# ETHICS OF THE SIKHS

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PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

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*by*

**Avtar Singh**

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# FOREWORD

Religions may be described as sacrificial, ritualistic, mystical or philosophical. They might combine all or some of these facts, or there might be moments in their careers when such definitions applied to them more aptly than on others. Yet each religion must have a code of conduct for its followers, however superstitious or elevated, conscious or unconcious. Sikhism is one of the most profoundly moralized faiths, though it does not claim any formal system of ethics. The sources of Sikh teaching is the Guru Granth which comprises poetry of deep mystical intuition and fervour as uttered by six of the ten founding Gurus. There is no speculative thesis elaborated in it, nor any codified principles or laws of behaviour. Unmistakable, however, is the basic spiritual and humanistic ideal which emerges as the sovereign rule of life. Faith and love are its principal motives. Belief in God is the primary dynamic of Sikh living.The Guru Granth contains a reverberating and sterling testament of trust in the Absolute. Creation is perceived as grounded in the Divine and informed by a spiritual purpose. Verse of joyous quest, lyrical devotion and humble penitence is interspersed with high moral sentiments. Practical excellence is in fact made an integral part of piety. Self-fulfilment is predicated upon active participation : withdrawal is disavowed. To realize God's will in daily life is the consummation of Sikh aspiration. Empty ceremonial and observances are considered as of no avail. In the words of Guru Nanak : *Sachoh orey sabh ko uppar sach āchār, i.e.*, truth is higher than everything, higher than truth is true living. Truth is achieved by living a life of faith, charity and courage. A perfected being is defined in the Sikh Scripture as "one who revels in doing good to others." Altruistic action and righteous character take precedence in the Sikh scheme of values.

Without any external commandments, Sikhism is built on an essentially ethical principle. Its morality, inseparable from its spiritual core and history, has not been theoretically worked out. Here is a

scholarly lag as well as a handicap to the understanding of the Sikh faith. Its empiric and historical concern has led to some to the conclusion that Sikhism is a practical faith, without any philosophy. It has also been alleged that Sikhism lacks a moral code.

Dr. Avtar Singh, a young Sikh Scholar, has for the first time atttempted a systematic and scientific study of the Sikh ethic. To this end, he has explored the entire Sikh corpus, from the Guru Granth to the codes and manuals which followed the creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the ten Gurus. The investigation, detailed and serious, has been carried out with scholarly assiduousness and aplomb and with deep analytical insight. The author develops his argument knowledgeably and clearly and presents a cogent and faithful philosophy of the Sikh morals. Broadly, the book constructs the overall Sikh world view in its moral, spiritual and religious dimensions.

Although it does not set out with this aim, the book resolves some of the difficulties "outside" scholars encounter in their study of Sikhism. Several Western writers have, for instance, been baffled by the transformation it underwent in the hands of the later Gurus. Some of them have seem in it a falling-off, a deterioration of Sikhism and a reversal of the teachings of Guru Nanak. The "inside" view has been that the militant turn after the Fifth Guru was part of the social and historical evolution of Sikhism and that what happened in the time of Guru Gobind Singh was a natural culmination of Guru Nanak's vision. Dr. Avtar Singh brings to this argument a new perspective by elaborating on the doctrinal harmony and continuity of Sikhism.

This work was originally the author's thesis presented to the Punjab University, Chandigarh, for Ph.D. degree. Yet it does not suffer from the heaviness of a doctoral dissertation and reads freshly and sensitively. The scholarly apparatus is impeccable, but the writing is exempt from technical jargon and has a marked personal flavour. For this reason it will appeal both to the general reader and the *cognoscente*. The Department was especially happy that it was able to include it in its publication schedule in honour of the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.

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# I
# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 : Definition and scope

The ethics of the Sikhs may be understood to embrace the theory of good, evil, right and wrong as found in the teachings of the Sikh Gurus (teachers and founders ) from Guru Nanak onwards and which are now consolidated in the *Ādi Granth*, the principal scripture of the Sikhs. However, this definition needs to include the traditions of *Rahitnāmas* and *Sikh Rahit Maryāda* (life-rules) which have exercised tremendous influence on the conduct of the Sikhs. It is generally conceded that if any teachings of the life-rules conflict with the precepts of the *Ādi Granth*, then the latter is to be followed. These codes or life-rules have a profound moral content along with organisational duties and imperatives. The organisational imperatives are not a part of the *Ādi Granth*, but it is a development of the era of the tenth Guru and the period following his final institutionalisation of Sikhism in its present form. However, the need to follow the teachings of the *Ādi Granth* is stressed even in these life-rules. The ethics of the Sikhs, therefore, may be defined in broader terms as doctrine of values in human conduct as found in the *Ādi Granth* and those of the life-rules which do not conflict with the spirit of the former.

The present work may be looked upon as a systematics study of the authentic ethical speculations in Sikhism within the above context. It is, therefore, not a study of morals as actually practised by the Sikhs, but as they ought to be according to the teachings of the Gurus. It is a textual study of the original sources to discover the ethical views of the founders of Sikhism. Reference will also be made to the comparative views held by other systems. The research is, thus, mostly textual and analytical and not historical in the sense of the appreciation of the moral praxis of the Sikhs during any particular period.

The scope of the book is intentionally wide in the sense that it

covers the teachings of all the Sikh Gurus which, in terms of time, extend over a period of nearly three hundred years from 1469 to about 1708. Nevertheless, the research may be regarded as limited in that the text is chiefly concerned with the ethical aspect of the Sikh thought.

**1.2 : Need for the present research project**

The need for the present work, *Ethics of the Sikhs*, has arisen for more than one reason. It is partly due to the fact that it was not propounded by the founders of Sikhism in a manner called systematic. The need for such an exposition was not felt during the life time of the Gurus, as their physical presence more than made up of for the need for a system. This has been the approach of the founders in the other systems as well. Dirk Jellema, a scholar of Christianity, has expressed a similar view about Christian ethics.[1] Similarly, E.W. Hopkins has remarked about morality in India that "it is a subject incidentally broached but never systematically pursued by the Hindus. Morality, its origin and in its expression in various commands and interdictions was too much taken for granted to be discussed."[2]

In the case of Sikhism, the *Ādi Granth*, the scripture of the Sikhs, contains the ethical teachings intertwined with the metaphysical and religious declarations. This is done for the simple reason that in actual life itself a person finds them commingled. This book is an attempt to glean the ethics of the Sikhs from the main sources of Sikhism and to build a systematic exposition. This will be done by separating or extracting the ethical principles and precepts manifested in the *Ādi Granth* and other allied literature (reference to which will be made in the section on the Sources).

Another reason for undertaking the present work has been to find out the truth in the indirect insinuation of a scholar, Ernest

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[1] Dirk Jellema, "Christian Ethics", *Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, ed., Carl, F.H. Henry, (New York : Channel Press, 1957), p. 110. "The Bible contains the seeds for a systematic ehtics, an ethics which takes up the contemporary problems of man and society... the Bible contains a Christian ethics in the sense that the earth contains a treasure. It must be searched for."

[2] E.W. Hopkins, *Ethics of India* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1-25), p. 88

Trumpp, in the Introduction to his translation of the *Ādi Granth* in the English language. He has hinted at the lack of a moral system which could have guided the Sikhs. His remarks in original are : "They [Sikhs] could easily destroy by their martial fury an old weak establishment, but were not able to erect a new solid fabric upon its ruins, as they had not in themselves the necessary moral and intellectual capacities."[1] The present research is an attempt to find out whether or not Sikhism lacks a moral system to support it. In case we succeed in finding one, the indictment by Ernest Trumpp would be understood as his personal opinion about some Sikhs of some particular historical period. This part of his statement can then be left to the students of history and it would not be within the purview of the present study.

Here it may be added that Max Arthur Macauliffe, who undertook the study of Sikhism, on the other hand, made a very generous claim in respect of Sikh morals, which more than countered the assertion of Ernest Trumpp. In a lecture in England, Macauliffe claimed, "I am engaged here tonight in offering to your attention a religion which has God and Soul, which presents no mysteries and which embraces an *ethical* system such as has never been excelled, if needed it has ever been equalled—I mean the Sikh Religion."[2] (Emphasis added.) But in view of his huge preoccupation with the Sikh religion as a whole he did not take up the task of a systematic exposition of the ethics of the Sikhs.

Again, in the comparatively more recent times, John Clark Archer, who is generally very just and objective in his study of Sikhism, has also pointed out in similar manner that "Nanak himself laid too little stress on human conduct and Sikhs have yet to formulate a code for its true guidance."[3] Now, Archer cannot be taken as seriously denying that Guru Nanak laid great stress on moral conduct and practice, as he must have been familiar with many expressions such as, "By talk alone none goes to the heavens; for emancipation is by

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[1] Ernest Trumpp, *The Ādi Granth*, (London : 1877), p. cxvi. His work has been included in the review of literature, *infra*.

[2] Max Arthur Macauliffe. *The Sikh Religion, A Lecture*, delivered before the Quest Society at Kensington, May 12, 1910 (Amritsar : S.G.P.C.) p.22

[3] John Clark Archer, *The Sikhs* (Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 329

living truth."[1] Then again, in the sermon to Muslims, Guru Nanak stresses again and again the need of "Truth, honest living and good of all" to be the proper prayer, which he calls as "prayer of deeds," all other prayers being declared by him as false.[2] The need for love and compassion[3] toward the living beings is the subject of another declaration of Guru Nanak. In still another sermon to the followers of Islam he advises them to substitute the religion rituals by ethical values and virtues. Many moral precepts, such as "mercy, faith, honest living, humility, good conduct, pious work and moral deeds"[4] figure very prominently in these addresses. In a similar address to the Hindus, Guru Nanak directs men to lead the life of the house-holders,[5] not to usurp what belongs to others,[6] and cleanse the mind of evil, rather than be occupied with ablutions. The need for substituting the religious ritual of the Hindus, known as thread ceremony, by the ethical conduct and virtues such as "compassion, contentment and truth," is also found in the teachings of Guru Nanak.

In the light of the preceding *prima facie* evidence, John Clark Archer certainly could not be taken to have rightly denied the stress by Guru Nanak on the moral practice or conduct. He was in India for some time and in his first hand contact with various scholars of Sikhism he could not have escaped knowing all this. But, then, possibly he may be simply referring to the absence of a comprehensive moral code or lack of any systematic exposition of the ethics of the Sikhs by the scholars, which would highlight the type of moral conduct envisaged by the Gurus in Sikhism. This indeed is the only possible inference as, to repeat. Archer is generally very fair and objective in his study. It is this absence of a systematic exposition that has led to the present research.

Lastly, even though I am a Sikh. I was, before beginning this inquiry, conscious of my own ignorance of the deeper values of

[1] *Ādi Granth,* Vār of Mājh, M. 1, p. 141
[2] Ibid., (3-7), p. 141
[3] Ibid., (1-8), p. 141
[4] Ibid., (1-7), p. 140
[5] Ibid., (5), p. 140
[6] Ibid., (2-4), p. 139

Sikhism. The present work, therefore, is quite as new to me in many respects as it may be to others.

This work is an attempt at a systematic study of the ethics of the Sikhs. The task has presented some difficulties. I became conscious of the huge problems of the project as well as my own limitations as soon as I started a detailed survey of the subject matter. What has sustained me in courage in my effort to bring this work to a conclusion has been the ever new experience and knowledge that the research has yielded. It is thus the joy and pleasure of discovery that has kept me determined to complete this self-rewarding, long and arduous journey.

### 1.3 : Sources of the ethics of the Sikhs

Various sources for the present research have been used in order to present as complete a picture as possible. We may cite here the primary as well as some of the secondary sources. The criterion for the distinction being that the source which has been established to be the personal contribution of the Gurus may be treated as a primary source, while others that have a bearing on the development of ethical precepts in Sikhism, but are not directly traceable to the Gurus, may be treated as secondary sources. We propose first to enumerate here some important sources for the present study and then refer to some of them subsequently while undertaking a brief review of the literature and auxiliary events.

The *Ādi Granth* (primary source)

*Dasam Granth* (The scholars of Sikhism are still not agreed whether the whole of it is a primary source).

*Rahitnāmas* (a secondary source. A large number of formulations, inclusive of those by Nand Lal and Premsumārag are now available.)

*Sikh Rahit Maryāda* (published by Shriomani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee—a secondary source)

*Janam Sākhis* (a secondary source)

*Guru Pratap Sūraj Granth* (contribution of Bhai Santokh Singh—a secondary source)

*Gurubilās* (by Bhai Sukha Singh—a secondary source)

*Guruśhobha* (credited to Kavi Senapat, the court bard of the tenth Guru—a secondary source)

All the sourcess cited above are in the Punjabi language.

However, the *Ādi Granth*, some of the *Janam Sākhis* (not the one by Meharban) and two *Rahitnāmas* by Nand Lal and Prehalad Singh have been rendered into the English Language.

### 1.4 : Brief review of sources and literature of Sikhism

It was observed by A.E. Taylor that "no living theology has ever arisen from mere intellectual curiosity and the serious theologies have always come into being as the fruit of reflection upon lived and practised religions."[1] Any new religion in its acceptance of the contents of the older faiths and traditions appears very close to them, but its individuality and distinction is marked by what it rejects of the old and what it introduces afresh, thereby precipitating a new *gestalt*. When the differences reach a stage that departure becomes irreversible, then it is neither necessary nor perhaps possible to reduce it to the earlier traditions, to which it may be indebted in many ways. Sikhism, too, is obliged to the older theologies, critical reflection on which, coupled with the genius of its ten Gurus from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh, led to its own distinct emergence and development. Let us now refer briefly to various stages of the development of Sikhism in terms of its literature.

It may indeed be added that rather difficult and perhaps even arbitrary that a continuous stream of human thought and literature may be divided by any student into well marked different periods and the cross sections thus abstracted be cited as exclusively representative of some particular trend and true in their aloofness. However, if we bear in mind that the division of the literature of Sikhism into different periods attempted here is not indicative of any such claim of their being absolutely unconnected or any argument for the discontinuity of thought or moral principles, then the attempt to so refer to them here may not only be accepted but also be seen as necessary.

#### First stage of the exposition of Sikhism and its contribution (Pre-Gurus' period)

In a way, it may not be erroneous to say that Sikhism is partly older than its exposition by the Gurus, namely Guru Nanak onwards.

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[1] A.E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist*, Gifford Lectures (London : Macmillan & Co., 1951), p. 10

The Holy Book of the Sikhs, the *Ādi Granth*, contains the hymns and tenets preached by the devotees (*Bhagats*) who lived much earlier than the appearance of Sikh Gurus and the emergence of Sikhism in its present form. In terms of communities these saint-poets whose hymns have been included in the *Ādi Granth* are both Hindu and Muslim. The period covered by these *Bhagats* is long; from Jaidev (1170) onwards to Kabir (1440-1518) and Sheikh Farid (1173-1266) in addition to which there are some saint-poets whose hymns have been included in the *Ādi Granth*; but we do not know the exact time during which they lined and preached their views.

The selection of compositions of these saints is based on their ideology (*Gurubilās* of VIth Guru). This gives some indication that Sikhism was marking its diagreement with a multitude of other saints whose hymns were not included.

This period is simultaneously marked by a sort of disintegration of the order tradition and ushering in of a religious renaissance of the rising humanism. It appears to be characterised by the loss of hope in the serviceability and efficacy of the older tradition to solace and guide the men who were almost conditioned to the earlier views to the extent of being a reflex response mechanism to the nearly over bearing barren ritualism. However, one can also hear, a faint, but an unmistakable trumpet, announcing a new and more resurgent humanistic awakening, sponsored by all men in their togetherness. The situation was precipitated by the infusion of a different mode of life and belief which accompanied the victorious armies from outside India. A struggle was smouldering ethically and religiously for the release of man from the suffocating web woven by the time-worn mores and ethos. Every thing appeared to be poised for a humanistic avowal. The hymns of this period, included in the *Ādi Granth*, provide the cue to this resurgence of religiously touched humanistic ideals. This may be termed by us as *potential Sikhism*. On the horizon of Indian ethico-religious thought then appears the second stage of the exposition of Sikhism by the ten Gurus.

**Second stage of the exposition of Sikhism and its literature**

(1) *The Gurus and the Ādi Granth* : The most comprehensive literature on Sikhism, which is the primary source of the present

research as well, is found to belong to the period of its exposition by the Gurus. The principal and primary source is the *Ādi Granth,* compiled mainly in 1604 by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev. Formerly, it was called only *Granth Sahib* but later, in order to distinguish it from *Dasam Granth,* ascribed to the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, the prefix *Ādi* (prior or first) was added and it is now generally called *Ādi Granth* or *Śri Guru Granth Sāhib,* to denote the fact that it is at present the Guru (teacher) of the Sikhs. It includes the hymns and teachings of first Guru, Nanak Dev (1469-1539), Second Guru, Angad Dev (1504-1533), third Guru, Amardas (1476-1574), fourth Guru, Ramdas (1534-1581), fifth Guru, Arjan Dev (1563-1606), and ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur (1622-1675). There is one Śloka which some scholars credit to Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru (1666-1708). Besides the hymns of the Gurus the *Ādi Granth* includes the hymns of saint-poets,[1] to whom we had referred while dealing with the first stage of the exposition of Sikhism, termed by us as potential Sikhism. The last human Guru, Gobind Singh, did not include his own hymns in the *Ādi Granth* which has given rise to various speculations among the scholars. However, we must also add here that the last recension of the *Ādi Granth,* was dictated by him and it was he again who bestowed the guruship to the *Ādi Granth.* His own compositions, it is believed by some scholars, are contained in what is now called *Dasam Granth.*

As to the *Ādi Granth,* it is a huge scripture of fourteen hundred and thirty pages, written in languages more than one, and further many dialects of these languages. The attempt to expound the faith in the language of the common people, which changes rather often, has led to a state where a part of the *Ādi Granth* is no more accessible to

[1] A movement had emerged in Sikhism, before the partition of India in 1947, spearheaded among others by an organisation named *Panch Khalsa Dewān or Khalsa Parliament,* at Bhasoud, in Punjab, which argued for the exclusion of the hymns of the *bhagats* or saint-poets. Their contention seems to rest, first, on some contradictions which these hymns of the saint-poets (*bhagats*) appeared to introduce into Sikhism, and second, that the words (*bani*) of persons other than Gurus is *Kachi* (frail and imperfect). The movement lost its momentum during and after the partition of India. (Refer, Harbhajan Singh, *Satguru bina hōr kachi hai bāni,* Panch Khalsa Dewan, Bhasoud, 1946).

the persons for whom it was meant. Consequently, the initiative again gradually appears to be passing into the hands of priests, scholars and interpreters.

The medium used by the Gurus in the *Ādi Granth* is poetry and the master poets have also kept in mind the rhythm and metre along with the thought-content. It is relatively difficult to interpret and analyse the philosophy contained in poetry, as the poet very often uses symbols for the communications of his personal frame of reference and experience which at times involves equivocation. And when this frame of reference and experience is of the nature of mystic intuition, the message communicated through symbols is very often only felt vaguely. Here while the inner self seems to know all about it, the thought still seems to be groping for its essentials. The difficulty of any critical and philosophic analysis there can only be imagined and not fully described.

The above difficulty, however is not insurmountable, and with patience and concerted effort, it indeed becomes possible to reach the message directly. But a person with no such aptitude may become a victim of some hasty generalisations, such as one made by Ernest Trumpp that the "*Sikh Granth* is a very long volume, but incoherent and shallow in the extreme, and couched at the same time in dark and perplexing language, in order to cover these defects."[1] The remark is a mis-statement and a result of what Max Arthus Macauliffe later called *odium theologicum.*

The *Ādi Granth* is the principal repertory of the morals as taught by the Gurus. It would be seen in the text of the present book that Gurus' moral teachings point to a comprehensive ethical system. Broadly speaking, the ethico-spiritual precepts of the Gurus in the *Ādi Granth* can be generally summed up under three main headings : (1) the need for the improvement of man, (2) the nature of relation of man to man, as it ought to be; and (3) the union of man with Spiritual entity, which is said to be 'not away from us'. The union is called *sanjog,* which is the highest a man ought to aim at. These are the cardinal themes of the *Ādi Granth :* man, society of man, and man in

[1] Ernest Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. vii

union with the Spiritual entity. These appear again and again in the utterances of the different Gurus and the various aspects of man's life are stressed and highlighted. The Gurus return to man many times, and show him the way to solve the problems of life. A great stress is laid on moral conduct or praxis.

Another equally favourite theme in the *Ādi Granth* is the fact of continuity of existence in terms of spiritual unity. The Gurus reiterate that there runs an underlying unity throughout creation, and thus every one is related to every one else. The Gurus remind the seekers that they ought to realize this underlying unity of existence; this view, again, is translated in their view of social ethics.

The Gurus were men of vision and the *Ādi Granth* is full of their ethico-spiritual insights. They were sensitive to the socio-natural environments of man. Guru Nanak, after witnessing bloodshed during Babar's attack on India, had proclaimed, "And there shall arise another disciple of real hero !!"[1] He was not predicting the rise and fall of any ruler or empire. He was rather plainly pointing to the crisis which was to lead to the unchaining of the spirit of man and incarnation of humanistic age which was to be the rise of the "disciple of real hero." We may now refer to other literature contemporaneous with the Gurus.

(2) *Bhai Gurdas* : Bhai Gurdas was the scribe to whom the first recension of the *Ādi Granth* was dictated by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev and consequently his personal contribution also claims a high degree of authenticity and validity. His compositions are *Vārs, Kabits, Swayyās.*

His *Vārs* are mostly an attempt to render in simple language the centrality of the moral virtues and values as cherished by the Gurus in Sikhism. In seeking to cite the source of moral precepts, he was delved into the teachings of the Gurus and while presenting the moral norms he displays a deep concern to relate them to man and his natural surroundings. The *Vārs* show that although he was keenly and directly interested in delineating clearly the moral precepts, yet many times his method of simply stating or enumerating certain virtues and values, without entering into any detailed analysis, was conditioned by his

[1] *Ādi Granth*, Tilang M.1 (2-3-5), p. 733 (*Hōr bhi uthasi marad kā chella.*)

immediate task of showing the *Raha* (path); Sikhism being termed by him as *gaddi raha* (the grand highway).

The examination of his compositions reveals that, among other ethical and religious principles, he was pre-eminently attracted to many central moral principles, such as, eschewing of pride and cultivation of humility and altruism *(parupkār).* Throughout his *Vārs* one finds stanzas studded with illustrations in this direction. For example, we find him showing that water, very important in view of its utility for life, still flows in the lower direction as compared to Simil tree which stands tall and aloof but in fact is useless as it does not yield any fruit. The bamboo tree is condemned as it is haughty and stands erect. Then there are illustrations of a tree yielding fruit to others even when they throw stones at it for getting it. Or, there is wood, which in the form of a boat ferries men across the rivers even though the owner of the boat had got the wood cut and sawn in order to convert it into a boat. All these, along with many other examples, are cited by Bhai Gurdas to stress the Virtue of humility and altruism. He also stressed the need of controlling various motives and praxis such as, concupiscence, ire, avarice, attachment and pride.

Some of the *Vārs* of Bhai Gurdas were elaborated and commented upon in *Bhagatratnāvali* and *Giānratnāvali* by Mani Singh, the scribe to whom the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, dictated the final recension of the *Ādi Granth.* These commentaries show a continuity of same ethical precepts and values even during the time of tenth Guru, which were extant during the life of earlier Gurus.

Bhai Gurdas has combined in his writings religious ideals with humanistic moral precepts. His attention was incessantly focussed on the moral character and conduct of man. It is, therefore, no wonder that his *Vār* is held in Sikhism as the *key* to the *Ādi Granth,* the main scripture of the Sikhs.

(3) *Janam Sākhis-literature contemporary with Sikh Gurus : Janam Sākhis* are the scattered biographical sketches of Guru Nanak, ascribed to various narrators, principal among whom are Bala (also called *Paiḍe Mokhe Wali Janam Sākhi*) and Manohar Das Meharban (1581-1640). The latter *Janam Sākhi* has been edited in Punjabi language in 1962 under the auspices of Sikh History Research

Department, Amritsar.[1] Generally a great number of *Janam Sākhis*, with some differences in versions and contents, are current.

In these *Janam Sākhis* the eye of the narrator is always on the moral or the practical lesson to which these anecdotes invariable lead. It is through these morals tales of Guru Nanak's life that the young children and the lay are nurtured and introduced to the ethical precepts of Sikhism. Herein are told the morals of altruism, social service and absurdity of the claim that the rich are necessarily better men. In it are included various dialogues stressing the futility of asceticism or renunciation. The validity of the social context and the superiority of the life of the householder is brought in broad relief. The moral of the brotherhood of mankind is encountered in the anecdotes connected with the visit of Guru Nanak to Mecca and Medina, the holy shrines of the Muslims. The individual narrator might have added some details here and there but the general trend of the religiously touched humanistic morals remains almost unchanged. Consequently, these *Janam Sākhis* serve to maintain the continuity and uniformity in many ethical precepts and norms.

These *Janam Sākhis,* however, by virtue of their very nature, scope and methodology do not attempt at building any ethical system, though in themselves they preserve a vivid record of values and morals cherished during the time of the Gurus as well as some of the later period.

(4) *Literature of tenth Guru, Gobind Singh's period :* The next landmark of the moral percepts of Sikhism is met in the literature of

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[1] *Janam Sākhi* of Bhai Manohar Das Meharban has remained neglected for a long time, perhaps, because Meharban was closely related to Prithi Chand who sought to create schism in Sikhism. The editors of the presently published *Janam Sākhi* have attempted to clear Meharban of this stigma. Bhai Meharban was grandson of Guru Ram Das and nephew of Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru. The treatment of themes in this *Janam Sākhi* is by far superior to other similar narrations and Bhai Meharban shows deeper philosphic knowledge of the doctrine and also displays greater skills in the handling of his problem, along with some Vedantic influence.

In a way the *Janam Sākhi* by Bhai Meharban may be ranked equal if not higher to the *Vār* of Bhai Gurdas in its erudition and dialetic, coeval with their simplicity and lucidity. One may also be deeply impressed by a somewhat Socratic conversational style adopted by Bhai Meharban in the *Janam Sākhi* under reference.

Guru Gobind Singh's period. It is generally believed that under his guidance huge literature dealing with the tenets of Sikhism was compiled and in terms of weight the literature was around twenty quintals. It is further believed that it was lost or destroyed during the various conflicts, battles and persecutions of the Sikhs by the Mughal rulers and Hindu hill rulers. To hand, we have now the compilation called the *Dasam Granth*, which contains many independent compositions. The scholars of Sikhism are yet to agree upon the final acceptance or rejection of some of the compositions ascribed to the *Dasam Granth.*

It is to the genuis of Guru Gobind Singh that we owe the baptization and institutionalisation of Sikhism, along with certain categorical organisational duties which came to mark off the final departure of Sikhism from the traditional theologies. Guru Gobind Singh is the last human Guru of the Sikhs as after him the *gurushíp* was bestowed on the *Ādi Granth,* which transfer was effected in his own lifetime by the Guru.

Incidentally, a question may be faced here, whether any sudden and completely new turn is given to Sikhism by the tenth Guru and with what effect on the ethics of the Sikhs. The fact of development is a historical fact and undeniable. The point, which is many times argued in public and private conversations is whether it was a complete change in Sikhism from pacifist approach and declarations against ceremonial ritualism to what a scholar has called "militaristic energism and adoption of certain characteristic Gestalt and morphology."[1] This question is also taken up by a scholar of Sikhism, Bhai Jodh Singh.[2] The point which the historians seem to suggest is that of trans-valuation and not of simple additions in Sikhism during Guru Gobind Singh's period. And yet the fact of simple additions and development only is a fact of history, in as much as otherwise the stress on the values of

[1] B.K. Sarkar, *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*, "Sacred Book of Hindus", Series book no. XXXII. (Allahabad : Panini Office, 1937), p.100. By militaristic energism Sarkar means, the Sikhs' recourse to arms, and by Gestalt and morphology, the reference is to the categorical duties of keeping unshorn hair etc., all of which would be discussed in the Chapter on Duties, *infra.*

[2] Jodh Singh, *Gurmat Nirṇai* (Ludhiana : Lahore Book Shop, n.d.) p. 281

love and devotion[1] by Guru Gobind Singh is just the same as cherished by earlier Gurus. The moral virtue of facing and not running away from the struggle was stressed in Sikhism even earlier than Guru Gobind Singh and the same is continued by him in keeping with the historical context. We shall also refer to it in the chapter on Virtues while discussing the development of courage as a virtue in Sikhism. The historians who are unaware of the inner doctrinal aspect of Sikhism are enchanted by the external developments and proceed to infer from them that with the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, Sikhism underwent a complete transformation or trans-valuation. It may, however, be conceded here that in so far as the historians seek to make a statement of fact in some particular context in respect of certain details, their assertion may be accepted. The details such as baptization or some organisational duties introduced by Guru Gobind Singh are the facts of history and a credit to his genius. But if an attempt is made by the historians to suggest, *inter alia,* that this signifies a change in the doctrine or the general moral precepts of the Sikhs, then historians may be rightly accused of going beyond their premises.

The question of change in the doctrine or moral precepts under Guru Gobind Singh can be decided only when we take into consideration whether the teachings of first Guru, Nanak Dev, had the potentials of this development which culminated with the tenth Guru. Here it may be submitted that the Absolute (*Sat Nām Karta Purukh*) is described by Guru Nanak as "fearless and without enmity." It is this Absolute which is the ideal in Sikhism. Consequently, Sikhism right from Guru Nanak is nurtured on this ideal of being fearless and without enmity. Therefore, Sikhism, even during Guru Gobind Singh ought to be viewed as a direct continuation of this doctrinal approach of fearlessness and without enmity set down by Guru Nanak.

Let us now make a brief attempt to find out whether the institutionalisation of Sikhism took place suddenly with the tenth Guru or whether he was only consolidating finally the gradual development which had been taking place right from the first Guru

[1] Kavi Senapat, "*Guru Śobha*" ed. Bhai Kahan Singh, *Gurmatsudhākar,* para 488-89.

onwards. It may be submitted here that the first step towards the institutionalisation of Sikhism was taken with the institution by Guru Nanak, the first Guru, of the system of succession of the Gurus. The second major step was the compilation of a separate scripture, the *Ādi Granth,* by the fifth Guru. The third event was the wearing of the sword by the sixth Guru, Hargobind at the time of his succession to the guruship. In fact, it is said that two swords were worn by him, one each to signify the spiritual and temporal power; though the second was perhaps worn to correct the accidental mistake whereby the first sword was put on the wrong side by the initiator. We may also notice that the name of the ninth Guru is "Tegh Bahadur" which means "brave at sword", and this may indicate in some measure the thinking then current in Sikhism. All this brief violent changes were introduced by the tenth Guru, as the institutionalisation and gradual development of moral precepts has been continuing from the first Guru onwards.

There is, however, another question and of entirely different nature, whether the Gurus from the very beginning had with them a complete idea about all the details of the form which Sikhism was to be given in terms of *Khālsa.* Jodh Singh, to whom we have referred earlier, answers this question in the affirmative. To me, however, it seems rather an open question. Such an anticipation to the last detail involves two difficulties. The first is to deny the role of historical change, but for which certain additions and developments would perhaps have not become necessary. Second, it also seems to deny the genius of the later Gurus under whose inspiration those gradual developments were wrought and brought to their fruition. The argument of Bhai Jodh Singh in *Gurmat Nirṇai,* cited earlier, indeed establishes the support from tenth Guru's *Sarbloh* and Prehlad Singh's *Rahitnāma,* that Guru Gobind Singh cherished *Khālsa* as his own form. But this does not in any way establish his view that no development took place in Sikhism right after the first Guru. It would, perhaps, be more appropriate and correct if we take a development view of the process of institutionalisation of Sikhism, at least in matters of general details and historical responses of the Gurus to certain situations. In the realm of cardinal moral precepts too, while the

fundamentals remained unchanged, some developments in terms of increased stress here and there is a historical fact. On the whole, however, after one keeps in mind the above observations, one can clearly notice the continuity of such moral principles as equality, universal brotherhood and other ethical norms and ideals, which have accompanied the rising humanistic moral precepts of Sikhism *ab ovo.*

The literature of Guru Gobind Singh's period has a coincidence of din and noise produced by the cluttering and smiting of weapons, with a calm composure of man, charged with the confident belief that he would at least succeed against the near noisome heteronomy of barren ethos and mores which had taken hold of man during a few centuries in the past and had resulted in his moral and political subjugation. We finally hear the sound of breaking chains and somewhat as symbolised in the Biblical Samson, we witness the 'rising of disciple of real hero' which was so succinctly prophesized by Guru Nanak. This disciple, who is symbolice of 'all-men', is the culmination of the humanistic ideal of Sikhism.

(5) *Post-Gobind Singh period (Rahitnāmas) :* The era which we are referring to as Post-Gobind Singh era, in terms of ethics of the Sikhs, refer to the period when the *Rahitnāmas* (codes of conduct) became extant around 1699, but appear to have gathered greater momentum after about 1708. The detailed analysis of these *Rahitnāmas* has been attempted in the chapter on Duties, *infra.*

It may, however, be necessary to remark here that the consciousness of power, political and otherwise, newly gained was required to be controlled by moral precepts. The *Rahitnāmas* seek to perform this task as well. The compilers, such as Chopra Singh, Nand Lal and others drew upon the *Ādi Granth* for reinforcing the validity of their formularies. The compilers of these codes also ascribe the *Rahitnāmas* in many cases to the tenth Guru and call it as *mukh vāk.* But various *Rahitnāmas* in the total form they are now available, including the one manuscript by Bhai Chopra Singh, described to be the earliest available copy in Sikh Reference and Research Library, Amritsar, cannot be traced to the tenth Guru. The Guru is known for his catholicity and universalism. He has both the Muslims and Hindus

as his followers. But various *Rahitnāmas* contain an element of antagonism towards other communitites. Again, the stress in these compilations seems to be increasingly laid on the brotherhood of the Sikhs, which shows that these formularies belong to the period when Sikhism was being consolidated after the Sikhs were deprived of the leadership of the tenth Guru on his death in 1708. The *Rahitnāmas* of Prehlad Rai and Bhai Nand Lal were included by Ernest Trumpp in his translation of the *Ādi Granth.* We shall refer to Ernest Trumpp in the period on recent literature to which we may turn now.

