false is the structure of the world. Nanak says, it does not remain permanent like the wall of sand (GGS, p 1428) .
- “ਘਟੰਤ ਰੂਪੰ ਘਟੰਤ ਦੀਪੰ ਘਟੰਤ ਰਵਿ ਸਸੀਅਰ ਨਖੁਤ੍ਰੁ ਗਗਨੰ॥ ਘਟੰਤ ਬਸੁਧਾ ਗਿਰਿ ਤਰ ਸਿਖੰਡੰ॥ ਘਟੰਤ ਲਲਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਭ੍ਰਾਤ ਹੀਤੰ॥ ਗਟੰਤ ਕਨਿਕ ਮਾਨਿਕ ਮਾਇਆ ਸਰੂਪੰ॥ ਨਹ ਘਟੰਤ ਕੇਵਲ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਅਚੁਤੰ॥ਅਸਥਿਰੰ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਧ ਜਨੰ॥—Man’s beauty constantly declines, decline the islands, decline the sun, the moon, the stars and the sky, decline the earth, mountains, trees and the three worlds. Perishable are wife, sons, brothers and friends. Perishable are the beautiful gold, jewels and wealth. Impershable is only the Immovable Lord. Nanak says, immutable are the Lord’s holy men (GGS, p.1354) .

Regarding expansions and contractions of the universe the Gurus say that expansions and contractions of the universe have occurred many times. The Guru says, “He (God) has unfolded the universe in many ways, He has expanded it umpteen times. Only the Lord Himself is immortal, “ਕਈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਕੀਨੋ ਬਿਸਥਾਰੰ॥ ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਾਸਾਰੰ॥ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਕੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੰ॥ (GGS, p.276) .

- ਖੰਡ ਪਤਾਲ ਦੀਪ ਸਭਿ ਲੋਆੰ॥ਸਭਿ ਕਾਲੇ ਵਸਿ ਆਪਿ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਕੀਆੰ॥—The continents,, nether regions, islands and all the worlds; the Lord Himself has made them subject to death (GGS, p.1076) .
- ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਬੁਦਬੁਦਾ ਓਪਿਜੈ ਬਿਨਸੇ ਨੀਤੰ॥ ਜਗ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੈਸੇ ਰਚੀ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਮੀਤੰ॥—As the bubble ever appears and disappears on water. Nanak says, listen my friend, such indeed is the creation of the world ( (GGS, p.1427) .

### Theory of creation (Genesis according to Hinduism)

Hinduism believes in the Trinity of God constituted by Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Lord **Brahma** is the most important member of the Brahmanical Trinity and is traditionally referred to as the Creator of the entire universe. The birth of Brahma is recorded differently by different scholars. According to a legend mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib, Brahma was born out of a lotus flower which grew from the naval of Vishnu, “ਨਾਭਿ ਕਮਲ ਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਓਪਜੇ, ਬੇਦ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਮੁਖਿ ਕੰਠਿ ਸਵਾਰਿੰ॥ ਤਾ ਕੇ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਜਾਏ ਲਖਣਾ, ਅਵਤ ਜਾਵਤ ਰਹੈ ਗੁਬਾਰਿੰ॥ (GGS, p.489). The Vedas, the oldest and the holiest of Hindu scriptures, are attributed to him.

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

In order to create the universe, Brahma gave birth to the 11 forefathers of human race called. 'Parjapatis' and the seven great sages or the, 'Saptarishi'. These children or the mind-sons of Brahma, who were born out of his mind than body, are called 'Mahaputras.

### **Vishnu**

Vishnu is said to look after the universe

### **Shiva**

He is supposed to destroy creation.

The relative position of Hindu gods to one another is rather confusing. One would imagine that Brahma being the creator of the universe must have created the other two gods as well but that is not so.

### **Sikh view:**

Gurbani says, “ਬੇਦ ਪੜੇ ਪੜਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇਹਾਰੇ ਏਕੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਪਾਏ।।--ਦਸ ਅਓਤਾਰ ਰਾਜੇ ਹੋਏ ਵਰਤੇ ਮਹਾਦੇਵ ਅਓਯੁਤਾ।। ਤਿਨ ਭੀ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਏਓ ਤੇਰਾ ਲਾਏ ਥਕੇ ਬਿਭੂਤਾ”।।--Many a Brahma got tired of studying Vedas, but they could not estimate even an iota of God's greatness.--Ten incarnations of Vishnu and the famous ascetic Shiva, who got tired of smearing his body with ashes, could not fathom God's extent (GGS, p. 747).

## Scriptures of Sikhism

### Guru Granth Sahib

Guru Granth Sahib is the Holy Scripture of the Sikh faith. Guru Arjan Dev the 5<sup>th</sup> Sikh Guru, compiled it as the revealed and final doctrinal authority of Sikhism in the beginning of the seventeenth century. He started the compilation in 1601 and completed it in 1604 A.D. He called it '*Pothi Sahib*'/'*Granth*'. It was, recensed by Guru Gobind Singh in 1706 AD, when he entered the Gurbani of the 9<sup>th</sup> Guru, Guru Teg Bahadur, at Talwandi Sabo, now called Damdama Sahib. It was installed as Guru Eternal on October 5, 1708 by Guru Gobind Singh and since then it is called 'Guru Granth Sahib'.

The Sikhs believe Guru Granth Sahib as the 'living' embodiment of ten Gurus and it is the only focus of Sikh faith. Guru Granth Sahib is treated with the same respect as the human Gurus received. In addition to the hymns of the Sikh Gurus it contains the writings and hymns of saints and preachers with different religious backgrounds, whose philosophy conformed to the spirit of Sikhism. Many verses composed by Gurus are either a contradiction or clarification of a similar verse of a Bhagat or an answer to the questions raised by Bhagats in their compositions. From Sheikh Farid (born 1173) to Guru Teg Bahadur (died 1675), the galaxy of writers covers full five centuries of India's spiritual thought.

Guru Granth Sahib is a literary classic and a spiritual treasure. It throws light on the path leading to the highest goal of spirituality. It contains the eternal truth, proclaims God, and shows the way of His realization. It lays down moral and ethical rules for the development of the soul and religious commandments for the progress of morality and attainment of salvation. In it philosophy is propounded through the songs of love and devotion. The message of love, truth, contentment, humility, fatherhood of God, brotherhood of man, restraint of passions, mercy on living beings, purity of mind and body, search for the self and Higher Soul, equality of man and equality of man and woman, service to others, liberalism in the matter of food and clothing, and references to the political, economic and social life of the people of Hindustan during the fifteenth century and sixteenth century constitute the main contents of Guru Granth Sahib. It is a guide to Sikh way of life. Its goal is of the ideal man, who attains perfection by linking himself with God. References to *Vedas* (Hindu) and *Katebas* (Semitic) scriptures are also found in it. Guru Granth Sahib rejects all types of *Karam Kanda* (ritualism: Fasting, pilgrimage, penance and ritual sacrifice) and all formalism for spiritual attainment. It lays stress on selfless action performed in the best interest of the society. It condemns asceticism, which has the effect of negativism. It lays stress on the dynamic attitude towards life. It supports normal family life (*Grahisti jivan*) and social commitment. It recommends leading of a pure life whilst fighting temptations and imperfection of this world. It is the only scripture where each and every conceivable aspect of human life has been addressed, discussed and analysed. Mythological references are only illustrative and do not indicate any Guru's belief in mythological personages or their actions. In Guru Granth Sahib no status or sanctity has been given to any gods (*Devtas*), goddesses (*Devis*) or *Avtaars* (incarnations).

In its present lithographed diction, Guru Granth Sahib contains about 5894 Hymns and Verses mainly in Punjabi, Hindi, Braj, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Sindhi, Lehndi, Dhaki, Bengali and Marathi, in Gurmukhi script on 1430 pages, composed and arranged in well-known 31 Ragas i.e; tunes / musical settings (*Gurmat Sangeet*), except for the initial seven and last seventy seven pages. It is a treasure of Indian languages and musical Ragas. Rigmala at the end mentions the families of eighty four Ragas and Raginies.

Guru Granth Sahib is the only scripture in the world, which mentions with respect Ram, Gobind, Hari, Allah, Rahim, Karim etc, (names for God) used by different religions and which includes writings of holy people born in other religions (Hinduism, Islam) in addition to the Sikh Gurus. It is the only source of Sikh philosophy that has been written and authenticated by the Gurus themselves and whose authenticity has never been questioned. It is the only scripture, which traveled through the generations without the change of a single letter. It is final and unalterable scripture.

The author of Guru Granth Sahib is God Himself. He revealed the religious truth to the Sikh Gurus and ordained them to spread it to mankind all over the globe. Guru Nanak did not claim divinity, only that he was a messenger of God, ਜੈਸੇ ਮੈ ਆਵੇ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ—“*Jaisay mein aavay khasam kee bani, Taisra kari gian vay Lalo*” ie “As the word of the ‘Master’ comes to me so I make known to thee” (GGS, Tilang M1, p.72). Guru Nanak bestowed the Guruship to the Shabad (Divine Word) in his Bani, ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੁ ਸੁਰਤ ਧੁੰਨ ਚੇਲਾ—“*Shabad Guru Surat Dun Chela*” ie, “Shabad is Guru, conscience and intention towards it make one its disciple” (Ibid, M1, p.943). Thereafter, all the Gurus of the House of Nanak taught the same principle, i.e *Shabad (Bani i.e, The Divine Word)* is the Guru. Guru Amar Dass said, “ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਜੇਵਡੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥—Waho waho bani nirankaar hai tis jevad avar na koay i.e; Praise be to the Bani of the Formless, Whom none can equal” (Ibid, p .515). Guru Ram Dass says, ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਜਨ ਮਾਨੇ ਪਰਤਖ ਗੁਰੁ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ—“*Bani Guru, Guru Hai Bani Vich Bani Amrit Spray, Gurbani Kahay Sewak Jan Maanay Partakh Guru Nistaray*” ie, “Bani is the Guru and Guru is the Bani and it contains the elixer of life. If the devotee obeys what Bani teaches us, the Guru confers His grace on him” (Ibid, M4, p.982). Guru Arjan says, “ਧੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਆਈ॥ਤਿਨਿ ਸਗਲੀ ਚਿੰਤ ਮਿਟਾਈ॥—*Dhur kee bani aae tin saglee chint mitaaee* i.e; Bani has come from God, it effaces all worries and anxieties” (Ibid, M5, p.628). He further adds, “ਪੋਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨ—“*Pothi Parmesher Ka Than*” ie, The Book is the Abode of God” (Ibid, M5, p.1226).

It is believed that he, who attentively reads, sings, listens and acts upon the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib, attains bliss and is brought into direct personal contact with the Guru-‘God’, “ਭਗਤਿ ਭੰਡਾਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਲਾਲ॥ ਗਾਵਤ ਸੁਨਤ ਕਮਾਵਤ ਨਿਹਾਲ (Ibid, p376). Therefore, Guru Granth Sahib is treated to be the presence of the Guru himself in the Sangat. It is the presiding deity in every Gurdwara or Sikh place of worship and every visitor there bows before it in reverence before assuming his / her seat. When moved, it is accompanied by five initiated Sikhs.

NB:

- Sikhs have the original scripture and it is not subject to textual analysis by any one. It is the eternal Guru of the Khalsa (Sikhs). (SGPC Amritsar, Jan 5, 1996)
- In Sikh scriptures, the word ‘Guru’ has been used to denote at least three different senses. First, it has been used for God Himself, secondly, the word has been referred to as teacher-Guru and finally it is used for the Holy Sikh scripture, "Guru Granth Sahib".
- Translation of Guru Granth Sahib cannot be installed in a Gurdwara.
- Guru Granth Sahib is not like the idol in a Hindu temple nor the statue of the virgin in a Catholic

Cathedral. It is the means and not the object of worship.

- The instalment of Guru Granth Sahib is mandatory at a Sikh service.

### **Scriptures of Hinduism**

The Hindu scriptures can be broadly classified into two groups:

- (1) **Sruti** (“That which is heard”) and
- (2) **Smriti** (“that which is remembered”)

### **Shruti books of Hinduism—The Vedas**

Vedas literally means knowledge. There are four Vedas:

- (1) Rig Veda is the foremost of all Sruti literature. It consists of 1028 hymns to gods which are described in ten books (chapters). It is a collection of praises in the form of hymns. In the Rig Veda we see the Aryans settling down in the Indus valley and worshipping all the powers of nature such as air (Vayu), water (Varuna), sun (Aditya / Surya), moon (Soma) and fire (Agni). The popular caste system is also referred to in this scripture. There is no particular author for Rig Veda. It is the collective work of many sages.
- (2) Yajur Veda (Veda of liturgy) concerns the knowledge of rites. It contains the rules explaining how to perform all rituals. This Veda is indeed a priestly handbook, even describing the rules and regulations of how to make an altar. Sacrifice is one of the most important parts of this Veda.
- (3) Sama Veda (Veda of Music) concerns the knowledge of chants. Sama means “melody”. The classical Indian music originated from Sama Veda. Stanzas from Sama Veda were sung by saints when the Soma sacrifice was performed. Invocations in this Veda are addressed to Soma (moon), Agni (fire), and Indra (the God of heaven).
- (4) Athar Veda contains the knowledge given by sage Atharvana. Atharvana Veda was also known as Brahma Veda because it was used as a manual by the chief sacrificial priests and Brahmans. This contains many magic charms and incantations.

### **Contents of each Veda**

The Vedas mainly consist of:

1. Samhitas. Basic texts for hymns, formulas and chants.
2. Brahmanas. Directions of performance rituals.
3. Aranyakas. Contain Mantras and interpretations of rituals.
4. Upanishads. These are number of texts revealing the ultimate spiritual truths and various suggestions of ways to realize them. The word Upanishad is composed of Upa (near), Ni (down) and Shad (to sit). An Upanishad is a teaching taught by the Guru when the disciple sits very close so that no body overhears the teachings.

### **Authorship of Vedas**

The authorship of Vedas is uncertain.

### Upnishads

Upnishads are the last of the Sruti literature. Upnishads reinterpreted ritualism in philosophical terms. Upnishads preach withdrawal from struggle for existence and a life of asceticism. Almost all Upnishads recommend subjugation of desire by self-mortification. Under their teachings the Concepts like Ishwara, Universe, soul, salvation, samsara etc. entered the religious thought. The relationship between the material world and Brahm began to gain significant importance through them. It is for this reason that some Hindu scholars have reserved the word “Vedant” only for the Upnishads. Rishi Vyasa was one of the major proponents of this period and is greatly revered for this philosophy. Upnishads mainly deal with—forms of meditation (austerities). Between 900-500 BC about 108 Upnishads were written as commentaries on the Vedas. The thirteen most important Upnishads are: Isa, Kena, Khatha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Aitreya, Taittiriya, Chandogya, Brihad-Aranyaka, Kaushitaki, Shvetasvatara and Maitri.

There are also eleven minor Yogic Upnishads. The most important among them are Yogatattva, DhyanaBindu, and Nadabindu. Yogatattva consists of all details about yogic practices. Nadabindu deals with the auditory phenomena that accompany certain yogic exercises. DhyanaBindu deals with the syllable AUM and with many mystic revelations.

**Sikh view:** Sikhism differs with the teachings of upnishads regarding struggle for existence and a life of asceticism. It instructs its followers to live in the society, earn an honest living and help others:

ਵਿਚ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ (GGS, p 26). ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥੁ

ਦੇਇ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ॥ (GGS, p1245) ਇਕਿ ਵਣ ਖੰਡਿ ਬੈਸਹਿ ਜਾਇ ਸਦੁ ਨ ਦੇਵਹੀ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਪਾਲਾ

ਕਰੁ ਭੰਨਿ ਸੀਤਲੁ ਜਲ ਹੋਵਹੀ—(GGS, p1284).

ਇ ਇ ਉ ਈ ਏ ਆ ਆਂ ਐਡਾ ਉ

### Post Vedic Texts

**Hinduism has five principle sects:** The Vaishnavas, the Shaivas, Shaktas, the Ganpatyas and the Shauryas who are worshippers of Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Ganesha and Surya respectively. The **Vaishnavas** are devotees of Vishnu and his incarnations Rama and Krishna. Their scriptures include: Bhagwatgeeta, the Bhagwatpurana and Vishnu purana. They worship stones (Saligram) and idols (Moortis). The **Shaivites** worship Lingum. There are many manifestations of Shiva and Shakti like the manifestations of Vishnu. The manifestations of Shiva are: Bhairava, Rudra, Mahavira etc. Their scriptures Agamas and Purans. The **Shaktas** worship the Goddess Shakti in her various forms: Chandi, Kali, Durga etc. Their scriptures are called **Tantras**. They worship Shivas wife and consider her as the source of all regenerative power. Tantrik Hinduism has many Tantras and they are all supposed to be based on a discussion which Shiva is supposed to have had with Durga or Kali. The Shaktas are divided into two paths i.e; Dakshina (rightists) and ‘Vama’ (leftists). The vamcharis are seeped in sensuous life. They believe in five Makars. These are:

1. The drinking of liquors and intoxicating agents of various kinds---Madya
2. The eating of meat -----(Mansa)
3. The eating of fish----- (Matasya)
4. The eating of parched grain----- (Mudra)
5. The sexual union----- (Maithuna)

The Tantras are known as *Agma* where as Vedas are known as *Nigma*. Tantras are believed to have been authored by Dattatreya considered to be an incarnation of the Trimurti

(Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva). According to Kalluka Bhatta the Tantras are equal in authority with Vedas. However it is a fact that the Tantriks have no respect for the Vedas. Some Tantriks even claim that their Tantras are superior to the Vedas.

One of their Purans is 'Kali Purana' which propagates the worship of Kali. The Rudhir Adhyaya (Chapter) of this Purana is full of bloodshed and advocates that, "It is through bloody ritual sacrifices that princes obtain bliss, heaven and victory over their enemies".

In the past Saktas also resorted to human sacrifices and believed that the Devi is pleased one thousand years with one human sacrifice and a hundred thousand years by the sacrifice of three men. Chamunda, Chandika and Bhairon became three notorious goddesses of sacrifice. Saktas offered blood to the goddesses and flesh as oblations to Agni (fire). The instructions read: "Let the performer of the sacrifice be cautious never to offer bad flesh. Let the words 'Devi Barjeswari, the Lawha Dandayai Namah'.

According to the Tantriks the best form of worship is the fullest satisfaction of the sexual desires of man therefore in Tantrik worship sexual intercourse with any woman is prescribed as a part of worship. The Shaktas worship their supreme goddess through mantras (prayers and mystical formulae), mudras (hand gestures) and mandalas (magical diagrams representing cosmos). Sikh Gurus condemned the Tantrics and their practices, "ਜੰਤੂ ਮੈ ਨ ਤੰਤਰ ਨ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਬਸਿ ਆਵਈ ॥ (ਮੁਖ ਵਾਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ)

### **Purans/ Puranas**

The word Purana literally means "ancient". The Puranas are compendiums of myth, legend and history that reflect popular theistic traditions. They consist principally of stories about Hindu gods and goddesses, supernatural beings, seers and men. Later Purans associated upnashadic philosophy with certain gods. They even named their Purans after gods in which they believed. There is a large number of Purans but eighteen are called Major Purans or Mahapurans that are considered scripture by most Hindus. Out of these, six are addressed to Lord Vishnu, six are addressed to Lord Shiva and six are addressed to Lord Brahma. None of the Puranas has a date of composition, but some say that they date from sixth century A.D.

The six Puranas addressed to Lord Vishnu are: the Vishnu Purana, Narada Purana, Srimad Bhagavata Purana, Garuda Purana and Varaha Purana.

The six Puranas addressed to Lord Shiva are the Matsya Purana, Kurma Purana, Linga Puran, Vayu Purana, Skanda Purana and Agni Purana.

The six Puranas addressed to Lord Brahma are the Brahma Purana, Brahmanda Purana, Brahma-Vaivasvata or Brahma-Vaivarta Purana, Markandeya Purana, Bhavishya Purana and Vamana Purana.

In addition to the eighteen Major Puranas there are at least known twenty seven Minor Puranas known as Upa Puranas. It is said that there still could be more Puranas in Hinduism unknown to even the great apostles of Hindu doctrine uptill now.

### **Topics discussed in Purans**

The Purans have five topics:

1. Creation of the world
2. The dissolution of the world
3. The ages (yugas) of the world
4. Genealogies
5. Stories about the descendents of the dynasties described in genealogies.

Other topics receiving greater attention include the four aims of life: wealth, enjoyment, social duty and liberation from rebirth, religious observances (Vartas), rites for dead ancestors (Shradha), description of places of pilgrimage (Tiraths), gifts / charity (dana), means of subsistence, manifestations of higher beings and Brahman as the underlying support of the cosmos. These texts provide a window into the actual religious life of Hinduism in all its rich complexity and myriad manifestations.

### **Puranic deities**

During Gupta period the Brahmins (Priestly class of Brahmanism / Santan Dharma / Hinduism) discarded the Vedic deities and propagated the Divine Trinity constituted by Brahma (God of creation), Vishnu (God of preservation) and Shiva also known as Mahesh (God of annihilation), jointly represented by its vibratory aspect called Aum / Om, / Oam ॐ, and they also introduced the incarnations of God including Sri Ram Chander and Sri Krishna. Female deity Devi was also introduced and worshiped

### **When the Purans were written?**

Wyasa the narrator of the Mahabharata is hagiographically credited as the compiler of the Purans. The date of production of the written texts does not define the date of origion of the Purans. They existed in oral form before being written down and were incrementally modified well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A broad date for the 18 great Purans would be from 400-1000 C.E.

### **Smriti**

Smriti came into being when Yajna / Yagna based Hinduism was replaced by temple based (Puranic) Hinduism. Smriti refers to a body of texts usually attributed to an author, traditionally written down but constantly revised, in contrast to Shruti (Vedic literature) considered authorless, that were transmitted verbally over generations. Smriti in Sanskrit means recollection. Smriti is that class of Hindu sacred literature based on human memory as distinct from vedas which are considered to be Shruti (literally) “what is heard” or product of divine revelation.

### **Manusimriti or Manavdharma Shastra**

It is an ancient legal text among many Dharma shastras of Hinduism Composed around 200 BCE to 200 CE. It came into being when yagna /yajna based Hinduism was replaced by temple based Hinduism. It is unique amongst dharma shastras as it represents itself like a holy text, a purana, beginning with origin of the world, the origin of four communities, managing adversities, transgressions and finally the two great conclusions of human life—obtaining fruites of this life’s actions in the next birth or liberating oneself from cycle of birth and death. It aligns with the Vedic view that society is composed of four kind of communities: (1) Those who know Vedas (Brahmins), (2) Those who govern the land (Kashatriyas). (3) Those who trade (Vaishyas) and (4) Those who serve (Shudras).

Typically dharmashastras give greater value to the code of Brahmins than to the code of Kshatriyas. Statecraft is elaborated in arthshastra. However Manusimriti gives almost equal value to the code of Brahmins and the code of Kashatriyas, effectively making arthshastra a part of the dharma shastra. So while earlier dharmashastras were interested in regulating the conduct of Brahmins mainly, Manusimriti is also interested in regulating the conduct of Kashatriyas,

Vaishyas and the Shudras too.

**Manu Simriti** was one of many dharma shastras and was not much in use in India as India came to be increasingly governed by Muslim rulers, such as Sultans of Delhi and the Deccan and Bengal. When the East India Company took over the governance of India from Moghuls they compiled law for managing their subjects. For Muslims they accepted the then prevalent Sharia but for Hindus, they had nothing. So they resurrected Manu Simriti and saw it as the Hindu law book. It is the first Sanskrit text translated during the British rule of India in 1794 by Sir William and used to formulate Hindu law by the colonial government. So they resurrected Manu Simriti and saw it as the Hindu law book. That made Manu Simriti famous throughout the world.

Origin of Manusimriti is attributed to Brahma, the creator, who passes it on to the first human, Manu, who passes it on to the first teacher Bhrigu, who passes it on to other sages.

### **Shastras**

Shastra means which gives a direction and protects the followers. Hindus believe that to make life meaningful (Purusha Artha) / We have to pursue four goals simultaneously:

- (1) Dharma: Be socially responsible
- (2) Artha : Generate and distribute wealth,
- (3) Kama: Indulge in pleasure
- (4) Moksha: Do not get attached to anything.

There are at the minimum 4 dharma shastras, 1 Arthshastra, 1 Kamasutra and 6 Darsnas i.e the directive scriptures of philosophy and there are six schools of philosophy and that totals to 12 shastras. They are available today for some one to study.

The compilation of these shastras by Brahmans began roughly during the rule of Mauryan Emperors. Apastambha, Gautma, Budhayana compiled the earliest dharma shastras, Chanakya compiled the arthshastra, Vatsayayamna compiled the Kama shastra and various philosophers compiled different kinds of moksha shastras, such as yoga and Vedanta.

Typically dharmashastras give greater value to the code of Brahmans than to the code of Kshatriyas. Statecraft is elaborated in arthshastra. However Manusimriti gives almost equal value to the code of Brahmans and the code of Kashatriyas, effectively making arthshastra a part of the dharma shastra. So while earlier dharmashastras were interested in regulating the conduct of Brahmans mainly, Manusimriti is also interested in regulating the conduct of Kashatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras too.

### **Ramayan, Mahabharat, Geeta.**

The Brahman gained popularity by combining Upnishadic philosophy with the folk religion. The merger of priestly and popular traditions is evident in the epics of, Mahabharta, Ramayana and the Purans. This gave rise to what has come to be called Puranic Hinduism (Modern Hinduism), which was in many ways a departure from Vedic Brahmanism. Sanskrit epics, Ramayna (compiled 1200 BCE) and Mahabharta (compiled between 400 BCE to 300 CE) were put into writing during this period.

### **Ramayana**

The incidents related to the Ramayana refer to a period about 1200 B.C.E. It was compiled by the sage named Valmiki in the Punjab. It is the story of the hero Rama, or Ram Chandra, viewed by Hindus as a model son, brother and husband. He is considered to be the seventh Avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu, and his name is often invoked as a greeting. Ramayana narrates the invasion of Celyon (Sri Lanka) by Rama, the king of Awadh (Ayodhiya), whose wife Sita had been abducted by Rawan, the king of Sri Lanka. A great fight took place and Sita was rescued.

### **Mahabharat**

Mahabharat deals with a period, about 1000 B.C. E. Its composition is ascribed to a sage named Wayasa. In its present form it is said to have been compiled around 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It describes the great-war between the Pandus and the Kurus. The battle raged with great fury for eighteen days on the plains of Kurukshetra, near Thanesar and the result was total defeat of the Kurus. Lord Krishna sided with the Pandus. Sri Krishna with his soldiers who survived war abandoned Mathura and went towards the west, reached Dwarka and settled there. As his soldiers were all Gauwalas / Gowalas / Gujars (Cow herders), therefore area under their control came to be called Gujrat. Mahabharat is an important source on the development of Hinduism between 400 BCE and 200 CE.

### **Bhagwad Gita**

Bhagwad Geeta, known as the essence of Vedas by the Hindus is very close to the heart of every Hindu. Bhagwad Geeta forms a part of Mahabharat, is a battlefield conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, the hero of this battle at Kurukshetra. The battle has been called Mahabharat, because various kings from the entire Indian subcontinent, beyond the limits of the territory of the then “Bharat” participated in it. It is said to have been recorded by Ved Yayasa who claims that Lord Vishnu himself expressed these thoughts through Sri Krishna. In it Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to fight against his cousins and relatives to regain his usurped royal rights and thus justify his duty as a Kashatriya. According to Bhagwad Gita Press of Gorakhpur, Bhagwad Geeta is based on two principles Sankhyoga and Karmyoga. Sankhyoga preaches that since life is nothing more than a dream, therefore humans should forget that they perform any actions (V.8-9) and trust that everything is done by God. Sankhya yoga is synonymous with Sanyas (Forest dwelling). Karmayoga stipulates that failures and successes should be taken as equal and actions should be performed according to God’s besets (V-10). Obviously the two paths cannot be traversed by the same man at the same time. The Sanyasis can not practice Karmayoga because they have to renounce all actions and abandon social living.

### **Total of Hindu scriptures**

According to the Hindu saints:

Vedas: 4

Shastras: 6

Purans: 18

Simritis: 27

Upnishids: 52

Gayatri: 1

Total: 108

The Hindu sadhus who are well versed in all the above mentioned scriptures of Hinduism write 108 with their respective names.

### **Sikh view:**

The supreme source of inspiration for most Hindus is Vedant but for the Sikhs Guru Granth Sahib is the only spiritual guide:

- ਇਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਇਕੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਇਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ” || (GGS, p646).
- “ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਸਭ ਦੇਖੇ ਜੇਇ। ਉਹਾਂ ਤਉ ਜਾਈਐ ਜਉ ਈਹਾਂ ਨ ਹੋਇ।। (GGS, p.1195).
- “ਨਾਨਕ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੇ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਗੁਰੁ ਨ ਛੋਡੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਦੂਜੈ ਨ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਅਰੁ” || (GGS, p.1087)

- “ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ”।। (GGS, p.465).
- ਏਕੇ ਸੇਵੀ ਸਦਾ ਬਿਰ ਸਾਚਾ ਦੂਜੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਕਾਚਾ ((GGS, p 1049).
- ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਜਾਤਾ।। ਨ ਤਿਸੁ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਸੁਤ ਭ੍ਰਾਤਾ।। ((GGS, p1021).

The Sikh Gurus disagreed with rituals, the Vedas and the Upnishads. They propounded their own philosophy which they left for their followers in Guru Granth Sahib,:

- “ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਜੇ ਦੀਸਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਜਮੁ ਜਾਗਾਤੀ ਲੁਟੇ।। ਨਿਰਬਾਣੁ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾ ਨਿਮਖ ਸਿਮਰ ਜਿਤੁ ਛੁਟੇ ((GGS, p747).

### Sikh Gurus never claimed divinity

The Sikh Gurus were divine people, but they have made themselves abundantly clear that they were neither God Himself nor His incarnations and they were ordinary human beings. They proclaimed that they convey the divine word to the mankind under the commandment of God, the Almighty. Guru Nanak says:

- ਹਉ ਢਾਡੀ ਵੇਕਾਰ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ।। ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਹੈ ਕੈ ਗੁਰੁ ਧੁਰਹੁ ਫਰਮਾਇਆ।। ਢਾਡੀ ਸਚੇ ਮਹਿਲ ਖਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ।। ਸਚੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਕਪੜਾ ਪਾਇਆ।।--(GGS, M1, p150).--*Hao dhaadhee vekaar kaaray laa-i-aa. Raat dihai kai vaar dhurhu furmaa-i-aa. Dhadhee sachai mahal khasme bulaa-i-aa. Sachee sift saalaah kapraa paa-i-aa.*---“I was an out of work minstrel, God gave me employment. God gave me the order, ‘Sing day and night’. God summoned the minstrel to His court and bestowed on me the robe of honouring Him and singing His praises (GGS, M1 p.150)”.
- ਤਾ ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਕਹਣ ਜਾ ਤੁਝੈ ਕਹਾਇਆ।।--*Taa mai kahiaa kahan jaa tujhai kaha-i-aa*--“I speak only when you, O God, inspire me to speak (GGS M1, p.566)”.
- And,
- ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ।।--*Jaisee mai aavai khasam kee baani taisraa karee giaan ve laalo*- As the word of Master (God) comes to me so I make it known (Ibid, M1,p.722).
- ਸੋ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ।।--*So mukh jalo jit kahay thaakur jonee*-- “Burnt be the tongue that says Lord takes birth and undergoes death.” (GGS, M5, p.1136)

Guru Gobind Singh says:

- ਜੋ ਹਮ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਉਚਰਿਹੈ।। ਤੇ ਸਭ ਨਰਕ ਕੁੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਿਹੈ।। ਮੈ ਹੋ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੋ ਦਾਸਾ, ਦੇਖਣ ਆਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਤਮਾਸਾ।।-- “*Jo ham ko parmेशar uchray tay sab narak kund mein par hain. Mein hoon param purkh ko daasa dekhan aa-i-o jagat tamaashaa.* --I am but slave of God, and I have come to witness the wonders of His creation But whosoever regards me as Lord shall be damned and destroyed.” (Bachittar Natak).

### Sikh place of Worship and Sikh Worship--Gurdwara

**Sikh place of worship:** Sikh place of worship is called Gurdwara. Sikh worship in a Gurdwara is congregational, therefore the main structure in the Gurdwara where Guru Granth Sahib wrapped in fine Rumalas is seated over a small bed (Peerah Sahib) with nice bedding on a raised platform under a Chandoa hanging from the ceiling of the hall. In a Gurdwara there are no images, statues, idols, altar or pulpit, the object of Sikh reverence is The Holy Sikh Scripture---Guru Granth Sahib, and it is universal. The Sikhs bow before Guru Granth Sahib and sit cross legged in the hall, facing towards Guru Granth Sahib to listen the Ragis proclaim verses from its sacred pages. It is followed by Katha i.e, exposition of the holy Sikh Scriptures, then Ardas (prayer) is offered to the Supreme Eternal Reality before the conclusion (Bhog) of the worship. After the conclusion of Ardas Karah Parshad is distributed. The Sikhs offer Ardas twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening.

### Hindu place of Worship and Worship in Hinduism

The Hindu place of worship is known as Mandir (Temple), Devi-dwara, or Shiv-dwara. The objects of worship are idols or statues of different deities. Different Mandirs have different deities and there is no universality. Hindu worship is not congregational like the Sikhs / the Muslims / the Christians and is mainly personal. The main structure of the temple where the image of the deity is installed is therefore based on the principle of having a small garbha griha. There is a passage for circumambulation of the garbha griha. This is the heart of the temple and the dome or the spire is normally above the garbha griha. Passage around the idol is an essential part of the structure of the temple as circumambulation after prayer is very necessary. There is a small passage called antrala, which connects the garbha griha to Mandapa or the pillard hall where devotees gather for worship.

A Hindu visits a temple mainly to have a glimpse (*darshan*) of the moorti. Religiosity in Hinduism is limited to please and propitiate gods to find magical solutions for day to day problems by specific rites and ceremonies, which are practiced by, *Hom / Havan / Yagna / yajna* (burnt offerings), fasting, pilgrimage, bathing, Vedic and tantric mantras, Yantras, tantras, yogic concentrations, meditations, sacrifices and rituals merely to obtain boons of prosperity. In Vedic system (Brahminism/ Hinduism) everything including heaven could be achieved by the performance of rituals and sacrifices. Hinduism believes in performing certain acts of outward show in order to appease the deity.

Hindus believe in millions of gods and goddesses and worship their statues. Most sacred way of worshipping Hindu gods and goddesses is the "Havan". Only Chandan wood and cow butter are permissible in a Havan fire. Blowing of conch shells is a common Hindu ritual for morning and evening prayers.

Hindus seldom ever explain their scriptures in their Mandirs. On the other hand Sikhism says, that one must read, understand and act upon the religious instructions only then he can attune to God, "ਸੁਣਿਐ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਮਨਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਭਾਉ" (GGS, p. 4) and "ਸਮਝੈ ਸੂਝੈ ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਬੂਝੈ ਅੰਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਸਾਚਾ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਦੇਖੈ ਸਾਚੁ ਸਮਾਲੇ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਾਚੇ ਜਗੁ ਕਾਚਾ" (GGS, p. 930).

No knowledge about God is imparted to the worshippers and explanation of Vedas, Purans and Upnishads in the temples is very rare. The Hindus mostly dramatize their history and very little if any, instruction in theology is imparted to the audience.

Sikhism forbids the worship of idols and pictures and advises concentration on Gurbani for accumulation of spiritual knowledge. ਗਿਆਨ ਮਹਾ ਰਸਿ ਨਾਈਐ ਭਾਈ ਮਨ ਤਨ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਹੋਇ॥ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ਪੂਜੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਂਗਉ ਕਿਆ ਦੇਹਿ॥ ਪਾਹਣੁ ਨੀਰਿ ਪਖਾਲੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਬੁਡਹਿਤੇਹਿ॥ ਗੁਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਲਖੁ ਨ ਲਖੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਜਗੁ ਬੁਢੇ ਪਤਿ ਖੋਇ॥ (GGS, p. 637). Gurbani says, Hey brother, bathing in spiritual wisdom the mind and body become pure. Why worship idols of gods and goddesses, what can you ask of them and what can they grant? You notice that they sink as you wash them. Without spiritual guide true knowledge is not obtained and the whole world is similarly drowning (in darkness).

The object of worship for the Sikhs, therefore, is to understand the word (Shabad) of the Guru embodied in Guru Granth Sahib. It is for this reason that Guru's 'word' (Gurbani) is studied, explained, debated and sung at all Sikh functions. The pictures, statues or figurines are not permitted in the Gurdwara. There are no Brahmans or priests to be pampered or fed. Offerings are placed before the Holy Scripture and are used for common good of the humanity at large. At the time of birth or death no special scriptures like Garud Puran are consulted instead the hymns are sung and Guru's advice for such occasions is internalized. Birth and death are considered as natural phenomena and on both occasions "Anand Sahib (The song of joy)" is recited. Newly born children are blessed and prayers are held invoking God to grant spirituality to the new born baby in life. "ਤੀਰਥ ਵਰਤ ਸੁਚਿ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਨਹੀ ਪੂਜਾ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਭਾਇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨਿਸਤਾਰਾ ਦੁਬਿਦਾ ਵਿਆਪੇ ਦੂਜਾ॥ -Pilgrimage, fasts, purification and austerities are meaningless and so are rituals and religious ceremonies and show-worship. O Nanak emancipation comes only by invoking in worship of God and controlling duality". (GGS, p 75).

### Invocation used in Sikhism----- Invocation (Mangal-ਮੰਗਲ) of Sikhism

- Invocation in Punjabi language is called 'Mangal'. ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈ ਭੰਗੁ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ -which forms the basic postulate of Sikhism and is the opening verse in the holy Scripture of Sikhism Guru Granth Sahib, is used as invocation (ਮੰਗਲ) in Sikhism.
- Its recitation is called *Manglacharn* in Punjabi, the religious language of the Sikhs.

The commencing verse of Gurbani in Guru Granth Sahib popularly called *Mool Mantra* has been represented by Guru Arjan many times throughout the Guru Granth Sahib as invocation before the beginning of every Raag, every section and every subsection of GGS as such without abridgement or in an abridged form as follows:

(1) Complete form: ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈ ਭੰਗੁ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥..

(2) Abridged forms:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

Hence the shortest abridged form of *Mool Mantra* (Basic Postulate of Sikhism) most commonly used in the Guru Granth Sahib as sign of invocation (*Mangal*) is: ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

***Ikk Oankar Satgur Parsad-*** ੴ ਸੇਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ

*(Ikk Oankar Satgur Parsad)*

**Literal meaning:**

There is one God. He is infinite. He is eternal reality. He is enlightener and gracious.

**Implication:** I / We begin by the grace of God who is infinite (Beant), eternal reality, enlightener and gracious.

**Invocation used in Hinduism----** Gayitry Mantra:

Gayitry is an invocation of special spiritual efficacy for the Hindus. According to Manusimriti (11. 76), “Brahma milked out the letters A, U, and M from the three Vedas which joined together forming the monosyllable AUM in Gaytry. The three words *Bhur* (earth), *Bhuva* (Sky), and *Svah* (the heaven) taken from the three Vedas each contributed one letter to it. Atherav Veda did not contribute anything to Gaytry although it preached magic. The full mantra is as follows:

*“Aum Bhoor Bhuwah Swaha. Om tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargo devasaya dheemahi. Dhio yo naha prachodayaat”.*

The mantra is also prayer to the “giver of life and light”-Sun (Savitur). Oh God! Thou art the Giver of life, remover of pain and sorrow, the bestower of happiness, oh Creator of the universe, may we receive thy supreme sin destroying light, may thou guide our intellect to lead us in the right direction.

The ideal time for chanting Gayatri Mantra are three times a day: At dawn, mid day and at dusk. These times are known as Sandhyas.

### Hindu Karm Kanda (Rituals) and the Sikh view

There are two categories of *Karmas* (*Karam Kanda*) in Hinduism Viz; *Nitya Karmas* and *Naimittika Karmas*. The first one observed daily and the second on special occasions.

a) Nitya Karma: Observed daily

1. Sandhya,
2. Pooja (worship), and
3. Panch-mahayajna:
  - a) Brahma Yajna
  - b) Pitri Yajna
  - c) Deva Yajna
  - d) Bhuta Yajna
  - e) Atithi Yajna

#### *Nitya Karmas*

They are to be observed daily and are mainly divided into three parts:

- (a) **Sandhya**
- (b) **Pooja**
- (c) **Panch-maha-yajna.**

#### Sandhya and the Sikh view

The prayer which the Hindus offer along with the rituals in the morning, noon and in the evening is known as *Sandhya\**, in which they recite *Gayitri* mantra, which is an invocation to the Sun God, through which the person offering prayer invokes the God to shed His blessings on the earth. In addition to reciting the mantra, they offer water to Sun and the ritual is called *Tarpan*. This is followed by the practice of *Pranayama*. There is mention of this ritual of *Sandhya* and *Tarpan* in the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib:

- ਸੰਧਿਆ ਤਰਪਣੁ ਕਰਹਿ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਬਿਨੁ ਬੂਝੇ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ॥-*Sandhya tarpan karah gaayatri bin bhoojhe dukh paa-i-a*. They perform ‘*Sandhya*’ and ‘*Tarpan*’ and recite *Gayitri* mantra, but without the True knowledge they undergo sufferings’ (ibid, M3, p.603).

