

Glimpses of Sikhism

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Glimpses of Sikhism

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Preface

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 First Glacial Period and into the beginning of the second Ice Age, Early Man entered the foothills of the Northwest Punjab, in the area traversed by 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 Genomic studies reveal that these people arrived in India from Central Asia (Kazakstan area) 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—The Harappan 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 “Jatts—ਜੱਟ”, which is the oldest named tribe in India whose name is found even in Mahabhartā. About four thousand years ago the people of Indus valley in the Indian subcontinent had reached a very high level of civilization and spirituality when people of an Aryan tribe who rode horses, worshiped fire, reared cattle, ate beef and spoke an Indo-European language which originated on the steppes of Eurasia entered into the Indus valley from Asia Minor (Seistan-Persia-modern Iran) region, through the passes in the Koh Hindu Kush mountains as graziers of cattle and settled in the in northern Punjab in the Kashmir region around Taxila, which is now Pakistan. 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 (Surya), moon (Soma) and fire

(Agni).

The native practitioners of spirituality in the Indus valley called themselves Jogis or Siddhas, who believed in One Supreme Eternal Reality, whom they called *Brahma* and they had a script called Brahmi / Siddhmatrica. Some of Aryans learnt spirituality from the Punjabi Jogis / Siddhas. The Aryans, having knowledge of Brahma (God), designated themselves as Brahmans and became priests, the custodians of the religion and spirituality. They called their religion Sanatanmat / Sanatandharma, which literally meant ancient religion, which is now popularly called Hinduism. It is here that they developed a slang of local Punjabi dialect, 'Sehaskriti' and called it '*Brahm Bhasha*', literally meaning language of God for their worship purposes, but subsequently it was named Sanskrit. Brahmans made it their religious language, which was neither spoken nor understood by common mass of people. Around 1000 BC, the Aryans produced scriptures in Brahm Bhasha and named them Vedas, literally meaning books of knowledge, which were memorized verbally and passed on from generation to generation orally. Around 500 BC Rishi Panini wrote Sanskrit grammar, Ashtadhiay in Taxilla in the hills of the Punjab (*The Penguin history of Early India from origins to AD 1300, Romila Thapar, p, 163*). The script used was Siddhmatrica, renamed by the Aryans as Sharda. The Vedas gave birth to Vedic culture, which gave birth to caste system in India. Manu the Hindu law giver wrote Manu Simriti around 600 BC. Subsequently they created more religious scriptures--Shastras, Simrities, Purans and so on and reinterpreted the message of religious texts to their advantage. The words *Bip* and *Bipar* mean Brahman, whereas *Bipran* means Brahmans and *Bipran kee reet* means Brahmanical culture / ways / ideology. Since those times, the Aryan Brahmans, as custodians of spirituality and religion in the Indian subcontinent have been holding central control of religious practices in Hinduism. Hindu scriptures created by Brahmans themselves, gave them high headedness of highest order and they reinterpreted the message of religious texts to their own advantage. They reserved the right to education for only themselves. Only they were entitled to access to knowledge written in Vedas, Shastras, Simrities, Purans and so on. The Brahmans only could perform prayers (Poojas) and could worship gods and goddesses for the benefit of all people. Their authority was unquestionable. Even the kings could not rule out their verdicts. Once a person was born as Brahman, this was enough for him to enjoy the status of Brahman. Whatever he learnt from his father was adequate to make him qualified for all his duties his ancestors were performing. The Brahmans reserved the right to learn Sanskrit, the language of Vedas and other scriptures, and learning the special Mantras for various occasions in a Hindu household. They designed occasions for birth, naming ceremonies, initiation ceremony (Janeu Sanskar), mundan ceremonies, shub mahoorats for opening new business set up, lagan ceremonies, special ceremonies for pregnant women (god bharai), mirtak Sanskar (Funeral ceremony) for example. With the passage of time this unquestionable lot was stupefied with greed and power. They divided the society into four Varnas (Jatis ie, castes) and life into four Ashrams (stages). They were protectorates of religious institutions. They made rules for entry to the places of worship. They denied this fundamental right to worship to a very significant majority of so called *Ashoots* (untouchables). They spread the virus of hatred in the minds of other upper castes in the society. These deprived people were forced to do all menial jobs for the benefit of upper classes in the society. In return they were neither paid for any work they did for them nor were they rewarded in any way. Hatred and abuse were the only rewards given to several generations throughout India. Brahmins on the contrary were treated like gods. Their visits to residences were considered as divine blessing on the family. The Hindu routine of life was guided and controlled by this highly placed class of Brahmans. Some of the injunctions of Manu the Hindu law giver as

laid down in his Manu Smriti are given here:

- During the days of distress and destitution, the members of a caste can engage in the work of lower caste, but under no circumstances is he to undertake the work of the higher caste. (Chapter X/99-100)
- The Shudra is forbidden to study, the Vedas, the Shastras and the scriptures (Chapter x/127-128)
- It is reprehensible for a Brahman to study the Vedas before a Shudra (Chapter IV/99)
- The Shudra should be fed the left overs of his master's food and clothed with his tattered and discarded dress (Chapter X/25).
- The Shudra is not allowed to amass wealth (Chapter x/129).
- If a Shudra abuses a man of higher caste, his tongue should be cut off (Chapter viii).
- If a Shudra sits near a Brahmin on the same floor, the flesh of his bottoms should be sheared off (Chapter viii/281).
- If a Shudra talks of religious matters to a Brahman, molten lead or boiling oil be poured in his mouth and ears (Chapter viii/272)
- The atonement for the killing of a Shudra is the same as that for killing of a cat or a dog or a frog or a lizard or any other animal.

The Shudras were treated like dogs and cattle. They could not rise higher up in the scale and do the work of Kashatriyas. If per chance a Shudra attained some worthwhile stature in political arena, he could under no circumstances be admitted to a higher caste. No amount of wealth or personal status of political nature or courage or scholasticism could raise a Shudra to a higher caste. What is shocking and highly damnable is that this was done in the name of religion and God, supported by the so-called gospels of God.

Hindus were made to believe that man is reborn after death and this cycle continues indefinitely unless salvation (*Mukti*) is achieved for which the Hindu priest (Brahman) told methods in the form of rituals to be performed by the followers of Hinduism. These rituals of three types: Karam Kanda (rituals mentioned in Veds / Shastras) dealing with sacrificial acts, Upasna Kanda (rituals dealing with actions pertaining to worship) and Giyan Kanda (rituals dealing with spiritual knowledge). The Brahmin laid stress on the Karam Kanda and Upasna Kanda, because they helped to maintain his importance and make monetary gains. He did not show much interest in Giyan Kanda, because he himself was devoid of any spiritual knowledge. Guru Nanak says, "You expect others to call you wise, O Pandit! But you are devoid of knowledge (spiritual) and meditation (GGS, p.1290).

The Hindu psyche injected in the minds of most Hindus is governed by the dictum of Brahmanic supremacy. Most of the Sanskaras or rituals are performed by reading the respective Mantras by the priest who performs such rituals for the people (*Yajmans*). These Mantras are known only to these actively involved Brahmans, who are paid well by these *Yajmans*. Sanskrit is the religious language of Brahmanism / Hinduism, therefore all religious service takes place in Sanskrit. A common Hindu does not know Sanskrit and hence cannot read the required scriptures for various rituals. He had no direct access to God, but had to reach Him through the institution of Pandits / Brahmans. Not only does this institution controlled the process of worship of God, even the solemnizing of various auspicious and inauspicious occasions in the family had become so much ritualized that Brahman had become an inevitable part of Hindu's life. Dependence of common men in the Hindu society on such necessary services is so acute that even if a person wants to sideline these priests, other members of the society giving psychological warnings of evils to fall if the task is not handed over to the priests. Even a dying person puts his wish about

rituals required to be performed by the family members. There are short cuts known to priests only when their palms are greased well, they deviate and reduce the time schedule. People get what they want by bribing them at all occasions of ritualistic chorus according to their convenience. Society by and large does not dare to stand in their way. This is going on from one generation to another in spite of understanding among the more reasonably level headed people.

These services were denied to the members of low caste fraternity of Hindus. They are ill treated to an extent that their dead bodies are also denied ritualistic disposal. According to the high-headedness of priestly segment, they are destined to go to hell and need no purification of their souls. A born Shudra, lives as Shudra and dies as Shudra. God will also put them in the separate place where high caste will not even peep into. Their shadows are also impure and can cause immense harm to the souls of dead from high castes. Brahmans, at that time, enjoyed the super-most status in the society, which made him living god for every regal decision of the ruling class. He has ruled not only the heart and mind of Indian masses since past many thousand years, but also has remained undisputed god man for millions in this country.

Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in 1496 AD; in Punjab as revealed to him by the “Supreme Eternal Reality” i.e God at Sultanpur Lodhi, in Punjab, in the Indian subcontinent among the two already well established religions of Hinduism and Islam. He declared, ‘oneness of God’ and ‘oneness of man’ and laid down the complete ideology of Sikhism which developed and matured over a period spanning over two hundred and three years under the guidance of his nine successors. Guru Nanak spearheaded the cause of these under cared millions from all walks of life. Sikh thought treated every human soul at par. “The deeds are more important of a person than his pedigree”, said he. He exposed the social, religious and political leaders of his time and their methods cutting at the very roots of misrepresentation of religious doctrines of Hinduism by Brahmans and those of Islam by Mullas and Qazis. He preached virtues should receive preference over outward acts in daily life. He rejected all rituals which the clever religious leaders had invented to maintain their hold on the common man in order to maintain their supremacy and gain material benefits. He condemned the escapist life of Jogis and advocated full participation in social and domestic life. In Asa dee var he has discussed the doctrines, rituals, rites practices and life of Yogis, Brahmans and Turks (Muslims) and given their right interpretation which forms the foundations of Sikhism.

Sikhism was formally consecrated by the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab on the Vaisakhi day 1699 AD; corresponding with 30th March 1699. He formally declared the abolition of caste system in Sikhism by administering Pahul to the initiates from the same communion bowl (*Amrit Bata*). On this day he laid down the Sikh religious code of conduct, distinct from Hinduism and Islam and he said:

ਜਬ ਲਗ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦੇਉ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਰਾ॥-

ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਰੋਂ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ਮੈਂ ਨਾ ਕਰੂੰ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ॥

(ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪਾ:੧੦).

jab lag Khalsa rahay naira tab lag tej deoon main sara,

Jab ih gahein bipran kee reet mein na karoon in kee parteet.

(Sarab Loh Granth—Patshahi 10)

Meaning: “As long as Khalsa strictly maintains its separate identity, I will lend him my full support, when he adopts the Brahmanical ways (culture), then I shall not believe him”

(Guru Gobind Singh)

Sikhism one of the youngest and modern religions of the world is based on belief in One God and recognizes the equality of all human beings and is marked by its rejection of

polytheism, ritualism, hypocrisy, idolatry, caste system, gender discrimination, celibacy and asceticism. Its philosophy called '*Gurmat*' lays great stress on leading a life full of virtues (*Shub karman*-love, truthfulness, compassion, righteousness full of good intentions, devoid of ego, instead of acts of outward show popularly called rituals. It is the latest religion in the series of religions introduced to the humanity for its spiritual survival.

Gurbani simplified the concept of religion in context with mysterious, transcendental and beyond those rituals which were not real in human reach and had a direct access to God while living the life of a Gurmukh instead of a Manmukh. The whole Gurbani consists of a dialogue describing a prescribed way of life for a Gursikh by practicing the life that draws strength from practice of egalitarianism, humility, honest devotion to God and same love for all his created human beings.

The Brahman had hierarchized the society on two important basis, caste and gender. Guru Nanak and his successors forcefully attacked and successfully weaned the followers of the new faith, "Sikhism" from the divisive Hindu caste system, gender discrimination, idolatry, celibacy, asceticism, renunciation and other ritualistic practices of Hinduism. They advocated leading a life of householder full of virtues, devoid of rituals, superstitions, caste, gender discrimination and hypocrisy. They disapproved religious intolerance and stood as a rock against ritualism. Guru Nanak attacked directly on caste system. He said, "*Fakkar jaati, fakkar nao, sabhna jeean ikka chhao*" i.e, False is the distinction of caste and status. Every body has equal protection of God" (GGS, p.83). He rejected the distinction between man and man on the basis of birth and caste. He emphasized the idea of brotherhood and equality. He further clarified that individual could achieve higher status by practicing righteous behavior. 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, "*Jaat janam neh poochhiye sach ghar leho bata-ay. So jaat so paat hai jehe karam kamaye*" (GGS, p.1330).

Gurbani / Gurmat (Sikhism) rejects the notion that Brahmans were born with purity and low castes were impure by birth, "*Garabhvas mein kul nahin jaati, Brahm bind te sab utpati. Kaho re Pandit Brahmin kab te ho-ay. Brahm keh keh janam mat kho-ay. Je toon Brahmin Brahmani Jaaya, tao ann dwar kahay nahin aiah. Tum kat Brahman ham kat sud, hum kat lohu tum kat doodh. Kaho Kabir jo brahm becharay, so Brahman kahiat hai hamaray*" (GGS, p.324).

Second important inequality ordained in Hinduism is based on gender discrimination. Though man and woman are different biologically, there is no justification to place them in hierarchy. In context of Varna, woman was considered physically impure due to certain biological features. Hence she was considered physically impure to certain biological features. Hence she was prescribed not to indulge in certain religious rituals and social ceremonies. Gurbani negates philosophy of physical impurity both in men and women. Discrimination against women in terms of physical impurity during menstruation and child birth, has been protested in Gurbani, "*Jion joru sir nahvani aavay vaaro vaar, juthay jootha much vasay nit nit hoay khuvar*" (GGS, p.472). The discrimination on this account is illogical and against the law of nature. This is sheer ignorance of mind, which needs to be shed off, "*Saach kateb bakhaane Alho naar purkh nahi koi, padhe gune nahin kachh baure, jao dil meih khabar na hoi*—The book tells thee that God is true. He is neither male nor female. Thou gainest nothing by reading the reflecting, O mad man, if thou obtainest not understanding in thy mind (GGS, 483). Guru Nanak says, "*Bhand jammiey bhand nimiey bhand mangan viaho*—Nanak *bhande bahra eko sachcha soay*" (GGS, p.473). Gurbani clarifies the greatness of a person, man or woman, based on deeds

and not on the gender bias. It is the humility one follows in every aspect of life that makes a person great and not the worldly riches one may possess, “*Jis ke antar raj abhimaan so narakpati hovat suan. Jo jaane mein jobanvant, so hovat bista ka jant*” (GGS, p.278).

Regarding Hindu concept of salvation Gurmat says, “If salvation can be achieved by washing in water then a frog has a better chance because he remains in water every day (GS, p.484). Similarly regarding union (Jog-Yoga) with the God, Gurbani says, “If union could be obtained by wandering around naked, then all deer of the forest would be liberated. What does it matter whether someone goes naked or wears deer skin, if he does not remember the Lord within his soul? If the spiritual perfection of Siddhas could be obtained by shaving the head, then why haven't the sheep found salvation? If someone could save himself by celibacy, O siblings of destiny why then haven't eunuchs obtained the state of supreme dignity?” (GGS, p.324).

Gurmat confronts superstition with scientific argumentative approach (*Bibek Buddhi*). For example the Pandas at Hardawar questioned the Guru's so called sacrilegious act of throwing water to the west when everybody was throwing it towards the sun in 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 can't my water a few hundred miles on earth?” The lesson went home to the Pandas and the general public that had gathered to see the spectacle.

Gurmat has ever advocated for the betterment of life on the globe. *Kirt karni* (Work to earn honest living), *Vand chhakna* (Share the meals with the needy), *Naam Japna* (Remembering God) are three cardinal principles of Gurmat. This principle provides comfort to man, meet his moral and spiritual needs and provides satisfaction of purposeful living. Gurbani not only attacks in-egalitarian philosophy, it also offers an alternative way of life style with different priorities. Here religion, attainment of God and related issues have been taken out of the domain of temples and mosques and put in the center of his home and easily reachable, irrespective of gender or caste distinction. It is stated that outer physical beauty, wealth, shrewdness, arrogance or even pride of knowledge, cannot get one happiness and solace.

The path of Gurmat, therefore is to revolutionize the human character to create ideal personalities from the society so that society gets rid of all such superstitions, useless rituals and evils from the ambit of prevailing human society. Therefore it is revolutionary and much wider multi-dimensional principle for human race. It is full of love, compassion and human understanding in the fields of social, political, economic, good will, universal brotherhood and spiritual up-lift. It speaks for every human being. Sikh Ardas ends with “*Nanak Naam chardi kala teray bhanay sarbat daa bhala*”. Thus the disguising as a saintly person with lots of greed for worldly pursuits at heart would not fetch anything. Without the true service to God (by doing service to mankind) man would never attain true happiness. This is a reaction, to the very institutionalization of ritual symbolization of God with some kinds of colour of dress (outward garb of godliness), which may in fact be totally false and deceitful. Hence Gurbani's insistence upon real and unreal, true and false and fraudulent is very significant. It negates a blind submission to any kind of hierarchization, ritual, social, economical and so on. By putting on a particular garb one does not become jogi, Sant, Pandit or Qazi, it is the deeds that count. In Sikhism one has to be on practical path for a respectable and satisfying ideal human, selective for virtues and be prepared to shun rituals and compulsions. He has to learn the art of co-existence and shun the hatred for others with whom his ideologies don't match

At personal level I have no objection against the Brahman community. But Brahmanism as an ideology has been propounded by members of Brahman community to divide

the (Indian) society on a permanent basis as a result of which India's political sovereignty as a nation has been disintegrating and this is the negative aspect of Brahmanism. Exploitation of ritualistic practices of religion for one's personal vested interests downgrading the spiritual and Divine aspects of religion by linking one's trade with religion, fleecing the common masses in the name of charity by making them victims of superstition and hollow rituals, promoting one's own ritualistic trade through the propagation of the nine planetary configurations, serving one's own monetary interests by devising various kinds of beneficent or malefic effects of particular moments, planets, of days and months, belief and propagation of untouchability, association of purity and impurity with the task of cooking, creating superstitions, charts and suggesting various kinds of tantric (occult) solutions—these are various malpractices of Brahmanism. A true religion unites and integrates the society rather than creating divisive walls of superstition and prejudice based on birth and caste.

Sikhism has no aversion for any one and not the least for Hindus. This book only expounds differences in various thought currents in both the religions. All the topics under various chapters have been authenticated with quotations from the scriptures constituting the canon of the Sikh faith. I am confident that the Sikhs living in various parts of the world in particular and followers of other religions in general will be able to understand Sikhism better and benefitted by this work. Suggestions for improvement will be most welcome. I wish the readers a happy reading of the text ahead.

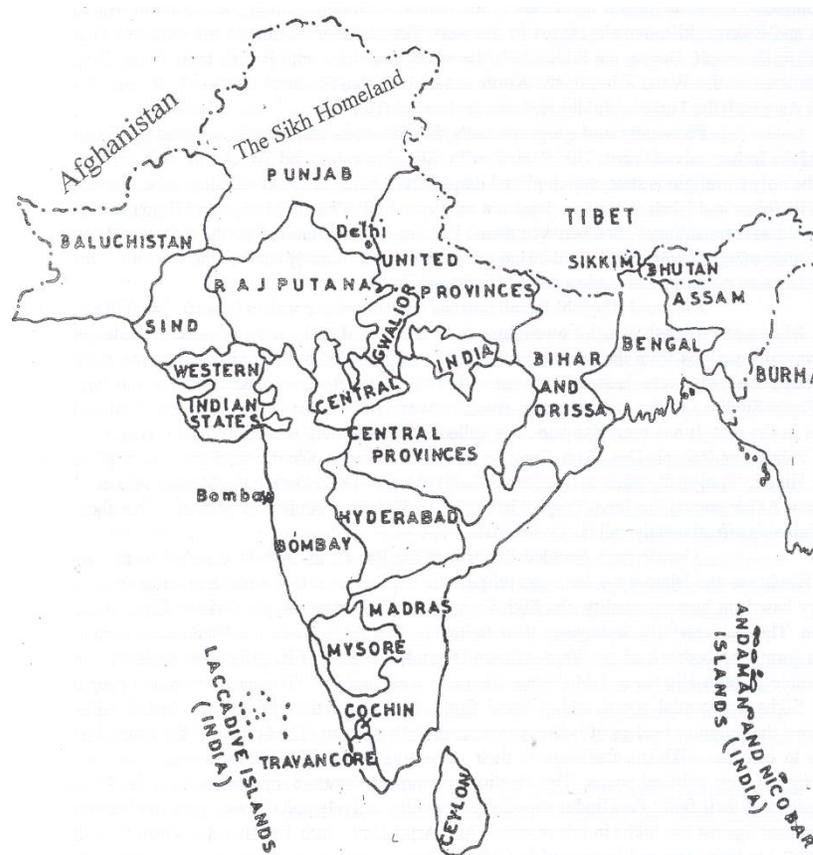
Jagraj Singh
Tampa Florida, February, 2017

What is Sikhism?

Sikhism /Sikhi (Sikh Dharma) is a major religion of India and fifth largest faith in the world. It is the youngest and most modern religion among the religions of the world. It was founded by Guru Nanak in 1496 A.D, as revealed to him by the ‘Supreme Spiritual Reality (*Akaal Purkh*) at Sultanpur Lodhi in Punjab in the Indus valley in the Indian subcontinent. Sikhism is a simple, monotheistic, non-ritualistic religion that allows its followers to live a religious life while taking care of their worldly duties. It preaches oneness of God and oneness of man and denounces ritualism, idolatry, asceticism, celibacy, down grading of women, gender inequality, hypocrisy and the caste system in strongest terms. Guru Nanak was born in a Hindu family but he refused to formally get himself initiated into Brahmanism / Hinduism and severely criticized its divisive caste system, ritual practices and gender inequality, as recorded in the holy Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib in *Asa Dee vaar*. Guru Arjan, the fifth Nanak, formally declared the separate existence of Sikhism by writing it in the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib on page 1136. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Nanak formally consecrated Sikhism on the Vaisakhi day 1699 AD at Anandpur Sahib in the Punjab, prescribed a distinct religious code of conduct for the Sikhs and propagated the *Nash* doctrine, thereby abolishing the caste system in Sikhism, which forms the bed rock of the Brahmanical religion, “*Varn Ashram Dharma*” now popularly called “Hinduism”. Although Sikh Gurus preached Sikhism in India and adjoining countries for a period spanning over about two centuries but it was formally adopted en-mass by the jatts of the central Punjab called Majha.

The followers of Sikh religion / Sikhism are called “Sikhs”. Presently it has about twentyfive 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 the remaining 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.



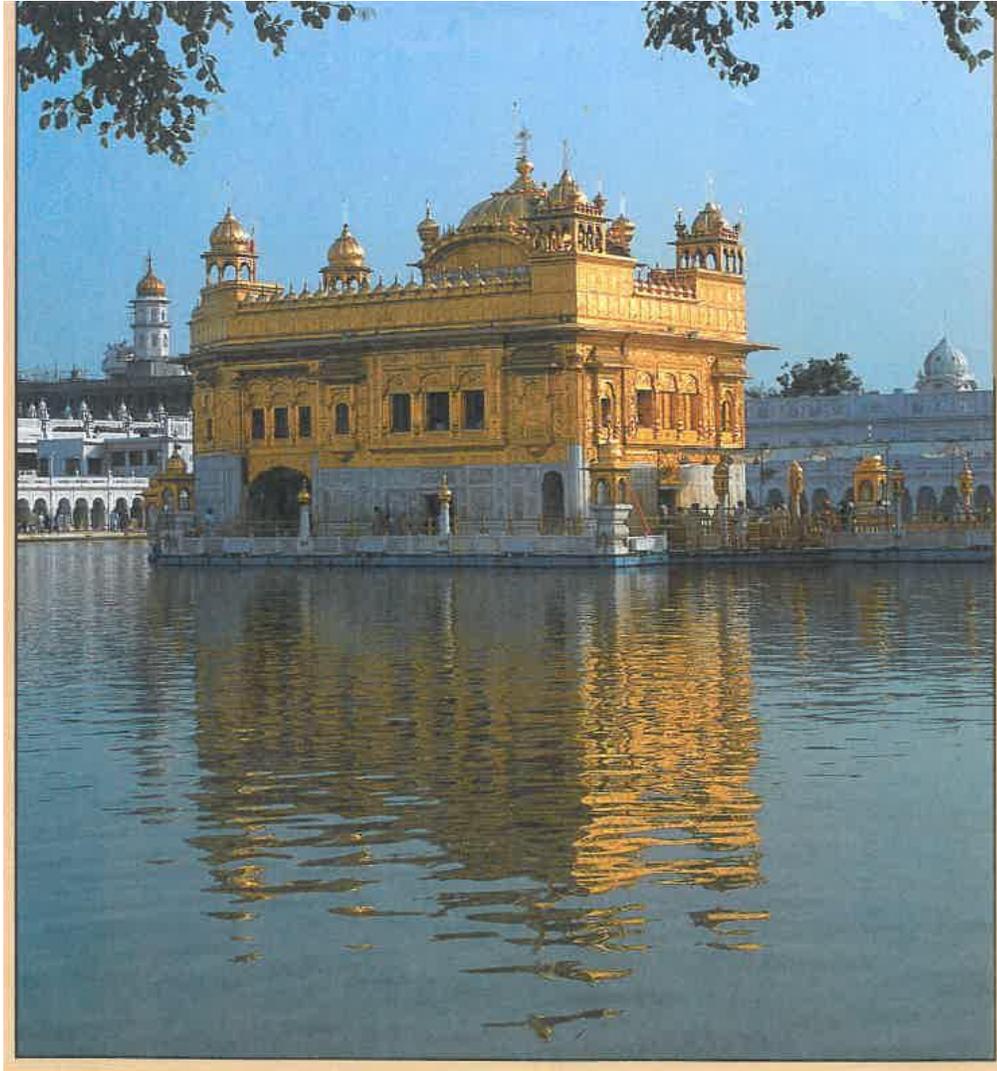
Shoes are not allowed inside the Gurdwara, because the Sikhs consider shoes ceremoniously unclean. The visitor has to go bare foot inside the Gurdwara .Every Gurdwara has a Jora Ghar (shoe house) outside the main complex for depositing the shoes. The Sikh worship is congregational therefore the main 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, Verses of Guru Gobind Singh 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,

Glimpses of Sikhism

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.

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 Brahmans, 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 ਗੁਰਹਾਈ।।*—*Ek pita ekas ke ham barik toon mera gurhae*" (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 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.

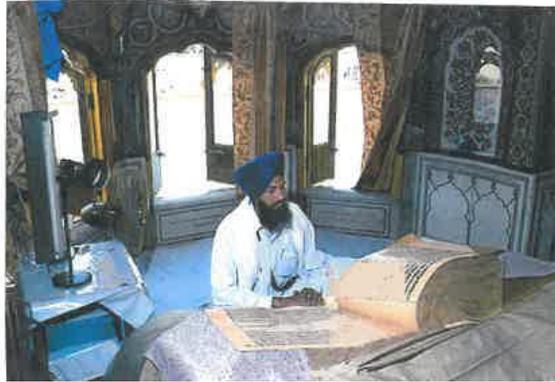
Guru Nanak denounced polytheism, henotheism, idolatry, superstition, renunciation, asceticism, celibacy, hypocrisy and ritualism to appease the deities. In his utterances he severely criticized the religious leaders of all the then prevalent faiths in India for their short comings. Of Islam's specialists 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 upbraided 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).

Glimpses of Sikhism

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 Aad Granth (now Guru Granth Sahib), in Rag Bhairon, 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 9th 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 its 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.

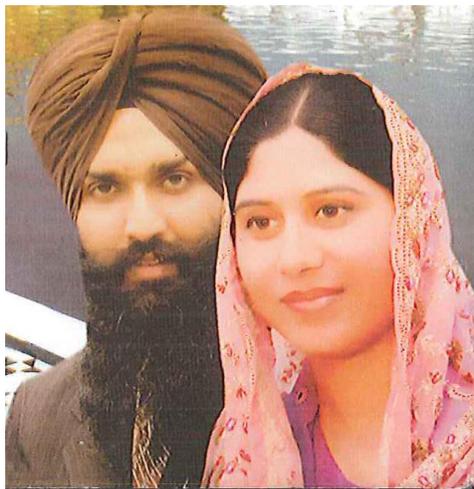
Sikhism developed, matured and became established to work its way in the world at the end of two centuries under the guidance of its ten Gurus. It was formally consecrated by its tenth

Glimpses of Sikhism

Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day 1699 AD at Anandpur Sahib in the Shivalik foothills 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, MI, 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 worryfree 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 escapist. 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 jiwan*), 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 bhunchh" (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).

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 choosen 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 (Devatas), 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. Everyone 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 tareeay 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 ga-ay, 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 Ml, 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.

Emblem (Logo) of Sikhism



“*Deg Teg Fateh*”

The Sikh national Emblem / Logo / Insignia / Symbol was created by the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) after its constitution in the early twentieth century, when it depicted the Sikh doctrine “*Deg Teg Fateh*” in the Emblematic form. Since then it is seen inscribed on the Sikh national flag/ letter heads and the stamps of various Sikh organizations. The doctrine is first found in written form in Persian, on the seal of Banda Singh Bahadur (1708-1716), stamped on his letters. The seal bore the inscription:

“*Deg-O-Teg O Fateh-Nusrat-I -Bedrang Yafat -Az Nanak--Guru Gobind Singh*” i.e, “The kettle/ Caldron (*Deg*)- (The Sikh symbol of economy, the means to feed all and sundry on an egalitarian base), sword (*Teg*)-(The Sikh symbol of power, to protect the weak and hapless and smite the oppressor), victory and unending patronage are obtained from Gurus Nanak-- Gobind Singh”. After Banda Singh Bahadur this inscription was adopted by the Sikh Misals and then by Sikh rulers for their coins also. Now the official seal of Akal Takhat bears this inscription.

The circle in the emblem of Sikhism represents the *Deg* (caldron) used to prepare food, *Guru ka Langar* initiated by the founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak to remove caste barriers, teach people equality and humility before each other and to feed all and sundry on an egalitarian base so that no body sleeps empty stomach.

The two swords on the outside represent the *Miri--Piri* (*Bhagti and Shakti*) doctrine of Sikhism, *revealed by Guru Nanak and* put into practice by his sixth successor, Guru Hargobind indicating the integration of spiritual and temporal powers together and not treating them as two separate and distinct entities.

In the center is the *Khanda*, the double-edged sword, used by the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh to prepare *Amrit* to initiate the Sikhs. *Khanda* has cutting edge on both sides indicative of two swords fused together representing *Bhagti and Shakti* (spiritual and temporal powers), giving birth to “The Khalsa”, who is a saint-soldier (*Sant-Sipahi*), the saint meaning scholarly in knowledge of Gurbani and soldier meaning marshal in spirit.

To summarize, the Sikh national Emblem, reminds the Sikhs that they are warriors, they should take *Pahul* (*Amrit*), become ‘Khalsa’ i.e, The ultimate form of the Sikh, keep *Guru Ka Langar* going so that no body sleeps hungry, keep themselves armed, protect the weak and hapless, fight injustice and oppression, wherever it takes place, the victory will be theirs:



Who are Sikhs?