(6) *Recent period : Translation of the Ādi Granth into English and impact of foreign scholars on Sikh ethics :* The era of *Rahitnāmas* mark the last original attempt at the formulation of moral precepts in Sikhism. Thereafter, most of the contribution towards the general literature in Sikhism is merely expository and interpretative. This period began around the establishment of British supremacy in the Punjab. We shall only mention the general trend of this period and its impact on the general ehtical view-point of the Sikhs.

(7) *Ernest Trumpp and his translation of the Ādi Granth :* The British rule in the Punjab, subsequently, led to the *Ādi Granth* into English which was published in 1877. The contact of Ernest Trumpp with Sikhism is a very significant event as it was then that the tenets and precepts of Sikhism were open to evaluation by a person who had no personal emotional attachment for them. He raised some theoretical and practical questions in the Introduction to his translation of the *Ādi Granth.*

It is generally believed that somewhat severe language and a few personal remarks about the Gurus by Ernest Trumpp were caused by some personal difficulties in which he was involved in his contact with Sikhism. This may be true to some extent as very often his objectivity of approach is clouded by his desire for ridicule and vengeance. This translation and the Introduction to it caused widespread protests among the Sikhs, and led to its rejection by them.

However, it would be unfair, and a distortion of the spirit of scholarship, if the merit of his contribution is not recognised. His role is very important mainly for his critical study of Sikhism. His acute criticism of the minute ordinances as conduct rules, into which

Sikhism had the danger of lapsing, through authoritarian approach and large number of *Rahitnāmas,* served to caution the Sikhs against any re-chaining of the spirit of rising humanistic ideals, though one may concede that some organisational norms are necessary to keep some organisation or institution fit and going. The contribution of Ernest Trumpp is important and immense by way of what he has provoked. One of the reasons for the appointment of a Committee in 1932 by Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (the central religious organisation of the Sikhs) to consolidate the code of duties for the Sikhs, might well be due to the scathing criticism of these minute ordinances and codes by Ernest Trumpp, along with some other internal requirements. The recommendations of this Committee, which took more than ten years to finalise, have now been published as *Sikh Rahit Maryāda,* a booklet of thirty-seven pages. This has been examined in some detail in the chapter on Duties in the present book.

(8) *Max Arthur Macauliffe :* The excessively critical translation of the *Ādi Granth* by Ernest Trumpp was almost a case of still-birth and cause of resentment among the Sikhs. Max Arthur Macauliffe, another scholar, then undertook extensive study of Sikhism and resolved, according to his own claim, to "endeavour to make some reparation to the Sikhs for the insults which he [Trumpp] offered to their Gurus and their religion."[1] Macauliffe, however, reached another extreme, and included everything in his writings, which was handed over to him by persons devoted to Sikhism. Thus some of the things found in his treatment of Sikhism, can now be accepted only by an unduly long stretch of imagination and credulity. His work, in six volumes, however, till this day remains most popular and widely quoted on Sikhism, particularly among the Western scholars. We have already referred to a generous claim of Macauliffe about ethics of the Sikhs in one of his lectures in England. But he did not attempt any special examination of the Sikh ethics, which of course was not the primary subject matter of his study.

(9) *Nirmala tradition in Sikhism :* A section of the Sikhs, now

[1] Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion,* (Oxford : 1909), Vol.I, p. viii

termed as Nirmalas, have spearheaded a somewhat scholastic movement in Sikhism. The Nirmalas trace their origin from Guru Nanak onwards, but there are some scholars who are of the view that the movement started during Guru Gobind Singh's period. He deputed some Sikhs to go to Varanasi, the then centre of learning, to receive education in classical languages and thought and then impart the same to all persons irrespective of caste distinctions. The Nirmalas have, however, under increasing Vedantic influence, gradually veered round to a position where their influence and contact with the main stream of the Sikhs has been reduced considerably. The Nirmala followers stress simplicity of life and preach the moral precepts as contained in the *Ādi Granth.* We may call them *Purists.*

(10) *Panch Khalsa Dewān, Bhasouḍ :* A code of conduct (*bibek rahit*) was also formulated by leaders of a movement called Panch Khalsa Dewan, or Sikh Parliament, Bhasoud. The code compiled by them is mostly based on the earlier *Rahitnāmas,* though an attempt has also been made to support it from the teachings on the *Ādi Granth.* They may be called as *Rigourists,* as they have pleaded very often the exlusion from the *Ādi Granth* of the hymns of saints and persons other than the Sikh Gurus. We have referred to them in a footnote earlier on page 9 . The movement is almost extinct now.

(11) *Bhai Kahan Singh of Nabha and Bhai Vir Singh of Amritsar :* In the last few decades, such scholars as Bhai Kahan Singh of Nabha and Bhai Vir Singh of Amritsar and others, have been gradually marking a new phase in Sikhism, which may be termed as *Orthodox liberalism.* The scholars, while faithful to the fundamentals, were yet not inclined to accept all the details handed down from the past. Bhai Kahan Singh has edited some *Rahitnāmas* in his *Gurmutsudhākar* and the comments in the form of occasional footnotes are mostly to soften the rigidity of these codes. He has observed in *Guruśabadratnākar* that the central *rahit* (ethical precepts) are embodied in the *Ādi Granth,* and various other compilations.

(12) *Nāmdhāri tradition :* Baba Ram Singh (1824-1885), a pious and devoted Sikh, during the course of his teachings has founded a school, now called a Nāmdhāri tradition, or alternatively, sometimes also known as Kooka Sikhs. It has continued to follow the fundamental precepts as embodied in the *Ādi Granth,* but has also accepted some

variations in practical matters. The imperatives and guidance in all matters in provided by their living Guru in the light of *Ādi Granth,* past traditions and the intuitions of the living Guru.

(13) *Sat Sangh, Beas and Nirańkāri Mandal, Delhi :* These traditions are, in the main, the devotional cults inspired by Sikhism. The teachings of the Gurus of these traditions were based on the *Ādi Granth,* and *sant baṇi.* Both the Sikhs and the Hindus are members of these cults and consequently observance of injunctions with regard to the keeping of hair, sword etc. are not stressed. The moral and spiritual inspiration is drawn by the followers of these cults from the teachings of the *Ādi Granth* and examples of the living Gurus of these cults. Their role as an integrative factor is very important.

(14) *Sikh precepts among Sindhis :* The teachings of Guru Nanak and the *Ādi Granth* have also flourished among the Sindhis, who number in both the categories, namely the ones who follow the injunctions with regard to Five Ks (hair, sword etc.), as well as those who do not accept this part of Sikhism, but are deeply devoted to the *Ādi Granth.* Their moral and religious principles are drawn from the *Ādi Granth* and other teachings of the Sikh Gurus. Bhai Chella Ram has translated *Japji* into English and also written about Sikhism.

(15) *The main stream of Sikhism :* The main stream of Sikhism today continues to be guided by the influence of the *Singh Sabha* movement, and claims to follow the moral and spiritual teachings of the *Ādi Granth* and abides by the imperatives of *Sikh Rahit Maryāda.* The literature is mostly marked by the spirit of revivalism and is usually occupied with historical and devotional themes. Occasionally, one comes across a passionate justification and defence of organisational duties and imperatives. One may notice great activity in the arena of Punjabi literature and it is in this field that concerted efforts are being made for the reconstruction of Sikh thought. Some writers of Punjabi often allude to the morals in Sikhism, but an attempt has not been made as yet for systematisation of ethical views. A complete effort has not been made so far in this direction. This observation is in no way an attempt to belittle the tremendous and overwhelming efforts which are being made by these devotees of learning towards the systematisation of Sikh thought. The scene today is gradually acquiring a tone of renaissance, which may, in times to come, herald a *neo-radicalism* in Sikhism, based on the teachings of the Gurus.

# II
# THE MORAL STANDARD

## 2.1 : Prolegomena

A moral standard being central to any moral theory, it is necessary to examine it in detail as every system has to be appreciated in the light of its adopted standard. We may, therefore, take up first the study of moral standard with view to decide the question of its definition and to touch upon various possible leads. We may then analyse it in later chapters.

If we refer to historical perspective in this respect, wide and diverse possibilities with regard to the moral standard would be the first thing noticeable. Different notions of good have been offered as the basis of moral theories, including the one which regards the good as indefinable. Ethical systems built on pleasure and happiness (hedonism and utilitarianism), law (natural as well as divine), logical reason and practical reason, intuition, harmlessness (*ahiṃsa)* and self-realization, are cases in point. All these theories contain some merit or truth. However, great and not always irrelevant objections to all of these theories bring to light the fact that no one standard is theoretically considered as completely satisfactory or absolutely inviolable. It is, perhaps, because no single standard, in isolation, can be fully satisfactory. The human personality is a rich whole, and a standard which seeks to leave out some aspect of this personality would impoverish its authenticity to that extent. An integrated approach in terms of the whole self, therefore, seems to be the best solutions. Consequently, those idealistic self-realization theories which take into consideration the whole and higher self in the perspective of human creativity appear to be nearer the mark, though there may be a certain amount of vagueness in such theories, mostly due to their idealistic content.

When we come to Sikhism, we see that it too agrees with other

great ethical systems of India as well as Christianity and Islam (including Plato's *Republic,* and general Greek thought) in their general humanistic trends. Buddhism, also, is noted for its extreme concern with man. Sikhism, which in terms of historical emergence, is the most recent major religion of the world, seems to have richly benefited by all these great humanistic traditions of the world. Consequently we find it, too, concerned with human existence as such and the need to improve it. T.H. Greeen has in his *Prolegomena to Ethics* protested that rules are made for man and not vice versa. This, in fact, is the right reminder as well as a pointer to normative ethics as differing from meta-ethical theories. It is the self which has to continuously strive to be the ideal self, as a self, in its social relationship; and also what a religionist may say 'to be acceptable to God'. The uplift has to be of the whole self. Consequently, a moral standard, in order to meet this requirement, must aim at the realization of the whole and higher self. This realization ought to be by consciously choosing actions in terms of their conductiveness to such a realization. And again, this realization when attained, is to be reflected in its actions.

We may briefly touch upon another factor which rather crucial to idealistic theories of ethics, though in one way or the other, no ethical theory can be said to escape it. It is the metaphysical assumptions and views which appear to be intertwined with the ethical views. The ethical systems nurtured in India, inclusive of Buddhism and Jainism, seem to be deeply involved in the relationship of their ethical views with their metaphysical views. In a way this is a prominent feature of all ethical systems which have appeared as a result of the teachings of prophets or saints touched by spiritual experiences. It may be submitted here that Sikhism is, likewise, no exception to it. With this background, we may now turn to the solution, which Sikhism offers for the puzzling human predicament in terms of moral standard.

### 2.2 : Self-realization as the Moral Standard in Sikhism

In order to know the moral standard in Sikhism, we shall have to understand the problem of morality, envisaged therein. The problem is stated by Guru Nanak in his composition *Japji,* with which the *Ādi Granth* opens, and which is generally held to be a compendium of the basic principles of Sikhism.

The peculiarity of the human situation, according to Guru Nanak, lies in the fact that each person, in his empirical existence occupies himself with a narrow and limited view-point. This narrow view-point, Guru Nanak identifies as *houmai*[1] (I-am-ness), a feeling of individuation indicated in a narrow or limited point of view. The problem, for morality or, for that matter, for the whole of life, is how to widen or abscind this narrrow or too limited point of view,[2] centred in and around selfness, so that man may realise (*hovie*) the greater self or the real self. In Japji, this real self is termed by Guru Nanak, *Sachiāra,* which is the apex of self-realization (*kiv sachiāra hovie*),[3] there by sat is being used by him as the principle of spiritual progress. The full meaning of *sat* and *sachiāra* will be explored a little later, and we may content ourselves here with merely taking *sachiāra* to mean the ideal self. The morally good person, according to this approach, would be one who rises higher and higher, and moves *away* from his narrow view-point (*houmai*) of life and function and *towards* the larger or wide self, namely *sachiāra.* An act is good

[1] *Ādi Granth,* Japji (i), p.1

[2] "Egoism is not only 'bad' it is also false. It contradicts man's infinite ideal which is his truth. In a poem in *Chaitali,* Tagore asks God to whisper into his ears 'your selfishness is false, the infinite in you is true." V.S. Narvane, *Rabindranath Tagore, A Philosophical Study* (Allahabad : Central Book Depot) p. 202

[3] *Ādi Granth,* Japji (1), p. 1

It may be interesting to mention here that though this ideal or real self is named here as *Sachiāra,* Guru Nanak himself has used many other terms to refer to this apex of realization. For example, in his famous discourse with Siddhas (included in *Ādi Granth* and called Siddha Gosti), we first find the reference to realized self as *sant* and then in the next few stanzas, this ideal self is identified as *gurmukh.* When we come to the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, we find that sometimes this ideal self is called *Braham giāni* and all that was said about the *gurmukh* is said about *Brahama giāni,* in his composition Sukhmaṇi (included in the *Ādi Granth).* The frequent use of *sant* by fifth Guru, is also noticeable. This may raise the question as to which is to be understood as final. The Japji is said to be a composition of Guru Nanak's mature age and in this he seems to have crystallised his views and reflections and therefore the term *sachiāra* may be used here with an understanding that *gurmukh, Brahama giāni* and *sant* at places are used as it synonyms, except where these terms are used in some limited connotation. Another reason for the adoption of *sachiāra* here is that at times Guru Nanak has used *sachiāra* for God and significantly enough, the use of the same word for God and ideal self points out the basic relationship, the nature of relationship and its beatitude.

in so far it is conductive to this realization, the apex being the highest good.

The person on this journey[1] of self-realization develops himself from various aspects. These aspects are recognised to be five, out of which four may be properly described as aspects of progress and the fifth and final may be considered the apex of self-realization. A detailed examination of these *khands* will be undertaken in chapter VII, but we shall merely enumerate them here in order to highlight the point that development is a fundamental notion in Sikhism. These aspects (called *khands*)[2] are *dharam khand, giān khand, saram khand, karam khand,* and the final, *sachkhand* which may be rendered respectively as (1) the situation when socially determined duties are performed to the best of one's ability (*dharam-khand*) being the first stage towards the progress; (2) the acquisition of wisdom or knowledge (*giān khand*), leading to the assimilation of wisdom; (3) attainment of emotional harmony and unity of self including aesthetics realization (*saram khand*), and pointing to the next aspect; (4) we find that the self is wider and larger in the sense that its actions are close to all-comprehensiveness, the aspect being marked by spiritual energy and strength of which the self is them almost full. Self here in *karam khand* would perhaps be better described as 'self-less self' for not an iota of consciousness of individuation or *houmai* (I-am-ness) remains and he continues performing social and moral actions.[3] The person in his altruistic self takes up his service to mankind as a spiritual warrior or spiritual Hercules. He is then a fit self proceeding to the highest level of self-hood, (5) namely, *sach khand,* which is the achievement of the self as a 'universal point of view, universal aesthetic communion and universal will.'[4] Here is action (*kar kar*), here is consciousness

[1] The life is symbolised by Guru Nanak as *chalna* (walking). It is derived from the Sanskriti root *char,* from which are also derived *achār* and *chariter* (moral conduct and character, respectively).

Compare also *Caraivati* couplet *Aitryeya Brāhamaṇa.* Guru Nanak too considers this process of realization as 'walking' towards the ideal.

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Japji, xxxv to xxxvii

[3] It recalls the Christian ideal, "For whoever would save his life shall lose it." *Matt.* 22.25; (R.S.V.)

[4] *Ādi Granth,* Japji (37) p.8. (*Tithe khand mandala varabhanda... Tithai loa loa akār*—"in that region are numerous worlds and numerous forms").

(*vekhe*) and here is bliss (*nihāla*). This is the highest good, *sachiāra* to which man aspires. He is a complete person in the sense that he seeks good spontaneously (*sehaj subhāe*). The self has no conciousness of being different from others and this is reflected in its actions and functions. All the descriptions of this final stage may be rather hazy and not comprehended clearly. The difficulty is essentially of the level, as to the one who is marked by the characteristics of having a limited point of view, the details of the universal point of view (which includes all the three aspects, congnitive, affective and conative) may not be comprehensible. The prominent description of this *khand* is that of ceaseless activity (*kar kar vekhe*)[1] and harmony between will and action (*jiv jiv hukm tive tiv kār*).[2] It is the universal point of view, to which we have been referring so far and which, as Guru Nanak says, is difficult to describe (*Nanak kathna kaḍra sār*).[3] However, it may be said that the stage is marked by complete annihilation of 'I', of the individuality and realization of the personality in the sense of the real self, devoted to ceaseless effort to help others without thought of gain to self. It is something like what Reinhold Niebhur in a different context has said : "self-realization through self-giving."[4]

There are great implications in such a view of the moral problem and human function in relation to the ideal of self-realization. Guru Nanak seeks to elicit these implications and is followed by his successor Gurus in this direction.

**Will in self-realization**

But before we proceed further, we may clear another point. We have been so far calling the moral standard self-realization, but a pertinent question may be asked here. Are we, in morality, concerned with the realization of the whole self in the sense of consciousness, affection and will, or are we concerned only with will? The question is pertinent and relevant and we have to recall F.H. Bradley, who

[1] *Ibid.*, Japji (37) p.8

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Reinhold Niebhur, *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p.140

raises a similar question in his *Ethical Studies.*[1] And the fact that self-realization in the case of Bradley is different from the sense in which we have been explaining it, does not affect the pertinence of the question.

The point for us to decide here would be whether in the self these distinctions of cognition, affection and conation can be made, not as parts or faculties but, as aspects. And if the distinction is discernible, should we hold that self realization in morality means the realization of the ideal will or universal will, which for morality would be the realization of the universal point of view. The answer is plainly in the affirmative as a fact of moral conciousness. Here we may agree once again with Bradley that "it is not self realization from all points of view, though all self-realization can be looked at from this one point of view, for all of it involves will, and so far as the will is good, so far is the realization moral."[2] We have already stated that morality is concerned with will, which we said is affirmed as a fact of moral consciousness. Any theory, therefore, which can be termed ethical in the genuine sense, will have to concern itself with will, though it may be conceded that realization is the realization of the whole self, and that cognition and affection are not be left outside this progressive realization. But the acceptance of will is a necessary factor to decide whether or not any theory has a genuine place for morality. It is this that makes Sikhism predominantly a genuine moral approach to self-realization, because the nature of will is considered to be one principal factor in deciding the state of self.

*Manmukh* is the self characterised by narrow egoistic will, as opposed to *gurmukh* whose will is in harmony with the universal will, recognised to be good-will. We may also refer here to a resolution of the problem of how to realize the self (*kiv sachiāra hovie*) to which we had occasion earlier to refer as the Ideal. The reference to the answer was not made there in as much as we were at that point primarily concerned with the question of the ideal-self. Guru Nanak in reply to this fundamental question of how the self is to be realized

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[1] F.H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies* (Oxford : Claredon Press, 1959), p.228: see also pp. 309-310: 214, 232-7: 244

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 229

says, "*Hukm razāi chalna Nanak Likhiā nāi*"[1] (Act according to the Universal Will which is written within one's Self). *Hukm* is an imperative; it is 'will' and Guru Nanak imports this word into Sikhism from Islam (the term *hukm* occurs many times in the Qurān.)[2] This answer shows that the concern of Guru Nanak is with will, which he takes to be fundamental and an important criterion of self-realization. The will issues in actions, and so we identify the *gurmukh* or *sachiāra* by his actions. This answer establishes our earlier observation that the approach of the Gurus is predominantly moral. But, does that mean, it may be asked, that the two other aspects, that of cognition and affection do not find a place in this programme of self-realization? If that were the position, the Gurus could also be criticised for having taken only one aspect into consideration. But we find that apart from this observation concerning *hukm* (will) in the same composition, Japji, Guru Nanak takes up the two other aspects *mut* and *bhau* to refer to cognitive and affective realization. This indicates that although for morality the will is the primary concern, and important from the point of view of realization, in the ultimate analysis, self-realization is the characteristic of the whole self and the self is not poorer in the sense that nothing is left out. It is in this synthesis, that Gurus seem to mark a departure from the traditional view that either pure knowledge (*Giān*) or devotion or aesthetic communion alone marks the ultimate realization.

It is this synthesis, perhaps, to which the Sikh scholar, Sher Singh, seems to be proceeding in *Philosophy of Sikhism,* when he remarks, "Guru makes a new synthesis. He takes up Advaitism as a philosophy with *Gyān* in practical life."[3] However, this synthesis is not brought out fully in the final analysis. Sher Singh, in addition, takes recourse to "aesthetic feeling or communion. " Here he says, "The way to enter it lies in *wismād,* aesthetic feeling."[4] And in spite

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Japji

[2] *Qurān.* Suraha III 73; XIII 41; XXXI 40, and XXI 79

[3] Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism* (Lahore : The Sikh University Press n.d.,) p. 79

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 199

of his understanding of *Nām* in terms of *wismād* (wonder) and conveyed through "aesthetic experience or communion" the whole affair comes to appear as rather affective and fails to highlight the synthesis which he seems to have promised earlier in the passage referred to above. The self so realized may be understood as poorer, in addition to the fact that even the clue 'aesthetic' chosen by him, in a way, does not fully bring out the stress on will and action (*hukm* and *kar*).

The difficulty, which perhaps led to the neglect of will by scholars of Sikhism as the primary and necessary constituent of self-realization, could be that *hukm* as universal will (or divine will) can be understood to operate in two ways. It may be taken to operate as external to self as "Thou shalt do this..." as laid down in a series of commandments in scriptures. In this sense the moral standard would not be in terms of Ideal and Good but in terms of external law (law known only through certain specific scriptures). The moral theory would consequently be called authoritarianism. An act would be right if it conforms to the externally applied moral law.[1] Some passage of the *Ādi Granth,* when viewed in isolation, could be wrongly understood in this sense. But in another and proper sense—in Sikhism—this *hukm* or will may be understood to operate as internal to self. That this is the proper sense, we shall now attempt to establish. But, before we take up the possibility of the text to support the view that *hukm* or universal will is inborn in every self, and that in seeking to realize it, the person is not being directed externally but is proceeding towards self-realization, we may ask a question.

The question is whether the self has a spiritual constituent integral to it which, in essence, is not different form the *hukm* or the universal will, and, therefore, the realization of *hukm* is no way different from self-realization. However, it may be added here that the self which is fully-realized is different in quality from the self termed as *houmai*

[1] According to S.K. Maitra, it is in this sense that Ramanuja—the founder of Viśiṣṭādvaita School of Indian Philosophy—regards the moral standard as law of God. Some of the fundamentalists of Islam and Christianity, also, interpret the Commandments in this sense. *The Ethics of Hindus* (Calcutta : University of Calcutta, 1956), p. 291

(I-am-ness) by which the Gurus understood the narrow egoistic self. It is in fact called death of *houmai*. The answer of the Gurus to the above question is that the spiritual constituent is within the self.[1] It is in the self but it is not realized, setting thereby the problem for morality and the self to realize it[2] more and in the process to be transformed more and more. It is progress towards the ideal self which, in the language of Guru Nanak, is the real self (*sachiāra*). The *hukm* therefore is not any external law applied to the self, but is integral to it or, to use the terminology of Guru Nanak, *likhiā nāl* (it is written within self).[3]

But the very fact that we have called it universal will, indicates that it is not exhausted in any one particular self. It is within self[4] in the sense that self has to realize it from within but it is objective in the sense that it is the ideal which the self has to realize; and it, as universal, transcends his particularity. The texts cited *supra* also support our contention that this spiritual constituent, which is not different form *hukm*, is internal to self. This may make Sikhism different from any view which holds the universal will (or divine will) as some sort of externally applied moral law. *Hukm* is declared by Guru Nanak to be "*kehā nā jae*"[5] (which cannot be said or described). Therfore, no scripture can be said to state it completely. It is something which every self has to realize existentially in every moment of its life and in its march towards the ideal. An act is good in so far as it is conductive to self-realization. It is bad in so far as it negates this purpose.

The moment we may that *hukm* cannot be stated (*hukm kehā nā*

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[1] "Yea, the death is of strife, of ago in the mind, dies not the seer within thee—the undying self. The Ideal that thou goest to find at the holy places, that jewel, O man, is within thy heart" *Ādi Granth,* Gaudi M.I. (2 &3-4), p. 152

[2] "When the deeds are good, there is a perfect mind too, without these the mind is of less avail (3-30), Prayeth Nanak, what kind is the man of wisdom? Yea, he who knoweth himself, knoweth alone." *Ibid,* Sri Rāg M.I. (4-80). p. 25

[3] *Ibid.*, Japji (1) p.1

[4] Compare : Albert Schweitzer's remark about God. "In the world He appears to me as mysterious, marvellous creative force, within me. He reveals Himself as ethical will." Charles Hartshorne ed., *Philosophers Speak of God* (The University of Chicago Press : 1953), p. 298

[5] *Ādi Granth,* Japji (2) p.1

*jae*)[1], the question arises, what is then the value and role of the *Ādi Granth.* And this is an important question because if it does not contain a complete enumerative statement of *hukm,* what is its function and role. We raise a point which may help us in the understanding of this question. Does a person need any guidance, we may ask? Or, what is the role of any education? What is the importance of showing general direction? The scripture in Sikhism, the *Ādi Granth,* is called Guru and so were called its originators. Guru means a teacher or guide. And her precisely lies the value of scripture, the value of guidance to give the direction and initiate the person to self-realization.[2] It is the belief of the Sikhs that this help comes in abundance from the *Ādi Granth* and this conviction is based on the declarations of the Gurus themselves,[3] as being themselves self realized, they know the direction in which a self ought to proceed. In this, the lives of the Gurus,[4] just as lives of Jesus Christ, Lord Buddha, and Sikh Gurus, serve as moral examples. And this is beautifully brought out in a verse of *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā,* "Whatever action is performed by the great is copied by the laymen, whatever standard is set by him is followed by them."[5]

We may infer here that in taking self-realization as the moral standard, Sikhism is in sympathy with the Advaita school of Sankara, though in its stress on will as an important constituent and clue for self-realization, it is nearer to Viśiṣtādvaita of Ramanuja.[6] But in the case of Ramanuja, will is understood in terms of śāstric *vidhi* (scriptural prescription), and he prefers sacrificial ceremonial imperatives of the Mīmāṃsā,[7] whereas one does not find such imperative (sacrificial and ceremonial) in the texts of the *Ādi Granth.* In the rejection of rituals

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[1] *Ibid,* p.1

[2] Compare : St. Paul, II Cor. V 7; and St. Augustine's *The City of God,* Book XIX, Chapter XIV

[3] The role of Gurus is stressed by all Gurus, though one may notice a little more frequent reference to this aspect by the third and fifth Gurus.

[4] *Ādi Granth,* Japji, "*Suniye Siddha pīr sirnāth...*"

[5] *Srīmad Bhagavad Gītā,* III

[6] S.K. Maitra, *op. cit.* p. 291

[7] Chatterjee and D.M. Dutta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Calcutta : University of Calcutta, 1953) p. 432

and ceremonials, Sikhism is nearer to Sankara and Buddha. Sikhism perhaps also shows some agreement with the theoretical contention in respect of dynamic will held by Gorakhnath of Siddha school.[1] We find a full-length discourse of Guru Nanak with the followers of Siddhas called "*Siddha Goṣti*" included in the *Ādi Granth.*[2] The reference to Islam has already been made. We may also explain here that in understanding this universal will in spiritual nature, Sikhism is nearer to the Christian view, where this will is held to be the will of God. It is also interesting to note that Guru Nanak does not write "God's *hukm*" but the very fact that it is understood in a universal sense, it conveys the same meaning of spiritual or divine will without using the word God. We have already referred to this notion, as used in Sikhism, that the term is Semitic in source. But we may also recall that *hukm* operates as internal to self and has to be realized internally through gradual progress.

**2.3 State of self necessary for self-realization**

The analysis of *sat* and *sachiāra* will be taken up in a latter section, but presently we shall allude briefly to some of the implications of this view-point of self-realization. What, we may ask, is the proper state of the self for self-realization. Can an absonant self undertake this moral progress while it is usually torn between various passions, unbalancing propensities, impulses and springs of action, is a question we should not forget to ask.[3] To what extent can any meaningful moral progress be made while the self is ceaselessly under the influence of opposing valences driving it in this or that direction is an important consideration. Guru Nanak, as also other Gurus, show full awareness

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[1] "With regard to the ultimate character of this Unique Power of the Supreme Spirit, Gorakhnath says... that this power is of the nature of Pure Will (*Icch-mātra-dharma*) and this will is eternally and essentially inherent in the nature of the Supreme Spirit, Brahma" Akshya Kumar Banerjee, *Philosophy of Gorakhnath* (Gorakhpur : Mahant Dig Vijai Nath Trust), p. 60

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Rāmkali M.I., Siddha Goṣti, p. 938

[3] "Reason and Morality seen in proper perspective, are just the epitome of the culture of feelings and emotions. The destiny of moral and intellectual faculities is indissolubly mixed up with emotion." Prem Nath, "Aesthetic Education," *The Philosophical Quarterly,* Vol. XXX, 1: April 1967, p. 128

of this aspect of the moral problem. These propensities and spring of action, which, according to the Gurus may hinder the progress, are five, namely *kām, krodh, lobh, moh* and *ahankār*[1] which respectively mean, "concupiscence, anger, avarice or covetousness, attachment and pride." These are called the "thieves and burglars" which continuously steal away all merit. All these must be harnessed and regulated in terms of the Ideal, if the self is to proceed smoothly on its quest. Does that mean that Guru Nanak advocates some course of body inflicions for regulating them? Or does he advocate complete renunciation and asceticism? It is evident from one of his remarks[2] that Guru Nanak recognises that, phychologically, complete suppression is difficult or perhaps impossible and, ethically, needless or undesirable. He, thereby, seems to accept the empirical situation of the self, in the way it is constituted and which self is to proceed on to the moral journey not be violent injury to it but by taming it or regulating it. Guru Nanak and other Gurus speak overwhelmingly against extreme austerities, fastings or asceticism. On this way, namely Sikhism, therefore, the unity of self is to be attained by harnessing and regulating this aspect of life. The favourite teachings of Sikhism in this direction are expressed in the favourite phrase "live like a lotus, in the water but detached from it,"[3] or sometimes we witness the counsel of moderation.[4] We also find Gurus advising the person to substitute virtues for *kām, krodh, lobh moh, ahankār,* as springs of action because, thereby, while the action may be done, their moral bases would be different. This, then, is the view of the Guru about the unity of self which is so very necessary and essential for self-

[1] "Into the house of my body, with its ten doors (senses) break the five thieves (*kām, Krodh, lobh, moh and ahankār*) ever and steal away all my righteousness and riches, but I the blind egocentric know it not... And though in it are the five thieves, them he bindeth down" *Ādi Granth,* Bilawal, M.4, Astapadis, p. 823

[2] "Some there are who live in the woods and feed themselves upon the roots. Some wear the ochre robes and acclaimed as *yogis* and *sannyasis* [ascetics]. [But] within them burns the desire for delicacies and fine raiments. Wasted in vain is their life, for they are neither of the household, nor have they renounced the world." *ibid.*, *Pauḍi* Mājh M. 5, p. 140.

[3] *Ibid,* Gauḍi M. 1,Dakhni (3-5), p. 152

[4] "Neither eat too much nor abstain from it altogether", "Sākhi Guru Amardas", *Premsumārag*, ed., Randhir Singh (Amritsar : Sikh History Society), p. 42

realization.[1] We shall take it up for detailed examination in the next chapter where we shall examine various propensities and springs of action and follow it by a chapter on virtues which are to be the regulators of action. The comparative references will also be made in that chapter.

## 2.4. The nature of social relationship and social context in this Moral Standard as Self-Realization

What is to be the validity of social context in this scheme of morality?—is the next question we may touch upon. Is self-realization to be attempted in the seclusion of a deep cave or in the calm serenity of abodes far away from the social situations and involvements? Would not such a seclusion be of far greater value—in terms of self-realization-than to live in society of other selfs and be continuously frustrated by them over one thing or another? In society one may be touched and get depressed by doings and happenings which are neither under one's control nor are of one's choosing, and, therefore, would it not be of more help for self-realization if one decides to get away from the social situations and commitments? The answer of the Gurus is in the negative.[2] Sikhism does not permit this 'running away' from the social.[3] One must accept the social as the necessary and essential factor in self-realization. John Dewey also, in a different philosophical perspective, but in a likewise manner, stresses this when he says, "This withdrawal from this involvement means the end of this process as well as the destruction of the development and fulfilment both for the individual and for the members of the community."[3] The home,

[1] The term *sehaj* is used by the Gurus to refer to the naturalness or poise, which is the ideal to be attained in this balancing of self, e.g., "*Suniya lage sehaj dhyan*", *Ādi Granth,* Japji (x), p. 3

[1] Guru Nanak arguing against recourse to forest (*Sannyāsa*) and monasteries proclaims "The household and forest are alike for one who lives in poise (*sehaj*)" *Ibid;* Asa M. 1 (I-II) p. 351

[2] Sikhism is here in agreement with Hegel and Green, for whom also "the moral ideal is to be progressively attained only in a social life which we share with other self-conscious beings." William Lilli, *Introduction to Ethics* (London : Methueu & Co. Ltd., 1951), pp. 822-23

[3] Robert J. Roth, *John Dewey and Self-Realization* (Englewood Cliffs N.J. : Prenctice-Hall Inc., 1962). p. 16

social, national and human partnership in this progress is sanctified, and authenticity of the social context is validated. If all 'selfs' have sprung from the same spiritual continuum, there is the need of accepting the society as a spiritual unity and not of looking down upon it as a hinderance. The acceptance and fulfilment of social and human loyalties is accorded a positive recognition. In respect of social relationship, Sikhism is more willing to accept and enforce the logical conclusion of such a standpoint than some of the traditional idealistic and theistic systems of India had been which laboured within the frame-work of caste system of social relationship. In the chapter VI, we shall take up these implications for detailed examination. We shall see that the spiritual hero seeking self-realization ought to recognize that his self is ultimately not separate or opposed to other selfs. It is self-realization but not that of the narrow egoistic self. The social service, altruism and equality of all men would consequently occupy us in the chapter VI.