The Guru means that the worship of created things is useless. Only the Lord-God should be remembered. According to Gurbani:

- ਏਹਾ ਸੰਧਿਆ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਹੈ ਜਿਤ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਚਿਤਿ ਆਵੈ ॥ਹਰ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਉਪਜੈ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੁ ਜਲਾਵੈ॥-  
“*Ehaa Sandhya parvaan hai jit har prabh meraa chit aavai.H Har sion preet oopjai maya moh jalavai..-i.e;-*Such “*Sandhya*” is approved, which implants my Lord in my mind. It produces attachment with God and burns the love of materialism ”(Ibid, p.553).

Gurbani says:

- ਦੈਤ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਪ੍ਰਹਿਲਾਦੁ, ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਤਰਪਣੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ, ਸਬਦੇ ਮੇਲਿ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ॥--*Dait putt ar prehlad, gayitri kichh na janay, sabday mail milaia* i.e Prehlad the son of a demon, did not perform any *Sandhya* or *Gayitri* and yet became a man of God (GGS, p.1133).
- ਗੁਰ ਸਾਸਤਿ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਖਟੁ ਕਰਮਾ ਗੁਰ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਅਸਥਾਨਾ ਹੇ॥ *Gur saasat simrit khat karma gur pavittar asthana hay--* The Guru is my Shastras, Simritis and the six rituals and the Guru is my holy place i.e, For the Sikhs their Guru is everything (GGS,P. 1074)

\* The word *Sandhya* comes from Sanskrit / Punjabi word *Sandhi* –union (between two times

viz day and night noon after-noon, evening and night).

### **Pooja, (offering to deities) and its Sikh view**

The second *Nitya Karma* in Hinduism is, 'Pooja', which is offered to deities. Pooja is not an act of prayer; it is an act of homage, including that of entertainment. Hindus worship stones and stone idols of different gods and goddesses. Hinduism has five principal sects: The Vaishnavas, the Shaivas, the Shaktas, the Ganapatyas and the Shauryas, who are worshippers of Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti (Devi), Ganesha, and Surya (Sun) respectively. All Hindus pay veneration to cow and rever the Brahman.

The Vaishnavas are devotees of Vishnu and his incarnations Rama and Krishna. Their scriptures include: *Bhagvadgeeta*, the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Vishnu Purana*. The worship involves bathing, dressing, feeding and singing hymns to the stone gods / statues / pictures. They call the stones, *Saligram*, while the idols are called *moortis*. They gather in the temple in the morning and in the evening for *Pooja*. In *Pooja*, the Icon-god is ceremoniously awakened from his bed in the morning with music, given a bath, ceremoniously dressed and is presented with an offering. The offering consists of flowers (*Phool*) garlands, *dhoopa* (incense burning), *deepa* (lighting lamps with clarified butter), *arga* (grass blades, washed rice and oblations of water and *milk--kachi lassi etc*), *madhuparka* (offering of honey etc), *gandha* (perfumes, sandal paste etc), and *Tulsi* leaves and *naibed* (food for the deity) of which it eats the subtle part, leaving the gross food, '*seet parsaad*', i.e '*jootha-ਜੁਠਾ*' for the worshipper. In larger temples, the icon-god is taken to bed at night to join his wives or *shaktis*, and he is entertained by dancers, the *devdasis*, during the day. In the evening there is display of lights combined with offering and devotional singing. This is called '*Aarti*'.

*Aarti* is performed by Shaivites also around the *Lingum*, with prayers the worshipper pours water on the *lingum* and makes on it the three marks of tripunda with a paste of sandalwood ash, mixed sometimes with saffron. He makes similar marks on his own forehead and places flowers and leaves on the top of the *lingum* as a sort of offering to the god. There are many manifestations of Shiva and Shakti like the manifestations of Vishnu. The manifestations of Shiva are: Bhairva, Rudra,, Mahavira etc. Their scriptures are Agamas and Puranas.

The Shaktas worship the Goddess (Devi) *Shakti* in her various forms: Chandi, Kali, Durga etc. The scriptures of Shaktas are called *Agamas / Tantras*. The Shaktas are divided into two paths i.e: '*Dakshina*' (rightists) and '*Vama*' (leftists). The Vamcharis are steeped in sensuous life. The Shaktas worship their supreme goddess through *mantras* (prayers and mystical formulae), *mudras* (hand gestures) and *mandalas* (magical diagrams representing cosmos). In all this the basic elememnts of prayer are lacking.

The *havna (homa)* is performed with sacrificial offerings, the sacred text is recited, the mantras are repeated along with meditation. The flowers water with perfume etc; incense (*dhoopa*), lighted lamp (*deepa*) etc are used during worship.

Gurmat regards all these rituals i.e; *Karmas or Karm Kanda* as acts of hypocrisy and therefore rejects all such practices. The Gurus criticized the paraphernalia and the material ingredients used in worship. Saying:

- ਪੂਜਾ ਵਰਤ ਤਿਲਕ ਇਸ਼ਨਾਨਾ ਪੁਨ ਦਾਨ ਬਹੁ ਚੈਨ।। ਕਹੂੰ ਨ ਭੀਜੈ ਸੰਜਮ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਮੀਠੈ ਬੈਨ।।---ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਰਮੋਲਕੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਸੁ ਤਿਨਿ ਪਾਇਓ ਜਿਸੁ ਕਿਰਪੈਨ।। *Pooja, vart, tilak isnana, pun daan bahu daen Kahoon na bheeje sanjam soami, bolay meethay bain .1. ---Amrit naam nirmolak har jas tin paio jis kirpain Sadh sang rang prabh bhetay, Nanak sukh jan raen .3. i.e.Worship, fasting,*

frontal mark, ablution, the giving of copious alms and charity, self-mortification and utterance of sweet words, with none of these the Lord is pleased.---The ambrosial Name and the Lord's praise are invaluable and he alone obtains them, whom the Lord shows mercy. By meeting the holy company, slave Nanak is blessed with the Lord's love and his life night passes in peace (Ibid, p.674).

- ਧੂਪ ਦੀਪ ਨਈਬੇਦਹਿ ਬਾਸਾ॥ ਕੈਸੇ ਪੂਜ ਕਰਹਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਦਾਸਾ॥ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਅਰਪਉ ਪੂਜ ਚਰਾਵਉ॥ ਗੁਰਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਪਾਵਉ॥- *“Dhoop deep naibedeh basa, kaisay pooj kareh teri dasa. Tan man arppao pooj chraavao. Gur parsaad niranjan paavao.”* i.e. With incense, lamps, victuals and scents, how can Thy devotees worship Thee? I dedicate and offer my mind and my body as worship. By Guru's grace, I attain to the immaculate Lord (GGS, p 525).
- ਭ੍ਰਮ ਭੂਲੇ ਅਗਿਆਨੀ ਅੰਧਲੇ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਫਲ ਤੋਰਾਵੇ॥ ਨਿਰਜੀਉ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਮੜਾ ਸਰੇਵਹਿ ਸਭ ਬਿਰਥੀ ਘਾਲ ਗਵਾਵੈ॥ *Bharam bhoolay agiani andhlay, bhram bhram phal toravay, Nirjio poojay, marah srevay sabh birthi ghaal gaavay* i.e. The blind ignorant ones stray in doubt and so deluded, they pluck flowers for worship. They worship the lifeless stones and adore tombs. Their service all goes in vain (Ibid, p.1264).
- ਪਾਤੀ ਤੋੜੇ ਮਾਲਿਨੀ ਪਾਤੀ ਪਾਤੀ ਜੀਓ॥ ਜਿਸੁ ਪਾਹਨ ਕਉ ਪਾਤੀ ਤੋਰੈ ਸੋ ਪਾਹਨ ਨਿਰਜੀਉ-*Paati toray malini, paati paati jio, Jis pahan kao paati toray, so pahan nirjio, Bhooli malini hai io, satgur jagta hai deo* i.e. Thou tearest off leaves, O lady-gardener, but in every leaf there is life. The stone (idol) for which thou pluckest the leaves, that stone is lifeless. In this, thou art mistaken, O lady gardener. The True Guru is the living Lord (Ibid p.479).
- ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮਿਲੇ ਤਾ ਸਹਿਸਾ ਜਾਈ॥ ਕਿਸੁ ਹਉ ਪੂਜਉ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਦਰ ਨ ਆਈ॥ ਏਕੈ ਪਾਥਰ ਕੀਜੈ ਭਾਉ॥ ਦੂਜੈ ਪਾਥਰ ਧਰੀਐ ਪਾਉ॥ ਜੇ ਓਹੁ ਦੇਉ ਤ ਓਹੁ ਭੀ ਦੇਵਾ॥ ਕਹਿ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਹਮ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ॥ *Satgur milay taan sehsha jaie, kis hao poojo, dooja nadir na aie, Ekay pathar, keejay bhao, doojay pathar dhariay pao, Je uh deo, tan uh bhi deva, kahay Nam Deo, ham har kee sewa* i.e. When the True Guru (Lord God) is met, it is then that the doubt is dispelled. Whom should I worship? I see no another. One stone is lovingly adorned. Another is trodden under the feet. If the one is god, the other is also a god (Ibid, p525).
- ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰੀ ਚਨਣਾਠੀਆਂ ਜੇ ਮਨ ਉਰਸਾ ਹੋਇ॥ ਕਰਣੀ ਕੁੰਗੂ ਜੇ ਰਲੈ ਘਟ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਪੂਜਾ ਹੋਇ॥ ਪੂਜਾ ਕੀਚੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਪੂਜ ਨ ਹੋਇ॥॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥ ਬਾਹਿਰ ਦੇਵ ਪਖਾਲੀਅਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਨੁ ਧੋਵੈ ਕੋਇ॥ ਜੂਠ ਲਹੈ ਜੀਉ ਮਾਜੀਐ ਮੋਖ ਪਇਆਣਾ ਹੋਇ॥ *Tera Naam kari channathian, je mann ursa hoay, Kani kungoo je ralay, ghat antar pooja hoay, Pooja keechay Naam dhiaiy, bin navin pooj na hoay, Rhao, Bahir dev pakhalieh, je mann dhovay koay, jooth lahay jio manjiay, mokh paiana hoay* i.e. I make thy name sandalwood and my mind the rubbing stone. If good deeds be mixed with as saffron, then alone shall the true worship be performed in the heart. Perform His service by meditating on God's Name, for, without the Name there is no worship. 1. Pause. If man were to wash his heart as the stone-god is washed from without, his impurity shall be removed, the mind shall be cleaned and he shall depart to deliverance (Gujri, Ml, p.489).
- ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਮੈਲਾ ਸੰਤੋਹੁ ਕਿਆ ਹਉ ਪੂਜ ਚੜਾਈ॥ ਹਰਿ ਸਾਚੈ ਭਾਵੈ ਸਾ ਪੂਜਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਭਾਣਾ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਾਈ॥-*Har*

*bin sabh kichh maila santoh, kia haon pooj chdai, Har saachay bhavay sa pooja, bhana man vasaaee i.e. Without God, everything is filthy, O saints. What offering should I lay before Him? Whatever pleases the True Lord, that alone is His worship (Ibid, M3, p.910).*

- ਅਚੁਤ ਪੂਜਾ ਜੋਗ ਗੋਪਾਲ॥ ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਅਰਪਿ ਰਖਉ ਹਰਿ ਆਗੈ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਹੈ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲ॥--*Achut pooja jog gopal. Man tan arp rakho har aagay sarab jeeaa kaa hai pratipaal..-i.e. The Lord eternal alone is worthy of worship. My mind and body, I dedicate to the Lord and place them before Him, who is the cherisher of all beings. (GGS, P.824).*
- ਮੰਨੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਚੀ ਪਤਿ ਪੂਜਾ॥ ਕਿਸ ਵੇਖਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਦੂਜਾ॥--*Mannay naam sachee pat pooja. Kis wekhaa naahee ko dooja.*—i.e. To believe in the *Naam* (God) is to attain true honour and worship. Whom else should I see, when there is no other except the Lord. (GGS,P.832).
- ਪੂਜਾ ਕੀਚੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਈਐ॥ ਬਿਨ ਨਾਵੈ ਪੂਜ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥--*Perform His service by meditating on God's Name, for, without the Name, there is no worship. (GGS, p.489)*
- ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜੀ ਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਤ ਮਨ ਚੈਨ॥--*By contemplating the reverend God's Name, mind obtains peace (GGS, p.674) .*
- ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਉ ਨ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਉ॥ ਏਕ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਲੇ ਰਿਦੈ ਨਮਸਕਾਰਉ॥--*I donot perform Hindu worship nor offer Muslim prayer. Tking the One Formless Lord into my heart, i make obeisance to Him (GGS, p.1136) .*

#### **Aarti and Sikh view**

*Aarti* is Hindu ceremony performed in adoration of the deity or personage in which lamps are lit with *desi ghee* (clarified butter) and placed in a platter. The number of lamps in the platter may vary from one to one hundred. The person performing *Aarti* moves the platter four times before the feet, twice before the naval, once before face and seven times around the body. He rings a bell with one hand and moves the platter with lit lamps around the image (*moorti*) or the person with the other hand. During the process he continues to chant *mantras*. Each devotee snaps his fingers and claps with hands and towards the end attendents touch their respective heart, arms, eyes and head etc with the hands.

In Guru Granth Sahib there is mention of *Aarti*, and the above mentioned offerings, but Gurbani denounces this ritual system of *Aarti* and the mode of worship and presents a cosmic version:

- ਗਗਨ ਮੈ ਥਾਲੁ ਰਵਿ ਚੰਦੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਬਨੇ ਤਾਰਿਕਾ ਮੰਡਲ ਜਨਕ ਮੋਤੀ॥ ਧੂਪੁ ਮਲਆਨਲਉ ਪਵਣੁ ਚਵਰ ਕਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਬਨਰਾਇ ਫੁਲੰਤ ਜੋਤੀ॥ ਕੈਸੀ ਆਰਤੀ ਹੋਇ ਭਵ ਖੰਡਨਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਆਰਤੀ॥ ਅਨਹਤਾ ਸਬਦ ਵਾਜੰਤ ਭੇਰੀ । ਰਹਾਉ॥ ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਨੈਨ ਨਨ ਨੈਨ ਹੈ ਤੋਹਿ ਕਉ ਸਹਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਨਾ ਏਕ ਤੋਹੀ॥ ਸਹ ਪਦ ਬਿਮਲ ਨਨ ਏਕ ਪਦ ਗੰਧ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਗਮ ਇਵ ਚਲਤ ਮੋਹੀ॥੨॥ ਸਬ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ॥ ਤਿਸ ਕੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ॥ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਖੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਹੋਇ॥ ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੁ ਆਰਤੀ ਹੋਇ॥੩॥ ਹਰਿ ਚਰਣ ਕਮਲ ਮਕਰੰਦ ਲੋਭਿਤ ਮਨੋ ਅਨਦਿਨੋ ਮੋਹਿ ਆਹੀ ਪਿਆਸਾ॥ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਜਲੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਰਿੰਗ ਕਉ ਹੋਇ ਜਾ ਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਮਿ ਵਾਸਾ॥--*Gangan mai thaal rav chand Deepak banay taarika mandal janak mote. Dhoop malaalno pavan chavro karay sagal ban rai phoolant jotee. Kaisee aarti hoay bhav khandnaa teree aarti. Anhataa sabad waajant bheree. Rahao. Sahas tav nain nan nain hai tohe kao sahas moorat nana ek tohee. Sahs pad bimal nan ek pad gandh bin sahas tav gandh iv chalet mohee. Sab mah jot jot hai soe. Tis kai chaanan sabh mah chaanan hoay. Gur saakhee jot pargar hoay. Jo tis bhavay su aarti hoay. Har charn kanwal makrand lobhit mano andino mohay aahee piaasa. Kirpa jal deh Nanak saarang kao hoay jaa te teray naam waasa. i.e. "In the sky salver, the sun and the moon are the lamps and stars with their orbs, are the studded pearls. The fragrance of sandal wood trees makes Thy incense, wind Thy fan and all the vegetation Thine*

flowers, O Luminous Lord.1. What beautiful worship with the lamps is being performed? Such is Thine adoration O Lord, the Destroyer of dread. The unstruck music, is the sounding of temple drums. Pause. Thousands of Thine eyes, yet Thou hast no eye. Thousand are Thine forms, yet Thou hast not even one. Thousands are Thine holy feet, yet Thou hast not even one foot. Thousands are Thine noses yet Thou art without a nose. I am bewitched by these plays of Thine.2. In all there is light and that light art Thou. By His light, the light shines in all the bodies. By Guru's teaching the Divine Light becomes manifest. Whatever pleases Him, that is His real worship. My mind is bewitched by the honey of the lotus feet of God, night and day, I am thirsty for them. O Lord Bless Nanak, the pied cuckoo, with the Nectar of Thine mercy, so that he may have an abode in Thy Name, O Lord." (Ibid, M1 p.663).

During his visit to the Hindu Temple at Jagan Nath Puri in Orissa in the evening the Pandas of the temple asked Guru Nanak to join the Aarti poojan with them, which he refused and told about the real Aarti being performed in nature by the Supreme Eternal Reality (God) and uttered this shabad singing the cosmic Aarti and spiritually enlightened them against the futility of the ritualistic Aarti with lamps in the platter.

### **Idol Worship (\*Moorti Pooja / Butt pooja) and the Sikh view**

Idol (Image) worship is predominant and accepted form of worship in Hinduism. It is said to have been introduced by Narad Muni. According to the ideology of Sikhism God is Transcendental, Who is without any form, delineation and colour: ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖੁ ਨ ਰੰਗੁ ਤਿਸ ਤੈ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਿੰਨ (GGS, p.283). He is Indefinable, immeasurable and Inaccessible, ਬਾਪਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਏ ਕੀਤਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ।। - *Thapia na ja-ay keeta na ho-ay*" i.e. He cannot be created or installed (Ibid, M1, p.2), therefore He cannot be adorned in any form image or idol nor created. The disapproval of idol worship has been expressed in the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth sahib in simple and common place terms:

- "ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੂਲੇ ਭੁਲੇ ਅਖੁਟੀ ਜਾਂਹੀ।। ਨਾਰਦਿ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਿ ਪੂਜ ਕਰਾਂਹੀ।। ਅੰਧੇ ਗੁੰਗੇ ਅੰਧ ਅਧਾਰੁ।। ਪਾਥਰੁ ਲੇ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਮੁਗਧ ਗਵਾਰ।। ਓਹਿ ਜਾ ਆਪਿ ਡੁਬੇ ਤੁਮ ਕਹਾ ਤਰਣਹਾਰੁ।।-*Hindu moolay bhoolay akhutee jaahee. Naarad kahiaa se pooj karaahee. Andhay gungay andh andhaar. Paathar le poojah mughad gavaar. Ohe jaa aap dubay tum kaha taranhaar.*-i.e-Hindus have forgotten the Primal Lord and are going the wrong way. As Narad instructed so they worship the idols. They are blind, dumb and the blindest of the blind. The ignorant fools take stones and worship them. Those stone idols which themselves sink, cannot ferry you across (Ibid, p.556).
- "ਪਾਖਾਨ ਗਵਿ ਕੈ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਦੇ ਕੈ ਛਾਤੀ ਪਾਉ।। ਜੇ ਏਹ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਸਾਚੀ ਹੈ ਤਉ ਗੜ੍ਹਹਾਰੇ ਖਾਉ।।-*Paakhaan gadh kai moorat keenee de kai chhatee pao. Je eh moorat saachee hai tao gharnhaaray khaao.*-i.e- "The sculptor carves the stone into an idol, by putting his feet on its chest. If the idol is truly God, then, why it does not punish the sculptor" (Ibid, p.479).
- "ਘਰਿ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ਸਭਾ ਨਾਲਿ।। ਪੂਜ ਕਰੇ ਰਖੈ ਨਾਵਾਲਿ।।ਕੁੰਗੂ ਚੰਨਣੁ ਫੁਲ ਚੜਾਏ।। ਪੈਰੀ ਪੈ ਪੈ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਮਨਾਏ।। ਮਾਣੂਆ ਮੰਗਿ ਮੰਗਿ ਪੈਨੇ ਖਾਇ।। ਅੰਧੀ ਕੰਮੀ ਅੰਧ ਸਜਾਇ।।ਭੁਖਿਆ ਦੇਇ ਮਰਦਿਆ ਰਖੇ।। ਅੰਧਾ ਝਗੜਾ ਅੰਧੀ ਸਥੈ।।*Ghar nara-i-n sabhaa naal. Pooj karay rakhai n navaal. Kungoo channan ful chara-ay. Pairee pai pai bahutut mana-ay. Manooa mang mang painay kha-ay. Andhee kam-mee andh saja-ay.*-i.e.- O Pundit, you install the idol of god in your house, along with lesser godlings. You wash it, worship it, offer saffron, sandalwood and flowers. You fall at its feet seeking to propitiate it. But you beg men for what you wear and eat. For thine dark deeds, thou shalt receive unforeseen punishment. The idol gives not the hungry and saves not the dying. It is a blind wrangling of the society of the blind" (Ibid, p.1240-41).

- “ਬੁਝ ਪੂਜਿ ਪੂਜਿ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੂਏ ਤੁਰਕ ਮੂਏ ਸਿਰੁ ਨਾਈ।। ਓਇ ਲੇ ਜਾਰੇ ਓਇ ਗਾਡੇ ਤੇਰੀ ਗਤਿ ਦੁਹੂ ਨ ਪਾਈ।।-*But pooj pooj Hindu mooy Turk mooy sir naae. Oay le jaaray oay lay gaaday teree gat duhoo na paaee.*-i.e-  
“The Hindu die worshipping and worshipping the idols and Mussalman die bowing their heads. The former burns the dead and the latter bury them. Neither of the two find Thy real state. O Lord” (Ibid, p.654).

Guru Gobind Singh says:

- ਕੋਊ ਬੁਤਾਨ ਕੋ ਪੂਜਤ ਹੈ ਪਸ ਕੋਊ ਮ੍ਰਿਤਾਨ ਕੋ ਪੂਜਨ ਧਾਇਓ।। ਕੂੜ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਉਰਝਿਓ ਹੀ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਕਾ ਭੇਦ ਨ ਧਾਇਓ।।--Some fools worship idols or proceed to worship the dead. The whole world, being in the grip of false ceremonies, has not known God’s secrets (Tav Parsad Savaiye).

\*Moorti could be made up of skin, bones and flesh i.e in form of a human being or a painting on a paper or wall or in the form of a photograph etc; or created from stone clay, wood, metal or plastic etc. Moorti is a Moorti and its worship in any form is strictly prohibited in Gurmat (Sikhism).

**Sikh view:** Gurbani says:

- ਏਕੋ ਜਪਿ ਏਕੋ ਸਾਲਾਹਿ।।ਏਕੁ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਏਕੋ ਮਨ ਆਹਿ।।ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਉ ਅਨੰਤ।। ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਜਾਪਿ ਏਕ ਭਗਵੰਤ।। ਏਕੋ ਏਕ ਏਕੁ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ।।ਪੂਰਨ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਬਿਆਪਿ।। “*Eko jap eko salahay, ek simer ekay mann ahay Ekas kay gun gao anant, mann tan jaap ek bhagwant. Eko ek ek har aap, pooran poor rehio prabh biap.*-i.e-Contemplate on one sole Lord and laud Him alone. Him alone contemplate and seek Him only in thy mind. Sing the excellences of the Infinite One Lord. With thy mind and body contemplate the one Lord. God Himself is solely One and Real. The pervading Lord is fully filling every place.” (Ibid, p.289).
- ਜਾਗਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ।।- “*Jaagat jot Japai nis basar, ek bina mann naik na aanai* i.e, He (the Khalsa) meditates on the Ever-radiant Light, day and night, and rejects all else but the One Lord from his mind.” (33,Swayie, Patshahi, 10).
- ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨੋ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਵੇਖਦਾ, ਜੇਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ।। ਡਿਠੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ, ਜਿਚਰੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਨ ਕਰੇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ---*Satgur sabh noon vekhda jetaa sagal sansaar, dithai mukat na hovaee jichar shabad na karay veechaar* i.e, All emancipated, until one contemplates not on the Guru’s word (GGS, p594). the mortals that are in the world, behold the True Guru. By merely seeing the Guru, one is not
- ਗੁਰ ਮੂਰਤ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਹੈ, ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਗਟੀ ਆਇਆ।। In fact the image of the Guru is *Shabad* (Word) of the Guru that remains conspicuous amidst *Sadh Sangat* (Holy congregation) (Bhai Gurdas var 24 pauri 25).
- ਤੀਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਮੋਹਿ ਕੋ ਸੁਨੋ ਨੰਦ ਚਿਤ ਲਾਇ।। ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਸਰਗੁਣ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਹੈ ਕਹੈ ਤੋਹੇ ਸਮਝਾਇ।।-*Teen ropp hai mohay ko suno Nand chit laa-ay. Nirgun, Sargun, Gur Shabad hai kahay tohay samjha-ay* (Mukh vaak Patshahi 10-Rahitnaama Bhai Nand Lal).

**Sikh commandment is:**

“ਪੂਜਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ-*Pooja Akaal kee* i. e, Worship only God, ਪਰੀਚਾ ਸਬਦ ਕਾ-*Paricha Shabad ka*, i.e Believe only in Gurbani, ਦੀਦਾਰ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਕਾ-*Deedar Khalse Ka*-i.e Keep the company of the Khalsa”

### Stone Worship (*Saligram / Thakur Pooja*) and the Sikh view

Hindus worship stone and call it Saligram or Thakur, which according to them represents Vishnu. Saligram is a village located in the south of Nepal, which is situated on the bank of Gandka River. From the bed of this river come out round stones, black or bluish in colour having white streaks on them. According to Hinduism they represent Vishnu. From the name of this village these stones have derived their name Saligram, which are also called Gandika Sut (son of Gandika).

According to a Pauranic story Vishnu turned into a stone after he had a curse from Rani Satbrinda wife of Raja Jalandhara, whom he had cheated. Before his turning into stone Vishnu said that he will marry her in his next birth. Satbrinda committed 'Sati' and she was reborn as Tulsi plant, on her grave. The Hindus solemnize marriage of Tulsi with Saligram every year in the month of Kartik in temples. Gurmat denounces such beliefs:

- ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੂਲੇ ਭੂਲੇ ਅਖੁਟੀ ਜਾਂਗੀ॥ ਨਾਰਦਿ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਿ ਪੂਜ ਕਰਾਂਗੀ॥ ਅੰਧੇ ਗੁੰਗੇ ਅੰਧ ਅੰਧਾਰੁ॥ ਪਾਥਰ ਲੇ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਮੁਗਧ ਗਵਾਰ॥ ਓਹ ਜਾ ਆਪਿ ਡੁਬੇ ਤੁਮ ਕਹਾ ਤਰਣਹਾਰੁ॥—*“Hindu moolay bhoolay akhuti janhi Narad kahia se pooj kranhi. Andhey gungey andh andhar. Pather ley poojeh mughad gavar. Uh ja api dubey tum kaha taarnhaar.-i.e.* The Hindus have forgotten the Primal Lord and are going the wrong way. As Narad instructed so they worship the stones (idols). They are blind, dumb and blindest of the blind. The ignorant fools take stones and worship them. Those stones, when they, themselves sink, how shall they ferry thee across? (Ibid, p. 556).
- ਤਾ ਕੋ ਕਰ ਪਾਹਨ ਅਨੁਮਾਨਤ॥ ਮਹਾ ਮੂੜੁ ਕਛੁ ਭੇਦ ਨ ਜਾਨਤ॥*Ta kao kar pahan anumanat. Maha murh bhed na janat.*—The great fool thinks that God is a stone. But he does not know the difference between the two (Guru Gobind Singh, Chaupai).
- ਜੋ ਪਾਥਰ ਕਉ ਕਹਤੇ ਦੇਵ॥ ਤਾ ਕੀ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੇਵ॥—*Jo pathar ko kehtay dev, ta kee birtha hovai sev* i.e Those who call stone their God, their service is wasted (GGS, p.1160).
- ਜੋ ਪਾਥਰ ਕੀ ਪਾਂਈ ਪਾਇ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਘਾਲ ਅਜਾਂਈ ਜਾਇ॥੧॥*Jo pathar kee paein paa-ay, tis kee ghaal ajain ja-ay.* i.e. Those who fall at the feet of the stone, their endeavour goes in vain (GGS, p.1160).
- ਨਾ ਪਾਥਰੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਨਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਦੇਇ॥ ਫੋਕਟ ਕਰਮ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਹੈ ਸੇਵ॥—*Na pathar bolai na kichh day, fokat kashir thakur pujanhi molil le man hoth zeeb jahig. deha dekhie savangur yehi bulle bhatakah ahig. karam, nihphal hai sev*—The stone does not speak nor gives you anything. Hollow are the rituals of the idol worshipper and fruitless his service (Ibid, M5, p.1160).
- ਏਕੈ ਪਾਥਰ ਕੀਜੈ ਭਾਉ॥ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਥਰ ਧਰੀਐ ਪਾਉ॥ ਜੇ ਓਹੁ ਦੇਉ ਤ ਓਹੁ ਭੀ ਦੇਵਾ॥.—*Ekey pathar keejai bhao, doojay pathar dhareey pao, Je uh deo taan uh bhi deva. i.e.*—One stone is lovingly adorned. Another stone is trodden under the feet. If one stone is god, the other is also a god. (Ibid, p525).
- *Kabeer thaakar poojah mol lay man hath teerath jaahay. Dekhaa dekhee sawaang dhar bhoolay bhatkaa khaahay* i.e; Kabir says, men buy and worship the god-idols and by their stubbornness go on pilgrimages. In imitation of each other, they wear ritual garbs, go astray and wander at large (GGS, p.1371)
- ਕਬੀਰ ਪਾਹਨ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰ ਕੀਆ ਪੂਜੈ ਸਭੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ॥ ਇਸ ਭਰਵਾਸੈ ਜੋ ਰਹੈ ਬੁਡੈ ਕਾਲੀਧਾਰ॥ *Kabeer paahan pamesar keea poojai sabh sansaar. Is bhavvaasay jo rahay booday kaalee dhaar* i.e; Kabir says, making gods of stone, all the world worships them. They, who abide in this belief, are drowned in the dark stream.(GGS, Kabir, p1371).

- ਅੰਤਰਿ ਦੇਉ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਅੰਧੁ॥ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਕਾ ਮੋਹਿਆ ਪਾਵੈ ਫੰਧੁ॥ ਨ ਪਾਥਰੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਨਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਦੇਇ॥ ਫੋਕਟ ਕਰਮ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਹੈ ਸੇਵ॥--*Antar deo na janai andh. Bhram ka mohia pavai phandh. Na pathar bolai na kichh day. Phokat karam nihphal hai sev* i.e; The blind one does not perceive God inside him; Immersed in doubts he gets entangled; Idol neither speaks nor gives; these are mere meaningless actions, without any rewards (GGS, p.1130).
- ਸਾਲਗ੍ਰਾਮ ਬਿਪ ਪੂਜਿ ਮਨਾਵਹੁ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤੁਲਸੀ ਮਾਲਾ॥ ਰਾਮਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਬੇੜਾ ਬਾਂਧਹੁ ਦਇਆ ਕਰਹੁ ਦਇਆਲਾ॥-- ਬਗੁਲੇ ਤੇ ਫੁਨ ਹੰਸਲਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੇ ਤੂ ਕਰਹਿ ਦਇਆਲਾ॥ ਪ੍ਰਣਵਤਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਦਾਸਨਿ ਦਾਸਾ ਦਇਆ ਕਰਹੁ ਦਇਆਲਾ॥ “*Saligram bip pooj manavhoo, sukrit tulsi mala, Ram Naam, jap beda bandho daya karho dayala---* *Pranvat Nanak, daasan daasa, daya karoh dayala*-O Brahmin, you worship, and propitiate the stone-god and deem it a good act to wear the rosary of sweet basil. Build thou the ship of meditation of Lord’s Name and pray to gracious Lord for grace.--- O Lord, if you be graceful then the heroin again turns into a swan. Nanak, the slave of Thy slaves, humbly supplicates, gracious Lord, show grace.” (Ibid, p.1171)
- ਪੂਜ ਸਿਲਾ ਤੀਰਥ ਬਨਵਾਸਾ, ਭਰਮਤ ਡੋਲਤ ਭਏ ਉਦਾਸਾ॥ ਮਨ ਮੈਲੇ ਸੂਚਾ ਕਿਉ ਹੋਇ? ਸਾਚ ਮਿਲੈ ਪਾਵੈ ਪਤ ਸੋਇ॥i.e. The man worships stones, abides at holy places, jungles, wanders, wavers and becomes a renouncer but with the filthy mind, how can he become pure? He, who meets the True Lord, obtains honour (GGS, p686).
- ਘਰ ਮਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਨਦਰ ਨ ਆਵੈ॥ ਗਲ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਹਣ ਲੈ ਲਟਕਾਵੈ॥ ਭਰਮੇ ਭੂਲਾ ਸਾਕਤੁ ਫਿਰਤਾ॥ ਨੀਰ ਬਿਰੋਲੈ ਖਪਿ ਖਪਿ ਮਰਤਾ॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥ ਜਿਸੁ ਪਾਹਣ ਕਉ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਕਹਿਤਾ॥ ਓਹੁ ਪਾਹਿਣੁ ਲੈ ਉਸ ਕਉ ਭੁਭਤਾ॥ ਗੁਨਹਿਗਾਰ ਲੂਣ ਹਰਾਮੀ॥ ਪਾਹਣ ਨਾਵ ਨ ਪਾਰਗਿਰਾਮੀ॥ ਗੁਰਮਿਲ ਨਾਨਕ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜਾਤਾ॥ ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਬਿਧਾਤਾ॥ i.e. Within his home, the man beholds not the Lord and suspends a stone-god aroud his neck. The mammon-woshiper wanders astray in doubt. He churns water and dies tired in agony. Pause. The stone which he calls his god, that stone drowns him along with itself. O sinner, untrue to thy salt, it is not the boat of stone that shall ferry thee across. By meeting the Guru, has Nanak realized the Lord. God the creator is fully prevalent in the water, dry land and troposphere (GGS, p.739).
- ਨਾਵਹਿ ਧੋਵਹਿ ਪੂਜਿਹ ਸੈਲਾ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਤੇ ਮੈਲੇ ਸੈਲਾ--*Naavah dhovah poojah saila. Bin har rate mailo mailaa* i.e. Thou (The Hindus) bathest, washest and worshippes stones. But without being imbued with God, they remain impure and filthy (GGS, p.904) .
- ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜਾਤਾ॥ ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਬਿਧਾਤਾ *ਘਰ ਮਲਿ Nanak thakur jaataa, Jal thal mahial pooran bidhaataaa*- i.e-By meeting the Guru, has Nanak realized the Lord, God, the creator is fully prevalent in water, dry land and the troposphere. (Ibid, Suhi 5, p739)
- ਅਪਨੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਕੀ ਆਪੇ ਰਾਖੈ ਆਪੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ॥ ਜਹ ਜਹ ਕਾਜ ਕਿਰਤ ਸੇਵਕ ਕੀ ਤਹਾ ਤਹਾ ਉਠ ਧਾਵੈ॥ ਸੇਵਕ ਕਉ ਨਿਕਟੀ ਹੋਇ ਦਿਖਾਵੈ॥ ਜੇ ਜੇ ਕਹੈ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਤਤ ਕਾਲ ਹੋਇ ਆਵੈ॥ *Apunay sevak kee aapay raakhay aapay naam japaavay. Jah jah kaaj kirat sevak kee tahaa tahaa uth dhavai. Sevak kao nikatee hoay dikhaavay. Jo jo kahay thakur pah sevak tat kaal hoay aavay* i.e. The Lord Himself preserves the honour of His slave and Himself causes him to repeat His name. Withersoever the business and affair of His slave is, thither the Lord runs to help him (Ibid, M5, p.403).

Guru Gobind Singh says:

- ਕਾਹੇ ਕੇ ਪੂਜਤ ਪਾਹਣ ਕੇ ਕਿਛ ਪਾਹਣ ਮੇ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸਰ ਨਾਹੀ।।ਤਾਹੀ ਪੂਜ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕਰਕੈ ਜਿਹ ਪੂਜਤ ਹੀ ਅਘ ਓਘ ਮਿਟਾਹੀ।। ਆਪਿ ਬਿਆਪਿ ਕੇ ਬੰਧਨ ਜੇਤਕ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਲੇਤ ਸਬੈ ਛੁਟ ਜਾਹੀ।। ਤਾਹੀ ਕੇ ਧਿਯਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨ ਸਦਾ ਇਨ ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਕਰੇ ਫਲ ਨਾਹੀ।। *Kahay ko poojat pahan kao, kichh pahan meh permesar nahee? Tahee ko pooj Prabhu karkay jih poojat hee agh ogh mitahee. Aadh biaabh kay bandhan jetak Naam kay lait sabhai chhut jaahee. Tahee ko dhian pramaan sadaa in fokat dharma karay fal nahee, ie. "Why worship a stone, God is not in a stone; Worship Him as thy master, by the worshipping whom all pains are assuaged. And by uttering whose Name thou shall be freed from all thy mental and bodily entanglements. Meditation on Him only is acceptable these false deeds end in no gain.*  
(Guru Gobind Singh, 33 Sawayyas, 20)
- ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਭਯੋ ਫਲ ਹੀਨ ਜੁ ਪੂਜ ਸਿਲਾ ਜੁਗ ਕੋਟ ਗਵਾਈ।।ਸਿਧ ਕਹਾ ਸਿਲ ਕੇ ਪਰਸੇ ਬਲ ਬ੍ਰਿਧ ਘਟੀ ਨਵਨਿੱਧ ਨ ਪਾਈ।।  
The hollow religion became friteless O being! You have lost years by worshipping the stones; you will not get power with the worship of stones; the strength and glory will only decrease; (DG, 33 swayyas, 21)
- ਜੋ ਜੁਗ ਤੈ ਕਰਿਹੈ ਤਪਸਾ, ਕਛੁ ਤੋਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨੁ ਨ ਪਾਹਨ ਕੈ ਹੈ।। ਹਾਥ ਉਠਾਇ ਭਲੀ ਬਿਧ ਸੋ, ਜੜ ਤੋਹਿ ਕਛੁ ਬਰਦਾਨੁ ਨ ਦੈ ਹੈ।।  
You may perform auterities and worship the stone for three yugas, it will not gadden thy heart. The image will not cofer any boon upon thee, with arms uplifted in a gracious manner; (33 Sawayyas 22 ).
- ਕਾਹੂ ਲੈ ਪਾਹਨ ਪੂਜ ਧਰਯੋ ਸਿਰ ਕਾਹੂ ਲੈ ਲਿੰਗ ਗਲੇ ਲਟਕਾਇਓ।। ਕਾਹੂ ਲਖਿਓ ਹਰਿ ਅਵਾਚੀ ਦਿਸਾ ਮਹਿ ਕਾਹੂ ਪਛਾਹ ਕੇ ਸੀਸ ਨਿਵਾਇਓ।। ਕੂ ਬੁਤਾਨ ਕੇ ਪੂਜਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ ਕੋਊ ਮ੍ਰਿਤਾਨ ਕੇ ਪੂਜਨ ਧਾਇਓ।। ਕੂਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਉਰਝਿਓ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਜਗ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਕੇ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ।।Some worship stone and their head on it i.e bow their head to stones. Some hang the phallus (lingum) stung in necklace. Some bow their head towards the south (towards Dwarka) and some towards the west (towards Kaba in Mecca). Some worship images, others busy praying to dead, The world is thus bound by false ritual, and God is secret unread.”  
(Tav Parsad Swayye, Guru Gobind Singh).