The Sikhs, now found globally are natives of the Punjab, a region in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent forming major portion of the Indus valley. Punjab was an independent country ruled by the Sikhs, before its annexation by the British in 1849 A.D. Punjab, the country of the Sikhs, separated the Hindu and the Muslim worlds. The Sikhs were the most difficult and last power in Asia to fall to the British imperialism. The British killed the Sikhs politically by not returning their country back to them at the time of decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, which they had annexed from them under a written agreement. They partitioned it into two parts, the western part 62% was made over to the newly created Islamic State of Pakistan and the remaining 38% eastern part was attached to Hindu India. Since then they are a stateless nation. The Sikhs constitute a distinct ethnic group and they are a “religious community and a political nation” simultaneously and thus they are a unique society in the world. They are marked by a distinctive ideology / religion, distinctly clear Sikh ceremonies, Sikh civilization, Sikh culture including language and an intense devotion to their motherland-‘Punjab’. The initiated Sikhs are called ‘Khalsa’ (lit: sovereign), who now represent and spearhead the tasks of Sikh religion. They are recognizable throughout the world as bearded and turbaned persons in Sikh dress. They are concerned with the creation of a just social order and are committed to the social equality and peaceful co-existence. Their history is in essence two kinds of freedom—spiritual and political. The first was achieved through teachings of their Gurus. The second was, won by the Sikhs themselves. Ethnically and culturally the Sikhs of the Punjab are a distinct people. According to Professor Bruce La Brack, who has written extensively on the Sikh community, “Sikhs have been recognized as an ethnicity in more than sixty countries world-wide”. 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, who gradually developed into a great civilization, now known as, “Indus Valley Civilization”, which is one of the oldest civilizations of the world. The natives here farmed the lands and are called “Jatt”, 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, all natives of this land came to be known as Punjabis, irrespective of their religious affiliations. Majority of these people formally embraced Sikhism, when it was consecrated by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 at Anandpur Sahib. Physically and mentally the Sikhs of the Punjab are a virile and assertive race. A living spirit possesses the Sikh people. Their skin complexion, their body built, their features, their habits, their language, their literature, their ethics, their dress, their food, their customs and religious ceremonies etc are entirely different from rest of the people in the Indian subcontinent and they have a distinct identity. They are strong, tall and muscular with well-shaped limbs, erect carriage, agile and hardy, brown complexioned, sharp-featured along with strong hair growth especially the beard. From childhood they are used to hard toil in the fields. They were hardened by burning summers and freezing winters, heavy rains and dust storms of the Punjab. During their struggle for sovereignty the teachings of the Guru lent them a dignified look and instilled in them the spirit of bravery and sacrifice. When the call came in the name of the Guru and the Panth, they emerged as fearless fighters. And, however severe their hardships, their mood was always cheerful and morale high. They earned praise even from their bitterest enemies. Qazi Noor Mohammad, a Muslim historian, who came along Ahmad Shah Abdali during his seventh invasion in 1764 A.D; and wrote his book Jangnama, which is a contemporary evidence of happenings, made the

most contemptuous remarks about the Sikhs says, "After the Durranis no other troops can be compared with the Sikhs. This sect abounds in giant-sized and loin-limbed youth". He usually called the Sikhs dogs. He further writes, "Do not call them "dogs". In fact, they are loins in the times of battle and when in festivities they surpass Hatim (a legendary name in generosity). When they hold the Indian sword in hand, they gallop from Hind (Gangetic Doab) upto the country of Sindh. Besides their fighting, listen to one thing more in which they excel all other warriors. They never kill a coward and do not obstruct one who flees from the field. They do not rob a woman of her gold or ornaments, may she be a queen or a slave girl. Adultery also does not exist among the 'dogs'. None of them is a thief"----- . The Sikhs of the Punjab are outspoken, industrious, frugal, resourceful, optimistic, intelligent and tenacious people. They are neither intolerant nor bigoted nor selfish. They have a forgiving nature and do not hold grudge for long. They are frank, honest, simple and courteous people. They are admirers of nature, art and architecture and are quick to adopt good qualities of others. They are quick at learning and grasping, always keen to acquire latest knowledge. They have a natural aptitude for practical trades. They are dependable people and stick to their promise. They have an adventurous nature and are always prepared to take risk, sometimes even at the cost of their life. They are well known for their wanderlust and they have been foremost among the Hindustanis to seek out avenues of employment, agriculture and trade in foreign lands. They give warm reception to their guests. Hospitality and humane love is an organic trait of their culture. The warmth of 'you are mine' is inborn. They give a warm send off to their guests, not empty handed, but with a gift of whatever is available in the house. They love perfection and do not consider any time too long or labour too intense to secure perfection in the execution of a project. They have made name in all spheres of life, but are among the best soldiers, farmers and players in the world. Fighting spirit being the very substance of the Sikh psyche, they rely more on morale than on resources. Cracking jokes is their favourite past time. Initiated Sikhs (Amritdhari Sikhs) do not consume any intoxicants including alcohol. Tobacco is a taboo for all Sikhs. Who are Sikhs? Copyright Dr. Jagraj Singh 25 Their religious faith and worldly aspirations are wholly different from other Indians. They believe in oneness of God, all humans are equal, and service and devotion, and morality lead to enlightenment. Honest work, sharing and remembrance of God in words, mind and actions are fundamentals of the Sikh faith. 'Guru Granth Sahib' is the holy book of the Sikhs and Gurdwara is their place of worship. The Sikhs do not worship Guru Granth Sahib as an idol or deity, instead they worship and revere the teachings of God revealed through sacred writings. Sikh worship has plain simplicity, a quite suspicion of aesthetic graces, Path, Katha, keertan and Ardas. Public spirit and fellow feeling is the characteristic mark of the Sikhs. They do not worship idols, pictures, graves or tombs. They shun all ritualism and do not believe in the divisive Hindu caste system. Individualism is in Sikhism the cardinal sin without expiation, violation of obligation towards community means not just alienation from the holy but also social excommunication. To protect the weak and smite the oppressor are among the major traits of the Sikhs. In politics, they are devoted to their motherland and have an ideal for Punjab. Democracy an important aspect of modern society is the guiding rule in Sikhism. The traditions of Sangat, Panj Piaray, Panches, Sarbat Khalsa and Gurmata are unparalleled institutions of the Sikhs in the history of religions and nations for taking collective decisions during the times of crisis facing the Sikh nation. Sikhs are not great communicators and are not very adept at striking deals. Political leaders of today show themselves up to be as corruptible as others of their ilk in rest of India, but Sikhs in general reject those who compromise and are quick to react if they realize betrayal of their interest. The Sikhs are highly conscious and committed to assert their identity

through their dress and appearance. It stands for their willingness to be identified and held accountable so that their character and actions meet the standards set by the founders of their faith. Because of their smart turbans, unshorn hair with flowing or well-set or rolled beards Sikh men can be easily identified among large crowds. Their ceremonial dress consists of a long coatdress called achkin (ਐਚਕਿਨ) and tight trousers (ਚੁੜੀਦਾਰ ਪਜਾਮਾ), along with turban in smart Sikh style. They have a fine sense of matching colours they wear. They are very fond of good eating, historical experience has made them survivors and hospitable, also generous and with a zest for life. Meat eating is not a prohibition among the Sikhs. According to Sikh religious code of conduct (Sikh Rehat Maryada), the Sikhs are permitted to eat only jhatka meat. Eating halal (kosher) meat is prohibited in Sikhism and the Sikhs follow it very strictly. Tobacco in any form is a taboo for the Sikhs. Of all the people of India, the Sikhs are perhaps the most travelled and best known in the west. Their handsome appearances, impressive beards and striking turbans, their valour and bravery as soldiers, tireless energy as workers and cheerful dispositions have combined to make them something of a legend. Presently, the Sikhs constitute roughly a little over two percent of the total Indian population, which has recently crossed over one billion. According to rough estimates there are about twenty three million Sikhs in all, inhabiting the entire globe, out of which nearly 15 million live in the Punjab (Indian), where they constitute 62.2 percent of the total population, about 6 million live in rest of India outside Punjab and about two million are spread all over the world, out of which over half a million live in UK, another over half a million live in North America (Canada and USA) and the rest one million are spread all over the world. Big concentrations are located in Malaysia, Singapore, Africa, France, German, Australia and Newzealand etc. Wherever they have gone they have carried their unique philosophy with them. Every person in a new social, cultural or geographical environment faces many problems. Sikhs have had to face such problems more so because of their distinct appearance. However, they have adapted themselves to their new environment wherever they have settled. They have adopted new places as their homes and mixed well with the society.

Who is a Sikh*?

The Sikh religious code of conduct (Sikh *Rahit Maryada*), defines a 'Sikh' as 'any person who believes in 'One Immortal Being' (God), in the ten Gurus; in the Guru Granth Sahib and other writings of the Gurus and their teaching, the Khalsa initiation (*Amritpaan*) ceremony and who does not believe in the doctrinal system of any other religion.

“Sikh” (ਸਿਖ) in Punjabi, literally means learner / learned and “*Asikh*” (ਅਸਿਖ) means not learned. Guru Gobind Singh in his prayer to the Supreme Eternal Realty (God) says, “ਸਿਖ ਉਬਾਰ ਅਸਿਖ ਸੰਘਰੋ॥-*Sikh ubhar Asikh sanghaaro*”, i.e, “ O Lord increase the number of the learned (*Sikh*) people and eliminate the non-learned - not knowledgable (*Asikh*)- Chaupai, Guru Gobind Singh. The word, “Sikh” was patronized by the founders of the Sikh faith for the followers of the new religion i.e; Sikhism (Sikhi).

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* 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. When the Siddhas questiond 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). Describing ‘Sikh’ as ‘*Shishya*’ (Disciple) is invention of Brahmans / Hindus writers who have

infiltrated into the Sikh institutions in the garb of Sikhs.

The Sikh, the Khalsa and the Singh refer to the same entity and there is no other category of Sikhs. There are no classification categories in Sikhism. Either one is a Sikh or not a Sikh.

The word *Sikh is purely Punjabi in origin and is derived from '*Sikhna*' meaning to learn. It was patronized by the founders of the Sikh faith for the adherents of the Sikh religion (Sikhism-Sikhi-ਸਿੱਖੀ), 'ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥-*Sikhi sikhia gur veechar*' i.e, "Sikhism is the philosophy of Guru Granth Sahib and the teachings of the Sikh Gurus" (GGS, M1, p.465).

When Guru Nanak embarked upon his mission for preaching his message he had with him a Muslim companion named, Mardana. When people asked him as to who was his companion. He always replied: Bhai Mardana. He never mentioned him as his *Chela* (*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. *Bhai* in Punjabi means brother, meaning all Sikhs are brothers and this brother-hood is called *Panth*, "*Nanak nirmal panth chalaio*" (Bhai Gurdas). The sonorous titles of Sant and Baba and Sant Baba, Braham Giani etc being used by so called modern preachers of Sikhism were never used by the Sikhs till recently. They have mushroomed after the independence of India and are trying to Hinduise Sikhism with their preaching of ritualistic practices etc based on Vedantic philosophy among the ignorant Sikh masses.

*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 meanings. It may mean learned, learner, teaching, sermon or a follower of Sikh religion (Sikhism-Sikhi) or Bodi / Choti on the shaved head. The word Sikh is purely Punjabi in origin and is derived from '*Sikhna*' meaning to learn. It was patronized by the founders of the Sikh faith for the adherents of the Sikh religion (Sikhism-Sikhi-ਸਿੱਖੀ. It has nothing to do with the Sanskrit word *Shishya* which means disciple (Chela--ਚੇਲਾ).

Signs of Sikh Identity

All practicing Sikhs express their religious identity in leaving the hair on their body unshorn, in wearing articles of the Sikh faith (by initiated--baptized Sikhs), in adopting a common suffix 'Singh' for male and 'Kaur' for female names, in avoiding tobacco, Halal meat, in shunning idolatry, ritualism and in abjuring any connection with Hinduism, Islam, Christianity or any other religion. All Sikh men wear turban in Sikh style to cover the unshorn hair on their head. Turban is an essential and complimentary adjunct to unshorn hair. Sikh women wear dupatta to cover their head. Because of their smart turbans, unshorn hair with flowing or well-set or rolled beards, practicing Sikh men can be easily identified among large crowds. They are highly conscious and committed to assert their identity through their dress and appearance and of course through their mother tongue, Punjabi. It stands for their willingness to be identified and held accountable so that their character and actions meet the standards set by the founders of the faith. Like all other religious communities of the world apostates and renegades are found in Sikhism too.

Why identity is necessary or needed?

It is enshrined in the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, "ਦਾਗੇ ਹੋਹਿ ਸੁ ਰਨ ਮਹਿ ਜੁਝਹਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਦਾਗੇ ਭਗਿ ਜਾਈ...*Daage hoay so run meh joojheh bin daage bhag jaaee* i.e, The branded ones fight in the battle-field with zest, the unbranded turn away as renegades (GGS, p. 970)..

Being a Sikh

One may be Sikh:

- (1) *By birth: being born of Sikh parents or
- (2) By conversion: who has embraced Sikhism through conversion from some other religion.

*Guru Arjan was the first born Sikh Guru, born of Sikh parents. After him all Sikh Gurus were born Sikhs.

Sikh way of life

The Sikh way of life known as '*Gurmat*' was demonstrated by the Sikh Gurus. They supervised the theoretical and practical aspects of Sikhism and guided their followers. Guru Ram Dass prescribed the daily routine of the Sikhs (GGS, p.305), while Guru Gobind Singh completed the form. A religious committee constituted at Akal Takhat, finalized a draft of '*The Sikh Rehat Maryada*'—'Sikh religious code of conduct' based on the canon of the Sikh faith and released it for the Sikh nation, which was published in a booklet form by the Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 1945, regulates individual and corporate Sikh life.

The Sikh way of life is the honest house-holder's life and to live in the world in the normal way with the endeavour to attain the higher consciousness without entanglements in temporary alluring materialistic attractions and leading a worldly desire free life in the world. It is based on the doctrines and ideology of Sikhism.

Sikh religious beliefs

Belief in the existence of One God (Akal Purkh) is the fundamental theological concept of Sikhism. Belief in Akal Purkh through Shabad Bani to the strict exclusion of all other forms of worship, define the basic position of the Khalsa*. They believe in ten Gurus and after them, in *Shabad Bani* as the Guru, it is embodied essentially in the Guru Granth Sahib. To converse with Guru one could read his Shabad. To see the Guru one could go to a gathering of the Khalsa to see the Guru in the Khalsa—ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ (Mukh vaak Patshahi 10). No living person is to be regarded as Guru.

The Khalsa commandments:

ਪੂਜਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ--*Pooja Akal Kee* -----Worship only God

ਪਰੀਚਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਕਾ--*Paricha Shabad Ka*---Believe only in Gurbani

ਦੀਦਾਰ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਕਾ--*Deedaar Khalsay Ka*-- keep the company of the Khalsa.

* Khalsa is an Arabic / Persian word and means Sovereign, it should not be confused with the Punjabi word Khalis, which means pure.

Sikh Rehatmaryada (*Sikh Dharm Achaar Shastar*) OR Sikh Religious Code of Conduct

Like all other major world religions, Sikhism too has its own religious code of conduct, which is called 'the Sikh *Rehatmaryada*', which is based on commandments of Guru Granth Sahib and commandments of Guru Gobind Singh as recorded by Bhai Nanad Lal and some other writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A religious committee constituted at Akal Takhat, finalized a draft of '*The Sikh Rehat Maryada*' and released it for the Sikh nation, which was published in a booklet form by the Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 1945 A.D, regulates individual

and corporate Sikh life. The Sikh religious code of conduct consists of: *Sroop* (Bana-outer appearance) and *Rehni* (as per Bani / doctrines).

Sroop (appearance-*Banaa*):

A Sikh is a saint-soldier (*Sant-Sipahi*). Saint (*Sant*) means that he is scholarly in his knowledge of Gurbani (*Bani*) and leads his life according to the teachings of the Gurus as enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib, while soldier (*Sipahi*) denotes that he is a fearless warrior and maintains the Sikh uniform (*Bana- the five K's--Kes, Kangha, Kachhehra, Kara and Kirpan*)- “*Saabat soorat dastaar sira—ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਿਰਾ*” (GGS, p1084) and follows all the instructions of Guru Gobind Singh issued at the time of *Amritpaan sanskaar*. Guru Gobind Singh has issued a very strict warning in this regard, “ਜਬ ਲਗ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦਿਉ ਮੈ ਸਾਰਾ-*Jab lag Khalsa rahay naira tab lag tej deon mein saara--* As long as Khalsa strictly maintains its separate identity, I will lend Him, my full support, ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਰੈ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ਮੈ ਨਾ ਕਰੂੰ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ।। *Jab eh gahein bipran kee reet*, mein na karoon in kee parteet--*when he adopts the Brahminical ways, then I shall not believe Him”

(Mukh vaak, Patshahi Dasween).

Guru Gobind Singh further says:

- ਰਹਿਣੀ ਰਹੈ ਸੋਈ ਸਿਖ ਮੇਰਾ, ਉਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਮੈ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਚੇਰਾ-“*Rehni rahay soi Sikh mera, oh sahib mein os da chera*” i.e, “Only the follower of rehat is my Sikh, he is my sahib (master) and I am his disciple”.
- ਰਹਿਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਮੋਹੀ ਕੋ ਸਖਿ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਨਾਹੀ-“*Rehat piari mohi ko Sikh piara nahin*” i.e, "I love Rehat and not the Sikh i.e I love the law and not the follower of law”.
- ਬਿਨਾ ਸਸਤਰ ਕੇਸਮ ਨਰੂ ਭੇਡ ਜਾਨੋ, ਗਰੈ ਕਾਨ ਤਾ ਕੋ ਕਿਤੇ ਲੈ ਸਿਧਾਨੋ-“*Bina sastra kesam naroo bhed jano, gahey kaan ta ko kitay lay sidhano*” , - Without weapon (sword) a man with kesas (unshorn hair) on the head is like a sheep, ready to be led by the ear into slaughterhouse any time by whosoever may wish to do so.
- ਬਿਨਾ ਸਸਤਰ ਕੇਸਮ ਦਿਉ ਨਾ ਦੀਦਾਰੇ-“*Bina kes tegham deo na deedaray*” ie, “Don't show me your face without unshorn hair and sword”.

Rehni-way of life:

The Sikh way of life was demonstrated by the Sikh Gurus. They supervised theoretical and practical aspects of Sikhism and guided the `Sikhs'. Guru Ram Dass prescribed the daily routine of the Sikh; Guru Gobind Singh completed the form of Sikhism by creation of the Khalsa Panth. He gave his Sikhs an outer uniform, “The five K's” and an inner uniform of “courage, meditation and sacrifice”. Sikh way of life includes:

- The inner values of Sikhism as per Gurbani (contents of Aad Granth-Bani / Gurbani).
- Commandments of Guru Gobind Singh,
- Practices of Sikhism (dos and don'ts of Sikhism),

- Rites / social ceremonies, customs and traditions etc of Sikhism.

Inner values of Sikhism

As per Gurbani a Sikh should possess following qualities:

- ਅਉਗੁਣ ਸਭ ਮਿਟਾਇਕੇ ਪਰ ਉਪਕਾਰ ਕਰੈ- “*Augun sab mita-ay ke par upkar Karen*” (GGS, p.218). A Sikh should be free from all vices and do good to others. He should look different from others due to his inner qualities (Bani) and not, because of his outer looks only (Bana).
- ਆਤਮ ਰਸ ਜਿਹ ਜਾਣਹੀ ਸੋ ਹੈ ਖਾਲਸ ਦੇਵ, ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਮਹਿ ਮੋ ਮਹਿ ਤਾਸ ਮਹਿ ਰੰਚਕ ਨਾਹੀ ਨਾ ਭੇਵ- “*Aatam ras jih jaan he so hai-ay khalas dev prabhu mae mo mae taas meh ranchak nahin bhev*” (Sarab Loh Granth)
- ਅਲਪ ਅਹਾਰ ਸੁਲਪ ਸੀ ਨਿੰਦ੍ਰਾ ਦਯਾ ਛਿਮਾ ਤਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ--“*Alp ahar sulp see nindra daya chhama tan preet* i.e; Eat little and sleep little, love the practice of compassion and forbearance
ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਬਾਹਿਥੋ ਹੈਵਬੋ ਤ੍ਰਿਗੁਣ ਅਤੀਤਿ--“*Seel santokh sada nirbahithio, havbho tregun ateet* i.e ; Be calm and contented and thus you will gain freedom from the Three States (Rajas, Tamas, Satva)
ਕਾਮ, ਕ੍ਰੋਧ, ਲੋਭ, ਹਠ, ਮੋਹ ਨਾ ਮਨ ਸੋ ਲਿਯਾਵੇ--“*Kaam, karodh, lobh, hath, moh na mann sion liavay*-Keep your mind away from lust, anger, pride, greed, obstinacy and wordly love.
ਤਬ ਹੀ ਆਤਮ ਤਤ ਕੋ ਦਰਸੇ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਹ ਪਾਵੈ--“*Tab he atam tat ko darse parm purkh keh pavay*”-Thus you will see the essence of your own soul and also realise the Supreme Lord. (Ram Kali Patshi 10).
- ਜਹਿ ਕਰਨੀ ਤਹਿ ਪੂਰੀ ਮਤ ਕਰਨੀ ਬਾਝੋ ਘਟੇ ਘਟ-- “*Jeh karni tahay poori mat, karni bajhon ghatay ghat*” i.e “A Sikh should mean what he says, any person who does not possess this quality cannot be called a Sikh” (GGS, p.25)
- ਇਉ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਆਪ ਨਿਵਾਰੀਏ ਸਬ ਰਾਜ ਸਸ਼ਿਟ ਕਾ ਲੇ-- “*Eo Gurmukh aap niwari-ay sab raj srishat ka lay*” -- “God shall himself honour such a Gurmukh Sikh and he can rule the whole world” (Ibid, p. 648).

Gurbani further says:

- Those who maintain only the outer appearance of a Sikh but do not possess inner values of Sikhism are not Sikhs. They are called *Bhekhi* (ਭੇਖੀ) Sikhs (Sikhs in disguise--hypocrites):
ਰਹਿਤ ਅਵਰ ਕਿਛ ਅਵਰ ਕਮਾਵਤ, ਮਨ ਨਹੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਮੁਖੋ ਗੰਧ ਲਾਵਤ, ਜਾਨਣ ਹਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ, ਬਾਹਰ ਭੇਖ ਨਾ ਕਾਹੂ ਭੀਨ--“*Rehat avar kichh avar kamavat, mann nahin paret mukho gand laavat, jaananhaar prabhu parbu parbeen, bahir bhekh na kahoon bheen*” i.e, "Man professes one thing and practices quite another, in his heart there is no love but in his speech he talks tall. The wise Lord who is inner-knower is not pleased with the outward uniform (Ibid, p. 269).
- ਜਿਨ ਕੇ ਭੀਤਰ ਅੰਤਰਾ, ਜੈਸੇ ਪਸੂ ਤੈਸੇ ਉਹ ਨਰਾ-- “*Jin kay bheetar antra, jaisay pasoo taisay uh nara*” i.e, “Those who do not mean what they say, they are as good as animals” (ibid, p.1163).

- ਕਰਤੂਤ ਪਸੂ ਕੀ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਾਤਿ ਲੋਕ ਪਚਾਰਾ ਕਰੁ ਦਿਨ ਰਾਤ-- "*Kartoot pasoo kee maanas jaat lok pachara karay din raat*" i.e, "They only look humans but by actions they are animals" (Ibid, p.267). and while commenting on them, Guru Nanak says:
- ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਨਰ ਅਸਲ ਖਰ ਜੇ ਬਿਨ ਗੁਣ ਗਰਭ ਕਰਨ-- "*Nanak se nar asal khar, je bin gun garbh karan*" (Ibid, p. 1246) i.e, "Nanak, those persons who have not adopted good qualities, but are full of ego, they are in reality, donkeys and not human being (Ibid, p.1246)

The articles of Sikh faith

All initiated (Khalsa) Sikhs should support the articles of Sikh faith, commonly known as 5K's and these are:

Kes ---the unshorn hair
Kangha ----small comb for the topknot (Joorā)
Karha ---a steel wrist bangle
Kirpan ---steel sword
Kachhehra or Kachha- (Punjabi name for breeches)

ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੇ ਸਿਖੀ ਈ ਪੰਜ ਹਰਫ, ਕਾਫ , ਹਰਗਿਜ਼ ਨਾ ਬਾਸ਼ਦ ਈ ਪੰਜ ਮੁਆਫ-- "*Nishane Sikhi een panj harf, kaaf, Hargiz na bashad een panj muaaf*
ਕੜਾ, ਕਰਦੇ, ਕੱਛ, ਕੰਘਾ ਬਿਦਾਂ, ਬਿਲਾ ਕੇਸ ਹੇਚ ਅਸਤ ਜੁਮਲਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ---*Karha, Kardho, Kachh, Kangha Bidaan, Bila Kes hech ast jumla nishan*".
(Bhai Nand Lal Goya, Dasam Granth)

Meaning:

There are symbols of five letters *Kaaf* (Five K's) in Sikhism, which cannot be exempted. These are, "*Karha, Kirpan, Kachha and Kangha*", but these are meaningless in the absence of *Kes*.

In addition:

They should wear turban (*Dastaar*--ਦਸਤਾਰ) to cover the unshorn hair on their head. Every Sikh male name should have 'Singh' and Sikh female name 'Kaur' as compulsory ending of the name.

The five symbols of Sikh faith, give an identity to the organized form of Sikhism. These are national uniform of the Sikhs. These symbolize the fact that the Sikh has been baptized.

Addressing the Khalsa after completing the *Amrit Paan Sanskar*-(Baptismal ceremony) at Anandpur Sahib Guru Gobind Singh said:

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ, ਖਾਲਸੇ ਮੇ ਹੂੰ ਕਰੂੰ ਨਿਵਾਸ-- "*Khalsa mero roop hae khas, Khalse mein hoop karoon niwas*"

Meaning:

Khalsa is my ownself and I dwell within the Khalsa.

To maintain separate identity from Muslims and to prevent the extinction of the distinct Sikh way of life and relapse of Sikhism into Brahminism (Hinduism) Guru Gobind Singh warned the Khalsa, extorting:

ਜਬ ਲਗ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦਿਉ ਮੈ ਸਾਰਾ-- "*Jab lag Khalsa rahay niara, tab lag tej diyon mein saara,*

ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੈ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ਤਬ ਨਾ ਕਰੂੰ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ--*Jab eh gahen bipran kee reet, mein na karoon in kee parteet*".

Meaning:

- "As long as Khalsa strictly maintains its separate identity, I will lend him my full support, when He adopts the Brahmanical culture, I shall not believe Him".

The rationale behind the articles of faith of Sikhism

Kes and Turban:

Before the birth of Sikhism, the Arabic and Turkish Muslim invaders took pride in supporting beard and turban. They did not like the slave Hindus to keep beard, long hair, support turban and look like them. Therefore the Muslim rulers after the occupation of Hindustan (now India) issued orders that the Hindus keep the beard and head shaved and wear a prescribed cap (*Topi*) instead of turban.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism and thereafter all his nine successors maintained unshorn hair and supported turbans in defiance of the Muslim imperial order. The sanctity of hair on human body was practiced by all the Sikh Gurus who kept it unshorn, to obey the God's will. How can those be called Sikhs who disobey the Sikh dictum and defy the Sikh code of conduct? Guru Nanak in the very beginning of Japji Sahib at p.1 of GGS proclaimed: "ਹੁਕਮ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਨਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲ" - *Hukam rajae chalna Nanak likhia naal*" i.e "To remain under the will of God, is ordained from the very beginning". No doubt is left at all in this respect that God's will has to prevail and everyone has to follow it. The hair on the body are in accordance with the will of God and the appearance of the human body is to be kept intact if one is to live in the will of God. The God's will is defied when we cut hair and refuse to keep it intact. How can so called Sikhs (clean shaven) call themselves to have faith in the teachings of Guru Nanak and the Sikhism?

At the time of formal consecration of Sikhism in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh made *Kes* and turban as part of the Sikh dress. Both *Kes* and turban in Sikhism represent freedom, liberty, justice and peaceful co-existence. Sikhs keep unshorn hair and wear turban as a distinctive identifying marks. It symbolizes their commitment living the Sikh values of humanity, service and leadership in both public and private lives. It stands for their willingness to be identified and held accountable so that their character and actions meet the standards set by the founders of their faith. Sikhism regards both shave (*Hajamat-Bhaddan*-Tonsure) and cap (*Topi*-) as signs of slavery.

Kirpan:

Every Sikh (Khalsa) is a saint-soldier and weapons are life and soul of the soldier. *Kirpan*-in Sikhism signifies two fundamental tenets of Sikhism namely that it is the basic responsibility of a Sikh to confront and resist injustice, and that asceticism, monasticism or escapeism of any kind is wrong. Thus *Kirpan*, on one hand is a constant reminder to the Sikh of his duty, and on the other hand, is a standing guard against reversion to pacifism and otherworldliness.

Kachhehra or Kachha

The Hindus wore either *Langoti* or *Dhoti* to cover their loin. *Langoti* kept the person half naked and a person wearing a *Dhoti* cannot discharge the duties of a soldier. Guru Gobind Singh discarded both and made *Kachhehra* a part of *Sikh Rehat*, which is a smart battle dress.

Karha (ਕੜਾ):

It is a sign of solemn pledge (*Rakhree*) for adhering to the tenets of Sikhism.

Kangha:

Kangha in the topknot (Joor) is meant for combing the hair. It signifies negation of filthy living of Sadhus with matted hair.

Genesis of the Sikhs and Sikhism

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 First Glacial Period and into the beginning of the second Ice Age, Early Man entered the foothills of the Northwest Punjab, in the area traversed by 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 Genomic studies reveal that these people arrived in India from Central Asia (Kazakhstan area) 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—The Harappan 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 "Jatts—ਜੱਟ", which is the oldest named tribe in India whose name is found even in Mahabharata. After the region was named Punjab in 1590 A.D by Emperor Akbar, the natives of this land came to be called Punjabis. Scholars of history generally agree that Punjabi heritage is one of the oldest civilizations in the world and that its cradle was the soil of Punjab. Its main cities were Mohenjodaro and Harappa. It dates back to about 3300 BC and flowered between 2500 and 1700 BC.

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 statues / seals of meditating jogis have been found among the ruins of Harappa and Mohenjodaro towns in the Indus valley, so far no scriptures belonging to them have been found, although 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 in the eighteenth century B.C, people of a white nomadic tribe from Asia Minor (Seistan / Persia, modern Iran region) who rode horses, reared cattle, ate beef and spoke an early common ancestor of all Indo-European language and called themselves Aryans entered northern Punjab through the passes in the Hindu Kush mountains as herds-men and graziers of cattle. They settled down here in the Kashmir region around Taxilla (now in Pakistan) and by the ninth century B.C, were spread across northern Punjab what is now Pakistan. All Aryans did not come at once but kept on pouring gradually over a period of centuries.