### 2.5. Nature of values according to this standard

What, it may be asked now, is the nature of values in the sense of whether these are to be considered objective or subjective? We have already said that self has to realize *hukm* as internal to itself but, by virtue of its being universal, it transcends the subjectivity of this or that particular. Sikhism, in line with its general spiritual standpoint, holds that values are objective in the sense that the self has to discover them. It conceives them as inalienably subjective qualities of Ideal entity or self in which all of them are grounded.[1] And in this it agrees with the Christian standpoint as well as that of Ramanuja.[2] The very notion of development (the concept of *khands* or aspects) points to the fact that the self has to discover the values. The Ideal

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Malhār M. 1, p. 1234 *(jaiti...teti; "Keemat so pave āp janave Āp"* (He alone realiseth its value, to whom He revealeth it), *Ibid.,* Suhi M. 1 (9-2-5), p. 767

[2] "The West is much more oriented in terms of the view of Ramanuja, of all Hindu theism, and of the Hindu religion as a whole. in all of which the ultimate spiritual reality possesses all the obvious auspicious qualities and in which individual man and the world have genuine significance as intimately related to the ultimate." Charles A. Moore, *Spirituality in the West* (Chandigarh : UNESCO Centre, Panjab University, India 1965), p. 6

self is called *Purukh,* which is the supreme Entity in which all the values are conserved. It is what we may call in the religion terminology, God. The expression most popular with the Gurus in respect of God is "Thou" (*Tudh, Teti, Tun* etc.)[1]. Being primarily a religious approach, the stress on objectivity of values is so intensely and sincerely laid that the utterances have a reasonable chance of being misunderstood as a sort of authoritarianism. But the stress is understandable because the Gurus are perhaps thereby signifying their disapproval of any declaration of "I" as the source of representation of values. Whether "*Aham Brahmāsmi*" (I am *Brahman*) of Sankara's school was in their mind, one may never know. The whole stress of Vaiṡ ṇava movement or devotionalism—to which Sikhism in some respects is generally declared to be nearer—is on the objectivity of values. Here objectivity means objective, so far as we or our self is concerned, but these are subjective in terms of the source of their conservation, which source, as per statement above, transcends subjectivity of this or that self. The very expression of *ladhā* (found) or *khojat* (searched) point to the fact of this objectivity.

**Fundamental spirit necessary for the realization of the Ideal :**

A necessary sequel to our view of the objectivity of values is in terms of the spirit in which the self is to proceed towards self-realization. This spirit, according to Guru Nanak, ought to be that of utter humility, partly expressed by him through the Arabic term *raza.*[2] It is customary to render it in English as "to yield or surrender". It is indeed indicative of the spirit of surrender but not passive surrender. It is more a spirit of dedication. This notion has been examined in detail elsewhere also in the present book. Suffice to submit here that it is the surrender of ego (*houmai*), the consciousness of individuation, or what we may say, the acceptance of insignificance of one's egoistic view-point, which is so very necessary for the seeker of the universal point of view. But we must add that this consciousness of insignificance

[1] It partially agrees with Christianity that a person may "aspire to grow in the direction of moral perfection, but to do so he is told that he must turn his attention away from self as end and devote himself to the service of God and man." A. Campbell Garnett, *Can Ideals and Norms be Justified* (College of the Pacific), Vol. V, p. 70

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Japji (i), p. 1

or surrender is not to lead to any defeatism, complacency, fatalism or some other doctrine of inaction or morbidity. The use of the terms *chalna* (walking) as well as *raza* amply provides against any such misinterpretation. The self becomes increasingly aware that there is an element which always transcends its activity, an awareness that one is not the whole and sole doer and that brings to it both solace as well as humility. The doctrine of Grace (*prasād, nadar, karam, bhaṇa),* which is an important part of Sikhism, is another step in the same direction. In this its stand-point is somewhat similar to Christianity and Ramanuja. The latter also uses the term *prasād* in similar meanings and this spirit is common to almost all the devotional schools in India. The spirit is somewhat like the one portrayed by William James, in his essays on morality : "There is but one unconditional commandment, which is that we should seek incessantly, with fear and trembling, so to vote and to act as to bring about the very largest total universe of good which we can see."[1] And Guru Nanak says, "Without Thee I am not a copper, but if Thou art pleased with me I become priceless."[2] It is spirit of dedication that may be seen in this declaration, which makes the whole progress deeply religious.

### 2.6. The meaning of 'sat' and 'sachiara'

What, it may be asked now, are the meanings of the terms *sat, sach* and *sachiāra,* which we have been using without examining them, though we have some general idea about their usage by now?

It may be important to add here that these terms (*sat* and *sach*) are used for the Absolute, which is the objective good, and the term *sachiāra* is used for the self which realizes itself in the sense that it realizes this ultimate good. The moral standard, thus, may be seen as having been derived from the general notion of the Absolute. Consequently, it is necessary for us first to briefly examine this nature of the Absolute in order to appreciate fully the meanings of *sachiāra* as applied to the moral agent.

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[1] William James, *Essays on Faith and Morals* (New York : Longmans, Green & Co., 1949), p. 200

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Tukhāri Chhant, M. 1 (6-1) p. 1101; also, "Let self-surrender and intuition be they parents-in-law! and make deeds thy wife O mind". *Ibid.*, Gaudi M. 1 (3-3) p. 152

In order to arrive at some proper conclusion it may be submitted here that it is necessary to cite the prevalent and the past interpretations of this term, as well as some of the possibilites. It is, as it appears from their writings, customary with the scholars of Sikhism, among whom we include both the Eastern as well as the Western, to interpret *sat, sach* and *sachiāra* as True, Truth and True one, respectively. Thus we find Ernest Trumpp—the first Western scholar to render the *Ādi Granth* into English—translating the opening verse of the Granth under reference, in which these terms occur, as "The true name (*sat nām)* is the creator, the spirit without fear, the spirit without enmity." And the question "*kiv sachiāra hovie?*" (the question of ideal-self according to our contention so far) is rendered by him as "How does one become a man of truth (knowing the true one)."[1] The term *sat* thus is interpreted by him as "true".

This "true name" of that the Asolute was "true in the beginning... is true, will be true" (*Ād sach, jagād sach*), however, is not acceptable to another Western scholar, Max Arthur Macauliffe, who came historically after him. He takes passage under reference to mean "There is but one God whose name is true, the creator, devoid of fear and enmity"; and the next lines he interprets as "The True one was in the beginning; the True one was in the primal age. The True one is (*bhi*) now also; O, Nanak, the True also shall be."[2] Here Macauliffe pauses and thinks as to what was conveyed by the Gurus in this description. He feels that "this translation is unmeaning, for it is not doubted that God was true in all ages."

What was in Macauliffe's mind when he described the interpretation as "unmeaning"? Was he contemplating to seek some other meaning of *sat* and *sach*? It will remain a difficult problem to divine the exact meaning in Macauliffe's mind. But from what he quotes for comparison, namely an inscription from a Greek temple "I am all that was and is, and will be," we may infer that perhaps the alternative meanings in his mind were in terms of "being, or eternal existence." This may be seen as the right attempt to understand the meanings in terms of its usage in the Sanskrit language from which *sat* is taken. But right here, what is very significant for us is the pause

[1] Ernest Trumpp, op. cit., p. 1

[2] Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion* Vol. 1, p. 195

and the remark of Macauliffe, about the translation being unmeaning. It is a tell-tale pause which requires us not to hurry onwards but seek to understand what the Guru is trying to convey through this term *sat*. However, this pause is not noticed by scholars who gave followed Macauliffe as we shall see. For these scholars, *sat nām, sat* and *sach* very obviously meant True Name, Truth, or True respectively, and like Trumpp these scholars also seem to be engulfed by the same force of the habit of translating *sat nām* as True Name and *sat* as True or Truth. Thus whatever Macauliffe had contributed by his important pause and looking around does not appear to have been availed of, though, to be fair, we must recognise that the scholars could have been influenced by the use of the term *sach* in many other passages of the *Ādi Granth*, where it does convey the sense of speaking the truth,[1] which is in fact also recognised as a virtue of very high moral order. This seems to have weighed too heavily with the scholars leading them to see it in the same meanings even when it is used to indicate the Absolute or as the ideal of self-realization.

We have examined the views of Ernest Trumpp and Max Arthur Macauliffe and it may be pertinent to refer to other interpretations in the same direction arrived at in recent times.

Gopal Singh, a recent translator of the *Ādi Granth*, takes *sat* to be *satya* and renders it as "literally meaning Truth" and further clarifies that "Truth, in the Sikh credo, is that verity which is eternal."[2]

Mohan Singh renders it as "Truth-existence".[3]

Sohan Singh takes it to means "The Real". He regards *sat* and *sach* as having identical meanings—a point which we have been assuming throughout the preceding discussion—and these meanings he holds to be "The Real".[4]

The author of *Guru Granth Kosh* in Pujabi takes it to be derived from Sanskrit *sat* in the sense of "existent" (*hona*).[5]

Sodhi Teja Singh explains it in terms of "equally present in all

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[1] "*Satyug sach kahe sabh koi*"—"In Satyug every one spoke truthfully", *Ādi Granth*, Maru M. 1 (5-4), p. 1023

[2] Gopal Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, English Version (Delhi : Gur Dass Kapur & Sons Private Ltd., 1960), Vol. I. p. 1, Note 2

[3] *Ibid.*, Note 2

[4] Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path* (Bombay : Orient Longmans, 1959), p. 6

[5] *Guru Granth Kosh* (Amritsar), p. 172

things and at all times."[1]

We may entertain the following possibilites : It could be said that the term *sat* here has the same meaning which *satya* has in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa,* where the opening verse is "an adoration of the ultimate truth (*parama satya*)... The essential (*svarupa*) definitive nature of God is said to be truth (*satya*)."[2]

It could also be the case that Guru Nanak used this word in the sense in which *satta* is used in Pali language, namely, a living being, creature, a sentient and rational being, person.[3] He could have tried to convey the same sense by modifying the *satta* to *sat.* But it may be argued that the two words are different and it may not also be necessary to understand it in terms of its usage in Pali, when it can be adequately understood in terms of its usage in Sanskrit from which this term has been adopted in Punjabi.

It may also be considered that perhaps Guru Nanak has used *sat* in the sense of Sanskrit word *sattva,* from which also he might have derived it. *Sattva* is understood in the sense of strength, firmness, energy, courage, self-command.[4] The *sat* could thus also be related to the Vedic word *satvān* meaning "a strong or valiant man, hero, warrior." Here while *sattva* could be understood in the sense of the Absolute, *satvān* could be understood in the sense of *sachiāra* as a reference to the ideal self. In this way, we can also understand the historical development of Sikhism with an emphasis on being a spiritual hero or a warrior. But, while it does explain the historical development of the Sikhs, it cannot be accepted for the same reason which led to our non-acceptance of the last possibility, in terms of the difference in the two words. But, never-the-less, the ideal of *sachiāra* does seem to have been influenced by the sense in which *satvān* is understood.

We may now mention the sense in which *sat* is understood in Sanskrit language from which it is adopted in Sikhism. *Sat* in Sanskrit (from the root *as* meaning "to be") is understood in the sense of "real, actual, as any one or anything ought to be, true good, right (*tan na*

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[1] Sodhi Teja Singh, *Sri Gur Baṇi Prakāsh* (Amritsar : S.G.P.C., 1953), p. 14

[2] S.N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridege : At the UniversityPress, 1952). Vol. IV p. ii

[3] T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pali Dictionary* (Chipstead : 1925)

[4] Monier Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary.* (Oxford : 1925)

*sat* "That is not right" as used in *Vedas*). It is also used in the sense of "Universal spirit, *Brahama.*"[1] It is in this sense of Universal Spirit, or *Brahma,* that it is used and understood by Vedanta school and the earlier literature. Mani Singh, the scribe of the recension of the *Ādi Granth* dictated by the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, and quoted by Ernest Trumpp, also points in the similar direction when he says "*Braham* sach...". According to him, thus, *sach* means *Brahama,* and *Brahama* as we have seen earlier, means "Universal Spirit." The concept of *sat,* therefore, has the influence of Vedanta, where it is elaborated in great detail. But in Vedanta the ultimately reality, or the universal spirit, is termed *sat-citānanda* while in Sikhism it is termed *Sat Nām Karta Purukh.* This shows some independence of meanings as well. We will now attempt to examine this difference. The absolute in Vedanta (*sat cit ānanda* or *Sachidānada*) is literally understood as "Existence, Consciousness, Bliss." Now in Sikhism, while *sat* is common with the Vedanta tradition, it adds *Nām,* which it has in common with Buddhism, to denote "consciousness."[2] But then Sikhism adds further *Karta* (Creative energy or Activity), *Purukh* (entity).[3] The absolute is thus conceived in Sikhism as dynamic and is viewed functionally. This attribute of the creative activity has considerably influenced the ideal of self-realization. This also marks its difference from the sānkhya school of Indian Philosophy, because, in Sānkhya, the *puruṣa* is considered inactive, as it is pure consciousness; but in Sikhism it is declared to be *karta,* the Creative energy, activity. Coming back to the use of *sat* we may see that the only appropriate course is to understand it in terms of its usage in Sanskrit (from where it is adopted) as "Real, existent, good" and when it refers to the ideals or self it, like-wise, would mean "as any one or anything ought to be." But these meanings will have to be conjoined with *Sat Nām Karta Purukh* when a reference is made to the Absolute. The Gurus, however, do not always use the full *Sat*

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 1134

[2] *Nām* as used in Buddhism stands for 'conciousness', as in "*Nām Rupa*", when it is used to refer to the self; c.f. "*Nāma* does not stand for name in the usual sense but for the psychic factors... ". I.C. Sharma, "The Ethics of Budhism". *Ethical Philosophies of India* (London : George Allen & Unwin, 1965), p. 159

[3] Mohan Singh Dewana, *Punjabi Bhakha Vigyān ate Gurmat Giān* (Amritsar : Kasturi Lal and Sons, 1952), p. 22

*Nām Karta Purukh* to refer to the Absolute but many a time simply use symbol *sat* or *nām* for the same. Therefore, even when *sat* or *nām* is used singly it ought to be understood in the sense of *Sat Nām Karta Purukh* unless it is specified in some other manner in some particular context, for example, when *sach* is used in the sense of truthful. And here we may refer to the earlier interpretations of *sat* by the scholars of Sikhism as truth, against which Macaulliffe raised some doubt as observed by us earlier. The use of the term truth here may be objected to on two grounds. First, that it may cause it to be confused with truthful. It is in this sense that Macauliffe seems to have objected to its use. Second, which is more important, that it may fail to convey the dynamic aspect, which, to be sure, is an important keynote of Sikh ethics. It is perhaps due to this inability of mere *sat* as truth to convey this dynamic creativity that Guru Nanak prefers to use *Sat Nām Karta Purukh.* It would, therefore, be better not to fall into the error of calling it as true or truth. And if it is absolutely necessary to use the term Truth to convey the idealistic groundings of the Absolute it would be necessary to make it clear that it is being understood in the sense of this dynamic existence which, from the moral angle, is held to be the highest good or the absolutely perfect. It is this Absolute that is declared to be fearless (*nirbhau*) and without enmity (nirvāir) by Guru Nanak.[1]

Let us now come to *sachiāra* which is the ideal self to be realized. In the light of preceding discussion a *sachiāra* is "as any one ought to be". It is the fully realized self. But here we may be faced with a difficulty, that a self has to seek light from realized self (*sachiāra*) but till it has not realized itself, it cannot be fully aware of that state of the realized self. It is in view of this difficulty that another term *Sikh* (a student, a seeker) is used for the self while it is still choosing its actions in terms of their conduciveness to the realization of the state of *sachiāra.* The light at this stage comes to him from the Guru (teacher) who is a realized self. F.H. Bradley also comes almost to the same position when he argues "for idealizing further the best characteristics of admired persons and using them as examples."[2]

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Japji, p. 1

[2] John L. Mothershead, *Ethics* (New York : Henry Holt and Company, 1955), p. 254

However, in Sikhism it is believed that the Gurus are fully realized persons and, therefore, that part of Bradley's proposition, which contains the reference to "idealizing further" may not be operative in the case of Sikhism. It is a view which Sikhism seems to share with the ethical notions of other spiritual systems where the same view is held about their respective founders.[1] It may be called a reference to authority, but this authority is not the person in the Guru but his experience. But, even apart from this guidance, the principle of *sach* does afford us some clue towards this realization. In the first instance, *sach* requires the realization of the unity of self, e.g., "*Gurumukh sach vasai ghat antar sehaja sach samai*". Second, the notion of the creative activity of the Absolute affords us another clue, that actions are chosen in terms of their creative improvement of the self and in social relation *sach* becomes a principle of equality, non-exploitation, love, altruism and unity. The most important would be that of unity. If everyone is a participant in the same Absolute manifestation of the same universal spirit then it is the only moral course open for the self to realize and reflect this, not through some mystic intuition only, but through its actions also. It is this stress on actions idealized by the notion of *karta*-discussed in terms of Absolute—that provides the cue that the state of *sachiāra* is realized through continuous creative efforts for improvement, and again the realization is characterised by a ceaseless activity for helping others. Thus a self, when torn between various impulses, can neither realize the state of *sachiāra* nor can one, who may claim such realization, but in actions may seek to escape social responsibilities and human loyalties towards its improvement, be termed *sachiāra* . The ideal of all the discipline is to realize the pervasiveness of universal spirit in all and this is to be realized not only through gradual expansion of consciousness, but is also to be effectively translated in the actions of the self. It is only then that we can understood *karta* (creative activity) attributed to the

[1] Compare : "The purpose of spiritual knowledge is the awakening of the soul and transformation of life itself." It is further said that for this knowledge Guru (teacher) is required and "the Guru may be compared to a lighted candle that ignites the disciple's soul." Sri Sankaracharya, *Ātmabodha.* ed. Swami Nikhilananda (Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math. 1947), pp. 39-40

Absolute by Guru Nanak. As Charles Moore has ably argued, "The moral life, in its social aspect, is the spiritual life; it is spirituality in action."[1] And Guru Nanak says : "Truth is higher than everything else but true conduct is higher than even truth."[2] A realized self-*gurmukh*-is known by his altruistic activity as we shall have occasion also to see in Chapter VI. In this the *gurmukh* or *sachiāra* is nearer to the Christian mystic. Just as Eckhart says, "What a man takes in contemplation he must pour out in love."[3] In Sikhism the Guru says that *braham giāni*—used as a synonym of *sachiāra*—does no evil : (*Braham giāni to kich bura no bhaya*) or that "a truly educated person is overflowing with altruism" (*vidya vīchari taṇ parupkāri*).

Therefore, in spite of the difficulty that the self has to seek light from the realized self (*sachiāra*), when it is not *sachiāra* as yet, there are enough cues available to him for setting out on this moral journey of self-realization. And this light and cues he obtains from the notion of the Absolute or the Perfect.

The cue to this principle of progress is also provided by the negative aspect of this standard. This negative aspect is the progressive transformation of *houmai* (ego) in the sense of its negation by progressive expansion. In starting this negative aspect in very clear terms Guru Nanak seems to be following the general Indian tradition of negative description *neti neti* (not this, not this). This aspect of the standard tells us what the moral progress is *not,* and according to it 'my' or 'mine' (which consciousness is immoral) is gradually to be transformed into 'we' and then this 'we' has to be gradually expanded (*vikās*) to include the whole creation or existence, so that, it reaches 'we-all'. This negative aspect clearly would not permit the self to make any concession or relaxation in its own favour. This may have some similarity with Kant's criterion of 'universalisation' of the act. In fact, this theoretical aspect of Kant's moral philosophy is its most crowning glory, though in view of the lack of the positive content (it being called as merely negative), it is subjected to great objections.

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[1] Charles A. Moore, op. cit., p. 28

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Sri Rāg. M. 1 (5-14) p. 62

[3] As quoted by Stace in, *Mysticism and Religion* (New York : J.P. Lippencott Company, 1960), p. 338

Here, in Sikhism, Guru Nanak integrates this aspect of the moral principles as a negative aspect of his general idealistic standpoint of self-realization. It is what Bradley may call 'Self-realization through sel-sacrifice.' In Sikhism it is found alongwith the positive content of *sach sehaj* (unity of self) in terms of its relevance to the personal issues, and in social context, as the awareness-and expression through actions—of the unity of humanity and existence as manifestation of *sat.*

Historically, in India, *satya* as truth largely surperseded the Vedic notion of *ṛta* as the moral principle of righteousness during the *Brāhamaṇas* period, that is, the literature which followed Vedic period and preceded the *Upaiṣads.* But though *satya* replaced *ṛta* the negative form of the latter as *anṛta* established itself as opposite of truth (*satya).*[1] This *satya* however, as a moral principle, is interpreted as speaking truth.[2] The untruth is described as "a hole in the voice which can be filled by adding a syllable to a verse."[3] However, when we come to Advāita Vedanta the stress is on *sat* as constituent of the Absolute *Sat Cit anandā* and Sikhism seems to have some similarity with Vedanta in this regard rather than with *Brāhamaṇas* literature. Another reason for the adoption of this term in Sikhism could have been that in Islam (particularly among the Sūfis) the ultimate reality is described as *Haqq* which, rendered into the English language, is 'Truth'. The Sikh Gurus might have found in this term an excellent meeting ground between the two great idealistic traditions of the world, namely, Hinduism and Islam, and might have attempted to demonstrate the compatibility and similarity of views, though the Gurus, as we have seen, did introduce variations, here though the Gurus, as we have seen, did introduce variations, her and there, in accordance with their experience of reality as well as their concept of the principle of the moral and spiritual progress.

## 2.7. Concluding remarks

Let us now briefly summarise the answers to the various questions discussed in this chapter. We had made the observation that Sikh

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[1] Arthur Berriedale Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishada* (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1925). Vol. II, p. 479

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 478

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 479

ethics follows great humanistic traditions in focussing the attention on man and his improvement. This aspect of the development was demonstrated in this chapter. It was seen that the self is required to transform its narrow egoistic perspective to realize the ideal self, namely *Sachiāra.* On this standard an act is good in so far as it is conductive to the progressive realization of the whole self-in developing it-and thus leading the self in its onward journey towards its ideal. This is, what we may say, viewing the standard in terms of moral creativity. It was also seen that in this realization of the whole self all the three aspects, *jut, mut* and *bhau*[1] (to refer to conation, cognition and affection) are realized, though it also came to light that the stress is on the will and action. The freedom of will has been ensured by declaring that the will is working within self. But it avoids the sheer subjectivism, to which such a position could lead, by positing the universality of this will and thereby transcending the sheer subjectivity viewed in the perspective of individuation. As a cue to this moral progress, *sach* was seen as a pointer in the direction of the attainment of the unity of self by regulating the various springs of action and by providing ethical virtues as their bases. That led to our discovery that this balances self has to work through social relationship which relationship, in turn, is to be regulated on moral principles enumerated there. The reference has also been made to the necessary fundamental spirit in which this progress is to be carried on. It is the spirit of surrender and humility. But it is integrated with fearlessness and absence of enmity (*nirbhau* and *nirvāir*).[2] These twins are in fact said about the Absolute, but as the self has to realize on the pattern of the Absolute, there are, according to Sikhism, the fundamental requisites of the spirit for the moral progress of the seeker. A craven and crescent seems to have no place in this scheme. And it is this spirit in terms of which the historical development of Sikhism can be properly appreciated. The synthesis of these with humility and surrender brings out the fact that the spirit of humility ought not be

[1] *Ādi Granth,* Japji. sloka, p. 8. See also "If intellect be thy organ and love thy tambourine, thou shall remain in Bliss, Asa M. 1. (1-6), p. 350

[2] *Ibid.* Japji, p. 1

confused with cowardly humiliation. This, in a way, had been the message of *Bhagavadgītā* also. After taking into account this question of spirit we undertook a discussion of the possible meanings of the term *sat* and *sach* as the principle of moral and spiritual progress. It was seen by us that this *sat* and *sach* ought not to be confused understood in the mere meanings of *satya* as was current during the *Brāhamaṇas* period, that is, as 'being true in speech'. Perhaps it is this confusion which Macauliffe was seeking to remove as discussed earlier. We have also argued that *sat,* as derived form Sanskrit, would be better understood in the sense of 'dynamic existent' or 'real energy' in the same meanings. It is in this sense that we appreciated it to be a description of the Absolute as well as a pointer in the direction of the principle of the moral and spiritual progress. We also found that *sach* in Sikh ethics stands for a principle of the creative transformation of self (as a unity) and the moral basis of social relationship. The negative of *sach*, namely *kuḍe* (bad, falsehood) was found to be *houmai* (I-am-ness), a conciousness of egoistic individuation, the absolute transformation of which could lead towards the realization of *sachi ara* state.

It will be now necessary for us to examine in some detail the various aspects of the problems raised in this chapter and for that we may take up in the next chapter the ethico-psychological analysis of the various springs of action as its study forms the first link in our attempt to understand the nature of self-realization.

# III
# HUMAN MOTIVES, PROPENSITIES AND PRAXIS
## (Psycho-ethical evaluation)

### 3.1. Prolegomena

A person planning to soar high would recognise the need of self-regulation and precision of response as necessary conditions for his efficient progress towards the realization of the ideal. It may be questioned whether a self, which is an easy victim of violent pulls of various impulses and passions in different directions, is in a proper condition to undertake the onerous journey of self-realization. Impulses are very often jealous and once a self gives way to wrong types, the praxis, thus accepted, may generate its own vicous circle. it is aptly pointed out by John Dewey that "an impulse or habit which is strongly emotional magnifies all objects that are congruous with it and smothers those which are opposed whenever they present themselves." He cites the case of Oliver Cromwell who "indulged in *fits of anger* when he wanted to do things that his conscience would not justify."[1] (Emphasis added.) This brings out the need for the proper education and culture of the various impulses, passions and propensities involved in human activity.

John Dewey, while tracing the career of an impulse, prefers sublimation to "surging explosive discharge-blind, unintelligent or to suppression." In this sublimation "a gust of anger may, because of its dynamic incorporation into disposition, be converted into an abiding conviction of racial injustice to be remedied. Or, an excitation of sexual attraction may reappear in art, or in tranquil domestic attachments and service." According to John Dewey, "such an outcome represents the normal or desirable functioning of impulse."[2]

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[1] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York : Modern Library, 1957), p. 195

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 156

In a different philosophical perspective Spinoza and Kant have also recognised the need for proper cultivation and regulation of passions and motives for the autonomy of the self. In India, Buddhism, "by making the ethical depend upon the motives,"[1] seeks to provide more profound basis to the ethics. The need to transform the various impulses is also a prominent feature of the different schools of Hindu Philosophy.[2] A similar view in regard to the regulation of the various passions is also an important characteristic of the Christian ethics.[3] However, it may be doubted whether we can accept in total the psychological analysis in regard to the various passions or propensities as postulated during earlier ethical systems.

In view of the recent advance made in the analysis of the motivational structure it may be neither necessary nor proper for us to accept the archaic description regarding the operation of these propensities and motives which seem to have been adopted in earlier attempts to describe some uniform pattern of possibilities and actual activities in the sphere of motivational scheme. It may be pertinent to remember that it was not so long ago that the artifacts, such as instincts, coupled with emotions, were accepted as the proper and adequate description of motivational activity and imperatives were raised on the basis of this view.

However, when due allowances has been made for the time which has elapsed since (fifteenth century) the postulation of the imperatives, in regard to the nature and operation of the various motives and propensities in Sikhism, we may recognize their great truth and relevance to morals even today. The crux of the problem lies in the acceptance of the need to educate those impulses and motives, what some scholar has called habits, or what we may as well call praxis, which may cause the loss of the personal and social equilibrium. The recognition of this need is a necessity for the moral hygiene of the self.

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[1] E.J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought* (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1953), p. 117

[2] S.K. Maitra, *op. cit.*, p. 175

[3] Dietrich, Von-Hilderbrand, *Christian Ethics* (New York : David Mckay Company Inc., 1953), p. 441

### 3.2. General treatment of motives and propensities in Sikhism

A study of Sikhism reveals that there are four inter-related groups of motivation : (1) The first group includes a cluster of five motives which are termed as moral evils necessitating their sublimation and regulation by (2) virtues (3) social motives and (4) the urge for the Spiritual. In this motivational scheme only the first group is antagonistic to the unity of the self and as such merits moral culture and regulation.[1] We shall examine the first group in the present chapter and the others, namely, the second the third and the fourth "ethical oughts" will be taken up in the subsequent chapters. We may describe the last three groups as positive in the sense that these are desirable motives in contradistinction to the first group which may be termed as negative in the sense that these hamper the realization of the ideal self (*sachiāra*).

The springs or propensities usually listed in the first cluster are *kām, lobh, moh, krodh and ahankār,*[2] which may be respectively rendered as concupiscence (or lust), covetousness (or greed), attachment (and also delusion), ire (wrath), and pride. Some of these propensities are positive in the sense that they involve the attraction of the person towards someone or something, which is its objective pole, whereas the others may be called negative which involve the repulsion of the self from someone or something which is its objective reference.

It may be important and pertinent to add here that these are not biological or primitve urges that are criticised in the ethics of the Sikhs (such as *kām,* etc.). These are rather learnt dispositions characterised by indiscrimination. These may be regarded as ego-sentiments. The propensities such as *kām, lobh, moh, krodh* and *ahankār* may have their origin in the biological structure but are criticised in ethics. These are viewed as learnt dispositional activities. Their wide

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[1] Cf. Harry L, Hollingworth, *Psychology and Ethics* (New York : The Ronald Press Company, 1949). p. 61. It is pointed out by him that "many thoughts of social welfare indeed are calculated to suppress the activity of such instincts as escape, pugancity, assertion, aquisition and the like."

It may be added here that in hormic psychology, "for each of these instincts there is correlated primary emotion: thus fear goes with escape, *anger* with pugnacity, *pride* with assertion and so on." (Emphasis added.) *Ibid.*, p. 77

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Rāg Gujri M. 1 (6-1), p. 503; ("*kām, krodh, ahankār...*" Rāmkali M. 1 (3-0). p. 913; Kedāra M.4 (1-2-1)

and almost universal occurrance may be due to the continuity of subjective and objective conditions which sustain their motivational structure.

It will also be seen that these propensities are considered evil not only because of their consequences of indiscrimnation and praxis leading to socially undesirable results but they are criticised also because they stand in the way of the concentration by the self on the supreme values of union with the Spiritual Absolute. We may usefully refer to John Dewey who points out, in a different context, that "a bad habit suggests an inherent tendency to action and also holds command over us. It makes us do things we are ashamed of, things which we tell ourselves we prefer not to do. It overrides our formal resolutions, our conscious decisions."[1] In Sikhism, in this sense, pride is regarded as a greater evil than others, because, more than any other of these passions or propensities, it assumes a commanding posture and bars the way to the self-realization. It retunds the receptivity of the self to the higher ideals.

This approach of Sikhism to the realization of the ideal, along with the need for self-control, may be seen as a synthesis of something like a Dionysian ideal, in a different context, with the Appollonian stress on self-regulation or control. In this approach Sikhism may be seen to have some similarity to Christianity.[2]

**Analysis of the five propensities in Sikhism**

We may now analyse and examine in detail the five propensities namely *kām, lobh, moh, krodh and ahankār* (concupiscene, convetousness, attachment or delusion, wrath and pride, respectively). Among these, generally speaking, *kām, lobh, moh* and *ahankār* are sentiments while *krodh* may be considered as an emotion. But this distinction of the sentiment and the emotion does not appear to be fully drawn out in Sikhism as all of these propensities are sometimes stated together and at other times in some groups without any apparent signs of distinction. The reason for our taking up *kām, lobh* and *moh* first lies in the fact that these act as the valences of attraction in

[1] John Dewey. *op. cit.*, p. 34

[2] Compare : Christian view. A Campbell Garnett. *op. cit.*, p. 71

contradistinction to ire and pride which are generally indicated in repulsion of the person from some thing or a being.

**3.3. Kām (concupiscene)**

*Kām,* as a disposition, is criticised by the Gurus in Sikhism but the word *kām* is used by them very often without delineating its meanings. However, generally speaking, the Gurus use *kām* in the sense of an unbalancing propensity. Guru Nanak says, "And *kām* is the adviser... and subjects are blind and like the dead they dance to the tune,"[1] of *kām* and other propensities such as covetousness, etc.

The notion of *kām* as an unbalancing propensity is older than Sikhism. It is used in the Sanskrit language in a variety of meanings, so much so, that, according to an Indian scholar, "*kāma* suffers in the Sanskrit literature from a profuse, popular and indefinite usage."[2] In the *Amar Kośa* one finds eighteen synonyms for *kām* at one place and six at another. *Kām,* in old literature, is understood as : (1) an energy (*kām śakti*) motivating and energising all our activities, (2) the process of desiring itself (*kām cheśta*) and (3) the object of desire or ambition (*kāman or kāmana*).[3] We may thus used for used for desire in general. But it is also used for the sexual urge or concupiscene in a particular sense. In Sikhism one notices both these meanings given to it but usually it is used in the special sense of concupiscence or lust. The reference to this propensity as such is found in the utterances of all the Gurus but we find some detailed reference to it by Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru. In a passage of the *Ādi Granth* he has this to say, "O *kām,* thou lands men in hell, and makes them wander through myriad wombs, and cheatest all minds, sways all the three worlds and vanquishes all one's austerities, meditation and culture. Thou, whose pleasure is illusory, thou that makes one unsteady and poor [weak] and punishes the high and low alike."[4] We find Guru Arjan Dev referring to it in some detail in two other passages also, apart from

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Āsa M. 1 (111) p. 568; Gauḍi Guareri M. 1 (3-3) p. 232; Gauḍi M. 4 (2-9). p. 304

[2] Kanwar Lal Agrawal, *Yoga as a Science of Psychological Integration,* unpublished manuscript (Delhi University Library), p. 81

[3] *Ibid.* p. 61

[4] *Ādi Granth,* Slokas Sahskriti M. 5. p. 1358

the general reference to it throughout the *Ādi Granth.* He says, "The elephant is lured by *kām* to his enslavement and he goes as he is led by another. And the deer is lured to death by the sweet melodies of music. Seeing his family, the man is enticed away by the sense of possessiveness and the love of *māyā.* And then one becomes a part of it and owns it, but it forsure leaves him in the end."[1] This passage seems to conjoin the general meanings of desire as well as the special meanings of lust by the use of the analogy of the elephant. We may refer to yet another passage in which this stress on the special sense is brought out more clearly, before we take up its analysis. It is said by Guru Arjan Dev that "the man of lust is satisfied not with any number of women and breaks into others' homes. He sins and then regrets; so he withers away by sorrow."[2] Elsewhere also, the same Guru has said that "some feed eyes on the beauty of others' women, hid from the world's eyes, yea, if these be their deeds, they come to grief." [3] The last two passage seem to refer to the feeling of guilt involved in this deviant response of the person under the influence of lust.

The language of these passages is terse and the use of the symbols and the analogies seeks to convey more than what meets the superficial eye. The elephant (*kunchar*) and deer (*mṛg*) are understood in India as symbols of kām.