**Sikh view:** According to Gurmat:

- ਏਕੋ ਜਪਿ ਏਕੋ ਸਾਲਾਹਿ।। ਏਕੁ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਏਕੋ ਮਨ ਆਹਿ।। ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਉ ਅਨੰਤ।। ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਜਾਪ ਏਕ ਭਗਵੰਤ।। ਏਕੋ ਏਕ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ।। ਪੂਰਨ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਬਿਆਪਿ।।—“*Eko jap eko salahay, ek simer ekay mann ahay, ekas kay gun gaao anant, mann tan jaap ek bhagwant. Eko eke k har aap, pooran poor rehio prabh biap—* i.e; “Contemplate on one Lord and laud Him alone. Him alone and seek Him only in mind. Sing the excellences of the infinite One Lord. With thy mind and body ਜਾਗਜੋਤ ਬਸੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸਰ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ।।—contemplate the One Lord God Himself is soley One and Real. The pervading Lord is fully filling every place” (GGS, p.289).
- *jaagat jot japai nis baasar, ek binaa mun naik na aanai* i.e; “He (Khalsa) meditates on the Ever-radiant Light, and rejects all else but One Lord, and rejects all else but the One Lord from his mind (33 Sawaiyye Paatshahi10)
- ਬਿਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਨਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਤਮ ਮਾਨੋ—“Bin Kartaar na Kirtam maano—Except the Creator donot worship any created being” Shabad Hazare, Guru Gobind Singh)

**The Sikh Commandment is:**

“*Pooja Akaal kee---Worship only God,*

*Paricha Sahabad kaa,*

*Deedar Khalsay kaa—Keep the company of the Khalsa”.*

(*Mukh vaak Patshi* 10)

***Devi / Devta Pooja and Sikh view***  
**(Gods and Goddesses worship)**

*Devta* lit: means One who gives something, whereas *Devi* lit: means give me something. Hinduism is a polytheistic religion and belief in numerous gods and goddesses is one of its cardinal principles. The Hindu priest, Brahman, determined, a controller (*Devta*) for every natural force, blessing, disease or calamity. These *Devtas* included planet gods viz; sun, moon and earth etc. Then the natural forces as gods; Air, fire, rain and water etc, rivers viz Ganga-Ganges, Jamna etc, food items as gods (*Ann devta*) including salt etc, the animals as gods: Cow, Boar (*Varah*), snake (*Shesh naag*) fish (*Machh*), tortoise (*Kachh*), rat etc, birds as gods: *Neelkanth*, *Garud* etc, trees and plants as gods: *Banyan*, *coconut*, *Pipal*, *Tulsi* etc, diseases viz small pox (*Seetla Devi*) etc are also among them. Then there were superhuman gods responsible for creation, sustaining and destruction of the world. The giver of life or creator was named *Brahma*, the sustainer as *Vishnu* and the destroyer was given the name of *Shiva*. These three gods are spoken of as forming a *Trimurti* (Trinity). The female forces were given the name of *Devis*-(*Durga*, *Kali*, *Saraswati*, *Lakshami* etc), while the male forces were called *Devtas*. The Brahmin, himself, designated as *Brahmin Devta*. The total number of such *Devtas* and *Devis* (divinities i.e Gods and Goddesses) in Hinduism came to be thirty three crores. Different time was fixed for each one of them, different type of worship was fixed for different *Devtas* and *Devis* and different types of offerings were conceived for them, because every *Devta* fulfilled a different desire or demand. Because of his ignorance man became victim of unnecessary imaginative worship. The verdict of *Gurbani* in this regard is:

- ਪਵਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨਿ ਤਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸ ਅਕਾਰ॥--*Pawan paanee Agn tin keea Brahama, Bisan, Mahesh akaar*. i.e “The master who created air water and fire also created *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*” (GGS, p.504).
- ਤੇਤੀਸ ਕਰੋੜੀ ਦਾਸ ਤੁਮਾਰੇ ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਅਧਾਰੀ॥ ਤਾਕੇ ਰੂਪ ਨ ਜਾਹੀ ਲਖਣੇ ਕਿਆ ਕਰਿ ਆਖਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ॥-  
*Tetees karoree dass turaray ridh sisidh praan adhaaree. Taa ke roop na jaahee lakhnay kiaa kar aakh weechaaree* i.e, “Thirty three crores of gods are Thy servants Thou givest wealth of supernatural powers and thou art prop of their life. His forms cannot be comprehended. What can one narrate or contemplate on these?” (GGS, p.423).
- ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ਪੂਜੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਗਉ ਕਿਆ ਦੇਹਿ॥ ਪਾਹਣੁ ਨੀਰਿ ਪਖਾਲੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਬੁਭਹਿ ਤੇਹਿ॥ “*Devi Deva pooji-ay bhai kia mangi kia deh'Pahan neer pikhali-ay bhai, jal meh booday teh*.—i.e, “why worship goddesses and gods, brother, what can one ask from *them* and what can they give him? The stone gods are washed with water, brother but they drown in water.” (Ibid, M1, p. 637).
- ਤਿਤੀਆ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸਾ॥ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵ ਉਪਾਏ ਵੇਸਾ॥ ਜੋਤੀ ਜਾਤੀ ਗਣਤ ਨ ਆਵੈ॥ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਾਜੀ ਸੋ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਪਾਵੈ॥-  
-The third (lunar day) the Lord has created *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Shiva*, goddesses, gods and various other forms. There is no count of beings emanating form His light. He, who made them knows their extent and appraises their worth (GGS, p, 839) .
- ਕੋਟਿ ਬਿਸਨ ਕੀਨੇ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ॥ ਕੋਟਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਧ੍ਰਮਸਾਲਾ॥ ਕੋਟਿ ਮਹੇਸ ਉਪਾਇ ਸਮਾਏ॥ ਕੋਟਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਜਗੁ ਸਾਜਣ ਲਾਏ॥ ਐਸੇ ਧਣੀ ਗੁਵਿੰਦ ਹਮਾਰਾ॥ ਬਰਨਿ ਨ ਸਾਕਉ ਗੁਣ ਬਿਸਥਾਰਾ॥--Millions of *Vishnu* incarnations, He has created. Millions of universes are His abodes to practice rightes deeds. Millions of *Shivas* He created and destroyed. Millions of *Brahmas*, he employed to create the universe. Such is our Lord

Divine Master. I cannot narrate the details of his innumerable merits (GGS, p, 1156) .

- ਠਾਕੁਰ ਛੋਡ ਦਾਸੀ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਅੰਧ ਅਗਿਆਨਾ॥ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਨਿੰਦਹਿ ਨਿਗੁਰੇ ਪਸੂ ਸਮਾਨਾ॥  
“*Thakur chhod dasi kao simreh, manmukh andh agiana. Har kee bhagat karah tin nindah niguray pasoo samana i.e.* The blind and thoughtless egocentric leaving the Lord, contemplates His subordinates. Those who are without the Guru, are like the beasts. They slander those, who worship God.” (Ibid, p.1138-39).
- ਈਸਰ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ॥ ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਤਪੇ ਮੁਨਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਸੇਵਾ॥ ਜਤੀ ਸਤੀ ਕੇਤੇ ਬਨਵਾਸੀ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਪਾਇਦਾ॥ “*Eesar Brahma Devi Deva, Inder tapay mun teri sewa, Jatee Satee ketay banvae ant na koi paaida i.e.* Shiva, Brahma, goddesses, gods, Indra, penitents and silent sages, are all engaged in Thine service. The celibates, the men of piety and good many forest dwellers, none of these, is able to realize thy extent. (Ibid, M1, p.1034).
- ਈਸਰੁ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਸੇਵਦੇ ਅੰਤੁ ਤਿਨੀ ਨ ਲਹੀਆ॥ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਅਲਖੁ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟੀਆ॥--*Eesar Brahma sevade ant tinee na laheea. Nirbhao nirankaar alakh hai gurmukh pargateea* i.e. Shiva and Brahma, despite their devotion, have not found God’s limit. The fearless and Formless Lord is invisible and is revealed only to God-oriented ones. (GGS, p.516) .
- ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹਾਦੇਉ ਮੋਹਿਆ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਲਗੇ ਸੇ ਸੋਹਿਆ॥-*Brahma Bisan Mahadeo mohia. Gurmukh naam lagay se sohia* i.e, “Brahma Vishnu and Mahadev were under the worldly attachments. The Guru-wards in devotion to the Name, have come out with honour” (GGS, p.394).
- “ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ਮੂਲ ਹੈ ਮਾਇਆ॥ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਾਸਤ ਜਿੰਨ ਉਪਾਇਆ॥ “*Devee Deva mool hai maya, Simrit saasat jin upaa-i-aa i.e* The great illusion is the origin of gods, and goddesses on whom Simritis and Shastra were written” (Ibid, M3, p.129).
- “ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਸਭਿ ਦੇਵਾ ਕਾਲੁ ਨ ਛੋਡੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ॥ ਓਹੁ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਅਲਖ ਅਭੇਵਾ॥ -“*Maya mohay Devi sabh Deva, kaal na chhoday bin gur kee sevaa,. Oh abinaasee alakh abhevaa* i.e. Materialism has deluded all gods and goddesses. Death spares none without Guru’s service. That Lord is imperishable, Unseen, and Inscrutable.” (Ibid, p. 227).
- “ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹਾਦੇਉ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਗੁਣ ਰੋਗੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਈ॥ ਜਿਨ ਕੀਏ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਨ ਚੇਤਹਿ ਬਪੁੜੇ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸੋਝੀ ਪਾਈ॥-*Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadev were suffering from three qualities of materialism and were acting under egoism. They remembered not God who created them* (GGS, p. 735).
- “ਮਹਿਮਾ ਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਬੇਦ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਭੇਦ॥ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਅੰਤੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬੇਅੰਤ॥ ਅਪਨੀ ਗਤਿ ਆਪਿ ਜਾਨੈ॥ ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਅਵਰ ਵਖਾਨੈ॥ ਸੰਕਰਾ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਭੇਦ॥ ਖੋਜ ਹਾਰੇ ਦੇਵ॥ ਦੇਵੀਆ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨੈ ਮਰਮ॥ ਸਭ ਉਪਰਿ ਅਲਖ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ॥ - “*Mahima na jaaneh baid Brahmey nahee jaaneh bhed. Avatar na jaaneh ant. Parmesar paarbrahm beant. Apni gat aap janay. Sun sun avar wakhaanai. Rhao. Sankra nahin janeh bhev, Khojat haray dev. Deveea nahi janai marm. Sabh oopar alakh Parbrahm* i.e. The Vedas, know not the Lord’s glory. Brahma cannot realize His mystery. The incarnations know not His extent. The Lord is supreme, transcendent and limitless. His state, He Himself knows. Others speak of Him from hearsay. Shiva knows not His secret. The gods have grown weary searching Him. The goddesses know not His mystery. Over all is the Unseen Supreme Lord”. (Ibid, p. 894).

Guru Gobind Singh says:

- ਕਾਰੇ ਕੇ ਏਸ ਮਹੇਸਹਿ, ਕਾਰੇ ਦਿਜੇਸ ਕੇ ਏਸ ਬਖਾਨਯੋ॥ ਹੈ ਨ ਰਘਵੈਸ, ਜਦਵੈਸ ਰਮਾਪਤਿ ਤੇ ਜਿਨਕੋ ਬਿਵਨਾਥ ਪਛਾਨਿਯੋ॥ ਏਕੋ ਛਾਡ ਅਨੇਕ ਭਜੈ, ਸੁਕਦੇਵ, ਪਰਾਸਰ, ਬਿਯਾਸ ਝੁਠਾਨਿਯੋ॥ ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਸਜੈ ਸਭ ਹੀ, ਹਮ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਬਿਧ ਨੇਕ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨਿਯੋ॥ “Why call Shiva God and why speak Brahma as God, God is not Ram Chandra or Krishna whom ye suppose to be the Lords of the world; Sukhdev, Prashar and Vyas erred in

abandoning the One God and worshipping many Gods. All have set up false religions; I in every way believe that there is but One God” (Thirthy three sawayas—XV Swaiya).

- ਕੋਊ ਦਿਜੇਸ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ, ਕੋਊ ਮਹੇਸ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਬਤੇ ਹੈ।। ਕੋਊ ਕਹੈ ਬਿਸਨੋ ਬਿਸਨਾਇਕ, ਜਾਹਿ ਭਜੈ ਅਘ ਓਘ ਕਟੈ ਹੈ।। ਬਾਰ ਹਜਾਰ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਅਰੇ ਜੜ, ਅੰਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਤਜ ਜੈ ਹੈ।। ਤਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਧਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨ ਹੀਏ, ਜੋਊ ਥਾ, ਅਬ ਹੈ ਅਰੁ ਆਗੇ ਊਹੈ ਹੈ।। i.e, “Some worship Brahma as God others point to Shiva as God; Some say Vishnu is the Lord of the world and that by worshipping Him all sins are erased; Think on this a thousand times, O fool, at the last hour, all thy gods will forsake thee; Meditate in thy heart who was, is and shall ever be”. (Thirty three swayyas -xvi)
- ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਬਿਸਨ ਸਚੀਪਤਿ ਅੰਤ ਫਸੇ ਜਮ ਫਾਸ ਪਰੈ ਹੈਂ।।-- “*Brahm, Mahesar, Bisan Sachipat ant fasay jam faas paren gay*” i.e; “Brahma, Shiva and the husband of Sachi i.e; Indra will ultimately be entrapped in the noose of death” (Tav Parsaad Sawaiyye Patshi10)).

**Gurbani says:**

- “ਪੂਜਹੁ ਰਾਮੁ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਦੇਵਾ”।।--“*Poojoh ram ek he deva*” i.e, Worship only the One Lord (GGS, p. 484).
- ਏਕੋ ਜਪਿ ਏਕੋ ਸਾਲਾਹਿ।। ਏਕੁ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਏਕੋ ਮਨ ਆਹਿ।। ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਉ ਅਨੰਤ।। ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਜਾਪਿ ਏਕ ਭਗਵੰਤ।। ਏਕੋ ਏਕ ਏਕੁ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ।। ਪੂਰਨ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਬਿਆਪਿ।। “*Eko jap eko salahay, ek simer ekay mann ahay Ekas kay gun gao anant, mann tan jaap ek bhagwant. Eko ek ek har aap, pooran poor reho prabh biap.*”-i.e-Contemplate on one sole Lord and laud Him alone. Him alone contemplate and seek Him only in thy mind. Sing the excellences of the Infinite One Lord. With thy mind and body contemplate the one Lord. God Himself is solely One and Real. The pervading Lord is fully filling every place.” (Ibid, p.289).
- ਜਾਗਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ।।- “*Jaagat jot Japai nis basar, ek bina mann naik na aanai* i.e, He (the Khalsa) meditates on the Ever-radiant Light, day and night, and rejects all else but the One Lord from his mind.”

(33, Swayie, Patshahi, 10).

**The Sikh Commandment is:**

“*Pooja Akaal kee*---Worship only God,

*Paricha Sahabad kaa,*

*Deedar Khalsay kaa*—Keep the company of the Khalsa”.

***Avtaar Pooja (Worship of Incarnations) in Hinduism and Sikh view***

In the theology of Sikhism, ‘*Avtaar*’ literally means birth: ਮਾਨੁਖਾ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਦੁਲਭ—*Maanukha avatar dulabh* i.e; “Human birth is difficult to obtain” (GGS, p.486), but in Hinduism it means any person or animal serving as the embodiment of God or spirit. According to Hindu thought God descends to earth in the form of an incarnation to restore *Dharma* (righteousness) whenever there was rule of *Adharma* (un-righteousness) and therefore these incarnations are worshiped as God. When Guru Nanak appeared on the soil in the Indian subcontinent, according to ancient Hindu thought there were many Gods. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva formed the trinity as creator, preserver and destroyer. It was held in Hinduism that God took birth not only in human form, but also himself comes into the world in various anthropomorphic forms, such as, The *Hansa* (Swan), *Machh* or *Matsya* (Fish), *Kachh* or *Kurma* (Tortoise), *Varaha* (Boar), *Nar-Simha* (Partly human, partly tiger) and finally in human forms. Twenty-four incarnations of God Vishnu were accepted. Rama the son of king Dashratha and Krishna

son of Vasudeva were among them. Countless male and female divinities were also regarded as Gods. The total came to 33 crores.

Contrary to this philosophy according to Sikhism, there is one and only one God and he does not descend on earth and does not assume human form as the *Avtaar Vaad* (Incarnation) theory in Hinduism portrays. Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism says, “ਸਰਬੰ ਸਾਚਾ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ॥—*Sarbang saachaa ek hai dooja naheen ko-ay*” i.e., “In this whole world there is one God second to none” (GGS, p.660). Sikhism neither believes in the Hindu trinity of God-Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva nor 24 incarnations nor 33 crore divinities. As per Sikh thought there is One God and He is Supreme Eternal Reality. There is no division of functions and no delegation of authority. According to Sikhism, “God does not descend on earth. He neither takes birth nor dies. He is uncreated. He does not assume human or anthropomorphic form as the *Avtaarvaad* (incarnation) theory of Hinduism portrays”. This characteristic has been mentioned in Gurbani repeatedly. Guru Granth Sahib rejects the worship of Gods and their incarnations, because they are all created beings and also prone to death. The Brahmans confused the created beings with the creator. Gurbani lays emphasis on the worship of the Transcendent Almighty (Nirguna), who is Immortal and Infinite. It describes God as ‘*Ajoooni*’ (beyond birth and death). Its conception of God is uncompromisingly monotheistic, with no room for the idea of incarnation. Therefore worship should be of One Formless God. It says:

- ਏਕਮ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ॥ ਅਮਰੁ ਅਜੋਨੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਲਾ॥ ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖਿਆ ਖੋਜਤ ਖੋਜਤ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ॥—“*Ekam, ekankaar nirala, amar ajoni, jaat na jala, Agam agochar, roop na rekhia, Khojat khojat ghat ghat dekhia*—The Unique Lord is Peerless, Immortal, Unborn, and without caste and involvement. He is Inaccessible, unknowable and has no form or outline. By searching and searching I have seen Him in all hearts.” (GGS, M1, p.838).
- ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ਕਲਿ ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਦੀਪਾਈ॥—“*Akal moorat ajoooni sanbhao kal andhkar deepai*”, i.e.; “The one (whose allegoric body) is without any effect of time and space, is free from life and death cycle, is created by itself and gives light to disperse darkness (of ignorance)” (Ibid, M5 p.916).
- ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਨਹੀ ਧੰਧਾ ਧੈਰਿ॥—“*Janam maran nahin dhanda dher*”, ie; “The Almighty is free from birth and death cycle” (Ibid, p936).
- ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ॥—“*Janam maran tay rehat Narain*” i.e; “The Almighty is free from birth and death” (Ibid, M5, p.1136)
- ਤੂ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਜੋਨਿ ਨ ਆਵਹੀ॥—“*Toon parbrahm parmesar joon na avhi*” i.e; “You are the greatest and do not come into life and death cycle” (Ibid, M5, p.1095).
- ਅਮੋਖ ਦਰਸਨ ਆਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਜਿਸੁ ਕਦੇ ਨਾਹੀ ਖਉ॥—“*Amog darshan ajoooni sanbhao, Akal moorat jis kaday na khao*”, i.e; “The inexhaustible Bounteous is without life-death cycle and is created by itself. There is no effect of time and space (on its allegoric body) and is never destroyed” (Ibid, M5, p.1082).

According to Gurbani the so called *Avtars* (of Hindus) were human beings and not God in human form, therefore it rejects their worship, because they are all created beings and also prone to death:

- “ਜੁਗਹ ਜੁਗਹ ਕੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੀਏ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਕਰਿ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ॥ ਤਿਨ ਭੀ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਕਰ ਆਖ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ॥ [—*Jugah jugah ke raaje kee-ay gaavah kar avtaaree.tin bhee ant na paa-i-a ta ka kiaa kar aakh weechaaree*—i.e-The kings created by Thee in different ages are sung as Thine *Avtaars* (incarnations). Even they have not found Thy limits. (Ibid, p.423).

- ਅਵਤਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਅੰਤੁ॥ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬੋਅੰਤੁ–*Avtaar na jaanah ant. Parmeshar paarbraham beant* i.e. The incarnations know not His extent. The Lord is supreme, transcendent and limitless (GGS,p.894)
- ਹੁਕਮਿ ਉਪਾਏ ਦਸ ਅਉਤਾਰਾ ਦੇਵ ਦਾਨਵ ਅਗਣਤ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥ ਮਾਨਹਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਸੁ ਦਰਗਹਿ ਪੈਝੈ॥ ਸਾਚ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਸਮਾਇਦਾ॥ *Hukame upaae das aotaaraa. Dev daanav aagant apaaraa . Maanai hukam su dargah paijhai saach molaae samaaidaa* i.e. By His order God created ten incarnations, innumerable gods and numberless devils. Whoever obeys Lord's command is robed in honour at the Divine Portal. By uniting him with the True Name, the Lord merges him in Himself (GGS, p.1037)
- ਸਹੰਸਰ ਦਾਨ ਦੇ ਇੰਦੁ ਰੋਆਇਆ॥ ਪਰਸਰਾਮੁ ਰੋਵੈ ਘਰਿ ਆਇਆ॥ ਅਜੈ ਸੁ ਰੋਵੈ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਖਾਇ॥ ਐਸੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਰਾਮੁ ਨਿਕਾਲਾ ਭਇਆ॥ ਸੀਤਾ ਲਖਮਣ ਵਿਛੁੜਿ ਗਇਆ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਦਹਿਸਿਰੁ ਲੰਕ ਗਵਾਇ॥ ਜਿਨ ਸੀਤਾ ਆਦੀ ਡਉਰੁ ਵਾਇ॥ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਪਾਂਡਵ ਭਏ ਮਜੂਰ॥ ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਰਹਤ ਹਦੁਰਿ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਜਨਮੇਜਾ ਖੋਇ ਗਇਆ॥ ਏਕੀ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਪਾਪੀ ਭਇਆ॥ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਸੇਖ ਮਸਾਇਕ ਪੀਰ॥ ਅੰਤ ਕਾਲਿ ਮਤੁ ਲਾਗੈ ਭੀੜ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੰਨ ਪੜਾਇ॥ ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਮਾਗਹਿ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਜਾਇ॥ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਕਿਰਪਨ ਸੰਚਹਿ ਧਨੁ ਜਾਇ॥ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਰੋਵੈ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਗਵਾਇ॥ ਬਾਲੀ ਰੋਵੈ ਨਾਹਿ ਭਤਾਰੁ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੁਖੀਆ ਸਭ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ॥--*Sahansar daan de indar roaia. Paras ram rovai ghar a-i-aa. Ajai su rovai bheekhia kha-ay. Aisee dargah millai saja-ay. Rovaiy ram nikalaa bha-i-a. Seeta Lakhman wichhur ga-i-a. Rovaiy dahsir lank gava-ay. Jin seta adee daaroo wa-ay. Rovah pandav bha-ay majoor. Jin ki suamee rahat hadoor. Rovaiy janmeja kho-ay ga-i-a. Ekee kaaran papee bha-i-a. Rovah raje kann parae. Ghar ghar magah bheekhia ja-ay. Rovah kirpan sanchah dhan ja-ay. Pandit rovah gian gava-ay. Balee rovai naahe bhataar. Nanak dukheea sabh sansaar.*—With reward of punishment of the thousand marks of infamy, Indar had to weep. Paras Ram returned home crying. Ajai wailed, when he was made to eat the dung he gave in charity. Such is the punishment, meted out at the God's Portal. Rama wept when he was exiled and Sita and Lachhman were separated from him. The ten headed Rawan, who took away Sita by beating a hand drum, wept when he lost Ceylon. The Pandvas, whose Master lived with them, became servants and wailed. Janmeja wailed as he was gone astray. A single lapse turned him sinner. The Seikhs, seers and spiritual guides weep, lest they suffer agony at the last moment. The kings weep, having their ears torn and they go begging from house to house. The miser weeps when his hoarded wealth parts company with him. The Pandits wail when their learning fails. The young woman weeps for she has no husband. Nanak says, all the world is involved in suffering. He who believes in the Name, becomes victorious. No other ritual or deed is of any account (GGS, p.953).

Regarding Ram Chandar, the Hindu incarnation of God, Guru Nanak Dev proclaimed that if Ram had been God, he would not have lost his wife Sita and he would have healed his brother Lachhman, instead calling on Hanuman to do so. It was God the Almighty who did every thing not Ram:

- ਰਾਮ ਝੁਰੈ ਦਲ ਮੇਲਵੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਲੁ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ॥ ਬੰਤਰ ਕੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਜਝੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ॥ ਸੀਤਾ ਲੈ ਗਇਆ ਦਹਿਸਿਰੇ ਲਛਮਣੁ ਮੂਢਿ ਸਰਾਪਿ॥ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰਣਹਾਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਥਾਪ ਉਥਾਪ॥*Ram jhurai dal melvai antar bal adhikaar. Bantar kee saina seveevai man tan jujh apaar. Seeta lai gaiaa dah-siro Lachhman moo-o saraap. Nanak karta karnhaar kar wekhai thaap uthaap.*--Rama grieves in his mind, he gathers the army, he has within him the power and authority. The ten-headed Ravana has taken away Sita and because of a curse, Lakshmana was killed. Ram Chand grieves in his mind for Sita and Lakshmana. The misguided demon (Ravana) does not comprehend it. It was Lord God, who did everything, who is carefree and whose writ cannot be effaced, saith Nanak (Ibid, M1, p.1412).
- “ਪਾਂਡੇ ਤੁਮਰਾ ਰਾਮਚੰਦੁ ਸੋ ਭੀ ਆਵਤੁ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਥਾ॥ਰਾਵਨ ਸੇਤੀ ਸਰਬਰ ਹੋਈ ਘਰ ਕੀ ਜੋਇ ਗਵਾਈ ਥੀ॥–*Paanday tumra ramchand so bhee aavat dekhia tha . Ravan setee sarbar hoee ghar kee jo-ay gavaaee*

*thee--O Puandit! I saw your Ram Chand coming. He had a quarrel with Ravana and lost his wife" (Ibid, Gaund Nam Dev, p.875).*

- ਗਾਵਨਿ ਗੋਪੀਆ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਕਾਨ। ਗਾਵਨ ਸੀਤਾ ਰਾਜੇ ਰਾਮ। ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ। ਜਾ ਕਾ ਕੀਆ ਸਗਲ ਜਹਾਨੁ। ਸੇਵਕ ਸੇਵਹਿ ਕਰਮਿ ਚੜਾਉ।।ਭਿੰਨੀ ਰੇਨ ਜਿਨਾ ਮਨਿ ਚਾਉ।।-People sing the Gopis and Krishna, Sita and Rama, but not the fearless, true transcendent Lord, who is the creator of the whole world, whom only the servants through His grace adore (Ibid, M1, p.465).
- ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਹੋਰਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਰਾਮ ਰਵਾਲ। ਕੇਤੀਆ ਕੰਨ ਕਹਾਣੀਆ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਦ ਬੀਚਾਰ।।-Nanak *nirbhao nirankar hor ketay Ram raval. Ketia Kaan kahanian ketay Bed bichar* i.e; Nanak God is Fearless and Formless, there are many Ramas lying in dust. There are many stories about Krishna. There may be many thought-provoking Vedas (GGS, p.464).

Regarding Shri Krishna another incarnation of God in Hinduism, Gurbani says:

- ਤੁਮ ਜੁ ਕਹਤ ਹਉ ਨੰਦ ਕੋ ਨੰਦਨੁ ਨੰਦ ਸੁ ਨੰਦਨੁ ਕਾ ਕੋ ਰੇ।। ਧਰਨਿ ਅਕਾਸੁ ਦਸੋ ਦਿਸ ਨਾਹੀ ਤਬ ਇਹ ਨੰਦ ਕਹਾ ਥੋ ਰੇ।। ਸੰਕਟਿ ਨਹੀ ਪਰੈ ਜੋਨਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਵੈ ਨਾਮ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਜਾ ਕੋ ਰੇ।।-*Tum jo kahat hau nand ko nandan nand so nandan ka ko ray. Dharn akas daso dis nahin tab ih nand kaha tho ray. Pause. Sankat nahi parai jon nai avai naam Niranjan ja ko ray* i.e; You call God as Nand's son, how is he God when there was neither earth nor sky in all directions where was this Nand? God is beyond troubles nor is he born. He is called immanent (GGS, p. 338).

Guru Gobind Singh says:

- ਜੋ ਕਹੋ ਰਾਮ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਅਜੈ ਅਤਿ ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਕੌਸਲ ਕੁਖ ਜਯੋ ਜੁ।। If you consider Ram, the Lord as unborn, then how did he take birth from the womb of Kaushlya?
- ਕਾਲ ਹੂ ਕਾਨ ਕਹੈ ਜਿਹਿ ਕੋ ਕਿਹਿ ਕਾਰਣ ਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਦੀਨ ਭਯੋ ਜੁ।।He, who is said to be the destroyer of death, then why did he become subjugated himself before death?
- ਸੰਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਬਿਬੈਰ ਕਹਾਇ ਸੁ ਕਯੋ ਪਥ ਕੋ ਰਥ ਹਾਂਕ ਧਯੋ ਜੁ।।If you call Him (Krishna) all goodness and without enmity, why did then He become the charitor of Arjuna? ਕਿਯੋ ਕਹੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਿਧ ਹੈ, ਕਿਹ ਕਾਜ ਤੇ ਬਧਿਕ ਬਾਣ ਲਗਾਯੋ।।
- ਤਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕਰ ਕੈ ਜਿਹ ਕੋ ਕੋਊ ਭੇਦ ਨ ਲੇਨ ਲਯੋ ਜੁ।। O mind! You only consider him the Lord God, whose Mystery could not be known to anyone (33 Swayyas, 13)
- How do you identify Krishna, with All –merciful? Why did the hunter shot him with an arrow?
- ਅਉਰ ਕੁਲੀਨ ਉਧਾਰਤ ਜੋ, ਕਿਹਤੇ ਅਪਨੋ ਕੁਲ ਨਾਸ ਕਰਾਯੋ।।Why did he, who saves the families of others, had his own clan destroyed?
- ਆਦਿ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਕਹਾਇ ਕਹੋ, ਕਿਮ ਦੇਵਕਿ ਕੇ ਜਨਰੰਤਰ ਆਯੋ।। If he (Krishna) is said to be primeval and unborn, then how did he come into the womb of Devki?
- ਤਾਤ ਨ ਮਾਤ ਕਹੈ ਜਿਹ ਕੋ, ਤਿਹ ਕਿਉਂ ਬਸੁਦੇਵਹਿ ਬਾਪ ਕਹਾਯੋ।।He, who is considered without any father or mother, why then Vasudev be termed his father? (33 Sawayye—14,)
- ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਮਹੇਸਹਿ ਭਾਖਤ, ਕਾਹੇ ਦਿਜੇਸ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਬਖਾਨਯੋ।। ਹੈ ਨ ਰਘਵੈਸ ਜਦਵੈਸ ਰਮਾਪਤਿ, ਤੈ ਜਿਨਕੋ ਬਿਸਿਨਾਥ ਪਛਾਨਿਯੋ।। ਏਕ ਕੋ ਛਾਡਿ ਅਨੇਕ ਭਜੈ, ਸੁਕਦੇਵ, ਪਰਾਸਰ, ਬਿਯਾਸ ਝੁਠਾਨਿਯੋ ।। ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਸਜੈ ਸਭ ਹੀ, ਹਮ ਏਕਹਿ ਕੋ ਬਿਧ ਨੇਕ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨਿਯੋ।। i.e, “Why call Shiva God and why speak Brahma as God? God is not Ram Chander or Krishna or Vishnu, whom ye suppose to be the Lords of the world; Sukhdev, Prasar and Vyas erred in abandoning the one God and worshipping many gods. All have set up false religions; I, in every way believe that there is but one God who manifests himself in many ways” (Thirty three sawayyas-xv)
- ਕੋਊ ਦਿਜੇਸ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ, ਕੋਊ ਮਹੇਸ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਬਤੈ ਹੈ।। ਕੋਊ ਕਹੈ ਬਿਸਨੋ ਬਿਸਨਾਇਕ, ਜਾਹਿ ਭਜੈ ਅਘ ਓਘ

ਕਟੈ ਹੈ॥ ਬਾਰ ਹਜਾਰ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਅਰੇ ਜੜ, ਅੰਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਤਜ ਜੈ ਹੈ॥ ਤਾਹੀ ਕੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨ ਹੀਏ, ਜੋਊ ਥਾ, ਅਬ ਹੈ ਅਰੁ ਆਗੇ ਊਹੈ ਹੈ॥ i.e., “Some worship Brahma as God others point to Shiva as God; Some say Vishnu is the Lord of the world and that by worshipping Him all sins are erased; Think on this a thousand times, O fool, at the last hour, all thy gods will forsake thee; Meditate in thy heart who was, is and shall ever be”. (Thirty three swayyas -xvi)

- ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਮਹੇਸ਼ੁ ਬਿਸਨ ਸਚੀਪਤਿ ਅੰਤ ਫਸੇ ਜਮ ਫਾਸ ਪਰੈ ਹੈ॥-- “*Brahm, Mahesar, Bisan Sachipat ant fasay jam faas paren gay*” i.e; “Brahma, Shiva and the husband of Sachi i.e; Indra will ultimately be entrapped in the noose of death” (Akal Ustat).

Thus all divinities are prone to death, therefore the Lord God is to be adorned, who is Ever-Existent, ਬਿਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਨ ਕਿਰਤਮ ਮਾਨੋ “*Bin Kartar na kirtam mano*” i.e; ‘Except the Creator do not worship any created beings’ (Patshahi 10, Shabad Hazare).

Gurbani lays emphasis on the worship of the Transcendent Almighty (*Nirguna*), who is immortal and infinite:

- ਬਿਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਤਮ ਮਾਨੋ॥ ਆਦਿ ਆਜੂਨੀ ਅਬਨਾਸੀ ਤਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸਰ ਜਾਨੋ॥-- “*Bin Kartar na kirtam mano, adi ajoni abnasi teh Parmesar jano*—O man, except the creator do not worship anything other created being. Regard God, who was from the beginning Unborn, Invincible and Indestructible as the Supreme Being” (Mukh waak Patshahi 10, Shabad Hazare). This is very important tenet of Sikhism.
- “ਪੂਜਹੁ ਰਾਮੁ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਦੇਵ”॥--“*Poojoh ram ek he deva*” i.e, Worship only the One Lord (GGS, p ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਇਨਿ ਸਚੁ॥ ਜੋ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮੇ ਸੁ ਕਚੁ ਨਿਕਚੁ॥--(GGS, p. 484).
- Nanak says true are they, who meditate the True One. They who die and are reborn, are unbaked and worthless, false (GGS, p.463).

Several names of these incarnations, which were prevalent among the masses for the Supreme Eternal Reality (God), have been used by the Sikh Gurus in their verses, because they were more clearly understood by the devotees viz: Rama, Krishna, Gobind, Gopal, Banwari, Murari, Damodar etc.

### Grave and Tomb Worship in Hinduism /Islam and Sikh view

Sikhism strictly forbids any such worship. The canon of Sikh faith says:

- ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਨ ਪੜਉ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਹੋਰੁ ਨ ਪੂਜਉ॥ ਮੜੇ ਮਸਾਣਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਰਾਚਿ ਨ ਪਰ ਘਰਿ ਜਾਵਾ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਨਾਮਿ ਬੁਝਾਈ॥-- “*Dubhdha na parho, Har bin hor na poojo, Marhay masaan na jae Trisna raach na par ghar Java, trisna naam bujhae*—I do not indulge into duality, do not worship any other but God and do not go to tombs or crematoriums. With desire in mind, I do not go to another’s house. The Naam has assuaged my desire.” (GGS, Ml, p. 634)
- ਕੋਊ ਬੁਤਾਨ ਕੇ ਪੂਜਤ ਹੈ ਪਸ ਕੋਊ ਮ੍ਰਿਤਾਨ ਕੇ ਪੂਜਨ ਧਾਇਓ॥ ਕੂਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਉਰਝਿਓ ਹੀ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਕੇ ਭੇਦ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ॥ Some fools worship Idols others proceed to worship graves. The entire world is e d God (Patshahi 10, Tav Parsad Sawayye).ngaged in false rituals (cermonies) and none has understood the secret of the Lor
- ਜਾਗਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ॥ *Jagat jot japai nisbasur ek bina man naik*

*na aney*“--He (Khalsa) who meditates on the ever-radiant, day and night and rejects all else but the One Lord from his mind. ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਸਜੈ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਗੋਰ ਮੜੀ ਮਟ ਭੂਲ ਨਾ ਮਾਨੈ।।*Pooran prem pratit sajai, gor marhi mat bhool na maney*,--He who decorates himself with perfect love and faith and believes not in fasts, tombs, crematoriums and hermit-cells by mistake. ਤੀਰਥ ਦਾਨ ਦਯਾ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹੀ ਏਕ ਪਛਾਨੈ।।*Tirath dan daya tap sanjam ek bina neh ek pachhane*--He who knows none except the One Lord in the performance of acts of pilgrimage, charities, compassion, austerity and self control. ਪੂਰਨ ਜੋਤ ਜਗੇ ਘਟ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਖਾਲਸ ਤਾਹਿ ਨਾਖਾਲਸ ਜਾਨੈ।।*,Pooran jot jagai ghat maein tab Khalas tahe nakhalas jaane*-Such a man in whose heart shines the full Divinely radiant Light is a true Khalsa (33 Sawayyas patshahi. 10, Sawayya 1).

### **Jot Jagaoni--Holiness of lighting earthen / Wheat flour lamps with Desi Ghee (Clarified butter) in Hinduism**

&

### **Its rejection in Sikhism**

Sikhism is not against lighting lamps for light purposes, but is definitely opposed to make it a ritual. Vedanta/Sanatan Dharma (Hinduism) believes in worship of fire, therefore they keep the lamp (*Jot*) lit all the time in their place of worship. They believe that it keeps the evil Spirits away and they remain free from adversities, but according to *Gurmat* only, the lamp of Divine knowledge can dispel the darkness of ignorance from the mind, which is responsible for all our worldly sufferings:

- ਕਲਿ ਕਾਲਖ ਅੰਧਿਆਰੀਆ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨ ਦੀਪਕ ਉਜਿਆਰੀਆ।।--*Kal kaalakh andhiaariaa. Gur giaan deepak ujiaareeaa* i.e; “In the kalyuga there is pitch darkness (of ignorance). The Guru has lamp of divine knowledge, enlightens it”(GGS,P.210).
- ਦੀਪਕ ਬਾਧਿ ਧਰਿਓ ਬਿਨੁ ਤੇਲ।। ਸੇ ਦੀਪਕੁ ਅਮਰਕੁ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ।। ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਬਿਖੁ ਕਾਵੀਲੇ ਮਾਰਿ।।--*Deepak baandh dhario bin tel. so deepak amrak sanaar. Kaam krodh bikh kaadheele maar* i.e; “By contemplating whom thou shalt make merry, within thee, the Lord has firmly placed a lamp that burns without oil. That lamp renders the world immortal and drives out the poison of carnal appetite and anger” (GGS, p. 971).
- ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀਵਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਧਨ ਰੂਪ।। ਅਗਿਆਨ ਮੋਹ ਮਗਨ ਮਹਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਅੰਧਿਆਰੇ ਮਹਿ ਦੀਪ *Gobind jeevan praan dhan roop. Agiaan moh magan mahaa praanee andhiaare mah deep* i.e; “The lord is our life, breath, wealth and beauty. The mortal is greatly involved in ignorance and wordly love and the Lord is the lamp in this darkness” (GGS, p.701).
- ਸਬਦੁ ਦੀਪਕੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਇ।। ਜੇ ਚਾਖੈ ਸੇ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਹੋਇ।।ਨਿਰਮਲ ਨਾਮਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਮਲੁ ਧੋਇ।।--*Sabad deepak wartai tih loe. Jo chaakhai so nirmal hoe. Nirmal naam haomai mal dhoe* i.e; “The light of the *Naam* lamp is pervading the three worlds. He, who tastes the *Naam* becomes pure. The immaculate *Naam* washes off the filth of ego (GGS, p.664).
- ਦੀਪਕੁ ਸਹਿਜ ਬਲੈ ਤਤਿ ਜਲਾਇਆ।। ਦੀਪਕ ਰਸ ਤੇਲੇ ਧਨ ਪਿਰ ਮੇਲੇ ਧਨ ਓਮਾਹੈ ਸਰਸੀ।।...*Deepak sahj balai tat jalaa-i-aa. Deepak ras telo dhan pir melo dhan omaahai saesee* i.e; “The lamp, lighted by the essence of enlightenment burns steadily. God’s love is the oil of the lamp that unites the bride (soul/*atma*) with her groom (*Parmatma* / God). The bride is in bliss and blooms” (GGS, p. 1109).

- ਦੀਵਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਇਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਤੇਲੁ॥ ਉਨਿ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਓਹੁ ਸੋਖਿਆ ਚੂਕਾ ਜਮ ਸਿਉ ਮੇਲੁ॥ *Deeva mera ikk Naam dukh vich paia tail, un chaanan uh sokhia chooka jam sion mail.* The Naam is alone is my lamp and therein, I put oil of suffering. The Naam's lamp light has dried up the oil of suffering and I have escaped from Death's courier (GGS, p. 358).
- ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਬਦਿ ਉਜਾਰੋ ਦੀਪਾ॥ ਬਿਨਸਿਓ ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਤਿਹ ਮੰਦਰਿ ਰਤਨ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਖੁਲੀ ਅਨੂਪਾ॥--By the True Guru's Word is lighted the lamp. With that darkness of the body-temple is dispelled and the beauteous cabin of jewels is opened (GGS, p, 821) .
- ਨਾਮ ਤੇਰਾ ਦੀਵਾ ਨਾਮ ਤੇਰਾ ਬਾਤੀਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੋ ਤੇਲੁ ਲੇ ਮਾਹਿ ਪਸਾਰੇ॥ ਨਾਮ ਤੇਰੇ ਕੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਲਗਾਈ ਭਇਓ ਉਜਿਆਰੋ ਭਵਨ ਸਗਲਾਰੇ॥--Thy Name is the lamp Thy Name is the vick. Taking the oil of Thy Name, I pour it therein. Thy Name is the light, which I have applied to the lamp and it has enlightened the whole world (GGS, p, 694) .
- ਅੰਧਿਆਰੇ ਦੀਪਕ ਚਹੀਐ॥ ਇਕ ਬਸਤੁ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਲਹੀਐ॥ ਬਸਤੁ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਪਾਈ॥ ਘਟਿ ਦੀਪਕ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਈ॥ --In darkness, a lamp is required to find the unknowable thing. I have found the unknowable thing as within my-self the lamp is absorbed (GGS, p, 655) .
- ਬਲਿਓ ਚਰਾਗੁ ਅੰਧਾਰ ਮਹਿ ਸਭ ਕਲਿ ਉਧਰੀ ਇਕ ਨਾਮ ਧਰਮ॥ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਸਗਲ ਹਰਿ ਭਵਨ ਮਹਿ ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ॥--The Name's lamp is lighted in the midst of spiritual darkness. All the people of the Dark-age are saved with the aid of the One Name. The Guru-God, slave Nanak has ਪੋਥੀ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਕਮਾਈਐ ਭਉ ਵਟੀ ਇਤੁ ਤਨਿ ਪਾਈਐ॥ ਸਚੁ ਬੁਝਣੁ ਆਣਿ ਜਲਾਈਐ॥ ਇਹੁ ਤੇਲੁ ਦੀਵਾ ਇਉ ਜਲੈ॥ ਕਰ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤਉ ਮਿਲੈ--become manifest in all the worlds of the Lord (GGS, 1387)
- In this body lamp, put put the oil of reciting the religious books and the vick of Lord's fear. Light this lamp with the fire of knowledge of truth. With this oil thus shall thy lamp light up. Mke such light and then shalt thou meet the Lord (GGS, p, 25)
- ਸਭ ਮੈ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ॥ ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ॥ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਖੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਹੋਇ॥ ਜੋ ਤਿਸ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੁ ਆਰਤੀ ਹੋਇ॥--There is light in every heart and that is Thy Light which illuminates every one. By Guru's teaching the Divine light becomes manifest. Whatever pleases Thee that is the true worship (GGS, p, 13) .
- ਅਗਿਆਨੁ ਅੰਧੇਰਾ ਕਟਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡ ਬਲਾਇਆ॥--The darkness of my ignorance is removed. The Guru has blazed a very bright light of Divine knowedge in me (GGS, p, 78).

**b) Naimittika Karma**—Observed on special occasions. These are divided into four parts:

1. Samskaras (Sacraments / rites / Ceremonies)-Total forty six, but among the commonly observed one include: Garbhadharna Karma (impregnation of wife), Janam-Samskara (birth of child), Namadheya (naming the child) Annaprasana, Chudakarna, upanaya, Vivaha and Dah Samskara (the funeral ceremony).
2. The second kind of Naimittka Karmas are Shantis or propitiatory ceremonies, which have been introduced by Puranas. These are connected with, Ganesha, the giver of success, the planets, which have astrological effects.
3. The third type of Naimittika Karmas are Vratas (fasts) and Kathas (recitation of sacred legends).
4. The fourth kind of Naimittika Karma are praschitta or penances for the purification of the soul fom sins.

### **Important places of Hindu pilgrimage---Hindu Tiraths in India**

There are literally hundreds of temples all over India, but following shrines are important as well as popular places of pilgrimage:

**Shrines dedicated to Brahma**---Pushkar in Rajathan

**Shrines dedicated to God Vishnu:** *Badrinath* in Himalyas in Uttar Pardesh. At *Puri* in Orrisa, in eastern India Vishnu is worshiped as **Jagannath** and at *Tirupati* he is named **Balaji**, while at *Trivandrum* in Kerala he is **Padmanabh**. At *Gujrat*, in *Dwarka* the god is called **Krishna**—incarnation of Vishu.

**Shrines deicated to the God Shiva:** The god Shiva is called **Amarnath** at his shrine in Kashmir. His shrine at **Kedarnath** is up in the Himalayan foot hills in Uttar Pardesh. At Varanasi he is worshipped as **Vishveshwar** (Lord of the Universe), in Gujrat he is in **Somnath** and at Nasik in Maharashtra he is called **Trimbaka**. His southernmost shrine is at Rameshwaram. At all these shrines **Shiva is worshiped in a phallic (Penis) form called the lingam**, but at Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu he is worshipped as **Nataraj**, the Lord of the Cosmic Dance.

**Shrines dedicated to the mother goddess (Devi):** The mother goddess at the temple in Calcutta is known as Kali / Durga. At Varanasi she is called Vishalakshmi. Mahalakshmi temple at Kohlapur in Maharashtra is popular for the devotees of the mother goddess. In her temple at Kanchipuram in south India she is named Kamakshi, while she is popularly worshiped as Meenakshi in her magnificent temple at Madurai, also in southern India. In Himachal Pardesh she is worshiped as Naina Devi / Sheranwali.

**In Sikhism:**

Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Amritsar is the world seat of Sikhism and nothing else rivals it, “ਡਿਠੇ ਸਭੇ ਥਾਵ ਨਾਹੀ ਤੁਧ ਜੇਹਾ॥ (GGS, p.1362).

### **Hindu festivals**

Hindus have numerous festivals but the prominent ones are Holi and Divali, other important Hindu festivals include Navratri, Ramnaumi or Krishna Ashtami.

### **Sikh festivals**

Sikh festivals are called Gurburabs and relate to days commemorating the birth, accession and death / martyrdom of Gurus and important events in Sikh history.

The martyrdom anniversaries of the Gurus are not an occasion to express grief, but are festivals to inspire Sikhs, to remind them of their history and struggle for justice to teach them the value of sacrifice for a good cause. Most notable days observed by the Sikhs worldwide are:

- Birth day Guru Gobind Singh jee---January 5,
- Mela Maghi Mukatsar (Chali Multian da Shahidi Divas-- January 13,
- Foundation day of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple)—January 13,
- Vaisakhi (Khalsa Saajna Divas)—April 14,
- Ghallughara day 1984—June 4,
- Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev ji—June 6,
- Foundation day of Akal Takhat—July 2,
- Installation of Guru Granth Sahib as permanent Guru—October 20,
- Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur ji—November 24,
- Guru Nanak ji's birthday celebration date—November 26\*
- Chhotay Sahibzadian Da Saheedi Divas (Martyrdom day of Guru Gobind Singh's younger sons—Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh)—December 26,

\*Although Guru Nanak was born on the Vaisakhi day in 1469 A.D; but during the days of Sikh rule the celebration came to be held on the full moon day (Punnian / Poornima) in the month of Kattik according to Bikrami Samvat and thus date used to be different every year, but now with the introduction of the Sikh calendar the celebration date has been fixed at November 26 for good.

### **Vaisakhi**

Vaisakhi is the first day of the month of Vaisakh, corresponding with 14 April. It is the most important day in Sikh history and is celebrated by the Sikhs all over the globe as Khalsa Sajna Divas (Formal consecration day of Sikhism) It marks:

- Birthday of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith (April 14, 1469 A.D).
- The birthday of Khalsa (Vaisakh 1699), when Guru Gobind Singh formally revealed (consecrated—launched) Sikhism in its present day form at Kesgarh Sahib (Anandpur Sahib-Punjab) through his Sikh initiation ceremony—Amrit Paan, by offering Amrit to the five representatives (Panj Piaray) of the new faith

(Sikhi / Sikhism) whose adoption was tried at the altar of death. In short it is the formal birthday of Sikhism.

- Dal Khalsa, who ultimately established Sikh rule in the Sikh home-land, Punjab was founded, on this day in Sarbat Khalsa held at Akal Takhat Amritsar, under the leadership of Sardar Darbara Singh.
- The formal establishment of Sikh State on this day, in 1801 A.D.
- The beginning of the summer and end of harsh winter season and so also the beginning of wheat harvesting season, which is the major crop of the Sikh State, the Punjab.
- On this day in 1919 A.D; the Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place in Amritsar. The British who ruled Hindustan at that time had forbidden any gathering in Amritsar during that period. Nevertheless, Sikhs did come to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) to celebrate Vaisakhi festival, the army fired upon them at a place called Jallian Wala Bagh opposite Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), killing hundreds of unarmed innocent Sikhs.

To celebrate Vaisakhi Akhand Path is held in Gurdwaras and on the concluding day, Bhog ceremony is held with keertan, Katha, lectures, Ardas is offered and Karah Parshad is distributed and Langar is served. The main function is held at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar. Sikhs who want to join the Khalsa do so at Vaisakhi. On this day the old cloth covering of Nishan Sahib is changed with new one in all Gurdwaras. The Sikhs contribute their annual Daswandh to Gurdwaras on this day. Sarbat Khalsa is held at Akal Takhat on this day each year to discuss and sort out the problems facing the Sikh Nation.

### **Diwali**

Generally regarded as a Hindu festival, Sikhs celebrate Diwali, because Guru Hatobind came back to Amritsar, after securing his own and fifty two Hindu Rajput Rajas release from the Gwalior fort jail, on this day in 1621 A.D. The Sikhs celebrate Diwali as Bandede Chhod Diwas. Main function is held in Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar. At Diwali Gurdwara Darbar Sahib is lit up, there are fire works displays and people send sweets to their relatives and friends.

### **Maghi**

Maghi is celebrated in the memory of Chali Muktas (the forty liberated one's—immortals), who embraced martyrdom while fighting against and defeating Moghul forces, pursuing Guru Gobind Singh, at Muktsar in January 1706. Main function is held at Muktsar. It corresponds with 14 January each year.

### **Hola Mohalla**

Hola Mohalla is celebrated at Anandpur Sahib (Punjab). The word Hola seems to have been derived from Hamla or Halla meaning attack and Mohalla being the place of

attack. On this day Guru Gobind Singh held mock battles of the Khalsa—The Sikh National Army (Khalsa Akaal Purkh kee fauj) after training them in warfare—a sort of military exercise in modern terms. The festival lasts for three days. On the final and concluding day the fair reaches its climax with a large procession called Hola Mohalla. The participants chant devotional hymns and display feats of horsemanship and soldiery as they march.

Hola Mohalla is celebrated in the month of March each year. Hola has no connection with Holi, which is a Hindu festival except that it falls on a day next to Holi. The festival was started by Guru Gobind Singh to wean the Sikhs away from celebrating the Hindu festival of Holi.

#### **Ghallughara Day—The Holocaust of 1984**

It is celebrated to commemorate the sad memory of operation blue star--code name for the army action against the Sikh Nation by the Hindu government of India in 1984, another sad day in Sikh history.

### Philosophy of Hinduism

Philosophy in ancient Indian literature is called, 'Darsan'. Unlike other religions of the world since there is no single founder of Hinduism, therefore it does not have a single philosophy. Its philosophy called '*sad Darsan*' has been referred to as '*Khat Darsan*' in Guru Granth Sahib as it contains six different philosophical thought systems.

#### **Sad Darsana / Khat Darsana:**

**Philosophy** in Indian culture is called '**Darsan**', which literally means to see. The thing which was realized or seen was named '*Darsan*'. The Aryan Brahman scholars called Rishis developed six systems of thought. These six Sanatan / Brahmanical (Hindu) philosophical systems called sad Darsan have been referred to as '*Khat Darsan*' in Guru Granth Sahib, which include:

- (1) Nyaya system (Darsana) of Rishi Gautama
- (2) Purva Mimamsa system (Darsana) of Rishi Jaimini
- (3) Sankhya system (Darsana) of Rishi Kapila
- (4) Vaisheshika system (Darsana) of Rishi Kanada
- (5) Yoga system (Darsana) of Rishi Patanjali
- (6) Vedanta system (Vedanta Darsana) of Rishi Vyasa : Today Vedant has come to be considered a collection of the Vedas, the Brahmins, the Aryanyakas, the Sutras, the Smritis, the Geeta and the Purans. It also includes the schools of philosophy which interpreted and re-interpreted the Upanishads time and again. Vedanta Darsana has two subdivisions:

**Advaitism:** Preached by the followers of Adi Shankra. Believes in one god.

**Dvaitism:** Preached and practiced by followers of Madhvacharya. It believes in two gods, manifest as well as non-manifest God.

The supreme source of inspiration for most Hindus is Vedant.

Vedant is not one definite philosophy recorded in some religious book where it can be studied and commented upon. It is a collection of sayings and statements in various Hindu books the number of which runs into hundreds if not thousands. They do not speak in one voice therefore contradictions abound in them. Most Vedantic thought is based on the Upanishads, which deal with forms of meditation, rituals and asceticism. They are commentaries on Vedas and as such claim to be their essence and the backbone. Vedant is, therefore, not a single concept or a system of philosophy acceptable to all scholars or those who claim to practice Hinduism. It is usually summed up in the following dogmas:

- (1) Belief in chaturvarna (four castes)
- (2) Sanctity and infallibility of Vedas.
- (3) Sacrifices to gods
- (4) A collection of intellectual but often contradictory somersaults.

### Philosophy of Sikhism / Gurdarshan / Gurmat /

Before the birth of Sikhism, there were two ancient religious philosophies in the world: The Indian philosophy known as Eastern philosophy and the Greek philosophy called Western philosophy. The Indian Rishis (Philosophers) developed classical Indian music, poetry, astrology, mathematics, political science and social sciences etc, but simultaneously propagated pessimism and preached about the un-reality / Falseness of the world, detachment (Vairag) i.e asceticism and renunciation of the worldly life. All these things weakened the Indian society instead of making it strong. Instead of making the society dynamic they made it static. The pessimism put breaks on the development of the society. Buddhism and Jainism were born as a reaction to Brahmanical Hinduism. The Ahinsa (Ahimsa) propagated by Jainism made the people desert the profession of agriculture for fear of killing organisms and became traders (Banias). Buddhism described birth, youth and old age as suffering and desire as root cause of sufferings. The Brahmanical Varn Ashram Dharma divided the society on the basis of caste. All this made Indians weak, which resulted in their slavery to foreign powers.

When Guru Nanak appeared on the religious scene in the 15th century all the six systems of ancient Hinduism (Sanatan Dharma / Brahmanism), Islam, Jainism and Buddhism existed there in the Punjab. Guru Nanak received enlightenment at Sultanpur Lodhi in Punjab and founded Sikhism here in 1496 A.D. He laid down the complete ideology of Sikhism. With the birth of Sikhism in the 15th century in 'Punjab' in the Indian subcontinent the third branch of philosophy was born, which is called '**Gurmat**' or **Gurdarsan**, which is absolutely different and distinct from the previously existing eastern i.e Hindu philosophy. Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of Sikhism says, "**ਖਟੁ ਦਰਸਨ ਵਰਤੈ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਅਗਮ ਅਪਾਰਾ-Khat darsan vartay vartaara, Gur ka darsan agamapaara**" i.e. Although six systems of Hindu philosophy are prevalent everywhere but the Guru's philosophy is profound and unequalled" (GGS, p.360-61). The philosophy of Sikhism known as Gurmat / Gurdarsan has been propounded in the holy Sikh Scripture, 'Guru Granth Sahib'. Its fundamentals differ from the fundamentals of all the major world religions including all the six systems of Hinduism. Before a Sikh goes to bed he reads a short prayer Sohila, which contains following stanza on six Hindu systems, "**ਛਿਅ ਘਰ ਛਿਅ ਗੁਰ ਛੇ ਓਪਦੇਸ--Chhhea ghar chhea gur chhea updes, ਗੁਰ ਗੁਰ ਏਕੇ ਵੇਸ ਅਨੇਕ॥-Gur Gur eko ves anek,** meaning "Six are the Hindu systems; six are their divine teachers; six are their different teachings / doctrines, but the teacher of all is One Lord, though He has numerous forms. Pause. ਵਿਸੁਏ ਚਸਿਅਾ ਘੜੀਅਾ ਪਰਾਰਾ ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰੀ ਮਾਹੁ ਭਏਅਿਅਾ[[ ਸੂਰਜ ਏਕੇ ਰੁਤਿ ਅਨੇਕ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਤੇ ਕੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਵੇਸ[[ -i.e. There are seconds, minutes, hours, quarters of a day, lunar days, week days, months and several seasons that spring from the lone sun, so all forms of beings, originate from the same creator, says Nanak.(GGS, Rag Asa M1 pp12, 357).

The holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, further adds: "**Gur darsan udhray sansaara, je ko a-ay bhao piara**"-"Through Guru's philosophy the whole world can be saved if the same were accepted with devotion and love (GGS, Rag Asa, M3. P361).

Sikhism (Sikh religion) teaches uniformity in thought and action (ਏਨਿਸਾਨ ਦੀ ਕਥਨੀ ਤੇ ਕਰਨੀ ਵਿਚ ਫਰਕ ਨਹੀ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ॥ i.e, A person should mean, what he says). The philosophy of Sikhism is not a matter of mere intellectual discussion of mantras only. It gives an insight into

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

the metaphysics, ethics, mysticism and cosmology of Sikhism. It says, Akaal Purkh (God) is the creator of this universe and Soul is immortal. Sikhism believes in equality of all human beings as compared to Vedanta, who believes in the division of the society upon the basis of caste system. Sikhism, says this world is the field of action and denounces asceticism and renunciation in strongest terms and preaches a house-holder's life.

The philosophy of Sikhism envisages that a true Sikh loves all humanity, earns his livelihood by all fair means, shares his earnings with the deprived and strives for the realization of God by abiding His Will and seeking Grace. It believes in the doctrines of Karma, transmigration, salvation-(Mukti), Surag (Heaven), Narak (Hell), Hukam (Raza) and Grace, but according to its own way. From the inception of Sikhism by Guru Nanak in 1496 AD, to its ritual consecration by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 AD, barely within a period of about two hundred years, the Sikhs were able to evolve a comprehensive philosophy embracing spiritual, religious, social, economic, cultural, political and military aspects with the objective of creating a more disciplined organization of saint soldiers.

During the past about four hundred years the discoveries of science in the western world regarding nature have made remarkable progress and science threw challenge to the ancient religious ideologies. Science believes in proving and demonstrating things through experimentation and research. Religion makes efforts to know the Reality (Truth / Supreme Eternal Reality / God) and depends upon the path of spiritual experience, devotion and belief. To think about God, good and evil fall within the domain of religion whereas the research on nature is the purview of science. Religion likes ancient-hood and stagnation. For the traditional religions progress, modernity and change are enemies. In the western world every scientific discovery was opposed by Christianity and described as irreligious by the religious leaders there. Scientists were tortured and even killed mercilessly. Science was treated as enemy of religion. In spite of their repression, the scientists in the west remained undeterred and continued their research. During the 17th and 18th centuries science made rapid strides in Europe which changed the entire ideology there and gave birth to atheism and materialism, resulting in drift of the people away from religion in the western world.

In this world everything is stable on its axis because of gravitational force and it disappears if dislocated. Human society can flourish on the support of religion. Because of the lack of mental peace which the religion provides, people in the western world remain mentally tense and upset. The western world adopted science and relegated religious philosophy to the back burner but this not happen in India. Unlike other traditional religious systems, Sikhism is not opposed to science rather it is a blend of philosophy and science. Sikh Gurus were neither scientists nor trained in scientific methods, yet they provided tremendous insight into the working of the natural and physical world. They have remarkably stated their ideas in a language that not only satisfies religious but also proves true on the touchstone of science. Sikhism is scientific and consistently challenges the illogical superstitious belief.

There are seconds, minutes, hours, quarters of a day, lunar days, week days, months and several seasons that spring from the lone sun, so all forms of beings, originate from the same creator, says Nanak (GGS, Rag Asa M1 pp 12, 357). The holy Sikh Scripture Guru Granth Sahib further adds: "Gurdarsan udhray sansara. Je ko la-ay bhao piara" meaning: Through Guru's philosophy the whole world can be saved if the same were accepted with devotion and love" (GGS, p. 361).

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abiding His Will and seeking Grace. It believes in the doctrines of Karma, transmigration, salvation (Mukti), Surag (heaven), Narak (Hell), Hukam (Raza) and Grace, but according to its own way. From the inception of Sikhism by Guru Nanak in 1496 to its ritual consecration by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 A.D; barely within a period of about two hundred years, the Sikhs were able to evolve a comprehensive philosophy embracing spiritual, religious, social, economic, cultural, political and military aspects with the objective of creating a more disciplined organization of saint soldiers.

During the past about four hundred years the discoveries of science in the western world regarding nature have made remarkable progress and science threw challenge to the ancient religious ideologies. To think about God, good and evil fall within the domain of religion whereas research on nature is the purview of science. For the traditional religions progress, modernity and change are enemies. In the western world every scientific discovery was opposed by Christianity and described as irreligious by the religious leaders there. Scientists were tortured and even killed mercilessly. Science was treated as enemy of religion. In spite of their repression, the scientists in the western world remained undeterred and continued their research. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries science made rapid strides in Europe which changed the entire ideology there and gave birth to atheism and materialism resulting in drift of people away from religion in the western world.

In this world everything is stable on its axis because of gravitational force and it disappears if dislocated. Human society can flourish on the support of religion. Because of the lack of mental peace which the religion provides, people in the western world remain mentally tense and upset. The western world adopted science and relegated religious philosophy to the back burner but this not happen in India. Unlike other traditional religious systems, Sikhism is not opposed to science rather it is a blend of philosophy and science. Sikh Gurus were neither scientists nor trained in scientific methods, yet they provided tremendous insight into the working of the natural and physical world. They have remarkably stated their ideas in a language that not only satisfies religious but also proves true on the touchstone of science. Sikhism is scientific and consistently challenges the illogical superstitious beliefs.

For Sikhs Guru Granth Sahib is the only spiritual guide. The Sikhs are instructed to follow the Guru as the preceptor and Gurbani as an inspired word:

- (1) ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਭ ਦੇਖੇ ਜੋਇ ॥ ਉਹਾਂ ਤਉ ਜਾਈ ਐ ਜਉ ਈਹਾਂ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥ Baid puran sabh dekhay joay, uhan tao jae-ay jao eehan na hoay (GGS, p.1195)
- (2) ਨਾਨਕ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੋ ਜਾਈਐ ਗੁਰੂ ਨ ਛੋਡੈ ਅਪਣਾ ਦੂਜੈ ਨ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰ॥ Nanak milia so janee-ay guru na chhoday aapna doojay na dharay piar (GGS, 1087). ਇ ਇ ਉ ਈ ਏ ਆ ਆ ਐ ਡਾ ਉ
- (3) ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ॥ Sikhi sikhia gur veechaar ((GGS, p.465)

Unbroken uniformity of thought is the hallmark of Guru Granth Sahib and all through the Granth each Guru says, “Avoid confusion and pray only to one God. This is the surest way to salvation”—ਤਜ ਸਭਿ ਭਰਮ ਭਜਿਓ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਟਲ ਇਹ ਧਰਮੁ॥ (GGS, p.196). There is no denying the fact that some writings of Indian sages (of 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century) are incorporated in the Sikh Scripture Guru Granth Sahib. These writings are compatible with Guru Nanak’s religious philosophy. There are no quotations of Semitic

and Hindu books in Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru Says, Neither Vedas (four Hindu texts) nor the four Katebas (Semitic texts): the Tohra, the Zabur (Psalms), the Injil (Gospel), and the Quran) know the mystery of the Creator because God does not have a mother, a father, a son or a brother, “ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਜਾਤਾ॥ ਨ ਤਿਸ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਸੁਤ ਭ੍ਰਾਤਾ॥ (GGs, p.1021). These religions accept that God was born (as in Hinduism gods have parents) or in Islam (where Huhammad is considered God’s prophet) and in Christianity (where Christ is called God’s only son). According to Sikhism to say that ‘Humans are God’ is a heresy born of man’s arrogance and ego, “ਸੋ ਮੁਖ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਜੋਨੀ॥ (GGs, p.1136).

According to Sikhism a religion must have worship of God at its centre and have an element of spiritual uplifting element. It should also have the egalitarian approach of bringing people closer to one another. Vedant does not satisfy these conditions because worship of numerous gods is contrary to these principles. Sikhism states again and again that, “The worship of God alone can be the basis of religion, “ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕ ਸਮਾਈ ॥ (GGs, p.930). Mathematical digit 1 (one) with open end alphabet oorha (ੴ) used in Mool Mantra leaves no doubt about oneness of God in Sikhism. Gurbani says, “ਹਿੰਦੂ ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਤੁਰਕੁ ਕਾਣਾ॥ ਦੇਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਸਿਆਣਾ॥ Which means that the Hindus are blind and Muslims are one eyed (GGs, p.875), denoting thereby that Hindus have many gods (and are blind to one universal omnipotent God) but Muslims believe only in one God. However even Muslims are off the track (one eyed) when they consider the non-Muslims as Kafir (Infidel).

Vedant is full of contradictions. There are at least six different philosophies in it. One Hindu book says one thing another says the opposite. This causes confusion and disbelief. It was for this reason, that Hindu scriptures were rejected by the Sikh Gurus. Another reason for its rejection was that Vedantic literature is full of obscenities which are anathema to morality. In addition it supports class distinctions which are totally refuted by Sikhism. Sikhism is a unified system of beliefs which neither contradict each other nor are anyway antisocial. They gravitate around the worship of one God.

According to Sikhism the world is created by God and He resides within it. In that sense world is real, “ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੈ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੇਠੜੀ ਸਚੈ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ (GGs, p. 463). Sikhism says that rituals have no value for humans and that man’s salvation does not lie in rituals but in rightful actions, “ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭ ਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ (GGs, p.62). On the other hand Vedant is based on Vedic sacrifices (ਰੋਮ ਯਗ)। These sacrifices do no good to anybody. Gurbani says, “ਰੋਮ ਜਗ ਜਪ ਤਪ ਸਭਿ ਸੰਜਮ ਤਟਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਨਹੀ ਪਾਏਆ॥ ਮਿਟਿਆ ਆਪੁ ਪਏ ਸਰਣਾਈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਗਤੁ ਤਰਾਇਆ॥ (GGs, p.1139). Gurbani clearly states that for the Sikhs Guru Granth Sahib is the only guide, “ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਭ ਦੇਖੇ ਜੋਈ॥ ਊਹਾਂ ਤਉ ਜਾਈਐ ਜਉ ਈਹਾਂ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥ (GGs,p.1195). ਨਾਨਕ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੇ ਜਾਈਐ ਗੁਰੂ ਨ ਛੋਡੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਦੂਜੈ ਨ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ॥ (GGs, p.1087). ਕਬੁਧਿ ਮਿਟੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ॥ (GGs, p.944). ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਹੁ, ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਕਢਾਏ॥ (GGs, 308).

## Punjabi

### The religious and National language of the Sikhs and Sikhism

Punjabi has been the spoken language of all the natives of the undivided Punjab, since prehistoric times. F.E Keay and Grierson, both well known Orientalists are of the opinion, “that Punjabi is of greater antiquity than any of the languages of the Indo-Gangetic plain”. Hence it is one of the oldest spoken languages in the world, although it was given different names at different times.

Punjabi with Gurmukhi script is the religious language and national language of the Sikhs and it is sacred to them, because their scriptures are in Punjabi with Gurmukhi script. Presently Punjabi is 10<sup>th</sup> popular spoken language in the world. Punjab, the Sikh homeland, lies in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent and connects the Middle East and Central Asia with the South Asia. Because of its geographical location, a series of invaders from the north and west have trampled over this land for centuries. Every invader tried to destroy the local culture especially its language and impose his culture and language on the people of this land. Its different dialects have been variously and contemptuously been called by the invading people as: Harrapan (The language spoken by the people in and around Harrapa and Mohenjodaro), Prakrit lit: the language of the people who work for others-ਪਰਾਈ ਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੋਲੀ, Apbhransh literally meaning corrupt, Taki or Takri (lit: The language of the malechh people), Sindh Sagri, Sauraseni, Sahaskriti, Jatki (The language of the Jatts), Zabane Jattan, Hindvi, Sant Bhasha, Desi (lit:: local), Lahori (lit: The language spoken in and around Lahore) etc. During the Muslim rule here Emperor Akbar named this region of the Indus Valley as ‘Punjab’ in 1590 A.D, after which gradually the local vernacular came to be called ‘Punjabi’, the name which has persisted since then.

It is universally agreed upon now that man evolved in Africa and gradually spread over the entire globe. According to Dr. H.D. Sankalia, the renowned anthropologist, “It is more or less established that at the end of the First Glacial Period and into the beginning of the Second Ice Age, Early Man entered the foot hills of the Northwest Punjab, into the area traversed by the Soan, Haro and other rivers within the Indus-Jhelum Doab. Early man spread into the area comprised by Rawalpindi and Attock districts of the Punjab, and the Jammu and Kashmir States”. Recent Genographic studies reveal that these people arrived in India from Central Asia by travelling south of the rugged and mountainous Pamir knot, some 30,000 years ago. Early humans lived here as gatherers and hunters, who gradually developed into a great civilization, now known as “The Indus Valley Civilization”, which is one of the oldest civilizations of the world. The natives of the Indus Valley lived by farming the lands and were called “Jatts”. ‘The Jat tribe’ is the oldest named tribe in India whose name is found even in Mahabhart. Because of its location and prosperity this region of the Indus valley has been target of repeated attacks from Middle-East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. In spite of all odds the ‘Jatt’ tribe never left this region, got concentrated on both sides of the river Ravi between Satluj / Beas and Chenab / Jhelum rivers in the central Punjab around Lahore and faced every invader defiantly. After the region was named Punjab by Emperor Akbar, its natives came to be called Punjabis and their dialect (Language) came to be called Punjabi. It is these people who embraced Sikhism en-mass in large numbers, after it was founded by Guru Nanak.

More than 4000 years ago (about 2000 B.C), people of a white tribe from Asia Minor who called themselves ‘Aryans’ entered into the hills of the Punjab as herds-men and graziers of the cattle, through the passes in the Hindu Kush mountains and settled in the Kashmir region. It is a well known fact

that the earliest spiritual traditions in the world began in the Punjab in the Indus Valley. People professing spirituality among the Punjabis called themselves Jogis / Siddhas (lit: knowledgeable). These Jogis believed in 'One Supreme Eternal Power', whom they called '*Brahma*'. They remembered their spiritual revelations orally and transmitted them from generation to generations verbally and did not produce any written scriptures, perhaps they feared loss of their sanctity by putting them into writing, although they had a script called, Brahmi / Siddhmatrica. The Aryans spoke an Indo-European language that originated on the steppes of Eurasia. The Aryans although tribal in nature, but apparently smart people very early realized the importance of education and knowledge. Some of them learnt spirituality from Jogis of the Punjab. They developed a slang dialect of Punjabi for worship purposes and cleverly called it, '*Brahm Bhasha*' literally: the language of God, but later on named it 'Sanskrit'. Around 1000 BC; they produced scriptures in *Brahm Bhasha* (Sanskrit). The Scriptures were named, 'Vedas' literally meaning books of knowledge, which were memorized by them orally and continued to be transmitted verbally from one generation to the other for centuries. Romila Thapar in her book titled, "The Penguin History of Early India" writes that Rishi Panini laid the rules for Sanskrit grammar in Taxilla (located in the foot hills of the Punjab) around 500 BC and wrote Sanskrit grammar, the *Ashtadhyai*. As Sanskrit was devoid of any script, the Aryans created Sanskrit literature by using the local script in the place of writing, for instance they used *Brahmi / Sidhmatrica* script of Punjabi Jogis in the Kashmir region of the Punjab. The persons among the Aryans having knowledge of Vedas became the priestly class and called themselves 'Brahmins' (having knowledge of Brahma). The Brahmins made Sanskrit as the language of their scriptures, which could only be interpreted by them, because it was neither spoken nor understood by the common mass of the native people. The first center of Aryan culture in the Indian subcontinent developed in the hills of the Punjab in the Kashmir region. After centuries of their stay, development and proliferation in the hills of the Punjab in the Kashmir region the Aryans descended into the plains of the Punjab. They tried to dominate the 'Jatts' through the Brahmin. The Jatt spirit of freedom and equality refused to submit to the Brahmanical dominance and pushed the Aryans out of the limits of the Punjab and in its turns drew the censure of the learned Brahmins who pronounced that "no Aryan should stay in the Punjab for even two days because the Punjabis refused to obey the priests"\* . Henceforth the Aryan Brahmin developed an extremely hostile attitude towards the jatts of the Punjab.

After their exit from the Punjab by the 'Jatts', the Aryans settled in the Ganga Jamna divide in the Malwa region of India, built their religio-cultural center there and named it 'Ujjain', which they affectionately called, '*Dev Nagri*' (देव नगरी), a town inhabited by Brahmins, who are gods (Devatas-देवते) in human form. Here they used the local form of Sidhmatrica script for writing their Sanskrit literature but named it '*Dev Naagri*' (देव नगरी) . After sometime they shifted their center of activity in the easternly direction into the fertile and mineral rich area and built here their religio-cultural center on the banks of Ganges and named it Kashi (Varanasi-Banaras). Here they wrote more religious books in Sanskrit and named them, 'Shastras' in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Because of the shastras the language spoken in and around Kashi (Varanasi-Benaras) came to be popularly called '*Shastri*' (now Hindi).

The Aryans gained religious and cultural control of the Ganges valley through the priest (Brahman) by blending their culture with that of the natives, who believed in many Gods, the principal ones being by Brahma (creator), Vishnu (sustainer) and Shiva (destroyer). The Aryan society consisted of priests and warriors. The priests communed with the gods through animal sacrifices. They worshiped fire and chanted mantras from the Vedas. The warrior class consisted of tribal chieftains. The Aryans as a group lorded over merchants, land lords and the under class whom they called *dasas*, who served as laborers and farmers. Later on this class system was turned into hereditary caste system by Mannu,

the Hindu law giver. Because the native people revered cow, the Aryans discarded animal sacrifices, prohibited meat eating, introduced vegetarianism and started worshiping the Gods of the natives.

The Punjabi Jogis / Siddhas lived away from human habitations meditating for seeking personal salvation in the caves, jungles and snowclad mountains therefore acquisition of knowledge by the common man in the plains of the Punjab became impossible.

After the Aryans, foreign invasions of the Punjab started in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and continued until 1849 AD. A series of invaders from the north and west trampled over this land for centuries. They included the Persians (Iranians), Shakas (Scythians), the Parthians, the Greeks, the Bactrians, the Kushans, the Huns, the Turks, the Mongols (Mughals), the Afghans (Pathans) and the British etc.

Islamic invasions of the Punjab began in 711 AD. Its people resisted for centuries, but ultimately it fell to the invading Islamic forces in 1001 A.D. They named the area east of Indus River as 'Hindustan' in the beginning of the eighth century and called its inhabitants "Hindi," and later on Hindus. After the occupation of the Punjab they spread into the remaining India without any resistance. They made Persian as court language and Arabic as religious language of this region. They recorded the native language of the gangetic plain, in Persian script, which came to be called 'Urdu\*\*\*' and became the Muslim language in Hindustan.

For centuries Punjab has witnessed numerous invasions in ever changing political upheavals. Every invader tried his best to kill the Punjabi language, Punjabi culture and civilization and replace it with his own. In spite of all odds the Punjabi language and the Punjabis have remained unvanquished and proud, protecting their land and their rich heritage and assimilating all new comers.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) founded Sikhism in the Punjab at the fag end of 15th century. At that period of time with the exception of Muslim rulers and the Muslim elite, Punjabi was the spoken language of the Punjab and Persian was the official language, Arabic was the religious language of the Muslims and Sanskrit was the religious language of the Hindus. Neither Sanskrit, nor Persian nor Arabic was spoken or understood by common mass of the People of the Punjab, who conversed among themselves in Punjabi. Guru Nanak gave his 'Bani' in local vernacular that is Punjabi, instead of Sanskrit, which till then was the traditional medium for religious poetry / philosophy among the Hindustanis. As mentioned earlier Punjabi has been the spoken language of the people of the Punjab since prehistoric times, but till the birth of Sikhism it was only a spoken language and did not have a script for its proper pronunciation and expressions, therefore it did not have any written literature. Guru Nanak developed the script for Punjabi language by selecting appropriate letters from other scripts (Brahmi / Sidhhmatrica / Lande etc) current in north India and creating some new ones. He purged the Sidhhmatrica and its offspring, Devnagri, of their irritating and unscientific characteristic of being an alphabet without consonants. He perfected the script with vowels and laid down the rules for its grammar. The alphabet has thirty five letters. He composed a hymn enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib in Rag Asa M1, on pages 432 to 434, as 'Patti Likhi' in the form of an acrostic, making use of the 35-letter alphabet. Thus the Sikhs developed their dialect into written language. It gave the Sikhs a written language distinct from written language of Hindus-Sanskrit (Vedas) and Mussalmans-Arabic (Quran). The script was named *Gurmukhi* (The script used to write the language spoken from the mouth of the Guru) by his successor, Guru Angad, who greatly propagated the use of Gurmukhi letters in his drive for literacy among his followers, 'the Sikhs'. He gave form and finish to the alphabet, prepared primers (*Baalupdes*) of Gurmukhi (Punjabi) alphabet and made copies of Guru Nanak's hymns and distributed them among the people leading to the increase in the number of literates in the Punjab. He broke the

monopoly of the Brahmin over learning. Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Sikh Guru compiled, Granth Sahib (Guru Granth Sahib), the holy Sikh scripture in Gurmukhi script, in 1604 AD. Guru Gobind Singh established the first Sikh seat of learning in 1706AD, at Talwandi Sabo, now called Dam Dama Sahib in Bathinda district and named it *Guru Ki Kanshi* as counter part to the Hindu seat of learning in Varanasi (Benaras--Kanshi). After Guru Gobind Singh Sikhs were busy in their struggle for existence and were unable to pay any attention for the development of their mother tongue. At one time the teaching of Punjabi was forbidden in schools, which retarded the development of Punjabi literature. During the Sikh rule in Punjab Persian remained the official court language, no efforts were made for the promotion of Punjabi by them, because they remained busy in expanding and securing the borders of their young kingdom. Although Punjabi was not the official language of the Sikh court, but being the language of the rulers it flourished immensely during the Sikh rule in the Punjab, copies of Guru Granth Sahib were produced and Sikh literature written in Punjabi.

The British annexed the Sikh Kingdom, Punjab in 1849 A.D. Punjabis unlike the Bengalis and Sindhis were not allowed by them to use their mother tongue as an official language because they feared the development of Punjabi-Sikh nationalism. They made Urdu along with English as the official court language in the British Punjab. The Muslims were made to believe that Urdu was their mother tongue. None of the alien languages i.e, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Greek, Urdu or English etc, was spoken by the common mass of people of the Punjab, who continued to communicate among themselves in Punjabi, irrespective of their religious affiliations. After its annexation by the British, Christian missionaries came to Punjab and started seeking conversions of the Sikhs into Christianity in the Sikh homeland. Also a Gujrati Brahmin named Dyanand Saraswati, came to the Punjab in and founded his Hindu sect, Arya Samaj in Lahore. He started propagating the teachings of the Vedas and claimed that the Sikhs were a sect of Hindus and that Sikhism was not a separate religion. He started attacking the Punjabi language, Sikh scriptures (Guru Granth Sahib), the Sikh Gurus and other Sikh institutions. This awakened the Sikh intelligentsia, who founded Singh Sabha (society of the practicing Sikhs) in 1873 AD, in Amritsar, for the propagation of the Sikh religion, Punjabi language and Punjabi culture.

Development of the Punjabi language and Gurmukhi script started after the birth of Singh Sabha. Singh Sabha started first Punjabi printing press in the Punjab with Gurmukhi script in Lahore in 1876 A.D, and published first Punjabi paper in Gurmukhi-Khalsa Akhbar. Under Singh Sabha movement Punjabi gained admittance into the university curriculum; inspite of severe opposition by the Hindu members of the Punjab University Lahore, who viewed it as no more than a rude dialect without any literary tradition and hence not worth teaching. Teaching of Punjabi in Gurmukhi script started in Oriental College Lahore in 1877. This gave Punjabi a communal label as language of the Sikhs, just as Shastri (now Hindi) was of the Hindus and Urdu of the Muslims. As a result, although Punjabi remained, as before, the spoken language of all Punjabis, whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian, its literary output came to be largely confined to the Sikh writers. Till the advent of print media and the modern broadcasting system, different dialects of Punjabi were spoken in different parts of the Punjab viz: *Majhi*, *Malwai* and *Doabi* were spoken in the central Punjab. *Poadi*, *Haryanvi*, *Sarhandi*, *Raathi*, *Bhatiani* and *Kangri* dialects were spoken beyond Ghaggar river, whereas *Dogri*, *Kangar*, *Himachali* were spoken in the hill tracts of the Punjab. *Multani*, *Jhangi*, *Pothohari* and *Dhani* dialects were spoken beyond Chenab River. After the advent of print and modern broadcasting media, the writers and broadcasters have evolved a standard form of Punjabi based on the dialect spoken in and around Lahore i.e, central Punjab called '*Majha*' giving it its present global form.