Gradually, after many centuries of their stay in the hills they descended down into the plains of the Punjab. They tried to dominate the jatt of the Punjab through their priest, the Brahman, but the jatt refused to submit to the Brahmanical dominance and pushed the Aryans. Kushwant Singh in his book, '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 Brahmans 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 Brahman developed an extremely hostile attitude towards the jatts of the Punjab.

After their exist from the plains of the Punjab the Aryans settled down in Ganga Jamna divide called Malwa and named their first settlement as Dev Nagri (देव नगरी—literally meaning the town of Gods, because Brahmans described themselves as Devtas i.e. Gods. Now it is called Ujjain. With the passage of time the Aryans followed the Chanakya policy and came to settle in the region between River Yamuna and Afghanistan in a servile position to the jatts. The mercantile community among the Aryans called Khatris (Kashatriyas) lived mostly in urban areas and became engaged in trade, accountancy, managerial and administrative jobs etc. The jatts lived in the country side and controlled the lands and agricultural production. The Brahmans in small numbers settled there as teachers, priests and astrologers. There was at least one Khatri and one Brahman household in each village of the Punjab. The jatts of the Punjab did not profess any religion, they just worshiped nature only.

Punjab connects South Asia with Middle East and the Central Asia. Because of its geographical location it has been a perpetual battlefield serving as the gateway to India for the invaders from the Central Asia and the Middle-East. After the Aryans, foreign invasions of the Punjab started in the 5th century BC. A series of invaders trampled over this land for centuries. These early invaders included Iranians (Persians), the Greeks, the Parthians, the Sakas (Scythians), the Kushans, the Huns and the Bactrians. Persian king Darius was the first to invade this land in 5th century BC. He was followed by Greek conquer-rer, Alexander the great in 326 BC, after whom Punjab was annexed by Bactrian king Saleucus in 305 BC, and the Bactrians ruled over this land for about two hundred years. The Bactrians were defeated by Chander Gupat Mauriya and he made the Punjab part of the vast Mauryan Empire. Buddhism became the state religion during the rule of Mauryan King Ashoka (274—232 BC), who established university of Buddhist learning in Taxilla in the foot hills of the Punjab, but Buddhism could not influence the jatts in the plains of the Punjab and Buddhism remained limited to the hilly areas bordering Afghanistan.

After the fall of Buddhist Mauryan Empire, Brahmanical revival took place in Hindustan in the 8th century AD; and Shankracharya, who had his head quarter at Dwarka in Gujrat, violently wiped out Buddhism from Hindustan (India), but Brahmanism could not influence the “Jatts” of the Punjab and did not dare to penetrate into them in a big way and extend its influence beyond Jamna River. Punjab remained politically isolated from the Gangetic Plains for about a thousand years after the fall of Mauryan Empire.

Islamic invasions of the Punjab started in the beginning of the 8th century and the Turks, Mughals and Afghans followed one after the other. The brave people of the Punjab resisted for almost three centuries, but ultimately the Punjab fell to the invading Islamic forces coming in hordes in the beginning of the 11th century. Turks, Moghuls and Afghans, (Pathan) tribes occupied the areas of the Punjab bordering Afghanistan and settled there permanently. Some of the weak minded Punjabis in this area got converted into Islam, while others fled in front of the Muslim onslaughts and settled on the northern fringe of the Punjab in a narrow belt running along the foothills of the Himalayas, a region intersected by mountain streams and deep ravines, difficult for easy access. They started worshipping goddess Durga and came to be known as Durgras (worshippers of Durga), now simply called ‘Dogras’ and are found in the hills of the Punjab in large numbers.

The brave natives of the Punjab called ‘Jatts’ never left the plains of the Punjab. They kept resisting and fighting against the invaders, got concentrated on both sides of River Ravi in the Central Punjab called “Majha” around Lahore, between River Chenab and River Yamuna.

Glimpses of Sikhism

Guru Nanak founded Sikhism, in Punjab at the fag end of the 15th century. Although Sikh Gurus preached their message in the Punjab, Hindustan, and adjoining countries including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Arabia, Palestine, Turkey, Tibet, Parts of China, Russia and Sri Lanka etc for a period spanning over more than two centuries, their teachings were accepted only by the Punjabis, and Sikhism was formally embraced en-mass by the people of the central Punjab called Majha, mostly jatts, when it was formally consecrated by the 10th Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaiskhi day in 1699 at Anandpur Sahib in the Punjab through Amritpaan ceremony. The Sikhs of the Punjab are therefore a distinct ethnic people.

Today Sikhism is fifth largets religion of the world and the Sikhs are an imoportant international community. Global spread of Sikhism has been mainly through migration of the Sikhs from 'Punjab'. Recently because of its principles Sikhism has been embraced by many white people and now many white Sikhs and even black Sikhs can be found internationally, particularly in USA.

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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 ਸਤਿ 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*
(GGS.p.78, 450, 845)

Monotheism of Sikhism

Sikhism is a strictly monotheistic religion and oneness of God has been made crystal clear by Guru Nanak in the opening word of the opening verse (invocation) of the holy Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib by writing, 'ੴ' and pronounced as, "*Ikk Oankar* or *Ekankar*". In Punjabi language, "ਇਕ-Ikk" means one and the alphabet E-Oora with open end in Punjabi is pronounced as "ਉਹ-Oh," which means "He"--the Almighty (God). The open end of the alphabet 'oora' denotes His infiniteness (ਬੇਅੰਤ-Beant), thereby literally meaning, "ਉਹ ਇਕ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਹੈ--*Oh ikk hai te beant hai*" i.e, there is only one God and he is infinite. The numerical 1 in ੴ denotes His unity and uniqueness. He is one without any equal and He is infinite. Guru Nanak has not assigned any descriptive name to Almighty (God), because according to him, the Almighty is ineffable. There are no separate gods for different

religions, but only He is addressed by different names by different religions. He is not sum total of so many forces bundled together as the Hindu theory of trinity portrays: Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva addressed as ॐ.—Oam / Aum, on the other hand, He is one who makes existence and manifestation of all forces possible. Gurbani says:

- ਸਰਬੰ ਸਾਚਾ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ॥--*Sarbang saacha ek hai dooja nahin ko-ay*--In the whole world, there is but one True Lord and there is not any other (GGS, p.660).
- ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ਅਵਰ ਨਹੀ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕ ਸਮਾਈ॥--*Ekankaar avar nahin dooja Nanak ek samaaee* i.e. There is One Lord there is not another. Nanak remains merged in One Lord (GGS, .930).
- ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕ ਹੈ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ॥--*Sahib mera ek hai, eko hai bahaaee eko hai. Rhao*—There is one and only one Gd, hey brother (GGS, p. 350).
- ਏਕੇ ਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਏਕੇ ਜਾਨ॥ ਏਕੇ ਰੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਨ॥--*Ekai re har ekai jaan, eka re gurmukh jaan*—O man know that there is one and only one God. By Guru's guidance, know Him to be one (GGS, p. 535).
- ਏਕ ਮਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਰਬ ਮਹਿ ਏਕਾ ਇਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਦੇਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਈ॥--*Ek mein sarb, sarb meh ekaa, eh satgur dekh dikhaee* i.e., The tue Guru has shown me the vision that the on is in every thing and every thing is in the one (GGS, p. 907).
- ਨਾਨਕ ਵਰਤੈ ਇਕੁ ਇਕੋ ਇਕੁ ਤੂੰ॥--*Nanak vartay eko ikk toon*—Nanak says, “You one and only one, pervade everywhere” (GGS, p.966)
- ਪੂਜਹੁ ਰਾਮ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਦੇਵਾ॥--*Poojoh ram ek he deva* i.e. “Worship only the One Lord God (GGS, p. 484).
- ਇਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਇਕੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਇਕਾ ਸਬਦ ਵੀਚਾਰ॥--*Ikka Bani ikk Guru ikka shabad veechaar* i.e., “Thre is but One Divine sermon, One God and there is One Word to contemplate (GGS, p. 646).

Difference between the Sikh and Islamic monotheism

According to Sikhism, ‘The Supreme Eternal Reality’ has no particular name, “*Namastang Anamay*” i.e I salute him who has no name” (Guru Gobind Singh—Jaap Sahib, Bhujang Paryat Chhand Verse 4).

According to Semitic belief there are seven upper and seven lower regions (*Chaudah Tabak*) and God lives above in the seventh sky. There is total confusion about God in Hinduism.

- “ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੇ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ॥--*Aapeenay aap sajio aapeenay rachia nao* i.e, The Lord, of Himself created His ownself and Himself He assumed His Name” (GGS, p 463).
- “ਆਪੇ ਆਪੁ ਉਪਾਇ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ--*Aapay aap upaa-ay niraala*—The peerless God created Himself” (GGS, p.1036).

Residence of God

According to Sikh belief, **God is Omni present**. He is present in every place and at every time. Gurbani says:

- “ਸਭੈ ਘਟ ਰਾਮ ਬੋਲੈ॥ ਰਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੋਲੈ ਰੇ॥ਅਸਥਾਵਰ ਜੰਗਮ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਮ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਸਮਾਨਾ ਰੇ॥--*Asthaavar jangam keet patangam ghat ghat raam samaana ray.*-i.e; None else but the Lord speaks in all living beings, whether they trail on ground, walk on their legs or fly in the air.” (GGS, p988).
- ਜਾਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਜਾਤਾ ਅਕਲ ਕਲਾ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ॥--*Thy light is pervasive in the creatures and the creatures are contained in thy light. Though, O mighty inconceivable Lord art filling all* (GGS, p.469).
- ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਦੂਰਿ ਨ ਦੇਖੁ॥ ਸਰਬ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਗਜੀਵਨਾ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਾਚਾ ਲੇਖੁ॥--*O, father donot consider the*

True Lord to be far away. The light of God, the life of the world is pervading everywhere and on every head is the True Lord's writ (GGS, p.992).

- ਏਕਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਜੇਤਾ ਹੈ ਜੀਆ। ਸੁਰਤਿ ਵਿਹੂਣਾ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕੀਆ।--There is same inner consciousness in all beings. Without the inner consciousness, He has not created any. (GGS, p.24) .
- ਇਕੁ ਫਿਕਾ ਨ ਗਾਲਾਇ ਸਭਨਾ ਮੈ ਸਚਾ ਧਣੀ।। ਹਿਆਉ ਨ ਕੈਹੀ ਠਾਹਿ ਮਾਣਕ ਸਭ ਅਮੋਲਵੈ।। ਸਭਨਾ ਮਨ ਮਾਣਿਕ ਠਾਹਣੁ ਮੂਲਿ ਮਚਾਂਗਵਾ।। ਜੇ ਤਉ ਪਿਰੀਆ ਦੀ ਸਿਕ ਹਿਆਉ ਨ ਠਾਹੇ ਕਹੀਦਾ-*Ik fika na gala-ay sabhna mai sacha dhanee. Hiaao na kaihee thahe maanak sabh amolvay.. Sahna man manak thahan mool machgava.* Je to pireeaa dee sik hiaao na thahay kaheeda i.e, Do not be rude to any person, the same Divine Master dwells in heart of every human being. If you want to realize the lord, do not hurt the feelings of any one, you will hurt him residing there in” (GGS, 1384).
- ਡੂੰਗਰ ਜਲਾ ਥਲਾ ਭੂਮਿ ਬਨਾ ਫਲ ਕੰਦਰਾ।। ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਆਕਾਸ ਪੂਰਨੁ ਹਭ ਘਟਾ।।--The Lord is pervasive in the mountains, the oceans, deserts, lands, forests, fruits, caves, the nether regions, the skies and all the hearts (GGS, p.1101) .
- ਏਕ ਅਨੇਕ ਬਿਆਪਕ ਪੂਰਕ ਜਤ ਦੇਖਉ ਤਤ ਸੋਈ।।--The one sole Lord is in many manifestations, wherever I look, there is He pervading and filling all GGS, p.485) .
- ਐਸਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਤਨੁ ਨਿਰਮੋਲਕੁ ਪੁੰਨਿ ਪਦਾਰਥੁ ਪਾਇਆ।। ਅਨਿਕ ਜਤਨ ਕਰਿ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਰਾਖਿਆ ਰਤਨੁ ਨ ਛਪੈ ਛਪਾਇਆ।।ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਕਹਤੇ ਕਹਿਨੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ।। ਜੈਸੇ ਗੁੰਗੇ ਕੀ ਮਿਠਿਆਈ।।--*Aisa naam rattan nirmolak pun padarath pa-i-a. Anik jatan kar hirdai rakhia rattan na chhapai chhapa-i-a. 1. Har gun kahtay kahan na jaaee. Jaisay googay kee mithiaaee.* The Lord blessed me with the priceless jewel, the Divine Name. One can enjoy it, but like a dumb person cannot describe it. I observe him revealing Himself every where” (GGS, p.659).
- ਅਵਲਿ ਅਲਹ ਨੂਰੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਬੰਦੇ।। ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਨ ਭਲੇ ਕੇ ਮੰਦੇ।।--*Aval alah noor upaia kudrat kay sabh banday. Ek noor tay sabh jag upjia kaon bhalay ko manday.*-- The whole universe sprang up from one Divine Light. A person who attunes himself with Divine Law, finds him pervading every where throughout the whole universe” (GGS p1349).
- Guru Nanak says, “ਜਹ ਜਹ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਹ ਤਹ ਸੋਈ।।”*Jeh jeh dekha teh teh so-ee*: “Wherever I see, I see Him (God) (GGS, p1343).
- “ਜੋ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡੇ ਸੋਈ ਪਿੰਡੇ ਜੋ ਖੋਜੈ ਸੋ ਪਾਵੈ।।--He who is in the universe is that also abides in the body and whoever seeks , he finds Him there (GGS,p.695).
- ਹਟ ਪਟਣ ਬਿਜ ਮੰਦਰ ਭੰਨੈ ਕਰਿ ਚੋਰੀ ਘਰਿ ਆਵੈ।।ਅਗਹੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਪਿਛਹੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਤੁਝ ਤੇ ਕਹਾ ਛੁਪਾਵੈ।।-*Hat patan bij mandar bhan-nai kar choree ghar aavai. Agahu dekhai pichhahu dekhai tujh te kaha chhapaavai*—i.e, The man burgles shops, strong places of cities and stealing therefrom comes home. He looks in front of him and looks behind to avoid detection but where can he hide himself from Thee? (GGS, p. 156).

When at Mecca the Guru Nanak was scolded for his sleeping with his feet towards Kabba, it was pointed out by him that he saw God in every direction.

God is Transcendent

- ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੁ ਉਪਾਇਓਨੁ ਤਦਹੁ ਹੋਰ ਨ ਕੋਈ।। ਮਤਾ ਮਸੂਰਤਿ ਆਪਿ ਕਰੇ ਜੋ ਕਰੇ ਸੁ ਹੋਈ।।ਤਦਹੁ ਆਕਾਸੁ ਨ ਪਾਤਾਲੁ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਤੂੰ ਲੋਈ।। ਤਦਹੁ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਕਰੇ ਜੋ ਕਰੇ ਸੁ ਹੋਈ।। ਜਿਉ ਤਿਸ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਿਵੈ ਕਰੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ।। “There was only the formless one Himself without any creation and He did what he desired and there was no other than him” (GGS, p.509).

God is Immanent

- ਘਟ ਘਟ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਲੁਕਾਇਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਬਾਈ- “*Ghat, Ghat Antar Brahm Lukaia Ghat,*

Ghat Jot Sabaae” God is hidden in every heart and every heart is illuminated by Him i.e; (GGS, p597).

- ਘਟ ਹੀ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਤੇਰੈ ਤੈ ਖੋਜਤ ਉਦਿਆਨਾ- *Ghat He Mahen Niranjan Tere Taen Khojat Udhiana* i.e; The immaculate lord is within thy mind, but you search him in the wilderness(GGS, p632).
ਸਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਆਪਿ।। ਆਪਨ ਕੀਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ” ਫਿਰਿ ਜਾਪਿ।।-
- ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੈ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸਚੈ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ- *“Ih Jag Sachchay Kee Hai Kothari, Sachchay Ka Vich Vaas*” i.e; “This world is the chamber of god where in the true one resides” (GGS, p463).

God is both Transcendent and Immanent

- ਅਵਿਗਤੋ ਨਿਰਮਾਇਲੁ ਉਪਜੇ ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਸਰਗੁਣ ਥੀਆ।।-*“Avgato nirmaail upjay nirgun tay sargun theaa* i.e; “From formless, the Lord assumed the Pure Form and from unattributed, He became attributed” (GGS, p.940).
- ਸਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਆਪਿ।। ਆਪਨ ਕੀਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ” ਫਿਰਿ ਜਾਪਿ।।-*Sargun nirgun nirankaar sun samaadhee aap. Aapan keea Nanka aapay he fir jaap* i.e; “The same God is *Sargun* and *Nirgun*, *Nirankar* and self absorbed. He has done everything and created the entire creation to meditate upon His Name (GGS, p.290).
- *Sargun nirgun nirankaar sun samaadhee aap. Aapan keea Nanka aapay he fir jaap* i.e; “The same God is *Sargun* and *Nirgun*, *Nirankar* and self absorbed. He has done everything and created the entire creation to meditate upon His Name (GGS, p.290).
- ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਸਰਗੁਣ ਆਪੇ ਸੋਈ।। ਤਤੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਸੋ ਪੰਡਿਤੁ ਹੋਈ [[Lord Himself is un-attributable and attributable. He, who realizes His essence is a scholar (GGS,p.128).
- ਨਿਰਗੁਨੁ ਆਪਿ ਸਰਗੁਨੁ ਭੀ ਓਹੀ।। ਕਲਾ ਧਾਰਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਗਲੀ ਮੋਹੀ।। Lord, who by Himself is unattributed and attributed, by wielding His [[- “might has charmed the whole universe (GGS p. 287).
- ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖਿਆ।। ਖੋਜਤ ਖੋਜਤ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ*Agham Agochar Roop Na Rekhia Khojat, Khojat Ghat, Ghat Dekhia*” i.e;-He is unreachable. He is beyond mind and senses. He is formless. He has neither any form nor outline yet I have seen him in each soul (GGS, p838)-.

God is ocean of Attributes, Values and Virtues

In the holy Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, God has been described as Father, Mother, Friend, Brother, Enlightner, Protector (GGS, p.103), Shelter of the shelterless, Loving, Beneficent, Helper of the poor and weak and destroyer of the demonical or oppressor (GGS, p. 224), Destroyer of the evil doers (GGS, p.1208).. He is always Benevolent. He relieves the suffering of the down trodden; He is the Succour of the succourless (GGS, p.263-64). God is eyes to the blind, riches to the poor, Nanak He is the Ocean of virtues (GGS, p. 830).

God is The Doer (*Karta Purkh*)--Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer

The basic postulate of Sikhism as enshrined in the opening verse of the holy Sikh scripture, Guru Granth describes God as the Doer Person (*Karta Purkh*), who does every thing in this universe. God created the world of life, planted Naam (Immanent God) therein and made it

the seat of righteousness, “ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਅ ਉਪਾਇ ਕੈ ਲਿਖਿ ਨਾਵੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਬਹਾਲਿਆ॥ (GGS, p.463) . He creates all, fills all, and is yet separate, “ਜੰਤ ਉਪਾਇ ਵਿਚਿ ਪਾਇਅਨੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਅਲਗੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ॥ There are many hymns in Guru Granth Sahib which mention that God was there before He created the Universe, He being Transcendent. He Himself started the creation. He is the Sole Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer. There is no second one, “ਤੂ ਆਪੇ ਕਰਤਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਕੀਆ ਸਭੁ ਹੋਇ॥ ਤੁਧੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਦੂਜਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥ (GGS, p. 11-12) . God was by Himself and there was nothing else. During a discussion, the Yogis asked Guru Nanak, “When there was no form, nor sign, where was the Word (*Sabad / Naam* or *Logos*)? 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॥ (GGS, p.940) . He is responsible for all happenings in the universe, “ਏਕਾ ਮਾਈ ਜੁਗਤ ਵਿਆਈ ਤਿੰਨ ਚੇਲੇ ਪਰਵਾਨ” ਇਕ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਇਕ ਭਮਡਾਰੀ ਇਕ ਲਾਇ ਦੀ ਬਾਣ॥ (GGS, Jap p. 7). These quotations from Guru Granth Sahib give a clear idea of the creative activity of God and the cosmological aspect of His Creation which is distinct from Him.

God is Omnipotent

God is all powerful. According to Gurbani such is His power that He can cause lions, hawks, kestrels and falcons to eat grass, and those who eat grass, He can make them eat meat; He can make hills appear in place of rivers and bottomless oceans in place of sandy deserts; a worm-like creature may become a sovereign under His will and an army may be reduced to ashes. It will be no wonder if He makes animals live without breath, “ਸੀਰਾ ਬਾਜਾ ਚਰਗਾ ਕੁਰੀਆ ਏਨਾ ਖੁਆਲੇ ਘਾਹ॥ ਘਾਹ ਖਾਨ ਤਿਨਾ ਮਾਸੁ ਖਵਾਲੇ ਏਹਿ ਚਲਾਏ ਰਾਹ॥ ਨਦੀਆ ਵਿਚਿ ਟਿਬੇ ਦੇਖਾਲੇ ਥਲੀ ਕਰੇ ਅਸਗਾਹ॥ ਕੀੜਾ ਥਾਪਿ ਦੇਇ ਪਾਤਸਾਹੀ ਲਸਕਰ ਕਰੇ ਸੁਆਹ॥ ਜੇਤੇ ਜੀਅ ਜੀਵਹਿ ਲੈ ਸਾਹਾ ਜੀਵਾਲੇ ਤਾ ਕਿ ਅਸਾਹ॥ (GGS, p. 144)

- ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥ (Japu ji)-*Humai andar sabh ko bahar hukam na koe*—i.e, All are under His will, none is exempt from it.
- ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋਈ ਹੋਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੂਜਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥—*Jo tis bhaavai soe ho-e Nanak dooja avar na koe*--i.e, Whatever pleases Him, that alone happens. Nanak says there is no other second to Him. (GGS, p.278) .

God is omniscient

God is the power to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secret is hid. Gurbani says, “ਪੈ ਪਾਤਸਾਹੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਵੇਖਣ ਕਉ ਪਰਪੰਚ ਕੀਆ॥ ਦੇਖੈ ਬੂਝੈ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ॥—*Papai paatsaah parmesar wekhan kao parpanch keea. Dekhai boojhai sabh kichh jaanai antar baahar rav rahiaa*—The Supreme Lord, our king, has made the world to behold. He sees, under stands and knows everything. Within and without He is pervading”(GGS, p.433).

Outline, shape, colour, caste or lineage etc of God

Besides the belief that God is one, Guru Nanak taught that God had no garb, that is no form or attachments by which one could claim deity to be Hindu or Muslim. He freely used both Hindu and Muslim names during his utterances e.g. Hari, Ram, Gopal, Oankar, Allah, Khuda, Sahib etc. Gurbani says:

- ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖ ਨਾ ਰੰਗੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਿੰਨ॥ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਭੁਝਾਏ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਿਸੁ ਹੋਵੇ ਸੁਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ—*“Roop na rekh na rang kichh, treh gun tay prabh bhinn, tisay bhujay-ay Nanaka, jis hovay suparsan-i.e*The

Lord has no form, no outline and no colour. He is above the three qualities. Nanak says with whom God is very pleased, he grants him understanding ” (GGS, p283).

- ਚਕਰ ਚਿੰਨ ਅਰੁ ਬਰਨੁ ਜਾਤਿ ਅਰੁ ਪਾਤਿ ਨਹਿਨ ਜਹਿ--“*Chakar chin ar barn jaat ar paat nahin jeh-*God has no quoit, mark, colour, caste or lineage,
- ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਅਰ ਰੇਖ ਕੋਊ ਕਹਿ ਨਾ ਸਕਤ ਕਹਿ--*Roop rung ar rekh bhekh kou keh na sakat keh* None can describe His form, complexion, outline and costume,
- ਅਚਲ ਮੂਰਤ ਅਨਭਉ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ ਅਮੀਤੋਜ ਕਹੀਜੈ--*Achal moorat anbhau parkas amitoj kahijay*-He is perpetual, self-illuminated, and measureless in power,
- ਕੋਟ ਇੰਦਰ ਇੰਦਰਾਨ ਸਾਹੁ ਸਾਹਾਣ ਗਣਿਜੈ--*Kot Inder Indran sahu sahaan ganijay*-God is the king of kings and God of millions of Indras,
- ਤ੍ਰੀਭਵਨ ਮਹੀਪ ਸੁਰ ਨਰ ਅਸੁਰ ਨੇਤ ਨੇਤ ਬਣ ਤ੍ਰਿਣ ਕਹਿਤ--*Tribhavan maheep sur nar asur, net, net ban trin kehat*--God is emperor of three worlds, demigods, men and demons and woods and dales proclaim him as indescribable,
- ਤਵ ਸਰਬ ਨਾਮ ਕਥੇ ਕਵਨ ਕਰਮ ਨਾਮ ਬਰਨਤ ਸੁਮਤਿ--*Tav sarb naam kathay kavan, karam naam barnat sumat*-No one can tell all the names of God, Who is called by special Name by the wise, according to His excellences and doings".

(Jaap Sahib Guru Gobind Singh)

God has no religion

- ਨਮਸਤੰ ਅਕਰਮੰ॥ ਨਮਸਤੰ ਅਧਰਮੰ--*Namastang akarm. Namstang adhrmang*-i.e, I salute God who is above rituals and is not bound to any religion (Jaap Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh).

Who created God?

Gurbani says:

- “ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੇ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ॥--*Aapeenay aap sajio aapeenay rachia nao* i.e, The Lord, of Himself created His ownself and Himself He assumed His Name”

Why everybody can't see God?

- (GGS, p 463).
- “ਆਪੇ ਆਪ ਉਪਾਇ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ--*Aapay aap upaa-ay niraala*--The peerless God created Himself” (GGS, p.1036). Just as the sun does not exist for the owl, God does not exist for those who haven't got the vision to see Him. To see God one has to have mental vision and intuitive eyes. Gurbani says, “The eyes that see God are different from physical eyes, “ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਅਖੜੀਆ ਬਿਅੰਨਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਡਿਸੰਦੇ ਮਾ ਪਿਰੀ” (GGS, p.1100) . For the Sikhs God is visible everywhere, “ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਾਹਿਰਾ--*Nanak kaa paatshah disay zaahira* (GGS, p.397) ” . He is immanent in the phenomenal world like the musician can be said to be present in his music. Our eyes can see the matter but they cannot see all its properties. For example they cannot detect radiation, radio impulses and magnetism etc. They cannot see the data on a floppy / compact disc or

DVD. This does not mean that nothing exists on them. God is not material. He is the totality of cosmic consciousness.

God does not incarnate

In the theology of Sikhism, 'Avtaar' literally means birth: ਮਾਨੁਖਾ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਦੁਲਭ— [[–
–*Maanukha avatar dulabh*—Human birth is very 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 Dharama (righteousness) whenever there was rule of *Adharma* (unrighteousness) and therefore these incarnations are worshiped as God. It was also 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 human forms. Twenty-four incarnations of God Vishnu were accepted. Rama the son of king Dashratha and Krishna son of Vasudeva were among them.

According to *Gurmat* (Philosophy of Sikhism) it is the duty of every Sikh to respect and pay regards / respects, to all the enlightened persons called prophets / *Massihas* / Gurus who came to this world from time to time and guided the humanity for its betterment, irrespective of their religious affiliations, but simultaneously it describes it as an unpardonable sin to consider them God and then worship them. 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. Its conception of God is uncompromisingly monotheistic, with no room for the idea of incarnation: In the Mool Mantra God has been mentioned as one who never takes birth—'Aajoni'. Gurbani says:

- ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ॥ --Nanak, God alone is the one who is not born of a woman (GGS, . p. 473).
- ਜਨਮਿ ਮਰਣਿ ਨਹੀ ਧੰਧਾ ਧੈਰੁ ॥ --“*Janam maran nahin dhanda dher*” --, “The Almighty is ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ॥ --“free from birth and death cycle nothing interferes” (GGS, p931)
- *Janam maran te rehat Narain*” --, “The Almighty is free from birth and death” (GGS, M5, p 1136).
- ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਇਨਿ ਸਚੁ॥ ਜੋ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮੇ ਸੁ ਕਚੁ ਨਿਕਚੁ॥ Nanak says, truly meditate on Him who is ever existent, the one who takes birth and dies is false (GGS, Var Asa M1. p.463) .
- ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ਕਲਿ ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਦੀਪਾਈ॥--Akaal moorat ajooni sanbhao kal andhkaar deepaaee 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 (Ibid M5, p. 916).
- ਏਕਮ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ॥ਅਮਰੁ ਅਜੋਨੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਲਾ॥ ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖਿਆ ਖੋਜਤ ਖੋਜਤ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ॥ (GGS, M 1, p. 838)
- ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਅਜੋਨੀ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਹੋਨੀ ਘਟ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਦੇਖੁ ਮੁਰਾਰੀ ਜੀਉ॥ --*So braham ajooni hai bhee honee ghat bheeter dekh muraaree jeeo.*--- He, the unborn Lord is and shall also ever be. In thy heart behold him (GGS, p.598).

- ਤੂੰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਜੋਨਿ ਨਾ ਆਵਹੀ ॥-- “*Toon Parbrahm Parmesar joon na aavhee--*, “You are the greatest and do not come into life and death cycle” (GGS, M5 1095)
- ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ਕਲਿ ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਦੀਪਾਈ॥ --, “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 (GGS,p.916).”
- ਅਮੋਖ ਦਰਸਨ ਆਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਜਿਸ ਕਦੇ ਨਹੀ ਖਉ॥ “*Amogh darsan ajooni sanbhao, Akal moorat jis kaday nahi khao*”--, “His is the fruitful sight and Immortal form which does not perish. 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” (GGS, M5 p1082).