### Nature of Kam

The nature of *kām,* as understood in Sikhism, can be stated briefly. It seems to go beyond Greek's sense of mere intemperance though it appears to have some resemblance with it in the sense of licentiousness. The special stress seems to be on the need to escape from being overpowered by it. We may conclude the following from the passages cited above : (1) *Kām* blinds the individual to higher values. The person seems to lose the power of discrimination. (2) *Kām* as a response of the person may be generalized. The habit of promiscuity may lead to generalized deviant sex response. The person is not satisfied with any one object of lust. We may usefully refer here to a study by

[1] *Ibid.*, Dhanāsri M. 5, p. 671
[2] *Ibid.*, Dhanāsri M. 5, p. 672
[3] *Ibid.*, Vār of Guaḍi, Paudi M. 5 (27), p. 315

Bandura and Waters who refer to many cases of generalization of the sex response some of which "eventually required clinical treatment."[1] (3) The satisfactions from *kām* are relatively short lived, though, as a propensity, it is fairly permanent. (4) All individuals, in whatever position they are, may be affected by it. One is reminded of the *Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.3.6) where it is said that *kām* has an irresistible urge and even the sages of yore were led astray by sexual passion and were constrained to commit sin. (5) The psychological propulsion which this motive commands may make the individual oblivious even to his own self-preservation. (6) One who is enticed by it becomes weak an unsteady in one's rational judgement. (7) It has a great capacity and possibility of robbing the mind of its supreme authority. (8) It is a complex propensity and may be operative in collaboration with other motives or propensities.

This analysis reveals some unique features of *kām* as a propensity. Usually it is examined merely from the affective aspect, but in the Sikh ethics all the three aspects, namely, its adverse effect on affective, cognitive and conative are examined. From the affective aspect under cruelty generated by it, the self may be blinded to tender feelings. As to the cognitive aspect it may blind the perception of moral values. And conatively speaking it may even lead to actions of self-destruction. The second feature, which also comes to light, is the recognition of both the increase and the inhibition of action affected by this propensity; that is to say, certain activities are accentuated under it (i.e. intensity of feeling and intensity of effort) and some are hampered or even suspended and stopped (such as reflective activity or feeling of self-preservation). Guru Tegh Bahadur views lust conjointly with a mercurial mind and holds that it keeps a person always restless.[2]

It is perhaps because all these would lead to the moral degradation of the self that St. Augustine had said, "Justly is man ashamed of this lust, and justly are those members (whom lust moves) called shameful."[3] And Dorothea Krook has pointed out that "St. Augustine's

[1] Albert Bandura and Richard H. Waters, *Social Learning and Personality Building* (New York : Holt, Richard and Winstone Inc., 1963), p. 154

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Basant M. 9 (1-2), p. 1186

[3] St. Augustine, *The City of God*, Bk. XIV, Chap. 16 (Every man's ed.) p. 47

account of concupiscence is at once a peculiarly representative and peculiarly definitive statement of the Christian view."[1] We may thus notice a sort of similarity in the ethical evaluation of this propensity in Christianity and Sikhism.

Among the Hindu schools of Indian Philosophy also, *kām*, as a propensity, is recognised. According to Prasastapada of Vaiśeśika, it is "sexual craving" though he says that sexual craving, when praticularised, may mean "longing for happiness in heaven."[2] Vatsyayana of Nyāya, however, does not state *kām* as a separate drive for action but traces passions and emotions to one root, viz., *moh* (delusion)[3] though be deriving it from delusion, its moral evaluation is indicated. Jayanta in Nyāya Manjari also traces it to delusion the latter being a sort of disorder of reason.[4] In *jivanmuktivīveka* of Vidyaranyasvami of the Vedanta School, *vāsanas* (tendencies) constitute the source of the emotions and the passions which are unreflective and spontaneous. *Kām* is included in desire for carnal pleasures (*deh vāsana*) and it is declared to be inauspicious tendency (*aśubh-vāsana*). These evil tendencies are further declared to be cause of birth and participation in the world.[5] The views of Buddhism are well known on the subject. Edward J. Thomas relates an incident from the life of Buddha. According to this scholar Buddha thought that "when the fire of passions is extinguished, the heart is happy; when the fire of hate, the fire of stupidity are extinguished, it is happy; with the extinction of pride, false views, and all the depravities and pains, it is what is called *nibuttam* that, is, happy."[6] A somewhat extreme position appears to have been taken by Jainism in this regard, where complete abstinence of sexual indulgence is regarded as a high ideal. In Jainism *abrahmacarya* that is, "unchastity, idulgence in sexual intercourse mentally or physically" is considered as one of the eighteen

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[1] Dorthea Krook, *Three Traditions of Moral Thought* (Cambridge : At the University Press, 1959), p. 271

[2] S.K. Maitra, *op. cit.*, p. 175

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 179

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 181

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 186

[6] E.J. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 137

demerits or vicious acts.[1]

We have already referred to the fact that this propensity seems to be criticised in Sikhism as a learnt sentiment and not wholly as a biological one. The analysis of *kām* in Sikhism, thereafter, may be understood as pointing to a propensity which may attain a dimension, morally and spiritually harmful, in terms of the characteristics already noticed by us. Sikhism, however, does not go to the extreme of declaring all normal sexual relationships as immoral. This conclusion is also reinforced from the direction of the Gurus to lead a life of the householder, as well as from their own lives. The *Sikh Rahit Maryāda* (code of conduct) seeks to channelise this propensity into normal martial sex consummations.[2] The Gurus themselves were married and had maintained families. The only conclusion, therefore, which can satisfactorily explain their treatment of this propensity is that the heightened passionate sensualism, which may overpower all the activities of the self, is evaluated as moral sickness and evil. In regard to the sex impulse a scholar has pointed to a possibility in a different context when it may result in "a domination of the emotions, perceptions and social incorporation of the person" and "the whole environment and most bodily feelings become sexualized."[3] Guru Nanak has also pointed out that "the lover of women is lured by lust... the man of passions is lured by another's wife and he engages himself in strife."[4] It is thus the lasciviousness which is disapproved of and not the consummation of relationships within the martial bonds. This seems to be a special connotation of *kām*. The sex response, when it is transformed and fortified through loyalty, purity of mind and marriage, is held to be desirable in Sikhism. A psychologist, advising a wholesome attitude towards sex, maintains that "most important of all is adoption by the adolescent of a pattern of values in which sex gratification plays a role, but not the dominant role."[5] In

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[1] I.C. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 120

[2] *"Apni istri se rut hoie, rahitvān Guru Kā Sikh soie," Sikh Rahit Maryāda* (Amritsar : S.G.P.C.), p. 24

[3] Hans Gerth, C. Wright Mills, *Character and Social Structure* (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1954), p. 77

[4] *Ādi Granth,* Gaudi M. 1 (4 & 5-II), p. 226

[5] Harry S. Broudy, Eugene L. Freel, *Psychology for General Education* (New York : Longmans Green and Company, 1956), p. 169

Sikhism the Gurus advise the seeker to sublimate and regulate various propensities and responses in terms of the various moral virtues which we shall examine in the present book.

### 3.4. Lobh (convetousness)

In *Gurśabadratnākar,* Bhai Kahan Singh renders *lobh* as the "desire to possess what belongs to others,"[1] though the propensity, as stated in the *Ādi Granth,* seems to stretch beyond these meanings. Guru Arjan Dev refers to it thus, "O *lobh* thou has swayed even the best of men by thy waves. And men's minds waver and wobble and run in all conceivable directions, to gather more and more; thou hast respect neither for friendship, nor ideal nor father, nor mother, nor kindreds. Thou makes one do what one must not do, and to eat what is eaten not, and to build what cannot be built."[2] Guru Nanak says, "The greedy mind is never at peace and out-goeth in all directions."[3] Guru Arjan Dev points out that for the greedy, riches become the mainstay of life.[4] As to the social relations of the greedy persons Guru Amar Dass says that such a person is not trustworthy. The greedy is not loyal to anything else axcept his own riches, for which, he would deceive every one else in the end.[5]

The above descriptions of *lobh* and *lobhi* (greedy person) may give us some insight into the nature of this propensity, the behaviour pattern of the subject moved by it, as well as the psychological power which this spring of action may command over other activities.

#### Nature of Lobh

We have noticed that (1) in the above passage *lobh* is described as a wave which implies that the activity caused by this propensity is the product of something in the object of *lobh* as well as the presence of some reciprocating tendency in man, the joint effect of which is that one attracts and the other has the inclination to be attracted. (2) It

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[1] Bhai Kahan Singh, *Gurušabadratnakār* (Patiala : Languages Department, 1960)

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Slokas Sahskriti, M. 5, p. 1358

[3] *Ibid.,* Rāmkali M. 1 (2-1) Chaupadas, p. 876

[4] *Ibid.,* Rāmkali M. 5 (2-4), p. 914

[5] *Ibid.,* Sloka M. 3 (40), p. 1417). (*Lobhi Kā visaha nā keje)*

also seems to create a false perspective of value. One gives an overriding value to riches or money, which value it does not have from the moral or spiritual point of view. Thus it topsy turvises the value scale. It is said to create a mirage-like illusion. It perpetuates a sense of unsatiation as it has been described as *mṛg* triśna."[1] The self, under it, is shown as one who is incessantly restless. The wavering and wobbling in all conceivable directions incapacities the individual from viewing the values in their proper perspective. (3) It may also be seen as a limiting factor and extremely individualistic in nature; extremely egoistic and selfish. (4) The self under its sway pays no heed to one's social and even family obligations, what to say of the humantarian, and one's dealings may create social and personal difficulties. (5) We have already drawn attention to the fact that a greedy self is untrustworthy and devoid of social loyalties.

**Psychological charge of this motive**

The psychological strength of this propensity, according to Sikhism, can be gauged from the fact that it commands instantaneous movement towards its object. ("And whatever sharpens his greed, he runneth after instantaneously")[2].

Second, even those men who have attained some amount of perfection may be sometimes tempted by it, that is, they are required to be careful against it. This additional characteristic, referred to in the passage, perhaps takes cognizance of the often witnessed facts of history as well as that of the Indian legendary tales wherein men, otherwise acclaimed as great in many spheres, succumbed to avariciousness.

The above description of this propensity has some remarkable resemblance to the exposition of J. Butler in which he has contended that even though some propensities are lower in ethical scale they may yet command greater psychological power at any time and may in actuality surpass the ethically higher principles, such as conscience.[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, Devgandhāri M. 9, p. 536

[2] *Ibid.*, Devgandhāri M. 5, p. 531

[3] "In any actual man self-love may overpower conscience and so spread itself at the expense of benevolence." C.D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London : Routhledge Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 61

A reference to the various schools of Hindu Philosophy in regard to *lobh* reveals that Prasastapada does not mention it as a separate propensity. Vatsyayana of Nyāya mentions it but he traces it to one ultimate root, viz., delusion (*moh*) as he does in the case of *kām* as well. According to him from delusion arise various passions and emotions characterised by attraction and repulsion. Greed is at this stage a motive along with mendacity and deceitfulness (māya kaptāta)[1]. We find that Guru Nanak also uses "*kapti*" with *lobhi*[2] so as to stress the deceitfulness involved in the greedy self, which, in a way, is a pointer to the social impact of this propensity. Jayanta's rendition of *lobh* in the Hindu ethics it as the desire to obtain a forbidden thing, the slight difference being, that Kahan Singh adds "what belongs to others"[3] and thereby brings out the emphasis more clearly on the anti-social element in *lobh.* Patanjali finds it as a co-motive along with the other submotives of human actions, viz., cruelty and mendacity and gives it the meanings of desire for the pleasure, which meanings as we have seen earlier, are accepted as a part of *lobh,* though it may be added here, that sometimes greedy person may be so engulfed by this propensity that all activity may be directed towards the attainment of the object without aiming at happiness directly. This may cause restlessness. And it is this lack of rest or tranquillity caused by *lobh* which is stressed in the preceding passages cited from the *Ādi Granth.* We have also seen that it is regarded in Sikhism as a separate propensity and not as part of any other motive as postulated by Patanjali. However, it is recognized in Sikhism that *lobh* may conjoin with other motives in the course of its operation.

This analysis and comparision show that the recognition of *lobh* as a spring of action is not something unique to the Sikh ethics but it is distinguished by its greater emphasis on the social aspect, since in Sikhism, it is stressed that *lobh* may motive disregard for social loyalties and reponsibilities. It is, therefore, termed as an evil act.[4] The imperative as regards to convetousness in Sikhism, may be seen to

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[1] S.K. Maitra, *op. cit.*, p. 179

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Āsa M. (2-1-34), p. 959. (*Lobhi, kapti, papi*)

[3] Kahan Singh, "Lobh" *Gurśabadratnākar*

[4] *Ādi Granth,* Todi M. 5. p. 443 (*Lobh vikār...*)

have some remarkable similarlity to the description of the various restraints by Vyas who includes the imperative to control avariciousness in his scheme of self-discipline. It is explained by a scholar of the Yoga that "*aparigraha* (absence of avariciousness) is the non-appropriation of things that do not belong to one and it is a consequence of one's comprehension of the sin that consists in being attached to possessions, and of the harm produced by the accumulation, preservation or destruction of possessions."[1]

It is pointed out by David Hume that "avarice, which, as it both deprives a man of all use of his riches, and checks hospitality and every social enjoyment, is justly censured on a double account."[2]

We have already noted the various references in Sikhism to the mental unsatiation, deceitfulness and untrustworthiness generated by *lobh*. This show it to be an undesirable praxis. But all this, in turn, also points out that it is a pschological disposition and as such we may see the possibility of its being transformed. In its stress on the social aspect of avarice Sikhism may be seen to have some similarity to the Christain view where one finds a commandment against it.

The great need for the moral control of covetousness may be conceded by all. We may even say that the regulation of avarice of man, and further of nations, is a necessity of personal and social survival.

### 3.5. Moh (attachment and delusion)

*Moh,* as a propensity, is understood is two meanings, though both of them are inter-related. The term is used to convey the sense of delusion, loss of consciousness, bewilderment, perplexity, error and folly. It is an inability to view the values in right perspective. But it is also used in the sense of attachment with mundane things and in this meaning it seeks to convey attitude of the self. In Buddhism, it is used to mean ignorance which is one of the three roots of vice.[3] It is

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[1] Mircea Eliade, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom. tr.*) from French by Willard R. Track (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), pp. 49-50

[2] David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L.A., Selby Bigge (Oxford : At the Clarendon Press, 1902), p. 238

[3] Sir Monier Monier Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 836

often used as *moh jāla,* that is, a net of illusion, mundane fascination. In Sikhism this term conveys both of these senses, namely, a sense of being cheated of consciousness (delusion) as well as an attitude of attachment for the mundane.

In a way, delusion is more general and exhaustive in meaning and may include the attachment born out of wrong views. It is the general view of the schools of philosophy in India, except Carvāka, that the world is phenomenal and only relatively real, that is, it is non-permanent and, therefore, any attachment to it, in the sense of taking it to be the reality, is evil. The central theme of Buddhism may be viewed in this sense when suffering is said to be caused by mistaking that which is changing to be eternal. Guru Nanak says, "The whole world is engulfed by mundane values and attachment to it."[1] At another place he says, "*Moh* creates the family; through *moh* are all works. Rid yourself then of *moh,* for it leads to nothing but sin. O, thou brave one, shed your *moh* and doubt."[2] The fifth Guru addresses to this propensity thus : "O, unconquerable, O powerful hero of the battle-field, that moves down every thing before it. It has enticed away the hearts of even the gods and their attendants, heavenly musicians, the men, animal life and the birds."[3]

**Nature of moh**

The preceding passages reveal to us the nature of *moh* and the behaviour pattern of the individual moved by it, as well as its psychological charge. We may recognise that it is a tendency whereby men cling to the things with which they identify themselves, that is, the family, wealth, etc. This tenacity ultimately reduces the individual's chance of viewing things in the right perspective. It narrows down the individual's outlook and may, therefore, help cause and feed his narrow prejudices. It is all pervasive. The reference is *supra* quotes to heavenly musicians, gods, etc., have been drawn from the Indian mythology just to bring out this meaning clearly. *Moh* may be the outcome of one's ingnorance of the real and the changing nature of

[1] *Ādi Granth,* Prabhati M. 1. p. 1142
[2] *Ibid.,* Āsa M. 1. Panchpadas, p. 356
[3] *Ibid.,* Sloka Sahskriti, p. 1359

the things of this world and thus, in a way, it may be said to be the result of delusion. However, we should note the fact that the brave one is indicated to have the possibility of shedding it.

**Behaviour pattern of the individual under moh**

The individual under *moh* manifests a remarkable tenacity towards the things near and dear to him and, therefore, he may show a complete disregard for the things which are beyond his circle of preferences. It may thus arise from the egoistic feelings and also be fed by the egoistic acts thereby creating a sort of a vicious circle.

*Moh* also preplexes the individual and casts him into doubt as to the real value of things. Viewed in this sense it may be understood to create hesitation and, therefore, partially inhibit the individual in his activities.

The individual moved by it may be continuously enveloped in a sort of morbidity and because all the things to which one is attached do not survive for ever, in this everchanging Heraclitian world, the moment one is forced to part with the object of one's attachment one is bound to feel morose and lugubrious. It is in this sense that Buddha taught one to adopt an attitude of non-attachment to things if one wanted to avoid pain and sorrow. But, it may be relevant to remind ourselves, that in Sikhism the ideal life is that of the householder and, therefore, the attitude of non-attachment is to be viewed in the same perspective. The non-attachment, therefore, is to be a matter of the attitude and is not to be realized by leaving the home and running away from social responsibilities.

**Psychological charge of moh**

*Moh* (in the passages already referred to) has, by the Guru, been called the unconquerable and also the powerful hero of the battle-field. This description is sufficiently lucid to describe the psychological power which this motive may command and may, therefore, even over-rule other motives which may be higher in the ethical scale. The individual who is able to escape from the command of this tendency has been called brave.[1] This reminds us of a similar view expressed in

[1] *Ibid.*, Āsa M. 1, p. 356

the *Bhagavadgītā* (II, 31) by Sri Krsna in his sermon to Arjuna who was overcome, in the battle-field, by this attachment for his kith and kin against whom he hesitated to take up arms (I, 29). In this incident *Bhagavadgītā* amply brings out the threat his propensity poses to one's sense of duty.

The reference to the mythological stories of Hinduism has been made here to show that the influence of this propensity may extend even to persons who may appear to have attained some spiritual discipline; a warning that one has to continously watch against it, which, incidentally, also indicates its great psychological power.

Here it may be added that the consciousness of the fact that a certain amount of affection might be inevitable when the life of the house-holder is held to be desirable and preferred to that of the ascetic, appears to have led the author of the *Premsumārag* to add the word "very much"—thus holding that one should not be *very much* attached.[1] This attempt, coming after the tenth Guru, could be seen as an attempt to rationalise, what to the author of the *Premsumārag*, seemed to be an arduous and difficult task. The texts in the *Ādi Granth,* however, do not generally appear to grant this relaxation. An attitude of detachment seems to be the ideal cherished therein. This absence of attachment, which may be distinguished from apathy, may be seen as the necessary spirit which sustained Sikhism, historically, during the period of its persecution. This amply provided for the attitude necessary for making sacrifices for a cause. In a way in Islam, the tradition of *bakar-īd* could also be viewed as an attempt in the similar direction.

A scholar of Hinduism, Swami Ramakrishnananda, asks the question. "How does attachment come?" and himself proceeds to answer that the "man who makes much of sensual enjoyment, who thinks that out of sounds, forms and touches alone enjoyment can come, naturally becomes attached to them... A man thinks 'I want to be happy only in the world, and nowhere else can I be happy' and out of this belief attachment for the world springs up."[2] This process of

[1] "Premsumārag" ed. Kahan Singh in *Gurmutsudhākar* st. 827. p. 445 (*Bahuta moh nā kare*)

[2] Swami Ramakrishnananda, *For Thinker on Education* (Madras-Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1948), p. 125

the development of attachment appears to be accepted in Sikhism also, except that, in Sikhism it is impressed upon the seeker that the cultivation of non-attachment has to be carried on within the context of social participation. Non-attachment, in Sikhism, is not equated with renunciation of social duties, or asceticism. The ideal stressed by the Gurus in this regard is that one ought to live in the world just as the lotus flower lives in water. The flower is in the water and is yet unaffected by it in the sense that it does not sink in the water. Similarly, man should not renounce the social context but at the same time he ought not to be attached to it.

### 3.6. Krodh (wrath)

*Krodh* (wrath) is another emotion recognised in Sikhism which serves as a spring of conation. Individuals and nations, under the sway of this emotion, may be led to their own destruction, as well as that of those towards whom it is directed. Guru Arjan Dev says, "O, *krodh* (wrath), O father of strife, you know no compassion, thou hast a powerful sway over vicious men, who dance to your tune like monkeys, and then have to face immense punishment at the hands of the couriers of death; in whose society, men turn into devils."[1] Kabir, in a similar vein, says, "Wrath, the great garrulous being, reigns supreme."[2] Guru Nanak also remarks, "The anger destroys all the evil ones."[3] Let us now analyse (1) the nature of *krodh,*(2) behaviour pattern of the agent under its control, and (3) the psychological charge of this emotion.

#### Nature of krodh

One thing which emerges from the above passage is the inclusion of *krodh* among the emotions which shows that it is not considered, in Sikhism, as merely situation-inspired, but subjectively-inspired also. Second, by calling it the father of strife, it is shown to be a complex motive from which arise actions causing social conflict and strife. The actions may take different forms but they remain the same in quality, which quality is described as cruelty. If we look around,

[1] *Ādi Granth*, Slokas Sahskriti M. 5, p. 1358
[2] *Ibid.*, Bhairo Kabir (1-9-17), p. 1161
[3] *Ibid.*, Gaudi M. 1 (4-11), p. 225

the truth of this dictum would easily impress us. More cruelties—both personal and social—emanate from this emotion than from any other. In the recent times whole nations have seen to be consumed by the fire of ire in contradistinction to righteous indignation, as the latter lacks cruelty as constituent, though, very often, under the garb of righteous indignation, it is plain wrath which is active. Third, it is an emotion which may be termed as a double-edged one, because it harms the object which it is directed to as well as the organism which it has been directed from. Guru Nanak says, "Lust and wrath destroy the body as flux melts the gold."[1] Thus, while in its direction outward its impact may be social, inwardly it may lead to the disturbance of the peace of self and the loss of equilibrium.[2] Here one may refer to Professor Prem Nath, who while reporting the psycho-somatic findings in regard to the evil effect of anger on a person, observes, "Anger can kill a man. It does kill him indeed." He points out further that "anger is not only biologically hurting but is socially destructive also, destroying brutally as it does so many social relations which become difficult to redeem. Paralyzing reason and reasonableness, it follows its own dialectic of destruction."[3] This observation directly supports the views expressed by the Gurus and their warning that one should overcome wrath or otherwise "it would destroy the body as the flux melts the gold." Fourth, as the generator of hatred, or itself being the outcome of hatred, it militates against an attempt to establish social cohesion and integration. As jealousy is not mentioned separately in Sikhism, it appears to have been included under *krodh,* because, in jealousy also, like anger, the self may strive to remove the cause of it. Fifth, a Sikh, scholar, Bhai Kahan Singh, in a foot-note to *Tankhanāma* of Nand Lal, while referring to *krodh,* says that the persons who regard themselves as men of discrimination and knowledge (*Vibeki*) and insult others (as devoid of knowledge) are also examples of misplaced *krodh.*[4] The anger in this case seems to be the result of

[1] *Ibid.,* Rāmkali M. 1, p. 932

[2] Bhai Kahan Singh, "Address of Guru Tegh Bahadur to Makhan Shah" *Gurmutsudhākar,* para 1034 (*Nis meh neend nā pae dukhiāra*)

[3] Prem Nath, *The Art of Living* (Jullundur : University Publishers, 1963), pp. 124-25.

[4] Bhai Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar,* para 774.

pride. Sixth, in contradistinction to *kām, lobh or moh*—which are propensities of attraction—*krodh* involves an aversion from its object.

**Behaviour pattern of the individual under wrath**

The individual moved by wrath seems to be incapable of reflection[1] and becomes highly suggestive as is evident from the simile of the monkey dancing to the tune. The man is bereft of any consciousness of the consequence of his action in this world or hereafter. He may, though, be intensely conscious of the need to have vengeance on the noxious person or the object of *krodh*. There may even be some consciousness that such a vengeance is good. But this cannot be called the rational consciousness since the person is more or less a puppet under the influence of this passion, like the monkey dancing to the tune. Second, even men who are normally endowed with a well developed rational faculty—*compos mentis*—may take to ugly behaviour under its influence. Third, the man moved by it seeks to destroy the object of his wrath and in such destruction he exhibits no compassion or sympathy. Then, does anger lead to taciturnity? It does not necessarily appear to be so to Guru Teg Bahadur, who in his address to a Sikh, says that an angry man utters harsh words.[2] In this Sikhism may be seen to agree with St. Thomas Aquinas who supports a similar view and quotes the *Bible* to sustain it.[3]

**Psychological power of wrath**

Wrath as a person is charged with great psychological power whereby it may supercede other propensities including one's own physical and mental well-being. This sway of *krodh* seems to be directly proportionate to the perversity of the individual ("powerful sway over vicious men" as already referred to in the passages cited above). Thus, this emotion, or the spring of human action, may also draw its strength from the already existent evil tendencies in a man. It

[1] *Ibid.*, para 1034, (*Budh sabh naseh*).

[2] *Ibid.*, para 1034, *(Nisthor vāk kahē sumdaī)*.

[3] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, tr., Fathers of English Dominican Province (New York : Benziger Brothers Inc. 1947), p. 790. The quotation from Bible says "Whosoever is angry with his brother and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, and whosoever shall say to his brother,"Thou fool."

is also said to pervade all[1] which shows its strength not only in terms of intensity or depth but also in extensity.

**Some comparative references**

*Krodh,* in the old Indian literature, is "personified as child of *lobh* and *Nikriti;* or of Death, or of *Brahma*"[2] In the sermon from Guru Teg Bahadur, referred to earlier, the Guru also recognises that it may arise form the thwarted desires and, therefore, it may be called a child of *kāma.* In this sense it could be said to be related to *lobh.* But in Sikhism we do not find it described as a child of *Brahma.* Perhaps in the old Indian literature it was sought to be associated with the *tāndav* dance of Śiva (dance of destruction) and the passage under reference may perhaps be alluding to that fact. In the later schools of Hindu Philosophy we find it mentioned by all the schools. Patanjali of Yoga refers to it in *sūtra* 34 of the *Sadhanāpāda* of the *Yoga Sūtra.* Similarly, we find that anger is mentioned in the compounds under aversion in Jayanta's classification of the springs of action where it is called "an explosive emotion of the painful type."[3] In the case of Prasastapada also this passion is mentioned.

In Christianity we find St. Thomas Aquinas writing a large number of articles on anger while dealing with human acts (question 46 ff.).[4] Treatment of anger in the Sikh ethics appears to lay greater stress on the social aspect of this propensity in conformity with its general social line of approach and in this it may be seen to have some similarity of approach to the one adopted (in the above cited analysis) by Christianity.

Immanuel Kant also regards the "self-conquest in times of anger" as a "virtue of merit"[5] and stresses the need for controlling the activity of this impulse. A psychologist points out that "the *contractive* moods that affect us as individuals are chiefly moods of anger and fear." (Emphasis added.) He also stresses the need for replacing it by "an

[1] *Ādi Granth,* Maru M. 3 (15-4-18), p. 1062

[2] Monier Monier-Williams, *op. cit.,* p.322

[3] S.K. Maitra, *op. cit.,* p. 182

[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *op. cit.,* p. 778, ff.

[5] Immanuel Kant, *Education* (The University of Michigan Press : Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1960), p. 107

expansive mood." According to him "to make the switch over oneself, is to gain a fine sense of power and at same time to resolve the conflict."[1]

We may here refer to an interesting hypothesis of Herbert Spencer, in his writings on moral education, in regard to irascibility in human beings. After referring to some situations in which a person has reacted with an irate response Herbert Spencer concludes that these instances exhibit "in human beings that blind instinct which impels brutes to destroy the weakly and injured of their own race."[2] The inference here may be taken merely as a stress on the moral undesirability of angry response without our conceding the conjecture that it is that continuation in man of the same animal instinct which leads the latter to destroy the weak and injured of their race. The fact that it is not always the case even among the animals must have been known to Spencer. Second, it is not necessary that the irate response is only directed towards the weak and injured. Nevertheless, his observation serves the purpose of showing the moral undesirability of an angry response.

It is very aptly pointed out by Professor Prem Nath that "enormous damage caused by anger has not been reduced to statistical language" but he quotes James Bolton to point out that "half the sorrows of mankind could be averted if people grew up to keep anger at a safe distance."[3] All this supports the viewpoint of the Sikh ethics which requires men to control and overcome the angry response. Guru Nanak's dictum that anger destroys men[4] is an apt caution to mankind. There is a greater need to be vigilant against arousal and sustaining of anger today in view of the enhanced human resources and potentials of causing destruction, on the one hand, and the increased chances of frustration, born of ever multiplying competition between indiviudals and social groups, on the other hand.

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[1] H.A. Overstreet, *About Ourselves* (New York : H.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1927), pp. 262-63

[2] Herbert Spencer, *Education, Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (London : Watts & Co., 1945), p. 102

[3] Prem Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 126 (We may, however, not agree with the rather exaggerated claim of James Bolton in respect of "half the sorrows..."

[4] *Ādi Granth*, Rāmkali M. 1. p. 932 (*Kām krodh kāya ko gāle*)

### 3.7. Ahankār (pride)

*Ahankār* (pride), also written as *hankār* in the Punjabi language, is another of the springs of action under discussion. If one takes into consideration all the references to it in the Sikh scripture and allied literature, it would be easily seen that *ahankār* is considered to be a greater evil than the other propensities. But before we commence our examination of this propensity it may be necessary to state that this meaning of *ahankār* as pride is different from *ahankār* in the sense of the principle of individuation as understood in the Sankhya school of Indian Philosophy.[1] The term which more appropriately conveys this principle of individuation in Sikhism is *houmai*. So *ahankār* is Sankhya somewhat corresponds to *houmai* in Sikhism. Presently however, we are examining a psychological propensity and not a metaphysical category as it is used in Sankhya.

*Ahankār* may arise from one's possession of beauty or power.[2]Another cause for the rise of this propensity could be that the individual becomes proud of his acts of charity or of some religious merit attained by him through pilgrimages.[3] It is in this sense that "riches of the world which give rise to pride are called poison" because, thereby, "one is drowned and loses real honour."[4] At another place, Guru Arjan Dev says, "O pride the cause of our coming and going in the world, O soul of sin, thou estranges friends, confirms enmities and makes men spread out the net of illusion far and wide, and tires men by keeping ever on the round, and making them experience now pleasure, now pain. And men walk through the utter wilderness of doubt : thou afflicts men with incurable maladies."[5] These passages give us an understanding of the nature of this propensity, and behaviour pattern of the agent under it as well as the intensity of its psychological charge.

#### Nature of pride

The distinguishing mark of pride appears to be that it is secondary

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[1] I.C. Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-193

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Slokas Sahskriti M. 5 (63), p. 1359

[3] *Ibid.*, Slokas., M. 9, p. 1428

[4] *Ibid.*, Dhanāsri., M. 3 (4-8) p. 666

[5] *Ibid.*, Slokas Sahskriti M. 5 (49), p. 1358

in the sense that it, in itself, is effect of factors such as possession of riches, acts of philanthropy or the performance of scriptural duties. These may give an individual the feeling that he has some superiority over others and then this feeling may become a tendency in him to treat others as inferior to his own self. This would estrange him from humanity at large. Kabir says in this connection : "Thou thinks thyself to be great by tiny little deeds; but they who look upon others as small through words, thoughts, or deeds are cast in hell."[1] Pride, as pointed out in this passage may be reflected in word, thought and deed. The intellectuals may easily fall a prey to it. As Kant says about himself, "There was a time when I despised the masses who know nothing Rousseau has set me right. This blind prejudice disappears. I learn to honour men... "[2] A.K. Teale, commenting upon this says, "Now it may be surprising that a child of German Pietism should wait upon the author of *Emile* to learn about the inherent worth and dignity of every human being regardless of birth, rank, or station." But he himself clarifies further that "it may not be quite so surprising when we recall the prevalence of *intellectual pride* among learned people."[3]

However, it may be called secondary only in the sense of its origin and not in respect of its importance or its capacity to give rise to some particular types of action. From another view this tendency may appear to become a source-tendency[4] and, therefore, primary in relation to these later tendencies like hatred, etc. Second, the man may, under its influence, treat even his friends as strangers, that is, he may refuse to acknowledge his relationship or fulfil his social obligations. Though, at times one may perform even heroic deeds for feeding one's pride, but the Guru holds such actions in low estimation. He says, "heroes are not they who die of ego... "[5] In the same passage he cites the *Vedas* to support this view. He says : "But God loves not

[1] *Ibid.*, Maru Kabir (2-1), p. 1105

[2] Hartenstein, *Kants Sammtliche Werke*, VII-VIII, 624. Here quoted from, A.E. Teale, *Kantian Ethics* (London : Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 41

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 41

[4] As stated earlier, "it afflicts man with incurable maladies."

[5] *Ādi Granth*, Sloka M. 3 (9), pauḍi, p. 1089

pride, the *Vedas* proclaim this truth." Third, pride is of no avail in winning over enemies, rather it accentuates the enmity and jealousy already existent between individuals, since a proud man may be scorned, shunned or feared but not loved and respected in any real sense. Fourth, this propensity blinds the individual to the underlying unity of mankind and of existence and, therefore, it will divert him from the realization of the ideal of spiritual unity.

This propensity, therefore, has been accorded a negative value and Sikhs are enjoined to eschew it. Bhai Gurdas, the scribe of the first recension of the *Ādi Granth,* says, "a Sikh loses pride and takes to good deals."[1]

**Behaviour of the agent under pride**

We find from the passages quoted earlier, that the person under the influence of pride remains restless and is exhausted in his attempt to fulfil the heavy demands of this propensity. The proud person is called blind[2] or suffering from false notion.[3] This refers to those actions of a person which seem to be based on considerations of his difference from others and which actions would, consequently, again be directed towards the furtherance of those differences. Thus the person would continuously be moving in a vicious circle. This also brings to light that the actions would be directed towards the self. And this self-directedness would be continued through words, thoughts and deeds. Also, pride does not always lead one to pleasure but on may also experience pain under it. The behaviour pattern informed by it must therefore, be something like spreading-out and shrinking-in.