Development of Punjabi suffered a severe set back, when Punjab, the Sikh homeland was partitioned by the British in 1947 and Lahore, the capital of the Sikh Democratic Republic of Punjab,

the nerve center of Punjabi culture and headquarter of Punjabi press was denied to Sikhs and transferred to Pakistan by the British at the time of the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent.

After gaining independence, the congress government of India dominated by radical Hindus, officially recognized *Shastri* (now Hindi) i.e, the vernacular spoken in the united provinces (Agra Wa Auvadh) around the cities of Delhi and Lucknow, as the official language of India. Thereafter Hindi came to be symbolized as the language of all Hindus irrespective of the region they lived in. The Punjabi Hindu fundamentalists disowned Punjabi language and propagated that Punjabi was the language of the Sikh Nation only as it was the language of their scriptures (Guru Granth Sahib); the mother tongue of the Punjabi Hindu was Hindi. The Punjabi Hindu spoke Punjabi, but when it came to writing he felt more at home with English or Urdu and refused to accept Punjabi as his mother tongue, which was an absolute lie and when the Sikhs said their language was Punjabi, the Hindus sometimes accused them of motives beneath one's dignity to accept. Not only had the Sikh to defend his language but with that his honour as a patriot as well. When the Punjabi Hindus finally were reconciled to the inescapable fact that Punjabi was to be their mother tongue, they trotted out a lame excuse that Gurmukhi was not a proper script for Punjabi. They wanted it to be written in '*Dev Naagri*' (ਦੇਵ ਨਾਗਰੀ) script and not in Gurmukhi script.

Secondly, shortly after independence the government of India announced that boundaries of all the Indian States would be redrawn along linguistic lines and consequently, this was done for all the 14 Punmajor languages spoken in India except Punjabi. The Sikhs, therefore, raised the demand for the creation of a "Punjabi speaking state of the Punjab" through a campaign of non-violence in order to defend the Sikh traditions and identity in addition to their cultural, linguistic, religious, economic and other interests. The Hindu organizations reacted by appealing to members of their community to formally disown Punjabi language. The Hindus in Punjab registered their language as Hindi in the census of 1951. Hindu organizations like Arya Samaj, Hindu Maha Sabha and Jan Sangh opposed the Sikh demand vehemently. The Hindus of Punjab and the Press dominated by Arya Samajist Hindus dubbed the Sikh demand as a stepping-stone towards the creation of an "independent Sikh State". Hindu Sikh riots broke out in many towns. The Hindu congress government with Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru as Prime Minister and Sardar Partap Singh Kairon as Chief Minister of Punjab opposed, each and every Sikh demand. Both in India and abroad the government-controlled media projected that the Sikhs demand an independent Sikh State. The Sikhs cajoled, threatened, pleaded, marched and suffered to win a "Punjabi speaking state," but India resisted.

Both Pt Nehru and Kairon, the arch opponents of the Sikh demand, died in 1964. Lal Bahadur Shastri became the next Prime Minister of India. Sant Fateh Singh, the then president of Sharomani Akali Dal, threatened to launch *morcha* (agitation) for the creation of Punjabi speaking state. Clouds of war between India and Pakistan were looming large at that time. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri gave an understanding to the Sikh leadership to concede their demand provided they co-operated with the government in case of war between India and Pakistan. War broke out between India and Pakistan. The Sikhs played a remarkable role for defending the Indian borders. Ultimately on the conclusion of the Indo-Pakistan war in September 1965 in which the Sikh peasantry played a notable role helping Indian troops on the front line, a commission was appointed to demarcate Punjabi speaking areas from the Hindi speaking. In 1966, the already truncated Punjab was split into four states: Haryana, Himachal, Union Territory of Chandigarh and 'Punjabi speaking Punjab'. The division of the state was done by the congress government dominated by radical Hindus on communal lines and not on linguistic basis leaving large tracts of Punjabi speaking population out of the 'Punjabi Speaking Punjab'.

The Punjab Legislative Assembly under the Chief Ministership of Sardar Lashman Singh Gill in

1967, legislated and made Punjabi in Gurmukhi script as the official language of the Punjab and thereafter, the development of Punjabi language and production of Punjabi literature began in the right earnest.

Punjabi language has its own expressions and manifestations amongst the languages of the world. It is not in any way inferior to any other language. Unlike English Punjabi has a specific-name for each and every relationship, which indicates its cultural strength. Hierarchy in Punjabi families is very important and at a very young age children learn the appropriate kinship terms. One particular example of precise meaning of kinship names in Punjabi might be given as a demonstration, for instance an aunt might be called:

*Masee* if she is mother's sister

*Mamee* if she is mother's brother's wife

*Bhooa* if she is father's sister

*Chachee* if he is father's younger brother's wife

*Tae* if she is father's elder brother's wife

The richness of the Punjabi language can be further gauged from many other examples for instance human excreta is called *goonh* (ਗੂੰਹ) , in case of buffalo / cow it is called *Phos* (ਫੋਸ) , camel passes *laidnay* or *laiday* (ਲੇਡਣੇ , ਲੇਡੇ) , goat passes *maingna* (ਮੇਂਗਣਾ) , a horse passes out *liddh* (ਲਿੱਦ) and so on. Similarly a buffalo / in heat is called *boli hoee*, a bitch in heat is called *mushkee hoee*, a mare in heat is called *vaigee hoee*, a shee camel is called *Bahaar vich* and so on.

### **Punjabi versus Sanskrit & Hindi**

Punjabi with Gurmukhi script is the religious language of the Sikhs and Sanskrit with Devnagri script is the religious language of the Hindus. The Aryans at the time of their entry in the hills of the Punjab in the Kashmir region spoke an Indo-European language that had originated on the steppes of Eurasia. The Aryans were smart people and very soon realized the value of learning i.e education. They learnt spirituality from the Punjabi jogis who believed in One Supreme Eternal Reality, whom they called '*Brahma*'. The Aryan scholars having knowledge of *Brahma* designated themselves as Brahmins. They developed a slang form of the local Punjabi dialect for worship purposes and cleverly named it '*Brahm Bhasha*' (Lit: The language of God), which was subsequently named 'Sanskrit'. Around 1000 BC, they produced scriptures in Sanskrit dialect and named them Vedas, literally meaning books of knowledge, which were memorized orally by them and they kept them passing on from generation to generation over centuries as such. *Rishi* Panini wrote Sanskrit grammar, *Ashtadhyayi* in Taxilla in the hills of the Punjab in 500 BC (The Penguin History of Early India--Romila Thapar). The first center of Aryan culture developed in the hills of the Punjab in Kashmir region. After their multiplication and development in the hills of the Punjab the Aryans descended down in the plains of the Punjab. They tried to dominate the natives of the Punjab called jatt through the priest (Brahmin), but the jatt refused to submit the Brahmanical dominance and pushed the Aryans beyond the limits of the Punjab into the Ganga-Yamuna Doab. Khushwant Singh in his book titled, 'A History of the Sikhs' writes, "The jatt's spirit of freedom and equality refused to submit to Brahmanical Hinduism and in turn drew the censure of the privileged Brahmins of the Gangetic plains who pronounced that, "no Aryan should stay in the Punjab for even two days", because the Punjabis refused to obey the priests". Hence forth the Aryan Brahmin developed an extremely hostile attitude towards the jatts of the Punjab. The Aryans gradually gained religious and cultural control of the Ganges valley through the priest (Brahmin) by blending their culture with that of the natives. Centuries later, when the Aryans gained full control of the Gangetic plain and established their rule, they made Sanskrit as their court language. In spite of all these efforts the common mass of people continued to converse in the native language. Sanskrit never became a language of the common people any where in the world. The Aryan scholars enriched the language by creating and adding new terms as per needs.

Punjabi has been the spoken language of all the natives of the Punjab, including those in Pakistan since prehistoric times. F.E Keay and Grierson, both well known orientalist are of the opinion, "that Punjabi is of greater antiquity than any other languages of the Indo-Gangetic plain". Hence it is one of the oldest spoken languages in the world, although it was given different names at different times.

Till today Sanskrit does not have any script of its own. Its creators used the local script for the purpose of creating literature, wherever they went. For instance they used Brahmi / Sidhmatrica script of the Punjabi jogis for creating their literature during their stay in the hills of the Punjab, in the Kashmir region. They used a local version of Sidhmatrica during their rule in Malwa region in Ujjain and named it *Devnaagri*, which is now the common script, both for Hindi and Sanskrit. Sanskrit is only a spoken dialect used by Brahmin priests for religious worship only. Like other languages of the world including Punjabi, it is not a spoken language of the common people in any part of the world. Maximally Sanskrit became the court language in the areas of Brahmanical dominance in the Indian subcontinent and there too its dominance in the royal courts came to an end with the loss of Brahmanical control over the Royalty. The Hindus now have adopted Hindi as

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

their spoken language and Sanskrit as their religious language. The use of Sanskrit is limited only for chanting Vedic Mantras by Hindu Priests (Brahmins) for worship purposes and religious ceremonies.

### The Hindu caste system and Sikhism

The caste system forms the bedrock of Hinduism / Brahmanism / Varn Ashram Dharma / Sanatan Dharma. The term jaati (caste) is Indian in origin and its mention for the first time is found in the Aryan scripture Rig Veda. It came into practice after the arrival of Aryans in India and creation of 'Vedas'. The Brahmanical religion is also known as Varn Ashram Dharma. Varn in Brahmanical language (Sanskrit) means colour which forms the basis of the jaati or the caste system in Brahmanical religion also called Sanatan Dharma now popularly called Hinduism. A passage in Mahabharata reads, "Brahmans are fair, Kashatriyas are reddish, Vaishyas are yellowish and Shudras are black". The Brahmans (having knowledge of *Brahma* / God) became scholars and priests, Kashatriyas were designated as warriors, the Vaishyas as the traders and the non-Aryan manual workers, artisans, tillers of soil and people who raised cattle were designated as Shudras. To begin with the term was applied to professional groups but gradually it became hereditary.

Over the period of time the Aryans assumed dictatorship, shunned labour, became respectable, and even worshipful but the down trodden lower classes turned into labourers and slaves. The upper classes became richer and richer without doing much work whereas the lower working classes became poorer and poorer in spite of back breaking hard labour. The dignity of labour was completely lost.

Presently in India the term *jatee* is applied to social groups, which rank in a hierarchic order within which there is a minimal of social mobility. It refers to the social division of Indian society. Its use in the Indian society became extensively prevalent during the time of Manu, the Hindu law-giver, when he wrote his Manu Simriti roughly around 200 B.C. Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of Sikhism says, "ਬੇਦ ਕੀ ਪੁਤ੍ਰੀ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਭਾਈ॥ ਸਾਂਕਲ ਜੇਵਰੀ ਲੈ ਹੈ ਆਈ" -- *Bed kee putree simriti bhai sankal jevree lai hai aae* i.e.; "Simriti is the daughter of the Vedas, she has brought chain and rope for men" (GGS, p 329). Bhagvad Gita fully supports Manu's treatment of the Shudras. The caste system has been rightly described as Brahmanical Hinduism, for it was the Brahmans who moulded this pattern of social order to suite their own ends.

The caste system forms the bedrock of the Brahmanical religion i.e., *Sanatan Dharma* / *Varn Ashram Dharma*, now called Hinduism. Varn means caste (Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) and *Ashram* means stages of life-- (*Brahm charya ashram*, *Grahist ashram*, *Sanyas ashram* and *Vaanprast ashram*). The people who were engaged in the professions of scavenging and allied professions were kept out of the pale of the caste system and were called *Ashoot* (untouchables). Brahmans, the interpreters of the tradition are to be found in all locations literally every village, certainly at every point of dispensation of power. They exercise their dominance through rules, rituals and rigmarole. They propagated their own doctrine, which says, *Saviay bipar gian gun vohoon. Shudar na seviay giayan gun parbeena*-- "ਸੇਵੀਐ ਬਿਪੁ ਗਿਆਨ ਗੁਣ ਵਿਹੂਣਾ॥ ਸੂਦਰ ਨਾ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਗਿਆਨ ਗੁਣ ਪਰਬੀਨਾ॥ i.e. The Brahmin should be worshipped even if he is devoid of any knowledge or merits / virtues. A Shudra should be shunned even if he is full of knowledge and merits / virtues". The Shudras were neither entitled to education nor could become rich, because a Shudra who makes money is distressing to the Brahman.

#### Sikh view

The caste system prevented development of a society based on values of human freedom and equality for common class interests. Guru Nanak (1469-1539) founded Sikhism at the fag end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He stepped beyond the frontier in defiance of the 3000 years old caste rules of Hinduism. He attacked directly on caste system, "ਫਕਤ ਜਾਤੀ ਫਕਤੁ ਨਾਉ॥ ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਇਕਾ ਛਾਉ॥"-- *Phakar jaatee phakar naao sabhna jeeaa ika chhaao* i.e False is the distinction of caste and status. Everybody has

equal protection of God” (GGS, p.83). He rejected distinction between men on the basis of birth and caste. He emphasized the idea of brotherhood and equality of man. He further clarified that individual could achieve a higher status by practicing righteous behaviour. It did not matter which caste or economic status he came from. He stressed upon the achievement of status by a person on the basis of his deeds, “ਜਾਤਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਨਹ ਪੂਛੀਐ ਸਚ ਘਰੁ ਲੇਹੁ ਬਤਾਇ।। ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ।। *jaat janam nah poochheei sach ghar leho bta-ay. Sa jaat sa pat hai jehay karam kama-ay.* i.e; The Lord does not ask the mortals caste and birth in His True Home, only actions performed are taken into consideration (GGS, p. 1330). He declared, “Oneness of God and one-ness of man—ਏਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ”. He associated himself with the weaker sections of the society, “ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚਾ ਹੂੰ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਨ ਕੇ ਸਾਥ ਸੰਗ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਤ।।--*Neechaan under neech jaat neechaan hoon at neech. Nanak un ke saath sang wadiaan sion kia reet* i.e, “Nanak seeks the company of those, who are low caste among the low, infact, the lowest of the low and has no desire to compete with the high” (GGS, p.15). His mission was carried forwards by his nine successors. Sikh Gurus powerfully attacked the Hindu caste system and successfully disengaged their followers from it. Sikhism became established at the end of about two centuries to work its way in the world, when it was formally consecrated by the 10<sup>th</sup> Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh through Sikh baptismal ceremony-*Khanday batay Dee Pahul*, on the Vaisakhi day, 1699AD; at Anandpur Sahib in the Punjab-India. On this day he declared caste a taboo in the order of the Khalsa (Initiated--Baptized) Sikhs / Sikhism. The theory of separate duties for different castes was replaced by the same ethical and religious duties for all. Therefore, the fundamental equality of all men was ensured by free and voluntary admission into the order of the Khalsa / Sikhism.

Sikhism believes in universal brotherhood, egalitarian society and anti-casteism is one of its basic distinguishing features. The Holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib is opposed to any discrimination in human society. It strongly condemns the age old caste system, the social classification in Hindu society, and the disdain for the poor who were called *Shudras* and *ashoots*.

Guru Nanak found faults with that ideology saying:

- “ਕਥਾ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਬੋਦੀ ਆਣੀ ਪਾਪੁ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ।। ਦੇ ਦੇ ਲੈਣਾ ਲੈ ਲੈ ਦੇਣਾ ਨਰਕ ਸੁਰਗ ਅਵਤਾਰ।। ਉਤਮ ਮਧਿਮ ਜਾਤੀ ਜਿਨਸੀ ਭਰਮਿ ਭਵੈ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ।।--*Katha kahane Bedi aanee paap pun beechaar. De de laina lai lai dena narak surag avatar. Utam madham jaatee jinsee bharm bhavai sansaar* i.e, “The Vedas have brought forth legends and tales and they expound sin and virtue. What one gives gratis, he receives and what he receives gratis, he gives. According to their deeds they are born in hell or heaven. The world caught in delusion strays in doubt of high and low, castes and classes”. The Vedas make a wrong distinction of caste (GGS,p.1243).
- “ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ।।--*Manas kee jaat sabe ekay pehchanbo*” i.e, “Treat all mankind alike” (Mukh Vaak, Guru Gobind Singh, p.10).

Finally it is held by the Guru that the caste is no consideration in the spiritual realization that human beings of lower caste need not wait to be born in the next higher class for the attainment of deliverance:

- ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਖੜੀ ਸੂਦ ਵੈਸ ਚਾਰਿ ਵਰਨ ਚਾਰਿ ਆਸ੍ਰਮ ਹਰਿ ਜੇ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਵੈ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ।।--*Brahmin Khatri Sood Vais chaar varn chaar ashram haih jo har dhiavai so pardhaan* i.e, “There are four castes Brahman, Khatri, Shudra and Vaishya and four stages of life. Out of these, only he is supreme who remembers God.” (GGS, p.861).
- ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ।। ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ।।-- *Sabh mah jot jot hai soe. Tis dai chaanan sabh mah chaanan hoe* i.e; There is light in every heart and that is Thy light which illuminates every one (GGS, p.13).

The teachings of the Gurus, the Sikhism, verily destroy the superstitions (doubt) of caste, race and lineage:

- ਜਾਤ ਬਰਨ ਕੁਲ ਸਹਸਾ ਚੂਕਾ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ॥--*Jaat barn kul sehsa chooka gurmat sabad beecharee* i.e, “By contemplating the Name through Guru’s teaching, one is rid of caste, race, lineage and doubt” (GGS, p.1198).
- ਖੜੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਸੂਦ ਵੈਸ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਚਹੁ ਵਰਨਾ ਕਉ ਸਾਂਝਾ॥ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪੈ ਉਪਰੈ ਸੇ ਕਲਿ ਮਹਿ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਾਝਾ॥--*Khatri brahmin Sood Vais updes chauh varna kao sanjha, gurmukh Naam japai udhrai so kal meh ghat ghat Nanak majha.*—“For the four castes of warriors, priests, farmers and menials, there is one common spiritual message. He who under Guru’s guidance utters the Name of God, who abides in all hearts, Nanak says, is saved in the Dark-age” (GGS, p. 747-48).
- ਸਭੈ ਸਾਝੀਵਾਲ ਸਦਾਇਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਨ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਜੀਉ॥--*Sabhai saanjheewal sdain toon kisay na dishay bahra jeeo* i.e, “All are partakers of your grace. You are not alien to any one (GGS, p 97).
- Vedas preach and confirm caste differences. Against this the Sikh Gurus preach, “ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੂਛਹੁ ਜਾਤਿ ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹ”॥--*jano jaat na poochho jaati aagay jaat na hai* i.e, “Never question any body’s caste or lineage . Know that Divine Light is within all. There is no caste in the next world” (GGS, p. 349)
- ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਉਜਿਆ ਕਉਨ ਭਲੇ ਕੋ ਮੰਦੇ ॥--*Ek noor tay sabh jag upjio kaun bhalay ko manday* i.e, “From One Light has arisen entire iniverse. Then who is good and who is bad?” (GGS, p.1348-49).
- ਵਰਨਾ ਵਰਨ ਨ ਭਾਵਨੀ ਜੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਡਾ ਕਰੋਇ॥--*Varna varn na bhavnee je kisay wadaa karay* i.e, “when God makes people of one race great, the people of other race do not like it” (GGS, p.53).

The Guru thus refuses to accredit the caste institution in social ethics and further denies God having favoured a few by bringing them out from the higher parts of the body and the Shudras from the feet of the Primeval man.

This was a distinct blow to the social ideology of *Varn Ashram Dharma* (Hinduism), which gave scriptural sanction for the hierarchical caste system.

Sikhism not only gave every one right to be a warrior, but it also gave everyone right to be priest. Under the caste hierarchy, the workers were looked upon with disrespect and those whom they served were considered honourable. The elimination of caste system by Guru Nanak established the equality of man and dignity of labour.

- 10<sup>th</sup> Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, finally swept the caste from the Indian society by offering Amrit to all from the same bowl and gave Sikhism, the *Naas* doctrine: ***Kul Naas***, (deliverance from shams of caste system by birth), ***Dharam Naas*** (deliverence from previous religious practices), ***Karam Naas*** (deliverence from ritualism); ***Bharam Naas*** (deliverence from all the superstitions), ***Kirt Naas*** (deliverence from previous occupation) to signify a casteless society. The Panj Piaras, who received Pahul (Sikh Baptism) from Guru Gobind Singh were:
  - Bhai Dya Ram a Khatri from Lahore
  - Bhai Dharam Dass, a Jat of Delhi
  - Bhai Mohkam Chand, a washer man from Dwarka
  - Bhai Sahib Chand, a barber from Bidar

Bhai Himmat Chand, a water-carrier of Jagan Nath.

Pahul (Sikh baptism) symbolizes a rebirth, by which the initiated are considered as having freed themselves of their previous family origin-caste or lineage (*Kulnash*) to become the family of Gobind Singh; of having renounced their earlier creeds-communal outlook (*Dharamnash*) for the creed of Khalsa; of having renounced their previous occupations or professions (*Kirtnash*) for that of soldiering; of having given up superstition (*Bharamnash*); of having given up all rituals (*Karamnash*) and develop catholicity and universality of outlook; “*Maanas kee jaat sabhay ekay pechanbo-Treat all mankind alike*” (Guru Gobind Singh).

- In order to establish equality Guru Gobind Singh at the formal consecration of Sikhism on the Vaisakhi day 1699; instructed the followers of Sikhism to drop their last names, which in India indicate one's caste and take the last common name 'Singh' for males and 'Kaur' for females to show their acceptance of equality of all people.

Sikhism does not believe in classification of its followers on the basis of caste, class, clan or profession etc. Soon after the demise of Guru Gobind Singh the Sikhs suffered worst type of persecution at the hands of the Moghul government, which continued for about six decades. During this period the Sikh places of worship, the Gardwaras fell into the hands of Udasi and Nirmala Sadhus, who were literate Brahmans from Banaras. They introduced not only un-Sikh but even anti-Sikh practices in Gurdwaras and distorted and misinterpreted the tenets of Sikhism since there was nobody to counter their nefarious designs. They created lot of literature which is now being used against Sikhism and the Sikhs. The division of the Sikhs on such a basis was the creation of early writers of Sikhism who were mostly literate Hindus especially Brahmans, some of whom perhaps had embraced Sikhism with the ulterior motive of Hinduising it through their writings as they did not wish to do away with the caste system. During this period of control they introduced into Sikhism, the divisive caste system, which forms the bedrock of the Brahmanism / Snatan Dharma / Varan Ashram Dharma now called Hinduism. Mentioning of caste, class, clan or profession etc, along with Sikh name in Sikhism is a social defect and does not concern Sikh religion. Anybody who mentions caste with his / her name therefore is not a true Sikh, but a hypocrite.

NB: JD Cunningham writes in 'A history of the Sikhs' on page 34: “*It was reserved for Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform, and to lay the broad foundations which enabled his successor Govind to fire the minds of his countrymen with a new nationality, and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes*”.

### Religion and character in Sikhism

#### Ethics of Sikhism

Maintenance of ethical (moral) standards and conduct is an integral part of Sikhism. The holy book of Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib says:

- "ਸਚੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰ॥--*Sachu oray sabh ko oper sach aachar* i.e., Although truth is highest virtue, but higher still is truthful living (GGS, p62).

The rules of conduct in Sikhism are very simple and salutary, which leave the followers work out their social consciousness themselves:

- "ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਹਰਿਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ॥ ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਭਲਕੇ ਪਰਭਾਤੀ ਇਸ਼ਨਾਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰਿ ਨਾਵੈ॥ ਉਪਦੇਸਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੁ ਜਾਪੈ ਸਭਿ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਪਾਪ ਚੋਖ ਲਹਿ ਜਾਵੈ॥ ਫਿਰ ਚੜੈ ਦਿਵਸੁ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵੈ ਬਹਦਿਆ ਉਠਦਿਆ ਹਰਿਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ॥ ਜੋ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੋ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ॥ ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ॥ ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਧੂੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਕੀ ਜੋ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ॥--*Gur satgur ka jo Sikh akhaa-ay so bhal-kay uth har Naam dhia-vay, Udham kar-ay bhal-kay parbhaati ishnaan ka-ray Amritsar naha-vay, Updes Guru har har japu japay sab kilvikh paap dokh leh javay, Phir charay divas gurbani gavay behndiaan uthdiaan har naam dhiavay Jo saas giraas dhia-ay mera har har so Gur-Sikh Gur mane bha-vay Jis noon dyal hovey mera sooami tis Gur-Sikh Gur updes sunavay, Jan Nanak dhoor mangey tis Gur-Sikh kee jo aap japay avroh naam japaaavai*—He who calls himself, Sikh of the Guru should rise early and meditate on God's Name. He should make efforts, take bath early in the morning and have ablution in the tank of Nectar (Gurbani). By contemplating Lord's Name under Guru's guidance, all his sins, misdeeds and accusations are wiped off. Afterwards, at sunrise, he sings Guru's hymns and whilst sitting or standing, he meditates on God's Name. A Gur-Sikh, who with every breath and morsel contemplates over my Lord God, he becomes pleasing to Guru's mind. He unto whom my Master becomes merciful, to that Gu-Sikh, the Guru imparts His teaching. Servant Nanak asks for the dust of the feet of that Gur-Sikh, who himself contemplates on God's Name and makes others contemplate thereon (GGS, p.305-6).
- "ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕੋਊ ਰਾਫਜੀ ਇਮਾਮ ਸਾਫੀ ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਬੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ॥--*Hindu Turk kauoo rafjee imam safi manas kee jaat sabhay ekay pehchanbo* i.e., Treat all mankind alike irrespective of their being Hindus or Muslims or others (*Akal ustat*--Guru Gobind Singh).
- "ਏਕੈ ਨੈਣ ਏਕੈ ਕਾਨ॥ ਏਕੈ ਦੇਹਿ ਏਕੈ ਬਾਨ॥ ਖਾਕ ਬਾਦਿ ਆਤਿਸ਼ ਅਉ ਆਬ ਕੋ ਰਲਾਉ ਹੈ॥ ਅਲਾਹ ਅਭੇਖ ਸੋਈ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਔ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਓਈ॥ ਏਕਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੇ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਬਨਾਉ ਹੈ॥--*Ekay nain ekay kaan, ekay deh ekay baan, Khaak baad, aatash au aab ko rlaou hai, Allah abhekh soee, Puraan au Quraan soee Ek hee saroop sabhay ek hee bnao haiy*" (Guru Gobind Singh). i.e., all men have same eyes, ears body and figure made out of the mixture of earth, air, fire and water. The *Abhekh* (of the Hindus) and the *Allah* (of the Muslims) are one and the same, the Quran and the Purans are His (Praise). They are all of the same pattern; the one Lord has made them (*Akal Ustat*- Guru Gobind Singh).
- "ਏਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰਹਾਈ॥--*Ek pita ekas kay ham barik toon mera gurhaee*—We are all children of the One God and he is our common father" (GGS,

p.61 1)

- “ਘਾਲ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਹਿ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ॥—*Ghaal kha-ay kichh hathon de*, Nanak *rah pachhanay se*—He who eats what he earns by his earnest labour and from his hand gives something in charity, Nanak says, he alone knows the true way of life” (Ibid, p.1245).
- The Guru says that the food, clothes and transportation which cause pain to body and bring evil thought to mind should be avoided. There is no taboo regarding eatables, clothes and means of transportation according to Guru Nanak (Ibid, *Sri Rag*, pp.16-17):
 

“ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਏ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ॥— *Baabaa hor khaanaa khusee khuaa, Jit khaaday tan peerheey mann meh chaleh vikaar. 1. rhaao.---*

“ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਪੈਨਣੁ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਪੈਏ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ॥—*Baaba hor painan khusee khuar, Jitpaidhay tan peereey mann meh chaleh vikaar. 1., rahaao.*

“ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਚੜਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਚੜੀਐ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ॥—*Baabaa hor charhnaa khusee khuaar, Jit charchiay tan peerheei mann meh chaleh vikaar ".1.----(Ibid, p. 16,17)*
- “ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀੜੈ ਮਤਿ ਦੂਰਿ ਹੋਇ ਬਰਲੁ ਪਵੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਇ॥ ਆਪਣਾ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨ ਪਛਾਣਈ ਖਸਮਹੁ ਧਕੇ ਖਾਇ॥ --ਝੂਠਾ ਮਦੁ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਪੀਚਈ ਜੇ ਕਾ ਪਾਰਿ ਵਸਾਇ॥—*Jit peetay mat door ho-ay barl pavey vich aa-ay----*

*Jhootha madh mool na peechee jey ka paar vasa-ay*—By drinking which intellect departs, madness enters the brain, man does not distinguish between mine and thine and is pushed away by the Master----Do not thou drink at all such false wine as far as you can” (Ibid, 554).
- “ਅਲਪ ਅਹਾਰ ਸੁਲਪ ਸੀ ਨਿੰਦ੍ਰਾ ਦਯਾ ਛਿਮਾ ਤਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ॥—*Alp Ahaar Sulp See Nindra daya chhima tan pareet*—Eat little, sleep little; practice mercy and forgiveness” (Shabad Hazare, Guru Gobind Singh).
- “ਅਧਿਕ ਸੁਆਦ ਰੋਗ ਅਧਿਕਾਈ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਸਹਜੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ॥—*Adhak Suvad Rog Adhikai, Bin Gur Sehaj Na Paia*—The more men enjoy, more maladies come. Without Guru’s guidance peace is not obtained.” (GGS M1, p1255).
- “ਫਿਟੁ ਇਹੋਵਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਇ ਵਧਾਇਆ ਪੇਟੁ॥—*Phit ihaiva jeeviya jit kha-ay vadhaia* —Accursed is such a life, wherein man swells his belly by eating.” (Ibid, p.790).
- “ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਇ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੇ ਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਏ ਮਾਨੁ॥—*Aap gavaa-ay sewa kar-ay taan kichh paa-ay maan*—If one effaces one’s self-conceit and performs service, he, then obtains some honour. ” (ibid, p.474).
- “ਜਾਲਉ ਐਸੀ ਰੀਤਿ ਜਿਤੁ ਮੈ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਵੀਸਰੈ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਈ ਭਲੀ ਪਰੀਤਿ ਜਿਤੁ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸੇਤੀ ਪਤਿ ਰਹੈ॥—*Jalo aisee reet jit mein piara veesray, Nanak sai bhali pareet jit sahib seti pat rahay*” "Put away the custom that makes you forget the Loved One" (GGS, M1, p.590).
- ਸਾਚ ਕਹੁੰ ਸੁਣ ਲੋਹੇ ਸਭੈ ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੀਓ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਇਓ॥—*Saach kahon sun leho sabay jin prem kio tin he prabh paio*—Every body listen carefully, I say nothing but truth, only those who practice love attain union with the eternal Lord (Guru Gobind Singh).
- “—*Jit seviay sukh paiay so ahib sada samaliay, jit keeta paiay apna taan ghaal buri loo* ਜਿਤੁ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਸੋ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਮਾਲੀਐ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਾਈਐ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਾ ਘਾਲ ਬੁਰੀ ਕਿਉ ਘਾਲੀਐ॥ *In ghaaliy-*

- ie; " Ever meditate on that Lord by serving whom peace is obtained. Why doest thou do such evil deeds by which thou shalt have to suffer? (GGS, Asa M1, p 474)
- “ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜਿਨੀ ਕੰਮੀ ਨਾਹਿ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਕੰਮੜੇ ਵੀਸਾਰਿ।। ਮਤੁ ਸਰਮਿੰਦਾ ਥੀਵਹੀ ਸਾਂਈ ਦੇ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ।।—*Farida jinni kameen nahin gun tay kamray veesar, mat sharminda sevee sain day darbar*—Farid, the deeds which do not bring you any merit, leave those deeds lest you be put to shame at the Lord’s Court” (ibid, p 1381).
  - “ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ।। *Vich dunia sev kamaai-ay taan durgeh baisan paaee-ai*—In this world perform Lord’s service. Then you will get seat at God’s Portal” (Ibid, p.26)..
  - ਆਪਣ ਹਥੀ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕਾਜੁ ਸਵਾਰੀਐ।। *Aapan hathee aapnaa aapay he kaaj savareeai*—We should manage our affairs with our own hands (GGS, p474).
  - ਸੇਵਾਕਰਤ ਹੋਏ ਨਿਹਕਾਮੀ ਤਿਸ ਕੋ ਹੋਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਸੁਆਮੀ।।—*Sewa kart ho-ay nihkaami tis ko hot praapat swami*”—He who serves without desire for compensation attains the Lord (GGS, p.286)
  - “ਸਚੁ ਵਰਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਤੀਰਥ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ।। ਦਇਆ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਖਿਮਾ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ ਤੇ ਮਾਣਸ ਪਰਧਾਨ।।--*Sach vart, santokh teerath, gian, dhiaan ishnaan, daya devta, khima jampaali, te maanas pardhaan*—They who make truth, their fasting, contentment their pilgrimage, enlightenment and meditation their ablution, compassion their deity and forgiveness their rosary, the most sublime are those persons” (Ibid, Var Sarang, M1, p 1245).
  - “ਰੋਸ ਨ ਕਾਹੂ ਸੰਗ ਕਰਹੁ ਆਪਨ ਆਪੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ।। ਹੋਇ ਨਿਮਾਣਾ ਜਗ ਰਹੋ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ ਪਾਰ।।—*Ros na kahoo sang karo aapan aap beechaar.Ho-ay nimana jag raho, Nanak nadrin paar*—Do not harbour grievance against any one, contemplate on thy own-self. Abide with humility in the world. Thus Nanak says, through the God, thou shall be delivered” (Ibid, *Gauri M5*, 259).
  - “ਮਿਠਤੁ ਨੀਵੀ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਗੁਣ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਤਤੁ।।*Mithat neevee Nanaka gun changiaeeaa tat.*—Nanak says, sweetness and humility is the essence of merits and virtues” (Ibid, p.470).
  - “ਜੇ ਲੋਚੇ ਚੰਗਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਕਰ ਪੁੰਨਹੁ ਨੀਚ ਸਦਾਈਏ।।— *je loray changa apna, kar punho neech sda-iay*—If thou desirest thy good, O man perform virtuous deeds and be humble.” (Ibid, Var Asa, p 465).
  - “ਨਾਨਕ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਿਮਰੀਐ ਤਿਸ ਦੇਹੀ ਕੋ ਪਾਲ।।—*Nanak so prabh simree-ay tis dehi ko paal*—Nanak says,, cherish thou body so that it contemplates over the Lord” (Ibid, Rag Bihagra, M5, p 554).
  - “ਮਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਤੇ ਬੁਰਾ ਮਿਟਾਨਾ।। ਪੇਖੇ ਸਗਲ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਾਜਨਾ।।—*Mann apnay to buraa mitanaa pekh-ay sagal sarishat saajna*—He who effaces malice from his heart, sees the whole world as his friend (Ibid, p 266).
  - “ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇਦਿਆ ਜੀਉ ਤੂੰ ਕਮਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਸੁਖ ਭੁੰਚੁ।। ਧਿਆਇਦਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਮਿਲੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਤਰੀ ਚਿੰਤ।।—*Udham karaindian jeeo toon kamawndian sukh bhunch, dhiaindian toon Prabhu mil Nanak, utri chint*—O myself, by making an effort for the Name, thou shalt live and by practicing it, thou shalt enjoy peace. By meditating on the Name, Nanak says, thou shalt meet the Lord and thy anxiety shall vanish” (Ibid, p.522).

- “ਮਿਠਤੁ ਨੀਵੀ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਗੁਣ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਤਤੁ॥—*Mithat neeveen Nanaka gun changiaiyan tatu*—Nanak says, sweetness and humility is the essence of merits and virtues (Ibid,470)
- “ਧਰਿ ਤਾਰਾਜੁ ਤੋਲੀਐ ਨਿਵੈ ਸੁ ਗਉਰਾ ਹੋਇ॥—*Dhar trazoo toil-ay nivin so gaura ho-ay*—If a thing is weighed in a balance, the side which descends, that is heavier.” (Ibid, p470)
- “ਨਾਨਕ ਫਿਕੈ ਬੋਲੀਐ ਤਨ ਮਨ ਫਿਕਾ ਹੋਇ॥—*Nanak Phikai boliay tann mann phika ho-ay*—Nanak says, by speaking unpleasantly, the mind and body become foul, evil.” (ibid, p473).
- ਜਿਥੇ ਬੋਲਣਿ ਹਾਰੀਐ ਤਿਥੈ ਚੰਗੀ ਚੁਪ॥ --*Jithai bolan haaree-ay thithai changee chup* i.e; Where one is bound to loose by utterance, it is good to keep mum there (GGS, p.149).
- ਮੰਦਾ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਆਖੀਐ ਪਤਿ ਅਖਰੁ ਏਹੋ ਬੁਝੀਐ॥ ਮੂਰਖੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਨ ਲੁਝੀਐ॥--*Mandaa kisai na aakhiai par akhar eho bujheei. Moorakh naall na lujheei.*--Do not call any one bad, realize this by reading these words. Do not enter into arguments with a fool (GG, p.473).
- “ਐਸਾ ਕੰਮੁ ਮੂਲੇ ਨ ਕੀਚੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਅੰਤਿ ਪਛੋਤਾਈਐ॥—*Aisa kam mool na keechay jit ant pachhotai-ay*—Do not ever do such a deed for which thou may have to repent in the end” (Ibid, p 918).
- “ਪਰ ਕਾ ਬੁਰਾ ਨਾ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਚੀਤ॥ ਤੁਮ ਕਉ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਭਾਈ ਮੀਤ॥—*Par ka bura na rakho cheet tum ko dukh nahin bhai meet*—O brother and friend, have no evil, for another, in your mind, then no trouble shall befall thee” (Ibid Assa, M5, p386).
- “ਬਾਦੁ ਬਿਬਾਦੁ ਕਾਹੁ ਸਿਉ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ॥ ਰਸਨਾ ਰਾਮ ਰਸਾਇਨੁ ਪੀਜੈ॥—*Baad bibad kahon sion na keejay, rasna Ram rasain peejay*—Enter not into discussion and argument with anyone, with thy tongue quaff thou the Lord’s elixer” (Ibid, Bhairon Namdev, p 1164).
- “ਸਾਝ ਕਰੀਜੈ ਗੁਣਹ ਕੇਰੀ ਛੱਡਿ ਅਵਗਣ ਚਲੀਐ॥—*Saajh kreejay guneh kerī chhod avgun chali-ay*—Let us form partnership with merits, abandon demerits and walk the Lord’s way” (Ibid, p 766).
- “ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜਿਨੀ ਕੰਮੀ ਨਹਿ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਕੰਮੜੇ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ॥ ਮਤੁ ਸਰਮਿੰਦਾ ਥੀਵਹੀ ਸਾਈਂ ਦੈ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ॥—*Frida Jinni kammien nahin gun tay kamray visaar mat sharminda theev-ee sain day darbar*—Farid the deeds which do not bring you any merit, leave those deeds lest you be put to shame at the Lord’s Court” (Ibid, p 1381 ).
- “ਹੱਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਆਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ॥ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਾਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜੇ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ॥—*Hakk praiya Nanaka os, sonar os gai, Gur Peer hami taan bhare je murdar na kha-ay*—Nanak says, to grab what is another’s is like a swine for him (Musalman) and cow for him (Hindu). Guru and prophet shall stand surety only then, if man does not eat carrion.” (Ibid, p 141).
- “ਇਸ ਜਰ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਘਣੀ ਵਿਗੁਤੀ ਇਨਿ ਜਰ ਘਣੀ ਖੁਆਈ॥ ਪਾਪਾ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਥਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥—*Is jar kaaran ghani vigutti in jar ghani khuaie, papaan bajhon hovay nahin mooian saath na jae*—For wealth many are ruined and it has disgraced many. Without misdeeds it is not amassed and it does not go with the dead” (Ibid417).

- “ਬਿਨਾ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਊ ਰਾਜੈ॥-*Bin santokh nahin ko-ou rajay*—Without contentment no one is sated” (Ibid, p.279).
- “ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਲਗੈ ਕਪੜੈ ਜਾਮਾ ਹੋਇ ਪਲੀਤੁ॥ ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਚੀਤੁ॥-*Je ratt laggay kapray jama hoay paleet, jo ratt peevah maansa tin kio nirmal cheet*—If clothes stained with blood, the garment gets polluted then those, who suck the blood of human beings, how can their mind be pure?” (Ibid, p.140)
- “ਪੜਿਆ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਆਖੀਐ ॥ ਜਿਸੁ ਲਬੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰਾ॥-*Parrhia moorakh akhieay, jis labh lobh hankaar*—The scholar, who harbours greed, avarice and pride, is to be called a fool” (Ibid, p.140).
- “ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥-*So kion manda akhi-ay jit jamein rajaan*—Why call her bad, from whom are born the kings?” (Ibid, p.473).
- “ਜਾਤਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਨਹ ਪੁਛੀਐ ਸਚ ਘਰੁ ਲੇਹੁ ਬਤਾਇ॥ ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ॥-*Jaat janam neh poochiay sach ghar leho Bata-ay, sa jaati sa pat hai jehay karam kamaay*—The Lord does not ask the mortals caste and birth so you find out the Lord’s True Home. That alone is man’s caste and that his glory, as are the deeds which he does” (Ibid, p,1330).
- “ਜਾਨਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਜਾਤੀ ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੇ॥-*Jano jot na puchho jaati, aggay jaat na hai*—Know that Divine Light is within all, do not inquire the caste. There is no caste in the next world” (Ibid, Asa M1, p.349).
- “ਸਜਣ ਸੇਈ ਨਾਲਿ ਮੈ ਚਲਦਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ਚਲੰਨਿ ਜਿਥੈ ਲੇਖਾ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਤਿਥੈ ਖੜੇ ਦਿਸੰਨਿ॥-*Sajjan sayee naal mein chaldian naal chalan, jithay lekha mangiay tithay kharay disun*—They alone are true friends, who stand by you through thick and thin” (Ibid, p.729)
- “ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਥੀ ਜਾਇ॥ ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ॥-*Je jivay patt lathi ja-ay sab haram jeta kichh kha-ay*—Eating any thing is illegitimate if you live a disgraced life” (Ibid, 142)
- “ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨਿ॥-*Bha-ay kahay ko det neh neh bha-ay maanat aan*. Neither fear nor frighten any one” (Ibid, Salok M9, p1427).
- “ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਚੜਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੈ ਸਰਬਤ ਕਾ ਭਲਾ॥-*Nanak naam chardi kola teray bhanay sarbat da bhala*” .