It is a well-established concept in the ancient philosophy of India (Hinduism) that God appears in the form of human again and again when cruelty on human beings is on the increase. 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 also held that God took birth not only in human form but also himself comes into the world in various forms, such as, The ਹੰਸ-*Hansa* (Swan), ਮੱਛ-*Machh* or *Matsya* (Fish), ਕੱਛ-*Kachh* or *Kurma* (Tortoise), ਵਰਾਹ-*Varaha* (boar), ਨਰਸਿੰਘ-*Nara-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 Lord Krishna son of Vasudeva were among them. Countless male and female divinities were also regarded as Gods. The total gods 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 Avtar-Vad (incarnation) theory in Hinduism portrays. Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism says, “ਸਰਬੰ ਸਾਚਾ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ-*Sarbang saachaa ek hai dooja nahin ko-ay*” (GGS, p660) i.e, “In the whole world there is one God second to none”. Sikhism neither believes in the Hindu trinity of God, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva nor the 24 incarnations nor 33 crore divinities. As per Sikh thought there is one God and He is supreme 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 forms as the *Avtarvaad* (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 Brahmins confused the created beings with the creator. Gurbani lays emphasis on the worship of the Transcendent Almighty (Nirguna), who is Immortal and Infinite. It says:

- ਜੁਗਹ ਜੁਗਹ ਕੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੀਏ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਕਰਿ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ॥--*jugah jugah ke rajay keeay gaavah kar avtaaree* i.e; The kings created by Thee in different ages are sung of as Thine Avtars. (GGS, p. 423).
- ਪਵਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨਿ ਤਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ibsnu mhyS Akwr[[“The master who created air water and fire also created Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh” (GGS, p. 504).
- ਦਸ ਅਉਤਾਰ ਰਾਜੇ ਹੋਇ ਵਰਤੇ ਮਹਾਦੇਵ ਅਉਪੂਤਾ॥ ਤਿਨ ਭੀ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਤੇਰਾ ਲਾਇ ਥਕੇ ਬਿਭੂਤਾ॥--*Das aotaar rajay ho-ay wartay mahaadev aodhoota. Tin bhee ant na paa-iao teraa laa-ay thakay bibhootaa.*--The ten incarnations lived as kings and Yogi Shiva, all of them did not know Thy Limits, they were tired of applying ashes on their bodies. (Suhi M. 5, p. 747).
- hukim aupwey ds Aauqwrw[[dyvdwnv Agxq Apwrw[[[[--By His order God created ten incarnations, innumerable gods and numberless devils. (GGS, p, 1037) .

- ਤੇਤੀਸ ਕਰੋੜੀ ਦਾਸ ਤੁਮਾਰੇ ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਅਧਾਰੀ॥--*Tetees karoree daas tumaaray ridh sidh praan adhaaree*--“The thirtythree crore of divinities are Thy slaves” (Ibid, Asa Ashtpadi, iii, p. 423).
About the Lord Rama Gurbani says:
- ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਹੋਰਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਰਾਮ ਰਵਾਲ॥--*Nanak nirbhao nirankaar hor ketay ram ravaal* i.e; “Nanak says, the Formless Lord alone is without fear and many others like Ram are dust before Him.”
- ਜੋ ਕਹੋ ਰਾਮ ਅਜੋਨ ਅਜੈ ਅਤਿ, ਕਾਹੇ ਕਉ ਕੋਸਲ ਕੁਖ ਜਯੋ ਜੂ? If you maintain that the All-Pervading God is unborn and invincible, how could He as Rama be born of the womb of Kaushalya?” (Thirty three sawaiyas Guru Gobind Singh, swaiya 13).
- ਪਾਂਡੇ ਤੁਮਰਾ ਰਾਮਚੰਦੁ ਸੋ ਭੀ ਆਵਤੁ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਥਾ ਰਾਵਨ ਸੇਤੀ ਸਰਬਰ ਹੋਈ ਘਰ ਕੀ ਜੋਇ ਗਵਾਈ ਥੀ--*Paanday tumraa raamchand so bhee aavat dekhiaa thaa. Raavan setee sarbar hoee ghar kee joe gavaaee thee* i.e; “O Pundit! I saw your Ramchand coming. He had a quarrel with Ravana and lost his wife” (GGS, Gaund Nam Dev, p. 875)
- ਰਾਮ ਝੂਰੈ ਦਲ ਮੇਲਵੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਲੁ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ॥ ਬੰਤਰ ਕੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਜੁਝ ਅਪਾਰੁ॥ ਸੀਤਾ ਲੈ ਗਇਆ ਦਹਸਿਰੋ ਲਛਮਣੁ ਮੂਢਿ ਸਰਾਪਿ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰਣਹਾਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਥਾਪਿ ਉਥਾਪਿ ਉਥਾਪਿ॥ *Raam jhooray dal melvai antar bal adhikaar. Bantar kee sainaa seveei man tan jujh apaar. Seeta lai ga-i-aa dah-siro Lachhman moo-o saraap. Nanak karta karanhaar 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. Ramchand grieves in his mind for Sita and Lakshmana. the mistaken demon (Ravana) does not comprehend it.--. It was Lord-God, who did everything, who is carefree and whose writ cannot be effaced, with Nanak,” (GGS, M. 1, p.1412).
About Krishna Gurbani says:
- ਗਾਵਨਿ ਗੋਪੀਆ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਕਾਨ॥ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਸੀਤਾ ਰਾਜੇ ਰਾਮ॥ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ॥ ਜਾ ਕੀਆ ਸਗਲ ਜਹਾਨੁ॥--*Gaavan gopeea gaavan kaan. Gaavan seta raaje raam. Nirbhao nirankaar sach naam. Jaa keea sagal jahaan.*--The milk-maids sing and sing the Krishnas sing Sitas and sing Ramas and kings. Fearless is the Formless Lord, whose name is truth false Gurus sing the Gopis and Krishna, Sita and Rama, but not the fearless, True, Transcendent Lord, who is the creator of whole world, whom only the servants through His grace adore. (GGS M. 1, p. 465).
- ਜੁਜ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਰਿ ਛਲੀ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਾਵਲ ਕਾਨੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨੁ ਜਾਦਮੁ ਭਇਆ॥ ਪਾਰਜਾਤੁ ਗੋਪੀ ਲੈ ਆਇਆ ਬਿਦ੍ਰਾਬਨ ਮਹਿ ਰੰਗ ਕੀਆ॥--*Juj mah jor chhalee chandraaval kaan krisan jaadam bha-i-aa. Paarjaat gopee lai aa-i-aa bindraaban mah rang keea* i.e; “Krishna seduced Chandraval and stole wishfiling tree (*parjaat*) for a gopi and engaged in alliance in Brindaban (GGS, p.470).
- ਸੰਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਬਿਬੈਰ ਕਹਾਇ, ਸੁ ਕਿਯੋ ਪਥ ਹਾਕ ਧਯੋ ਜੂ? You call Him all goodness and without enmity. Why did then Krishna drive the chariot of Arjuna? (Guru Gobind Singh 33 swaiyas, swaiya 13)
- ਤਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕਰਿਕੈ ਜਿਹਿ ਕੋ ਕੋਉ ਭੇਦ ਨ ਲੇ, ਨ ਲਯੋ ਜੂ॥ Recognise only as your Master, whose mysteries none has been able to unravel or will be able to expound (Guru Gobind Singh 33 swaiye, Swaiya 13).
- ਕਿਉ ਕਹੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਿਧ ਹੈ? ਕਿਹ ਕਾਜ ਤੇ ਬਧਕ ਬਾਣ ਲਗਾਯੋ॥--“How do you identify Krishna with the All Merciful? How is it that he was shot with the arrow of a hunter?” ਅਉਰ ਕੁਲੀਨ ਉਧਾਰਤ ਜੋ, ਕਿਹ ਤੇ ਅਪਨੋ ਕੁਲ ਨਾਸ ਕਰਾਯੋ?--When he is said to be saviour of other families, how come

that he could not save his own family from destruction? ਆਦਿ ਅਜੋਨ ਕਹਾਇ, ਕਹੋ, ਕਿਮ ਦੇਵਕ ਕੋ ਜਠਰੰਤਰ ਆਯੋ? You call him primeval and unborn, why did Krishna come into the womb of Devki? ਥਾਤ ਨ ਮਾਤ ਕਹੋ ਜਿਹ ਕੋ, ਤਿਹ ਕਿਯੋ ਬਸੁਦੇਵਹ ਬਾਪ ਕਹਾਯੋ।। It is said he (God) hath no father or mother. Why then Vasudev be termed his Father? (Guru Gobind Singh, Thirty three sawaiyas, Swayya 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 ਸਜੇ ਸਭ ਹੀ, ਹਮ ਏਕਹਿ ਕੋ ਬਿਧ ਨੇਕ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨਿਯੋ।। ਫਿ.ਏ, “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 sawaiyas-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।। ਫਿ.ਏ, “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 sawaiyas -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 adored, 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). This is very important tenet of Sikhism.

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

Name of the Eternal Reality

‘ਸੋ ਹਰਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅਗੰਮੁ ਹੈ ਕਹੁ ਕਿਤੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਪਾਈਐ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਨਾ ਰੇਖ ਅਦਸ਼ਿਟ ਕਹੁ ਜਨ ਕਿਉ ਧਿਆਈਐ॥ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਅਗਮੁ ਕਿਆ ਕਹਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਈਐ॥--*So har purkh agam hai kaho kit bidh pae-ay, Tis roop na rekh adrishat kaho jan kio dhiaiy, Nirankar niranjano har agam kia keh gungai-ay*” (GGS, Rag Sorath, M4 GGS, p. 644) i.e; “Unfathomable is the Lord, say, how is one to attain Him? He hath neither form, nor lines (features) and is unseen, then how is he to be dwelt upon? He is formless, pure and unknowable, then, which attributes are to be sung?

It is in view of this difficulty that God has to be given a name. But what name? All names are His, “ਜੇਹਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇਹਾ ਨਾਉ॥-*Jeha keeta teha nao* (GGS, Japji, M1) i.e, What ever He hath created is His name”. All that exists is His manifestation revealing His glory and, therefore, is His Name. Yet He is above, all names. Guru, therefore, freely employs all names that had come to be associated with ‘The Eternal Reality’. All mean the same. It is only the heart that has to be in communion and, therefore any name was good enough.

The ‘Infinite Supreme Eternal Reality’ has been given religious and attributive (functional) names, yet He is without any name. Guru calls Him “*AnamY-Anamay*”-without any name, “ਨਮਸਤੰ ਅਨਾਮਹਿ॥-*Namastan anamay*” (Guru Gobind Singh, Jaap Sahib) i.e, “I salute the Almighty who is without any name”.

In Sikhism He (God) has been simply addressed as, “*Naam*-ਨਾਮ”. His religious names-God, Allah, Khuda, Jehova, Waheguru, Parmatma, Oankar, Ishvar, Ram, Gopal, Hari, Shiva Murari, Banwari, Gorakh etc; all mean the same. But although names have no inherent efficacy nor are they to be treated as charms they, get sanctified by tradition having been associated with the ecstatic experiences of the seekers who used them and then were inspired by them. But whatever the name, it is intended as an aid to work up and activate the mind for contact with higher regions where Soul and the Universal Soul (Eternal Reality) meet. As in geometry a line which is supposed to be without thickness and, therefore, undrawable, is yet drawn for the purpose of stimulating understanding, so also God is given a name as a symbol of His Personality in all diverse aspects. The name thus clothed with attributes that the personal God possesses, presents a person who could speak with us, lead us on path of Truth and Service, who is a dear father, whom we call our own and with whom we establish direct relations.

God is ‘Ethical Deity’ and embodiment of all attributes. All attributive names of God are suggestive of His nature, character and personality. His attributive names, which are continually in the process of evolving depending on the development of man himself, who is finite and limited, therefore understands things in a limited way. The only aspect one could bring about with certitude and definiteness is that He (God) is ‘SAT’ (ਸਤਿ) i.e, “Eternal Reality”, permanent and unchanging:

‘ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ ਕਥੈ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਬਾ॥ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾ ਪੁਰਬਲਾ॥-*Kirtam naam kathay teray jeehba, Sat-Naam tera paraa poorbala*” (GGS, Maru M5, p 1083)-- “My tongue utters only thine attributive names. But thy Primordial Name is that “Thou art Eternal Reality i.e, *Satnam*”

He is above space, name and form. He is Abnashi (Indestructible), Achal (Permanent), Akal (Timeless) and Ajooni (Unborn).

As man grows in the upward direction, the character of God changes from the Personal to the impersonal. Then he is beyond the three qualities, above pleasure and pain. All distinctions of Name, Form, Colour, disappear. Words were mere means to express Him but the object of this worship is beyond them. Paradoxical as it may seem, the Formless is realized through Names:

“ਬਿਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹਬਾਹੁੰ ਬਾਹਿਰਾ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੁ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਾਹਿਰਾ॥—*Baid, Kateb, Sansaar habaahoon bahira, Nanak ka patshah disay jaaharaa*” (GGS, p.397)--, “The Lord of Nanak who is beyond Vedas and Katebas (Hindu and Semitic scriptures) and beyond the visible world was clearly visible to him”. The Simran or worship of the Personal leads to that of the Impersonal.

Name used for the `Supreme Eternal Reality' (God) in Sikhism (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ—Waheguru)

As per Sikh thought God exists in abstract (Nirgun) form and manifests Himself in immanent (Sargun) form. In His Nirgun form He has no name and has been simply addressed as ‘*Naam*’ in Sikhism. He has limitless attribute, hence His attributive names are innumerable. Most common manifesting (attributive / functional) word / name used for God in Sikhism is: ‘*Waheguru,*’

- ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਵਾਹਿ ਜੀਉ॥ --*Waheguru waheguru waheguru wahe jeeo*—Wondrous, wondrous and wondrous are you, O Guru / God (GGS, p.1402).
- ਸਤਿ ਸਾਚੁ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸਦਾ ਤੁਹੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿ ਜੀਉ॥--*Sat sach sree nivaas aad purkh sadaa tuhee waheguru waheguru waheguru wahe jeeo*.—My praise worthy Lord God, Master You are ever wonderful, wondrous, wondrous and Primal Being (GGS, p.1403).
- ਕੀਆ ਖੇਲੁ ਬਡ ਮੇਲੁ ਤਮਾਸਾ ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਭ ਰਚਨਾ॥-- “*Keea khel badd mel tamaasa Waheguru teree sab rachnaa*” i.e; “This wonderful creation is a great play of yours, O Waheguru! (GGS, Svaiya, M4, p.1403)
- ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਨਿਤ ਸਭ ਕਰਹੁ ਗੁਰ ਪੂਰੇ ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਭਾਵੈ॥-- “*Waahu Waah Gur-Sikh nit sab karhu Gur pooray Waahu Waahu bhaavay*” i.e; “The Perfect Guru is pleased with Lord’s praise and you should recite it, always” (Ibid.,p515).
- ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਹੈ ਜਪਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਖੋਈ॥-- “*Waheguru Gur Mantar Hai jap Haumein Khoi* i.e, Waheguru is that incantation, perpetual recitation of which will destroy arrogance / ego” (Bhai Gurdas Var 13:2).

Guru Gobind Singh finally put the seal of his approval on the use of this word for the remembrance of God by the Sikhs on the Vaisakhi day 1699 AD at Anandpur Sahib, when he formally consecrated (launched) Sikhism in its present day form through Sikh initiation ceremony (*Khanday Baatay dee pahul-Amrit Paan Sanskaar*) and gave Sikhism its articles of faith, laid down the rules for the Sikh code of conduct, including its customs, ceremonies and the Sikh greetings:

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ॥-- “*Waheguru Jee Ka Khalsa*
ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ॥--*Waheguru Jee Kee Fateh*”

Also in *Tankhah-naamaa* (a composition of Bhai Nand Lal) Bhai Nanad Lal tells us that it was Guru Gobind Singh who initiated the contemplation of the holy word ‘*Waheguru*’:
ਸੁਨਹੁ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਇਹ ਸਾਜ॥ ਪਰਗਟ ਕਰਾਉਂ ਅਪਨੇ ਰਾਜ॥

ਚਾਰ ਬਰਨ ਇਕ ਬਰਨ ਕਰਾਉਂ॥ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਜਾਪ ਜਪਾਉਂ॥

The holy word '*Waheguru*' is found written in Guru Granth Sahib on pages 1402-3. Literally translated it means, 'Praise to the Guru' but more usually the phrase 'Wonderful Lord' is used. Other names, which are specifically Sikh include, *Akal Purkh*, *Karta Purkh* and *Parmeshar*. Sikh Gurus freely used Hindu names such as *Hari*, *Gopal*, *Muraree*, *Oankar*, *Rama*, *Brahma*, *Shiva* etc as well as *Allah*, *Khuda* and *Sahib* etc, from Islam. They seldom employed them with Hindu or Muslim concepts in mind. They believed in oneness of God and oneness of man. They simply used them for convenience as synonyms for "God"- 'The Supreme Eternal Reality'.

God and Satan

Gurbani does not believe in the existence of any good or bad Gods. God is the prime-mover behind all that happens, whether it appears to be 'good or bad'. We can discuss some facts of life to explain this. Darkness does not exist; it is only light which exists. Absence or deficiency of light is called darkness, but they have no physical existence. It is our perception only. Evil does not exist. It is absence or deficiency of goodness, which we call evil. Cause of evil is not 'Satan', but our ego, which arises from our failure to understand God's Will.

Realisation of God

Realisation of God in Sikhism means linking or uniting with God. Enlightenment and not redemption is the goal of life in Sikhism. The Supreme Spirit is lodged within one's -self, though unperceived because of perplexities of joy and sorrow and attachment to worldly objects. Gurbani says, "ਪੁਹਪ ਮਧਿ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਸੁ ਬਸਤ ਹੈ ਮੁਕਰ ਮਾਹਿ ਜੈਸੇ ਛਾਈ॥ ਤੈਸੇ ਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਖੋਜਹੁ ਭਾਈ॥-- *Puhap madh jio baas bast hai, mukar mein jaisay chhai, taisay he har basay nirtar ghat he khojo bhai*" i.e, "As fragrance dwells in a flower and reflection in a mirror so doth He dwell inside everything. Seek him, therefore in thy soul" (GGS, Rag Dhanasari, M 9, p 684). Again, "ਆਤਮ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਆਤਮੁ-- *Atam mien Ram, Ram mien Atam*" i.e, "God resides in the Soul and Soul is contained in Him" (Ibid, Rag Bhairon, M1, p1153). Gurbani says, "ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਘਰ ਮਹਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਨਾਹੀ॥ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਟੋਲੇ ਸੋ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਹੀ॥--*Sabh kichh ghar meh bahir nahin, Bahir tole so bharam bhulaahee*" i.e, "Everything is within us and nothing is outside. He who seeks outside only wanders in illusion" (GGS, Rag Manjh M5, p, 102). Thus He (God) resides in the Soul of every person and search for Him must therefore proceed within, "ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ--*Munn toon jot saroop hain apna mool pachhan* i.e; Myself, thou art thee embodiment (image) of Divine Light, thou realize your origin" (GGS, Rag Asa, M3, p 441).

Realising God or linking / uniting with God means, in concrete terms, becoming like Him, "ਜੇਰਾ ਸੇਵੈ ਤੇਰੇ ਹੋਵੈ--*Jeha sevay teho hovay*" i.e, "Man becomes like Him whom he serves". (GGS, M3, Rag Bihagra, p 549). This in Sikhism means only a link or union with the Creative Immanence of God. In Sikhism, God oriented man is called 'ਗੁਰਮੁਖ-Gurmukh' or 'ਸਚਿਆਰਾ-Sachiara' and a self-centered - egoistic person is called 'ਮਨਮੁਖ-Manmukh'. Gurbani says, "“ਰੇ ਨਰ ਗਰਭ ਕੁੰਡਲ ਜਬ ਆਛਤ ਉਰਧ ਧਿਆਨ ਲਗਾ॥ ਮਿਰਤਕ ਪਿੰਡ ਪਦ ਮਦ ਨਾ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਏਕੁ ਅਗਿਆਨ ਸੁਨਾਗਾ॥-- O man when you were in the womb, you didst meditate and fix your attention on the Lord, standing on your head. You did not have the pride of dignity of your perishable body and being completely rid of ignorance, you contemplated on one God, day and night" (GGS, p93) . "ਗਰਭ ਛੋਡਿ ਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਮੰਡਲ ਆਇਆ ਤਉ ਨਰਹਰਿ ਮਨਹੁ ਬਿਸਾਰਿਆ॥--After leaving

the womb, you entered this mortal world. You forgot God in your mind". Man gets lost into ਮਾਇਆ– Maya (wordly attachment / materialism), develops ego (ਹਉਮੈ–*Haumai*), becomes self-centered (*Manmukh*) and forgets the creator (Eternal Reality), resulting in pain and suffering. It is the ego that keeps man away from God, “ਹਉਮੈ ਨਾਵੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਵਿਰੋਧੁ ਹੈ ਦੋਇ ਨ ਵਸਹਿ ਇਕ ਠਾਇ–*Haumai nawien naal virodh hai, doe na vase ik tha-ay*” i.e., “Ego and Naam (God) are opposed to each other and they cannot share same place” (GGS, Rag Wadhans M3, p 560).

Gurbani tells us the method for the realization of God, “ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ।। –*Kiv sachiara hoviay, Kiv kooray tootay paal*” i.e., “How one can become God-oriented, how the wall of false-hood (ego/arrogance) that separates the man (ਜੀਵ ਆਤਮਾ-- *jivatma*) and God (ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ– *Parmatma*) can be broken? (Ibid, Japji)”. The answer provided in Gurbani is, “ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ–*Hukam razain chalna Nanak likhia naal*” i.e., Nanak says, “It is ordained that one should follow the Divine Will (Ibid, Japji, p1)”. “ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਜੇ ਬੁਝੈ ਤ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਹੈ ਨਾ ਕੋਇ–*Nanak Hukame je bujhay taan haumai kahay na koey*” i.e., “When one comes to know the Divine Will, then there is no ego (GGS, Japji, 1).”

“ਹਉਮੈ ਕਿਥਹੁ ਉਪਜੈ–*Haumai kithon upje*” (Ibid, Var Asa M1, p 466) i.e., “Where does the ego come from”? Guru Nanak says, “ਹਉਮੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਨਾਮਿ ਵਿਸਰਿਐ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਈ–*Haumai vich jag upje, purkha Naam visre dukh pa-ay*” i.e. “After coming in this world man develops ego and forgetting Naam (God) becomes unhappy” (GGS, Ram Kali, M1, p 946).

It is stated in Guru Granth Sahib that Maya (materialism) and Ego (self-hood), prevent man’s union with God, “ਇਹ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਵੀਸਰੈ–*Ih Maya jit har visaray*” i.e., “It is Maya that causes God to be forgotten (Ibid, Ram Kali M3, Anand).” Gurbani says, “ਧਨ ਪਿਰ ਕਾ ਇਕ ਹੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਵਾਸਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਭੀਤ ਕਰਾਰੀ–*Dhanpir ka ik he sang vasa vich haumai bheet karari* i.e., “The bride (*Atma*) and the bridegroom (*Parmatma*) live together with a powerful wall of ego separating them” (GGS, M 4, p1263). It further says, “ਅੰਤਰਿ ਅਲਖੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ ਵਿਚਿ ਪਰਦਾ ਹਉਮੈ ਪਾਈ–*Antar alakh na jai lakhia vich parda haumai pai*” i.e., “The unfathomable is within, not realized because of the veil of ego in between” (Ibid, Gauri, M5, p 205).

The evils of lust (Kam), anger (Karodh), greed (lobh), attachment (Moh) and pride (Hankar) constitute Haumai (ego) and make a man self-centered (Manmukh) and prevent his union with God. Guru Nanak says, “ਹਉਮੈ ਬੁਝੈ ਤਾ ਦਰੁ ਸੁਝੈ–*Haumai boojhay taan dar soojay*” i.e., “The gate way to Him opens when the fire of ego is extinguished” (GGS, Var Asa M1, p 466).

According to Sikhism enlightenment happens only through God's grace and inspires humans to dedicate their lives to service (Sewa) of humanity and contemplation (Naam Simran), “ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਜੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਤਾ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਮਾਹਿ।। ਨਾਨਕੁ ਕਹੇ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਜਨਹੁ ਇਤੁ ਸੰਜਮਿ ਦੁਖ ਜਾਹਿ।। – *Kirpa karay je apni taan Gur ka shabad kamahay, Nanak kahay sunuh jano it sanjam dukh ja-ay*” (GGS, p 466) i.e.,- “Lord sends grace and man practices the Guru's word, then this leads to elimination of the evil (ego). The reward is the total peace in mystical union.

The Third eye

The fundamental Sikh belief is that God is a reality, which cannot be seen or proved

through arguments. He can be experienced through the help of mystics rather than proven experimentally. For the Sikhs the existence of God requires no proof because “God” is visible everywhere —“ਫੁੰਗਰਿ ਜਲਾ ਥਲਾ ਭੁਮਿ ਬਨਾ ਫਲ ਕੰਦਰਾ॥ਪਾਤਾਲ ਆਕਾਸ ਪੂਰਨੁ ਹਭ ਘਟਾ॥—*Doongar jalaa thalaa bhoom bana phal kandra* —The Lord is pervasive in the mountains, the oceans, deserts, lands, forests, fruits, caves, the nether regions, the skies and all hearts (GGs, p.1101). *Ek anek bhaapak poorak jat dekho tat soee* (GGs, p.485). He is immanent in the phenomenal world like a musician can be said to be present in his music. Just as the sun does not exist for the owl, God does not exist for those who haven't got the vision and intuitive eyes.

The five senses (of seeing, smelling, touching, hearing and tasting—ਗਿਆਨ ਇੰਦਰੇ = ਸ਼ਬਦ, ਸਪਰਸ਼, ਰੂਪ, ਰਸ, ਗੰਧ) that help us understand our surroundings have very limited capabilities. Our eyes can see the matter but they cannot see all its properties. For example they cannot detect radiation, radio impulses and magnetism etc. They cannot see the data on a floppy / compact disc or DVD. This does not mean that nothing exists on them. God is not material. He is the totality of cosmic consciousness:

- ਜਿਨੀ ਆਤਮ ਚੀਨਿਆ ਪਰਮਾਤਮ ਸੋਈ॥ --They, who have realized their soul, they themselves become Supreme soul (GGs, p.421)
- ਏਕ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨੰ ਸਰਬ ਦੇਵਾ ਦੇਵਾਤ ਆਤਮਾ॥ਆਤਮਾ ਬਾਸੁਦੇਵਿਸੁ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਜਾਣੈ ਭੇਉ॥ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਦਾਸੁ ਹੇ ਸੋਈ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਦੇਉ॥The one Lord is the God of all gods and he is the soul of their godliness. If any one realizes the mystery of the soul and the Omnipresent Lord, of him Nanak is a slave as he is himself the pure Lord (GGs, p.469) .
- Awqm mi h pwr bRhm lhMqy [[--Many millions searching for the Lord, find the Supreme One within their mind (GGs, p.276)
- ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਲੇਹੁ ਤਰਹੁ ਸਚੁ ਤਾਰੀ॥ ਆਤਮ ਚੀਨਹੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਮੁਰਾਰੀ॥ ਜਮ ਕੇ ਫਾਹੇ ਕਾਟਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਿ ਅਕੁਲ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਪਾਇਆ--By taking the Guru's guidance swim across the world stream, by strokes of truth and within thy heart, contemplate God, the Enemy of pride. By contemplating God, Death's noose is snapped and the un-lineal Pure Lord is obtained (GGs, p.1041) .
- ਆਤਮ ਚੀਨਿ ਭਏ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੀ॥--By understanding the self, it becomes attached to the Formless Lord (GGs, p.415) .

The permanent un-perishable life principle-“The Eternal Reality” behind the visible world as also within the human soul is realizable through what may be called third eye or intuition or insight or inspiration. Man experiences all knowledge of the external world through the sensory organs of our body and feelings through our mind, but the Guru says, “The eyes that see God are different from the physical eyes”---“ਲੋਇਣ ਲੋਈ ਡਿਠ ਪਿਆਸ ਨਾ ਬੁਝੈ ਮੂ ਘਣੀ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਅਖੜੀਆ ਬੇਅੰਨਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਡਿਸੰਦੋ ਮਾ ਪਿਰੀ॥--*Loin loi dith pi as na buihe moo ghani*, Nanak say *akhrian beean jinni disando ma piri*” (GGs, p.577) i.e;“I have seen the Soul of Souls (God/ Parmatma) with my eyes, yet my immense thirst for the sight is quenched not. Those eyes are different O, Nanak, with which my beloved Lord was seen” (GGs, p.577)-“

It has been proved with the development of clairvoyance and telepathy that knowledge of the external world can come through channels other than sense organs. Thought is transmitted from man to the other man even when the two are separated by thousands of miles. A man endowed with the gift of clairvoyance can detect hidden things at great distances and can perceive events in space and time--events that had already happened or were yet to happen. The few, who have true understanding turn their minds inwards and realize the self within.

Glimpses of Sikhism

Enlightenment does not come from extensive study or through intellect or by learned discussion. It comes of itself when one's-self yearns for realization but not unless the mind has turned away from evil (ego) and has learnt to control itself and to be at peace with the world. In this endeavour one needs guidance, which is provided by the ten Gurus, the epitome of which it contained in Guru Granth Sahib.

Our Universe / Cosmos (*Brehmand*) according to Gurbani

According to the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, the universe is God's creation. It is limited by time and space and cannot be eternal like God. Its origin was in God and its end is in God; and it operates in the God's *Hukam* (God's order). Guru Nanak calls God "*Karta Purkh*" or "Creator Person".

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

First of all, "The Lord, of Himself created His ownself, He assumed His Name"--"*Aapeenay aap sajiyo 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 ਵਾਸੈ॥ (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 katheelay sunn nirantar vaas leea--*” [(GGS, p.940) .

We learn from the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib that before the universe was created God (*Parmatma*) 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*), “ਦੂਯੀ 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 ਲੇਖ 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 ਸੁਤਿ—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 ਜੁਗਾਇਆ—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 Garbth 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 galaxies” (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.

Evolution of life & creation of mankind according to Gurbani

Guru Nanak has explained the evolution of man right from flora, fauna life to reptiles, creatures like snakes, birds, spinal animals etc. This process continued for many ages in the same life cycle and ultimately man came into existence after evolutionary process for unknown period. Man reborn in all the stages many times and only then got its present anthropological position. Gurbani says:

- “ਕੇਤੇ ਰੁਖ ਬਿਰਖ ਹਮ ਚੀਨੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਪਸੂ ਉਪਾਏ॥ਕੇਤੇ ਨਾਗ ਕੁਲੀ ਮਹਿ ਆਏ ਕੇਤੇ ਪੰਖ ਉਡਾਏ॥—*Kaytay rukh birakh hum cheenay kaytay pasoo upa-ay kaytay naag kulee meh aa-ay kaytay pankh uda-ay*.-i.e; We were incarnated in the forms of numerous trees and plants and many a time we were born as animals. Many times we

entered the family of serpents and many times we were flown as birds,” (GGS, P.156).

- “ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਜ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਪੰਖੀ ਸਰਪ ਹੋਇਓ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਹੈਵਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਖ ਜੋਇਓ॥ ਮਿਲ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ॥ ਚਿਰੰਕਾਲ ਇਹ ਦੇਹ ਸੰਜਰੀਆ॥--*Kaee janam bha-ay keet patanga, kaee janam, gaj meen kuranga. Kaee janam pankhee sarp hoio. Kaeejanam haivar brikh joio. Mil jagdees Milan kee bareeaa. Chirankaal ih deh sanjareeaa-i.e;* For several births you were a mere worm, for several births, a moth. For several births an elephant, a fish and a deer. For several births thou became a bird and a snake. For several births were yoked as a horse and an ox. Meet the Lord of the universe. This is the time to meet Him, after ages this human body is created (GGS, P 176).
- ਫਿਰਤ ਫਿਰਤ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਜੁਗ ਹਾਰਿਓ ਮਾਨਸ ਦੇਹ ਲਹੀ॥*Phirat phirat bahtay jug haario maanas deh lahee.*---After passing through myriads of species, one is blest with human form” (GGS, p 631). This is also the modern scientific theory of evolution.