**Psychological power of pride**

Psychologically speaking pride seems to have sway over the sentiment of friendship but it appears to acquire some reinforcement in the case of already existent enmity towards someone. Second, the possibilities of sway and intensity of sway in pride would, relatively speaking, increase with the achievements of the person and may be a continuous source of danger to the intellectuals and others in this

[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs,* Var 11, pauḍi 3

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Sloka M. 3 (9), p. 1089

[3] *Ibid.,* Slokas Sahskriti (49), p. 1358

regard.

**Some comparative references**

In respect to *ahankār* Sikh ethics seems to differ generally from the various schools of Indian philosophy, except in the case of Vidyanaranyaswami of the Vedanta school, who recognises this propensity and mentions it by the name of *darpā* in his treatment of motives in *Jīvanmuktiviveka.*[1]

In the teachings of Hatha Yoga special attention is given to the eradication of pride. According to this school, "there is no friend higher than knowledge and no greater enemy than *ahankār.*"[2]

Sikhism also has a striking resemblance to Christianity in this regard. Von Hilderbrand points out that "the Gospels, St. Augustine and the whole Christian theology and philosophy consider pride to be the deepest and the most fundamental root of moral evil."[3] He quotes St. Augustine to support it. St. Augustine remarks : "The head and origin of all evil is pride which reigns without flesh in the devil."[4]

We may refer here to Nicolai Hartmann's attempt to "break down the seemingly antinomic relation between humility and pride"[5] and show the approvable compatibility of their simultaneous co-existence. However, the fact that he attempts to redefine humility and pride as "genuine humility" and "genuine pride" shows that the solution offered by him does not break down the antinomic relation between pride and humility, as commonly understood, but may do so in some special sense sought to be conveyed by the use of the additional symbol 'genuine'. That could be one argument against the above attempt of Hartmann. But we may also submit that it is not impossible to show that even what he calls "genuine pride" is a moral evil in the sense in which we have been discussing it and that, as such, it still stands in the antinomic relation with humility. According to Hartmann "genuine

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[1] S.K. Maitra, *op. cit.*, p. 186

[2] Theos Bernard, *Hatha Yoga* (London : Rider and Co. Ltd, 1958), p. 18

[3] Dietrich Von Hilderbrand, *Christian Ethics* (New York : David Mckay Company Inc., 1943), p. 441

[4] St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, ed. J. Healey, XIV. 3

[5] Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethics* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1951). Vol. II. p. 300

pride is far removed from *vain* self-admiration," wich may mean that only that pride is immoral which is not based on some achievement but which is a *vain* claim, in the sense of a false claim. (Emphasis added). Now it is precisely this pride of achievement which is the pride that is recognised by common sense, Sikhism, Christianity as well as by Kant (in the passage referred to earlier). Again, Hartmann says that "true moral pride" arises when "one measures oneself by a standard which is absolute and unattainably high." This, plainly speaking, would not give rise to moral pride but moral humility. Thus Hartmann may be seen to have defined pride not in terms of pride but in terms of humility. We may submit that in fact what is shown by him is that there is no antinomy between humility and humility : even though for the humility used in the first instance Hartmann substitutes the symbol "genuine pride" still conveying the generally accepted meaning of humility. Thus we may conclude that Hartmann has not conclusively shown that pride is not immoral and not antinomic to humility. And, in a way his solutin is rather linguistic than substantial in nature. In Sikhism, this pride of achievement is treated as evil. Guru Arjan Dev says that one who has pride of dominion, or of beauty, or wealth is an evil person.[1] It is held that even the pride of good deeds is evil[2] and if a man does good deeds under pride all his toil has gone to waste.[3] Similarly, the deeds done with the motive of being held high by others are called "acts which goodness touches not."[4] In all these texts, we may notice the keenness of the Gurus to ensure that pride is overcome. Bhai Nand Lal, the court-poet of Guru Gobind Singh, has laid special stress on the need to overcome self-glorification.[5] The author of *Gurpratāpsurya* reports Guru Ramdas as having said that the first requisite for a Sikh was to shed the pride of the mind.[6] Pride is the outcome of the failure of the

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[1] *Ādi Granth*, Gaudi Sukhmani M. 5 (1-12), p. 37 (*Abhimān, garbh or āpa* and *ahankār* are used as synonyms)

[2] *Ibid.*, (2-12), p. 278

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 288

[4] *Ibid.*, (3-12), p. 278

[5] Bhai Nand Lal, "Zindgi Nama", ed. by Bhai Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar*, paras 50, 51, 52. He calls it *khud-prasti*.

[6] *Gurpratāpsurya*, Rāsh 1, Adhya 11

individual to see the inter-relatedness of life and existence as a whole. It is the psychological narcissism fraught with dangerous potentalities, both for the self as well as the social, and is absolutely incompatible with the realization of the Spiritual. Pride, therefore, may be seen as an immoral propensity.

### 3.8. Concluding remarks

What then is the broad conclusion which emerges from our discussion of the various propensities and springs of action of the first group, namely those which are categorised as moral evils and are required to be regulated and sublimated by virtues, social motives and the urge for the spiritual? These are called evil ones[1], or thieves.[2] The Gurus stress the need to control them or overpower them. It may be asked whether there is any characteristic common to them all. From the preceding discussion it may be seen that these propensities keep a person in a state of restlessness, apart from their serious social repercussions. This leaves no scope for the peace for the self or wholeness (*sabat*)[3] and happiness.[4] Their regulation or control, however, is not to be affected by any voilent forcing of one's will through special ascetic practices or inflictions on the body. Guru Arjan Dev cites a long list of such evil practices,[5] indulged in by some, without identifying by name the person or groups indulging in them. The notion that body is something unclean and an obstruction—in terms of passions—in the path of the realization of the spiritual, has often resulted in torturing of the body by way of self-purification. This has been exalted ethically and religiously by the term asceticism. A characteristic example of the medieval asceticism, and the aggressive purification of the moral personality for peace and bliss in the

[1] *Ādi Granth.* Thitti Gaudi M. 5 (5), p. 97 ("*Panch, bikār, mun...*")

[2] *Ibid.*, Bilawal M. 5 (2 & 3-9-39), p. 810 ("*Panch chor āge bhāge jab sādh sangat...*") "The five thieves run away when one takes to the company of pure beings. His capital remains *whole* and earns he immense profit and arrives at home with glory. He is no more moved by these valenees, and his cares and waverings end."

[3] *Ibid.*, Gaudi Guareri M. 5 (4-20-89), p. 182

[4] *Ibid.*, Prabhati M. 1 (3-10), p. 1330 "*Panch mār sukh paya.*"

[5] *Ibid.*, Kanara M. 5 (2-3-36 and 1-1-37), p. 1305

knowledge of union with God, has come down to us in Suso's (ca. 1295—1366) description of himself.[1] The description makes rather a sad reading, full of 'blows, blood and nails' reportedly used to overcome the physical aspect of the personality. In India, in the post-Vedic period, asceticism has sometimes got the upper hand, perhaps due to the theoretical and the practical life situations. Some of the teachings of Hatha Yoga in India are further examples of violent controls.

Guru Nanak says, "He who tortures his body to whither away, is not approved... "[2] The same is echoed in the slokas of Sheikh Farid in the *Ādi Granth,* when he says, "Heat not thy body like an oven, burn not thy bones like firewood; what harm have thy head and feet done thee."[3] There are, thus, in Sikhism, injunctions against physical torture to achieve self-regulation. According to the Sikh Gurus, the ideal is to be attained in the natural way (*sehaj subhāi*). *Sehaj* is the equipoise and balance; it is emancipation in the natural way during life itself. It is opposed to the violence of Hath Yoga. The emancipation from these passions according to Sikhism, is to be attained in the balanced way by sublimating them by virtues and by recourse to the company of the realized selves.

We may, however, ask another question before proceeding to the next chapter. It is whether all of these five propensities and passions have a common root, so that by controlling the root all of them may be controlled. It could be inferred from a remark of Guru Arjan Dev that these arise from desire.[4] Desire here means a scale of values, in which we accord a priority to the mundane over the spiritual, and fail to regulate the lower by the higher. Almost a similar position is said to have been adopted in a sermon by Guru Tegh Bahadur reported to have been delivered by him to Makhan Shah.[5] According to this sermon *kām,* in the sense of unbridled mundane desires, is the root and all other evils are its branches. Anger is the resultant passion when an individual is obstructed in the attainment of the object of his desire.

[1] *Theologica Germanica* (London : 1951), p. 21

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Gaudi M. 1 (1-12), p. 226

[3] *Ibid.,* Sloka of Shiekh Farid, M. 5 (119), p. 1384

[4] *Ibid.,* Kanara M. 5 (1-1-37), p. 1305. He terms it *triśna.*

[5] Bhai Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar,* para 1034. He terms it *apār vikār kānd.*

The angry person then loses all sense of balance and respect for everybody else and no evil is too great for him. The individual may even take self-destruction. Thus *kām* is the root according to the above cited passage. But, on the other hand, generally all these propensities are mentioned both collectively as well as distributively. Guru Arjan Dev himself, in the *Ādi Granth* (*slokas sahskriti*)—to which reference has already been made—has addressed to all these motives, namely *kām, lobh, moh, krodh and ahankār,* separately, in different passages, thus emphasising their separateness. In this treatment of the motives *kām* is mentioned as one of the five propensities. It may, therefore, be more appropriate to assume that it is not usual in Sikhism to trace all the motives to only any one of the propensities.

It may be interesting to add that in the ancient Indian thought there are variants of these propensities which are required to be controlled by the individuals. In fact the "theme of the five sins" is very popular in India. It is also familiar to Buddhism's (*Dhammpāda* 370). Hopkins (*The Great Epics of India,* p. 181) gives some lists of the Five Sins' that the Yogin must cut off. One of these lists (*Mahābhārata,* XII, 241, 3) names sexual desire (*kāma*); wrath (*krodha*); greed (*lobha*); fear (*bhaya*) and sleep (*svapna*)."[1] We may note that the first three of this list of five are also found in Sikhism as we have seen in our preceding analysis.

The need for the regulation of emotions and propensities is, thus, generally recognised by the various schools of Indian Philosophy. It is aptly stated by Professor Prem Nath that mental health implies "cultural and emotion maturity. It means the rounding off of one's ego and liquidating one's selfishness to be able to live at peace with one's own self as well as with others."[2] In a similar tone Bertrand Russell warns that "a human ego, like gas, will always expand unless restrained by external pressure. The object of education is to let the external pressure take the form of habits, ideas and sympathies..."[3]

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[1] Mircea Eliade, *op. cit.,* p. 151, note 21

[2] Prem Nath, *The Basis of Education, a Philosophical and Sociological Approach* (Delhi : S. Chand & Co., 1957), p. 83

[3] Bertrand Russel, *Education and Good Life* (New York : Liverright Publishing Corp. 1926), p. 147

Our discussion so far has pointed to one fact : that we ought to voluntarily control the various passions and propensities. In this control by one's own self lies the freedom or autonomy of the self. We may refer to Alfred North Whitehead who similarly points out that "the only discipline important for its own sake is self-discipline and this can only be acquired by a wide use of freedom."[1]

We have reiterated many a time, in the present chapter, that various propensities or motives enumerated here have great force of impulsion, or psychological charge, to propel the conduct. Their regulation, therefore, is not as easy task. The course suggested by the Gurus lies in the cultivation of, what we may call, the *religious sentiment.* Guru Arjan Dev says, "enshrine the God's *Nām* in the mind, contemplate your Guru in your home... and all your sins are effaced, joining the society of the saints. The Lord's *Nām* is the treasure of virtue."[2] The culture of religious reverence and expansive consciousness, thus, is a step in the right direction for the effective regulation of these motives and the realization of the unity of self.

We may refer to the findings, in a different context, of a psychologist to support the above possibility. Gordon W. Allport says, "In a person who has gradually evolved a guiding philosophy of life where the religious sentiment exerts a generally normative force upon behaviour and confers intelligibility to life as a whole, we infer that this particular ego formation is not only a dominant motive, but it must be accepted at its face value. It is a master motive and an ego ideal whose shape and substance are essentially what appear in consciousness.[3] We may thus accept the possibility of guiding the conduct of a person normatively—perhaps more effectively—as indicated in the above cited advice from Guru Arjan Dev. However, we may perhaps not rule out entirely the possibility of some one attaining the ideal self-regulation even without the above referred to religious sentiment. But it may be submitted here that if a person has

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[1] Alfred North Whitehead. *The Aims of Education* (New York : A Mentor Book, 1951), p. 46

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Sorath M. 5 (1-2-52), p. 621

[3] Gordon W. Allport, "The Trends in Motivational Theory," *Recent Trends in Psychology,* ed., T.K.N. Menon (Bombay : Orient Longman Ltd., 1961), p. 37

to cover a certain distance by walking he may do so more conveniently and effectively by using both the legs. A person who chooses to use only one leg when he can use both, may also cover the distance but this needlessly cumbersome course will be adopted only when the person either has a strong prejudice against his second leg or when he sincerely believes that he has got only one leg.

Finally, it may be asked what practical steps ought to be taken so as to control the undesirable motives and propensities. Here we may refer to John Dewey. While discussing habit and will, he says that in order to correct a bad habit, "we must start to *do* another thing which on one side inhibits our falling into customary bad position and on the other side is the beginning of a series of acts which may lead into the correct position."[1] We may say that for the proper and effective control and regulation of the various propensities listed in the present chapter, one may adopt a somewhat similar course. Guru Nanak has in fact stressed the need of regulating the empirical self by virtues, that is, the desirable conduct. He observes, "One removes vice with virtues, for the virtue is our only true friend."[2] Again while pointing to a desirable self and its conduct, he says "This township [of the body] is maintained by truthfulness, contentment, chastity, charity and self-control all too-naturally, one is then met with life of life."[3]

[1] John Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Sorath M. 1 (4-1), p. 595 (*Nanak augan jaitre...je gun hon tan katiye*)

[3] *Ibid.*, Maru M. 1 (16-4-16), p. 1037

# IV
# VIRTUES

## 4.1 : Prolegomena

It is now necessary for us to know the chief forms in which the moral life of the unified self ought to express itself. Historically, an answer in this direction, from Pythagoras onwards, has been in terms of virtues. The term virtue which earlier meant manliness has, however, come to be understood more generally as qualities of the moral person. The modern ehtical dialogue appears to have continued this usage with a slight increased emphasis on action, in that the virtues are the qualities of self as expressed in action. It is in terms of virtues that the moral person expresses himself.

In different schools of Indian Philosophy a wide variety of terms are used to convey this ethical meaning. Thus we see that in Nyāya, Vatsyayana has used *subha*, while Patanjali has used *yamas*. Among the Jains *puṇya* and *dharma* convey almost the same meaning.

In some of the older Indian literature the term *guṇa* is also used to mean "good qualities, virtues, merits, excellences."[1] It is this term *guṇa* along with others like *sift* (from the Arabic language) and *sheel* (which might have a reference to the Buddhist terminology, *sila* in the meanings of good conduct) that are used in Sikhism to convey the equivalent meaning of virtues.[2] In Sikhism, *gun*[3] is understood to mean virtues and good qualities of the self. The contrary of *gun* in Sikhism is *augun* (evil quality) and contradictory is *vingun* (absence of *gun*). Let us now examine views about *guṇa* in Sikhism. We may first briefly refer to the general characteristics and then take up the various virtues for detailed examination and analysis.

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[1] Monier Monier-Williams. *op. cit.*. p. 367

[2] Bhai Kahan Singh, "*Gun*" *Gurśabadratnākar*.

[3] In Punjabi. *guna* is written as *gun*.

## 4.2 : Virtues in general in Sikhism

The importance of the *gun* is emphasized in the *Ādi Granth* by all the Gurus. Guru Nanak says that "as many are the vices, so many are the chains round one's neck. One removes vice with virtue, for virtue is our only friend."[1] What is the defination of virtue in Sikhism? The statement from which we may infer this appears to have been offered by Guru Nanak in the next stanza when he says, "Let your mind be the farmer and deeds the farming; and let your body be the farm : water it with effort. Let the spiritual word be the seed, and contentment the furrowing, and let the fence be of humility. If you do the deeds of love, the seed will sprout and fortunate will then be your home."[2] Now if we except, for the moment, the final object of virtue—the realization of the supreme ideal—we can see that by the use of the allegory "mind, the farmer and deeds, the farming" the virtues sought to be conveyed are what Sidgwick has called "qualities exhibited in right conduct."[3] Virtues mentioned in the above list, such as contentment, humility and love will be taken up later in this chapter. For the present the stress on the need to cultivate virtues may be mentioned. Guru Nanak, in one of his compositions, declares categorically that "devotion without virtues is impossible."[4] This stress on morality is clearly noticeable throughout the teachings of the Gurus.

The Gurus also regard virtues as qualities essential to endear the self to the Divine. It is, as Guru Nanak says, "charming one's love with the charm of virtue."[5] It is in this sense that "furrowing and fence" would help in the sprouting of the spiritual seed. In the terminology we have been using so for it would lead to the realization of the real self, that is the state of *sachiāra.*

The virtues, according to the Gurus, may be learnt and cultivated through social communication with the virtuous. This is brought out by Guru Nanak very well in one of his utterances in which he says,

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[1] *Ādi Granth*, Sorath M. 1 (4-1), p. 595

[2] *Ibid.*, Sorath M. 1 (1-2), p. 595

[3] Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (London : Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1962), p. 219

[4] *Ādi Granth*, Japji (21), p. 4 ("*Vin gun kēēte bhagat nā hoe*")

[5] *Ibid.*, Tilang M. 1 (7-1), p. 725

"In the society of the holy, one becomes holy, and one runs after virtues, forsaking his sins."[1] At yet another place he remarks, "If my friends are blessed with virtues, let us share some with them. Yes, share we should the virtues with our friends and shed out sins."[2] This notion of *sharing virtues* is in fact and in general, an aspect of sharing socially. It has vast implications, social as well as educational. We have already briefly touched upon the educational aspect in the chapter on Moral Standard and the social aspect will be taken up for extensive examination in the chapter on the Social Ethics. Here it may suffice to take notice that virtues have social implications as well, in addition to their value as personal qualities of the possessor.

Should a man be virtuous, it may be asked, in order to be so noticed by others? Should he get discouraged if his virtues attract no notice? The Guru teaches that a person need not feel discouraged in his moral and spiritual endeavour if he feels that his virtues are not being appreciated. Guru Nanak says, "Virtue is pricelesss, it cannot be bought at a stall, and it is weighed where the weights are whole and virtue weighteth its weight."[3] This is meant to encourage the release of the strenuous mood in the individual. The person is assured of the great value of virtue even when it does not appear to be deserving appreciated.

However, in spite of this emphasis on virtues, we do not find at any one place an exhaustive list of virtues or qualities involved in right conduct. As is the case with much of the other similar literature, in the *Ādi Granth,* too, we come across the treatment of virtues here and there and in order to understand the complex meaning one has to refer to different passages at different places. In the present chapter, those virtues which are held very high in the *Ādi Granth,* and receive support else-where also, have been brough together with their meanings. However, some excellences which have more social implications, or relate to social relations, such as altruism and the like, have been examined in the chapter on Social Ethics. The list here is representative of the qualities generally held to be indicative

[1] *Ibid.*, Āsa M. 1 (7-5), p. 414

[2] *Ibid.*, Rāg Suhi (3-1-4), p. 766

[3] *Ibid.*, Vār of Maru, Sloka M. 1 (1), p. 1087

of moral excellence. It includes : wisdom, truthfulness, temperance, courage, justice, humility and contentment. The list is rather broad-based and embraces almost all of the moral virtues.

We shall analyse the various aspects of the virtues as explained in Sikhism as well as direct our attention to the various historical developments which are reflected in an increased stress on some one aspect of a virtue.

### 4.3. Wisdom

Wisdom, as a fundamental virtue, plays a key role in the ethics of the Sikhs. The terms which are generally used to denote wisdom and the wise man are *gian* and *giani* respectively. But other terms such as *mut, mun, budh* and *bibek budh* are used also to convey the ideal of wisdom or the sense of discrimination.

What is wisdom? Which knowledge should be considered wisdom? Can we call such person a wise man as does not live his wisdom, in the sense that his actions do not reflect his wisdom? These questions are important in order to understand the nature and the scope of wisdom. Guru Nanak shows keen appreciation of the need to explain wisdom as he understood it. He, therefore, takes up this question in "Japji", a composition in the *Ādi Granth.* The problem is examined in great detail from various aspects. Guru Nanak shows wisdom to be "a comprehensive point of view as indicated in the actions of a man." He lays down three-fold steps for the cultivation of wisdom and then these steps are further seen to deal with the various aspects of knowledge.

The three steps are : *suniye* (hear) *manne* (reflect), and *ek dhyān* (concentrate, assimilate or synthesise). Let us analyse these three steps and find out their contents.

(1) *Suniye* (hearing), as a way of acquiring wisdom, occurs first. What should a seeker hear about? In reply to this question, Guru Nanak devotes four separate stanzas to it.

(a) The first stanza[1] dealing with it requires the person to hear about (i) the lives of the realized persons and (ii) the various aspects of the world.

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[1] *Ibid.*, Japji (VIII), p. 3

(b) The second stanza[1] includes the hearing by the seeker, of (i) the contents of higher consciousness such as that of gods, and the mystery of higher consciousness within himself. (ii) He hears of the various experiences of the higher consciousness such as those recorded in the *Śāstras, Smritis* and the *Vedas*. What is the effect on man of all this hearing? Guru Nank says that this hearing lead to the expansion of the consciousness of the seeker himself.[2] It also lifts him above evil and suffering.[3]

(c) In the third stanza.[4] Guru Nanak requires the seeker to hear about the moral principles and learn about such fundamental moral qualities as wisdom, contentment or purification. He hears about virtues which ought to be cultivated by the perfect man.

(d) In the fourth stanza[5] the seeker hears about the practical application of wisdom by the various leaders. He learns how these leaders helped others and guided persons at times of difficulity.

We are now in a better position to say what forms the contens of these four aspects of knowledge of which the seeker hears and learns about. We have found that the programme of hearing includes learning about the world and the man and recognizing higher consciousness in others and within one's own self and knowing about the moral principles and their practical application in the lives of those persons who have lived wisely and guided others.

A critical question may be posed here. Is it enough for the seeker to hear and accept all the preceding knowledge on the testimony of some one else? Hans Reichenbach, the scientist, as quoted by Ruth Reyana has aptly said, in a different context, "He who searches for truth must not appease his urge by giving himself up to the narcotic of belief."[6] In case wisdom is taken to end with hearing only, we may consider such a view as an authoritarian approach. The fact that most of the learning today generally conforms to this pattern of hearing

[1] *Ibid.*, Japji (IX), p. 3

[2] *Ibid., Bhagata sadā vikās.*

[3] *Ibid., Dukh pāp kā nās.*

[4] *Ibid.*, Japji (X), p. 3

[5] *Ibid.*, Japji (XI), p. 3

[6] Ruth Reyana, *The Philosophy of Matter in the Atomic Era* (Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1962), p. 16

only would in no way deter us from still calling it authoritarianism. This process may indeed be helpful to a person to know about the acquirements of the realized selves. But, would we be justified in calling such a person, who has acquired the knowledge merely on the testimony of others, a wise man? Here we sense an ommision. Is the seeker not required to reflect on all that he has heard? Would not this reflection help him in the transformation of his understanding and make him a wise man? Guru Nanak shows his concern for this requirement and devotes to *manne* (reflection) an equal number (four) of separate stanzas in continuation of the above statement on *suniye*. The term *manne* is traceable to the Sanskrit word *manana*, meaning reflection.[1]

(2) As already stated, reflection, as the second step of wisdom, now occupies the attention of Guru Nanak. The problem is analysed in four stanzas, as follows :

(a) In the first stanza about reflection.[2] Guru Nanak cautions the seeker that the process of reflection cannot be stated completely and that any one who promises to make such a description would have to concede the inadequacy of his attempt later. This failure to describe the whole process of reflection stems from the fact that the possibilities involved in reflection are vast and infinite. After this initial observation, however, Guru Nanak proceeds to describe the process of reflection.

(b) The second stanza[3] tells us that it is through reflection that awareness, mind and intellect are fashioned and sharpened. The seeker is then able to realize the true nature of reality and thus aviod the wrong path. At another place in the *Ādi Granth* Guru Amardas refers to this disposition to discriminate between reality and falsehood as *bibek budh*. This awareness of the path ensures that the person after death does not go through the process of transmigration.

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[1] (a) Monier Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 809

(b) V.S. Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Poona : Prasad Prakashan, 1958), Part II, p. 1233. He renders "manan" as "thoughtful, careful thinking, reflection... "

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Japji (XII), p. 3

[3] *Ibid.*, Japji (XIII), p. 3

(c) In the third stanza about reflection[1] Guru Nanak says that this reflection removes all the hindrances from the path of the seeker. A man of reflection receives great honour. All his waywardness and hesitation is gone. He now walks on a straight path.

And here the Guru makes a very important observation. He says that this man endowed with reflection does not break away from the social context. He continues to perform moral acts (*dharam*).

(d) In the fourth and last stanza dealing with reflection[2] we are told that this man of reflection realizes salvation. But the Guru promptly adds that the person now engage himself in altruistic activity. The reflection has shown the seeker that one spirit runs through all. The whole of humanity may now appear to him as one family. He, therefore, takes up the task of helping the entire family of mankind. He, not only realizes the ideal himself, but helps all others with their task (*tare tāre*). His activity becomes saturated with the aim of helping others. He indeed is a wise man, a man of knowledge. The wisdom lies in the depth and comprehensiveness of his realization and is indicated in his altruistic activity.

(3) We now come to the third aspect of this knowledge,[3] namely, *ek dhyān* which may be rendered as single-minded contemplation. It indicates the assimilation and synthesis of the knowledge acquired both from hearing and reflection. We find that the term *dhayān* (contemplation) occurs even while the Guru discusses the various aspects of knowledge by hearing.[4] The need to synthesize knowledge is thus stressed by Guru Nanak through this third aspect of knowledge. The synthesis, thus, is a constituent of the knowledge itself.

It may be interesting to mention here that this treatment of wisdom has a remarkable similarity to the notion of wisdom and knowledge in Vedanta. Mandana Misra, who is credited with being perhaps the oldest and the most systematic expositor of Vedanta, regards hearing (*śravana*) and reflection(*manana*) and direct self-realization (*nidhidhyāsana*) as the three aspects of knowledge.[5]

[1] *Ibid.*, Japji (XIV), p. 3

[2] *Ibid.*, Japji (XV), p. 3. *Pāve mokh dvār.*

[3] *Ibid.*, Japji (XVI), p. 3

[4] *Ibid.*, Japji (X), p. 2. *Suniye lāge sehāj dhayān.*

[5] I.C. Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-244

However, there is some difference with respect to the content of the two aspects, namely *suniye* and *manne*. Knowledge about the world occupies an important position in Sikhism, whereas in Vedanta, this knowledge appears to be characterised as inferior.

**Disagreement about the interpretation of manne as reflection**

Before we proceed further, it is necessary to clarify a controversy which arises about the interpretation of *manne* as reflection as adopted by us here. The traditional interpretation of *manne* by various scholars of Sikhism has been in almost all cases, in the sense of belief, or believing, or sometimes as obedience. We thus find Macauliffe,[1] Bishan Singh,[2] Sahib Singh[3] and recently Gopal Singh[4] rendering *manne* as belief or obedience.

But these scholars advance no reason for the interpretation of *manne* in terms of belief or obedience. However, in one case, Gopal Singh[5] briefly says in his translation that he prefers to render it as belief since it is used at another place[6] in the same sense of belief. However, an examination of this other passage, cited by the scholar, does not establish that even there it is used in the sense of belief and not reflection.

The argument against this rendition of *manne* as belief is that all the four stanzas dealing with it are rendered meaningless if we accept it as belief. If it was to be understood as belief, Guru Nanak could have said simply in one line (after the stanzas dealing with hearing) that the seeker should believe all that he has heard. The matter would have ended there. But in this event Guru Nanak would have left the Sikhs with a sort of a dogmatic belief, accepted without any reflection, which eventuality he avoids by devoting four stanzas to reflection. Second, it may also be asked whether these scholars, who render *manne* as belief, would be willing to maintain that all that which is

[1] Max Arthur Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 201

[2] Bishan Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji Satik* (Amritsar : Wazir Hind Press, 1939), p. 10

[3] Sahib Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan* (Jullundur : Raj Publishers, 1962) p. 69

[4] Gopal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 4

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 4

[6] *Ādi Granth,* Japji (XXI), p. 5

mentioned in the stanzas dealing with hearing should be believed without reflection. It may be added here that the Guru has said that the seeker should hearken to experiences from almost all quarters.

This in itself shows great catholicity of the Gurus as well as the comprehensiveness of knowledge they had in mind. So it may be asked whether these scholars would accept the position that the seeker should *believe* all that is handed down to him from all sources. Here it may be pointed out that even the writings of Manu and his code are a *Smriti* and it may rightly be asked whether all this literature should be believed by the seeker in Sikhism without any critical reflection and assimilation. This would be plainly unacceptable even to the scholars quoted since many notions contained in this literature have not been accepted by the Gurus. If these commentators were to maintain that the terms referring to the various pieces of literature are mere symbols for the Sikh literature then it may be submitted that such a view, apart from subverting the great catholicity of the Gurus, also seeks to limit the scope of the knowledge as envisaged in Sikhism. Third, the mention of awareness, mind and intellect, *surat, mun* and *budh,* in the stanzas dealing with *manne* would be rendered meaningless if it is taken merely to mean belief, Fourth, the stress on thinking, *vīchāra* or *vīchāro* in the "Mundavani" of Guru Arjan Dev, with which the *Ādi Granth* ends, would not be accounted for, if we fall in line with these scholars who render *manne* as belief and agree that the only two stages of acquiring knowledge, as mentioned by Guru Nanak, were hearing and believing. This also would go against the general spirit of Sikhism. On the other hand, the argument in favour of reflection is fortified by the fact that hearing and reflection are traditonally considered in India as important aspects of realizing wisdom. If in Sikhism we interpret *suniye* and *manne* as hearing and reflection, the interpretation would fit excellently in the background of the Indian view.

This interpretation of *manne* as reflection has been followed by at least one other scholar of Sikhism, Sohan Singh. He says likewise that, "as a matter of fact *manne* is only one of the terms in the triune of *sravana, manna* and *nididhyāsana* which, since ancient times, has

meant study, reflection, and devotional attitude."[1] He concludes that we should, therefore, interpret *manne* as reflection. Thus we see that the approach of Sikhism is not dogmatic. It does not view wisdom in an authoritarian manner. Consequently, Sikhism provides a person with an occasion to grow through reflection on all the problems of the world, morality and the higher consciousness. This stress on the moral aspect may be compared with a somewhat similar development, in different perspective, in the West in its early stages. Wisdom in the early religious background of Christianity had also come to acquire an increased moral connotation. According to a scholar "there was already manifest a marked tendency to magnify the ethical and religious elements of 'wisdom' which later came to their full recognition."[2] In the same context an identical view is expressed by another scholar who says that 'wisdom' in the early background of Christianity became "more and more practical and moral aim predominated."[3] However, it may also be recognised here that the connotation and the approach of Christianity and Sikhism differ from one another, in this regard.

In may also be appropriate to point out here that in Sikhism the virtue of wisdom synthesizes both the knowledge of the world as well as the spiritual knowledge and thus attains a fusion or synthesis with realism in the context of *suniye, manne* and *ek dhyān.*

We may also allude to the great importance accorded in Sikhism to practice as a necessary constituent of wisdom. Guru Nanak says, "Rare in the world is the man of wisdom who reflects on wisdom and rare is the wise man in this world who practises this wisdom."[4] Similarly, Kabir says, "If you have wisdom, destroy your evil and discipline your body."[5] He then uses the analogy of the battle ground and remarks that a hero is one who actually displays his powers and

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[1] Sohan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 35

[2] J.M.P. Smith, "Wisdom", *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed., James Hastings (Edinburgh : T & T Clark, 1947), p. 975

[3] Edward E. Nouse, "Wisdom", *A New Standard Bible Dictionary*, ed., M.V. Jacobus (New York : Funk A. Wagnalls Company, 1936), p. 948

[4] *Adi Granth*, Āsa M. 1 (6-3), p. 413 ("Jug giāni virla *āchāri*, Jug pundit virla *vīchāri*.")

[5] *Ibid.*, Kabir (34), p. 342

skill in the combat. This clearly establishes that wisdom in Sikhism is considered to be inextricably linked with practice. This view of wisdom has some similarity to the one held by Socrates, that knowledge is virtue. However, it should be pointed out that, according to Socrates, a person who knew good would also choose good and hence the dictum 'knowledge is virtue.' This may be seen to embody a statement of psychological fact. It has, however, been often disputed whether a person who knows what is good would also choose good. It involves what has been termed as 'Socratic fallacy'. The view here stated in respect of Sikhism is that a wise person ought to indicate his wisdom in his actions. The precept in Sikhism is normative and not positive, or semi-psychological, and in this it is seen to differ from the Socratic dictum cited above. It is interesting to add here that some philosophers have sought to treat wisdom as an all inclusive virtue[1] and also immortal.[2]

Finally, we may turn our attention to another requirement in connection with wisdom. The correct attitude of the seeker of wisdom ought to be that of open-mindedness and receptivity. This partly arises from how Hartmann takes wisdom as recognition of "one's own ethical non-being, failure and short coming."[3] According to Guru Nanak also a man may acquire wisdom when he says to himself that he does not know and thus slays his ego. The Guru says that "knowledge and self-examination is possible only when one has slain the narrow ego within him."[4] Guru Nanak further clarifies this point in another passage saying. "How can one instruct the one who says that he knows? He who considers himself as having crossed the sea, how can one tell him?"[5] This aspect of the Sikh view of wisdom may be seen to have some resemblance to the Socratic notion of wisdom. We may say that this open-mindedness alone is the correct attitude of receptivity which

[1] Cf. Lewis W. Spitz, *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts : Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 32. "Virtue has always seemed to many men a major ingredient of wisdom : for Agricola it was the heart of the matter."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 33, "For wisdom alone of all things is immortal."

[3] Nicolai Hartmann, *op. cit.*, p. 240

[4] *Ādi Granth*, Āsa M. 1 (5-22), p. 356

[5] *Ibid.*, Rāmkali M. 1 (Siddha Goṣti) (4), p. 938

is so very essential for a progressive view of wisdom.