**Religion, Character and Sexual Morality in Hinduism / Ethics of Hinduism**

- In Vedas one finds matters relating to seduction, incest, abortion, conjugal infidelity, deception and robbery as well. Prostitution was common and prostitutes were called waarrangnas. There are some very obscene passages in the Vedas.
- Brahma is considered to be the greatest spiritual leader of the Hindu Trinity and yet if we read Shiv Puran (Ruder Samhita 2 Sati Khand 2 Chapter 19, we find him mentioned as a cheat and maniac. Even at the time of the marriage of Shiva and Parvati Brahma displayed his sexual depravity openly. In the same Granth another lewd story is recorded concerning Shiva and Parvati.
- Reading Hindu Shastras and Purans we find that relation of sexes among the Vedic Aryans and Aryan gods was not ideal. Obviously these standards were later followed by the followers of Hinduism. More than one man shared one woman and none of them had any exclusive rights on the wife. Devas molested the wives of the Rishis or sexually attacked the wives of their colleague Devas. Rape of Ahalya, the wife of Rishi Gautma by Indra is well known and Indra was prominent god of Rig Veda. In Adhyaya 100 of the Vana Parva of the Mahabhartta we read that Rishi Vibhandaka cohabited with a female deer and as a result of this intercourse Rishi Shranga was born. In Adyaya 118 of Adi Parva of the Mahabhartta Rishi Vyas gives us a similar story of Pandu, the father of the Pandus, who received a curse from Rishi Kadam. According to the story Rishi Kadam issued a curse because he was engaged in sexual intercourse with a deer when Pandu disturbed him. In Adhyaya 63 of Adi Parva of the Mahabhartta Rishi Rarashara had sexual intercourse with Satyavati (also called Matsya Gandha-fisherman's girl) in Public and in broad day light. In Adhyaya 104 of the Adi Parva, Rishi Dirgha is stated to have staged a similar scene in public.
- **Incest**--sexual intercourse between persons too closely related to marry legally / Sexual molestation of a child or adolescent by a relative, especially, by a parent or other adult relative.:-
- Father-daughter incest occurs in the story of Brahma and his daughter. Brahma married his own daughter Satarupa.
- Hiranyakashpu married his daughter Rohini. Vashista married Shatrupa, Janhu married Janhavi and Surya married Usha.

**Rape**

- Rape was common. Some examples are Manu-Illa, Surya raped Kunti. Vishnu raped Jalandhra's wife (Varinda) who later committed suicide.

**Sons married their mothers:**

- There are examples where father and son married the same woman; Brahma is the father of Manu. Manu married his mother Sharadha. Pushan too married his mother.
- **Marriage with sisters**
- The discussion of open sex between a brother and sister (Yam and Yami in Rig Veda MandalX). Brahma had three sons Marichi, Daksha and Dharma and one daughter. Daksha is stated to have married the daughter of Brahma who was his sister (see Adi Parva of Mahabharata). Other examples are Purukutsa and Narmada, Viprachiti and Smhika, Nausa and Viraja, Sukra and Usanas, Amavasu and Go, Amsumat and Yasoda, Suka and Parvati. Pusan is the lover of his sister Achoda. (Rig Veda X.3.3). Agni is the lover of his own sister (Rig Veda VI.55.4). Ashvins were the sons of Savitar and Usha who were brother and sister.
- **Selling and hiring of women:**
- There is evidence that the ancient Aryans also sold their women (Wives and daughters). When a daughter was sold her marriage was known as Arsha maariage. (Manu Simriti 3.29)
- Women were also rented to others for cohabitation. In the Mahbharta we read that Madhvi was the daughter of king Yayati. Yayati made a gift of her to Galwa Rishi. Galwa rented her to three kings one after the other. After the third, Madhvi was returned to Galwa. She was now given by Galwa to his Guru Vishvamitra. Vishvamitra kept her till he begot a son. After this he returned her to her father.
- **Niyoga**
- Niyoga is the Aryan name for a system under which a wedded woman was legally permitted to beget a son from another person, not her husband. There was no limit to the number of men a woman could go for Niyoga.
- **Polyandry:**
- In Mahabharata Daropati had five husbands and Pandu allowed his wife Kunti to have four Niyogas.
- **Abduction:** “Juj meh jor chhali chandrawal kahn Kisan yadam bhaiaa” (GGS, p. 470). Chandrawal was the wife of Govardhan and daughter of Chanderbhan who was forcibaly abducted by Lord Krishna.
- **mistreatment of women & indecency:**
- Disrobing of women in public is evident in the Mahabharata. Daropati was disrobed in front of her near relatives. In Shiv Puran Ruder Samhita (4.12) we read that Shiva ran after the wives of Rishis completely naked. On account of this indecency he had to lose his male organ.
- In temples at Jagan Nath, Konark, and Bhuneshwar of Orissa there are statues of naked women in very objectionable pose. Similar poses are openly depicted on the outside of the temples at Khajuraho.

Such stories do not lead to spiritualism or to ideal sexual behavior which is expected from religious leaders. It is for this reason that Gurbani says, “Dirty was Brahma and dirtier still was moon. Shiva, Shankra and Mahesha too did not fare well” (GGS, p.1158).

**Notes and references:** Sikh Religion and Hinduism, G.S. Sidhu M.A. Fil (London).

### Sexual morality and Sikhism

—————Morality and ethics are the foundation of Sikhism. Sikhism expects ideal moral and social behaviour. Adultery is a *bajjar Kurehat* (major prohibition) in Sikh religious code of conduct (Sikh *rehat maryada* / Sikh *dharm achaar shastar*). An initiated (Amritdhari Sikh) found guilty of having extra-marital relationship loses his / her membership among the Khalsa and he has to submit himself before the *Sangat*, confess his / her guilt, accept *tankhah* (religious punishment) and get re-initiated. Gurbani gives very clear instructions in this regard:

- “ਪਰਤ੍ਰੀਅ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਪੇਖੈ ਨੇਤ੍ਰੁ॥-*Par triya roop na pekhay netar*” . “One should not even cast an evil eye on another's woman” (*Ibid*, p274).
- “ਪਰ ਧਨ ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਇਨ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਨਿਵਾਰਿ॥-*Par dhan, par dara, par ninda in sion pareet nivar*—Other's wealth, other's woman, other's slander, thou discard thy craving for these.” (*Ibid*, Asa M5, p379).
- “ਜੈਸਾ ਸੰਗੁ ਬਿਸੀਅਰ ਸਿਉ ਹੈ ਰੇ ਤੈਸੇ ਹੀ ਇਹੁ ਪਰਗ੍ਰਿਹੁ॥-*Jaisay sang bisier sion hai ray, taisay he ih par greh*—as is the companionship of a venomous serpent so is ravishing of another's wife” (*Ibid*, p403)
- “ਦੇਖ ਪ੍ਰਾਈਆਂ ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਭੈਣਾਂ ਧੀਆਂ ਜਾਣ॥-*Dekh praian changian mawan dhian bhena jaan*” Seeing beautiful women of others, a Gursikh should treat and behave towards them as mothers, sisters and daughters (Bhai Gurdas 29/11)
- ਪਰ ਧਨ ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਪਰਹਰੀ॥ ਤਾ ਕੇ ਨਿਕਟ ਬਸੈ ਨਰਹਰੀ॥--*Par dhan par daaraa parharee taa kai nikat bas-ay narharee*—The Lord abides close to the person who does not covet another person's wealth and woman (GGS.. p.1163)
- ਪਰ ਧਨ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਰਤੁ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਬਿਖੁ ਖਾਈ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ॥*Par dhan par naaree rut nindaa bikh khaaee dukh paaeiaa*. Being attached to another person's woman or riches and slandering others are like poison, where by one suffers pain (GGS, p.1255).
- ਬਨਿਤਾ ਛੇਡਿ ਬਦ ਨਦਰਿ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ॥ ਵੇਸਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਮਹਾ ਦੁਖਿਆਰੀ॥ *Bantaa chhod ves na paaeeai mahaan dukhiaaree*.—If one abandones one's own wife (by becoming mendicant) and then casts evil eyes upon another person's wife, one cannot attain Lord by merely religious garb and becomes very miserable (GGS, p.1348).
- ਰੇ ਨਰ ਕਾਇ ਪਰ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਜਾਇ॥ ਕੁਚਲ ਕਠੋਰ ਕਾਮਿ ਗਰਧਬ ਤੁਮ ਨਹੀ ਸੁਨਿਉ ਧਰਮ ਰਾਇ॥-*Ray nur kaa-ay par grihee jaa-ay kuchal kathor kaam gardhab tum nahe sunio dharm rai*—O man! Why do you go to another person's home (to entice his wife)? O filthy heartless and lustful donkey! Have you not heard of justice of God? (GGS, p.1001)).
- ਪਰ ਤ੍ਰਿਅ ਰਾਵਣਿ ਜਾਹਿ ਸੇਈ ਤਾ ਲਾਜੀਅਹਿ॥*par treea raavan jaahe sayee taa laajeeah*.—They who entice another person's woman have to suffer shame (GGS, p. 1362).
- ਦੇਇ ਕਿਵਾੜ ਅਨਿਕ ਪੜਦੇ ਮਹਿ ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਸੰਗ ਫਾਕੈ॥ ਚਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਗੁਪਤ ਜਬ ਲੇਖਾ ਮਾਗਹਿ ਤਬ ਕਉਣੁ ਪੜਦਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਢਾਕੈ॥--*day kivaar anik parday meh par daaraa sung faakkai. Chitat gupat jab kekhaa maaheh kaun pardaa teraa dhaakai*—You ravish another person's woman behind closed doors and many curtains (thinking that no one would see you). However when God's agents (who see all your

- actions) call for your accounts, then who will hide your sins (GGS, p.616).
- ਕਿਆ ਗਾਲਾਇਓ ਭੂਫ ਪਰ ਵੇਲਿ ਨ ਜੋਹੇ ਕੰਤ ਤੂ।।--*Kiaa gaalaeiou bhoosh par vael na johay kant too*—O fool! What are you talking? Don't covet other person's wife (behold with bad intentions). Only then you are a good husband.
  - ਨਾਨਕ ਤੂਰ ਮਰਹਿ ਦੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਜਿਨ ਅਵਰੀ ਲਾਗਾ ਨੇਹੁ।।*Nanak jhoor mureh dohaagunee jin avuree laagaa nehu.*—Nanak the wife who loves another man (and not her husband) wails herself to death (GGS, p. 1280).
  - ਜਿਉ ਤਨ ਬਿਧਵਾ ਪਰ ਕਉ ਦੇਈ।। ਕਾਮਿ ਦਾਮਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਪਰ ਵਸਿ ਸੇਈ।। ਬਿਨ ਪਿਰ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿ ਨ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਹੋਈ।। *Jio tun bidhuva par ko dehee kaam dhaam chit par vaas saee. Bin pir tripat na kabhoon hoee* – An (unchaste) widow gives her body to a stranger; she allows her mind to be controlled by others for lust or money, but without her husband, she is never satisfied.(GGS, p226)
  - “ਏਕਾ ਨਾਰੀ ਜਤੀ ਹੋਇ।। ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਧੀ ਭੈਣ ਵਖਾਣੈ।।--*Eka naari jati ho-ay, par naari dhe bhain wakhanay*-A person should be faithful to one woman (His wife) and treat other women as his daughters or sisters” (Bhai Gurdas, Var 6, Pauri 8).
  - ਹਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਘੋਲਿ ਘੁਮਾਇਆ, ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਨੇੜਿ ਨ ਜਾਵੈ।।--I am sacrifice unto him who does not near other woman with evil intentions (Bhai Gurdas, Var12, Pauri 4).
  - ਚੋਰੁ ਸਲਾਹੇ ਚੀਤੁ ਨ ਭੀਜੈ।। ਜੇ ਬਦੀ ਕਰੇ ਤਾ ਤਸੁ ਨ ਛੀਜੈ।। ਚੋਰ ਕੀ ਹਾਮਾ ਭਰੇ ਨ ਕੋਇ।। ਚੋਰੁ ਕੀਆ ਚੰਗਾ ਕਿਉ ਹੋਇ।।--If a thief praises one, his mind is not pleased.If a thief reviles him then even an iota of his honour is not detracted. No one takes the responsibility of a thief.. What a thief does, how can that be good? (GGS, p 662) .
  - ਪਰ ਕਾ ਬੁਰਾ ਨ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਚੀਤ।। ਤੁਮ ਕਉ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਭਾਈ ਮੀਤ।।--O brother and friend, have no evil, for another, in your mind, then no trouble shall befall thee (GGS, p.386).
  - ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬੁਰੇ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਕਰ ਗੁਸਾ ਮਨ ਨ ਹਢਾਇ।। ਦੇਹੀ ਰੋਗ ਨ ਲਗਈ ਪਲੇ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਇ।।--Farid do thou good in return for evil and harbour no wrath in your mind. Your body shall not be infested with with maladies and you shall obtain everything (GGS, p.1382).
  - ਲੈ ਕੇ ਵਢੀ ਦੇਨਿ ਉਗਾਹੀ, ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਕਾ ਗਲਿ ਫਾਹਾ ਹੇ।।--Those , who taking bribe, give false evidence, the noose of foul-thinking is put around their neck [ ] (GGS, p. 1032).
  - ਅੰਤਰਿ ਲੋਭੁ ਮਨਿ ਮੈਲੇ ਮਲੁ ਲਾਏ।। ਮੈਲੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਰੇ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਏ।। ਕੂੜੇ ਕੂੜੁ ਕਰੇ ਵਾਪਾਰਾ, ਕੂੜੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਦਾ।।--Of filthy mind are they, within whom is avarice. They attach filth to others as well. By doing dirty deeds, one suffers pain. By doing dirty deeds, one suffers pain. The false ones deal in nothing but falsehood. By telling lies thy come to grief (GGS, p.1062).
  - ਜਿਨਾ ਰਾਸ ਨ ਸਚੁ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉ ਤਿਨਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ।। ਖੋਟੈ ਵਣਜਿ ਵਣਜੀਐ ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਖੋਟਾ ਹੋਇ।। (GGS, p.22-23)

Gurmat teaches and preaches the practice of morality and honesty in one's life and this distinguishes it from the practitioners of ritualism only.

### Status of woman in Hinduism

Before the birth of Sikhism the plight of the woman in the Indian subcontinent was highly deplorable. She had the most inferior position in the society. The treatment of women in Hinduism is supposed to have been fixed by the Hindu scripture. It started from the Rig Veda (Rig Veda 10-85.40) In Hinduism she was treated at par with animals. Tulsi Dass in his Ram Chrit Manas Says, “ਢੋਰ ਗਵਾਰ ਸੂਦਰ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਨਾਰੀ।। ਯਹ ਸਭ ਤਾੜਨ ਕੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ।।--*Dhor, ganwar, shudar, pashu, nari, yeh sab tarin ke adhikari*”-

i.e, “The stupid person, the Shudra, animal and woman all deserve reprimand”. Manu the Hindu law-giver has attributed all that is good and great to males and on the contrary, assigned all that is bad and obnoxious to females. He considered women subservient to men and lower in status. He disallowed them from listening to the Vedas. Woman was considered an obstacle in the holy path. They were not permitted to offer Gariha samskaras (Household ceremonies) or performing other sacraments like adding ahuti (oblation) into the Havan Kund fire. Manu Simriti stated, “a woman does not deserve independence”. He expected them to remain under the guardianship of their father, brother or husband throughout life (Manu V.148). He required women to consider their husbands as ‘Lords’ (Manu V.154-155). In Hinduism women are considered impure at the time of monthly courses and after parturition. Even Bhagat Kabir did not speak very high of woman and he has described her as a source of lust and passions and refuse of the world. In Buddhism a male Bhikshu is not supposed to touch and rescue a drowning woman even if she was his mother. Dighambra Jains believe that a woman cannot reach Kavalya and has to achieve first male incarnation. She was assumed to be defiled and scorn worthy. Upon parent’s death only sons had the right to perform funeral and cremation ceremony. Even emersion of remains (ashes) at the holy places (which is considered to be a help in salvation of the soul) has to be performed by a male child. This is why the birth of a female child was not welcomed and considered a curse. Hence woman was required to produce a male child. Man’s right and undue control over woman had increased to the point that woman was like any other material possession of man and could even be given as alm (*Kanya Daan*) or wagered in gambling as was done by Raja Nul and Pandavas. Woman was considered so low that she was not allowed to wear Janeu (sacred thread). On death of her husband she was made to burn herself with him. This inhuman and tragic ritual was ironically called “Sati”, a sacrifice for Truth.

**Dev Dasis** (Literally means slaves of God)

Several Purans strongly recommended the services of singing girls for worship at temples. Young girls were offered at the Hindu temples fully loaded with ornaments to stay there for life. At one time people even offered their wives to the temples. This fact is mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Nanak, “He bathes at Kurukshetra during a solar eclipse to wash his sins, and gives away his decorated wife in offering”—*Je uh grehan karay kulkhet, arpay naar seegar samait*” (GGS, p.875). Also, “*As daan gaj daan sihja naari bhoom daan, aisay daan nit niteh keejay* (GGS, p.973). Girls as young as 11 are married to goddess Yellamma (Renuka) in a ceremony where a red and white beaded necklace is tied around their necks, signifying a life of bondage. They are then not allowed to marry any man, and implicitly become dancers and sex slaves for upper caste men. However, upper caste men were allowed to keep them as concubines. And if a child was born, only the mother would be responsible for its upbringing.

**Sati**

Sati has been ritual among Hindus for centuries. The Hindu widows were forced to burn themselves in funeral pyres of their husbands.

### **Widows**

Although Hinduism has been discarding some of its old practices under the influence of its reformers a wadow is still looked upon with indifference. Manu’s laws still govern the treatment of widows and women in general. Manu forbids them from getting remarried and they are excluded from inheritance (Manu viii, 416) except her wedding gifts. As soon as the news of husband’s death is received the wife’s bangles are smashed, her frontal mark (Bindi) is removed, and vermilion is wiped of her hair. The widows are degraded to a condition in which they are no longer a source of allurements. Their shadow is considered inauspicious and they wear white or colourless clothes. They are not permitted

to wear ornaments or use any make up. There are instances where widows are shaved to make them look unattractive. Young and newly married girls are prohibited from talking to widows. They are considered unlucky and there are social functions where they are not permitted to take part.

### **Status of woman in Sikhism**

The position in Sikhism however is totally different. One of the most notable social improvements introduced by Sikhism is the emancipation of women. The Sikh Gurus laid down norms of ethical equality of woman with man and granted her an exalted status. Sikhism does not consider woman inferior to man rather her position has been eulogized in Guru Granth Sahib (The holy Sikh scripture):

- “ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ॥ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡੋ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ॥ ਭੰਡੁ ਮੂਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ॥ ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਿਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ॥--*Bhand jam-meeai bhand nim-meeai bhand mangan weeah. Bhandah hovai dostee bhande chalai raah. Bhand muae bhand bhaaleeai bhande hovai bandhaan. So kion mandaa aakhiai jit jammah raajaan. Bhandah hee bhand oopjai bhandai baajh na koe. Nanak bhandai baahiraa eko sacaa so-ay.--* From the woman is our birth; in woman's womb are we conceived. To woman are we engaged; to woman are we wedded. The woman is our friend and from woman is the family. If one woman dies, we seek another, through the woman are the bonds of the world. Why call the woman evil who gives birth to kings? From a woman, a woman is born. Without the woman there can be none. Nanak says, only the True Lord is without a woman”- (GGS Var Asa M1, p.473).
- Guru Nanak says, “ਪੁਰਖ ਮਹਿ ਨਾਰਿ ਨਾਰਿ ਮਹਿ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਬੂਝਹੁ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ॥--*Purkh Meh Naar, Naar Meh Purkha Boojho Brahm Giani*” (bid, p.879)-man is born of woman and woman of man, realize this O' God-enlightened man.
- “ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਇਹ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਬਹਨਿ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਇ॥ ਏਕ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੋਇ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਇ॥--They are not wife and husband who sit together. Rather they are wife and husband who have one spirit in two bodies”. (GGS, p788).
- ਲੋਕ ਵੇਦ ਗੁਣ ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਚਿ ਅਰਧ ਸਰੀਰੀ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰੀ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸੁਖ ਫਲ ਨਿਹਚਉ ਨਾਰੀ॥--“From temporal as well as from spiritual point of view, woman is man's other half and assists him to salvation. She assuredly brings happiness to the virtuous”. (Var 5. Bhai Gurdas)
- Guru Hargobind during the course of his conversation with Sant Samrath Ram Dass, the mentor of Shiva jee Marhatta called woman, “*Aurat eemaan--ਔਰਤ ਈਮਾਨ*”---Woman is the conscience of man. This shows unequivocally the high esteem in which a woman is required to be, held in Sikhism.

### **Sikhism took practical steps for socio-religious equality of man & woman**

- In Sikhism there is no ban or prohibition on women to attend a Gurdwara and pay their obeisance. Women are equally entitled to get Sikh Initiation (Baptism) like men and wear articles of Sikh

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

faith. Initiated women can perform all Sikh religious ceremonies, which initiated Sikh men can perform. Sikhism condemns female infanticide and a Sikh found guilty in this regard is excommunicated from the Sikh Panth. Sikhs are forbidden to have any relationship with '*Kuri Maar-ਕੁੜੀ ਮਾਰ*' (one who kills his daughter).

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- Sikhism advocates education of women and encourages them to adopt various professions including armed forces and politics.
- Sikhism strictly forbids veiling (*Purda--ਪਰਦਾ*) of women.

### Various concepts of Hinduism & Sikh view

#### Hindu concept of trinity of God, its symbol *Oam* (ॐ) and Sikh view

Sikhism is a strictly monotheistic religion, whereas Hinduism is polytheistic and believes in the Trinity of God. The syllable ॐ is the symbol of God in Hinduism representing its Divine Trinity (*Tripunda*) consisting of Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer) and Shiva (the destroyer). It is used as manifesting word for God in Hinduism and is written as sign of invocation in Hindu literature both sacred and temporal and is pronounced as *Om / Oam / Aum* (O+A+m) .

Guru Nanak did not assign any particular name to the ‘Supreme Eternal Reality’ because according to him the Almighty is ineffable. He simply called the ‘Supreme Eternal Reality’, ‘*Oh*’ meaning, ‘He’ (God), written in Punjabi (Gurmukhi) as ਓ. In order to convey his stern monotheism Guru Nanak put digit one-1- (*ikk*) before the open end Punjabi (Gurmukhi) alphabet *oora* ਓ, there by creating ੴ. The open end of the alphabet ਓ denotes infiniteness of God. Guru Nanak says, “ੴ --- ਉਹ (*Oankar*-i.e; God) ਇਕ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਹੈ—*Oh ikk hai tay Beant hai*”, meaning: “There is one Supreme Eternal Reality and he is infinite”, thereby rejecting the Hindu concept of trinity of God. *Gurmat* holds that God is the sole Creator, Sustainer, Destroyer, Doer and indivisible. There was no partner or agent to God in the sweep of universal Infinity.

ੴ is not found written as such alone in the holy Sikh Scripture published by the supreme Sikh religious body, Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). It only forms a part of the Basic postulate, popularly, called *Mool mantra* of Sikhism, which defines the attributes of the ‘Supreme Eternal Reality’ i.e God. **It stands for the attributes and not the name of the Almighty (God).** The shortest form of Mool Mantra written as invocation in Guru Granth Sahib is: ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ meaning, “There is ‘One Supreme Eternal Reality’, the infinite, enlightner and gracious”. ੴ is a new word i.e, ‘One’+‘Oora’ with an open end and that is extended, coined by Guru Nanak to explain the ‘oneness’ and ‘Infiniteness of ‘Oh’, the Almighty, to whom no descriptive or specific name can be assigned. Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of Sikhism says:

- ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਸਦਾ ਧਿਆਇ ਤੂ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ॥--*Har jeeo sadaa dhiaae too gurmukh ekankaar*—You always remember the venerable God, through the Guru as the One and only One Lord (GGS, p.30).
- ਜਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਪੂਰਿਆ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਸਿਰਜਨਹਾਰੁ॥ ਅਨਿਕ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਪਸਰਿਆ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ॥--*Jal thal maahhaal pooriaa suaamee sirjanhaar. Anik bhaant go-ay pasriaa Nanak ekankaar*—Lord the creator is pervasive in water, the land and the troposphere. Nanak says, in innumerable forms, the One Lord has manifested Himself (GGS, p. p.296) .
- ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਉਤਪਤਿ॥ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ ਕੀਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਚਿਤਿ॥ ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸੈਲ ਜੁਗ ਭਏ॥ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ ਬੇਦ ਨਿਰਮਏ॥--*Oankaar brahma utpat. Oankaar keea jin chit. Oankaar sil jug bhae. Oankar bed nirmae. Oankaar shabad udhare. Oankaar gurmukh tare. Oankar akhar sunah beechaar. Onam makhar tribhavan saar*—Brahma was created through the One Lord. That Brahma cherished the One Lord in his mind. It is from the One Lord, that

mountains and ages have emanated. It is the Lord who created Vedas. It is through the One Lord that world is saved. It is through the Lord that the God-conscious beings are emancipated. Listen thou the account of the Imperishable Lord, worthy of obeisance. The eternal Lord is the essence of the three worlds. i. Listen O, Pandit what rigmarole writest thou? -----1. Pause. S: God created the whole world with ease. In the three worlds, is His One Light. Pick up thou the gems and pearls of the Name and by the Guru's guidance, thou shalt obtain God, the real commodity. If man understands, reflects and comprehends what he reads and pursues, he ultimately comes to realize that the True Lord is within all. The God-ward person perceives and contemplates the True Lord. Without the True Lord, the world is but false (GGS, p.929)

- ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਆਦਿ॥ ਕਥਨੀ ਅਨਾਦਿ॥ (Jaap p 10) –167.

### Gender inequality in Hinduism & Status of woman in Sikhism

Before the birth of Sikhism the plight of woman in the Indian subcontinent was highly deplorable. She had most inferior position in the society. In Hinduism she was treated at par with animals. Tulsi Dass in his 'Ram Chrit Manas' says. "*Dhor ghanwar, shudar, pashu, nari, yeh sab tarin ke adhikari*" meaning: "The stupid person, the shudra, animals and women all deserve reprimand". Manu the Hindu law-giver has attributed all that is good and great to males and on the contrary, assigned that is bad and obnoxious to females. Even Bhagat Kabir did not speak very high of woman and he has described her as a source of lust and passions and refuse of the world. In Buddhism a male Bhikshu is not supposed to touch and rescue a drowning woman even if she was his mother. Dighambra Jains believe that a woman cannot reach Kavalya and has to achieve first male incarnation.

The position in Sikhism is totally different. One of the most notable social improvements introduced by Sikhism is the emancipation of women. The Sikh Gurus laid down norms of ethical equality of woman with man and granted her an exalted status. Sikhism does not consider woman inferior to man rather her position has been eulogized in Guru Granth Sahib (The holy Sikh scripture):

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- Man is born of woman and woman of man, realize this O' divine—"Purkh meh naar, naar meh pukha, bhoojho brahm giani" (GGS, p.879).
- From temporal as well as spiritual point of view, woman is man's other half and assists him to salvation. She brings him salvation. She assuredly brings happiness to the virtuous—Var5. Bhai Gurdas.
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**Practice of renunciation and asceticism in Hinduism and Sikh view**

In religious life renunciation (Tiag--ਤਿਆਗ) means dissociation from worldly life (*Grahisti jivan*). All ancient Indian religious systems (Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism) regarded renunciation as a precondition for achieving salvation (*Mukti*). Sikhism denounces this concept in strong terms. It is a whole life religion and does not accept dichotomy in life, whether it is 'spiritual and material', 'faith and reason', or any other such differentiation. It involves an integral combination between spiritual and empirical life of man. It accepts householder's life (*Grahisti jivan*) as the forum of spiritual activities and growth. It does not believe the version of earlier religions that this world was a snare or at the best a mere delusion, a house of sin, a place of pain and suffering and hence an evil and release could come through complete dissociation with it. Sikhism regards this world as, "The house of God and He resides in it" i.e., "ਇਹ ਜਗ ਸਚੈ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ॥ ਸਚੈ ਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਸ॥ -*Ih jag sachchay kee hai kothari sachahay ka vich vaas*" (GGS, M2, p 463). Also, "ਇਹ ਵਿਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਤੁਮ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਇਹ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ॥ ਹਰਿ ਰੂਪ ਨਦਰੀ ਆਇਆ॥ -*Ih vis sanar tum dekhday, ih har ka roop hai, har coop nadrin aiya*" i.e., "This world you see is his manifestation. It is the God that you see every where" (Ibid, Ram Kali, M3, Anand). Sikhism believes in shouldering full social responsibility and rejects a life of escapeism. It denounces asceticism (*sanyasa /Bhikshuhood*) for achieving salvation as propagated by Hinduism, radical saints, Buddhism and Jainism. It propagates the life of a householder. Guru Nanak deprecates the *Yogi* who gives up the world and then is not ashamed of begging at the door of the householder. He says, "ਮਖਟੂ ਹੋਇ ਕੈ ਕੰਨ ਪੜਾਇ॥ ਫਕਰੁ ਕਰੇ ਹੋਰੁ ਜਾਤਿ ਗਵਾਏ॥ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਸਦਾਏ ਮੰਗਣ ਜਾਇ॥ ਤਾ ਕੈ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਲਗੀਐ ਪਾਇ॥ [-*Makhattoo ho-ay kai kan paraa-ay. Fakar karay hor jaat gavaa-ay. Gur peer sadaa-ay mangan jaa-ay. Taa kai mool na lgee-ay paa-ay.*-i.e. The person incapable of earning his living gets his ears split (turns a *Nath Yogi*) and becomes a mendicant. He calls himself a guru or a saint. Do not look upto him nor touch his feet (GGS, p1245). He knows the way, who earns his living and shares his earnings with others, "ਘਾਲ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥੋ ਦੇਇ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਸੇ॥ -*Ghaal kha-ay kichh hathon day Nanak rah pachhanay say*" (Ibid, p.1245). According to Sikh thought, salvation is not incompatible with laughing, playing, dressing well and eating i.e.; "ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਪੂਰਾ ਭੇਟੀਐ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ॥ ਹਸੰਦਿਆਂ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆਂ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆਂ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆਂ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ॥ -*Nanak Satgur bhetiay poori hovay jugat, hasandian, khelendian, penandian, khavandian vichay hovay mukat* (Ibid, p.522). Sikhism believes that one can lead a thoroughly religious life, as a part of the household, "ਗ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਬਨੁ ਸਮਸਰਿ ਸਹਜਿ ਸੁਭਾਇ॥ *Greh ban samsar sehj subhaa-ay* i.e. The house and the forest are alike for one who lives in poise (Ibid, p.351)".

According to Gurbani, “ਇਸੁ ਭੇਖੇ ਥਾਵਹੁ ਗਿਰਹੋ ਭਲਾ ਜਿਥਹੁ ਕੋ ਵਰਸਾਇ॥ *Is bhekhay thaavah girho bhalaaj jithah ko warsaa-ay* i.e. “Family life is superior to the ascetic life because it is from householders that ascetics meet their needs (i.e, by begging) (Ibid, p.587), God is there in the world that we see and we have to find Him there and yet remain detached, “ਜਿਉ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਅਲਿਪਤੋ ਵਰਤੈ ਤਿਉ ਵਿਚੇ ਗਿਰਹੁ ਉਦਾਸੁ॥ – *Jion jal mein kamla alpato vartey, tion vichay girhey udas* i.e. As lotus remains unaffected in water, so he (householder) remains detached in his household. ” (Ibid, p949). Guru Nanak says, “ਨਾਨਕ ਘਰ ਹੀ ਬੈਠਿਆ ਸਹੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਜੇ ਨੀਅਤਿ ਰਾਸਿ ਕਰੇਇ॥ – *Nanak ghar he baithian sahu milay je neeat raas karay* i.e If you put your mind on the right path then, even while seated at home, you shall Nanak says, meet with your Groom (God)” (Ibid, p1383).

According to Sikh thought true renunciation is renunciation of evil / ego / lust, anger, greed, attachment, and pride. Only renunciation of worldly life (*Grahisti jivan*) cannot lead to bliss (realization of God / salvation). The evil thought remains in mind:

- “ਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਤਜਿ ਬਨਖੰਡ ਜਾਈਐ ਚੁਨਿ ਖਾਈਐ ਕੰਦਾ॥ ਅਜਹੁ ਬਿਕਾਰ ਨ ਛੋਡਈ ਪਾਪੀ ਮਨੁ ਮੰਦਾ॥ – *Greh taj ban khand jai-ay chun khai-ay kanda, ajhu bikaar na chhodae paapi man manda* i.e; Abandoning home, one may go to the forest region and pick up tubers to eat, even then the sinful and evil mind forsakes not misdeeds” (Ibid, p.855).
- “ਬਿਨੁ ਹਉ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਕਹਾ ਕੋਉ ਤਿਆਗੀ॥ – *Bin haun tiag kaha ko-oo tiagi* ; without casting off egoism, how can one be a renouncer? – ” (Ibid, p.1140)
- “ਤਿਆਗਨਾ ਤਿਆਗਨੁ ਨੀਕਾ ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਲੋਭ ਮੋਹ ਤਿਆਗਨਾ॥ – *Tiagna tiagun neeka kam, karodh, lobh tiagna* -i.e; Of all the renunciations, the excellent renunciation is the renunciation of lust, wrath and avarice (Ibid, p.101 8).

Sikhism propagates living in equipoise (*Sehaj*), while leading a householder's life without falling prey to worldly temptations. “ਕਾਇ ਪਟੋਲਾ ਪਾੜਤੀ ਕੰਬਲੜੀ ਪਹਿਰੇਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਘਰ ਹੀ ਬੈਠਿਆ ਸਹੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਜੇ ਨੀਅਤਿ ਰਾਸਿ ਕਰੇਇ”॥ “*Ka-aye patola paartee kamblaree pehray, Nanak ghar hee baithian soh milay je neeat raas karay*” i.e, “Why do you tear your rich garment and wear a blanket. O Nanak! While leading a family life, you will find the Lord, if you keep your heart pure” (Ibid, p.1383).

#### **Practice of Brahmacharya i.e Celibacy in Hinduism and Sikh view**

*Brahm-acharya* literally means student of God, whereas in Hindu theosophy it means an un-married person under a vow not to marry as a means to achieve bliss. According to Gurbani, “ਬਿੰਦ ਰਾਖਿ ਜੋ ਤਰੀਐ ਭਾਈ॥ ਖੁਸਰੇ ਕਿਉ ਨ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ॥ – *Bind rakh jo tariay bhai Khusaray kion na parm gat pae*” i.e, “If one were to be saved by celibacy, then why didn't the eunuchs attain highest bliss? (GGS, p. 324)”. Guru Gobind Singh says, “ਬਿੰਦ ਕੇ ਸਧੱਯਾ ਤਾਹਿ ਹੀਜ ਕੀ ਬਡੱਯਾ ਦੇਤ॥ “*Bind ke sadhya taah heej kee badayya det*” meaning “A celibate can be surnamed as an Eunuch” (Dasam Granth). “ਜਤੀ ਸਦਾਵਹਿ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਛਡਿ ਬਹਿ ਘਰਬਾਰੁ॥ – *jatee sadaavah jugat na jaanah chhad bahah gharbaar* – Those who call themselves celibates do not know the way and so they leave their homes in search of God (GGS, p.469)”. Logically monasticism and celibacy go together and Guru Nanak categorically rejected both of them. Celibacy before marriage is a part of Sikh but its ethics, is mandatory for a Sikh to get married.

### Practice of Vegetarianism in Hinduism and Sikh view

Before the birth of Sikhism various sects of Hinduism and the radical saints prohibited eating meat. Bhagat Kabir's views in this regard have been included in the holy Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib who says, "ਜਉ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਏਕੁ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਕਹਤ ਹਉ ਤਉ ਕਿਉ ਮੁਰਗੀ ਮਾਰੈ।। ( GGS, p.1350).

Guru Nanak told them:

- In nature living beings feed on living beings, "ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਆਹਾਰੁ ਜੀਅ ਖਾਣਾ ਏਹੁ ਕਰੇਇ।।-*Jeeaa ka aahaar khana eh karay*" (GGS, p 955). Hence there is nothing unnatural or ungodly in eating flesh. Gurbani tells us that the claim of vegetarians to be superior or holier than non vegetarians does not stand the test of logic:
- ਜੇਤੇ ਦਾਣੇ ਅਨ ਕੇ ਜੀਆਂ ਬਾਝ ਨਾ ਕੋਇ। ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਵ ਹੈ ਜਿਤ ਹਰਿਆ ਸਬ ਕੋਇ।। -- "*Jetay daanay ann kay jeean baaj na koay, pehla panee jeev hai jit haria sab koay*" (Ibid, Asa M1, p 472)- Every food grain has life, water is the source of all life. It assists the growth of human beings, animals and vegetables. There is life in vegetables. Every thing is alive because of water.
- ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ।। ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪ ਸਮਾਣੈ- "*Maas, maas kar moorakh jhagre giaan dhiaan nahee jaanay kaun maas kaun saag kahavay kis meh paap samaanay--*" i.e; "Only fools argue whether to eat meat or not. Who can define what is meat and what is not meat, who knows where the sin lies, being a vegetarian or non-vegetarian (GGS, P.1289).
- ਮਾਸਹੁ ਨਿੰਮੇ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਜੰਮੇ ਹੰਮ ਮਾਸੈ ਕੇ ਭਾਂਡੇ-- "*Masshu nimmay maashu jammay ham maas kay bhaanday* i.e, "We are conceived from meat and born from meat and we are vessels made up of meat (Ibid, 1290).
- ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਨਿੰਮਿਆਂ ਮਾਸੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ। ਜੀਉ ਪਾਇ ਮਾਸ ਮੋਹੇ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹਡ ਚਮ ਤਨ ਮਾਸ।- "*Pehlaan mason nimmian maasay under vaas, jeeo paa-ay tan saja maas mohay miliaa hadd chamm tan maas* i.e, Man is first conceived in flesh and then abides in flesh. When life comes, he obtains the mouth of flesh, his bones, skin and body, all of flesh (1289)
- ਮਾਸਹੁ ਬਾਹਰ ਕਢਿਆ ਮੰਮਾ ਮਾਸੁ ਗਿਰਾਸੁ। *Maasah baahar kadhia mam-maa maas giraas-* i.e, Once out of mother's womb of flesh he again suckles meat through mother's nipples (GGS, p.1289).
- ਮੂਹ ਮਾਸਿ ਕਾ ਜੀਭ ਮਾਸਿ ਕੀ ਮਾਸਿ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਾਸੁ।।- *Muh maasai kaa jeebh maasai kee maasai andar saas.* i.e; The mouth is of flesh, tongue is of flesh and breath comes out of flesh.
- ਵਡਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀਆਹਿਆ ਘਰ ਲੈ ਆਇਆ ਮਾਸੁ।- *Vadda hoaa veeahiaa ghar lai aya maas-* i.e; When he grows up , he is married and brings the wife of flesh into his home.
- ਮਾਸਹੁ ਹੀ ਮਾਸੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਸਭੇ ਸਾਕੁ[[-*maashu hee maas oopjai maasahu sabo saak* i.e Flesh is produced from flesh and all the relatives of man are made of flesh (Ibid, p 1289)

According to Sikhism to deprive some one of his / her right or rob of his / her share or charging interest rates in excess than the prevailing rates or not paying for one's hard labour is just like drinking the human blood and that is an unpardonable sin-ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਲਗੈ ਕਪੜੈ ਜਾਮਾ ਹੋਇ ਪਲੀਤੁ।ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਚੀਤੁ।। -- "*Je ratt laggay kapray jama hoay paleet jo ratt peevah mansaa tin ko nirmal cheet*" (Ibid, M1, p 140).