The process of human development according to Gurbani (Sikhism)

Gurbani says that offsprings can not be produced without mother and father, “ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਬਿਨ ਬਾਲ ਨ ਹੋਈ--॥ (GGS, p 872). Guru Nanak has explained the process of human development. He says the parents conjugate, the semen of father mingles the ovum (egg) from the mother, conception takes place. The union of the semen and ovum flourishes and prepares residence (tan-ਤਨ- i.e body) for the soul (*Jeev-atma*-ਜੀਵ ਆਤਮਾ):

- “ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਸੰਜੋਗਿ ਉਪਾਏ ਰਕਤੁ ਬਿੰਦੁ ਮਿਲਿ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਕਰੇ॥ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਗਰਭ ਉਰਧਿ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗੀ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸਾਰੇ ਦਾਤਿ ਕਰੇ॥-*Maat pita sanjog upai rakat bind mil pind karay. Antargarbh urdh liv laagee so prabh saaray daat karay*—The mortal comes into being from the conjugation of the mother and father. By the union of the father’s sperm and mother’s ovum, the body is made. In the mother’s womb, he is suspended upside down, attached to the Lord’s love. The Lord sustains him there and blesses him with the gift of safety.” (GGS, p1013).
- ‘ਬਿੰਦੁ ਰਕਤੁ ਮਿਲਿ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਸਰੀਆ॥ਪਉਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਮਿਲਿ ਜੀਆ॥-*Rakat bindu mil pind sariya. Paon paanee agnee mil jeeaa.* i.e;From the union of father’s sperm and mother’s ovum, God has created the body. Uniting the air, water and fire, the life is made.” (Ibid, 1026).
- ਰਚੰਤਿ ਜੀਅ ਰਚਨਾ ਮਾਤ ਗਰਭ ਅਸਥਾਪਨੰ॥-Creating man, the lord installs the creation in the mother’s womb (GGS, p.706) [[
- ਦਸੀ ਮਾਸੀ ਮਾਨਸੁ ਕੀਆ ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਾ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਹਲਤਿ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਹਿ॥ --In ten months it was made

a human being O merchant friend! and was given a fixed period to do virtuous deeds (GGS, p77) .

- “ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਗੁਫਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਰਖਿ ਕੈ ਵਾਜਾ ਪਵਣੁ ਵਜਾਇਆ॥-*Har jeeo gupha under rakh ke waaja pawan wajaia-i.e;-*” i.e; *Parmatma* (ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ-God) put the *Jiv-atma* (soul-ਜੀਵ ਆਤਮਾ) into the body-cave and the inspirited air (*Pran-ਪ੍ਰਾਣ*) into it and made it to speak (GGS, p.922).
- As for providing sustenance and protection in the womb, the Guru says, “The Lord provided protection to you in the womb—ਮਾਤ ਗਰਭ ਮਹਿ ਹਾਥ ਦੇ ਰਾਖਿਆ॥-*Maat garbh mai haath de rakhiaa*” (GGS, p.805). According to Sikhism God created the universe and he looks after everything, “*Jin upaaee mednee soee karda saar*—ਜਿਨਿ ਉਪਾਈ ਮੇਦਨੀ ਸੋਈ ਕਰਦਾ ਸਾਰ॥ -*Jin upaee medhnee soee karda saar-i.e,-*He who has created the world, takes care of it”(GGS, p.724).

Components of living beings

The Sikh gurus have stated at many places in the Holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth that living organisms are composed of five elements:

- ਪੰਚ ਤਤੁ ਮਿਲਿ ਦੇਹੀ ਕਾ ਆਕਾਰਾ॥ ਘਟਿ ਵਧਿ ਕੇ ਕਰੈ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ॥-*Panch tatu mil dehi ka aakara. Ghat wadh ko kray beechara*--By joining together the five elements (Earth, air, fire, water and *Akash*(space), the form of body is made. No one can say that any element is less in one and more in another (GGS, p.1128) .
- ਪੰਚ ਤਤੁ ਮਿਲਿ ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਕੀਆ॥ ਆਤਮਰਾਮ ਪਾਏ ਸੁਖੁ ਥੀਆ-*Panch tatu mil ih tan keea. Aatam raam pa-ay such theea*--By uniting the five elements this body is made. By obtaining the All pervading Lord, peace is procured (GGS, p.1039) .
- ਪੰਚ ਤਤੁ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਕੀਨੀ॥ ਤਿਸ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਮ ਰਤਨੁ ਲੈ ਚੀਨੀ॥-*Panch tatu iml kaiaa keeni. Tis meh raam rattan lai cheeni*--By uniting the five elements the body is created. Within that the Lord’s jewel is realized (GGS, p.1030) .
- ਪੰਚ ਤਤੁ ਕਰਿ ਤੁਧੁ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਭ ਸਾਜੀ॥ ਕੋਈ ਛੇਵਾ ਕਰਿਉ ਜੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਵੈ-*Panch tatu kar tudh srishat sabh saajee. Koe chhewan kario je kichh keeta howay*--Of the five elements, thou hast created the whole world. Let any one make the sixth, if he can. [[- (GGS, p.736) .
- ਪਉਣੈ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਕਾ ਮੇਲੁ॥ ਚੰਚਲ ਚਪਲ ਬੁਧ ਕਾ ਖੇਲੁ-*Paune paanee agnee kaa mail. Chancha chapel budh ka khel*--The air, the water and the fire unite to create all animate objects. But it is the restless intellect that dominates the game (GGS, p.152)

It should be understood that the *tat* (ਤੱਤ) in Gurbani does not have the same meaning as element in science.

Joonis (Varieties of living organisms)

Oriental religions state that there were 84 lakh living types of creatures. Fourth Nanak, Guru Ram Dass referred to this commonly held belief when he wrote, “All the supposed 8, 400,

000 species of life are offered sustenance by the Great Provider, “ਚਵਰਾਸੀਹ ਲਖ ਜੋਨਿ ਉਪਾਈ ਰਿਜਕ ਦੀਆ ਸਭ ਹੂ ਕਉ ਤਦ ਕਾ...*Chavrasee lakh jon upaaee rijak deea sabh hook au tad kaa*-- (GGS, p.1403) . The Sikh Gurus however, did not put any limit on the number of living species. Guru Nanak says, “The species their families, colours and names are all recorded by His moving pen. If one tries to enumerate them, there will be no end to his calculations, “ਜੀਅ ਜਾਤ ਰੰਗਾ ਕੇ ਨਾਵ ਸਭਨਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਵੁੜੀ ਕਲਾਮ।। ਏਹੁ ਲੇਖਾ ਲਿਖਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ ਲੇਖਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਕੇਤਾ ਹੋਇ।।--*jee jaat ranga ke naav sabhna likhiala wuree kalaam. Ih lekhaa likh janay koay lekha likhiala ketaa hoay* (GGS, p.3) . The belief, that there are only 8,400,000 varieties of organisms rests on the fact that the number of varieties of life remains constant. This is not correct. We know that since life first appeared on our planet, more than 2 billion species have vanished. Some scientists estimate that the number of species now living on our earth is 30 million. More and more species unknown before are being discovered.

Modes of reproduction

In the times of the Sikh Gurus it was deeply held view that there were four modes of reproduction (ਖਾਣੀਆਂ)---- Egg born (ਅੰਡਜ) , placenta born (ਜੇਰਜ) , Sweat born (ਸੇਤਜ) , Growth from earth (ਉਤਭੁਜ) – The Sikh Gurus disagreed with that concept and said:

- ਕੇਤੀਆ ਖਾਣੀ ਕੇਤੀਆ ਬਾਣੀ ਕੇਤੇ ਪਾਤ ਨਰਿੰਦ।।--*keteean khanee keteean baanee ketay paat narind* --There are innumerable sources of production, innumerable languages, and innumerable dynasties of kings (GGS, p.7) .
- Asexual organisms like Amoebae and star fish produce identical replicas of themselves through dividing their bodies.

Wonders / Mysteries of life

Dr G.S. Sidhu in his book titled, “Sikh religion and Science” says, “Most of the animals do not fall into the generally stated four categories of reproduction as stated in the ancient Oriental sources. It was these mysteries and varieties that prompted Guru Nanak to exclaim with wonder:

- ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਖਾਣੀ।।--*Vismaad dhartee vismaadh khanee*--Wondrous is the earth and wondrous are the modes of reproduction (GGS, p464).
- ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਜੀਅ ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਭੇਦ।।--*Vimaad Jee vismaad bhed*--Wondrous are the living creatures and wonderful are their variety of forms (GGS, p.13).

Asexual organisms like Amoebae and star fish produce identical replicas of themselves through dividing their bodies.

Marine scientists have discovered living plants in underwater volcanic cracks, where the rift water has a temperature of 399C and manufacture their food through chemosynthesis (converting chemicals into food) rather than on photosynthesis, by which all plants live”. That life can exist in such high

temperatures is mentioned by the Sikh Gurus in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib:

- “ਦੇਇ ਅਹਾਰੁ ਅਗਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਖੈ ਐਸਾ ਖਸਮੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ।।--*De ahaar agan mein raakhay aisa khsam hamara*--Such is our Lord that He provides sustenance even to those that exist in fire (GGS, p.488)”.
- ਮਨਹੁ ਕਿਉ ਵਿਸਾਰੀਐ ਏਵਡੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਜਿ ਅਗਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਆਹਾਰੁ ਪਹੁਚਾਵਏ।।--*Manhu kion wisaareey ewad data je agan meh aahaar puhchavay*--Why should we forsake from our mind such a great Bestower Lord, who procures us sustenance in the midst of fire (GGS, p.920) .
- ਜੇਤੇ ਜੀਅ ਜੀਵਹਿ ਲੈ ਸਾਹਾ ਜੀਵਾਲੇ ਤਾ ਕਿ ਅਸਾਹ।। ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਉ ਜਿਉ ਸਚੇ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਿਉ ਤਿਉ ਦੇਇ ਗਿਰਾਹ।।--*Jetay jee jeeveh lai saha jeevalay ta ke asaaha. Nanak jio join sachay bhavay tio tion de girah*--All beings and creatures live by breathing, but He could keep us alive, even without breath. O Nanak, as it pleases the True Lord, He gives us sustenance (GGS, p.144).
- There are viruses, which remain alive for centuries. It is about life of this type that Sikh Gurus said, “ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਵੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਾਸ ਤੇ ਰਾਖੈ।।--*Prabh bhavay bin saas te raakhay* (GGS, p.277) .

Life in plants

Gurbani says:

- ਜੇਤੇ ਦਾਣੇ ਅੰਨ ਕੇ ਜੀਆ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ--*Jetay daanay ann ke jeean baajh na koay*--All food grains have life in them (GGS, p.472) .

God provides sustenance to all everywhere!

Myriads of insects creep and crawl in rocks and stones, was mentioned by Sikh Gurus more than five hundred years ago. They wrote:

- “ਸੈਲ ਪਥਰ ਮਹਿ ਜੰਤ ਉਪਾਏ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਰਿਜਕੁ ਆਗੈ ਕਰਿ ਧਰਿਆ --*Sail pathar meh jant upa-ay ta kaaa rijak aagay kar dharia*--In rocks and stones, He has created living creatures and their sustenance He has put before them (GGS, p.10) .
- ਪਾਖਾਣਿ ਕੀਟੁ ਗੁਪਤੁ ਹੋਇ ਰਹਤਾ ਤਾ ਚੋ ਮਾਰਗੁ ਨਾਹੀ--*Pakhaan keet gupat hoay rehta ta cho maarag nahin*--The worm lives hidden in a stone without passage for exist (GGS, p. 488) .

Nature (Kudrat) and Divine Discipline / Cosmic Law (Hukam / Will) according to Sikhism

After creating Himself, God created Nature / Universe / Nebulae Nebula? Glaxies / Solar System / Earth Biosphere / Human beings etc; under a specified Divine Discipline: “ਆਪੀਨੂੰ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪਨੂੰ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ॥ ਦੁਯੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ॥ ਦਾਤਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਤੂੰ ਤੁਸਿ ਦੇਵਹਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਪਸਾਉ॥ ਤੂੰ ਜਾਣੋਈ ਸਭਸੈ ਦੇ ਕੈਸਹਿ ਜਿੰਦ ਕਵਾਉ॥ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ॥--He Himself created Himself assumed His name, then he designed nature or creation ; and seated within this creation, He beholds it with delight. The Sikh Gurus gave a generic term, *Hukam* to innumerable universal laws of nature. And said:

- “The whole creation is the product of *Hukam*, which is indescribable, “ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਈ॥--*Hukam hovan akaar, Hukam na kahia jae*” (GGS, Japji, p 1).
- ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਹਜੇ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਪਾਈ॥--By His ordinance, the Lord has effortlessly created the world (GGS, p.1043) .
- ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਗਲ ਕਰੇ ਆਕਾਰ॥--The Commander has created the entire creation (GGS, p.150) .
- ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਭੈ ਉਪਜਹਿ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਹਿ--By Lord’s order all are created and by His order they do businesses (GGS,p.55) .

Being the “Infinit Self-consciousness of God”, *Hukam* is supremely one with Him. It is as infinit as God. In another sense *Hukam* is the supreme command. The universe moves, according to it. “ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥- *Hukmein under sabh ko bahir hukam na ko-ay-i.e;* -Every body and everything is controlled by His command, which none can escape (Japji)”. “It is His command that makes men do high and low deeds. His command works in a myriad ways--ਹੁਕਮੇ ਅਨਿਕ ਰੰਗ ਪਰਕਾਰ--*hukme anik rang parkaar*” (GGS, p.277). “ਹੁਕਮੇ ਜੁਗ ਮਹਿ ਆਇਆ ਚਲਣੁ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਸੰਜੋਗਿ ਜੀਉ॥--*Hukme jug mah aa-i-aa chalan hukam sanjog jeeo* i.e;-One comes into this world and goes out of it at His command” (GGS, p 760). Sikhism lays great emphasis on the necessity of knowing and realizing *Hukam*. According to Guru Nanak, the only possible way of achieving truth is to tread on the path of *Hukam*, “ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ॥--*Hukam razain chalna Nanak likhia naal*” (GGS, japji,p.1).

In Punjabi *Hukam* literally means order, whereas in Sikh theology, *Hukam* as Supreme or Infinit Will (Divine Discipline--Cosmic Law) is mentioned at many places in Guru Granth Sahib (GGS). It existed before the creation when there was complete nothingness. Right from the beginning, when the Universe was created, the most important place for human beings is the Earth, and most important objects in nature are Sun and the Earth. The Sun gives light and energy, creates winds, and causes

changes in the climate on earth. Placement of earth with respect to sun is unique in as much as it is not as near the sun as Mercury or Venus, nor far enough as Mars and Jupiter are, so that it gets as much heat and light which are optimum and necessary both for plant and animal life.

The divine discipline has created movements of rotation and revolution in stars and planets, which are responsible for dynamic equilibrium in the universe. Winds from cooler areas traverse to hot areas. This air circulation in the atmosphere causes changes in the weather conditions.

The rotation of the earth is responsible for creation of days and nights. The northern hemisphere experiences effect of continentality, i.e, expanse of vastness of land (Asia, Europe and America). This effect of continentality results in extreme climates. If the Divine arrangement was not such and the northern hemisphere was not placed at the farthest point during June-July, life in the northern hemisphere could not have survived due to very high degree of temperature. Likewise, during December-January, the northern hemisphere is nearest to the sun so that animals and the plant life could get proper heat and light and therefore survive and just not perish due to extreme cold.

By Divine Discipline there is approximately 79% ocean and other water bodies, and 21% of land area. The nature has allocated land and water on earth in such a way that northern hemisphere is having maximum land area and the southern hemisphere ocean and water bodies. The change in temperature has greater and sudden effect on land than on water. Water warms up slowly and also cools down slowly as compared to land mass. This rather lopsided distribution of land and water between the two hemispheres is so well-laid down divine arrangement as to help mankind, as also other fauna and flora, not to face the extreme hot and extreme cold weather conditions.

Similarly ocean water from equatorial zone moves to polar regions, and cold water from higher latitudes comes to the equatorial oceanic areas to harmonise and moderate the temperature in the ocean water. Had there been no air and water circulation, as ordained by divine discipline, it was not possible for the biosphere to exist. Likewise, there exists hydrographic cycle, which carries water from land to oceans through the rivers, and conversely water from ocean by evaporation and condensation comes back to land in the form of precipitation, i.e, rain, snow, etc. Gurbani says:

“ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਦਿਸੈ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਭਉ ਸੁਖ ਸਾਰੁ॥ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਪਾਤਾਲੀ ਆਕਾਸੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਆਕਾਰੁ॥ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਪੈਨੁਣੁ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਪਿਆਰੁ॥ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਜਾਤੀ ਜਿਨਸੀ ਰੰਗੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਜੀਅ ਜਹਾਨ॥ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਨੇਕੀਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਬਦੀਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਮਾਨ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ॥ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਪਉਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੈਸੰਤਰੁ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਖਾਕੁ॥ ਸਭ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਾਦਿਰੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪਾਕੀ ਨਾਈ ਪਾਕੁ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਵਰਤੈ ਤਾਕੋ ਤਾਕੁ॥...By His Divine arrangement we

see, and by His arrangement do we hear; By His Divine arrangement we have fear, and the essence of happiness. By His Divine arrangement the nether worlds and the Celestial bodies exist, and by His Divine arrangement does the entire creation sustain. By Divine arrangement the Vedas and the Puranas exist, and the Holy scriptures of the Jewish, Christians and Islamic religions, and by His Divine arrangement all deliberations exist. By Divine arrangement do we eat, drink, and dress; and by Divine Ordinance does all love exist. By Divine discipline virtues exist, and so do the vices. By Divine Discipline come honour and dishonour. By Divine Discipline earth wind, water and fire exist; By Divine Discipline earth and dust exist. Every thing is under Your Discipline, Lord; You are the all Creator. Your Name is the holiest of the Holy. O Nanak, through the Command of His Will, He beholds and pervades the creation; He is absolutely unravelled (GGS, Asa M1: p.464).

ਤੁਧੁ ਆਪੇ ਜਗਤੁ ਉਪਾਇ ਕੈ ਆਪਿ ਖੇਲੁ ਰਚਾਇਆ॥ ਤੈ ਗੁਣ ਆਪਿ ਸਿਰਜਿਆ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੁ ਵਧਾਇਆ॥--You Yourself created the world, and you fostered emotional attachment to Maya. You Yourself created the three qualities, and fostered emotional attachment to Maya (Sorath M3, p. 643).

ਬਾਜੀਗਰ ਡੰਕ ਬਜਾਈ॥ ਸਭ ਖਲਕ ਤਮਾਸੇ ਆਈ॥ ਬਾਜੀਗਰ ਸਵਾਂਗੁ ਸਕੇਲਾ॥--When the God magician beat his tambourine; The universe came into existence by His Order. Then the Divine Magician winds up his show GGS, p.655).

ਤੁਧੁ ਆਪੇ ਸਿਸਟਿ ਸਿਰਜੀਆ ਆਪੇ ਫੁਨਿ ਗੋਈ॥--You Yourself created the world in your Pleasure, and You Yourself shall destroy it in the end (GGS, p.654).

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਬੇੜ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਈ ਜੀਉ॥ ਗੁਰੁ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਏ ਅਕਥੁ ਕਹਾਏ ਸਚ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਚੁ ਸਮਾਣਾ॥ ਆਪਿ ਉਪਾਏ ਆਪਿ ਸਮਾਏ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਪਛਾਣਾ॥--As per Your Pleasure, the account is settled, and doubt dispelled. The Guru dispels doubt, and makes us speak the Unspoken; the true ones are absorbed into Truth. By His Will, He Himself creates, and He Himself destroys; I accept the divine constitution (GGS, Dhanasri M:1, p.688).

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਾਜੀਅਨੁ ਬਹੁ ਭਿਤਿ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ॥ ਤੇਰਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੀ ਕੇਤੜਾ ਸਚੇ ਅਲਖ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥--By Divine discipline, You created the creation, the world with its many species of beings. I do not know how vast and complex is Your Discipline, O Unseen and Infinite True Lord (GGS, p.786).

ਆਪੇ ਤਖਤੁ ਰਚਾਇਓਨੁ ਅਕਿਾਸ ਪਤਾਲਾ॥ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਾਜੀਅਨੁ ਸਚੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲਾ॥ ਆਪਿ ਉਪਾਇ ਖਪਾਇਦਾ ਸਚੇ ਦੀਨ ਦਇਆਲਾ॥ ਸਭਨਾ ਰਿਜਕੁ ਸੰਬਾਹਿਦਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ॥ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਵਰਤਦਾ ਆਪੇ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲਾ॥--He Himself established His throne, celestial bodies and the other nether worlds. By Divine Discipline, He created the earth, the true home of Dharma. He Himself creates and destroys; He is the True Lord, merciful to the meek. You provide sustenance to all; how wonderful and unique is Your Discipline. As per your Will, You Yourself are permeating and pervading; You Yourself are the Cherisher

(GGS, p.785).

ਸਗਲ ਸਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਤੇਰੀਆ ਸਭ ਜੁਗਤਾ॥--The entire creation is Yours; all are subject to Your Discipline (GGS, p.809).

ਹੁਕਮੇ ਆਵੇ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਜਾਵੈ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਈ॥--By Divine Discipline we come, and go; by His Command, we merge in absorption (GGS, p.940).

ਜਗਤੁ ਉਪਾਇ ਖੇਲੁ ਰਚਾਇਆ॥ ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਜੀਉ ਪਾਇਆ॥ ਅਪੁ ਤੇਜੁ ਵਾਇ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮੀ ਆਕਾਸਾ॥ ਤਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਪੰਚ ਤਤੁ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸਾ॥--By Divine Discipline He created the world, and has set His play into motion. He planned and placed the soul in the body of air, water and fire. Water, fire, air, earth and Akash—In that house of five elements, they dwell (GGS, p.1031).

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਮਾਨੈ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਸਮਾਇਦਾ॥--One who becomes Gurmukh realizes the Divine Discipline of God; surrendering to His Command, one merges in the Lord (GGS, p. 1037).

The Divine Discipline has created another cycle also- the carbon dioxide and oxygen cycle. Flora and fauna are both complementary and supplementary to each other. While fauna consumes oxygen and releases carbon dioxide, the flora consumes carbon dioxide and releases oxygen. Thus there is proper equilibrium in the atmosphere. Of course, we the greedy people are upsetting this balance by recklessly cutting down trees, causing a drastic ecological imbalance. We should make it a point to plant as many trees as possible to mitigate to some extent this imbalance in the eco-system.

Another Divine arrangement is in respect of atmosphere, troposphere and ozonosphere. The atmosphere acts as a blanket for the earth. Just as a seed stone of a fruit like “Ber” (berry, Spherical) has a thick layer of pulp around it, the earth has atmosphere around it, the earth has atmosphere around it which protects it from the ultra violet rays reflected / refracted / absorbed / filtered by the atmospheric layers, and the earth receives solar energy in the form of harmless short waves.

The most important part of atmosphere is 3-5 km layer above the earth known as troposphere. This is called *mahee-al* in Gurbani. The roof of the troposphere is called ozonosphere. This is the thick condensed oxygen in the form of ozone, surrounding the earth and guarding it from harmful ultra violet rays of the sun.

Due to man’s actions, including also flights of jets and aeroplanes, leakages from air-conditioners, refrigerators, etc. This ozone layer is punctured and gets depleted. To overcome this damage, natural repair and replenishment takes place automatically, by transforming ozone from the areas uninhabited by man, such as Antarctic region. This is one reason that the south pole ozone hole is widening year after year. The penguins are also dying in increasing numbers and the unguarded human beings near and around this region are getting skin cancer.

It is being projected in the media, particularly the electronic media that life on earth will come to an end during the next couple of years due to sun spots and

the solar disasters. They are unnecessarily creating horror and fear psyche, knowing not that the Lord who has created the universe, the solar system, the earth, and life on it, has designed the whole thing in such a way that it is not possible at all to happen at least a million years, provided of course man does not interfere in the divine organization and overexploit the natural resources. Guru Arjan Dev rightly says, “ਜਿਨ ਉਪਾਈ ਮੇਦਨੀ ਸੋਈ ਕਰਦਾ ਸਾਰ॥--The Lord Who has created the earth sustains it well (Tilang M5, p.724).

The More deeply we go into the teachings of, and try to understand, Gurbani and laws of nature, the more we can understand the Divine Discipline.

Notes and references:

Divine Discipline in Sri Guru Granth Sahib

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Death of life

Gurbani states very clearly in this regard:

- ਮਰਣੁ ਲਿਖਾਏ ਆਏ ਨਹੀ ਰਹਣਾ॥...Having recorded the time of death, one did come into the world but cannot stay any longer. (GGS, p.153) .
- ਜੋ ਆਇਆ ਸੋ ਚਲਸੀ ਸਭ ਕੋਈ ਆਈ ਵਾਰੀਐ॥...Whosoever has come, he shall depart and all shall take their turn (GGS, p.474) .
- ਜੋ ਉਪਜੈ ਸੋ ਸਗਲ ਬਿਨਾਸੈ ਰਹਨੁ ਨ ਕੋਊ ਪਾਵੈ॥...All that is created, all that shall perish.Nothing is allowed to stay here (GGS. p.1231) .
- ਜੋ ਆਇਆ ਸੋ ਸਭ ਕੋ ਜਾਸੀ॥...They, who come, they all shall certainly depart (GGS, p.1047) .
- ਜੋ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਸੋ ਬਿਨਸ ਹੈ ਪਰੋ ਆਜ ਕੇ ਕਾਲਿ॥--Whosoever is born, he must perish, may be today or tomorrow (GGS. p1429) .
- ਜਿਤ ਦਿਹਾੜੇ ਧਨਵਰੀ ਸਾਹੇ ਲਏ ਲਿਖਾਏ॥--On the day, woman enters into the body, the time of her wedding is writ (GGS, p.1377) .

Death of the Universe

According to Gurbani the universe emerged from void and will end up in void, “ਖੰਡ ਪਤਾਲ ਦੀਪ ਸਭ ਲੋਆ॥ ਸਭ ਕਾਲੈ ਵਸਿ ਆਪਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀਆ॥--The continents, nether regions, islands and all worlds; the Lord Himself has made them subject to death. (GGS,p.1076) . The holy Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib further says:

“ਘਟੰਤ ਰੂਪੰ ਘਟੰਤ ਦੀਪੰ ਘਟੰਤ ਰਵਿ ਸਸੀਅਰ ਨਖੁੜੁ ਗਗਨੰ॥ ਘਟੰਤ ਬਸੁਧਾ ਗਿਰਿ ਤਰ ਸਿਖੰਡੰ॥ ਘਟੰਤ ਲਲਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਭ੍ਰਾਤ ਹੀਤੰ॥ ਗਟੰਤ ਕਨਿਕ ਮਾਨਿਕ ਮਾਇਆ ਸਰੂਪੰ॥ ਨਹ ਘਟੰਤ ਕੇਵਲ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਅਚੁਤ॥ ਅਸਥਿਰੰ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਧ ਜਨ॥-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 Immmovable Lord. Nanak says, immutable are the Lord’s holy men (GGS, p.1354)

- 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 ਮੀਤ॥ ਕਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਥਿਰੁ ਨ ਰਹੈ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਲੂ 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) .

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 ਬਿਸਥਾਰ॥ ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਾਸਾਰ॥ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਕੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ॥ (GGS, p.276).

- ਖੰਡ ਪਤਾਲ ਦੀਪ ਸਭ ਲੋਆ॥ ਸਭ ਕਾਲੇ ਵਸ ਆਪ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀਆ॥-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 ਓਪਿਜੇ ਬਿਨਸੇ ਨੀਤ ਜਗ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੈਸੇ ਰਚੀ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਣ ਮੀਤ॥-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) .

Sikh concept of life

Sikhism does not accept the postulate of earlier religions that life was sinful in origion or that it was evil and source of suffering in itself or *Maya* (Illusion). On the contrary it believes, “God is true (reality) and so is his creation”--“ ਆਪਿ ਸਤਿ ਕੀਆ ਸਭੁ ਸਤਿ॥ *Aap satt keea sab satt*” (GGS, p, 294). Sikhism propagates that life isephemeral-- “ਦਾਮਨੀ ਚਮਤਕਾਰ ਤਿਉ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਜਗ ਖੇ॥-*Dammanee chatmatkaar tio wartaara jag khay*-Brief like a spark of lightening is our sjour in the world” (GGS, p.319). ਜਗਿ ਜੀਵਨੁ ਐਸਾ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਜੈਸਾ ਜੀਵਨੁ ਸੁਪਨ ਸਮਾਨੰ॥ ਸਾਚੁ ਕਰਿ ਹਮ ਗਾਠਿ ਦੀਨੀ

ਛੇਡਿ ਪਰਮ ਨਿਧਾਨੰ॥—*Jag jeevan aisaa supnay jaisaa jeevan jeevan supan samaanan. Saach kar ham gaath deenee chhod param nidhaanan.-i.e;* Life in this world is like a dream but we cling to it taking it to be true, forsaking the great treasure of good” (GGS, p.482). Religious and virtuous life is adored, “ਪ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਇਵੇਹਾ ਜੀਵਣਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਨ ਪਾਇ॥—*Dhrig ivehaa jeevnaa jit har preet na paa-ay.-i.e;*-Accursed is the life which does not yield the love of the Lord” (GGS, p.490). ਬਹੁਤਾ ਜੀਵਣੁ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਮੁਆ ਨ ਲੋੜੈ ਕੋਇ॥ ਸੁਖਜੀਵਣੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ॥—*Bahutaa jeevan mangeeai mooaa na lor-ay ko-ay. Sukh jeevan tis aakhiay jis gurmukh vasiaa soay-i.e;*-All seek to live long enough and no one wishes to die. But true life is in whose heart dwells the Lord through the Guru's Grace” (GGS, p.63). “ਭ੍ਰਮਤ ਫਿਰੇ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਛੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ॥ ਸੇ ਅਸਥਿਰ ਜਿਨ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਮਾਇਆ achieve nothing. Those, who act and live by Guru's word become stable.” (GGS, p.374).

Various stages of human life and Sikhism

Gurbani considers various stages of life but very differently from the four Ashrams (stages of life) of Hinduism / Sanatanism / Brahmanism, recognized as spiritual way of life. In Hinduism out of these four Ashrams (Brahmchari, Grahastha, Vanprastha and Sanyas) two, namely, the vanprastha and Sanyasa house holder's duties were not believed to be conducive to higher spiritual attainments. Vanprasth and Sanyasa Ashrams distinctly enjoin another worldly approach to life. That is why, in order to make any progress in the spiritual field, one had to renounce worldly activities and take to life of the hermit and Sanyasin. Bhai Gurdas, in his very first Vaar, has distinguished the stages of life as per Hindu and Sikh Religions.