### 4.4. Truthfulness

Veracity is another virtue which is accorded a very high value. Truthfulness, however, ought to be distinguished from 'Truth' in the metaphysical sense since the term *sach* is used in the *Ādi Granth* both in the ethical sense of truthfulness as well as for the Absolute 'Dynamic-existent', or Reality. Some scholars of Sikhism, who overlook the above dual usage, are invariably led to interpret the ethical virtue of truthfulness with the broader metaphysical meanings. Texts such as "they who know the Truth, contemplate the True One and themselves become True,"[1] and many similar ones, may cause the above confusion in case one is not careful about this distinction.

We may, however, add here that Truth in the metaphysical sense, when used for the Absolute, becomes the Supreme Ideal of the Sikh ethics as will be seen in the chapter under that title. It is, therefore, all the more necessary for us at this stage to bear in mind clearly the distinction between truthfulness, in terms of what Hartmann calls, agreement of one's word with one's thought, or conviction,"[2] and 'Truth' which is the end of the whole ethico-spiritual endeavour.

It is in this sense of "agreement of one's word with one's thought, or conviction," to which we may also add, "the agreement with one's acts" that we are going to examine here the moral virtue of truthfulness.

We find Guru Nanak holding that 'everything is below the Truth, but truthful conduct is above it."[3] The stress on the conduct is a vital feature of Sikhism and this stress is visible, even in the case of truth.

Guru Ramdas declares, "We, the false and unfortunate ones, have one thing on the tongue and another in the mind. In appearance we stick to God while from within we are the most vicious of beings."[4] This passage clearly brings out the two requisites of conformity of the thought with the word, and then, the agreement of the word with the act, as the essentials of veracity.

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[1] *Ibid.*, Suhi M. 3 (2-2-3), p. 769

[2] Nicolai Hartmann, *op. cit.*, p. 281

[3] *Ādi Granth*, Sri Rāg M. 1 (5-14), p. 62 See also Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 19, Vār 18

[4] *Ibid.*, Devgandhāri M. 4 (2-5), p. 528

In the *Zafarnāma*[1] of Guru Gobind Singh, the main weight of the argument and admonition administered by him, to Aurangzeb, the then emperor of India, rests on the desirability, in the first instance, of not making promises while knowing that these are not to be kept and, in the second instance, of keeping the word in case the promise has been made.[2] The Guru stresses that in such cases, the trust in the person making such promises[3] is lost and this harms the self of the person making the promise. The danger of promise breaking, if universalised, would also defeat the intention of the person making such a false promise as nobody would believe him. The Guru says, "If I would have also broken my pledge, I would not have left the fortress,"[4] which would have thwarted the purpose of the opposing forces who had then not kept their word. The Guru emphasizes the moral desirability of keeping one's word, even if one may have to suffer for it, and he does so by quoting his own case. He refers to morality in Islam, which also enjoins truthfulness.[5]

The Guru then declares that if a pledge is made in the name of the scripture (the *Qúrān* in this case) and it is broken by the person who made it, the spiritual force comes to the aid of the aggrieved person.[6] This indeed appears to be a strong case for keeping one's word and shows also the sanctity which the spiritual force attaches to such a need of keeping the word. Practically, too, this enables the person to keep one's word even if one has to endure material suffering.

Guru Arjan Dev also advises us to renounce falsehood, wrath and pride, clarifying further that "there is not any other evil so serious as falsehood" and "none derives any real gain by it."[7] Thus falsehood is rejected on practical grounds as well.

Bhai Gurdas contends that truthfulness helps a person to acquire

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[1] Guru Gobind Singh, *Zafarnāma* (Epistle of Victory). It was written to Aurangzeb, the then Mughal Emperor of India; the main theme and the moral being the desirability of veracity.

[2] *Ibid.*, Stanza 55

[3] *Ibid.*, Stanza 13, also 45

[4] *Ibid.*, 18

[5] *Ibid.*, 64

[6] *Ibid.*, 43, also 56

[7] Bhai Santokh Singh, *Guru Nanak Prakāsh*, Rash 3, Chapter 51

peace and poise.[1] He means here that veracity, by promoting mutual trust and reliability, leads to the realization of equipoise and peace of mind. A prevaricator is always feeling insecure and restless as he is afraid lest he should be detected. This would disturb the unity of the self and its equipoise. According to Bhai Gurdas falsehood is indicative of salvery.[2] He says, in addition, that truthfulness generates truthfulness and falsehood infects other people and thus starts a vicious circle of falsehood.[3]

We may also observe another important aspect of this virtue. Guru Nanak declares that "a person speaks truth because love inspires him to it."[4] This brings to our attention the fact that a person who loves others does not want to deceive them or lead them astray. The truthfulness thus is charged with a person's love for his fellow beings. As Hartmann points out "a lie injuries the deceived person in his life; it leads him astray. Sincere expresssion is good. One might accordingly think that the dispositional value of truthfulness is only a special instance of neighbourly love. A lie is, in fact, loveless."[5] A lie has an element of selfishness in it. It is an attempt to claim exception for one's self. In truthfulness, there is transcendence of this ego.

### 4.5. Justice

Virtue of justice *(niaoṇ or tapāvas)* is touched upon in various ways in Sikhism and is considered to be an important virtue in terms of its impact on the self as well as on social relationship.

At times the virtue of justice is referred to in terms of social equality. This is seen when Sikhism seeks to ensure equality by rejection of the caste system which had come to be regarded as a symbol of inequalities, whatever might have been the original idea behind this social division. The Gurus recognise that justice without social equality is meaningless. It is this virtue whereby a man regards other men as the social equals in all respects—an important characteristic of social relationship. Consequently, this aspect of justice,

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[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 1, Vār 30

[2] *Ibid.*, Stanza 3, Vār 30

[3] *Ibid.*, Stanza 4, Vār 30

[4] *Ādi Granth*, Prabhati M. 1 (7-5), pp. 1344-45

[5] Nicolai Hartmann, *op. cit.*, p. 282

namely equality, will be dealt with in detail in the chapter VI.

Second, the virtue of justice also consists in (1) respect for the rights of others and (2) non-exploitation of others. We may first discuss the respect for the rights of others as a characteristic of justice.

(1) The ethical requisite of respect for the rights of others is epitomised in the declaration of Guru Nanak that "to deprive others of their rights ought to be avoided as scrupulously as the Muslims avoid the pork and the Hindus consider beef as a taboo." Just as the two communities consider the above as most serious taboos on religious grounds, similarly, they ought to consider the transgression of the rights of others as a serious moral offence. He adds to it that "the Guru stands by thee if thou usurpest not one another's due." He further says, "none goes to heaven by mere talk but emancipation is by living the truth."[1] So we may say that *sat,* or truth, in social relations, in the sense of justice, is the characteristic of the person who does not violate the rights of others. A person must renounce the attitude that others are for the promotion of his ends. To treat everyone's right as sacred is a necessary constituent of justice as averred by the Guru in the passage cited above. The virtue of justice as conceived by the Sikh Gurus has universal application even though they appear to address themselves to the Hindus and the Muslims directly as in the above passages.

In a similar spirit the compiler of *Premsumārag* lays down that "one ought to be just. One ought not usurp others' share. There is no worship like observance of justice."[2] We may note that the keenness of the compiler to strees the sanctity of this virtue leads him to place it even higher than worship. He perhaps considers the repsect for the rights of others as the practical expression of all that one may realize in worship. This indicates the high regard in which this virute of justice is held in Sikhism.

Even in the case of enemy property the said compiler requires the Sikhs to apply the same norm of inviolability. He says that the same norm of justice ought to be applied even to the property of the

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Vār of Mājh, Sloka M. 1 (2-7), p. 141

[2] "*Premsumārag*", ed., Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar,* para 865

enemy in war and the "Sikhs should not plunder the enemy."[1] Bhai Kahan Singh, in his commentary on this stanza, attempts to clarify the passage in question saying that it does not lay down the precept that if there is anything belonging to the enemy army that also should not be taken possession of. Bhai Kahan Singh is of the opinion that the injunction under discussion only lays down "the belongings of the public in the enemy sector" should not be plundered as it is unbecoming of a warrior to plunder the common public and cause them injury."[2] Whatever is the merit of this commentary and clarification, in itself, it may be the result of the peculiar conditions of the battles of those days when a distinction was made or was possible to be made between the property of the ruler and the ruled or that of the enemy force. While seeking to apply it to the present times we may say that the victor should not violate the lawfully acquired property rights of the people at large in the vanquished sector.

(2) We find also that the Gurus speak vehemently against exploitation of one by the other. The Mughals were the political rulers at the time of the emergence of Sikhism. Historically we know that while some individual Mughal rulers are world renowned for possessing the virtue of justice, some, at times, showed relatively less respect for this virtue of justice in terms of non-exploitation of the Hindus, the Sikhs or even the Muslims. It is possible that a powerful man may come to accept the notion that everything belongs to him and thus display a remarkable absence in him of the virtue of justice. Occasionally he may also twist the concept of justice to assert that it entitles powerful men to have a right to be treated differently. It is in this sense that Thyrasymachus, the Sophist lawyer, seeks to define justice in Plato's *Republic* when he says, "Justice is the advantage of the stronger,"[3] or "Justice is the interest of the ruler and the stronger." Socrates takes up the cudgel to show this definition to be unacceptable and dismisses it just as he had dome the two other definitions of justice and which Brumbaugh calls "business man's ethics definition

[1] *Ibid.*, para 851

[2] *Ibid.*, Note 1 on para 851

[3] Robert S. Brumbaugh, *Plato for the Modern Age* (U.S.A. : The Crowell-Collier Press, 1962), p. 86

of justice" and "cow-boy ethics definition of justice."[1] We may see that by declaring it to be a necessary virtue for both the Muslims and Hindus, who were then the ruler and the ruled respectively, the Guru is seeking to show that it is wrong to hold on to the position taken by Thrasymachus. Thus the Sikh view of justice may have some affinity to the one held by Socrates when he says that "justice is the excellence of the soul and injustice the defect of the soul."[2]

At another place Guru Nanak calls this exploitation of the others as "devouring men."[3] The underlying idea is that some people like to impress others with their compassion for living things by calling themselves vegetarians, but when it comes to the exploitation of other men, the same people would know no limits. This is called "devouring the whole man in the night or the darkness." The point Guru Nanak establishes is that exploitation of man is no less than carnivorousness. A just man would not exploit others even if he has the means and oppurtunities for doing so.

Third, justice is also understood in a legalistic sense in Sikhism. In this sense it represents an impartial disposition of the person who dispenses justice in deciding various legal cases. The usage of justice is indicated in the writings of Bhai Gurdas. He traces tha state of justice during the various world-cycles. He says that during the three world cycles, preceding the present one, the virtue of justice was universally practised. This was indicated in the deciding of cases in an impartial manner. He then laments that in the present age justice is not administered in an impartial manner. At present only those can get a favourable decision who bribe for it.[4]

Similarly, in *Premsumārag,* the one edited by Bhai Kahan Singh in *Gurmutsudhākar*, and the other published by Sikh History Society and edited by Giani Randhir Singh, justice is generally used in its legalistic sense and indentified as a virtue of the ruler or king. The compiler of this code says that in the dispensation of justice one should

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Benjamin Rand, Compiler, *The Classical Moralists* (Boston Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937), p. 22

[3] *Ādi Granth*, Vār of Malhār, Sloka M. 1 (2-25), p. 1289

[4] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 7, Vār 1. "*Rihā tapāvas triha yug,* chautha yug to deve so pāve."

not give any undue favour to members of one's own religious or social group.[1]

The version of *Premsumārag,* edited by Giani Randhir Singh, contains a similar stringent requirement of justice to be observed in the dispensation of justice by the administrator. He says that "before the Divine, the ruler would not be questioned about his worship or obedience, but the primary enquiry would be about the state of justice in his domain. He would be asked as to who had to suffer the rigour of unjust pain. The ruler, therefore, ought to be vigilant to dispense justice carefully. He should always bear in mind and ensure that none under him suffers unjustly. If any powerful individual persecutes the weak, or causes them any injury, the ruler ought to haul up the wrong doer and hand him over to the weak, so that, whatever wrong the former has done to the latter, the same may be done to the former."[2] One may refer here to the duties of the guardians in Plato's *Republic* in respect to this dispensation of justice and note some similarity.

The same compiler further lays down that "the above cannon of justice ought to be applied in all cases irrespective of the parties involved in any dispute. The case may be against the administrator's own son, brother, mother, wife or minister. But the administrator of justice ought not to give any weightage to the fact of his being a close relation of the accused. He ought to decide the case in an impartial manner."[3] We may see that the compiler is seeking to use moral force to ensure the impartial dispensation of justice in legalistic sense. In view of the fact that the administrator has the power to misuse his position, the compiler is seeking to bind him down by a moral principle, namely the virtue of justice. The compiler appears to have been influenced directly by the teachings of Guru Nanak in the *Ādi Granth* where the Guru advocates the virtue of justice in its legalistic sense and makes it to be the principal characteristic of the ruler or the administrator.[4]

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[1] "Premsumārag", ed., Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar,* para 866

[2] *Premsumārag,* ed., Giani Randhir Singh (Amritsar : Sikh History Society, 1953), p. 85

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 85

[4] *Ādi Granth,* Vār of Sārang, Sloka M. 1 (2-7), p. 1240

The virtue of justice is also used in the sense of self-regulation by the administrator or the ruler. In this meaning of justice the compiler of *Premsumārag* prescribes that "the ruler also ought to subject himself to the same cannon of law and justice"[1] as is applicable to others. Bhai Kahan Singh in his commentary on this provision says, "This means that the evils for which the ruler punishes the subject, should also be avoided by himself."[2] This injunction may be understood in the sense of self-regulation on the part of the ruler or it may also be interpreted as an attempt to universalise the application of justice and the extermination of any exceptions in this regard.

A reference may be made to on more sense in which justice is understood in Plato's *Republic*. Socrates shows there that "in an individual, justice is a psychological balance." Since this balance is necessary for a truly human life, justice turns out, as Socrates had thought, to have an intrinsic value for the individual. It is the psychological state necessary to lead human life fully and well.[3]

In Sikhism this aspect of psychological balance is not treated as a virtue of justice. It is, however, sought to be covered in the treatment of temperance. Here attention may be called to the fact that what we have termed 'psychological balance' in the case of Plato is spoken of as equipoise (*sehaj*) in Sikhism. Equipoise may come through the regulation of different passions like concupiscence, covetousness, ire, attachment, delusion or pride. It is dealt with in our examination of the need for regulating different passions or propensities. In the present book we have also referred to it as unity of the self. So we may say that while the importance of this psychological balance is recognised in Sikhism, it is not referred to as justice. Justice, as we have seen here, generally characterises a disposition indicated in social relationship.

In addition, justice entails a self-conquest or ego-transcendence in the sense that a person acting justly claims no exception for one's own self. This ego-transcendence is seen from all aspects of his conduct, namely respect for the rights of others, non-exploitation of

[1] "Premsumārag", ed., Bhai Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar*, para 857

[2] *Ibid.*, note 2 on para 857

[3] Robert S. Brumbaugh, *op. cit.*, p. 88

others and equality. It is a disposition which facilitates the conquest of ego (*houmai*) which was mentioned as an important aspect of self-realization in the chapter on Moral Standard (*supra*).

We may conclude with the observation that justice is the most fundamental virtue but the realized self goes beyond mere justice and is guided by universal love. We shall see in the chapter on Social Ethics that according to one explanation by the Guru, justice is the lowest form of altruism and the ideal self rises higher and realizes universal love.

### 4.6. Temperance

The virtue of temperance or self-control (*sanjam*) also finds a place in the scheme of the Sikh ethics. The virtue is regarded both as moderation and as regulation or direction of the lower by the higher. Guru Amardas poses a question in regard to the nature of temperance. He asks, "What shall I seize upon and what shall I abandon, for I know not what to do?"[1] In the subsequent lines of the same passage, while referring to temperate persons, he says, "Truth is their temperance, this is the deed they do."[2] He then clarifies that mere fastings and ascetic practices are not temperance. He also reiterates that "truth and temperance are the only true deeds."[3] Let us examine these two aspects of temperance, namely as conduct of moderation and as regulation of the lower by the higher.

We find that in many passages Guru Nanak rejects an extremist code of self-control prevalent among some ascetics. This code required the seekers to exercise a kind of violent self-control of the various sense organs. Guru Nanak identifies this technique as Hatha Yoga which is rejected by him. Hatha Yoga is a discipline involving various bodily and and mental controls, but central to them all is the regulation of the breath.[4] "Etymologically, Hatha Yoga means Sun-moon."[5] We, however, see that "the traditional meaning of the word Hatha is (1) violence, force (2) oppression, rapine," and it is used adverbially in the sense of forcibly, violently, suddenly, or "against one's will." It

[1] *Ādi Granth*, Sarang M. 3 (3-3), p. 1234
[2] *Ibid.*, (5-3), p. 1234
[3] *Ibid.*, Bilawal M. 3 (7-1), p. 841
[4] Theos Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 15
[5] Harvey Day, *About Yoga* (London : Thorson Pub., 1956), p. 51

is in this sense that "this form of yoga is sometimes called forced yoga."[1] The techniques of this yoga are given in the texts *Hatha Yoga Pradīpaka, Gheranda Saṃhita* and *Śiva Saṃhita*. The techniques include an elaborate system of various controls and purifications which are described as Hatha Yoga.

This system of violent self-control is not accepted in Sikhism. Guru Nanak says, in this regard, "In vain I practised contemplation, austerities and self-discipline and in vain I controlled my sense-organs through Hatha Yoga, but the Ideal meeteth one spontaneously or in equipoise."[2]

But while an extremist code of asceticism as an ideal temperance is rejected in Sikhism, moderation in different spheres of life is stressed. We may say that the approach in Sikhism to the problem of temperance, in the sense of moderation, is that of a layman. It is in this sense that eating less, sleeping less and talking less is stressed by Guru Nanak and others. This eating less or sleeping less is considered to be a disposition of moderation, choosing between the extremes of too much of eating and too much of rest on the one hand and complete fasting and not resting at all on the other. Guru Nanak, in reply to the query of the Siddhas, says, "I sleep a little and eat a little. This is the quintessence I have found."[3] In a similar tone Bhai Gurdas writes that "a *Gursikh* eats less, sleeps less and talks less."[4] There is yet another instance in a sermon called *Sākhi Guru Amardas Kī*. Here Guru Amardas extols the virtue of temperance in the sense of moderation. He says, "A person ought ot eat only when he is fully hungry, talk only when there is need for it, and sleep when he feels very sleepy." The Guru perhaps feared that this counsel for moderation might be misinterpreted as a counsel for asceticism and he, therefore, promptly adds to the above sermon that this is a virtue of moderation and should not be misunderstood as a counsel for asceticism or physical torture of the body.[5]

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[1] Theos Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 15

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Asa M. 1 (2-2), p. 436

[3] *Ibid.*, Siddha Goṣti M. 1 (8), p. 939

[4] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 2, Vār 32

[5] Guru Amardas, "Sākhi Guru Amardas Ki", *Premsumārag*, ed., Giani Randhir Singh, p. 42

We may, therefore, say while the technique of extreme and violent self-control is rejected in Sikhism, temperance, in the sense of moderation, is regarded as a virtue. In this it is seen to have some affinity with a similar view of temperance held by Aristotle in *Nichomachean Ethics.* It is explained by Aristotle that "moderation in respect of certain pleasures and also, though to a less extent, certain pains is temperance, while excess is profligacy. But defectiveness in the matter of these pleasures is hardly ever found, and so this sort of people also have as yet received no name; let us put them down as 'void of sensibility.'[1] Since in Sikhism also an attempt is made to reject profligacy as well as 'void of sensibility' as the proper dispositions, we can discern some affinity in this regard between the two views.

We may revert here to the idiom used very often by the Gurus in connection with temperance. It is called *sat sanjam* or *sach sanjam* (truth temperance). It is possible that by using the idiom *sat sanjam* or *sach sanjam,* Gurus have tried to convey that temperance is a virtue in which *sat* regulates or predominates the other aspects of the individual. Here *sat* is understood to be used by the Gurus in almost the same sense in which it is used in the Sankhya School on Indian Philosophy. It may be added here that etymologically the word *sattva* is derived from the word *sat.* It may also be stated that in the Sankhya School, the modes, namely *sattva, rajas* and *tamas* are regarded as three contending modes in a man. According to the Sankhya "the *sattva* element is what produces goodness and happiness. It is said to be buoyant or light. The *rajas* is the source of all activity and produces pain. The *tamas* resists activity and produces the state of apathy and indifference. It leads to ignorance."[2] It is observed by S. Radhakrishnan that the doctrine of the *guṇas* has great ethical significance. We are told that in *devas* (gods) the *sattva* element predominates while the *rajas* and the *tamas* are reduced.[3] Now, in Sikhism, we may say that—

[1] Benjamin Rand, "Nichomachean Ethics". *The Classical Moralists* (Boston : Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937), p. 73

[2] S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1948) Vol. II, pp. 262-63

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 310

without accepting the specific nature of these modes or the belief that all activity is a lower category—when the Gurus use the idiom *sat sanjam* or *sach sanjam* they could well be referring to this geneal principle of regulation or direction of the lower by the higher, namely *sat.* We do find the reference to the modes by the Gurus here and there in the *Ādi Granth,* which is an evidence of their intimate knowledge of this tenet. So it is possible that the Gurus by the use of this idiom might have been referring to the general principle of temperance is somewhat the same sense in which Plato uses it in Book IV of the *Republic,* when he interprets temperance as being the master of one's self. Plato explains there that "the human soul has a better principle, and has also a worse principle; and when the better has the worse under control, then a man is said to be master of himself; and this is a term of praise."[1] In a similar manner the Gurus might have sought to convey a more general principle of temperance by the use of the idiom of *sat sanjam* or *sach sanjam.*

Therefore, broadly speaking, we may say that temperance is a virtue which has both the negative and the positive aspects and in its being a direction of the lower by the higher it is both repressive as well as permissive.

The great need for this virtue today in the sense of moderation is stressed by Brumbaugh in view of, what he calls, "dangers of intemperance latent in our advanced technology." He says that "men of this future world, think and consider that courage and justice may be crushed beneath an endless flow of commodities if you are intemperate in your use of the magic horn of plenty which the gods have given you."[2] This omnious warning of the latent dangers of overflowing may sound rather exaggerated to persons of the scarcity areas. But whatever may be the merit of this prophetic conjecture, the virute of temperance lays down the general principle, both in the sense of moderation as well as in the sense of direction of the lower by the higher. It is in this sense that temperance has an important role to play both in the personal lives as well as in the national or global relations of the entire human family.

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[1] Benjamin Rand, "The Republic", op. cit., p. 28

[2] Robert S. Brumbaugh, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-218

## 4.7. Courage

Courage is a central virtue in the ethics of the Sikhs. It may easily be recognised that a man devoid of courage is a man without authenticity.

Courage is a complex virtue. It embodies both fortitude as well as valour and although these two are grouped under one character they involve different responses to the situation. Historically in Sikhism, just as in Christianity, fortitude appears earlier, but it is recognised that to be of any ethical significance it must have the potency for the second, namely valour. However, before the transition or recourse to the second, a person has to ensure that a valour-response is the necessity of the situation. In the absence of such a moral regulation the person may respond rather violently to a situation under the influence of irascible passion and then rationalise it as an instance of courage, or he may mistakenly regard it as an act of courage. It is worthy of being remembered that courage tempered with poise is the proper moral response. But without the moral capacity of valour the one professing fortitude in appearance may only be indicative of a recreant person. We propose to examine both of these aspects, that is, fortitude as well as valour.

Historically, in Sikhism, the accent on valour is somewhat more prominent after the martyrdom of the fifth Guru. It is a strange, and perhaps also meaningful, coincidence because he comes almost in the midway of the ten Gurus. However, the two aspects fortitude and valour are not mutually exclusive and we find a comingling of the two in Sikhism, from the beginning till the tenth and last human Guru.[1] The terms used for courageous and brave person in the *Ādi Granth* are *sūrā*[2], *surbīr*[3], *nidar*[4], and *nirbhau*[5].

In the oft-quoted couplet of the *Ādi Granth* it is proclaimed by Kabir that "the battle drum is beat in the sky and lo, the target is pierced. The hero has descended upon battle field. Now is the time to

[1] *The Ādi Granth* is considered the eleventh and last Guru.

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Sloka Kabir (2-2), p. 1105

[3] *Ibid.*, Āsa M. 5 (3-37-88), p. 392

[4] *Ibid.*, Guaḍi Guareri M. 1 (5-2), p. 221

[5] *Ibid.*, Bhairo M. 3 (7-1-12), p. 1154

combat. The hero is he who fights for the faith, and though battered into bits, he abandons not the faith, and though battered into bits, he abandons not the fight."[1] In order to understand the sense in which Kabir uses the term *sūrā,* we may examine the historical evidence. Kabir, a Muslim saint under the influence of a devotional cult, set out on blazing the trail of a new faith, the one which proclaimed that there is only one God for all persons, whether they are Muslims, Hindus or others. And while he was welcomed by some, there were others who spurned him and regarded him as an outcast. Kabir, however, was not discouraged in his views. Now, in the passage cited above, he is exalting the virtue of suffering for the faith unflinchingly which is an example of what fortitude stands for in Sikhism. On the same page of the *Ādi Granth* we again find Kabir rebuking those who desert the faith. He reminds any such deserter that human life is not merely for filling the belly like quadruped,[2] but it is for facing the struggle.

Similarly, we find Guru Amar Das narrating the legend of Bhagat Prehalad and saying, Prehalad's father locked up Prehalad in a cell, "but the child was not afraid saying, 'within me is God'."[3] The narration refers to rare fortitude displayed by Prehalad in facing, unflinchingly, persecution for what he believed to be true.

In the passage cited above, and some others as well, the concept of fortitude is reinforced by the belief that God is with the righteous and that divine courage is infused in the person displaying fortitude. We have the historical evidence of the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, facing persecution with a smile. A scholar of the Christian ethics calls it "infused supernatural fortitude" and advises "giving up of one's life, rather than commit a moral evil, as St. Thomas More did in accepting martyrdom rather than consent to Henry VIII's acting as the head of the Church which Christ founded."[4] It is this ability to suffer for one's word and belief that is referred to by Guru Arjan Dev, the

[1] *Ibid.*, Sloka Kabir (2-2), p. 1105

[2] *Ibid.*, Maru Kabir (4-1), p. 1105

[3] *Ibid.*, Bhairo M. 3 (7-1-2), p. 1154

[4] Micheal V. Murray, *Problems in Ethics* (New York : Henry Holt & Co. Inc., 1960), p. 360

martyr, when he refers to the saints as "men of word (*bachan*), chivalrous are they."[1] In Sikhism also this virtue is sometimes referred to as "infused spiritual courage." Guru Arjan Dev in this sense says, "God is fearless. He dwelleth with thee, why fearest thou then?"[2] Guru Nanak also refers to the spiritually attuned person as one who "fears naught, nor is he ever drowned."[3]

God-inspired, confidence and courage are also indicated by Guru Arjan Dev when he remarks, "God has protected me... and becoming fearless, I now enjoy the state of eternal bliss."[4] In this manner we see that courage ought to accompanied by composure, as the example of the Guru indicates.

In the writings of most of the Gurus the Absolute is described as fearless. The lead is given by Guru Nanak and other Gurus also follow him.[5] It may, however, be possible that at times the Gurus are using *nirbhau* in respect of the Absolute to indicate its non-duality, since fear comes only when there is another which one may be afraid of. Thus when the Absolute is called *nirbhau* it may mean that it is One and there is no duality. This apart, the Absolute is also called the destroyer of fear which being the sense in which it is being discussed here; the Spiritual may be taken to infuse fortitude and valour. Guru Gobind Singh, in whom one notices the manifestation of both of the aspects of courage, also calls the Absolute, fearless, in the tradition of the earlier Gurus. He even calls it "all steel" which expression, however, its not used for the Absolute by the Gurus earlier to him.

We may now refer to the accent on valour, which culminated in the era of Guru Gobind Singh, though it is also unmistakenly manifest in the Gurus who came before him. This culmination is sometimes described as a transition or what some scholars prefer to describe as

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[1] *Ādi Granth*, Āsa M. 5 (3-37-88), p. 392

[2] *Ibid.*, Gauḍi M. 5 (1-5-126), p. 206

Cf. also Guru Gobind Singh, "Vachiternātak", *Dasam Granth*, Chapter 8, Stanza 24

[3] *Ādi Granth*, Bilawal M. 1, Thitti (18-1), p. 840

[4] *Ibid.*, Dhanāsri M. 5, (2-17), p. 675

[5] *Ibid.*, Maru M. 1 (11-4-21), p. 1042 : Cf. also, *Ibid.*, Gujri M. 5 (3-1), p. 507; *Ibid.*, Rāg Gujri M. 3, p. 516; and *Ibid.*, Maru M. 4 p. 998

'call to arms.' The moral justification for the accent on valour is offered by Guru Gobind Singh in the composition entitled *Zafarnāma* (*Episitle of Victory*), sent to Aurangzeb, the Mughal emperor. In it Guru Gobind Singh, after citing various circumstances of a particular combat, proclaims, "When the situation is past all remedies, it is righteousness to take to sword."[1] One may refer to a similar decalaration made by Sri Kṛsna in the *Bhagavadgītā* while exhorting Arjuna to take up the sword. It is an excellent example of Sri Kṛsna's views about the sense of duty.

According to Guru Gobind Singh the only consideration to be made before deciding to resort to such a recourse is to see that it is absolutely necessary and that all other avenues of rectifying the wrong have been tried out to their fullest extent. In the absence of such a control the above moral precept might lead to dangerous consequences and, instead of qualifying as a virtuous conduct, it may mistakenly provide a pretext for vengeance and violence which certainly would be immoral according to Guru Gobind Singh.

Historically, the accent on the need for displaying valour in a combat, was started by the sixth Guru, Hargobind, and has continued ever since—the tenth Guru and various *Rahitnāmas* in the post-Gobind Singh period. In between, however, we still find the instance of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, accepting matyrdom without recourse to arms, thereby manifesting fortitude which may be taken to testify to the non-exclusiveness of fortitude and valour.

The importance of courage as a moral virtue in Sikhism appears to have increased manifold during and after Guru Gobind Singh, as indicated in *Rahitnāmas*. It has played a significant role in determining whether a particular person accepts the Sikh ethics or not. Thus we find that in the code, *Tankhanāma* of Nand Lal, it is said that the qualities of the Khalsa, among others, consist of "fighting in the forefront, wearing of arms, or fighting resolutely."[2] Another code of life rules by Bhai Chopa Singh, enjoins upon a Sikh "not to desert

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[1] Guru Gobind Singh, *Zafarnāma*, 22

[2] Nand Lal, "Tankhanāma" ed., Sant Sampuran Singh, *Rahitnāmas* (Amritsar : Jawahar Singh, Kirpal Singh), p. 83

from the battlefield,"[1] however fierce the struggle may be, and also to wear arms.

It may be interesting to observe that Bhai Sukha Singh, in his *Gurubilās* (Bikrami era 1854), composed in a period later than the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, shows the traces of development in terms of the accent on valour and has even cited a sermon of the fifth Guru. According to *Gurubilās*, the fifth Guru addressed Kalesi, the warrior,[2] on the excellence of the virtue of fighting for righteousness. He is further reported to have extolled the role of an armed warrior who fights and never deserts. Such a person is able to conquer and rule the earth and, on death, attains salvation. In fact, this report of the sermon is marked by the spirit of post-Gobind Singh era. It is under the influence of this temper that the sense prior to the sixth Guru is sought to be reconstructed by scholars and charged eminently with the spirit of combat and valour.

Regarding Guru Gobind Singh himself, he declares courage to be a virtue of the very high order. According to him, the brave and benevolent attain honour in the world.[3] John Clark Archer observes, "From the first, Guru Gobind Singh committed all the Sikhs to the exercise of arms, pledged them never to turn their backs upon the enemy in time of battle and never to surrender."[4] Heroic poetry became the vehicle of thought and spirit. Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed, "Sword, that smites in a flash, that scatters the armies of the wicked in the great battlefield, O thou symbol of the brave. Thine arm is irresistible, thy brightness shines forth, the blaze of the splendour dazzling like the sun. Sword, thou art the protector of the saint, thou art the scourge of the wicked; O scatterer of the sinners, I take refuge in thee. Hail to the Creator, Saviour and Sustainer, Hail to thee—Sword supreme."[5] It is during Guru Gobind Singh's period that the

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[1] Chopa Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 94

[2] Bhai Sukha Singh, "Gurubilās", Raś 3, Chap. 60, ed., Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhakar*, p. 554

[3] Guru Gobind Singh, *Vachiternātak*, Chap. 8 Verse 22

[4] John Clark Archer, *op. cit.*, p. 196

[5] Guru Gobind Singh, "Vachiternātak", *Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960), p. 270

suffix, after the name of the members of the institutionalised brotherhood of the Khalsa, was introduced as *Singh* (lion) for men and *Kaur* for the women (*Kaur* is sometimes traced to lioness but it was also used for the princesses among the Rajputs).

The wearing of sword was made one of the organisational duties and the baptism itself was now to be prepared by stirring the sacramental water with a double-edged dagger. All this is indicative of the accentuated interest and stress on valour but, so far as Guru Gobind Singh is concerned, he has manifested in his character both fortitude as well as valour, though the former is very often overlooked by some people, thereby presenting a somewhat distorted and unbalanced pitcure of Guru Gobind Singh and Sikhism. The scholars very often also overlook the spiritual metaphorical meanings of sword as conveyed by Guru Gobind Singh.

We may, however, note also other important characteristics of courage as manifested by Guru Gobind Singh. First, the noteworthy factor is that militancy in courage was not directed towards any religion or community and the Hindus, Muslims as well as Sikhs fought together under his command. Courage in the battlefield was devoid of any hatred or enmity. Guru Gobind Singh has proclaimed, "Fearlessly I will declare the spiritual truth but without enmity to any one."[1] Second, this manifestation of valour was accompanied by Guru Gobind Singh's propagation of such cardinal moral principles as equality, righteousness and universal brotherhood which he resolved to proclaim without fear of men.[2] The Guru reiterated that he was human and a servant of God. He condemned those who might call him God.[3] The humanistic content in this declaration is clearly visible. The stress on the necessity to re-awaken in oneself authenticity and fearlessness, conjoined with refusal to put up with evil and sloth for ever, is *par excellence* a humanistic approach.