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

In Sikhism there is no prohibition on eating any kind of meat provided it comes from healthy animal and has been prepared by, '*Jhatka*' method. According to Sikh *Rehat Maryada* (Sikh religious code of conduct), published by SGPC, Amritsar, a Sikh is not allowed to eat '*Halaal*' (Kosher) meat (prepared according to Muslim rites). A Sikh should eat only, '*Jhatka*' meat. The food offered in Guru Ka Langar is always vegetarian as it is meant for the persons of all faiths.

### Rejection of Authority of Scriptures of Hinduism by Gurmat / Sikhism

- ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਭ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਇਨ ਪੜਿਆ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ਏਕੁ ਅਖਰੁ ਜੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਪੇ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਸੋਈ।।-- Reading of the Vedas, the Smritis and other Hindu religious books bring no spiritual merit. ( GGS, p.747).
- ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਪੁੰਨ ਪਾਪ ਬੀਚਾਰਦੇ ਤਤੈ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਣੀ।।--*Simrit shastar pun paap beecharday tattay saar na janee*. The Simritis and Shastras define alms giving and sin but do not know the essence of reality ( GGS, p.920).
  - ਵੇਦ ਪੜੇ ਵਾਦ ਵਖਾਣੇ।।ਅੰਤਰ ਤਮਸੁ ਆਪ ਨ ਪਛਾਣੈ।। (GGS. P.331)
  - ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹਬਾਹੂੰ ਬਾਹਿਰਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਸਾਹ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਾਹਿਰਾ।। (GGS, p. 397)
  - Guru Nanak in Var Sarang says, the Vedas is a trader, whereas Gurbani is only praise. The Vedas declare that one will receive heaven proportionate to the amount of donation and hell proportionate to the sin committed by a person: ਬੇਦ ਪੁਕਾਰੇ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਪਾਪੁ ਸੁਰਗ ਨਰਕ ਕਾ ਬੀਉ।। ਜੋ ਬੀਜੈ ਸੋ ਓਗਵੈ ਖਾਂਦਾ ਜਾਣੈ ਜੀਉ।। ਗਿਆਨ ਸਲਾਹੇ ਵਡਾ ਕਰਿ ਸਚੋ ਸਚਾ ਨਾਉ।। ਸਚੁ ਬੀਜੈ ਸਚੁ ਓਗਵੈ ਦਰਗ ਪਾਈਐ ਥਾਉ।। ਬੇਦੁ ਵਪਾਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਰਾਸਿ ਕਰਮੀ ਪਲੈ ਹੋਇ।। ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਸੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਲਦਿ ਨ ਚਲਿਆ ਕੋਇ।।--The Vedas proclaim that alms giving and sin are the seed of heaven and hell. Whatever man sows, that sprouts and the self realizes it and eats the fruit of his deeds. Deeming Divine knowledge great, whoever praises it, he becomes truthful by uttering the True Name. By sowing truthfulness, truthfulness grows in man and he finds a place at the Lord's Portal. The Veda is a merchant, enlightenment the capital, which is attained by the Lord's grace. Nanak says, without such capital none has ever departed laden with profit of the Lord's Name (GGS, p.1243).
- ਵੇਦੁ ਪੜਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਨਹੀ ਆਇਆ।। ਵਾਦੁ ਵਖਾਣਹਿ ਮੋਹੇ ਮਾਇਆ।।-*Ved paday har ras nahin aaiaya, vaad wakhaanay mohay maya* i.e, Reading of Vedas does not lead to spiritual peace. Readers get entangled in mammon (materialism) and argue un-necessarily (GGS, p.128).
- ਮਹਿਮਾ ਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਬੇਦ।। ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਭੇਦ।।-*Mahimaa na jaanah bed. Brahme nahee jaanah bhed* i.e; "The Vedas , know not the Lord's glory. Brahma cannot realize His mystery"(GGS, p. 894).
- ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਵੇਦ ਪੜੇ ਵਾਦ ਵਖਾਣੇ।।ਅੰਤਰ ਤਮਸੁ ਆਪ ਨ ਪਛਾਣੈ।। (GGS. P.331)
- ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹਬਾਹੂੰ ਬਾਹਿਰਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਸਾਹ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਾਹਿਰਾ।। (GGS, p. 397)
- According to Sikhism Vedas are wordly and without spiritual content, "ਬੇਦ ਪਾਠ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਕੀ ਕਾਰ।। (GGS, p.791)

Gurbani gives priority to *Gian*-knowledge (Spiritual). Gurmat regards God as

Supreme power and does not believe in the heaven / hell, Inderpuri, Brahmpuri etc. The Vedic trade is based upon *Karm-Kanda*, fasting, charity / donations and *Yag / Arti* whereas Gurbani believes in the elixir of the *Naam (Naam-Ras)*.

Gurmat does not insist on Mantras and mechanical meditation, but chiefly on moral living and the service of humanity.

The teaching of the Vedas has given birth to mythology, which is evident in the teachings of the Purans. It created divisions in the social life. Gurbani propagates egalitarianism. The Vedic teaching because of its trader nature gives birth to ego, which promotes selfishness and individual rise, whereas Gurbani tells the entire game as play of *Hukam*, cosmic administration /

The Sikhs are commanded to follow the preachings of Gurus only to meditate on the name of Waheguru:

- ਧੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਆਈ ਤਿਨ ਸਗਲੀ ਚਿੰਤ ਮਿਟਾਈ॥ (GGS, p.628)
- ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ॥ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਰੇ॥ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕ ਜਨ ਮਾਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਤਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ॥ (GGS, p.982)
- ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਝਉ ਹੋਰ ਕਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ॥(GGS, p
- ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਜੋ ਦੀਸੈ ਤਿਨ ਜਮ ਜਾਗਾਤੀ ਲੂਟੈ (GGS, P 747)

### Rejection of Sacraments of Hinduism by Sikhism

The sacraments of Hinduism are:

1. Sanskrit, the religious language of the Hindus / Hinduism
2. Janeu
3. Dhoti
4. Tikka
5. Rosary

### Rejection of Sanskrit / Religious language of Hindus / Hinduism by Sikhism

Punjabi with Gurmukhi script is the religious and national language of the Sikhs and Sanskrit with Devnagri script is the religious language of the Hindus, who describe themselves as Aryans and who entered into the Indus valley from Asia Minor through the passes in the Hindu Kush Mountains more than four thousand years (around 2000 BC) ago as herd's men and graziers of cattle (Gauwalas / Gwalas) and settled in the north Punjab in Kashmir region around Taxilla (now in Pakistan). They spoke an Indo-European language that had originated on the steppes of Eurasia. The Aryans were smart people and very soon realized the value of learning i.e education. They interacted with the learned Punjabi Jogis here, who lived in mountains caves away from human habitations and practiced spirituality. They learnt spirituality from the Punjabi jogis who believed in One Supreme Eternal Reality, whom they called '*Brahma*'. The Aryan scholars having knowledge of (*Brahma*--God) designated themselves as 'Brahmans'. They developed a slang form of the local Punjabi dialect, '*Sehaskriti*' for their worship purposes and cleverly called it '*Brahm Bhasha*' (Lit: The language of God), which they subsequently named 'Sanskrit' and that became the religious language of the Aryans in India. 'Sanskrit' therefore, is a dialect of Punjabi language spoken in ancient times in the mountaneous areas of the north Punjab around Taxilla. Romila Thappar in her book titled, "The Penguin History of Early India" writes that Rishi Panini laid rules for Sanskrit grammar in Taxilla (located in the foot hills of the Punjab) around 500 B.C and wrote Sanskrit grammer, '*the Ashtadhyai*'. As Sanskrit was devoid of any script the Aryans created Sanskrit literature by using the local script in the place of its writing, for instance they used Brahmi / Siddhmatica script of Punjabi jogis in the Kashmir region of the Punjab.

After their exist from the Punjab by the 'Jatts', the Aryans settled in the Ganga Yamuna divide in the Malwa region of India, built their religio-cultural center there and named it 'Ujjain', which they affectionately ecalled, '*Dev Nagri*' (देव नगरी), a town inhabited by Brahmans, who are gods (Devatas-देवते) in human form. Here they called their language as *Dev Bhasha* (language of gods). They used here the local form of Sidhmatica script for writing their Sanskrit literature but named it '*Dev Naagri*' (देव नगरी) . After sometime they shifted their center of activity in the easternly direction into the fertile and mineral rich area and built here their religio-cultural center on the banks of Ganges and named it Kashi (Varanasi-Banaras). Here they named their language, '*Brahmbhasha*' as, "Sanskrit" wrote religious books in it and named them, '*Shastras*' in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Because of the shastras the dialect (language) spoken in and around Kashi (Varanasi-Benaras) came to be popularly called '*Shastri*'. It was only in 1900 AD, that the British administration acceded to the popular demand of the Indian State of United provinces now called Uttar Pardesh, naming Shastri written in Dev Nagri

script as 'Hindi' and making it official language of this State.

. The Aryans gradually gained religious and cultural control of the Ganges valley through the priest (Brahman) by blending their culture with that of the natives. Later when the Aryans gained full control of the Gangetic plain and established their rule, they made Sanskrit as the court language. Sanskrit texts were given priority even where there were variants of the same narrative in other languages. In spite of all these efforts by the Aryans, the common mass of people continued to converse in their native language. The use of Sanskrit remained limited to court and the elite, mostly Brahmins. Sanskrit never became language of the common people anywhere in the world. The Aryan scholars enriched the Sanskrit language by creating and adding new terms and words as per needs.

It is worth mentioning here that Sanskrit till today does not have any distinct script of its own. It is only a spoken dialect used by Brahman priests for religious worship only. Like other languages of the world including Punjabi, Sanskrit is not a spoken language of the common people in any part of the world. Maximally Sanskrit became the court language in the areas of Brahmanical dominance in the Indian subcontinent and there too its dominance in the royal courts came to an end with the loss of Brahmanical control over the Royalty. The Hindus now have adopted Hindi as their spoken language and limited the use of Sanskrit for chanting Vedic Mantras by Hindu Priests (Brahmins) for worship purposes and religious ceremonies.

### **Origin of Sanskrit**

It is a well known fact that the earliest spiritual traditions started in the east in the Indus Valley. Those practicing spirituality were called Jogis / Siddhas. They believed in 'One Supreme Eternal Reality, whom they called, 'Brahma' and they had a script called *Brahmi / Siddhmatrica*. The people of the Indus Valley had reached a very high level of civilization more than 4000 years ago, when people of a white tribe from Asia Minor who called themselves Aryans entered Punjab through the passes in the Hindu Kush mountains as herds-men and graziers of cattle and settled in the Kashmir region of the Punjab. They spoke an Indo-European language that had originated on the steppes of Eurasia. Thus first center of Aryan culture developed in the Kashmir hills of the Punjab. All Aryans did not come at once but kept on pouring gradually over a period of centuries. The Aryans were smart people and realized the importance of education. Some of them learnt spirituality / Jog from the Punjabi Jogis. It was in the hills of the Punjab that the Aryans evolved their Vedic culture. It was here that they developed a slang dialect of the Punjabi language for their worship purposes and to begin they called it *Brahm Basha*, literally meaning the language of God, but subsequently they named Sanskrit. Around 1000 BC, the Aryans produced scriptures in *Brahm Bhasha* and named them Vedas, literally meaning the books of knowledge, which were memorized verbally and passed on from generation to generation orally. Brahma is said to be the creator of the Vedas. The Vedas gave birth to Vedic Culture, which gave birth to caste system in India.

Around 500 BC Rishi Panini wrote Sanskrit grammar, *Ashtadhiya* in Taxilla in the foothills of the Punjab (The Penguin History of Early India from origins to AD 1300, Romila Thapar, p,163). Rishi Ved Vyas is said to have recorded the vedas in writing and the script used was Siddhmatrica of the Punjabi Jogis, but they renamed it as Sharda and then they used local version of Siddhmatrica after settling in Ujjain in the Malwa region and called it Dev Naagri. It may be added here that Sanskrit till today does not have its own script. The Aryans used the local script wherever they settled.

### Rejection of Janeu-Tag (Yagyopavit) by Sikhism

The sacred thread worn across chest by male members of the Hindu religion is called Janeu or Yagyopavit or Tag, which tells the *Varn* of the wearer. The Brahman had made its wearing compulsory for the followers of the Varan Ashram Dharma (Brahmanism /Sanatan Dharma / Hinduism). The age and the type of thread differ from one caste to the other. It is mentioned in Manusimriti that a Brahman should wear a Janeu made of cotton, the Kashatriya made of jute (ਸਣ) and a vaish made of wool (ਉੱਨ) – (Manu Simriti *adhia-ay* 2, Salok 44). Women and Shudras were forbidden from wearing a janeu at all. The society was divided on the question of wearing a Janeu

According to Gurmat Janeu cannot have any influence on man's evil intentions / morality and spirituality. The praise of the Lord is the real check because that produces a change in character and not mere outer acts of show: Useless for life hereafter, to Guru Nanak, the sacred thread of the Brahman does not serve any moral purpose in life on this earth. At the time of the formal consecration of Guru Nanak into Brahmanical religion called *Varn Ashram Dharma* (Hinduism) arranged by his parents as per Brahmanical (Hindu) rites he refused to wear such a Janeu and there by his initiation into the *Vran Ashram Dharma* saying:

- ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ॥ ਏਹ ਜਨੇਉ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੈ ਘਤੁ॥ ਨਾ ਇਹ ਤੁਟੈ ਨ ਮਲੁ ਲਗੈ ਨਾ ਇਹ ਜਲੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥ ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਮਾਣਸ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜੋ ਗਲਿ ਚਲੇ ਪਾਇ॥--*Da-iy-aa kapaah santokh soot jat gandhee sat wat. Eh janeoo jee kaa haee ta paaday ghat. Naa eh tutai na mal lagai naa eh jalai na jaa-ay. Dhan su maanas Nanka jo gal chalay paa-ay.*-i.e- Guru Nanak tells the Brahman that the sacred thread he wears and puts on others has no spiritual or moral efficacy. The only sacred thread that does not get soiled and does not snap is the one prepared with mercy as cotton, contentment as the tread, self-control as the knot, and truthful living as the twist. 'If you have such a janeu O Pande then put it on me'. . Such a *yagopavit* never breaks, never gets polluted, can never be burnt by fire, and once worn is an everlasting asset of the human mind. Sayeth Nanak such persons who wear this sacred thread are the worthiest of the worthy, and whole universe says all hail to them" (GGS, MI, p.471).
- ਚਉਕੜਿ ਮੁਲਿ ਅਣਾਇਆ ਬਹਿ ਚਉਕੈ ਪਾਇਆ॥ ਸਿਖਾ ਕੰਨ ਚੜਾਈਆ ਗੁਰੁ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਥਿਆ॥ ਓਹੁ ਮੁਆ ਓਹੁ ਝੜਿ ਪਇਆ ਵੇਤਗਾ ਗਇਆ॥--*Chaokar mul anaa-iaa bah chaokay pa-i-a. Sikha kannn chraeea guru Brahman thia. Oh mooa oh jhar pa-i-a wetaga ga-i-a* i.e; Thou buyest and bringest a thread for four shells and seated inside the cooking space, putttest it on. The Brahman becomes the preceptor and wispsers some instuctions into the ears of the wearer. When the wearer dies, the thread falls and he departs without the thread. (GGS, p 471).
- ਤਗ ਕਪਾਹਹੁ ਕਤੀਐ ਬਾਮੁਣੁ ਵਟੇ ਆਇ॥ ਕੁਹਿ ਬਕਰਾ ਰਿੰਨਿ ਖਾਇਆ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਆਖੈ ਪਾਇ॥ ਹੋਇ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ ਸੁਟੀਐ ਭੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਹੋਰ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਤੁਟਈ ਜੇ ਤਗਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੋਰੁ॥ *Tag kapah kateey baman watay a-ay. Koh bakra rinn khaia sabh ko aakhay pa-ay. Ho-ay purana suteey bhee phir pa-ee-ay hor. Nanak tag na tutaee je tag hovay jor* i.e; "The thread is spun from cotton, the Brahman twists it. A he goat is killed, cooked and eaten then every one says, "put on the thread". When it wears off, it is thrown away, then another is put on again. Nanak says, the thread would not break, if it had any strength". (GGS, p, 471)
- ਨਾਇ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਪਤਿ ਉਪਜੈ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਸਚੁ ਸੁਤੁ॥ ਦਰਗਹ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਤੁਟਸਿ ਪੁਤੁ॥--By believing in the Name, honour arises and Lord's praise is the true sacrificial thread. Such a sacred thread is worn at the Lord's Portal and it breaks not (GGS, p, 471).
- ਤਗੁ ਨ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਨਾਰੀ॥ ਭਲਕੇ ਥੁਕ ਪਵੈ ਨਿਤ ਦਾੜੀ॥ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਪੈਰੀ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਹਥੀ॥ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਜੇਹਵਾ ਤਗੁ

ਨ ਅਖੀ॥ ਵੇਤਗਾ ਆਪੇ ਵਤੈ॥ ਵਟਿ ਧਾਗੇ ਅਵਰਾ ਘਤੈ॥ ਲੈ ਭਾੜ ਕਰੇ ਵੀਆਹੁ॥ ਕਢਿ ਕਾਗਲ ਦਸੇ ਰਾਹੁ॥ ਸੁਣ ਵੇਖਹੁ ਲੋਕਾ ਇਹੁ ਚਿਡਾਣੁ॥ ਮਨਿ ਅੰਧਾ ਨਾਉ ਸੁਜਾਣੁ॥--There is no sacred thread for sexual passions and no thread for lust of woman. Because of this, man's beard is daily and ever spat upon. There is no thread the feet and no thread for the hands. No thread is for tongue and no thread for eyes. Without the tread the Brahman himself wanders about. Twisting the threads, he puts on others. He takes remuneration for performing marriages. Pulling out the Calendar he shows the way. Listen and see, ye people, to this strange thing. The Pandit, mentally blind, is called wise (GGS, p, 471) . .

- ਹਿੰਦੂ ਕੈ ਘਰਿ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਆਵੈ॥ ਸੂਤ ਜਨੇਉ ਪੜਿ ਗਲਿ ਪਾਵੈ॥ ਸੂਤੁ ਪਾਇ ਕਰੇ ਬੁਰਿਆਈ॥ ਨਾਤਾ ਧੋਤਾ ਥਾਇ ਨ ਪਾਈ॥--*Hindu ke ghar Hindu aavai soot janeu par gal paavai. Soot pai karay buriaaee. Naataa dhota thaae na paaee.* --Hindu comes to the house of Hindu. By chanting a sermon, he puts on the sacred thread made of cotton around his neck. Putting on the thread, he still commits evil. His ablutions and washings are not approved by God. (GGS, p 951)

Gurbani says:

- ਸਚੁ ਵਰਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ॥ ਦਇਆ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਖਿਮਾ ਜਮਪਾਲੀ ਤੇ ਮਾਣਸ ਪਰਧਾਨ॥ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਧੋਤੀ ਸੁਰਿਤ ਚਉਕਾ ਤਿਲਕੁ ਕਰਨਣੀ ਹੋਇ॥ ਭਾਉ ਭੋਜਨ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਤ ਕੋਈ ਕੋਇ॥-- "*Sach vart, santokh tirath, gian dhian isnaan, Daya devta, khima jampali, tay maanas pardhaan, Jugat dhoti, surat chauka, tilak karni ho-ay, Bhao bhojan Nanaka, virla taan koi ko-ay*—They who make truth, their fasting, contentment their pilgrimage, enlightenment and meditation their ablution, compassion their deity and forgiveness their rosary; the most sublime are those persons. They who make right way of living, their lion-cloth, absorption in God their sacred kitchen enclosure, good deeds their forehead paste mark and the Lord's love their food; few, very few are such men, says Nanak" (Ibid, M1, p1245).
- ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਿਆ ਟਿਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਤਗੁ॥--*Nanak sachay Naam bin kiasa tika kiasa tag.*—Nanak says, without the True Naam (God), of what avail is the frontal mark and the sacred thread? (GGS, p.467) [ [

### Rejection of *Tilak / Tikka/ Bindi), Dhoti, Mala in Sikhism*

*Tilak* is a mark made with kesar etc, on the forehead and in some sects on other parts of the body in various sects of Brahmanism (Hinduism) as part of worship (Pooja). Supporting *Tilak* and other marks of Brahmanism are strictly forbidden in Sikhism, because these outward acts of mere show drive the mind away from God. Guru Nanak says if the Pandit had known about God, then he should have considered all the rituals as false:

- ਗਲਿ ਮਾਲਾ ਤਿਲਕੁ ਲਿਲਾਣੰ ਦੁਇ ਧੋਤੀ ਬਸਤੁ ਕਪਾਟੰ॥ ਜੇ ਜਾਨਸਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰ ਕਰਮੰ॥ ਸਭਿ ਫੋਕਟ ਨਿਸਚਉ ਕਰਮੰ॥--*Gal mala, tilak lilatan, do-ay dhoti, bastar kapaatang, Je jaanas braham karmang, sabh fokat nischio karmang*—Around their neck is the rosary, on their forehead the sacred mark and on their head is a towel and they have two lion-clothes. If they know the real nature of the Lord, then they will find that all these beliefs and rites are in vain." (Ibid, M1, p.470).
- ਮਾਥੇ ਤਿਲਕੁ ਹਥਿ ਮਾਲਾ ਬਾਨਾਂ॥ ਲੋਗਨ ਰਾਮੁ ਖਿਲਉਨਾ ਜਾਨਾਂ॥-- "*Mathay tilak hath maala baanaa, logan Ram khilauna jaana*—People put on the paste mark on their fore-head, carry rosary in hand and wear sectarian dresses. People look upon God as a play thing" (Ibid, p.1158).
- ਪਾਖੰਡ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਜਾਇ॥ Through hypocrisy Lord's devotion is performed

not, nor is Transcendent Lord obtained (Ibid, p849).

- ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਿਆ ਟਿਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਤਗੁ॥—*Nanak sachay Naam bin kiasa tika kiasa tag.*—Nanak says, without the True Naam i.e remembrance of God, of what avail is the frontal mark and the sacred thread? (GGS, p.467) [ [

Various sects of Brahmanism (Hinduism) have numerous differences among themselves and there is a lot of difference in their *tilaks*. For instance the Shaivas put *Tripunda* tilak and the Vaishnavs put *urdhpundar*. Also there are differences of thought among various sects of Brahmanism (Hinduism). In Padma Puran it is written that a Vaishnav should support twelve *tilak* marks on his various parts of the body after reciting the names of twelve deities. The rejection of Brahmanical (Hindu) thought is found written in the canon of the Sikh faith:

- ਬਾਰਹਿ ਤਿਲਕ ਮਿਟਾਇਕੈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਤਿਲਕ ਨੀਸਾਣ ਚੜਾਇਆ॥12 [ [711--Obliterating the consecration marks of twelve sects of Jogis (who dominated the religious scene at that time and formed a part of the *Khat Darsan* of Hinduism) the Guru-oriented Sikhs donned one mark (of piety of character and conduct in their lives)-- (Bhai Gurdas) .
- ਚਰਣ ਰੇਣ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਤਿਲਕ, ਭਰਮ ਕਰਮ ਦਾ ਲੇਖੁ ਮਿਟਾਏ॥ 19[16[--Instead of the ritual mark on the forehead, the Sikhs make teachings of the Guru as their consecration mark, which destroy unfounded beliefs and ritualism (Bhai Gurdas).

### Rejection of counting beads / Rosery (*Mala / Japni / Japmali*) in Sikhism

Followers of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity believe in turning the beads for spiritual enlightenment but Gurbani says:

- ਕਬੀਰ ਜਪਨੀ ਕਾਠ ਕੀ ਕਿਆ ਦਿਖਲਾਵਹਿ ਲੋਇ॥ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਰਾਮੁ ਨ ਚੇਤਹੀ ਇਹ ਜਪਨੀ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਇ॥-- “*Kabir Japnee kaath kee kia dikhlaveh lo-ay, Hirday Ram na chete, ih japnee kia ho-ay*—Kabir, how the wooden rosary can bring you enlightenment? In your mind you do not remember the Lord, of what avail is this rosary to you?” (Ibid Salok Kabir ji, p.1368)
- ਹਿਰਦੈ ਜਪਨੀ ਜਪਉ ਗੁਣਤਾਸਾ॥ ਹੁਰਿ ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਅਪਰੰਪਾਰ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਜਨ ਪਗਿ ਲਗਿ ਧਿਆਵਹੁ ਹੋਇ ਦਾਸਨਿ ਦਾਸਾ॥-- “*Hirday japni, japo gun taasa, Har agham agochar, aprampar soami, Jan pag lag dhiavo, ho-ay dasan dasaa*—Within heart I tell the beads of rosary of the Treasure of merits. God is inaccessible, unknowable and illimitable. By repairing to the saint’s feet and becoming the slave of the Lord’s slaves, I meditate on Him” (Ibid, p.841).
- ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਰਣੀ ਸਾਰੁ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ॥ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਫੇਰਿ ਚਲੈ ਤੁਧੁ ਨਾਲੀ ॥੧॥ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਹੁ ਬਨਵਾਲੀ॥ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਮੇਲਹੁ ਸਤਸੰਗਤਿ ਤੂਟਿ ਗਈ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਮਜਾਲੀ॥-- “*Sukrit karni, saar japmali, hirday pher, chaley tudh nali, 1, Har har naam, japo banwali, Kar kirpa meloh sat sangat, toot gai jam jali*—Doing good deeds, is the essence of telling the rosary. In thy heart turn the rosary, then it shall go with thee.1. Meditate on the Name of the Lord, forest-wanderer.. O Lord, take pity on me and unite me with the holy company so that my noose of the fatal mammon, be snapped” (Ibid M4, p1134).
- ਕੰਠ ਰਮਣੀਯ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਮਾਲਾਂ ਹਸਤ ਉਚ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਧਾਰਣੀ॥ ਜੀਹ ਭਣਿਜੋ ਉਤਮ ਸਲੋਕ ਉਧਰਣੈ ਨੈਨ ਨੰਦਨੀ ॥-- “*Kanth ramneeya ram ram maala, hast ooch prem dharnee, Jeeh bhanijo utam slok, udharnang, nain nandnee*—i.e; To utter the Lord’s Name, is the rosary around my neck and to love the Lord is my secretly telling of it. By uttering with my tongue, the sublime word of

the Guru, I have been saved and joy is in my eyes (Ibid, M5, p.1356).

It is very clearly stated in Guru Granth Sahib that hypocrisy has no place in *Gurmat* instead truthful living is only acceptable. Guru Nanak says:

- ਸਚੁ ਵਰਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ॥ ਦਇਆ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਖਿਮਾ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ ਤੇ ਮਾਣਸ ਪਰਧਾਨ॥ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਧੋਤੀ ਸੁਰਿਤ ਚਉਕਾ ਤਿਲਕੁ ਕਰਨਣੀ ਹੋਇ॥ ਭੁਉ ਭੋਜਨ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਤ ਕੋਈ ਕੋਇ॥--“*Sach vart, santokh tirath, gian dhian isnaan, Daya devta, khima japmali, tay maanas pardhaan, Jugat dhoti, surat chauka, tilak karni ho-ay, Bhao bhojan Nanaka, virla taan koi ko-ay*—They who make truth, their fasting, contentment their pilgrimage, enlightenment and meditation their ablution, compassion their deity and forgiveness their rosary; the most sublime are those persons. They who make right way of living, their lion-cloth, absorption in God their sacred kitchen enclosure, good deeds their forehead paste mark and the Lord’s love their food; few, very few are such men, says Nanak” (Ibid, M1, p1245).
- While answering an anonymous Brahman who asked Guru Nanak that apparently he looked like a *Sadhu* but had neither the *Saligram* nor the rosary of Tulsi beads, the Guru replied and said, “ਸਾਗ੍ਰਾਮ ਬਿਪ ਪੂਜਿ ਮਨਾਵਹੁ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤੁਲਸੀ ਮਾਲਾ॥ ਰਾਮਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਬੇੜਾ ਬਾਂਧਹੁ ਦਇਆ ਕਰਹੁ ਦਇਆਲਾ॥੧॥ਕਾਹੇ ਕਲਰਾ ਸਿੰਚਹੁ ਜਨਮੁ ਗਵਾਵਹੁ॥ ਕਾਚੀ ਢਗਿ ਦਿਵਾਲ ਕਾਹੇ ਗਚੁਲਾਵਹੁ॥-*Saaligraam bip pooj manaavah sukrit tulsee maala. Raamnaam jap beraa baandah da-i-aa karah da-i-aala. Kaahe kalraa kalra sinchah janam gavaavah. Kaacchee dhahage divaal kaahe gach laavah*: meaning, “O Brahman you worship and propitiate the stone-god and wear the rosary of myrobalam beads (sweet basil) symbolizing as good actions. Better equip your ship of repetition of the Name Divine and pray to the gracious Lord for grace. Why water the alkaline soil and waste your life? The mud wall shall crumble, why plaster it with lime?” (GGS 1171)
- ਗਉ ਬਿਰਾਹਮਣ ਕਉ ਕਰ ਲਾਵਹੁ ਗੋਬਰਿ ਤਰਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥ ਧੋਤੀ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੈ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ ਧਾਨੁ ਮਲੇਛਾ ਖਾਈ॥ ਅੰਤਰ ਪੂਜਾ ਪੜਹਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਤੁਰਕਾ ਭਾਈ॥ ਛੇਡੀਲੇ ਪਾਖੰਡਾ॥ ਨਾਮਿ ਲਇਐ ਜਾਹਿ ਤਰੰਦਾ॥--Thou (The Khatri) tax the cows and Brahmans but the cow-dung will not save thee. Thou wearest a loin cloth, putttest a frontal mark, carriest a rosary and eatest, the provisions supplied by the unclean. O, bother, within, thou performest worship, outside thou readest Muslim books, adopttest their way of life. Lay aside the hypocrisy. By taking God’s Name, thou shalt swim across (GGS, p.471).
- ਮਾਲਾ ਫੇਰੈ ਮੰਗੈ ਬਿਭੂਤ॥ ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਤਰਿਓ ਮੀਤ॥--Thou churns the rosary yet begs for wealth. O friend, in this way, none, has been saved (GGS, p.888) .
- ਕਾਜੀ ਹੋਇਕੈ ਬਹੈ ਨਿਆਇ॥ ਫੇਰੇ ਤਸਬੀ ਕਰੇ ਖੁਦਾਇ॥ ਵਢੀ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਹਕੁ ਗਵਾਏ॥ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਪੁਛੈ ਤ ਪੜਿ ਸੁਣਾਏ॥ -By becoming Qazi, a judge, he sts to administer justice. He tells the roary and mutters god’s Name. Tking bribe he does injustice. If someone questions him, then he quotes and reads out some citation (GGS, p.951) .
- ਕਬੀਰ ਜਪਨੀ ਕਾਠ ਕੀ ਕਿਆ ਦਿਖਲਾਵਹਿ ਲੋਇ॥ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਰਾਮ ਨ ਚੇਤਹੀ ਇਹ ਜਪਨੀ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਇ॥ -- Kabir why do you display, the wooden rosary to people? In your mind you do not remember the Lord (GGS, p.1368) .
- ਮ੍ਰਿਗ ਆਸਣੁ ਤੁਲਸੀ ਮਾਲਾ॥ ਕਰ ਉਜਲ ਤਿਲਕੁ ਕਪਾਲਾ॥ ਰਿਦੈ ਕੂੜੁ ਕੰਠਿ ਰੁਦ੍ਰਾਖੰ॥ਰੇ ਲੰਪਟ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨੁ ਅਭਾਖੰ॥ -Thou sittest on the deer skin and tallest the rosary of sweet basil. Thou putttest bright

sacred mark on thy forehead. While within thy heart is falsehood, around thy neck thou wearest the rosary of eleocarpus. O evil one, thou uttrest not the Lord's Name (GGS, p.1351) .

- ਕਬੀਰ ਬੈਸਨੋ ਹੁਆ ਤ ਕਿਆ ਭਇਆ ਮਾਲਾ ਮੇਲੀ ਚਾਰਿ॥ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਕੰਚਨੁ ਬਾਰਹਾ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਭਰੀ ਭੰਗਾਰ॥ -- Kabir says what does it avail a man to become the follower of Vishnu and wear four rosaries. Externally he is gold twelve times purified within he is stuffed with dust (GGS, p.1372) .
- ਗਜ ਸਾਢੇ ਤੈ ਤੈ ਧੋਤੀਆਂ ਤਿਹਰੇ ਪਾਇਨਿ ਤਗ॥ ਗਲੀ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਜਪ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਲੋਟੇ ਹਥਿ ਨਿਬਗ॥ ਓਇ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਸੰਤ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਬਾਨਾਰਸਿ ਕੇ ਠਗ॥--They, who wear loin-cloth three and a half yard long and three-fold sacred threads, they have rosaries around their necks and shining jugs in their hands, they are not called the saints of God but cheats of Banaras (GGS, p.475-476 [ [

According to Gurmat, the real mala for salvation is:

- ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਅਖਰ ਦੁਇ ਇਹ ਮਾਲਾ॥ ਜਪਤ ਜਪਤ ਪਏ ਦੀਨ ਦਇਆਲਾ॥ ਕਰਉ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਅਪੁਨੀ॥ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਸਰਣਾਈ ਮੇ ਕਉ ਦੇਹੁ ਹਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਨੀ॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥ ਹਰਿ ਮਾਲਾ ਉਰ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਧਾਰੈ॥ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਕਾ ਦੂਖੁ ਨਿਵਾਰੈ॥ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਸਮਾਲੈ ਮੁਖਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਬੋਲੈ॥ ਸੋ ਜਨੁ ਇਤ ਉਤ ਕਤਹਿ ਨ ਡੋਲੈ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੋ ਰਾਚੈ ਨਾਇ॥ ਹਰਿ ਮਾਲਾ ਤਾ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਜਾਇ॥--These two words God, God, I repeat on the rosary. While these I repeat, to me, the humble one, the Lord has shown grace. I make supplication unto **my True** Guru. Mercifully keep me under Thy protection and give me the rosary of God's Name. He who wears the rosary of God's Name in his heart, is freed from pain of birth and death. He who contemplates the Lord God in his mind and utters His Name with his mouth, never wavers here and hereafter. Nanak says, he, who is absorbed in the Name, with him goes the Lord's rosary into the next world (GGS,p.388) .
- ਚੇਤਹੁ ਬਾਸਦਉ ਬਨਵਾਲੀ॥ ਰਾਮ ਰਿਦੈ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ॥--Meditate thou on the Omnipresent Lord, wearing the garland of forest vegetation. To enshrine the Lord within the mind is true telling the rosary (GGS, p.503) .
- ਸਚ ਵਰਤ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ॥ ਦਇਆ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਖਿਮਾ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ ਤੇ ਮਾਣਸ ਪਰਧਾਨ॥-- they who make truth, their fasting, contentment their pilgrimage, enlightenment and meditation their ablution, compassion their deity and forgiveness their rosary, the most sublime are those persons (GGS, p.1245) .
- ਐਸਾ ਜਾਪ ਜਪਉ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ॥ ਦੁਖ ਸੁਖ ਪਰਹਰਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਨਿਰਾਲੀ॥--May I repeat such a rosary of God, that rising above weal and woe, I practise, the wondrous service of the Lord (GGS,p.1342) .
- ਕਬੀਰ ਮੇਰੀ ਸਿਮਰਨੀ ਰਸਨਾ ਉਪਰਿ ਰਾਮ॥ ਆਦਿ ਜੁਗਾਦੀ ਸਗਲ ਭਗਤ ਤਾ ਕੋ ਸੁਖੁ ਬਿਸਰਾਮੁ--Kabir says my rosary is my tongue, on which is the Lord's Name. From the very beginning, all the devotees dwell in peace through it (GGS, p.1364).
- ਨਾ ਸੁਚਿ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਤੁਲਸੀ ਮਾਲਾ॥ ਗੋਪੀ ਕਾਨੁ ਨ ਗਉ ਗਵਾਲਾ॥ ਤੰਤੁ ਮੰਤੁ ਪਾਖੰਡੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਵੰਸ ਵਜਾਇੰਦਾ॥--There was no purification or self restraint or rosary of sweet basil. There was no milk maid or Krishna or cow or herdsmen. There were no incantations and spells, no hypocrisy nor did anyone play on the flute (GGS, p.1035) .

### Rejection of Yoga (Yogic philosophy) of Hinduism and Sikhism

Jogism (*Jog*) is the oldest spiritual / religious philosophy in the world, which took birth in Punjab in the Indus valley in the Indian subcontinent. It originated here much before the arrival of the Aryans in the Indus valley. The Aryans learnt *yoga (Jog)* from the Punjabi (Harappan) *jogis*. The Harappan *jogis* worshipped only “One Supreme Eternal Reality”, whom they called ‘Brahma’. *Jog* literally means to unite together—yoke (a pair of animals harnessed together—a yoke of oxen). Theosophically it means to unite with the Supreme Eternal Reality i.e; God. The Aryans who came to Punjab around 2000 BC, pronounced the Punjabi word ‘*Jog*’ as ‘*yoga*’. They developed six systems of thought (Philosophy) which came to be known as ‘*Khat Darshan*’ and *yoga* forms a part of *Khat Darshan*. The Punjabi *jog* was corrupted by the Aryans. They introduced tortuous physical practices, which had nothing to do with spirituality. The Aryans propagated the theory of ‘Trinity of God’ and started the worship of deities: Vishnu and Shiva in addition to Brahma represented by . At the time of the birth of Sikhism in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the *Jogis / Naths* and *Siddhas* dominated the religious landscape in Punjab. They practiced asceticism, renunciation, celibacy and tortuous practices for seeking salvation. Guru Nanak preached Oneness of God and oneness of man, house-holder’s life and denounced the escapist life and other practices of the *jogis*, who had reduced the spiritual heights of *yoga* to mainly a healthy body building exercise. Guru Nanak visited all prominent centers of the *Jogis* and debated with them (GGS, p. 223, 420, 504, 642, 662, 730, 886, 903). *Sidh Gosit* has been recited just to change the style of Nath, Yogis, Sidh sects and Hindus, who believed in ascetic way of life. Guru Nanak advised the *jogis* to accept the householder’s life and inspired them to accept the path of dwelling upon the name of God or *Naam Simran*. Sikhism strongly denounces the escapist life of *jogis* and their tortuous practices. It preaches householder’s life as the forum of all activities. Gurbani deprecates the jogi who gives up the world and then is not ashamed of begging at the door of the householder (GGS, p.886). It says:

- ਜਤੀ ਸਦਾਵਹਿ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਛਡਿ ਬਹਹਿ ਘਰਬਾਰੁ॥—“*Jati sadavay jugat na janay chhad bahay ghar baar*”—They call themselves celibates, leave their homes and hearth but know not the right way of life” (GGS, Var Asa M1, p.469)
- ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਰਾ ਭੇਟੀਐ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ॥ ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ॥—Nanak satgur poora bhaiti-ay pooree hovay jugat. Hasandian, khelandian, penandian, khawandian vichay hovay mukat- “O Nanak, when one meets the true Guru one learns the proper discipline to realize God / Truth. One is liberated while enjoying worldly pleasures and comforts (laughing, playing, eating good food and wearing good clothes) (GGS, p.522). The Yogis (ascetics) looked down upon the house-holders. Guru Nanak admonished them saying:
- “ਘਾਲ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੋਇ”॥ *Ghaal kha-ay kichh hathon dey Nanak rah pachhanay say*—“He knows the way who earns his living and shares his earnings with others” (Ibid, 1245).

- ਸੋ ਜੋਗੀ ਜੋ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਪਛਾਣੈ॥ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦੀ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਣੈ॥--*So jogi jo jugat pchhanay gurparsaadeee eko jaanay*. A jogi, ie one who recognizes the right way (Truth) and recognizes the right way (Truth) and understands the One / God through enlightenment (Ibid, p.662). According to Gurbani man should renounce evil and selfish motives and not the wordly life:
- ਤਿਆਗਣਾ ਤਿਆਗਣ ਨੀਕਾ ਕਾਮ, ਕ੍ਰੋਧ, ਲੋਭ, ਤਿਆਗਣ--*Tiagna tiagan neeka kam karodh lobh tiagna*—Of all the renunciations, the excellent renunciation is the renunciation of lust, wrath and avarice (ibid, p.1018).
- ਬਿਨ ਹਉ ਤਿਆਗ ਕਹਾਂ ਕੋ ਤਿਆਗੈ॥--*Bin haun tiag kahan ko tiagi*—Without renunciation of ego, how can man be detached (Ibid, p.1140).