In Sikhism the three stages of life, which are generally mentioned in Gurbani are that of childhood, youth and old age. In all three stages, a person has to remain a householder, but attached with God. During the first stage, the acquiring of education and knowledge includes the knowledge of Divine i.e. path of remembrance of God. In the other two stages the physical symptoms may differ, but the person continues to observe the duties of *Grahasth* (household) and also keep himself detached from it like a lotus flower. One can have any type of enjoyment, comfort and luxury, but with such a restraint that the man does not get engrossed in it. In short, in Sikh religion, every stage is a stage for *Naam Simran*. Gurbani emphasizes that any person who spends any part of his life without remembering God, just wastes it, “ਬਾਲ ਜੁਆਨੀ ਅਰੁ ਬਿਰਧਿ ਫੁਨਿ ਤੀਨਿ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਜਾਨਿ॥*Baal juaanee ar birdh fun teen avastha jaan—* O man know, that there are three stages of life: Childhood, youth and then old age. ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਭਜਨ ਬਿਨੁ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਮਾਨ॥*Kauh Nanak har bhajan bin birtha sabh*

hee maan—O Nanak! Believe, that without God’s meditation, all are in vain (ibid, p 1428).

Guru Arjan Dev in Sukhmani Sahib, recounts various stages of human life, right from conception to old age and reminds the person to attune oneself to God at all times:

- ਰਮਈਆ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਚੇਤਿ ਪਰਾਨੀ॥ ਕਵਨ ਮੂਲ ਤੇ ਕਵਨ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਾਨੀ॥ --*Ramaeaa kay gun chet paranee kavan mool te kavan drishtanee*--O creature of God contemplate the attributes of Lord. From what origins, what visitable form he has given you.
- ਜਿਨ ਤੂੰ ਸਾਜਿ ਸਵਾਰਿ ਸੀਗਾਰਿਆ॥ ਗਰਭ ਅਗਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਜਿਨਹਿ ਉਬਾਰਿਆ *Jin toon saaj swaar seegaria garbh agan meh jineh ubhaaria*--Contemplate Him who created you, gave this beautiful form. He protected you in the fire of womb.
- ਬਾਰ ਬਿਵਸਥਾ ਤੁਝਹਿ ਪਿਆਰੈ ਦੂਧ॥ ਭਰਿ ਜੋਬਨ ਸੁਖ ਸੂਧ॥ --*Baar bivastha tujheh piaaray doodh bhar joban bhojan sukh sood*--In infancy he fed you on milk. In your youth He conferred on you delectable food and awareness of various pleasures.
- ਬਿਰਧਿ ਭਇਆ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਾਕ ਸੈਨ॥ ਮੁਖ ਅਪਿਆਉ ਬੈਠ ਕਉ ਦੈਨ॥ --*Birdh bhaiaa oopar saak sain much apiaao baith kau dain*--In your old age for your care he appointed your relatives and near ones. Who without your effort feed you eatables (GGS, p.267).

Behaviour of man during various stages of its life

During the development of human body in the mother’s womb *Atma* remains attached with its source (*Parmatma*) and is free from ego (*Gurmukh—God oriented*), --ਰੇ ਨਰ ਗਰਭ ਕੁੰਡਲ ਜਭ ਆਛਤ ਉਰਧ ਧਿਆਨ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗਾ॥ *re nar garbh kundal ja aachhat urdh dhian liv laaga*” (GGS, p.93)—O man, when you were in the mother’s womb, you didst meditate and fix your attention on the Lord, standing on your head. After coming out of mother's womb and entering into the mortal world, he forgets the creator (*Parmatma*) and develops ego and becomes *manmukh* (self-centred), “ਗਰਭ ਛੋਡਿ ਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਮੰਡਲ ਆਇਆ ਤਉ ਨਰਹਰਿ ਮਨਹੁ ਬਿਸਾਰਿਆ॥ --*Garbh chhod mrit mandal aai-ya tao narhar manhu bisaaria*. After leaving the womb thou entered the mortal world and then thou forgot God in the mind (GGS,p.93)..

Guru Sahib has discussed the actions and activities of man in different stages of life in Guru Granth Sahib in Rag Majh on pages 137 and 138.

੧. “ਪਹਿਲੈ ਪਿਆਰਿ ਲਗਾ ਥਣ ਦੁਧਿ॥ ਦੂਜੈ ਮਾਇ ਬਾਪੁ ਕੀ ਸੁਧਿ॥ ਤੀਜੇ ਭਯਾ ਭਾਬੀ ਬੇਬ॥ ਚਉਥੈ ਪਿਆਰਿ ਉਪੰਨੀ ਖੇਡ॥ ਪੰਜਵੈ ਖਾਣ ਪੀਅਣ ਕੀ ਧਾਤੁ॥ ਛਿਵੇ ਕਾਮੁ ਨਾ ਪੁਛੈ ਜਾਤਿ॥ ਸਤਵੈ ਸੰਜਿ ਕੀਆ ਘਰ ਵਾਸੁ॥ ਅਠਵੈ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਹੋਆ ਤਨ ਨਾਸੁ॥ ਨਾਵੈ ਧਉਲੇ ਉਭੇ ਸਾਹ॥ ਦਸਵੈ ਦਧਾ ਹੋਆ ਸੁਆਹ॥ ਗਏ ਸਿਗੀਤ ਪੁਕਾਰੀ ਧਾਹ॥ ਉਡਿਆ ਹੰਸੁ ਦਸਾਏ ਰਾਹ॥ ਆਇਆ ਗਇਆ ਮੁਇਆ

ਨਾਉ॥ ਪਿਛੇ ਪਤਲਿ ਸਦਿਹੁ ਕਾਵ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਅੰਧੁ ਪਿਆਰੁ॥ ਬਾਝੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਡੁਬਾ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ॥

Pahilai piar lagaa than dudh, Doojay maa-ay baap kee sudh, Teeje bhayaa bhaabhee bayb, Chauthai piar upannee khayd, Panjvai khan peen kee dhaat, Chhivai kaam na puchhai jaat, Satvai sanj keea ghar vaas, Athvai krodh joaa tan naas, Navai dhaulay ubhay saah, Dasvai dadhaa hoaa suaah Gaay sigeet pukaaree dhaah, Udhi-aa hans dasaa-ay raah, Aaia gaiaa muiaa naao, Pichhai patal sadihu kaav, Nanak Manmukh andh piar, Baaj guroo dubaa sansar". 2. M 1.—At first man cherishes affection for breast's milk. Secondly he acquires understanding of his mother and father. Thirdly he comes to recognize his bother, brother's wife and his sister. In the fourth stage the love of play arises in him. Fifthly he runs after food and drink. In the sixth stage of lust, he inquires not women's caste. Seventhly he amasses wealth and acquires an abode in his own home. In the eighth stage his body is wasted in wrath. In the ninth he grows grey and his breathing becomes difficult. In the tenth stage he is burnt and turns into ashes. His comrades accompany him to the pyre and give vent to loud lamentations. The swan (soul) flies away making inquiries where to go. He came departed and even his name is dead. After him leaf plates are laid and crows attracted. Nanak says, the wordly-minded love, the spiritual darkness. Thus without the Guru the world is drowned (GGS, p 137)

੨. ਮ:੧॥ “ਦਸ ਬਾਲਤਣਿ ਬੀਸ ਰਵਣਿ ਤੀਸਾ ਕਾ ਸੁੰਦਰੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ॥ ਚਾਲੀਸੀ ਪੁਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਪਚਾਸੀ ਪਗੁ ਖਿਸੈ॥ ਸਠੀ ਕੇ ਬੋਢੇਪਾ ਆਵੈ॥ ਸਤਰਿ ਕਾ ਮਤਿਹੀਣੁ ਅਸੀਹਾਂ ਕਾ ਵਿਉਹਾਰੁ ਨ ਪਾਵੈ॥ ਨਵੈ ਕਾ ਸਿਹਜਾਸਣੀ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪਬਲੁ॥ ਢੰਢੋਲਿਮੁ ਢੁਢਿਮੁ ਡਿਠੁ ਮੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਗੁ ਧੂਏ ਕਾ ਧਵਲਹਰੁ॥

Das baaltan bees ravan teesa ka sundar kahaavay, Chaleese pur hoay pachaasee pag khisai sathee kay bodhaypaa aavai, Satar ka matiheen asehaan kaa viuhaar na paavai, Navai kaa sihjaasnee mool na jaanai aap bal, Dhandholim dhoodhim dith mai Nanak jag dhooay kaa dhavalhar “.3.—Upto the age of ten one is called a child, at twenty in full bloom of youth and at thirty he is called handsome. At forty he is full with manhood, at fifty his steps begin to falter and at sixty comes old age. At seventy he loses his intellect and at eighty he cannot perform his duties. At ninety his seat is on the cot and being weak he absolutely understands not what strength is. Searching and seeking I have seen, says Nanak that the world is a house of smoke.--- (GGS, p138)

In Sri Rag Guru Nanak sees life in the form of four parts of the day. The old age has been explained as the fourth part of the day in the following words:

- ਅਖੀ ਅੰਧੁ ਨ ਦੀਸਈ ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਾ, ਕੰਨੀ ਸੁਣੈ ਨ ਵੈਣ॥--*Akhee andh na dees-ee vanjariaa mitra kannee sunai na vain*—O my merchant friend! In old age, man's eyes go blind and he sees not. He becomes deaf and can't hear.

ਅਖੀ ਅੰਧੁ ਜੀਭ ਰਸੁ ਨਾਹੀ, ਰਹੇ ਪਰਾਕਉ ਤਾਣਾ॥--*Akhee andh jeebh ras naahee rahe praakau taana*—With blind eyes, palate goes tasteless, becomes weak and lives on others prop

(GGS, p76).

It may be mentioned here that the above noted stage comes in the life of a *Manmukh* (self-oriented person) and not that of a *Gurmukh* (God oriented person). A person who has spent the earlier stages of his life in remembrance of God, never feels troubled even in the last stage. It is for such a Gur-Sikh that Gurbani describes:

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੁਢੇ ਕਦੇ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ॥--*Gurmukh budhay kaday nahee jina*

antar surat gian—In Gurmukhs is lodged God consciousness and realization.

ਓਇ ਸਦਾ ਅਨੰਦਿ ਬਿਬੇਕ ਰਹਹਿ ਦੁਖਿ ਸੁਖਿ ਏਕ ਸਮਾਨਿ॥--*O-ay sadaa anand bibek rahay dukh*

sukh ek samaan—They ever abide blissful wisdom and to them joy and sorrow are the same (Ibid, p.1418).

The goal / Purpose of Human life according to Sikhism (*Gurmat*)

According to Gurbani after passing through myriads of species, one is blest with human form, Nanak says, this is the occasion to meet the Lord. Why don't you contemplate on the Lord O man? “ਫਿਰਤ ਫਿਰਤ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਜੁਗ ਹਾਰਿਓ ਮਾਨਸ ਦੇਹ ਲਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਤ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਕਹਾ ਨਹੀ”॥(GGS, p 631). The goal of life in Sikhism is not personal salvation or heavenly abode called paradise but to achieve union / link with the ‘Supreme Eternal Reality’ (God) in order to be the creative instrument of God and His Will. The holy book of Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib declares, “I aspire for neither wordly pleasures nor do I crave for salvation. I crave for the love of the Lord’s feet i.e, Guru’s teaching—ਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਚਾਹਉ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਚਾਹਉ ਮਨਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲਾਰੇ (GGS, p534) .

According to the holy Sikh Scripture Guru Granth Sahib, the human soul is part of ‘Supreme Soul’—Waheguru. And because we have bodies, we look different from Him Who is formless. And because of the unacceptable deeds that we do with our bodies, we stay separated from Him. However, we are part of Him just as a bubble on the surface of water is a part of the body of water even though it looks different. Gurbani Says:

- ਪੁਹਪ ਮਧ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਸੁ ਬਸਤ ਹੈ ਮੁਕਰ ਮਾਹਿ ਜੈਸੇ ਛਾਈ॥ ਤੈਸੇ ਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਸੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਖੋਜਹੁ ਭਾਈ॥--As fragrance abides in the flower and reflection in the mirror so does God dwell within thee, so search Him in within thy heart, O brother (GGS, p, 684) .
- ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਲੁਕਾਇਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਬਾਈ॥--Within every heart is hid the Lord and in all the hearts and bodies is His light (GGS, p, 597).
- ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲ ਪਛਾਣੁ॥ ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਜੀ ਤੇਰੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਰੰਗ ਮਾਣੁ॥--Myself, thou art thee embodiment (image) of Divine Light, thou realize thy origin. O myself, the reverend God is within thee. By Guru’s teaching enjoy His love (GGS, 441).

From these hymns it is very clear that Waheguru resides in every human heart. In fact, Waheguru resides in every living being, but it is only in human form that we can realize Waheguru. Once we recognize that we are a part of Waheguru, the objective of human life becomes very clear. Waheguru has given us human bodies as an opportunity for us to unite / link our souls with Him. As humans, we have the intelligence to recognize the existence of Waheguru, and can use our bodies to do noble deeds, and to worship Him. No other life form is capable of understanding the concept of Waheguru, and is therefore unable to realize Him. Gurbani says:

- ਦੁਲਭ ਜਨਮੁ ਪੁੰਨ ਫਲ ਪਾਇਓ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਾਤ ਅਬਿਬੇਕੈ॥ ਰਾਜੇ ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਸਮਸਰਿ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਆਸਨ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਹਹੁ ਕਿਹ ਲੇਖੈ॥--You were given the invaluable human form by Waheguru for some good deeds on your part, oh man! But you are now wasting it by not worshipping Waheguru. Even if you had a palace as big as god Inder's and all other luxuries enjoyed by him, they are all useless if you do not worship Waheguru. Because only worshipping (remembering) Waheguru will connect you with Him. (GGS, Sorath Ravidas ji, p, 658).

Gurbani informs us that human life obtained after such a long time is in fact an opportunity to remember God and get united with the Divine soul. There is no other life in which the awareness of remembering God is there. It is only the human life which is purposeful in this regard as made clear in Gurbani:

- ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ॥ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ॥--*Bhaee prapat manukh dehuria, Gobind Milan kee ih teri baria*---“Man, thou art blest with human birth, this is thy only opportunity, to meet Gobind (God) (GGS, Asa, M5, p.378)”. According to the theosophy of Sikhism this is only possible by controlling ego through *Sewa*, by observing the principles of truth, love in their true spirit and *Naam Simran*.
- ਰਿਹਾ ਦੁਲਭ ਦੇਹ ਪਾਈ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ॥ ਨਾਮ ਨ ਜਪਹਿ ਤੇ ਆਤਮ ਘਾਤੀ॥੧॥ ਮਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਹੀ ਜਿਨਾ ਬਿਸਰਤ ਰਾਮ॥ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਹੂਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਉਣ ਕਾਮ॥--You got the invaluable human life because of your good fortune. O man! A person who does not Waheguru, is a murderer of his soul. Without remembering Waheguru, life is purposeless. (Ibid, p188).
- ਗੁਰ ਸੇਵਾ ਤੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਮਾਈ ॥ ਤਬ ਇਹ ਮਾਨਸ ਦੇਹੀ ਪਾਈ॥ ਇਸ ਦੇਹੀ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ ਦੇਵ॥ ਸੋ ਦੇਹੀ ਭਜੁ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ॥੧॥ਭਜਹੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਭੂਲਿ ਮਤ ਜਾਹੁ॥ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਨਮ ਕਾ ਏਹੀ ਲਾਹੁ॥ --Through service to the Guru, you were successful in your efforts to please Waheguru to the extent that you have been given this human body, O man ! Even gods cherish human bodies so that they could realize Waheguru. Now that you have been given human body, do not forget to remember Waheguru because this is the only opportunity for you to realize Waheguru O man!

(GGS, Bhairon Kabir ji, p, 1159). ਮੂਰਖਾ ਸਿਰਿ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਹੈ ਜਿ ਮੰਨੇ ਨਾਹੀ ਨਾਉ॥—The most foolish of the foolish is he, who believes not in ‘*Naam*—God’ (GGS, p.1015) .

Gurbani doesn't place any restriction on enjoyment of life as long as it is moral, and as long as you do not become a slave to a habit. Also your enjoyment should not hurt anybody else, or should not encroach upon the rights of others.

Within these parameters you can enjoy life. Gurbani says:

- ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਭੇਟੀਐ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ॥ ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ॥ If we have a perfect Guru to guide us, we can lead our lives successfully, and find

How long could be our life span?

Gurbani says :

- “ਹਮ ਆਦਮੀ ਹਾਂ ਇਕ ਦਮੀ ਮੋਹਲਤਿ ਮੁਹਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ॥—We are men of but one breath and do not know the appointed time and moment of our departure (GGS, p.660)
- ਹਰਿ ਜਪਦਿਆ ਖਿਨੁ ਢਿਲ ਨ ਕੀਜਈ, ਮੇਰੀ ਜਿੰਦੁੜੀਏ ਮਤੁ ਕਿ ਜਾਪੈ ਸਾਹੁ ਆਵੈ ਕਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ, ਰਾਮ॥—Donot make a moment's delay, O myself in contemplating over God, who knows, mortal may draw another breath or not” (GGS, p, 540)
- ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਕਰੀਜੈ, ਮਾਨੁ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ਇਕ ਰਾਤੀ ਕੇ ਹਭਿ ਪਾਹੁਣਿਆ॥—O myself, love God do not take pride as all are but guests of a single night (GGS, p, 455) .
- ਕਬੀਰ ਮਾਟੀ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਪੂਤਰੇ, ਮਾਨਸੁ ਰਾਖਿਉ ਨਾਉ, ਚਾਰਿ ਦਿਵਸ ਕੇ ਪਾਹੁਨੇ, ਬਡ ਬਡ ਰੁੰਧਰਿ ਠਾਉ॥—Kabir says, we are puppets of clay and bear the name of men. Though guests here for four days, much space we attempt to garb (GGS, p, 1367) .
- ਸੋ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਮਨ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਜੀਵੈ ਕੋਇ॥ ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਥੀ ਜਾਇ॥ ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ॥—He alone truly lives whose mind that Lord is lodged. Nanak says, none else is really alive. If some one leads a life of dishonour. All that he eats is illegitimate (GGS, p. 142).
- ਮਤ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਵਦਾ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਾਇ ਮੁਇਆਸ॥—Do not consider the world to be living, when caught in duality. It is dead (GGS, p. 643).
- ਬਿਨ ਸਬਦੈ ਮੂਆ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਕੋਇ॥ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਮੂਆ ਅਪਨਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਖੋਇ॥—Without the name, everyone is dead. The egocentric dies losing his life (GGS, p. 1418)
- ਨਾਨਕ ਸੋਈ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਇਕੁ ਪਛਾਤਾ॥—Nanak says, he alone lives, who realizes the One Lord (GGS, p. 319).

- ਸੋ ਜੀਵਤ ਜਿਹ ਜੀਵਤੁ ਜਪਿਆ॥ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਭਏ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਹਿ ਛਪਿਆ॥--He alone lives, who whilst alive, meditates on the Lord. Nanak says, he becomes manifest and none can hide him (GGS, p. 254) .
- ਭਹੁਤਾ ਜੀਵਣ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਮੁਆ ਨ ਲੋੜੈ ਕੋਇ॥ ਸੁਖ ਜੀਵਣ ਤਿਸੁ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਸ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ॥--Every-one asks for long life and no body wishes to die. Comfortable life is of that person, in whose mind the Lord abides through the Guru (GGS, p. 63) .

What is death? / Death of life

According to *Gurmat* human death is of two types: Physical death and moral death (moral degradation / *Aatmac maut* / *Zameer dee maut*).

Physical death

The separation of the body from the soul is called death. Physical death is the fate of all living beings as it is subject to “*Hukam*” i.e Divine Discipline / Cosmic Law and is unavoidable. Gurbani says all creatures and the universe are born in time and are therefore subject to certain death:

- ਕਾਇਆ ਹੰਸਿ ਸੰਜੋਗੁ ਮੇਲਿ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ॥ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਕੀਆ ਵਿਜੋਗੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਉਪਾਇਆ॥...*Kaa-i-aa hans sanjog mel milaa-i-aa. Tin hee keeaa vijog jin upaa-i-aa.* The Lord has brought the union of the soul with the body he is also responsible for separation (GGS, p.139)”.
• ਸਦੜੇ ਆਏ ਤਿਨਾ ਜਾਨੀਆ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਸਚੇ ਕਰਤਾਰੇ॥ ਨਾਰੀ ਪੁਰਖ ਵਿਛੁਨਿਆ ਵਿਛੁੜਿਆ ਮੇਲਣਹਾਰੇ॥--*Sadray aa-ay tinaa jaaneeaa hukam sachay kartaaro. Naaree purkh jaaneeaa hukam sachay kartaaro. Naaree purkh wichhun-niaa wichhuriaa melanhaaro.*—By the True Creator’s command, the beloved receives the call. The self spouse is separated from the body bride. Of the separated ones, the Lord is the uniter. When the True Lord so wills, He gives command to the soul and it is separated from the body, and the separated ones then He unites again” (GGS, p580).
- ਆਗਿਆ ਆਵੈ ਆਗਿਆ ਜਾਇ॥--*Aagia aavai aagia ja-ay.* According to His will alone we come and go” (GGS, p294).

In order to reduce the shock of death for men, they have been again and again reminded of its inevitability:

- ਜੋ ਉਪਜੈ ਸੋ ਕਾਲਿ ਸੰਘਾਰਿਆ॥--*jo upjai so kaal sanghaariaa.*--All that are created, by death must be destroyed” (GGS, p 227).
- ਜੀਵਤ ਦੀਸੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਸਰਪਰ ਮਰਣਾ॥ *jo deese tis sar par marna* .i. e; All that comes in view as alive inevitably must die” (GGS, p 374).
- ਜੋ ਆਇਆ ਸੋ ਚਲਸੀ ਅਮਰ ਸੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ॥--Who-so-ever has come, shall go. Only the sublime Guru and the Creator are Eternal (GGS, p63) .

Moral death / *Aatmak maut Zammer dee maut*

“Moral / *Aatmac* death” is avoidable. And that is the point that is

emphasized in Guru Granth Sahib again and again. Gurbani says:

- “ਸਬਦ ਮਰਹੁ ਫਿਰਿ ਜੀਵਹੁ ਸਦ ਹੀ ਤਾ ਫਿਰਿ ਮਰਣੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥--By killing one's own thought and leading the life according to Sabad (Guru's teachings) one lives eternally and then afterwards does not die again (GGS, p. 604) .
- ਸਬਦਿ ਮਰੇ ਸੋ ਮਰਿ ਰਹੈ, ਫਿਰਿ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਦੂਜੀ ਵਾਰ॥ਸਬਦੈ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਪਾਈਐ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੇ ਲਗੈ ਪਿਆਰੁ--He who dies with the Divine Word gets immune from (spiritual / moral) death and does not die second time. From Guru's Word, love for God's Name is obtained and Lord is attained thereby (GGS, p.58) .

Death is predetermined

This world is mortal and whoever is born must die even though we don't know when. Even nonliving things must come to an end eventually. According to Gurbani:-

- ਜੋ ਆਇਆ ਸੋ ਚਲਸੀ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਈ ਆਈ ਵਾਰੀਐ॥--Whosoever has come, he shall depart and all shall take their turn (GGS, p. 474).
- ਜੋ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਸੋ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਹੈ ਪਰੋ ਆਜ ਕੇ ਕਾਲ॥--Whoever is born, he must perish, may be today or tomorrow (GGS, p. 1429) .
- ਮਰਣੁ ਲਿਖਾਏ ਮੰਡਲ ਮਹਿ ਆਏ--With death recorded in his destiny, man comes into the world (GGS, p. 686) .
- ਜਿਤੁ ਦਿਹਾੜੇ ਧਨ ਵਰੀ ਸਾਹੇ ਲਏ ਲਿਖਾਇ॥-----ਜਿੰਦ ਵਹੁਟੀ ਮਰਣੁ ਵਰੁ ਲੈ ਜਾਸੀ ਪਰਣਾਇ॥--On the day woman enters into the body, the time of her wedding is writ.----This life is bride, death her bridegroom. He will marry her and take away (GGS, p. 1377) .

All this happens under Waheguru's Hukam--ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭ ਕੋ (ਘਘਸ, ਪ. ੧)

Death of the Universe

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 ਮੀਤ॥ ਕਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਰੁ ਨ ਰਹੈ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਲੂ 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 ਨਖੁੜੁ ਗਗਨੰ॥ ਘਟੰਤ ਬਸੁਧਾ ਗਿਰਿ ਤਰ ਸਿਖੰਡੰ॥ ਘਟੰਤ ਲਲਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਭ੍ਰਾਤ ਹੀਤੰ॥ ਗਟੰਤ ਕਨਿਕ ਮਾਨਿਕ ਮਾਇਆ ਸਰੂਪੰ॥ ਨਹ ਘਟੰਤ ਕੇਵਲ ਗੋਪਾਲ

ਅਚੁਤ॥ਅਸਥਿਰੰ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਧ ਜਨ॥-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 ਬਿਸਥਾਰ॥ ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਾਸਾਰ॥ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਕੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ॥ (GGS, p.276) .

- ਖੰਡ ਪਤਾਲ ਦੀਪ ਸਭਿ ਲੋਆ॥ਸਭਿ ਕਾਲੇ ਵਸਿ ਆਪਿ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਕੀਆ॥-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 ਨੀਤ॥ ਜਗ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੈਸੇ ਰਚੀ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਮੀਤ॥-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) .

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).

NB: GGS is an abbreviation for Guru Granth Sahib

The World and wordly life according to Sikhism

All ancient Indian religious systems believed that this world is not a reality, but a mere illusion (*Maya*). Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of Sikhism does not subscribe to anything like the unreality of the physical world. Sikhism believes that this world is real, because it has been created by God. God is a Reality (exists) and so is His creation, "ਸਚਾ ਆਪ ਸਚਾ ਦਰਬਾਰ, "Sachcha aap sachcha darbar" (GGS, japji Pauri 33). According to the philosophy of Sikhism this world and every thing this world is real but ephemeral, "ਦਾਮਨੀ ਚਮਤਕਾਰ ਤਿਉ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਜਗ ਖੇ॥-*Dammanee chatkaar tio wartaara jag khay-*-Brief like a spark of lightening is our sjour in the world" (GGS, p.319).

Secondly, all ancient religious systems believed 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 and hence the practice of renunciation and asceticism in them. Sikhism regards this world as house of God and he resides in it, "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*” ie, “This world you see is his manifestation and it is the God that you see every where” (Ibid, Ram Kali, M3, Anand). Also, “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). This emphatic assertion of the Sikh Gurus about the authenticity of the world is a clear departure from the Indian religious tradition.

In the Varn Ashram Dharma / Sanatan Dharma i.e; Hinduism, the house-holder’s duties were not believed to be conducive to higher spiritual attainments. That is why, in order to make any progress in the spiritual field, one had to renounce worldly activities and take to the life of renunciation and asceticism. In India the ideal of four *Ashrams* has been a scripturally recognised spiritual way of life. Out of these four Ashrams, two, namely, the *Vanprastha* and the *Sanyasa Ashrams* distinctly enjoin an-other-worldly approach to life. The house-holder’s duties were not believed to be conducive to higher spiritual attainments. That is why in order to make any progress in the spiritual field, one had to renounce worldly activities and take to the ascetic way of life. As against it the three stages of life, which are mentioned in Gurbani are that of childhood, youth and old age. In all the three stages, a person has to remain a house-holder, but attached with God. During the first stage, the acquiring of education and knowledge includes the knowledge of Divine i.e, path of remembrance of God. In other two stages the physical symptoms may differ, but the person continues to observe the duties of *Grahassth* (house-hold) and keep himself detached from it like a lotus flower. One can have any type of enjoyment, comfort and luxury, but with such a restraint that the man does not get engrossed in it. In short, in Sikh religion, every stage of life is a stage for *Naam Simran*. Gurbani emphasizes that any person who spends any part of his life without remembering God, wastes it, “ਬਾਲ ਜੁਆਨੀ ਅਰੁ ਬਿਰਧਿ ਫੁਨਿ ਤੀਨਿ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਜਾਨਿ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਭਜਨ ਬਿਨ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਮਾਨ॥—O man know, that there are three stages of life: Childhood, youth and then old age. O Nanak! Believe, that without God’s meditation, all are in vain (GGS, p. 1428). Seen in the context of Indian tradition, the ideals and institutions of Sikhism are entirely different.

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) **Abrided 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 ਸਤਿ 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.

NB: In Sikhism invocation is only to the “One Supreme Eternal Reality (God)” and the sign used as invocation is: ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ and none else.

Scriptures of Sikhism

Guru Granth Sahib

(The Holy Sikh Scripture)

Guru Granth Sahib is the Holy Scripture of the Sikh faith. Guru Arjan Dev the 5th 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 9th 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 (*Devatas*), 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. Ragmala 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 ਲਾਲੇ—“*Jaisay mein aavy 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, “ਪੌਠੀ ਪਰਮਿਸਰ ਕੁ ਠਹਿਰਾ—“*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—*Bhagat Bhandaar gurbani lal, gavat sunat kamavat nihal* (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.

Gurdwara - The Sikh place of worship

Gurdwara is the Sikh place of worship, prayer and piety. It is the center of Sikh life. It is indestructible symbol of Sikh faith. Gurdwara emerged as the new edifice on the Indian subcontinent's religious landscape in the seventeenth century, when in 1604 AD, Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, in Amritsar, placed with reverence the first volume of Aad Granth in the building, which had been completed by him three years earlier. Till then Sikh place of worship was popularly called Dharamsal. First Dharamsal was established by Guru Nanak at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan).

The term Gurdwara is a combination of two Punjabi words; Guru and Dwara, literally meaning, Guru's door, but in Sikh theology it means, the Guru's house i.e, the house of the divine. It is the Sikh center of spiritual, social and educational activities. The term Gurdwara is purely Sikh in origin and it was coined by Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith and is found written in the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib on pages 351, 554, 730, 922, 933, 937, 1015, 1075 and 1234. Usually there are four parts of the complex: The main hall for worship, *Langar* (The Community kitchen), *Serai* also called *Saran* (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. Hence, a Serai /-Saran (Inn i.e, Hostel), is usually attached to most of the Gurdwaras. A school to teach Punjabi language, Gurmukhi script, Sikh history, philosophy along with modern science and other languages is part of major / big Gurdwaras. Every Gurdwara has a *Jora Ghar*—ਜੋੜਾ ਘਰ (shoe house) outside the main complex for depositing the shoes, as shoes are not allowed inside the main Gurdwara complex and the visitor has to go bare foot after washing his / her hands and feet.