Here may be the place to point out that with Guru Gobind Singh the tradition, initiated by Guru Nanak, fructified into a nation—a fully institutionalised nation. The virtue of courage, as cultivated by its members, was to promulgate as well as preserve this fruition of

[1] *Ibid.*, Chap. 8, Verse 31
[2] *Ibid.*, Verse 33
[3] *Ibid.*, Verse 32

Sikhism. While writing about courage Nicolai Hartmann has also observed that "the most conspicuous form in which this value manifests itself is outward bravery, the ability to stake one's life, the spontaneous facing of extreme danger, the standing at one's post. In the early war-waging period of nation's life this is held to be synonymous with all virtue."[1] We may clearly recognise that Sikhism has not been an exception to it. But courage as a virtue must, in the ultimate analysis, transcend beyond the frontiers of groups and nations, and must be indicated in a concern for the whole of mankind.

## 4.8. Humility

Humility is a virtue which has both personal as well as social importance. When viewed from the personal angle it consists of having a humble estimate of one's own merit and from the social one, it consists of checking the tendency to expect and demand approbation and subservience from others in recognition of the merit one possesses. It is a deliberate cultivation of refusal to go down to what Henry Sidgwick calls the "dangerously seductive impulse"[2] of obtaining pleasure in one's own respect and admiration. The failure of man to cultivate humility may be due to his ignorance of the moral ideal against which he must measure himself. Persons, who have some inkling of the ideal, should be humble as this brings home to them the fact of how far away they are from the realization of the ideal. The virtue of humility, thus, is not to be the virtue of only those who have some achievement to their credit, but it is to be the virtue of all who measure themselves against the goal of ideal-realization. It may be reflected in the attitude of man towards himself, towards social relations, as well as towards the moral ideal which ought to be qualified by humility.

It is with all these aspects of the virtue that we find the Gurus occupying themselves. The term used to denote humble and humility, in Sikhism, are *garīb*[3] (poverty), *nīch*[4] and *nimāṇa*.[5] The term

[1] Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethics* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1951), Vol. II, p. 435

[2] Henry Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 336

[3] *Ādi Granth*, Mājh M. 5 (1-6-13), p. 98

[4] *Ibid.*, Bilawal M. 5 (4-25-55), p. 815

[5] *Ibid.*, Gauḍi Sukhmaṇi M. 5 (6-3), p. 266

*nimratā* along with *nitāṇā*[1] (humility and powerlessness, respectively) are also used by Bhai Gurdas in the above meaning.

The Guru, providing the clue to humility, proclaims, "I am low and supportless, ignorant and shorn of merit."[2] This attitude is required to be followed by others also for the cultivation of this virtue. The Guru, at another place, says, "Some pride on their power of speech, others that they have riches to lean upon, but I have no other support but God's : O Creator-Lord! save me, your meek slave."[3] Bhai Gurdas writes, "One who follows the instruction of the Guru, calls himself as lowliest of the lowly."[4] He then proceeds to explain analogically that one ought to have humble estimation of one's merit, as that attitude alone is expressive of one's merit. He quotes the example of a guinea being lighter in weight, though more in value and merit, than the coins it can command in exchange, the diamond in trun being lighter than the weight of guineas it can fetch. Another example of a mango tree laden with fruit and inclining downward[5] and many more, are cited in order to drive home the moral that humility is in fact a sign of merit and the value of this merit lies in not being proclaimed as a merit but rather in having a humble opinion about its possession.

From the social aspect, humility may mean virtue expressed towards fellow men, the Guru and the Absolute. The first seems to be the most difficult one because in the case of the Guru and the Absolute a person sincerely believes himself to be by far imperfect as compared to them, but in the case of his fellow men, in so many respects, he may have different views. But although the most difficult yet it is the most urgent because it is the fundamental. It is the most

[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 2,Vār 32
[2] *Ādi Granth*, Bilawal M. 5 (4-25-55), p. 815
[3] *Ibid.*, Maru M. 4 (13-2), p. 1071
[4] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 21, Vār 23
[5] *Ibid.*, Stanza 9, Vār 26

disarming weapon, a congenial attribute for social concord. The Guru declares, "Humility is my bludgeon, my doubled-edged dagger is to be the dust for all men to tread upon. No evil doer can face these weapons. The perfect Guru has made me wise, this-wise."[1] Here a historical fact may interest us. It was customary with the Sikhs, even before and after the times of Bhai Gurdas, that they greeted each other by touching each other's feet,[2] a practice which was meant to reinforce the profession of humility. Bhai Gurdas cites this practice—head is high but it bows to feet[3]—to bring home the moral of humility. Next comes humility before the Guru, the spiritual teacher, which indeed is the only proper attitude. The Guru says, "In utter humility, I fell at the door of the perfect Guru. He honours the humble; and strokes their backs."[4] The Guru himself gives expression to the virtue of humility, thereby, setting up an example to others. Guru Arjan expresses many a time his own desire to apply "the dust of the saint's feet to the forehead," and "becoming lowliest of the lowly."[5] And then comes humility before the Absolute. The virtue of humility at this stage is not exclusive of the earlier two; it is rather here that we realize the reason for the earlier two aspects as well. No matter, how much merit we might have considered ourselves to possess in relation to our fellow beings, it pales into insignificance before the Absolute Ideal, bringing home to us the futility of any response other than humility. We become aware of our imperfections and limitations. Guru Nanak declares that we speak, eat, walk, see and breathe within limitations and that our life span is also limited.[6] The attitude or virtue of humility thus comes to be grounded in the awareness of the finitude of man and his merit which always

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[1] *Ādi Granth*, Sorath M. 5 (1-16-80), p. 628

[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 3, Vār 4; also, St. 5, Vār 20

[3] *Ibid.*, Stanza 18, Vār 9

[4] *Ādi Granth*, Sri Rāg M. 4 (2-4-68), p. 41

[5] *Ibid.*, Bilawal M. 5 (2-15-45), p. 812

[6] *Ibid.*, Sri Rāg M. 1 (1 & 2-3), p. 15

falls short of an ideal excellence. While expressing his humility before God, the Guru declares the bride (symbolic of self) to be humble and powerless.[1] The self by seeking to measure itself with the Absolute, is convinced of the futility of nourishing any notion of pride.

In the treatment of this virtue by Bhai Gurdas we come across quite a few classifications of things which, according to him, highlight the great importance of the virtue of humility. He cites the examples of earth,[2] fire and water[3] as huge things but possessing the virtue of humility because they do not burst out with the feeling of their power. Humility here may be taken to mean self-restraint or acting according to one's function in the most orderly manner without any bursting out from a sense of one's importance or power. Humility does not require any slackening of one's function. On the contrary it expects performance of one's role, howsoever important that role may be, without being engulfed by any sense of self approbation. One ought to treat, even the very powerful roles in life, as the roles or functions one has to perform to the best of one's ability without being consumed by a sense of self-glow.

Bhai Gurdas then names certain small things which he takes to be the examples of things professing humility. He points out that this humility is their virtue since otherwise those are things of great merit. In this group, we meet the examples of the small finger,[4] the small drop of water,[5] the poppy and the *til* seeds. He then proceeds to show the great merit of these humility professing things. The small finger is the ring-finger and is thus of great importance. The small drop of water is pearl-making. The small seeds have great

[1] *Ibid.*, Tukhari Chhant M. 1 (7-1), p. 1107. Here '*bride*' is used for the devotee in the fashion similar to the Sūffis and some other mystic.

[2] Bhai Gurdas *Vārs*, Stanza 2, Vār 4

[3] *Ibid.*, Stanza 5, Vār 4

[4] *Ibid.*, Stanza 5, Vār 4

[5] *Ibid.*, Stanza 4, Vār 4

usefulness and are, therefore, things of great merit and utility.

He argues that in spite of the great importance of these things they profess humility by remaining small in appearance. Thus Bhai Gurdas shows that the virtue of humility is even possessed by big and small things of nature. Therefore it is all the more necessary and important for man, who is also a link in this continuity of nature, as well as its apex, to possess humility.

It is in this sense that Bhai Gurdas proclaims that a "*Gurmukh* though powerful, professess, powerlessness."[1] Humility is a necessary part for the realization of the ideal self. It is in this sense that the Guru calls humility-possessing persons as nearer to the Ideal,[2] or that they would be realizing the ideal soon,[3] as they are on the correct path.

In ascribing great importance to the virtue of humility Sikhism may be seen to be in line with Christianity, and the various schools of Indian Philosophy.

### 4.9 : Contentment

Contentment (*santokh* from *santosh*, Sanskrit root *tuś*, happiness, calmness) is a virtue which plays an important role in the ethics of the Sikhs. Sikhism has sought to project a comprehensive approach to life, inclusive of activity. This activism, in harmony with the spiritual ideal of human life, is central to Sikhism. But activism has some possibility of tiring the man and thus giving rise to occasional frustrations in life. Virtue of contentment, therefore, is integral to this system.

It is posssible that when a man has done all that he could, the result of his activity may not be commensurate with his efforts. This is the critical moment when the boiling cauldron of human activity, faced with an anticlimax, may take recourse to two alternatives, in order to re-adjust itself to the situation. In general Indian terminology, the alternatives may be called

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[1] *Ibid.*, Stanza 2. Vār 32

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Sri Rāg M. 1 (4-3), p. 15

[3] *Ibid.*, Bilawal M. 5 (3-7-12), p. 804

*vairāga* (renunciation) or *santokh* (calmness). The allurement of renunciation may be more tempting. It ensures, perhaps, better immediate adjustment. But the choice of the latter is ethically more important and eduring because the person accepts the results with an equipoise without losing the determination to act again, with better physical and mental equipment. Contentment can thus be defined as a studiously cultivated state of mind, which acts as a safety valve in human personality in contradistinction to the ascetic choice.

Importance of contentment in Sikhism in this sense is stressed by all the Gurus. The high place accorded to it may be judged from the fact that at times if a Guru mentions not more than three virtues, even then contentment is one of them. The expressions such as *sat santokh vīcharo*[1] (truth, contentment, reflection) or *sat santokh sanjam*[2] (truth, contentment, temperance), provide premises for the above inference. Similarly, the importance of this virtue may be seen from its frequent recurrence throughout the *Ādi Granth*, conjoined with *sat* as "*sat santokh*".[3] In *Janamsākhi*, it is described as one of the aspects of the spiritual progress, namely society of good people, truthfulness, self-regulation and contentment ("*Satsangat, satye, sām, dām, santokh*").[4] This again brings out its importance in Sikhism.

As to the nature of contentment it may be asked what should a person be contented with. Should he be contented with poverty, hunger and privations without making any effort at their removal? Does contentment mean accepting the status quo? Is it contentment with evil, lethargy or non-action? Does contentment mean accepting one's present situation without making any effort towards ethico-spiritual progress? Certainly all this is not *santokh*. Contentment does not mean fatalism, defeatism or compromise with evil. Rather, it is directly contrary to any compromise with evil. A man who refuses to

[1] *Ibid.*, Mundāvani M. 5, p. 1429

[2] *Ibid.*, Rāmkali M. 1, Siddha Goṣṭi (11), p. 939

[3] *Ibid.*, Maru M. 1 (8-4-10), p. 1030

[4] "Janamsākhi", ed., Bhai Kahan Singh. *Gurmatsudhākar* para, 657

surge forward and is not prepared for some of the frustations, which may have to be encountered in the process, cannot be called a man of contentment because he is afraid of putting his contentment to test. The acid test of genuine contentment lies in the acceptance of both success and failure calmly. Contentment is indicative of the human resolve to act again since a failure does not disturb the equipoise cultivated by contentment.

The cause of absence of contentment in a man may be traced to the presence of fear in him. Refusal to subject contentment to the above acid test may, first, be due to fear in man that he may not succeed. This fear, and its adjunct complacency, are opposed to the virtue of contentment. In this connection Guru Ramdas says, "Make contentment thy father."[1] Now, what are the qualities associated with an ideal father? What else, if not the persuasive encouragement to surge ahead? A father is a symbole of the factor which removes fear. Thus contentment, according to the Guru, is to provide the security of equipoise, both in the event of success and failure. Second, fear may also be caused by uncertainty of life hereafter. Guru Arjan Dev says, "The world is contented for the Guru has given the message of emancipation to all."[2] Contentment, thus, is also indicative of emancipation from fear or misgivings about salvation. The Guru has given the message of the possibility of emancipation for all. The man, therefore, need not entertain any fear of having to take some other births in different social groups for attaining salvation. Thus fear about it on this score is also removed. The contented person rises higher and continues making efforts without fear. Contentment is a disposition born of the honest conviction that one is doing one's best in a spirit of humility. The virtue of contentment, therefore, accompanies this doing of one's utmost and leaving the rest to God. Betrand Russell comes

[1] *Ādi Granth*, Gaudi Māṇjh M. 4 (2-1-27-65), p. 172. *Santokh pita kar.*

[2] *Ibid.*, Sorath M. 5 (1-21-85), p. 629

around almost to the same position when he says, "Christianity taught submission to the will of God, and even for those who cannot accept this phraseology, there should be something of the same kind pervading all their activities... The attitude required is that of doing one's best while leaving the issue to fate."[1] Accepting the religious phraseology regarding the outcome, Sikhism also says, "and leave it to God."

Who are the persons described as contented? We have already said that they are free of fear or despair. They are men of hope as they have trust in the message of peace given by the Guru, Guru Amardas further clarifies that only a pure person, free from guide and viciousness, can be called the "embodiment of truth and contentment."[2] Is there any doubt then that a person willing to put up resignedly with ignorance, dirt, privations, fear and the status quo cannot be called a man of contentment and purity? But a person who contemplates the ideal, seeks and obtains the guidance of the teacher (Guru) and engages himself in ceaseless activity with the disposition to accept all that he has to confront on the way and still continues the progress in a spirit of hope, will be called a contented person.[3]

In India distinction has sometimes been drawn between *vairāga* and *santokh*. The former may involve the renunciation of a situation but the latter indicates a sticking on to the effort at surging forward in the promotion of human welfare. One shall be unmindful of failures because one has trust in the justness of God, which is tempered with grace. Contentment is the dispositional shock-absorber, whatever be the nature of those shocks. It assists a person in rising above the psychological fret and fury involved in an activity without renouncing the activity. This activity, we presume, shall be a moral activity since only a man free

[1] Bertrand Russell. *The Conquest of Happiness* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960), p. 235

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Vār of Rāg Gujri M. 3 (9), p. 512

[3] *Ibid.*, Basant M. 5 (2-2), p. 1192

of viciousness and guile can be called contented.

There is, however, the danger of contentment being misunderstood by some. At times contentment is interpreted in a backward-looking manner. It is sought to be understood as something which emerges when a person compares himself with those who lack something which he possesses. For example, let us take a person who has half a rupee but is in need of one rupee. The plain course for him would be that he should work for it. Now, if instead of working for it, he consoles himself by saying that there is someone who does not even have half a rupee or that poverty is a virtue and that his working for his needs or for the needs of others will be contrary to his spirituality, should we call such a person as one having cultivated contentment ? The answer may be that such a person could be called contented only through a distorted notion of contentment. Plainly speaking this attitude may, in the first instance, most accurately be called smug complacency. In the sense that this person says, "I have something in comparison with a fellow being who does not have it." Second, this may smack of ego or pride, in which one hunts up for some inferior fellow being than whom one (this so-called contented person) is better off. In view of the fact that pride or ego is declared to be a great evil in Sikhism and that great stress is laid on the virtue of humility, this backward-looking sort of odious comparison, of myself having and some unfortunate not having, is downright immoral and can be called a virtue only by someone who has the ethical scale turned topsy turvy. In view of the unequivocal views of Sikhism about pride or self-glow, we may regard such a view as un-Sikh or anti-Sikh.

When a scholar ventures to interpret contentment in Sikhism in terms of these backward-looking odious comparisons, we can point out to him the above implications of such a view. We may, therefore, not be in a position to agree with a writer who, while discoursing on contentment in Sikhism, says, "When one feels that one has not enough, one must compare oneself to another who has nothing. A one-eyed man must thank himself that he is not blind." The same writer then quotes Welton approvingly when the

latter says that "adversity is no punishment because in poverty there are few temptations and one turns to God."[1] Clearly we may say that a person who indulges in such comparisons suffers from pride rather than saying that he has cultivated virtue of contentment. We have already pointed out that such a view goes against the spirit of Sikhism because Sikhism is grounded in the forward-looking optimism *(chardi kala)* and "victory for affluence and righteousness" *(degh tegh fateh)* as the fundamental-tenets along with spiritual effort.

Celestin N. Bittle, a scholar of Christianity, calls such an attitude of non-action as sloth which he regards as one of the seven capital sins.[2] In case contentment is a virtue in the sense in which some scholars have interpreted it as "comparison with those who do not have even that," or as a compromise holding that poverty may be conducive for the spiritual uplift, then we may have no ground for dissension with those who argue that backwardness of a country or its people is directly traceable to such a morbid view of contentment. But our main argument here is that contentment is not understood in this sense in Sikhism. The virtue of contentment has to be interpreted in the forward-looking spirit. It may be a virtue indicated after the activity and not a substitute for activity. Since activity is a continuous affair the virtue of contentment is also a permanent disposition and has a great moral and psychological value.

At times contentment is subjected to criticism. J.S. Mill, for example, observes that "fools, rascals and beasts are probably more contented than intelligent men relatively to their expectation but they are less happy absolutely, because they miss delights which are above their perception." In a reply to it we may agree with another scholar who points out that Mill uses satisfied as equivalent to contented, whereas we are using it as inclusive of happi-

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[1]Gobind Singh Mansukhani. *The Quintessence of Sikhism* (Amritsar : Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. 1958), p. 144.

[2]Celestin N. Bittle. *Man and Morals. Ethics* (Milwaukee : The Bruce Publishing Company, 1953), p. 269.

ness[1] and equipoise, which is born of the awareness that one has done his best, The difficulty of the above position lies, therefore, in the fact that we are isolating contentment as a virtue from the total moral scheme and then seeking to condemn it in the sense of satisfaction. But we should consider it as a part of the moral scheme of life. In that case these categories of persons mentioned by Mill and many others of similar nature, may not be called beings who have cultivated the virtue of contentment.

Similarly, contentment is often mistakenly understood in the sense of personal or social soporification. Joad, while commenting on the vote, by the English parliament in 181, of a million pounds of public money for the construction of Churches to preach submission when many Englishmen were facing financial difficulties, has said, "God, it seems is cheaper than a living wage, and no less effective as a means of securing social contentment."[2] Whatever may be the other merit of this criticism, it may be pointed out that social contentment in the sense of social lethargy is what has been understood by the scholar in the manner of the backward-looking man of despair. We may submit that we have not interpreted the moral virtue of contentment in the sense of social soporification, born of inactivity or despair. Contentment, as understood by us here, is in the sense of forward-looking and is an accompanying disposition to ceaseless activity for ethico-spiritual progress. It is what a person of optimism and hope (*chardi kala*) cultivates.

Is there any necessity for this virtue today? The answer is an emphatic yes. When the whole of humanity is seeking to work to the utmost to provide mankind with better and more congenial material conditions and higher ethico-spiritual standards, every person ought to cultivate contentment and avoid despair and slackening of effort in the face of personal failure or any smug complacency born of personal success. Contentment thus indicates transcend-

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[1] George F. Hourani, *Ethical Value* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1956), p. 222.

[2] C.E.M. Joad, *The Future of Morals* (London : John West House, 1946), p. 11.

ence of ego or narrow self. It is a sign of trust in God and grace. Contentment takes away the tiring frustrations of existential life without slackening the pace of progress. The gospel of contentment is, therefore, of permanent value. It is not that necessity for it was felt more during the earlier times. It is equally, if not more, needed in the modern technological era of rising human accomplishments. But it must be understood in the sense of a forward-looking virtue. This is *santokh* in Sikhism.

### 4.10 : Concluding remarks

We have presented the various aspects of the virtues of wisdom, truthfulness, justice, temperance, courage, humility and contentment. It may be asked whether any hierarchy of these virtues has been attempted in Sikhism. The answer is in the negative. One does find isolated references to certain virtues or certain groups of virtues but any systematic gradation is not indicated by the Gurus. The absence of such an attempt could have been inspired by the feeling that such gradation is not necessary. It could also be due to the general methodology used in the Sikh literature where no special or detailed examination is undertaken in respect of virtues. Virtues thus are treated in a general way and, in spite of the great importance attached to them, no ascending or descending hierarchies are attempted. We may, therefore, conclude that all these virtues are cardinal and define, in general, the behaviour of the person as it ought to be.

We may refer here to the treatment of virtues as found in Hindu Schools of Philosophy. We find these virtues included in the *sādhārana dharma*[1] list. The *sādhārana dharma* is the list of generic duties which is to be followed by the members of all *Varnas* (castes). We may, however, mention that in Hinduism courage and justice are regarded to be the *Viśeśa* dharma, that is, they are the exclusive duties of a certain caste, namely Kśatriya (the warrior caste). The recourse to arms was the duty of this caste. But in Sikhism all the virtues, including courage and justice, are moral

[1] Surma Dasgupta, *Development of Moral Philosophy in India* (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1961), p. 91.

characteristics to be cultivated by all. This is due to the rejection by Sikhism of the Hindu caste system along with the division of the virtues in terms of castes.

We have not taken up the love of fellow men, which is to be expressed in terms of altruism, in the present chapter and we shall take it up in chapter VI *infra.*

However, before passing on to the next chapter we may add here that while men are advised to cultivate virtues for realizing the state of *sachiāra,* they are cautioned against the danger of becoming proud of their virtues. The attitude of a person on this ethico-spiritual path ought to be one in which the person's ego is not permitted to puff itself up or glow with the idea that it possesses these virtues while others do not have them. One may cultivate all the virtues but, like the Guru, should claim, "I am virtueless."[1]

[1] *Ādi Granth.* Vadhans M. 5 (4-1), p. 577.

# V
# DUTIES

## 5.1: Prolegomena

The notion of obligation, in Sikhism, reveals two stages of its development, neither of which, however, is independent of each other; rather the second and later stage in the development is an attempt at an elaboration of the first, with some additions inspired by the genius of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. It may not be possible to affirm that all these elaborations as contained in various *Rahitnāmas* are directly traceable to him yet, chronologically at least, these rules, in the form of *Rahitnāmas*, must have become current after the inauguration of the Khalsa, the present institutionalised form of Sikhism, in the year 1699.

A general principle of duties appeared first in Sikhism in the teachings of Guru Nanak and some of the prominent personal and social duties, relating the person to the organisation, evolved gradually later. We may follow the same scheme in the present chapter.

## 5.2: General principle of duties—raza

We may observe that persons are born in different socio-geographical environments, take up different vocations and live in varied family groups. This indicates a vast expanse of possibilities in terms of life situations. Now, it may be conceded that if one were to compile a detailed list of duties, which would cater to all the life situations, the list so prepared may, apart from remaining imperfect, also involve the difficulties and problems associated with casuistry.

It is perhaps these factors which led Guru Nanak to lay down the general principle of the duties of the situations[1] which could

[1] We should not confuse the stations here with any principle of social division on the basis of castes or classes as these are not accorded any *locus standi* in Sikhism.

be applicable to all life situations. The general principle, so laid down by Guru Nanak, enjoins that "whatever be the duties, entailed by one's station, these ought to be performed to the best of one's ability till one may move to the next station, and then perform duties of the next station." This notion of the duties of the stations is laid down in Sikhism by the tenet of *raza*. The scholars of Sikhism have generally not paid attention to the interpretation of this notion though it contains an important principle of the Sikh ethics and also reflects the great vision of the Guru. The scholars have generally rendered *raza* as resignation or surrender to God's will. This interpretation appears to lay undue emphasis on passivism, or even fatalism, in addition to its failure to bring out the distinguishing mark of the principle denoted by *raza*.

We had referred to *raza* earlier while discussing *Moral Standard*. We may now examine it in some detail.

Guru Nanak has laid down that one ought to realize the universal will in *raza*[1] What is *raza ?* It is a vital question. Is it passive surrender to the universal will or is it active appropriation of the universal will as integral to the self ? The answers to these questions depend upon the analysis of the notion itself.

The term *raza* in Sikhism is a borrowed one. It was in use by the Suffis (Muslim mystic saints) with whom Sikhism has some doctrinal as well as historical affinity. The significance and meaning of the term *raza* are given in detail by Abul Hassan Ali, son of Usman Hujviri, the author of *Kashful-mahajub*. According to him, the Muhasibi school, founded by Haris, son of Asad Muhasibi, believed in *raza*, a word, which can be used as "meaning *maqām* (station) as well as *ahwāl* (state)[2] *Raza*, according to Hujviri, is understood in two senses: *raza* of God with human beings which means the divine reward for man's endeavour in doing good and the *raza* of human beings with God which consists in their submission and service to God. Man's *raza* depends upon God's sat-

[1] *Ādi Granth*, Japji (1), p. 1.

[2] A.M.A. Shustery, "Suffis and Suffism", *Outlines of Islamic Culture* (Bangalore: Bangalore Press, 1938), p. 373.

isfaction with him. *Raza* is considered to be higher to *zuhud* or renunciation *(sannyāsa)* as the former is the result of love for God and the latter that of indifference to worldly enjoyments." It is further explained about station and state that the former means "stationing on the way leading towards God, and *fulfilling the duties connected with that station* until the seeker is able and is fit to proceed to the next station. State or *hāl* is not attained by self-discipline, but is a gift from God. Thus, the former is connected with *human action* and the latter with divine mercy."[1] Emphasis added.) Guru Nanak, who moved among the Sūffis and the followers of Islam, might have learnt the use of this term from them.

While applying this principle of *raza* to Sikhism, we may remember that the socio-economic context of the house-holder only is accorded merit. Thus station and its duties, as understood in Sikh ethics, ought to be interpreted in terms of obligations connected with the social situations of the person on his journey towards the realization of the ideal.

The principle of *raza* as applied to ethics, clearly reveals that the person who does not perform the duties of his station to the best of his ability is morally inferior. A conscious recognition of duties as such, as well as their performance, is in fact the realization of *hukm* in *raza*."[2] It may, however, be only too proper to add here that the social situation is not to be understood in the narrow terms of conforming to the ethos of one's own communal or social group because the ethics suggested by the Gurus was to transcend beyond narrow sectarian considerations.

We may, consequently, conclude that the moral notion denoted by *raza* indicates the general principle of duties as applicable to all life situations, whether actual or possible.

However, in Sikhism, apart from the above general principle of obligation enjoined by *raza* we also come across some other imperatives or duties. The duties enjoined are both general as well

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 373.

[2] Sikhism does not permit the attempt to make renunciation as the life situation or station.

as organisational.

### 5.3: Rahitnāmas and Rahit Maryāda as sources of duties background

Apart from the general principle of duties denoted by *raza* there are some general and organisational duties which the Sikhs are required to perform. There are two major sources of these duties, namely *Rahitnāmas* and the *Sikh Rahit Maryāda.* These may be called the codes of conduct or life rules. We may first discuss *Rahitnāmas.*

*Rahitnāmas:* Before we examine the actual duties enjoined in *Rahitnāmas* a few observations about them, which may help us to avoid hasty and oversimplified generalisations, are necessary. We may, then, be in a better position to view them in their proper perspective.

First, it may be observed that these codes were formulated after the year 1699, that is, after the initiation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh. Some of the codes are the product of the time when the Sikhs were actively involved in a strife against the opposing forces and those who were keen on putting an end to this newly emerging system which sought to transvaluate some of their traditional values. The codes, therefore, very often reflect their averse attitude towards both of them.

Second, the compilers of these codes were also faced with the problem of consolidating the forces of Sikhism. They also display their interest for the precepts which would see the growing nation through its teething period and some of the extreme positions may, therefore, be more in the spirit of conservation and internal discipline.

Third, the codes also contain some imperatives, laying down even some minute details, which may be indicative more of love for detail of an individual compiler than of any internal necessity of the doctrine as such.

### 5.4: Origin of the Rahitnāmas

The origin and validity of some of the *Rahitnāmas* is claimed on the basis of their having been dictated by the tenth Guru. Bhai

Kahan Singh regards three formulations, namely *Tankha-nāma* Nand Lal, *Praśan Uttar* Bhai Nand Lal, and *Rahitnāma* of Bhai Desa Singh as codes formulated by some devotees on the basis of dialogue between the tenth Guru and Bhai Nand Lal and Desa Singh.[1] We find that Chopa Singh's *Rahitnāma* is also sometimes ascribed to the tenth Guru.

There is yet another *Rahitnāma* for which similar origin and validity is claimed. It is reported to be a compilation by Prehlad Singh (also sometime referred to as Prehlad Rai). This *Rahitnāma* begins with the opening *"Bachan Sri mukhvāk Patśahī 10,"* which may be interpreted to mean that it was uttered by the tenth Guru. It is this *Rahitnāma,* along with the one by Nand Lal, that Ernest Trumpp claims to have taken away with him from India.[2] Sir Attar Singh has also edited these two *Rahitnāmas.*[3] Ernest Trumpp has later complained that the translation of the *Rahitnāma* by Prehlad Rai as attempted by Attar Singh was rather free. In fact the two scholars were using two different copies of the *Rahitnāma* with some slight variations in the two versions. Bhai Kahan Singh has not included this *Rahitnāma in* his *Gurmutsudhākar,* though he has mentioned it in *Gurmutsudhākar* as one of the compilations of the life rules. Sant Sampuran Singh has included this *Rahitnāma* in his anthology of *Rahitnāmas* but has expressed doubt about the historical accuracy of the place where this *Rahitnāma* is claimed to have been dictated since the tenth Guru could not have been at that place by any possible means.[4]

Bhai Jodh Singh, while referring to the *Rahitnāmas* expresses his inability to establish which of them is *mukhvāk*[5] (that is, dictated by the Guru).

These diverse views indicate that there is considerable difference of opinion amongst the scholars of Sikhism as to the origin

[1] Bhai Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar,* p. 422.

[2] Ernest Trumpp, *op. cit.,* p. cxiii.

[3] Sir Attar Singh, *The Rahitnāma of Prehlad Rai* (Lahore: Albert Press, 1876).

[4] Sant Sampuran Singh, *Rahitnāma,* p. 91 (note).

[5] Jodh Singh, *Gurmut Nirṇai* (Ludhiana: Lahore Book Shop), p. 282, note.

and validity of the *Rahitnāmas*. Bhai Jodh Singh suggests that doubtlessly these have been written by faithful devotees and leading Sikhs *(sidkī* and *mukhī)*[1] and they have sought to describe the Sikh way of life at its best as known to them. We may infer from this that Bhai Jodh Singh, while not making any reference to the possibility of interpolations and subsequent additions to the compilations, is yet not very enthusiastic to defend each and every detail of the life rules current under the title of *Rahitnāmas*. He, however, quotes in his book under reference, from the *Rahitnāmas* of Bhai Prehlad Singh, Chopa Singh, Desa Singh and Nand Lal. Incidentally, it may be pointed out here, that he does not include the quotations from the life rules by Bhai Daya Singh. That may be taken to mean that he did not consider this particular code as authentic or valid. The code, in fact is unduly extremist and at times even against the spirit of toleration which is contrary to the general approach of Sikhism. The code, however, includes some altruistic imperatives as well.

It is interesting to note that the various *Rahitnāmas* included by Bhai Kahan Singh in *Gurmutsudhākar* are studded with comments mostly to soften the extremist views and injunctions laid down in them. There is the possibility of these comments being mistaken as an apologetic attitude of the commentator towards some of the details contained in the formularies. It is also indicative of a sort of orthodox liberalism in the sense that while the author is not willing to completely reject them, he is equally not prepared to lend credence to them in the form these were available to him.

As regards the rest of the codes or life rules the question of their being the dictation of tenth Guru does not arise since these are commonly acknowledged to be the contributions of some votaries of Sikhism. The compilation called *Premsumārag* may also be included in this category. This composition, even though also prefaced with *"Patśahi 10"*, is regarded to be the contribution of some devotee, who according to Giani Randhir Singh, the editor

[1] It can perhaps be inferred from this description as *"sidkī* and *mukhī"* that the possibility of these *Rahitnāmas* being directly traced to the tenth Guru has partly been discounted by Jodh Singh.

of the manuscript, appears to have copied it from some other composition. The book, among various other things, also contains some commonplace culinary recipes, all of which may be difficult, if not improper, to trace to Guru Gobind Singh. In itself the composition might have been inspired by some of the teachings of the Gurus but, as it is, the whole of it cannot be traced to the Guru. Bhai Kahan Singh also does not accept it to be the *mukhvāk* (by the Guru).

All of these codes reflect in their contents the general spirit of the consolidation of Sikhism as was the need of post-Gobind Singh era. These votaries were perhaps convinced in themselves that their contribution would serve to colligate the Sikhs as a nation.

Ernest Trumpp is quite outspoken about these life rules and rejects them as dictation from the tenth Guru. In his own words, "these injunctions are laid down in a number of so-called *Rahitnāmas* or books of conduct, which all pretend to have been dictated by the Guru himself, but none of which appear to be genuine, since they, vary greatly, and were, as may be easily proven, all composed after the death of the Guru, some of them as late as the end of the last century. They cannot, therefore, be considered a direct testimony of what Govind Singh himself ordained and introduced into Khalsa, but only as an evidence of the later development of Sikhism."[1] His argument that great variance among them can be an evidence that all are not genuine is indeed very sound and logical. Ernest Trumpp, however, does not offer any proof to support the easy "possibility" as suggested by the second part of his argument.

[1] Ernest Trumpp, *op cit.*, p. CXIII.

We may take this opportunity to express our surprise over rather a paradoxical position adopted by Trumpp. He, at the same place, accuses Guru Gobind Singh of introducing some additions in terms of ceremonies etc., as contained in these *Rahitnāmās* but at the same time very soundly refuses to accept that these codes were dictated by the Guru. The self-contradiction is glaring and destroys some of his scathing criticism of the Guru for these details as be himself does not trace the formularies to the Guru. We may also add that his rejection of the *Rahitnāmas* does not establish that at least some of the organisational injunctions as contained in these formularies, which gave distinct identity to the Sikhs, were not ordained by the tenth Guru.

In view of the whole of the preceding evidence the possible conclusion may be that the codes, in their present form, cannot be described to have been directly dictated by the Guru partly because of their great variance, and partly due to the fact that many injunctions contained therein are unequivocally against the teaching of the tenth Guru. It may be suggested that the life rules have also been interpolated and contain some of the personal views of the subsequent copyists. The codes, however, have a core which could have been inspired by the tenth and the earlier Gurus. This core, apart from some organisational duties, also embodies the moral duties, to which we refer now.