God is there in the world we see and we have to find Him there and yet remain detached:

- ਕਾਹੇ ਰੇ ਬਨ ਖੋਜਨ ਜਾਈ॥ ਸਰਬ ਵਿਆਪੀ ਸਦਾ ਅਲੇਪਾ ਤੋਹੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਮਾਈ॥--*Kahay ray ban khojan jae, sarb nivasee sadaa alepa tohee sang samaae*—"O man why thou goest in the forest, to search for God"? God though ever invisible, dwells everywhere and abides even with thee (Ibid, M9. p.684).
- ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਨਮਹਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਮੁਗਾਈ ਨੈਸਾਨੇ॥ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੈ॥--*Jaisay jal mah kamal niralam murgae naisanay. Surt sabad bhav sagar taree-ay Nanak Naam vakhaanai* (Ibid, p.938).
- ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਤਉ ਪਾਈਏ--*Anjan mahe niranjan rahiay jog jugat tao pai-ay*—When one remains detached amongst wordly attachments then he attains the way of yoga {Ibid, p.730}.

The Sikh Gurus have clearly disapproved of and rejected yogic practices of *Kundlani yoga* and *Hath Yoga*:

- ਨਿਵਲੀ ਕਰਮ ਭੁਅੰਗਮ ਭਾਠੀ, ਰੋਚਕ ਪੂਰਕ ਕੁੰਭ ਕਰੇ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੋਝੀ ਨਾਹੀ ਭਰਮੇ ਭੂਲਾ ਬੁਝਿ ਮਰੈ॥--He who practices the only-washings and makes a furnace of the spinal cord, He who achieves Poise through inhalation, exhalation and holding of breath. He awakens not this consciousness without the Divine Guru's guidance. Strayed away by doubts, he drowns in the ocean's existence (GGS, p.1343).
- ਆਸਨ ਕੋਟ ਕਰੇ ਅਸਟਾਂਗ ਧਰੇ ਬਹੁ ਨਿਆਸ ਕਰੇ ਮੁਖ ਕਾਰੇ॥ ਦੀਨ ਦਿਆਲ ਭਜੇ ਬਿਨ ਅੰਤ ਕੋ ਅੰਤ ਕੇ ਧਾਮ ਸੁਧਾਰੇ॥--*Aasan kot karay ashtang dharay bahu nias karay much karay, deen dyal Akal bhajay bin ant ko ant kay dham sudharay*—Those who practice millions of postures according to *ashtaag yoga* and make offerings of limbs and blacken their faces. Without remembering the name of the compassionate and immortal God, all of them will have to proceed to the place of the God of death (Tawparsad Swayye Patshahi 10).
- ਅਖੀ ਤ ਮੀਟਹਿ ਨਾਕ ਪਕੜਹਿ ਠਗਣ ਕਉ ਸੰਸਾਰ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥ ਆਂਟ ਸੇਤੀ ਨਾਕੁ ਪਕੜਹਿ ਸੂਝਤੇ ਤਿਨ ਲੋਅ॥ ਮਗਰ ਪਾਛੈ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਸੂਝੈ ਏਹੁ ਪਦਮੁ ਅਲੋਅ॥--*Akhee ta meeteh naak pakreh thagan kao sansaar.1. Rhao. Ant setee naak pakreh soojhtay tin alo. Magar paachhay kachh na soojhay ih padam alo.*—A yogi closes his eyes and holds his nose to deceive the world. Holding his nose with thumb and two fingers, he proclaims, "I seeing the three worlds". But he does not see anything that is behind him. Strange is the lotus posture (Ibid, p.662-63).
- ਅੰਧਾ ਭਰਿਆ ਭਰਿ ਭਰਿ ਧੋਵੈ, ਅੰਤਰ ਕੀ ਮਲੁ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਲਹੈ॥ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਫੋਕਟ ਸਭਿ ਕਰਮਾ, ਜਿਉ ਬਾਜੀਗਰ ਭਰਮਿ ਬੁਲੈ॥ The myopic washes his dark spots, again and over again. Defiled does he remain

forever from inside. Without the Lord's Name, as futile are all other deeds, As the tricks of a trickster who dupes with illusions (Ibid p.1343)

Sikhism does not approve of spiritual enlightenment and union with the Divine through the process of Kundlani activation:

- ਸਿਧਾ ਕੇ ਆਸਣ ਜੇ ਸਿਖੈ, ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀ ਵਸਿ ਕਰਿ ਕਮਾਇ॥ ਮਨ ਕੀ ਮੈਲੁ ਨਾ ਉਤਰੈ, ਹਉਮੈ ਮੈਲੁ ਨਾ ਜਾਇ॥

Even if one exercises control over one's senses, by learning the yogic practices from the Siddhas. Even then is man's mind not cleansed of dross, nor is rid of the taint of egoistic pride (GGS, p.642).

Gurbani has compared these yogic practices with actions of Bzigar (acrobat) in the absence of remembering of Naam (God):

- ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਫੋਕਟ ਸਭਿ ਕਰਮਾ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਜੀਗਰੁ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲੈ॥-- Naam bina fokat sabh karma join bazigar bharam bhoolay—Without the Name, vain are all deeds like those of a juggler, who deceives audience through illusion )Ibid, p.1343).

According to Gurbani, the human body is the shrine of God, ਮਨੁ ਮੰਦਰੁ ਤਨੁ ਵੇਸ ਕਲੰਦਰੁ॥--  
–“*Mun mandir tan ves kalandar*”i.e; “The mind in the body is the temple and the soul is the priest therein” (Ibid, Rag Bilawal, M1, p.795). If it is so, it is sin against Him (God) to torture the body or to deny it its rightful place. The search of the Lord will necessitate the care of the body, which needs to be fed in order that it may live, function properly and serve its master, the soul, so that it was enabled to realize its goal, “ਨਾਨਕ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਿਮਰੀਐ ਤਿਸ ਦੇਹੀ ਕਉ ਪਾਲਿ॥--“*Nanak so prabh simree-ay tis dehi ko paal*”—The Lord should be meditated on by serving the body first” (Rag Bihagra, M5, p.554).

Gurbani defines the true yogi as follows:

- ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਨਹੀ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਕੰਚਨ ਲੋਹ ਸਮਾਨੇ॥ ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਅਤੀਤਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨੇ॥--*Par ninda ustat nahi ja kay kanchan loh smano, harkh sog tay rahey ateeta jogi tahey bakhano*—He who slanders or praises not others and to whom gold and iron are alike and who is also free from joy and sorrow, call him, a true jogi” (Ibid Dhanasari, M9, p.685).

The Aryans entered into the Indus Valley about four thousand years ago. They were smart people. Some of them learnt *Jog* (spirituality) from the Punjabi *Jogis*. They wrote Vedas and developed six systems of spiritual thought (Philosophy), which is called ‘*Khat Darshan*’ and *Jog* (Yoga) is one of them, which was founded by *Rishi Patanjali*.

Although the philosophical terminology of the ancient systems like Samkhya, Vedanta and Yoga had been used by the Sikh Gurus, yet they completely rejected the *Yoga System* as enunciated by Patanjali and his commentator Vyasa. They deliberately used those terms and redefined them in the light of their own philosophy and Sikh mystical experience.

### Hindu Mythology and Sikhism

Mythology is the science or study of myths (ਮਨ ਘੜਤ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ / telling tales or legends). Brahmin scholars in ancient Hinduism were expert in writing mythological tales, which are found in plenty in the ancient Hindu scriptures called Purans. Unlike Hinduism, Sikhism is rooted in history and not in mythology, rather it frowns at mythology. In Guru Granth Sahib mythological references on certain pages are only illustrative and do not indicate any Guru's belief in mythological personages or their actions. The Gurus made a use of these references as the same were very common among the people for explaining to them certain principles and it was easier to make them understand the same through such mythological figures and events. For example, in case the Gurus wanted to emphasise that the whole creation was the work of only one God and not the trio as believed in Hindu mythology, they referred to three deities i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Shiva) and showed them as the creation of the same One God. The Gurus had a knack of explaining the things in such a manner that the same did not offend the believers in those myths. It was never said that Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh were not there, but explaining that all the three were themselves a part of the creation of the God, it was indicated that those three did not do the works generally attributed to them. It was will of God that prevailed and everything including the said deities were working under that will (Hukam). Another example can be given from Vaar Malaar. In one of the verses, the Guru says that when Inder was commanded by God to cause rain, it rained heavily. This verse clearly shows that those who worshiped Inder as the deity concerned with rain should realize the truth that Indra has no independent existence but has to obey the command of God. So it is God alone who is to be worshipped. The same is the position with Raja Ram. When Gurbani says that he destroyed the demons and obeyed the command of God:

- ਇੰਦ੍ਰੈ ਨੋ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ਵੁਠਾ ਛਹਬਰ ਲਾਇ॥--*Inderai no phurmaiaa vutha chhehbar la-ay* i.e. The God orders Inder (the cloud-god) and the rain falls in torrents (GGS, p.1279).
- ਦਸ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਾਜਾ ਆਇਆ॥ ਦੈਤਾਂ ਮਾਰੇ ਧਾਇ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਸਬਾਇਆ॥--*Das avtaree ram raja aaia. Daintan maray dha-ay hukam sbaia* i.e. The God created ten incarnations of whom one was king Rama. In God's will they hastened to kill all the demons (GGS, p.1279).

In conclusion, it can be said that whatever mythological incidents or figures have found mention in Gurbani, the mention is exclusively meant for explaining the Gurmat principles and not because of any belief in the same.

Guru has discarded the myth and has asked the masses to leave all this and try to mingle with the Supreme Lord. There have been efforts at the interpolations by the crafty Brahmins in order to pollute the heritage of the pure religion (*Nirmal Panth*) created by Guru Nanak.

After the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, the combination of *Minas* (Pirithi chand, the eldest brother of Guru Arjan Dev and his progeny, the rival claimants to Guruship hostile to Sikhism), the caste Hindus and the provincial Muslim officials at Lahore forged an alliance against Guru Hargobind and attacked him repeatedly in order to kill or capture him alive, but in all the battles, the provincial forces of Lahore government were defeated by the Guru. After the fourth battle at Kartarpur Guru Hargobind left the plains of the Punjab and relocated himself at Kiratpur in the Shivalik foot hills to avoid repeated conflicts. Thus forces hostile to Sikhism gained control of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) and Akal Takhat Amritsar. During this period of control they played havoc with Sikh

ideology. They in collaboration with the upper-caste Hindus (Brahmins) brought in a lot of Puranic mythology in various compositions on Sikhism including Guru Nanak's *Janam Sakhi* (biography), in the process reducing him to an *Avtaar* within the framework of Hindu pantheonism.

Again after the death of Banda Singh Bahadur the Sikhs in Punjab suffered worst persecution under the later Moghuls and they had to leave their homes and hearths and take shelter in the jungles, mountain caves and the deserts to avoid arrest and thereby death. During this period Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Akal Takhat at Amritsar and other historic Gurdwaras throughout the length and breadth of the Punjab came under the occupation of sects organized by Sri Chand son of Guru Nanak and Pirthi Chand eldest brother of Guru Arjan Dev. The followers of these sects were clean shaven and were known as udasi Mahants. They were not persecuted because of their Hindu looks. These Mahants in collaboration with the Brahmins during this period created a lot of literature in which they wrote not only un-Sikh but even anti-Sikh material. They also introduced not only un-Sikh but even anti-Sikh practices in Gurdwaras and tried their best to Hinduise Sikhism. Also during this period the learned Brahmins from Banaras and Paryag came to the Punjab and settled in the Malwa region (Nabha, Patiala, Jind and Faridkot states) of the Punjab, labeled themselves as Nirmala Sikhs and became favourites of the rulers of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Faridkot states and created Sikh literature as per Vedanta philosophy against Gurmat and made several interpolations.

During the Sikh rule in the Punjab, the clean shaven Mahants became Sikh in appearance by keeping unshorn hair, but continued to make interpolations in Sikh religious literature. The Sikhs remained busy in securing and expanding the borders of their young kingdom and made no efforts to purge the interpolations from the Sikh literature. With the passage of time the control became hereditary. Even during the first fifty years of the British rule in Punjab, both major shrines (Gurdwara Darbar Sahib and Akal Takhat) and most of other historic Sikh shrines remained in the occupation of these Mahants, who continued to make interpolations in Sikh literature during this period. The British gave them protection against the upsurge of the Sikh masses. The erratic thoughts expressed in the works created by these forces hostile to Sikhism emboldened the antagonistic forces in their onslaught against Sikhism in the modern period. Several works of Sikh philosophy, religion, history etc need thorough checking. They should be rewritten dropping all the erratic and spurious material, which does not fit with the Sikh thought content of the Holy Sikh Scripture, 'Guru Granth Sahib'.

**Un-Sikh and anti-Sikh practices of Hinduism and their rejection in Sikhism**

Sikh traditions are being targeted by Brahminic forces. These traditions are inseparable from Sikh life. They need careful guarding. The person with desire to offer services to propagate Guru's cause must learn it well by self education. Sikhism is based on Gurmat. Any tradition, which fails to conform to the philosophy of Sikhism, must be discarded without reservation. Gurbani says, "*Aklee Sahib saveeay, aklee payeeay maan—With thoughtful logic should one worship God, with same logic should one seek honour*" (GGS, p. 1245).

The status of Guru Granth Sahib in Sikhism and among the Sikhs is synonymous with the Sikh Gurus. Therefore, all doubts, controversies regarding Sikh religion must be settled in the light of Gurbani of this supreme scripture and the Guru. The ideas and views which conform to the Gurbani should alone be accepted as valid and authentic. All other versions should be discarded. Prevalent Brahmanical practices and rituals should be tested on touchstone of Gurmat principles. All those practices which violate the spirit of Gurmat and which create contradictions between belief and conduct must be done away with. Following acts of Brahmanism are against the Sikh ideology and are strictly prohibited in Sikhism:

The commencing verse of Guru Granth Sahib popularly known as **Mool Mantar (Basic Postulate of Sikhism)** is used as invocation (**Mangal-ਮੰਗਲ**) in Sikhism. It has been represented by Guuru Arjan Dev many times throughout the holy Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib before the beginning of every Raag, every section and every subsection of Guru Granth Sahib as such without abridgement or in an abridged form as follows:

**Complete form:**

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

## Abridged forms:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

Hence the shortest abridged form of Mool Mantar most commonly used as invocation in Guru Granth Sahib is: ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

Writing ੴ alone or ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ instead of writing ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ as sign of invocation (Mangal-ਮੰਗਲ) is against the ideology of Sikhism. ੴ alone is not found written alone in the holy scripture of Sikhism, 'Guru Granth Sahib' published by Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. Similarly ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ is also not found written together as such in Guru Granth Sahib published by Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. These are recent innovations of the so called *Sanatani* (radical) Hindus, who have infiltrated into the main stream Sikhism in the garb of Sikhs and are popularly called *Sant Babas*, are trying to Hinduize Sikhism through various ways. For instance they equate ੴ with ॐ, the sign used as invocation in Hinduism, which according to the theology of Hinduism represents the divine Trinity of Hinduism constituted by Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh also called Shiva, is totally against the montheism of Sikhism and therefore stands rejected.

- Belief in a living Guru after Guru Gobind Singh, idolatry, grave, tomb, and picture ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਵੇਦ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਵਾਦ ਵਖਾਣੇ।।ਅੰਤਰ ਤਮਸੁ ਆਪ ਨ ਪਛਾਣੈ।। (GGS. P.331)
- ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹਬਾਹੁੰ ਬਾਹਿਰਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਸਾਹ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਾਹਿਰਾ।। (GGS, p. 397)
- ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਵੇਦ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਵਾਦ ਵਖਾਣੇ।।ਅੰਤਰ ਤਮਸੁ ਆਪ ਨ ਪਛਾਣੈ।। (GGS. P.331)
- ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹਬਾਹੁੰ ਬਾਹਿਰਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਸਾਹ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਾਹਿਰਾ।। (GGS, p. 397)

worship are against the teachings of Sikhism / Gurmat. Putting charn-dhoor (dust from under the footmats at the entry door of the Gurdwara) on the forehead is a farce and does not really signify the humility of the Sikh. This has to appear from the conduct of the Sikh. Treating Guru Granth Sahib as deity and offering garlands, flowers, sprinkling scented sprays, pressing, kissing pillars or legs of Peerha (ਪੀਵਹ) of the Guru, burning dhoop, breaking Naryal (coconut) and keeping a vessel (*Kumbh*) full of water during recitation of Gurbani or in the presence of Guru Granth sahib, keeping fan running or providing airconditioner in the room for Guru Granth Sahib in summer, warm blankets and heaters during winter are all acts akin to idol worship and therefore prohibited in Sikhism. Lighting lamps with Ghio / Ghee (with a view of holiness of lamps)-Jot jagaoni is against the teachings of Gurmat, the use of lamps for necessary light is permitted. Ringing of bells, clapping and dancing in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, displaying of pictures of Sikh Gurus along with Guru Granth Sahib in a Gurdwara or any other place, performance of *Aarti* with lamps in a platter in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib is against the ideology of Sikhism. Washing Gurdwara floors with *Kachi Lassi* is nothing but a blind orthodoxy, which finds no approval of Gurmat. Observing *Chalihalas* (walking bare footed to a religious place for forty days for a desire to be fulfilled, *Sukna-Sikhni*, *Shagun*, *upshagun* ((good or bad omens), *nazar utaarni* (evil eye), removing *bhoot-paret-atma* (fow-spirits) by *jhar-phook* (Beating with broom and chimta) and holding breath to enter *dasam-dwar* (Tenth door) are all against teachings of Gurmat. Reading of five Shabads of *Dukh Bhanjni* or *Sankat mochan* for getting relief from ailments is only a myth by superstitious people is also against Gurmat. Observing caste system or even mentioning caste with one's name and observing gender inequality are against the teachings of Gurmat. Taking part in Devi jagratas, Raas Leela, Ram leela are against the teachings of Gurmat. Observance of fast, observance of Shradhs, belief in magical and occult powers, tying of muticoloured thread called '*mauli*' on the wrist, wearing of rosary (Mala) or counting of beads for worship purposes, putting up bindi on the forehead and sandhoor (vermillion) in the head by Sikh women and Tilak by men, veiling of women, Sati and child marriage is against the teachings of Gurmat. Celebration of Hindu festivals—Rakhri, Lohri and Holi is against the teachings of Gurmat.

### Sikhism versus other Religious Systems

- Sikhism is a prophetic religion based on a definitive revelation like Semitic religions of the west, whereas Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism have an anonymous mysticism as their source of validity.
- Sikhism believes in reality (existence) of the God and reality of the world, “ਸਚਾ ਅਪ ਸਚਾ ਦਰਬਾਰ॥-*Schcha aap sachcha Darbar*”-(GGS, M1, Japji, pauri 34, p.7). Hinduism believes in God, but regards the world as *Maya* (illusion). Christianity considers God as transcendent only, whereas for Sikhism God is both transcendent and immanent. There is total confusion about God in Hinduism. Sikhism is strictly monotheistic. It does not believe in Polytheism or henotheism. It neither believes in the Hindu Trinity of God, Brahma (The Creator), Vishu (The Sustainer) and Shiva (The Destroyer) nor in the Christian theory of Trinity of God. Buddhism and Jainism do not believe in God at all. Semitic religions accept God as the doer, but simultaneously propagate the existence of Satan, who is projected as equally powerful if not more powerful than God and has a hobby to lead good pious men astray. Sikhism does not believe in the incarnations (*Avtaars*) of God, Gods (*Devatas*) and Goddesses (*Devis*). Hinduism believes in incarnations of God (*Avtaars*), Gods (*Devatas*) and Goddesses (*Devis*).
- In Islam, the Almighty has been named, ‘Allah’ and it says, “*La ilah ill Allah Mohamad Ur Rasul Allah*”- “There is no God but Allah and Mohamad is prophet”. According to Sikhism Almighty has no particular name. Guru Nanak has simply called Him “*Naam*”. Guru Gobind Singh says, “I salute Him who has no name i.e., “*nmsqMg AnwmY* [ [-*Namastang anamay*” (Jaap Sahib). Sikh Gurus freely used Hindu names such as Hari, Oankar, Beethal, Shiva, Gopal and Rama etc as well as Allah, Khuda and Sahib from Islam. They simply used them for convenience as synonyms for ‘God’ as Sikhism believes in oneness of God and oneness of man. There is no place for music in Islam, whereas the entire holy scripture of Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib, except for a few pages in the beginning and a few pages towards the end is structured on Gurmat Sangeet.
- Hinduism believes in *Karma* and *bhog* (Cause and Effect), transmigration, the concept of Heaven and Hell. Buddhism and Jainism do not believe in the existence of God, but accept the concepts of transmigration of soul and that of *Karma* and *bhog* and they regard the world as misery or a suffering. The ultimate goal of Nirvana can be attained by following certain principles including non-violence. In Jainism non-violence is considered as *Parm Dharam*. Jainism also prescribes severe austerities and hard practices for attaining salvation. Sikhism does not subscribe to those views.
- Islam firmly adheres to Judaic concept of God, with theory of creation, Adam, the sin, Heaven and Hell. In Islam the belief is to enjoy life in heaven. According to this concept, there will be a day of judgement, when man will be judged according to his deeds and then sent to heaven or hell. In heaven, there is everything for one’s enjoyment, which a Muslim is directed to abjure in this life; and a garden laden with fruits. Sikhism believes in now and here and does not believe in the concept of after life and thereby rejects the existence of heaven and hell (Christianity), *Dozakh* and *Bahishat* (Islam) and *Narak-Surag* (Hinduism). As per Sikh thought, heaven and hell are not places for living here-after, they are part of spiritual topography of man and do not exist otherwise. They refer to good and evil stages of life respectively and can be lived here in our earthly existence. According to Gurbani: “Truthful living in the noble fear of God is heaven. Having no faith in God and leading an unethical life is hell”

- (GGS, p. 24).
- Sikhism does not subscribe to the Semitic religious belief that the world was created in seven days only. Guru Granth Sahib, the holy Sikh scripture gives a very definite theory of creation.
  - Sikhism does not believe in miracles, whereas there are miracles associated with Jesus. Hinduism also believes in miracles.
  - Sikhism strictly forbids Idol, picture, grave, tomb and *Baba* worship. Hinduism believes in Idolatry, samadh and *Baba* worship.
  - Sikhism strongly denounces ritualism whereas Hinduism believes in ritualism.
  - Sikhism is a whole life system because it does not accept any dichotomy in life, whether it is 'personal and social', 'spiritual and material,' 'faith and reason,' or any other such differentiation. It involves an integral combination between spiritual and empirical life of man. This constitutes the foundation of *Miri-Piri (Bhagti and Shakti)* doctrine of Sikhism. Other Indian religions: Vedanta (Hinduism), Radical saints, Buddhism, Jainism etc; consider spiritual path and empirical (worldly) paths, separate and distinct and there is a clear dichotomy between the empirical and spiritual life of man. Hence they are dichotomous systems. They address devotion (*Bhagti*) and force (*Shakti*) as separate entities.
  - Sikhism unlike Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism takes a more positive view of the human body. Man, the acme of God's creation is not merely a handful of dust, but repository and medium of the message of the lord. The body is not an unclean vessel, a seat of worms, but 'Temple of God' worthy of adoration and reverence. Anything unnatural or tortuous has no excuse for acceptance. Standing on one leg, living on roots, practicing contemplation in different postures, undergoing self suppression in a hard way and doing penances were too weak to avail man in the path of realization, but they are considered necessary in other eastern religious systems for the purification of the body and attainment of enlightenment. Buddhism and Jainism stand for *Moksha /Nirvana* through penance. Gurbani denounces any such practices, "nwnk so pRB ismrIAY iqs dyhI ko pwl[[–Nanak *so prabh simri-ay tis dehi ko paal*" i.e "The Lord should be meditated on by serving the body first" (GGS, p.554).
  - Sikhism believes in *Ahimsa (Ahinsa)*, but according to its own philosophy. It does not believe in Ahimsa that stood as a bar against the religious man or a religious society trying to confront socio-political aggression. A society that has to accept the social responsibility of confronting injustice cannot remain wedded to the hurdle of Ahimsa. According to Sikhism it is righteous to use sword, when all other peaceful means fail, "ਚੂੰ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਾਂ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜ਼ਸਤ॥ ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬਾ ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੀਰ ਦਸਤ॥–*Choon Kar Az Haman Heelte Dar Guzashat, Halal Ast Burdan Ba Shamsheer Dast*" (Zafarnama, Guru Gobind Singh). In Vedanta (Hinduism including radical saints) and other eastern religions (Jainism, Buddhism) Ahimsa is deemed to be a cardinal virtue and meat eating is a prohibition. Guru Nanak says, "ਮਾਸ ਮਾਸ ਕਰ ਮੁਰਖ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਧਿਆਨ ਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ॥ ਕੋਣ ਸਾਗ ਕੋਣ ਮਾਸ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪ ਸਮਾਣੈ॥–Only fools argue

whether to eat meat or not. Who can define what is meat and what is not meat or who knows where the sin lies, being a vegetarian or non-vegetarian?" (GGS, p.1289). And that "ਜੇਤੇ ਦਾਣੇ ਅਨ ਕੇ ਜੀਆਂ ਬਾਝ ਨ ਕੋਇ।।-every food grain that we eat has life in it," (GGS, p.472). He further adds, "ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਵ ਹੈ ਜਿਤ ਹਰਿਆ ਸਭ ਕੋਇ।।-Water is the source of all life, which assists the growth of all living beings human beings" (GGS, Var Asa, Ml, p.472). Also, "ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਆਹਾਰ ਜੀਆ ਖਾਣਾ ਏਹੁ ਕਰੋਇ।।-*Jeeaa kaa aahaar jee khana eh karay* i.e; Living beings feed on living beings"(GGS p.955), hence there is nothing unnatural or ungodly in eating flesh.

- Among all ancient Indian religious systems salvation (*Mukti /Moksha /Nirvana*) means deliverance from the cycle of life and re-birth (Samsara) and individual salvation is their ideal. Sikhism denounces this concept. Enlightenment not redemption is the Sikh concept of salvation. For Sikhs '*Mukti*' is replacement of ignorance by spiritual enlightenment, now and here and not after death. Gurbani says, "ਮੂਏ ਹੋਇ ਕੇ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਦੇਹੋਗੇ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇਲਾ।।-*Moo-ay ho-ay ko mukat deo gay, mukat na janay koela*" i.e, "O, God who will see that salvation, which you will grant me after death" (GGS, p. 1292).

According to Gurmat:

3. "ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਮਨੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਹੋਇ।। ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਵੈ ਸੋਇ।।--By realizing the self, the mind becomes purified Such one is emancipated in life and obtains the Lord (GGS, p161).
4. ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਆਤਮ ਹਿਤਾਵੈ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਸੋਊ ਕਹਾਵੈ।।--He, who in his heart loves Lord's command, is said to be the man, having salvation while alive (GGS, p. 275) .
5. ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਸੋ ਆਖੀਐ ਮਰਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਮਰਿਆ।। He, who effaces his own self and is dead in life, is said to have been emancipated while alive" (GGS, p.449).
6. "ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤੁ ਸੋ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਹਉਮੈ ਜਾਇ।।--He alone is said to be emancipated in life, who has eliminated ego from within him" (GGS, p.1010).

In Sikhism there is nothing like private or personal salvation. It is universal religion catering for the spiritual well-being of society as a whole, "ਆਪ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ।। ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸ ਜਨ ਕੋ ਸਦਾ ਨਮਸਕਾਰ।।-*Aap mukat mukat karay sansar Nanak tis jan kv sada naskar*" (Ibid, p293). Hinduism, Buddhism, Sufism, Christianity seek personal salvation catering to the needs of individuals. They are not concerned about evils of society and barbarities of rulers of time.

- Sikhism believes in shouldering full social responsibility and rejects a life of escapeism. It denounces asceticism and renunciation (*Sanyasa / Bhikshuhood*) for achieving salvation as propagated and practiced by Hinduism, radical saints, Buddhism and Jainism. Sikhism propagates the life of a householder, "ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪੂਰਾ ਭੇਟੀਐ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਹਸੰਦਿਆਂ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆਂ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆਂ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆਂ ਵਿਚੈ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ।।-Nanak *satgur poora bhetiay, poori hovay jugat, hasandian, khelandian, penandian, khavandian vichay hovay mukat*" (GGS, p522). Guru Nanak says, "He knows the way who earns his living and shares his earning with others" i.e "ਘਾਲ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥੈ ਦੇਇ।। ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਸੋਇ।।-*Ghaal kha-ay kichh hathon day Nanak rah pachhanay say*" (GGS, p.1245).

- Sikhism does not believe in celibacy (Brahmacharya) as a means to achieve bliss, but condemns it in strongest terms. According to Gurbani, "ਬਿੰਦ ਰਾਖਿ ਜੋ ਤਰੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਖੁਸਰੇ ਕਿਉ ਨ ਪਰਮ

ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ॥--*Bind raakh jau yaeey bhai khusray kion nap arm gat pae.*- i.e; If one was to be saved by celibacy, then the eunuchs should attain the highest bliss" (GGS, p.469). Celibacy before marriage is a part of Sikh ethics, but it is mandatory for a Sikh to get married. In Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Christianity, celibacy (Brahmacharya) is the rule for achieving bliss.

- Sikhism believes in ethical equality of woman with man. Before the birth of Sikhism the plight of woman in the Indian subcontinent was highly deplorable. She had most inferior position in the society. In Hinduism Manu the Hindu law-giver has attributed all that is good and great to males and on the contrary, assigned all that is bad and obnoxious to females. Tulsi Dass in his Ram Chrit Manas says, "ਢੋਰ ਗੰਵਾਰ ਸ਼ੂਦਰ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਨਾਰੀ॥ ਯਿਹ ਸਭ ਤਾੜਣ ਕੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ॥-*Dhor gamvar, shudar, pashu, nari, yeh sab tarin kay adhikari*". In Buddhism a male Bhikshu is not supposed to touch and rescue a drowning woman even if she was his mother. Dighambra Jains believe that a woman cannot reach Kavalya and has to achieve first male incarnation. In catholic Christianity, a woman is not ordained as a priest. In Islam also woman is denied ethical equality with man. In Sikhism the position of woman has been raised to an exalted status and she is regarded as principle of eternal creation, "From woman is our birth; in woman's womb are we shaped. To woman are we engaged; to woman are we wedded. The woman is our friend and form woman is the family. If one woman dies, we seek another, through the woman are the bonds of the world. Why call the woman evil who gives birth to Kings? "ਸੋ ਕਿਉਂ ਮੰਦਾ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤ ਜੰਮੈ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥-*So kion manda akhi-ay jit jamein rajaan*. From woman is the man, without the woman there is none"(GGS, Var Asa M1, p.473).
- Sikhism believes in universal brotherhood and equality of all human beings. It strongly denounces the divisive Hindu caste system. Guru Nanak says, "ਏਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰਹਾਈ॥-*Ek pita ekas kay ham batik toon mera gurhai*" i.e; "We are all children of the same God who takes care of us all (GGS, p.611). Guru Gobind Singh says, "ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ॥-*Manans kee jaat sabay ekay pehchannb*" "Treat all mankind alike". All other Indian religions, except Buddhism observe caste system and 'Varan Ashram Dharma' forms the bedrock of Hinduism. Buddhism did away with ceremonies of Hindus set aside the Brahmanical priesthood, abolished sacrifices and dethroned the Gods of the Hindus. Buddhism and Jainism stand for 'Moksha' or 'Nirvan' through penance. Jainism on one hand condemns sacrifices, denies divine origion of the Vedas, rejects the Hindu doctrine of immunity from punishment through alms-giving and invocation of Gods and attaches no importance to the spirits of the dead. On the other hand, it recognizes the priestly institutions of the Brahmins, adheres rigidly to the Hindu caste system and has rules connected with purification, weddings, death, inheritance, the worship of Gods closely analogous to those of Hindus. The Jains rever cow and consider killing of any living creature an unpardonable sin.
- Sikhism does not believe in the *mon-varat* (fast of speech) of Hinduism. It believes in constructive dialogue during our stay in this world, "ਜਬ ਲਗ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਛ ਕਹੀਐ ਕਿਛ ਸੁਣੀਐ॥-*Jab lag dunia rahi-ay Nanak kuchh kahi-ay kuchh suni-ay* (GGS, p.611).
- There is no priestly class in Sikhism any initiated Sikh, male or female, can perform the Sikh

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

religious service. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam all have priestly class.

- Sikhism differs as regards the authenticity of its dogmas from most other theological systems. Many of the great teachers of the world has known, have not left a line of their own compositions and we know only what they taught through tradition or second-hand information. But the compositions of Sikh Gurus are preserved and we know at first hand what they taught.

## GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY USED TERMS IN SIKHISM

*Aad*: First: Original

*Ant*: The end

*Akal Purkh*: The Being beyond time; God

*Akali*: Worshipper of Akal (God).

*Akhand Path*: Continuous, uninterrupted reading of Guru Granth Sahib, by a relay of readers

*Akiratghan*: Ungrateful

*Amrit*: Elixer used for formal initiation into Sikhism. Literally: *Mrit* means dead and

*A-mrit* is immortal.

*Ades*: Epipheth used as greetings by Jogis

*Asikh*: Non-Sikh. Literally means not learned.

*Avidya*: Lack of education

*Amritdhari*: One who has been initiated according to Sikh rites.

*Ardas*: Sikh prayer—A humble and sincere request to Akaal Purkh i.e; God.

*Asur*: Demon

*Atman*: Soul / Spirit / Self

*Avtar*: Incarnation of God

*Bani*: Contents of all the Holy Scriptures forming canon of Sikh faith.

*Bhai*: Literally, brother; an epipheth of respect used for a Sikh connected with religious affairs.

*Bhagauti*: (ਭਗਉਤੀ) —another name for God—Akal Purkh

*Bhagauti* (ਭਗਉਤੀ) means Kirpan / sword

*Bhagauti* (ਭਗਉਤੀ) means devotee (Bhagat)

*Bhog*: Concluding ceremony of Sikh service

*Baoli*: A well with stairs down to water level

*Baba*: Title given to a respected man (often elderly)

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

*Brahm-Giani*: God-illuminated human being, a perfect saint

*Banda* (ਬੰਦਾ): Man

*Buddhi*: Woman

*Baanda* (ਬਾਂਦਾ): Slave

*Baandi*: Slave woman

*Bhataar* (ਭਤਾਰ) : Husband

*Bharam* (ਭਰਮ) : Unfounded belief

*Birdh* (ਬਿਰਧ): Old person

*Bird* (ਬਿਰਦ): Follower (ਮੁਰੀਦ)

*Bird kee Paij* (ਬਿਰਦ ਕੀ ਪੈਜ) : Follower's honour

*Bungay*: Places of residence

*Buddh*: Wisdom

*Bip, Biper, Brahmin*: Purist Hindu Varna entitled to become priest and teacher.

*Bipran kee reet*: Brahmanical culture

*Bhugat-gian*: Spiritual knowledge

*Choohra*: Member of serf class outside the pale of Hindu caste system i.e, *Ashoot*.

*Chaunkian*: Guard posts

*Chaur*: A fan of Yak hair or peacock feathers, waved over Sri Guru Granth Sahib as a sign of respect, a symbol of authority.

*Chanani*: Canopy over Guru Granth Sahib

*Charhdi-Kala*: Active optimism

*Darbar Sahib*: Sikh name for Golden Temple

*Divan*: Sikh act of congregational worship

*Darsan*: Literally, glimpse, whereas in Indian theosophy means Philosophy

*Dera*: Settlement of a spiritual teacher, where his followers get together to listen his sermons.

*Daswandh*: literally meaning one tenth, but practically it is voluntary contribution by the Sikhs to

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

Gurdwara for the welfare of society and propagation of their religion i.e, Sikhism.

*Deg*: Cauldron

*Dahri*: Beard

*Fakir*: Muslim divine who lives on alms.

*Guru*: In Sikh scriptures, the word 'Guru' has been used to denote at least three different senses. Firstly, it has been used for God Himself, secondly, the word has been referred to as teacher-Guru and finally it is used for the Holy Sikh Scripture, "Guru Granth Sahib".

*Gurdwara*: Sikh place of prayer and piety.

*Guru Granth Sahib*: The holy Sikh scripture.

*Granthi*: Reader of Sikh scriptures during service.

*Giani*: A person learned in Sikh teachings.

*Gola*: Slave

*Gutka*: Hand book of hymns for daily devotion in Sikhism.

*Gurmat*: Philosophy of Sikhism.

*Gurmatta*: Collective decision taken by the Sikhs in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib.

*Gurmukh*: God-oriented.

*Grahisti*: Householder

*Gurpurb*: Anniversary of a Guru's birth, death or succession.

*Gaddi*: Seat of authority

*Gola*: Servant

*Hukam*: Literally order, theologically divine command

*Jaat*: Caste

*Jatha*: A band or group of the Sikhs

*Jathedar*: Leader of the Jatha

*Joora*: Top knot

*Jog*: One of the six systems of Hindu philosophy.

*Kartar*: God

*Karm* : Action, ritual, measuring stick

*Kirtam*: Created beings

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

*Kaal*: Time, death, black, tomorrow

*Khalis*: Punjabi word meaning pure.

*Khalsa*: Arabic / Persian word meaning sovereign.

*Kes*: Unshorn hair on the head.

*Kachhehra*: Breaches extending upto knees worn by initiated Sikhs.

*Kanga*: Special comb used by the Sikhs.

*Kara*: Iron wristlet.

*Kirpan*: Sword

*Kafir*: Non-believer

*Kookas*: A break away sect of the Sikhs, who believe in Guru Granth Sahib but along with it also believe in the continuity of a living Guru after Guru Gobind Singh. The sect was founded by Baba Balak Singh / Ram Singh. They have lost relevance in main stream Sikhism because of their belief in the continuity of a living Guru.

*Kala Pani*: Literally means black water, but in Hinduism it refers to sea water, which Hindus consider as ritually polluting to cross.

*Kirar* (ਕਿਰਾਰ) : Opportunist. The term is also used for merchantile community of Punjabi Hindu Khatri.

*Landa*: A script used by shopkeepers in the Punjab, before the creation of Punjabi speaking Punjab (punjabi Suba)

*Lawan*: Literaly separation, Hymn read at the time of somenization of marriage in Sikhism.

*Lala* (ਲਾਲਾ) : Slave (ਗੁਲਾਮ)

*Madh*: Middle

*Malechh*: Unclean

*Man-mukh*: Self-centered person

*Mat* (ਮਾਤਿ) Intellect / Wisdom

*Man* (ਮਨਿ) Mind / Soul

*Masands*: Order of the Sikh missionaries established by Guru Arjan and abolished by Guru Gobind Singh in Sikhism.

*Math*: a monastery

*Maya*: Deceptive power of material world

*Meena* (ਮੀਣਾ) : Scoundrel

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

*Moorti*: Representation of deity used for worship in Hindu temples and homes.

*Misar*: Another name for Brahmin

*Mullah*: Muslim religious teacher.

*Mundavani*: Stamp

*Nidhaan*: Treasure

*Nishan Sahib*: Sikh national flag

*Nitnem*: Daily devotional routine of the Sikhs

*Nirmalas*: Literally sinless. They believe in Guru Granth Sahib, instead of Sanatan image worship and caste observance, but because of their being deeply rooted in vedic philosophy have lost their relevance in Sikhism.

*Paat* (੫੦੫) : Dynasty

*Pathi*: Reciter of Sikh scriptures.

*Panth*: The entire Sikh community

*Panj kakaar*: Five symbols of Sikh faith, worn by initiated Sikhs.

*Parchar*: Preaching.

*Parviti*: Ceremony / rite of others (ਅਨਯਰੀਤਿ)

*Pasaar*: Propagation.

*Patka*: Piece of cloth used by Sikh children as head covering.

*Pandit*: Learned i.e, teacher Brahmin

*Pandiya /Panda*: Tirath Brahmin.

*Pir*: Muslim divine

*Pujari*: Priest of a temple

*Qazi / Qadi*: Muslim legal authority.

*Raj* : Sovereignty

*Ridh* (ਰਿਧਿ) : Wealth.

*Ridaa* (ਰਿਦਾ) Heart.

*Raagee*: Sikh religious musician

## A Comparative Study of Sikhism and Hinduism

*Ramraiya*: Sikh follower of Ram Rai , Rival claimants to Guru Gaddi

*Sikhi*: Sikhism

*Sikh*: Follower of Sikhism i.e, Sikh faith. Literally meaning, learned.

*Sangat*: Congregation

*Sant*: Holy person, comes from the word *Shaant* meaning who has controlled his desires.

*Sehaj*: Equipoise

*Sej*: (ਸੇਜ) conjugal bed

*Siddh*: A hermit possessing mystic powers.

*Sidh*: (ਸਿਧਿ) Supernatural i.e, miraculous power.

*Sidharan Path / Sehaj Path*: Recitation of Guru Granth Sahib not over a specified period of time.

*Surat*: (ਸੁਰਤਿ) inner consciousness.

*Tirath*: Place of pilgrimage

*Tikh*: Thirst

*Udasis*: Udasi sect in Sikhism was founded by Sri Chand s/o Guru Nanak. Its followers are called Udasi Sikhs, who believe in Guru Granth Sahib, but donot grow long hair and believe in renunciation, asceticism and celibacy. They have also lost their relevance in Sikhism, because of their Hindu practices.

*Vaak*: A random reading from Guru Granth Sahib

*Ved / Vedas*: Literally mean knowledge / Books of knowledge, but religiously mean  
Scriptures of Aryans / Brahminism / Hinduism

*Var*: Ode, ballad, a composition about the deeds of a hero.

*Vidhya*: Education

*Vismad*: wonder

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