The main structure in the Gurdwara is a big hall, where Guru Granth Sahib wrapped in fine Rumalas is seated over a small bed (*Manji Sahib/also called Peerah Sahib*) with nice bedding on a raised platform (Takhat Sahib) in a *Palki* (palanquin) with *Chandoa/ Chanani*, hanging from the ceiling of the hall. The place where Guru Granth Sahib rests is the most decorated part of the Gurdwara. Except when it is being read, it is kept covered. The Granthi waves *Chaur* (made of yalk hair) over Guru Granth Sahib. *Chanani and Chaur* are symbols of royalty and their presence is not functional. Guru is *Sachcha Padshah* (True king/ King of Spiritual Realm).

In a Gurdwara there are no images, altar or pulpit, the object of Sikh reverence is the scripture (Guru Granth Sahib) itself, and the Sikhs bow before it, 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. A Sikh is supposed to join Sangat (congregation) in the Gurdwara as frequently as possible.

Sikhs are not Hindus

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 First Glacial Period and into the beginning of the second Ice Age, Early Man entered the foothills of the Northwest Punjab, in the area traversed by 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 Genomic studies reveal that these people arrived in India from Central Asia (Kazakistan area) 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—The Harappan 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 “Jatts—ਜੱਟ”, which is the oldest named tribe in India whose name is found even in Mahbharta. After the region was named Punjab in 1590 A.D by Emperor Akbar, the natives of this land came to be called Punjabis. Scholars of history generally agree that Punjabi heritage is one of the oldest civilizations in the world and that its cradle was the soil of Punjab. Its main cities were Mohinjodaro and Harappa. It dates back to about 3300 BC and flowered between 2500 and 1700 BC.

Because of its geographical location Punjab has been a perpetual battlefield serving as the gateway to India for the invaders from the Central Asia and the Middle-East. After the Aryans, foreign invasions of the Punjab started in the 5th century BC. A series of invaders trampled over this land for centuries. These early invaders included Iranians (Persians), the Greeks, the Parthians, the Sakas (Scythians), the Kushans, the Huns and the Bactrians. Persian king Darius was the first to invade this land in 5th century BC. He was followed by Greek conquer-er, Alexander the great in 326 BC, after whom Punjab was annexed by Bactrian king Saleucus in 305 BC, and the Bactrians rule over this land for about two hundred years. The Bactrians were defeated by Chander Gupat Mauriya and he made the Punjab part of the vast Mauryan Empire.

Buddhism became the state religion during the rule of Mauryan King Ashoka (274-232 B.C), who established university of Buddhist learning in Taxilla, located in the foot hills of the Punjab, but Buddhism could not influence the Jatts in the plains of the Punjab and remained limited to the mountainous regions only.

After the fall of Buddhist Mauryan Empire, Brahmanical revival took place in the Hindustan. From 320 CE to 550 CE, during the rule of the Gupta dynasty Brahmanism / Sanatan Dharma (Hinduism) made remarkable progress. The Aryan Brahmans converted the local farming tribes of the Ganges Valley into Brahmanism (now Hinduism) and named them “Rajputs” and showered upon them various titles viz, *Surya Vanshi*, *Chander Vanshi*, *Agni Vanshi*, *SuryaVanshi*, *Chander Vanshi* and so on and created their long genealogies. There is no mention of Rajputs in Mahabharata and hence they are a later creation of the Aryan Brahmans. A further resurgence in Brahmanism took place during the 8th century. The Brahmans under the leadership of Shankra Acharya (788-820 AD), violently wiped out Buddhism from Hindustan, but the Brahmanism could not influence the “Jatts of the Punjab” and did not dare to penetrate into them in a big way and extend its influence beyond Yamuna River. Punjab remained politically isolated from the Gangetic Plains for about one thousand years after the fall of Mauryan Empire.

Islamic invasions of the Punjab started in the beginning of the 8th century and the Turks, Moghul and Afghans followed one after the other. The brave people of the Punjab resisted for almost three centuries, but ultimately the Punjab fell to the invading Islamic forces in the beginning of the 11th century. Turks, Moghuls and Afghan (Pathan) tribes occupied the areas of the Punjab bordering Afghanistan and settled there permanently. Some of the weak minded Punjabis in this area got converted into Islam, while others fled in front of the Muslim onslaughts and settled on the northern fringe of the Punjab in a narrow belt running along the foothills of the Himalayas, a region intersected by mountain streams and deep ravines, difficult for easy access. They started worshipping goddess Durga and came to be known as ‘Durgras’ (worshippers of Durga), now simply called ‘Dogras’ and are found in the hills of the Punjab in large numbers.

The brave natives of the plains of the Punjab called ‘Jatts’ never left the Punjab. They kept resisting and fighting against the invaders, got concentrated in the Central Punjab around Lahore on both sides of the river Ravi. Guru Nanak founded Sikhism, in Punjab at the fag end of the 15th century. Although Sikh Gurus preached their message in the Punjab, Hindustan, and adjoining countries including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Arabia, Palestine, Turkey, Tibet, Parts of China, Russia and Sri Lanka etc for a period spanning over more than two centuries, their teachings were accepted enmass only by the Punjabis. Guru Arjan Dev clearly declared the independent position of Sikhism by writing in the Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib), in Rag Bhairon, on page 1136 that:

“I do not keep the Hindu fast (*vrat*) or observe the Muslim Ramzan,
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 have broken with the Hindus and Muslims,
I neither worship with the Hindu nor 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 Hindus nor Mussalman”.

Sikhism was formally embraced en-mass by the people of the central Punjab, popularly called Majha, when it was formally consecrated by the 10th Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaiskhi day in 1699 at Anandpur Sahib in the Punjab through Amritpaan ceremony. The Sikhs of the Punjab are therefore a distinct ethnic people.

Qazi Noor Mohammad, who came with Abdali, during his seventh invasion of India in the eighteenth century, wrote that Sikhs were not Hindus and that the new religion which was distinct from Hinduism had been created by Guru Nanak (Qazi Noor Mohammad, Jang Namah, Ed by Ganda Singh, Amritsar, 1939, (English translation) PP58-59). Further there are orders of Mughal Emperors and Governors in the eighteenth century, which state that ‘*Nanak Panthis*’ should be eliminated and that rewards would be given for their destruction. Within two years and a quarter of the death of Guru Gobind Singh in October 1708, the infuriated emperor issued on December 10, 1710, an edict for a wholesale massacre of the Sikhs wherever found, “*Nanak prastan ra har ga kih bayaband ba qatal rasanand*” (Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla). This shows that there was only one entity, namely the ‘Nanak Panthis’ i.e, Sikhs, whom the rulers of the day considered to be the opponents worth liquidation. Nowhere the order is confined to Amritdharis, Singhs, or Khalsas, In fact, these terms are not mentioned in related official records. This clearly shows that making distinction of ideology or faith as between Nanak Panthis, on the one hand, and Sikhs, Khalsa, Amritdahrhis, Singhs on the other, is a recent contrivance, unknown to the insiders, outsiders or the adversaries of the Sikhs, before the nineteenth century. The confusion has arisen, because

in the nineteenth century during the rule of Ranjit Singh when Sikh star was ascendant, many fair-weather friends entered the Sikh fold. The same thing was repeated after the suppression of the mutiny in 1857 by the British and the Sikhs became their favourites. Again these fair-weather friends embraced Sikhism in large numbers during the Singh Sabha period in order to enjoy the benefits available to the Sikhs under the British rule. During all these periods, becoming a Sikh only meant gaining prestige and benefits without any risk of liquidation as in the earlier century, and it is they who reverted to Hinduism after annexation of Punjab and then after the independence of India. Some of these neo-converts have been holding the ship of Sikhism with their hands but kept their feet firmly stuck in the boat of Hinduism i.e., they believe in Guru Granth Sahib, but continue to observe Brahmanical practices, caste, rituals, rites, ceremonies etc. Instead of following the Sikh '*Rehat maryada*' they try to Hinduise Sikhism by introducing *Bipran kee reet* (Brahmanical practices like mentioning caste with their names, observe rituals and rites etc) into Sikhism.

In 1905 A.D, an international decision came in favour of the Sikhs when King Abdur Rehman of Afghanistan dismissed an appeal by Hindus for keeping idols in Gurdwara Guru Har Rai in Kabul. He made clear distinction between idol worshipper Hindus and the Sikhs: "Followers of Baba Nanak who was one of the greatest Unitarians and was opposed to idol worship". Recent anthropological and Genomic studies have revealed that the Sikhs of the Punjab are a distinct ethnic people.

Today Sikhism is a world religion. Global spread of Sikhism has been mainly through migration of the Sikhs from 'Punjab'. Recently because of its principles Sikhism has been embraced by many white people and now many white Sikhs and even black Sikhs can be found internationally, particularly in USA.

NB: All manual workers in ancient Punjab were called Jatts and regarded as Shudras by the Brahmans.

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Sikh identity and the Hindu Muslim hostility towards Sikhs and Sikhism

It is very well known that Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism was born in a Hindu Khatri family, but he refused to accept the sacraments / marks of Hinduism and Hindu way of worshiping the idols, and practice Hindu caste system which forms the bed rock of Hinduism. He denounced all this in strongest terms. He emphatically declared, "There is neither any Hindu nor any Muslim, we all are all children of the same one father (God)" and being children of the same father we are all brothers and sisters. First four Sikh Gurus were born in Hindu Khatri families, but the fifth Guru, Arjan was a born Sikh of Sikh parents and he declared the separate existence of Sikhism by writing it in the holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, in Rag Bhairon, on page 1136: "I do not keep the Hindu fast (*Vart*) or observe the Muslim Ramzan,
I serve only the One Supreme Being who alone is my refuge,
Serve the One Master who minister justice to both Hindus and Muslims,
I have broken with the Hindus and the Muslims,
I neither worship with the Hindu nor 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 Hindus nor Musalman”.

Guru Arjan created the holy Sikh Scripture (Aad Granth, now Guru Granth Sahib), the world seat of Sikhism (Gurdwara Darbar Sahib / Golden Temple) in 1604 A.D and installed it in the building which he had already completed in the midst of Sarovar at Amritsar; there by establishing separate religious identity of Sikhism. Till then the spread of Sikhism had been carried out through the word of mouth by the Sikh Gurus 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 (Brahmans / Pandits) and those of Islam (Mullas / Qazis). They regarded Sikhism as threat to their respective faiths. The Muslim administration, in addition, perceived it threat to its political power. The tensions that followed between the Sikhs, Hindus and the Muslim government resulted in the execution of Guru Arjan at Lahore on June 05, 1606 A.D.

Hargobind son of Guru Arjan succeeded him as the sixth Guru of the Sikhs. His career marks a turning point in the Sikh history. Seeing how peaceful resistance to oppression had proved abortive, he took the seat of his father with two swords girded round his waist one symbolizing spiritual power and the other temporal authority. At that time the Hindus were forbidden to wear a turban, ride a horse, to sit on a raised platform or seat and to keep weapons. In an open defiance of the imperial policy Guru Hargobind wore turban with a crown and made it compulsory part of the Sikh dress. He asked his followers to present him with young men, good horses and weapons. He encouraged martial activity among his followers, exhorting them to learn horsemanship and the use of arms. As a part of his new policy he founded Akal Takhat the Supreme Sikh seat of temporal authority of Sikhism, opposite Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar, as counterpart to the imperial Delhi Throne. He held his court there, received envoys, settled disputes and administered justice. He built a fort in Amritsar and named it ‘Lohgarh’.

The Governor of Lahore sent reports to Emperor Jahangir, in Delhi, regarding his activities. Guru Hargobind was summoned to Agra by the emperor. He presented himself in the imperial court, where he was taken into custody and sent to Gwalior fort as a prisoner, where political prisoners were kept. During the detention period of Guru Hargobind, Jahangir became a bit mentally disturbed and used to have very frightening dreams. Noor Jahan (who was a follower of Hazrat Sain Mian Mir) prevailed upon her husband to release Guru Hargobind, which might help him cure his mental sickness. Guru Hargobind refused to leave the fort till fifty two Hindu political king prisoners detained there were also released along with him. Guru Hargobind successfully secured their release along with him. Guru Hargobind left the Gwalior fort on October 26, 1619. Guru Hargobind reached Agra, Jahangir and Guru Hargobind befriended each other, but the provincial government at Lahore continued to maintain hostile attitude towards him.

The Exodus

The *Mina Khatri*s (Pirithi Chand elder brother of Guru Arjan and his progeny, the rival claimants to Guruship), caste Hindus i.e Brahmins and the provincial Muslim officials of Lahore government, forged an alliance to liquidate Guru Hargobind. The provincial Muslim forces under the governor at Lahore attacked Guru Hargobind and made four armed attempts at various places in the Punjab to capture or kill him, but were defeated by the Sikhs in all the encounters. After the fourth battle in 1635 A.D, at Kartarpur in Bist Doab, Guru Hargobind shifted his headquarter from Amritsar to Kiratpur in the Shivalik foot hills. This area lay outside the jurisdiction of the province of Lahore and was under the direct control of the emperor of Delhi, who at that time had cordial

relations with Guru Hargobind.

Infiltration of Brahmanical forces into Sikhism

After the expulsion of Guru Hargobind from Amritsar, Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) and Akal Takhat came under the control of *Mina Khatri*s—(Pirthi Chand and his progeny, who were Sikh in appearance, but Hindu at heart and antagonistic to Sikh thought) and remained under their control for about six decades till 1699 A.D. During this period of occupation they in collaboration with the caste Hindus i.e, Brahmans introduced not only un-Sikh, but even anti-Sikh practices in Gurdwara Darbar Sahib and Akal Takhat Amritsar. They created havoc with Sikh ideology and made several interpolations in the theology, philosophy and history of Sikhism and the Sikhs. They also created their own Granth and placed it in Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in place of Aad Granth of Guru Arjan, which was carried away by Dhirmal, grand son of Guru Hargobind Sahib to Kartarpur in Bist Doab, which is still in the possession of the family of Sodhis there. They also created *Janam Sakhi*-biography (Meharban Janam Sakhi) of Guru Nanak and in the process reducing him to an avtar with in the pantheonism of Hinduism.

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 A.D; at Anandpur Sahib in the Shivalik foothills in the Punjab, through his Sikh initiation ceremony--*Amritpaan* by administering *Khanday Baatay dee Pahul (Amrit)*. On this day he prescribed the religious code of conduct for the Sikhs.

The Minas at Amritsar, because of their Sikh connection were persecuted by the provincial Muslim Government at Lahore, who did not need them any more. They left Amritsar crossed River Satluj and settled in the sandy desert area of the Punjab in the Malwa region and founded a new town there, which they named, Guru Har Sahai. In the middle of June 1699 Guru Gobind Singh sent Bhai Mani Singh along with a Jatha of the Sikhs, who took possession of the shrine, Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar and resumed the daily *Maryada* (Sikh religious service) there.

Guru Gobind Singh left this mortal world in 1708 A.D. Before departing from this mortal world shortly after midnight between October 7&8, 1708, Guru Gobind Singh told the Sikhs that, the community in its organized form of Panth was to guide itself by the teachings of the Gurus as enshrined in the Holy Granth and also the collective sense of the community—Sikh Panth / Khalsa Panth. In this way he passed the spiritual authority of the Sikhs to Aad Granth and called it “*Guru Granth*”. He vested the temporal authority of the Sikhs with the Khalsa and called it “*Guru Khalsa Panth*”, who could neither be killed nor eliminated.

The Sikhs declared the war of independence of the Sikh nation in 1709 A.D; under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur (1708-1715) and occupied vast areas of the Punjab between Delhi and Lahore, destroyed Sarhind, killed its governor Wazid Khan, who was responsible for slaughtering Guru Gobind Singh’s younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, established Sikh rule in the Punjab and appointed Sardar Baj Singh as governor at Sarhind. Banda Singh was captured alive and executed in Delhi on June 9, 1716 A.D.

After the death of Banda Singh, the Muslim government of Hindustan vowed to exterminate the Sikh nation from the face of the earth. The Sikhs left their homes and hearths, took refuge in the jungles and the mountain caves of the Punjab and the desert area of the Punjab adjoining Rajputana. Moghul rulers and their Hindu collaborators perpetrated atrocities on the Sikhs and their families. For many years just being a Sikh was a crime punishable with death, but the Sikhs refused to submit and continued their struggle for survival and independence.

During the days of the persecution of the Khalsa (Sikhs) in the first and second

quarters of the 18th century, when the Khalsa had escaped into jungles, deserts and caves etc, the Sikh shrines (Gurdwaras) came under the control of the dissident *Nirmala* Brahmans and *Udasi Khatri Sadhus* followers of Sri Chand son of Guru Nanak. Because of their being clean shaven and having Hindu looks they were not targeted by the Muslim rulers. They introduced not only un-Sikh but even anti-Sikh practices into Gurdwaras and tried their best to Hinduise Sikhism.

After a hard gruesome 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 as sovereigns of Punjab. They 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, Korakoram mountain range in the north and plains of Sindh in the south. The Sikh Misals on the western side of the river Satluj consolidated themselves under the leadership of Ranjit Singh and formally established “Sikh State” in 1799, which became most powerful State in Asia. The Sikh State was based on Sikh traditions, values and principles under the patronage of Guru Granth Sahib and supremacy of Akal Takhat Amritsar. The Sikh government was called “*Sarkare Khalsa*”. The Sikhs of the Malwa region led by Ala Singh dissociated themselves from the main stream Sikhism. They refused to accept the supremacy of Akaal Takhat and follow the Khalsa traditions including Sarbat Khalsa.

People were given employment in the Sikh State on merit irrespective of the religion. The opportunists among the Hindus embraced Sikhism, rose to high positions (Prime Minister—Teju Brahman as Tej Singh & Lal Brahman as Lal Singh--Commander-in-Chief) and treacherously aligned with the British and brought down the Sikh government in 1848 A.D. The *Udasis* and *Nirmalas* during the period of Sikh rule grew hair and became Sikh in appearance, but remained Hindu at heart. They designated themselves as *Mahants*. During the Sikh rule in the Punjab huge properties were given in grant to the historical Sikh shrines. The Sikhs lost their rule in 1849 after many bloody wars not because of lack of bravery on the part of the Sikh but due to the treachery committed by the civil government dominated by the Hindus, when their kingdom was annexed by the British. The *Mahants* were patronized by the British rulers of the Punjab for political reasons.

The rulers of the Cis Satluj Sikh states i.e Malwa region of the Punjab went under the British protection in 1809 A.D; the learned Brahmans from Banaras crossed Jamna River in the garb of *Nirmala* Sikhs and settled in the Malwa region of the Punjab. They were patronized there by the rulers of the princely Sikh states there. These learned Brahmans in the garb of *Nirmala / Udasi* Sikhs, called themselves, ‘*Sant Babas*’ built their own Gurdwaras, which were called ‘*Sant Deras*’. They interpreted the Sikh Scriptures according to the Vedantic philosophy and preached and propagated Hindu practices in the Sikh places of worship in order to Hinduise Sikhism. They also produced a large amount of literature in this regard, which is presently being used to damage Sikhism.

Because of their Hindu background both the *Udasi* and *Nirmala* sadhus introduced Hindu practices and rituals in Gurdwaras, which were not only un-Sikh, but even anti-Sikh. They also made several interpolations in the Sikh literature. They misused the names of several Sikh personages to corroborate these myths and gave it credence. They demonstrated that these ritualistic practices had been initiated at the behest of Guru Gobind Singh and issued these in the form of instructions called *Rehatnamas* (Code of conduct). Before this phase of issuing *Rehatnamas*, this sort of theological crisis had crept up during the time of Guru Arjan Dev when attempts were made to induct fictitious verses (*Bani*) in the verses of the Sikh Gurus. But Guru Arjan Dev resolved the crisis by compiling the text of Guru Granth Sahib. The *Rehatnamas* are replete with *anti-Gurmat* views. All of these seem to have been composed towards the end of eighteenth century. The writers

of these commandments have cleverly omitted their own name and replaced these by names of scholars and great Sikh-personalities who have been contemporaries of the tenth Guru. Thus falsification was done by certain cunning people who tried to support their views by attributing them to the Gurus.

The Sikh Gurus had disapproved and condemned both Brahmanism and its ritualistic practices. Their crusade was not against Brahmans but against the ideology of Brahmanism. They never visualized that a new breed of Sikh Brahmanical priests should replace an existing class of Hindu Brahmanical priests.

The decay of Sikhism and the Sikh Empire had, in fact, started during the rise of Dogra-Khatris (Dhian Singh, Gulab Singh, Suchet Singh and Hira Singh) and Brahmans (Khushal Singh, Tej Singh and Lal Singh) at the Sikh court in the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They were all saboteurs, opportunist, neoconverts into Sikhism. They came to control the whole civil government. With them once again, came the worship of stones, idols and tombs. Towards the close of the 19th century, the Sikhism had actually become much Hinduized. Brahmans had actually pushed idols into the holy precincts of a number of Sikh shrines, where, in apparent contradictions to the spirit of Sikhism, idol worship was being practiced. There sprang a number of persons from the descendents of the Gurus who posed themselves as Gurus, and arrogated to themselves the position and privileges to which they laid claims as self-appointed successors of Guru Nanak—Guru Gobind Singh. They also reintroduced various Brahmanical rituals and ceremonies, like worship of idols and relics, rites connected with birth, marriage and death, and pilgrimages to Hardwar and other Hindu places etc; from all of which the Guru had weaned or liberated the Sikhs. A relapse of into Hinduism was thus in progress. The Sikh Kingdom was annexed by the British in 1849 / 1954, after many bloody battles. The Sikhs lost due to the treachery of the civil government dominated by neoconvert Hindus into Sikhism and not due to any lack of bravery on the part of the Sikh army.

Birth of Singh Sabha

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Social separation of the Sikhs and Hindus

After the annexation of the Sikh Kingdom of the Punjab by the British in 1849, the relationship between the Muslims, Hindus and the Sikhs underwent complete change. With Muslim threat gone, the external factors that kept Hindus and Sikhs together disappeared. They had to redefine their relationships. After its annexation the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab was dismantled, reorganized and merged with rest of the British India. The Hindus of the Punjab came into contact with well educated members of their respective communities from rest of the Hindustan (India), which had been already under the British rule for almost over more than one hundred years and were more enlightened with modern education and knowledge, whereas the Sikhs of the British Punjab had none to fall back upon. The ownership of the Gurdwaras had fallen into the hands of the cleanshaven *Udasi Khatri* and *Nirmala Sadhus*, during the days of the persecution of the Sikhs by the Moghul Muslim Government, who were at first patronized by Sarkare Khalsa and then by the British. The Sikhs during their rule in the Punjab remained busy with expanding and securing the boundaries of their nascent kingdom and did not take any steps to assert their religious identity through the '*Sikh Rehat*' (Sikh religious code of conduct) distinct from Hindu practices.

The Christian missionaries were firmly entrenched in Ludhiana. They established their centers in the Sikh heart-land Majha at Amritsar, Lahore, Batala, Dhariwal and the hills of the Punjab at Shimla and Dalhousie etc and were seeking conversion into Christianity.

Another thing that shook the Sikhs at that time was a series of carping lectures on the

Sikh faith and the narration of Guru Nanak Dev's life in deliberately garbled detail by one Brahman named, Sharda Ram Phillauri. In these lectures delivered by him at *Guru Ka Bagh* in Amritsar he made vulgar attacks on Sikh Gurus and Sikh scriptures, and ridiculed the Sikh community.

After the loss of Sikh power in the Punjab, the Brahmans from Banaras crossed river Jamna (Yamuna) in the garb of *Nirmala* and *Udasi sadhus* / saints, in Sikh appearance and settled in the Malwa region of the Punjab. They were patronized by the Phoolkia Malwae rulers in this region at the behest of the British, with whom they had entered into a treaty for protection against the Sikh State (*Khalsa Raj*) of the Punjab during the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809. These *Nirmala* and *Udasi Sadhus* were in Sikh garb but Hindu at heart and antagonistic to Sikh thought and doctrines. They produced Sikh literature in order to Hinduize Sikhism and made several interpolations in the Sikh theology, philosophy and history and are presently using that literature to misguide the Sikhs and others in India and internationally.

Naturally enough, such inroads and attacks aroused strong feelings among the Sikhs. Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia an uncle of the deposed Maharaja Dalip Singh took the initiative and called a meeting of prominent Sikh leaders of the Punjab in *Guru Ka Bagh* Amritsar to consider this matter. The meeting resulted in the formation of the Sikh society, which was named, '*Singh Sabha*' in 1873, with Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhwalia as president. That marked the birth of *Singh Sabha* movement. Unfortunately the Sikh society came to be dominated by persons who called themselves, *Sanatan* Sikhs (literally: ancient Sikhs). They were mostly of urban origin and belonged to the trading community of Khatri Hindus with Sikh appearance. These *Sanatan* Sikhs although believed in *Guru Granth Sahib*, but observed caste, personal Guruship, idol worship and other Hindu rites, rituals and practices. They were led by Baba Khem Singh Bedi, who was a direct descendant of Guru Nanak. He was resident of Rawalpindi and held a camp office in Amritsar. In the programme they devised, particular emphasis was laid on the promotion of periodicals and other literature on Sikhism, but failed to address the question of crystallizing a distinct Sikh *Rehat* and establish a separate identity distinct from Hindus, which concerned the major portion of the Sikh Panth in Punjab.

In 1877 a Gujrati Brahman, named Dayanand who called himself Sawami came to Punjab and opened a branch of his newly founded Hindu sect called *Arya Samaj* in Lahore. He cleverly contended that the Sikhs are a sect of Hinduism and Sikhism was not a separate religion. He attacked the Sikh Scriptures vehemently, ridiculed the Sikh Gurus and the Punjabi language.

The *Khalsa* Sikhs disagreed with the actions of *Amritsar Singh Sabha* led by Baba Khem Singh Bedi of Rawalpindi, therefore, they dissociated themselves from the parent body in 1879 and formed a parallel *Singh Sabha* in Lahore, under the leadership of Professor Gurmukh Singh, Harsa Singh, Jawahar Singh and Giani Ditt Singh and it was patronized by persons like Kanwar Bikram Singh Kapurthala and Sardar Attar Singh Bhadaur. The *Singh Sabha* Lahore proved to be more aggressive. As it was a revivalist movement and sought only to revive Sikhism of *Guru* period without making any deviations, it instantly caught the imagination of the Sikhs in general and attracted the attention of Sikh aristocrats, intellectuals and scholars in particular. Among them the names of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha (author of encyclopaedia of Sikh literature, doctrine and history), Bhai Vir Singh and Vaid Mohan Singh Tarn Taran are worth mentioning.

The movement grew rapidly and within a short span of time *Singh Sabhas* sprang up in all cities, towns and most of the villages of the Punjab, setting up a network of schools with a common appellation 'Khalsa' throughout the length and breadth of the Punjab where study of *Guru Granth Sahib* and *Gurmukhi* were compulsory. It did not indulge into politics, but instead sought co-operation and involved the Punjab government in its educational activities. It started first Punjabi

press in Gurmukhi script in Lahore and published first Punjabi paper 'Khalsa Akhbar' whose editor was Giani Ditt Singh. It got Punjabi in Gurmukhi script recognized as a subject for teaching in schools, colleges and university. It established the Premier Sikh Institution Khalsa College Amritsar for higher education in 1892. It also opened a number of Khalsa Schools throughout the length and breadth of the Punjab. Singh Sabha not only checked the relapse of the Sikhs into Hinduism but retaliated by carrying proselytizing activities into the Hindu camp. Large numbers of Hindus of Northern and North Western Punjab became Sikhs especially in urban areas. This however, brought Professor Gurmukh Singh incharge of the movement in conflict with the *Mahants* (*Pujaris*--Priests) of Gurdwaras led by Baba Khem Singh Bedi. As the Gurdwaras were in possession of the *Mahants* who believed in Hindu practices, they stopped allowing the revivalist Sikhs to perform religious services there. The Singh Sabhas constructed their own Gurdwaras, with *Granthis*, *Ragis* and *Updeshaks* and became centers of Sikh revivalism.

Singh Sabha movement taught the Sikhs three things: Firstly, they were not Hindus, secondly, the Khalsa membership should be the objective of all Sikhs and thirdly obedience to the Sikh religious code of conduct (*Sikh Rahat Maryada*).

Achievements of Singh Sabha:

- (a) It brought religious awakening among the Sikhs and laid the foundation of social separation of the Sikhs from Hindus, which was completed by them under Chief Khalsa Diwan, Sharromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) and The Sharomani Akali Dal. The Sikhs crystallized their distinct *Rehat Maryada* (Sikh religious code of conduct based on the canon of Sikh faith), which was published in a booklet form by SGPC in 1945.
- (b) It started first Punjabi press in Lahore and published first Punjabi paper in Gurmukhi—Khalsa Akhbar, whose editor was Giani Ditt Singh.
- (c) It got Punjabi in Gurmukhi script recognized as a subject for teaching in schools, colleges and university.
- (d) It established Khalsa College Amritsar in 1892. It also opened a number of Khalsa Schools throughout the length and breadth of the Punjab.
- (e) In 1905, it forced Auroor Singh, manager of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar to remove the statues of Hindu deities from Prikarma under legal orders.
- (f) It propagated Anand Marriage among the Sikhs.

Singh Sabha movement brought about socio-religious awakening among the Sikhs by raising Khalsa educational institutions, publishing news papers, books and journals on Sikhism and Sikh history and promoting the Punjabi language in Gurmukhi script, which was considered to be a vehicle of progress for the community and the country. The news papers, journals and books, were published in Punjabi, Urdu and English on weekly, fortnightly, on monthly basis, and as bulletins or supplements. The Sikh journalism of the first two decades of the twentieth century brought about political resurgence and collective consciousness of Panth. It also brought about awareness among the Sikhs to maintain their religious symbols and manage their own socioreligious institutions. Singh Sabha was totally committed to educational and religious matters of the Sikhs and Sikhism and paid no heed to politics.

It is a well known fact that the Hindus are highly intolerant of the non-confirming faiths, there have been persistent attempts on their part to over turn the Sikh history, theology and philosophy after the Sikhs lost their rule. Before the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent (Hidustan) in 1947 AD; and the division, destruction and denial of their state back to the Sikhs by

the British, they (Sikhs) for the first time in history came under the tutelage of a reviving Hinduism. Immediately after gaining independence the Government of India dominated by radical Hindus undertook the task of distorting of the Sikh history, theology and undermining of Sikhism and even declaring Sikhism a sect of Hinduism. The Brahmans / *Sanatani* Hindus in the garb of Sikhs called *Sant Babas* who had been patronized firstly by the Phoolkia rulers in the Malwa region and then encouraged by the British officials spread all over the country and even abroad. They have now been patronized by the Indian government dominated by radical Hindus. They have established their own Gurdwaras called *Sant Deras*, both in India and abroad, independent of main stream followers. In 1905 Auroor Singh the manager of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar was forced by the revivalist Sikhs through court orders to remove of Sikhism. These *Sant Babas* in Sikh garb are preaching, propagating and practicing Hindu rituals and ceremonies etc against the tenets of Sikhism (*Gurmat*), among the ignorant Sikhs and trying their utmost to Hinduize Sikhism.

Legal separation of the Sikhs and Hindus

The Sikhs finally adopted recourse for their legal separation from the Hindus. In 1905, Singh Sabha forced Aroor Singh, manager of Gurdawara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar to remove the statues of Hindu deities from Parikarma under legal orders. All Hindu idols from the Parkarma of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), which the Hindus had installed there and used to worship them after bath at the Amritsarovar, were removed and placed on the road side in front of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), thereby putting an end to the performance of Hindu rituals in that area. The Hindus in Amritsar did not possess any common land in Amritsar except for the cremation ground, therefore they took away the idols and installed them over a platform inside a small room in the cremation ground and named it Seetla Mandir, which was subsequently expanded and is now known as **Durgiana mandir**.

- In 1905 A.D, an international decision came in favour of the Sikhs, when King Abdur Rehman Khan of Afghanistan dismissed an appeal by Hindus for keeping idols in Gurdwara Guru Har Rai in Kabul. He made clear distinction between idol worshipper Hindus and the Sikhs,-- "Followers of Baba Nanak who was one of the greatest Unitarians and was opposed to idol worship".
- **Sikh educational conference was established in 1908 A.D**, which was instrumental in opening numerous Khalsa (Sikh) schools in towns and villages of the Punjab and even outside Punjab. It did a lot for the growth of literacy in the community.
- **Enactment of Sikh marriage Act in 1909 A.D:**

To establish the validity of distinct Sikh ceremonies and remove the legal objections raised by judicial officials in civil courts, Prince Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, on behalf of the Sikhs prepared the draft of Anand marriage Act, which was presented by Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia before the Punjab Legislative Council, and was passed after discussion. It became an Act on October 22, 1909 A.D in spite of opposition of the Arya Samaji Hindus, Santani Sikhs, Mahants and Pujaris.

- **Getting of Kirpan (Sword) legal**

As a result of assertions of the Sikhs, the Punjab Government exempted Kirpan from within the purview of the Arms Act in 1914. Wearing of Kirpan was allowed to cover other parts of British India in 1917 and the Sikh soldiers in 1920.

- **Getting Jhatka meat** (Sikh way of slaughtering animals for meat) **legalized:**

The religious boundary marking involved fixing the proper method of animal slaughter. Muslims upto late 19th century were major purveyors of meat in Punjab. They slaughtered

animals by Halal (Kosher) method, which requires that the throat be slit and blood drained while the animal is still alive. According to meat eating Singh's (Sikhs), the proper method was Jhatka slaughter, in which the animal's head is chopped by a single sword stroke. Under the revivalist Singh's this tradition emerged as an important definition of identity. The British officials recognized this as a potential issue for Muslim Sikh conflict in Punjab and started granting licences for Jhatka meat shops in Sikh dominated areas.

- **Separate Sikh electorate:**

The Montague-Chelmsford committee on Indian Constitutional reforms in July 1918 accepted the Sikh demand for separate representation in the process giving an effective recognition to their independent political identity. The franchise committee conceded, 'a separate electorate and separate constituencies for Sikhs'. This established an independent political entity of the Sikhs. Provincial autonomy was introduced by the British in Punjab in 1935 under which elections were held in 1937 after Montague-Chelmsford reforms. The total 175 seats of Punjab legislative assembly were communally divided among the Muslims, Hindus and the Sikhs.

- **By establishing Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC):**

The Sikh Gurdwara Act 1925 placed the entire control and management of all historical Sikh shrines under the elected body of the Sikhs, SGPC. The Act accentuated a legalized "separate entity of the Sikh and Hindu shrines". The intervention of the Hindus through Mahants and Pujaris in the Gurdwaras was legally put to an end. The bill defined a Sikh who made declaration, "I solemnly affirm that I am a Sikh, that I believe in Guru Granth Sahib, the ten Gurus and I have no other religion" Hence in the process the Sikhs clarified and delimited their own religious and distinct cultural identity. The parameters of distinct cultural identity of the Sikhs were laid down by way of defining Sikhism as distinct religion, which did not have philosophical and historical links with Hinduism. "Sikh Rehat Matyada" (Sikh religious code of conduct) was evolved on the basis of monotheism and Khalsa traditions.

To summarize in early twentieth century, the Sikhs could legally and legitimately claim to have their distinct religion, language, history, historical shrines, a large number of educational institutions and press. Guru Granth Sahib and Khalsa traditions occupied the central position on the pattern of ceremonies, customs and *Rehat*. Thus in the process the Sikhs clarified, refined and delimited their own religious identity.

The SGPC became a sort of Parliament of the Sikhs. The income from Gurdwaras gave it financial sustenance. Disbursement of income in the management of shrines, patronage in the appointment of hundreds of *Granthis*, *sewadars* (shrine servant), teachers for schools and colleges which were built, arrangements for training of *Granthis* for the missionary activity outside Punjab, all made SGPC a government within the government.

After its constitution the SGPC constituted a religious committee at Akal Takhat Amritsar, which finalized the draft of "*The Sikh Rehat Maryada*" (The Sikh religious code of conduct), which was published in a booklet form in 1945 A.D, by the Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee Amritsar for compliance by the Sikh nation.

- **By adopting separate Sikh Calendar:** On the eve of 300th year anniversary of the birthday of the Khalsa in 1999 A.D, the SGPC discarded the Lunar Hindu Bikrami Calendar and adopted its own Nanak Shahi Calendar based on the length of tropical (solar) year.

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 ਦੇਖ ਲਹਿ ਜਾਵੈ॥ ਫਿਰ ਚੜੈ ਦਿਵਸੁ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵੈ ਬਹਦਿਆ ਉਠਦਿਆ ਹਰਿਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ॥ ਜੋ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੋ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ॥ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ 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 peerheeay 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 peerheeai 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॥ *n 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 changiaiyaiyan 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 bujheeai. Moorakh naall na lujheeai.*--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*” .

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 abandons 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 ਝੂਰ 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॥ ੫ *Jio tun bidhuvaa 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.

The Hindu caste system and its rejection in Sikhism

The term *Jatee* (caste) is Indian in origin and its mention in the Indian literature for the first time is found in the Aryan scripture Rig Veda. It came into practice after the arrival of Aryans in India and the creation of 'Vedas'. It describes the origin of the four *Varnas*, or the caste groups, through the symbolic sacrifice of *Purusha*, the Primeval Man, from whose head rose the *Brahmans*, from arms the *Kashatriyas*, from thighs the *Vaishyas* and from his feet the *Shudras*.

The Brahmanical religion /Sanatan Dharma now popularly called Hinduism is also known as *Varn Ashram Dharma*. *Varn* in Sanskrit (Brahmanical language) means colour which form the basis of *Jatee* or the caste system in the Brahmanical religion. The Aryans divided the society on the basis of the colour of the skin. 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-Aryans were called Shudras and designated as workers, artisans, tillers of soil and people who raised cattle. To begin with the term was applied to professional groups but gradually it became hereditary.

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 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* around 600-200 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* ie; "Simriti is the daughter of the Vedas, she has brought chain and rope for men" (GGS, p 329). 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, Vaishiya 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, cremations and allied professions were kept out of the pale of the caste system and were called *Chandaal* / *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, "ਸੇਵੀਐ ਬਿਪ੍ਰ ਗਿਆਨ ਗੁਣ ਵਿਹੁਣਾ॥ ਸੁਦਰ ਨਾ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਗਿਆਨ ਗੁਣ ਪਰਬੀਨਾ॥ i.e, The Brahman 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.

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 15th century. He stepped beyond the frontier in defiance of the 3000 years old caste rules of Hinduism. He attacked directly on caste system, "ਫਕੜ ਜਾਤੀ ਫਕੜੁ 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 ਨਹੁ ਪੂਛੀਐ ਸਚ ਘਰੁ ਲੇਹੁ ਬਤਾਇ॥ ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ॥ *jaat janam nah poochheeci 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 10th Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh through Sikh baptismal ceremony-*Khanday batay Dee Pahul*, on the Vaisakhi day, 1699AD; at Anandpur Sahib in the Punjab. 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 sansaaar* 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).
- ਫਕੜ ਜਾਤੀ ਫਕੜੁ 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).
- ਜਾਤਿ ਕਾ ਗਰਬ ਨ ਕਰੀਅਹੁ ਕੋਈ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਿੰਦੇ ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਹੋਈ॥--*Jaat ka garb na kareeah koe braham binday so Brahman hoee* i.e; No one should be proud of his caste. He alone is Brahman who knows his God (GGS, p.1127).
- “ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ॥--*Ek pita ekas ke ham barik toon mera gurhaae*” i.e; The One Lord is the father of all and we are children of the One Lord . Thou O Lord, art our Guru—care taker” (GGS, p.61 1).
- “ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੂਛਹੁ ਜਾਤੀ ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੈ॥--*Jano joti, na poochhohjaati, aagay jati na haiy*—i.e, “Know that Divine Light is within all, do not inquire the caste. There is no caste in the next world.” (Ibid, Asa Ml, p.349).
- “ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥ ਤੇਹਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ॥--*Aagay, jaati roop na ja-ay, teha hovay, jehay*

karam kama-ay—i. e., ‘Hereafter caste and beauty does not go with man. As are the deeds done by a person, so shall he be judged there’ (Ibid, Asa M3, p.363).

Guru Nanak dissociated caste from birth and said that the caste of a person should be associated with the person’s deeds and not his birth:

- “ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ।।—*Sa Jaat sa pat hai jehay karam kamai*”-- “One’s deeds proclaim one’s caste and respect” (Ibid, p.1330).

Sikh Gurus openly declare that God is not in the grip of the Brahmans:

- “ਨਾਮਾ ਛੀਬਾ, ਕਬੀਰ ਜੁਲਾਹਾ ਪੂਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ।।*Naamaa chheebaa Kabir jolahaa pooray gur tay gat paaee* i.e., “ Naam Dev the caloco-printer and Kabir the weaver, obtained salvation from the perfect Guru” (GGS, p. 67).

- “ਜਾਤਿ ਕਾ ਗਰਬ ਨ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਰਖ ਗਵਾਰਾ।। ਇਸੁ ਗਰਬ ਤੇ ਚਲਹਿ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਵਿਕਾਰਾ।।—*Jaat ka garbh na kar moorakh gawara is garb te chalah bahut vikaaraa*” (Ibid, p. 1128}--“O, stupid fool do not take pride in grand caste, it leads to great conflicts”

- ਚਾਰੇ ਵਰਨ ਆਖੇ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਈ।। ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਬਿੰਦ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਓਪਤਿ ਹੋਈ।।--*Chaaray varan aakhay sabh koe. Brahm bind tay sabh upat hoee*.i.e., “Everyone says, there are four castes. But they all are created from the Lord’s seed’s, essence”.

- Kabir during his discussion with Brahmins inquires from them, “ਗਰਭ ਵਾਸ ਮਹਿ ਕੁਲੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤੀ।। ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਿੰਦੁ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਉਤਪਤੀ।।੧।। ਕਹੁ ਰੇ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਬਾਮਨ ਕਬ ਕੇ ਹੁਏ।। ਬਾਮਨ ਕਹਿ ਕਹਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਮਤ ਖੋਏ।।੧।। ਰਹਾਓ।। ਜੋ ਤੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਜਾਇਆ।। ਤਉ ਆਨ ਬਾਟ ਕਾਰੇ ਨਹੀ ਆਇਆ।।੨।। ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਹਮ ਕਤ ਸੂਦ।। ਹਮ ਕਤ ਲੋਹੁ ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਦੂਧ।।੩।।ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਜਪ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੈ।। ਸੋ ਬਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਕਹੀਅਤੁ ਹੈ ਹਮਾਰੈ ।।੪।।-- *Garbh vaas meh, kul nahin jaati, brahm bind tay sabh utpaatee IIII. II Kaho ray Pandit, Baman kab kay hoay, Baman keh keh janam mat khoay /III.II Rahao / Jao toon Brahmin Brahmani jaaiya, tao aan baat, kahay nahin aiya, Tum kat Brahmin, ham kat sood, ham kat laho, tum kat doodh* i.e., “Dwelling in the womb, the mortal has no lineage and caste. From the seed of the Lord, all have sprung. 1. Say, O Pundit, since when hast thou been a Brahmin? Waste not thy life by repeatedly calling thyself a Brahmin.1. Pause. If thou art a Brahmin, born of a Brahmani mother, then, why hast thou not come by some other way? 2. How art thou a Brahman and how am I of low caste? How am I of blood and how thou art of milk? 3. Kabir says, only he, who contemplates over the Lord, is said to be a Brahmin among us”.4. (GGS,p..324).

Taking the image of the potter's wheel Guru has compared the different kinds of people to vessels of many types and patterns, but all made of same clay:

- “ਮਾਟੀ ਏਕ ਅਨੇਕ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਸਾਜੀ ਸਿਰਜਨ ਹਾਰੈ।।--*Maati ek anek bhaant kar saaji sirjan haarai*” i.e., Clay is the same but the Creator has shaped it in innumerable forms (Ibid, 1350).
- ਮਾਟੀ ਏਕ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ।। ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਘੜੈ ਕੁਮਾਰਾ।। --*Maatee ek sagal sansaaraa. Bahu bidh bhaande gharai kumaraa* i.e; “The whole world is made out of one clay. But the Potter has fashioned it into vessels of numerous forms” (GGS, p. 1128).
- ਅਵਲ ਅਲਾ ਨੂਰ ਉਪਾਇਆ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਬੰਦੇ।। ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕੌਣ ਭਲੇ ਕੌਣ ਮੰਦੇ।। --*Awal Allah noor upaia kudrat kay sabh banday, ek noor tay sabh jag upjiaa kaun bhalay kaun manday* i.e., “God first created Light, and then by His omnipotence, made all the

mortals. From one Light has arisen entire universe. Then who is good and who is bad?" GGS, p. 1349-50).

- “ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ॥--*Manas kee jaat sabe ekay pehchanbo*” i.e, “Treat all mankind alike” (Guru Gobind Singh, Dasam Granth, 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 ਆਸ਼੍ਰਮ ਹਰਿ ਜੋ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਵੈ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ॥--*Brahmin Khatri Sood Vais chaar varn chaar ashram haih jo har dhiavai so pardhaan* i.e, “There are four castes Brahmin, Khatri, Shudra and Vaishya and four stages of life. Out of these, whoever meditates on the Lord is superior”. (GGS, p.861).
- ਜਾਤਿ ਅਜਾਤਿ ਕੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ਸਭਿ ਪੂਰੇ ਮਾਨਸ ਤਿਨਛੇ--*Jaat ajaat koe prabh dhiaavai sabh poore maanas tinchhay* i.e; Anyone, of caste or no caste, who contemplates on God, becomes a blessed devotee of God” (GGS, p 1178).
- 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).
- ਜਾਤਿ ਅਜਾਤਿ ਅਜੋਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ਨਾ ਤਿਸ ਭਾਉ ਨ ਭਰਮਾ॥--*Jaat ajaat ajonee sambhao naa tis bhaao na bharmaa* i.e; “His caste is castelessness. He is incarnated not, He is Self- illuminated and without fear and doubt (GGS, p.597)

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

- ਜਾਤ ਬਰਨ ਕੁਲ ਸਹਸਾ ਚੁਕਾ 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 ਉਧਰੈ ਸੋ ਕਲਿ ਮਹਿ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਾਝਾ॥--*Khatri Brahmin Sood Vais updes chauh varna kao sanjha, gurmukh Naam japai udhray 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).
- ਜਾਤਿ ਅਜਾਤਿ ਜਪੈ ਜਨੁ ਕੋਇ॥ ਜੋ ਜਾਪੈ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਹੋਇ॥--*Jaat ajaat japai jan koe, jo jaapai tis kee gat ho-ay.*i.e; “Any of high, low or no caste may contemplate God, whoever meditates on Him, he is emancipated” (GGS, p. 1150).
- 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).
- ਜਾਤਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਨਹ ਪੁਛੀਐ ਸਚ ਘਰੁ ਲੇਹੁ ਬਤਾਇ॥ ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ॥ *jaat janam nah poochheeai 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).
- ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਜਾਤਿ ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੇ॥--*jano jaat na poochho jaati aagay jaat na hai* i.e, “Know that Divine Light is within all, donot inquire the caste. There is no caste in the next

world” (GGS, p. 349)

- ਫਕੜ ਜਾਤੀ ਫਕੜ ਨਾਉ।। ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਇਕਾ ਛਾਉ।।--Fakar jaati fakar nao, sabhna jian ika chhao i.e, “Meaningless is the caste and vain is the glory. The lord alone protects all beings” (GGS, p.83).
- 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 ਕਰੇਇ।--*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.

Sikhism took practical steps to eradicate the caste system:

- Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism chose Bhai Mardana, a Muslim as his first lifelong companion. He founded the basic institutions of Sikhism based on equality:

Sangat-Praying as equals.

Pangat---Sitting in a row as equals.

Langar-Eating cooked food as equals.

- 2nd Nanak, Guru Angad Dev created equality in learning. He named the script for Punjabi language introduced by Guru Nanak, as Gurmukhi. After giving it form and finish he produced booklets of alphabets (*Baalupdesb-bwlaupdyS*) of the Punjabi language and made copies of the hymns of Guru Nanak and distributed them among the Sikh centers for teaching to the common mass of the people in the Punjab to increase the number of the literates there. Thus he broke the monopoly of the Brahmin over learning, who boasted of having the knowledge of Sanskrit, which was neither spoken nor understood by the common mass of the people in the Punjab.
- 3th Nanak, Guru Amar Dass got *Baoli* dug at Goindwal, where people had to go down the steps to reach water and fill their buckets as equals. Before this the Shudras were not allowed to draw water from the community wells.
- 4th Nanak, Guru Ram Dass got *Amrit-sarovar* (Amrit-sar) dug for bathing in the same water as equals.
- 5th Nanak, Guru Man Dev built--Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) with four doors

denoting that it was open to all the four castes-Brahmins, Kashatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, to all four religions in India-Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism, and to all the people of the world from all directions-- North, South, East and west. He edited Aad Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) the holy Sikh scripture, which is in itself an example of casteless-ness. In addition to the hymns of the Sikh Gurus contains hymns of holy men of other religions and different castes including the Shudras.

- 9th Nanak, Guru Teg Bahadur himself strictly monotheist sacrificed his life to defend the faith of Idolatrous Hindus.
- 10th Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, gave Sikhism, the *Naas* doctrine: ***Kul Naas***, (deliverance from shams of caste system by birth), ***Dharam Naas*** (deliverance from previous religious practices), ***Karam Naas*** (deliverance from ritualism); ***Bharam Naas*** (deliverance from all the superstitions), ***Kirt Naas*** (deliverance 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 soldering; 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. The division of the Sikhs on such a basis was the creation of early writers of Sikhism who were mostly literate Hindus especially Brahmins, 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 divisive caste system, which forms the bedrock of the Brahminism / Sntan 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 name therefore is not a true Sikh, but a hypocrite.

Chapter 9

Rejection of various concepts and practices of Hinduism by Sikhism

Rejection of the Hindu concept of trinity of God and its symbol *Oam* (ॐ) in Sikhism

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 mathematical digit one-1- (*ikk*) before the open end Punjabi (Gurmukhi) alphabet *oora* ਓ, there by creating the new syllable 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 represented by the syllable ॐ. *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. Guru Nanak pronounced ੴ as ‘*Ekankar*’ (GGS, p. 30,296, 831) and *Ek Oankar* also. 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 ਥਲਿ 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 keeaa jin chit. Oankaar sil jug bhae. Oankar bed nirmae. Oankaar shabad udhare. Oankaar gurmukh tare. Oankar akhar sunah*

beechar. 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 commodityIf 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 bt false (GGS, p.929)

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

Pracice of renunciation and Asceticism in Hinduism and its rejection in Sikhism

In religious life renunciation (Tiag-ਤਿਆਗ) means dissociation from wordly life (*Grahisti jivan*). All ancient Indian religious systems (Hinduism, Budhism 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 dicotchotomy 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*" ie, "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 ਪੈਨੂੰਦਿਆਂ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆਂ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ॥-Nanak *Satgur bhetiyai poori hovay jugat, hasandian, khelandian, penandian, khavandian vichay hovay mukat* (Ibid, p.522). Sikhism believes that one can lead a thoroughly religious life, as a part of the household, "ਗਿਰੁ 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 ਕੇ ਵਰਸਾਇ॥ *Is bhekhay thaavah girho bhalaa 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 ਗਿਰਹ ਉਦਾਸੁ॥ – *Jion jal mein kamla alpato vartey, tion vichey 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 jiwan*) 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 its rejection in Sikhism

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.

Sikh view

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 ਸਧਯਾ ਤਾਹਿ ਹੀਜ ਕੀ ਬਡਯਾ 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 bahar 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 its rejection by Sikhism

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 ਮਚੈ।। (GGS, p.1350).

Sikh View:

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 ਪਾਪੁ 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 sajjia 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।ਜੋ 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).

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 incarnation theory of Hinduism by Sikhism

Avtaar Pooja (Worship of Incarnations) and its rejection in Sikhism

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 *Avtaar* 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.

Sikh view:

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 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 ਧੰਧਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਨਹੀ ਨਹੀ॥ – “*Janam maran tay rehat Narain*” i.e; “The Almighty is free from birth and death” (Ibid, M5, p.1 136)
- ਤੂੰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ 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 ਬੇਅੰਤੁ – *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 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 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 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 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 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 ਕਯੋਂ ਪਥ ਕੋ ਰਥ ਹਾਕ ਧਯੋ ਜੁ॥ If you call Him (Krishna) all goodness and

- without enmity, why did then He become the charitor of Arjuna?
- ਤਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕਰ ਕੈ ਜਿਹ ਕੋ ਕੋਊ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਲੇਨ ਲਯੋ ਜੁ॥ 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 ਕਰਾਯੋ॥ 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 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 180very impotent 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 were more clearly understood by the devotees viz: Rama, Krishna, Gobind, Gopal, Banwari, Murari, Damodar etc.

Rejection of 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, shudra, 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):

- From the 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? *So kion manda akhie jit jamein rajaan*. From the woman is the man, without woman there is none GGS, Var Asa M1, p.473).
- 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.
- Guru Hargobind during the course of his conversation with sant Samrath Ram Dass, the mentor of Shiva jee Marhatta called woman, "Aurat eemaan"—Woman is the conscious of man. This shows unequivocally the high esteem in which a woman is required to be held in Sikhism.

Sikhism took practical steps for the socio-religious equality of man and woman:

- In Sikhism there is no ban or prohibition on women to attend a Gurdwara and pay obeisance. Women are equally entitled to get Sikh initiation (Baptism) like men and wear articles of Sikh 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*' (One who kills his daughter).
- Sikhism strictly forbids '*Sati*'. the burning of widow on the pyre of her diseased husband

Glimpses of Sikhism

- A widow or a divorced woman is allowed to remarry and lead a householder's life if she so desired.
- Sikhism advocates education of women and encourages them to adopt various professions including armed forces and politics. Sikhism strictly forbids veiling of women.

Rejection of Authority of Scriptures of Hinduism by Gurmat / Sikhism

Supremacy of Vedas is not accepted in Sikh religion / Sikhi / Sikhism:

- 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 evil 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 ਦਰਗਹ ਪਾਈਐ ਥਾਉ॥ ਬੇਦੁ ਵਪਾਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਰਾਸਿ ਕਰਮੀ ਪਲੈ ਹੋਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਸੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਲਦਿ ਨ ਚਲਿਆ ਕੋਇ॥--The Vedas proclaim that virtue 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).
- ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਪੁੰਨ ਪਾਪ ਬੀਚਾਰਦੇ ਤਤੈ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਣੀ॥--*Simrit shastar pun paap beecharday tattay saar na janee*. The Simritis and Shastras discriminate between good and evil but donot know the essence of the Real Thing. (GGS, p.920).
- 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 ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਵਾਦ ਵਖਾਣੇ॥ ਅੰਤਰ ਤਮਸੁ ਆਪ ਨ ਪਛਾਣੈ॥ (GGS. P.331)
- ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹਬਾਹੁੰ ਬਾਹਿਰਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਸਾਹ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਾਹਿਰਾ॥ (GGS, p. 397)

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:

Glimpses of Sikhism

- 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 Punjab, the Sikh homeland 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 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*—Supreme Eternal Reality / 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 was subsequently named 'Sanskrit' and that became the religious language of the Aryans. 'Sanskrit' therefore, is a dialect of Punjabi language spoken in ancient times in the mountaneous areas of the north Punjab around Taxilla.

Around 1000 BC; the Aryans produced scriptures in *Brahm Bhasha* (Sanskrit). The Scriptures were named, 'Vedas' literally meaning books of knowledge. They remembered them orally and continued to transmit them from generation to generation verbally for centuries, therefore the vedas during this period were also called "Shruti"—Sunī sunāae--*ਸੁਣੀ ਸੁਣਾਈ*. 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 grammer, the *Ashtadhyai*. The Aryans recorded their Sanskrit scriptures in Brahmi / Siddhmarica script of the Punjabi Jogis as Sanskrit had no script of its own. They renamed Siddhmatrica as Sharda. 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 around Taxilla. After centuries of their stay, development and proliferation in the hills of the Punjab the Aryans descended into the plains of the Punjab. They tried to dominate the natives of the plains of the Punjab, called 'Jatts' through the 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 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 Brahman developed an extremely hostile attitude towards the jatts 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 called, '*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 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 named their language, '*Brahmbhasha*' as, "Sanskrit" wrote religious books in it and named them, '*Shastras*' in the 11th 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 Brahmans. Sanskrit never became language of the common people any where 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 (Brahmans) 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 pass 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 foot hills of the Punjab (The Penguin History of Early India from origins to AD 1300, Romila Thapar, p.163). Rishi Ved Viyas is said to have recorded the vedas in writing and the script used was Siddhmatica of the Punjabi Jogis, but they renamed it as Sharda and then they used local version of Siddhmatica 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. They 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 society was divided on the simple question of wearing a janeu. 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.

According to Gurmat it (Janeu) cannot put any check on evil intentions of man. 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, according to Guru Nanak, the sacred thread of the Brahman cannot have any influence on the morals and spirituality of the wearer. It is perishable and does no good to the wearer. At the time of the formal consecration of Guru Nanak into Brahmanical religion called *Varn Ashram Dharma* (Hinduism) arranged by his parents as per *Varn Ashram* Brahmanical (Hindu) rites he refused to wear such a Janeu and there by his initiation into the *Vran Dharma* saying:

- ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ॥ ਏਹ ਜਨੇਉ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੇ 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 hae 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, M1, 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 instuuctions 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 ਕੇ ਆਖੈ ਪਾਇ॥ ਹੋਇ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ ਸੁਟੀਐ

ਭੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਹੋਰ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਤੁਟਈ ਜੇ ਤਗਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੋਰ॥ *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 ਤੂਟਸਿ ਪੂਤੁ॥--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 ਬੁਕ ਪਵੈ ਨਿਤ ਦਾੜੀ॥ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਪੈਰੀ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਹਥੀ॥ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਜੇਹਵਾ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਅਖੀ॥ ਵੇਤਗਾ ਆਪੇ ਵਤੈ॥ ਵਟਿ ਧਾਗੇ ਅਵਰਾ ਘਤੈ॥ ਲੈ ਭਾਤ 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 for 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 ਪਰਧਾਨੁ॥ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਧੋਤੀ ਸੁਚਿਤ ਚਉਕਾ ਤਿਲਕੁ ਕਰਨਣੀ ਹੋਇ॥ ਭੁਉ 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 kiaa tikaa kiaa 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 saffron (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 ਲਿਲਾਟੰ ਦੁਇ ਧੋਤੀ ਬਸਤ੍ਰ 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 [[7]।।--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

Sikh view:

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 chetee, 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 dhivao, 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, hriday 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॥ ਭੁਊ 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॥ ਰਾਮੁਨਾਮੁ 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)
- ਗਊ 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 ਪਤਿ 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) .
- 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 ਹੂਆ 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 shinning 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 gtoes 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 ਪਰਧਾਨੁ॥--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 by 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 Idus valley. The Aryans learnt *yoga* (*Jog*) from the Punjabi (Harappan) *jogis*. The Harappan *jogis* worshipped only “One Supreme Etenal Reality”, whom the called ‘Brahma’. *Jog* in Punjabi language 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 propogated the theory of ‘Trinity of God’ and started the worship of deities: Vishu and Shiva in addition to Brahma represented by- ॐ (Om / Oam / Aum). At the time of the birth of Sikhism in the 15th century, the *Jogis* / *Naths* and *Siddhas* dominated the religious landscape in Punjab. They practiced asceticism, renunciation, celibacy and tortuous practices for seeking salvation.

Sikh view:

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 brealize Gid / Truth. One is liberated while enjoying wordly 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 ਹਥਹੁ 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, exhaltation 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 ਅਸ਼ਟਾਂਗ 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 ਲੋਆ॥ ਮਗਰ ਪਾਛੈ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਸੂਝੈ ਏਹੁ ਪਦਮੁ ਅਲੋਆ॥--*Akhee ta meeteh naak pakreh thagan kao sansaar.1. Rhao. Ant setee naak pakreh soojhtay tin alo. Magar paachhay kachh na soojhay ih padam aloa*—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 ਝੁਲੈ॥ 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 ਝੁਲੈ॥-- Naam bina fokat sabh karma join bazigar bharam bhoalay—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 yogi” (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.

Rejection of Hindu Mythology by Sikhism

Mythology is the science or study of myths (ਮਨ ਘੜਤ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ / telling tales or legends). Brahman 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 Brahmans 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 (Brahmans) 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 Brahmans 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 Brahmans 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 Brahmanic 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 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 (ਪੀੜਾ) 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 *Shrads*, belief in magical and occult powers, tying of multicoloured 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.

- ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਵੇਦ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਵਾਦ ਵਖਾਣੇ।। ਅੰਤਰ ਤਮਸੁ ਆਪ ਨ ਪਛਾਣੈ।। (GGS. P.331)
- ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹਬਾਹੂੰ ਬਾਹਿਰਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਸਾਹ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਾਹਿਰਾ।। (GGS, p. 397)

Sikhism versus Hinduism

- Sikhism is the youngest whereas Hinduism is one of the oldest religions of the world.
- Sikhism is a prophetic religion based on a definitive revelation like Semitic religions of the west, whereas Hinduism, has an anonymous mysticism as its source of validity.
- Sikhism believes in the oneness of God and is strictly monotheistic faith, whereas 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 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 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 ਮੂਰਖ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਧਿਆਨ ਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ॥ ਕੋਣ ਸਗ 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 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:

- (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 society [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 ਹਥੋ 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 ਸੂਦਰ ਪਸ਼ੁ ਨਾਰੀ।। ਜਿਹ 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 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.

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 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). 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., “ਨਮਸਕ੍ਰਮ੍ਯ ਅਨੰਮਯ [–*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:

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 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 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 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 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 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 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 revere 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

Glimpses of Sikhism

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)

Glimpses of Sikhism

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

Glimpses of Sikhism

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

Glimpses of Sikhism

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

Glimpses of Sikhism

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.

Parvarti: 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

Glimpses of Sikhism

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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