## Moral duties enjoined in the Rahitnāmas

It is neither possible, nor within the scope of the present book, to reproduce here all the *Rahitnāmas* in toto. The manuscript copy of the *Rahitnāma* by Chopa Singh[1] alone consists of ninety-six folios, to which if we add other *Rahitnāmas* and also subject them to analytical examination, the whole project, apart from requiring colossal space and time, would also be unnecessary and needlessly cumbersome for our purpose here. The present work is a study of the Sikh ethics as a whole and not concerned exclusively with these formulations. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with taking into account only the main moral duties enjoined in these codes. We may, then, take up the organisational duties, some of which have been subjected to criticism by Trumpp and no less by Sikh scholars themselves, and which partly gave birth to the *Singh Sabha* and other movements.

## Main moral duties[2]

A thorough and critical examination of these *Rahitnāmas* reveals a predominent stress on the following three duties :

[1] Unpublished Ms. No. 6124, *Rahitnāma* of Chopa Singh, Sikh Reference and Research Library, Golden Temple, Amritsar.

[2] These duties in some cases, and predominently in the case of the *Rahitnāma* of Chopa Singh, are sought to be derived from the *Ādi Granth*, as the compiler almost continuously quotes from the *Ādi Granth* various hymns in support of his injunctions. The fact that very often there is a slight variation in spelling of a term in his manuscript and the *Ādi Granth* may indicate either that the compiler was quoting the *Ādi Granth* from memory or that the copyist of the manuscript, under reference, committed these errors.

(1) Right belief, (2) Right livelihood, and (3) Chastity and fidelity, including restrictions of sexual relationship within the marital bounds.

**Duties relating to right belief**

In these injunctions duties of right belief are understood in the sense of non-observance of superstitious beliefs and ceremonials as enjoined in other communities. Bhai Daya Singh's *Rahitnāma*[1] is more pronounced in its denunciation of these beliefs and requires the Sikhs not to entertain them. The superstition so indicted include the ones current both among the Muslims and the Hindus, such as, tomb worship, idol worship, sooth saying, magical *janter-manter*, divining by the priests, forecast by the oracles, etc.

The same duty of right belief is also found in the compilation by Bhai Chopa Singh. Desa Singh stresses the same. The injunctions concerning the right belief are also contained in the *Tankhanāma* of Nand Lal and *Rahitnāma* of Prehlad Singh.

The prime purpose of this duty is to ensure that the teachings of the Gurus are acted upon and the new converts to Sikhism from the other communities do not import into Sikhism some of the superstitious notions and practices of the older faiths and thus corrupt the ideals of the new faith.

These duties may be understood as the application of the virtue of wisdom to everyday affairs.

**Duties relating to right means of livelihood**

In these *Rahitnāmas* the compilers stress that every Sikh should adopt right means of livelihood. The compiler of *Premsumārag*[2] stresses the need for taking to industry, clarifying that one should not feel ashamed of industry, whatever be its nature, and may sell produce in the market. He even cites the hierarchy in which various professions may be followed. With him industry comes first while trade and agriculture are second and third, respectively. In respect of the salaried services the only job he seems to hold

[1] Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar* pp 472-484, and Sant Sampuran Singh, *op cit.*, pp. 95-96.

[2] *Premsumārag* ed., Giani Randhir Singh, p. 66.

worthwhile is that of a soldier. Bhai Nand Lal in *Tankhanāma* requires a person not to depend on charity of others and also not to be dishonest in trade. Desa Singh also requires the Sikhs to earn their livelihood, and wants even the persons looking after the Sikh temples to take from the offering not more than what is barely minimum. In the injunctions about right livelihood, he includes imperatives against participation in dacoities. There is a similar injunction against stealing in the formulary of Chopa Singh.

These injunctions can be directly traced to the declaration of Guru Nanak, "He alone, O Nanak, knows the way, who earns with the sweat of his brow and then shares it with others.[1] And to this principle, the saying of Bhai Gurdas can also be related, when he emphasises the importance of "earning rightly and sharing it with the others."[2]

**Duties relating to chastity and fidelity**

Duties relating to chastity are meant to regulate marital relations and to ensure respect for fidelity in the family and avoidance of adultery. In order to ensure that the conflict between the Sikhs and others may not lead to disrespect and molestation of the womenfolk of the others, the compilers lay great stress on this duty. In many codes this aspect has been clearly identified as the compilers forbid expressly any sex relations with the female members of the other communities. But the injunctions also forbid adultery in general, whoever be the parties to it. The auther of *Premsumārag* advocates sex regulation as an apt substitute for the traditional fasting.[3] Nand Lal is equally stern about this duty to avoid adultery.[4] Prehalad Singh forbids, within the range of this injunction, relations with the courtesans also. Daya Singh forbids even the entertaining of sex ideas in the mind on one's way to the

[1] *Ādi Granth*, Vār of Sarang, Sloka M. 1 (1-22), p. 1245.

[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 1, Vār 32 and also Stanza 6, Vār 28.

This hierarchy of vocations seems merely to stress the dignity of labour and the need for industry. It is not meant to recognise division of men into classes on the basis of their functions or vocations.

[3] *Premsumarag*, ed., Giani Randhir Singh, p. 18.

[4] Nand Lal, *Tankhanāma*.

religious congregation. Desa Singh and Chopa Singh also lay down imperatives to forbid adultery and to maintain fidelity.

These duties may also be the echo of some similar expressions in the *Ādi Granth.* Guru Nanak has pointed out the evil when he says, "Indra was attracted to Ahalya, wife of Gotma, the seer, and lo, he was cursed with a thousand yonis and then he grieved."[1] This is also in keeping with the general view on *kām* (concupiscence) which we have examined in chapter III *(supra).*

### 5.5: Organisational duties

Apart from the preceding moral duties we also come across the injunction by Prehalad Singh requiring Sikhs to wear *"kach, kes, kangha, kirpān* and *kaḍa"* which, respectively, are a short breeches, unshorn hair, a comb, a sword and a steel bangle.[2] Chopa Singh also emphasises the duty of being baptised *(āmrit)* after which the five articles mentioned above are required to be worn.

### Other miscellaneous duties

In addition to these duties we come across Daya Singh's injunctions to be altruists and the imperative of Desa Singh against defaming other faiths.[3]

There are, however, in the *Rahitnāmas* some minute details and injunctions which have provided ground for criticism of the *Rahitnāmas.* Representative of these injunctions are : to require people to bath in cold water ; not to use water, a part of which has been taken out to put the fire out ; to lay down the exact length of the short breeches. In one formulation we even find the quantity of water prescribed for taking the bath. These minute details led to this criticism from Trumpp that "we see from these minute ordinances that the Sikh reformatory movement soon ended again in a new bondage, which was quite as tiresome as that which they had thrown off."[4]

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Prabhati M. 1 (1-4), p. 1344. This is an episode narrated in the ancient mythology.

[2] Prehalad Singh, *Rahitnāma.*

[3] See also chapter VI, *Infra.*

[4] Ernest Trumpp, *op. cit.,* p. cxvi.

## 5.6: The Sikh Rahit Maryāda

A sub-committee of Sikh conduct conventions *(rahureet)* was set up with its terms of reference prescribed to consolidate the rules for the individual Sikh and the Sikhs' *Gurdwāra* (place of worship). The report was submitted on 1st October, 1932 by Teja Singh, convener of the committee. Various bodies of the Sikhs considered this report and suggested some amendments and finally the report was approved in the year 1945, that is, after about fourteen years' of its submission and was subsequently published by Shiromani Gurdwāra Prabandhak Committee. One is indeed impressed by the number of persons consulted and the dynamism of its compilers for whom the main consideration appears to have been to judge whether or not any particular tradition was in conformity with the general tenets of Sikhism. Consequently one finds some of the details of the *Rahitnāmas* dropped from this code.

A fruitful result of this long and important work by the committee is that we have now a code[1] comprising of thirty seven pages of text laying down general principles meant to guide the Sikhs in the performance of their organisational duties.

The principle of having such a convention for the Sikhs to decide about their duties themselves is provided for, in addition to other sources, in the *Rahitnāmas* by Daya Singh who envisages deliberation by the Sikhs themselves about codes of conduct *(rahit bibek).* The *Sikh Rahit Maryāda,* which is the result of the deliberations by the Sikhs themselves, by virtue of the above principle, occupies a highly respected place and validity in Sikhism.

This formulary, however, does not attempt to lay down all the detailed principles of the Sikh ethics for the obvious reason that its role is mostly explanatory and in the ultimate analysis the *Ādi Granth* is the final and complete guide.

## 5.7: Duties enjoined in the Sikh Rahit Maryāda

This code defines a Sikh as he who has belief in the word of the ten Gurus, the baptism prescribed by the tenth Guru and the

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[1] *The Sikh Rahit Maryāda* (Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwāra Prabandhak Committee, 1950).

*Ādi Granth,* and does not have belief in any other religious tradition. The code lays down both categorical and conditional duties. The former are required to be carried out always while the latter apply only in case of some special ceremonies.

The code envisages two aspects of a Sikhs's life, namely personal and organisational *(śaksī* and *panthak).*

### 5.8: Personal aspect of duties

The personal aspect is comprised of various prayers, living according to the teachings of the Gurus and service to others.

*Nām bāṇi dā abhyās* refers to various prayers in Sikhism. It includes a standard form of supplication which ends by praying for the good of all *(sarbat dā bhalā)* and for the regulation of passions by reason *(mun neevaṇ, mut ucchi).*

The second part of the personal duties enjoins that the views and living of the Sikhs should be according to the teachings of the Gurus.[1] Some duties are enumerated which every Sikh is required to perform. It is not difficult for us to trace the origin of these duties to various *Rahitnāmas,* even though the compilers of the *Sikh Rahit Maryāda* do not refer to the *Rahitnāmas,* with the exception of *Premsumārag.* The duties may be stated as follows:

(1) *Right belief:* This duty requires of a Sikh to have belief in One God *(Akāl Purukh,* that is, Timeless Entity). The Sikh should not believe in the existence of gods and goddesses. He should regard only the ten Gurus and their teachings as the medium of salvation. He should not practise caste, untouchability and magical rites. The injunctions require a person to accept the unity of existence in terms of One spiritual Entity and reject all superstitions.

The compilers require of a Khalsa[2] to maintain his distinctive way of life and not to lapse into superstitions. But the Khalsa should not injure the feelings of the followers of other faiths.

A Sikh should seek the blessings of God in his acts. The supplication, which requires him to pray for the good of all, is

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[1] *Ibid.,* pp.22-37. The discussion in the following pages is based on this reference.

[2] A baptised Sikh is called Khalsa.

meant to remind him that he should desist from acts which are inconsistent with this prayer. The prayer is meant also to reinforce his will and exert a healthy moral effect on his activity and conduct. It is what we have called religious sentiment in the chapter on Motives *(supra).* The duty of right belief is thus a great aid in guiding moral actions apart from being a moral duty in itself.

In this code, baptism *(āmrit)* is another requirement for the Sikhs. It is a provision whereby the person elects to fulfil all the duties enjoined in Sikhism. It is the affirmation of a voluntary choice by the person, by which the duties become self-imposed on him and not externally imposed. It, thus, signifies freedom associated with self-imposition.

*Education for right belief:* The compilers, in order to spread literacy and right belief as embodied in the *Ādi Granth,* have stressed the learning of Gurmukhi language. According to the formulation, however, the Sikhs should get all other forms of education as well.

(2) *Prohibition of the use of narcotics and intoxicants :* According to this code a Sikh should not take intoxicants and narcotics, such as, hemp, opium, spirits, tobacco, and like stimulants.

(3) *Respect for life and women :* The code requires that the Sikhs should not commit female infanticide and they should also refrain from social relations with the one who commits this immoral act. (See chapter VI, *infra.)* Child marriage is prohibited as immoral. Monogamy is normally the ideal. Widow remarriage is permitted.

There are also injunctions against adultery, both by men and women. Extra-marital relations are declared immoral. Men are directed to respect women and regard daughters of other men as their own and other men's wives as their mothers or sisters. It is only such a Sikh who carefully follows this injunction also that is considered to be a moral man.

(4) *Right livelihood and helping the needy ;* According to this formulary a Sikh should earn his livelihood through right and honest means. A Sikh should also help the needy. He should regard such a help as an act of service to the Guru. A Sikh should not steal

and should not gamble.

(5) *Duty of serving others :* The third aspect of personal duties covers the injunctions concerning social service (see chapter VI, *infra.)*

## 5.9 : Other organisational duties

Discussion of ethics of the Sikhs would remain incomplete if a reference was not made to the organisational duties which have partly come to distinguish the Sikhism from other traditions.

The compilers explain that a Sikh must live his life as an altruist. Altruism does not merely mean service in the community kitchen or among the congregation, even though such service is covered by it. Social service, in order to be wider in scope and more effective, must be processed through an organisation. That service can be described as successful which achieves more with relatively lesser effort. However, this can be possible only through a well-knit organisation. The organisation of the Sikhs is called *panth.*

The *guru panth,* according to this code, consists of all the baptised Sikhs. This *panth* has been made the leader of the Sikhs. Thus leadership among the Sikhs has been vested by the Guru in the Sikhs themselves.

We have already referred to baptism in Sikhism, which represents an individual's acceptance of the duties through self-imposition. We may now refer to some of the duties enjoined by the code upon the members of the organisation. The duties are laid down in the positive as well as the negative imperatives.

*Positive imperatives :* The Sikhs, apart from performing some religious duties, should also wear the following five : (1) *kes* (unshorn hair) ; (2) *kirpān* (sword) ; (3) *kach* (short breeches) ; (4) *kangha* (comb) ; and (5) *kaḍa* (a steel bangle).

These are called the five Ks, as the initial alphabet of all the items is a k.

*Negative imperatives :* The code expressly prohibits the committal of the following four acts which may be termed as nega-

tive prescriptions : (1) removing of hair *(kes)*[1] (2) eating of meat prepared by the process of a gradual and painful slaughter of the animal *(kutha)* (3) adultery and (4) use of tobacco.

The code lays down that in the case of a violation of these imperatives the defaulting person may himself appear before any religious congregation of the Sikhs, seek their award and be re-baptised. Even if the defaulter be a priest he must present himself before a congregation of the common Sikhs and go through the same process.

*Negative injunctions regarding social relations :* The code forbids social relations such as marriage, etc., with the following defaulters : (1) Certain categories of persons who sought to create schism in Sikhism ; (2) persons who use tobacco ; those who commit female infanticide ; and those who have removed hair[2]; (3) the Sikhs who have not been baptised or those who eat with non-baptised ones ; (4) those who dye their hair ; (5) those who sell or buy brides or bridegrooms ; (6) the users of intoxicants and narcotics ; and (7) those who act against the Sikh way of life *(gurmut)* and are, therefore, defaulters in Sikhism.

*Other injunctions :* The compilation also contains injunctions about the manner of disposal of appeals, the prominent characteristic of which is the democratic approach to such matters.

## 5.10: Concluding remarks

We have, in this chapter, referred to the two aspects from which the problem of duties in Sikhism may be examined. These are, the general principle of duties, *raza,* and some specific ethico-organisational duties, *rahit.* The most conspicuous among the organisational imperatives relate to the wearing of the five Ks, namely unshorn hair, sword, a short breeches, comb and a steel bangle. While, generally, no casuistry is allowed in respect to these or-

[1] It may be noted that the imperative regarding the keeping of hair figures in both the negative and the positive imperatives, which may indicate its great importance.

[2] A note on page 36 and 37 of the *Sikh Rahit Maryāda* clarifies that the persons included in this list are those who profess to be Sikhs and still commit a breach of these imperatives.

ganisational duties, and all of them are held as categorical injunctions, there has been some attempt in recent times at determining which is the most important of the five. Bhai Jodh Singh maintains that the *Rahitnāmas* reveal that there is some distinction among these duties. He expresses this distinction by the use of two terms, *patit* for those who cut the hair and *tankhāīa* for others who violate any one of the remaining four obligations.[1] The former violation is thus considered to be the more serious. However, this distinction is not sustained in the *Sikh Rahit Maryāda* and consequently we may regard all the five duties as categorical injunctions.

A question may now be asked whether these personal and organisational duties are the substitutes for the ethico-spiritual teachings of the *Ādi Granth.* The question may sound preposterous to the Sikhs but it is worthwhile to refer to it here. The answer generally is in the negative as the organisational duties are primarily meant to bring the Sikhs closer to the teachings of the *Ādi Granth* which is recognised as the ultimate guide. The principle of *raza,* therefore, is more fundamental to Sikhism though the organisational duties also occupy an important place. The *raza* and *rahit,* as the principles of duties and the life rules, respectively, taken together are the *vade mecum* of obligations in Sikhism. The Sikhs do not envisage any conflict between the *raza* and the *rahit.*

[1] Jodh Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

# VI
# SOCIAL ETHICS

## 6.1: Prolegomena

Every person, at birth, finds himself in a social group. His growth and development is also a social phenomenon. In so far as the practice as a whole is concerned we may agree that the personal and social morality cannot be separated because even in the case of such responses as are directly concerned with one's self there is an element of social involvement in some indirect manner. But it may be submitted that in a theoretical study of ethics distinction between social and personal morality would be very helpful from the view point of clarity as well as to appreciate the special stress laid in any system on the various aspects of the social response of the individual. In this analysis, by social ethics we mean the study of the response of the man in social situation according to certain moral principles.

It may be added that the social situation is a test in terms of which it may be possible for us to evaluate whether a person who professes humanistic outlook is faithful to what he proclaims or he is merely a sentimentalist who is dabbling in emotions but is devoid of action in the moral sense.

While a mystic intuition is subjective and not open to demonstration to others, we can know it in the conduct of the mystic, more particularly in his social actions. It is in this sense that Albert Terril Rasmussen, a scholar of Christianity, says, "If there is no difference in the motives and direction of the behaviour of those who are touched by the grace of God as compared with those who walk alone, then the light is indeed the light that fails."[1]

[1] Albert Terril Rasmussen, *Christian Social Ethics* (Englewood Cliffs N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1961), p. 4.

India being the birth place of Sikhism a brief reference to the background, in terms of social ethics, would help us to appreciate better the standpoint adopted in Sikhism in regard to the social ethics.

If we look to the early Vedic literature we may agree with Professor N.A. Toothi that "the highest individual development was required to be achieved in and through society, or to use the more comprehensive Hindu term, through *saṃsāra.*"[1] However, when we look to the later period we find, as pointed out by another scholar of the Hindu ethics, Surma Dasgupta, that "The *Upanisads* have recognised the concept of social good, but have given it a *subordinate* position." (Emphasis added) Thus it is described that persons, who have accomplished works for public good, will depart at death by the smoky path and pass on from smoke to night and through a long course reach the *devās* [gods], but again return by the same route and change into smoke and then into mist, rain, seeds and again pass into the offspring of those who eat them."[2] This, according to the above scholar, points to the subordinate position accorded to the concept of social good.

Further it may be said that if all are the manifestation of one spiritual continuum they ought to be treated as equal. Acceptance of the principle of equality of men may thus serve as an acid test of the systems which view the ideal in the perspective of the spiritual continuity and also evolve the ethico-spiritual precepts from the nature of reality. A pertinent and critical question may be asked whether Sikhism meets the requirements of the above test.

In Sikhism the socio-economic universe is declared to be the proper moral universe and consequently we would be interested to discover the nature of social relationships held by it as desirable. We had occasion to remark earlier that the ethical endeavour, at its highest, represents the transcendence of narrow egoism and we may now seek to find out whether the social good occu-

[1] Pandharinath H. Valvalkar, *Hindu Social Institutions,* editor's note by Prof. N.A. Toothi (Bombay: Longman, Green Co., 1939), p. VIII.

[2] Surma Dasgupta, *Development of Moral Philosophy in India* (Bombay: Orient Longman's, 1961), p. 12. The *Chhandogya Upaniśad* quoted is v, 10-3-6.

pies a permanent place in this scheme of values or Sikhism also contributes to the view that even the social good has to be abandoned for some life of seclusion in which the whole attention is directed to one's self in contradistinction to any involvement in the social good.

### 6.2: The fundamental principles of social ethics in Sikhism

The fundamental principles of the social ethics of the Sikhs are four, namely social equality, universal brotherhood, seeking good of all (altruism) and social service. All of these principles are interrelated and taken together they are the bases of Sikh ethics in terms of social relations. We have called them fundamental but the last two, namely altruism and social service are, in fact, practical measures to realize the third, namely universal brotherhood. We may, therefore, divide our study in the present chapter under the two heads: social equality and universal brotherhood.

Here may be the place to add that the tenet of social equality in Sikhism has not arisen from any ratiocination but from the realization of the spiritual unity of mankind and it asserts not only that men are equal but that this equality ought to be realized in conduct also. This leads us directly to the principle of universal brotherhood which, in turn, directs us to the need for seeking the good of all since this is a practical way of realizing the unity of mankind. However, the good of all is not an affair of mental or intellectual assent and attitude only but ought to be actualised by service to others.

### 6.3: Social equality

The doctrine of social equality as proclaimed in Sikhism is partially related to the historical conditions prevalent in India at the time of its emergence. The problem of social equality has been examined in this context from four aspects: (1) view of caste equality; (2) relations among economic classes; (3) relations among men of different religions and nationalities and (4) status of women in society.

Frequent references occur in the Sikh literature exposing the existence of inequalities sustained and perpetuated in India on

religious grounds. The caste system is an outstanding example of it which is rejected in Sikhism. It may, therefore, be necessary to examine this institution in some detail as many of the arguments employed against it could be held valid also against other attempts at supporting any similar system of inequalities.

### 6.4 : Caste system—general

According to an eminent Indian scholar, **R.N. Dandekar,** "The caste system of India represents the ethical organisation of the social life of the Hindus, just as the four stages of life are the ethical organisation of the personal life of the individual."[1] Inequality based on birth is associated with this system.

The caste system was attacked and denounced by Buddhism but it survived this repudiation. The outright rejection of this system by the Sikhs and the protracted struggle by them as well as by the humanistic devotional schools of Hinduism and growing humanistic consciousness among the Indians in general has finally fructified in this that the *Constitution of the Indian Republic* contains injunctions against discrimination on the basis of caste. But whether the system has been rejected in India completely in practice also is very much an open question.

One of the major points of departure with the Sikhs from Hinduism, right from Guru Nanak, the first Guru, to the last, has been the rejection by the former of the caste system of the Hindus and the "ethical organisation of the social life" based on it.

Originally *varṇa* is said to have stood for the social division on functional basis and *Jāti* for the castes. But whatever might have been the original connotation, by the time Sikhism appeared in India, the term *varṇa* and *jāt* or *jāti* were used interchangeably as synonyms to denote the social division indicated now by the term caste. The Sikh Gurus also use them as synonyms as seen in the writings of Guru Gobind Singh.[2]

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[1] R.N. Dandekar, "The Role of Man in Hinduism," *Religion of the Hindus*, ed., Kenneth W. Morgan (New York: The Ronald Press Coy. 1953), p. 143.

[2] Guru Gobind Singh, *Japu*, 1. *Chakkār Chahan aūr baraṇ jāt aūr pāt-nāhīṇ jeha.*

Though initially castes were mainly four,[1] namely brahmin, kśatriya, vaiśha and sūdra, by the time of the Sikh Gurus these had undergone enormous sub-divisions.[2]

**Origin of caste system**

Caste system is, generally speaking, traced to these sources: occupational or functional division as classes; social division in terms of some graduated origin from a Divine entity; the law of *karma*, according to which one enjoys the fruits of his actions in the past life; and cyclical development of successive ages *(yugās)*.

**Caste division based on occupational or functional classes**

The view has been held both by the Eastern and the Western scholars that the *varṇa* division is more a division in terms of economic classes. While referring to the extensive research of the *Vedas* by a scholar, named Ludwig, it is said by Emile Senart that the search by Ludwig has led to the recognition that in the *Vedas* he has discovered only two classes, the one of priests and the other of nobles who are placed above the mass of the Aryan people, the *Visas*.[3]

Another scholar, L.F. Ward, also seems to follow in the footsteps of Nesfield and Ibbetson in interpreting castes as classes. L.F. Ward says, "The four so-called Estates of European History, so clearly recognised in the eighteenth century, correspond so well to the four great castes of India."[4] The four estates consisting of the clergy; the warrior or the ruling class, the nobility; the merchant and business class; the commons of England...the labourers

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[1] According to R.N. Dandekar there was a fifth group whom he calls outcastes who were lower than even the sūdras. *op. cit.*, p. 143.

[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, stanzas 8-13, Vār 8. Cf. also, R.N. Dandekar, *op-cit.*, pp. 143-144. "Although this general pattern of the four major castes continues today there are actually more than three thousand castes in India forming a complex variety of real castes, sub-castes, mixed castes, left-hand castes and exterior castes which form the society of the sub-castes."

[3] Emile Senart, *Caste in India*, tr. E. Denison Ross. (London : Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1930). p. 133.

[4] L.F. Ward, "Social Classes and Sociological Theory." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XIII, pp. 617-27.

and artisans class are compared by Ward to the corresponding four *varṇas,* namely brahamin, kśatriya, vaiśha and sūdra, respectively.

An Indian scholar, P.H. Valvalkar is also of the opinion that the *varṇa* division is based on the various functions and therefore a question of the superiority of any one *varṇa* over the others does not arise.[1]

However, it is maintained by R.N. Dandekar, "Division of society into classes is a common feature all over the world but the caste system in India is *peculiar* in many respects and not comparable with analogous institutions existing elsewhere."[2] (Emphasis added.) We may, therefore, say that Ward seems to have overlooked these peculiarities.

**Origin of caste from divine entity**

There is a passage in the *Ṛg Veda,* namely the '*Puruṣh Sukt*'[3] in which men of the different castes have been described to have emanated from the different parts of the body of Demiurge, the Primordial Man. The brahmin is described to have come out of the mouth; kśatriya from the arms; the vaiśa from the thighs (or the stomach area); and the sūdra from the feet of the Demiurge. This passage is frequently cited to establish that the caste system traced its origin from the divine entity and is, therefore, sanctified. Here it is often overlooked that the description is merely symbolic. It is, however, used by some as a pretext to assert the sanctity of the caste system.

This may raise a question whether the scheme of caste system as found in the laws of Manu was known and practised even during the early Vedic period such as the *Ṛg Vedic.* Max Muller appears to deny this possibility.[4] Emile Senart also maintains a

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[1] Pandharinath H. Valvalkar, *op. cit.,* p. 36.

[2] R.N. Dandekar, *op. cit.,* p. 146.

Cf., also, Emile Senart, *op. cit.,* pp. 133-134. "The caste system has its origin in a normal evolution of the ancient constitution of the family—an organic evolution, but one *peculiar* to India... " (Emphasis added.)

[3] *Ṛg Veda,* X.

[4] F. Max Muller, *India—What It Can Teach Us* (London: Longman Green & Co., 1883), p. 95. Footnote, "... during times of conquest and migration, such as represented to us in the hymns of *Ṛg Veda,* the system of caste as it is described in the *Laws of Manu,* would have been simple impossibility."

similar view,[1] though he also points out that "the texts will, perhaps, never furnish a decisive answer."[2]

**Caste membership due to actions (karma) in the past life**

It appears that at times the institution of caste was also sought to be supported by the notion that the birth of a person in a particular caste was due to his actions in the past life.[3] A person was, therefore, required to wait for birth in the next life in a higher caste which would enable him to attain salvation.

**Origin of castes as cyclical development of successive ages (yugās) of the world**

There is also the view of the caste system as having developed in terms of cycles of the world. This notion is mentioned by Bhai Gurdas who might have taken it from the then prevalent Indian notion about it.[4] While explaining the world and the existence according to this view Bhai Gurdas writes that four ages were established and these were placed under four *varṇas*.

We find a similar reference in Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, 1, p. 149 and 86 seq. This view is, however, rejected by Emile Senart.[5]

**Birth or voluntary selection of profession as the basis of the caste?**

In recent times I had the occasion to discuss the question of the origin of the caste with Swami Samarpananda, ex-Chancellor of the Gurukal Kangri (University). He reiterates that the *varṇa* was originally based on a system of voluntary selection of professions by people and the caste was determined by the profession one chose. This contention is supported by him from the fact that

[1] Emile Senart, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[3] R.N. Dandekar, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

[4] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, stanza 5, Vār 1.

[5] Emile Senart, *op. cit.*, p. 137. "The trains of reasoning which connect their appearance either with successive ages of the world or with the natural inclination of mankind have neither more authority nor more stability than an adventitious fiction which reserves for each caste its own particular heaven."

*varṇa* is derived from the Sanskrit root *Vṛ* (meaning—to select).[1] According to him, around the *Mahabhārata* period, the caste came to be decided on the basis of birth.

In the *Laws of Manu,* however, we find that the passage in the *Ṛg Veda,* to which we had occasion to refer earlier, is pressed into service. And here, as pointed out by Emile Senart. "It is obviously an adjunct which disturbs the order of the cosmic theory."[2] And it is an adjunct which is capable of being misunderstood and misused against the lower castes.

We may refer to the fifth group, identified by R.N. Dandekar as out-castes, who appear to have been condemned to suffer all legal, social and religious disabilities which a low caste Hindu is normally subjected to and at the same time the out-castes were denied the few advantages which would have accrued to them had they belonged to the regular caste system.[3]

We may, therefore, conclude that even if the caste system at the time of its emergence was not based on the accident of birth, it came to be so determined later, much before the emergence of Sikhism.

### 6.5: Reaction against the caste system among the Hindus

We now come to the later period during which Kumarila attempted to reconstruct the edifice of the caste system. S. Radhakrishnan says, "Kumarila, the Brahmin architect who tried to build a stable society out of the chaotic conditions left by the disintegration of Buddhism, sought to strengthen the Brahminical cult by laying the foundations of caste solid and strong in a system wherein only the three upper classes were allowed to perform sacrifices, people at large were left to their own devotional cults."[4]

When we come to the great Hindu idealistic traditions of Advaita Vedanta of Sankara and Viśiśtadvaita Vedanta of Ramanuja, the caste

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[1] Swami Samarpananda Sarswati, *Vedic Selectionism* (New Delhi: Varnashram Sangh Office, 1965), p. 4.

[2] Emile Senart, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

[3] R.N. Dandekar, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

[4] S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1948), Vol. II, p. 661.

system is still accorded some recognition. Their teachings logically imply complete equality and universalism but, out of deference to traditions, they accept the validity of this institution. Radhakrishnan says of this, "The traditional theory that birth in a particular caste is not a matter of chance, but is the necessary consequence of conduct in a former existence, inclines Sankara to accept the claim of the upper classes, gods and *riśīs*, for the exclusive right to study the *Veda*."[1]

Similarly, Ramanuja also accepted the inequality in worship and other things as enjoined by the caste system. Radhakrishnan points out that even Ramanuja, whose religious teachings implied social equality, "out of deference to tradition he concedes that freedom is open only to the three upper classes, and others will have to work their way up and wait for the next birth. We cannot, therefore, say that he was in full sympathy with the logical implications of his teachings."[2]

But in spite of the fact that Sankara and Ramanuja, the two absolutist philosophers (the unqualified non-dualist and the qualified non-dualist, respectively), themselves did not fully accept the logical conclusions of their own teachings, their services cannot be underestimated in at least suggesting the way to the final rejection of the caste institution by the later systems. The universalism implied in the standpoints of these traditions serves as the major argument with the later systems against the efficacy of the caste inequalities.

The devotional schools of Hinduism gradually began to question the validity of these inequalities. According to Radhakamal Mukerjee, "One of Ramananda's of quoted teachings is, 'Let no one ask a man's caste or with whom he eats. If a man shows love to *Hari* (God), he is *Hari's* own'. Men and women of every caste and creed could gain admittance to this ascetic order, and could share their meals as well as pray together."[3] It may be relevant to point out

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 616.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 709.

[3] Radhakamal Mukerjee. *The Culture and Art of India* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1959), p. 321.

here that communal worship plays an important role in nearly all Vaiśnava sects. We find that *Nām-Ghar*[1] (Abodes of meditations) were established in Assam during 15th Century where the devotees of Sankaradeva joined together in worship. It may be interesting to note that Sankaradeva was a contemporary of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism.

Thus it may be said that the protest against the inequalities both in terms of worship as well as social relationship is quite visible within the fold of the later Hinduism. In this one may notice a sort of reawakening of the earlier *Vedic* splirit of universalism.

### 6.6 : Rejection of caste inequalities in Sikhism

The ethical organisation of the Hindus, in terms of the castes, which is described as the "objective morality of the Hindus"[2] is completely rejected in Sikhism. Complete equality among all men is declared by the Sikh Gurus to be the fundamental moral principle required to regulate the social relations and communication.

Promulgation of equality and the categorical rejection of the caste system and other symbols of inequality are attempted systematically and comprehensively in Sikhism. The following arguments, though simple in nature yet appealing as straight forward, are very often employed : (1) validity of the caste inequalities is denied as there is no fundamental difference among men in terms of physical constitution; (2) laws of nature are not more kindly oriented towards the members of the so-called upper castes; (3) men have not emanated from different parts of the primeval man; (4) attainment of the ideal is possible for all men irrespective of caste distinctions right in the present life itself. Thus men need not wait for birth into the next higher caste for the attainment of salvation or spiritual realization. Distinctions of caste and inequalities, consequently, are rendered meaningless, and (5) birth of a person and consequently the caste based upon it, does not enter into the ultimate reckoning of his deeds.

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[1] S.K. Barua, *Sankaradeva, the Saint of Assam* (Gauhati : Assam Academy for Cultural Relations, 1960), Preface II. and p. 5.

[2] S.K. Maitra, *op. cit.*, p.1.

We also come across various supplementary arguments in this regard which deny the validity of the caste system. The arguments employed, as seen above, are empirical, intuitional as well as ethico-spiritual so as to reject all possible grounds for support to this system.

In a polemic with the sacerdotal caste of brahmins Kabir enquires, "How are you a brahmin and I a low caste ? Is it that I have blood in my veins and you have milk ?"[1]—thus exposing the absurdity of any contention or a claim by the higher caste men that there are physical differences among men of the different castes. Similarly, in another passage in the *Ādi Granth,* it is asked, if Brahmins were different from others why they did not appear in the world by means other than the human birth.

The second point against the caste system on empirical grounds is scored by Guru Nanak when he points out that laws of nature do not react differently in respect to the higher caste men. Since nature makes no discrimination in favour of the twice born,[2] by recognising their superiority in any manner, the myth of caste superiority is clearly seen to be man-made. Guru Nanak contends, "What merit is in caste ?" and he himself answers. "This is the real truth that he who tastes the poison will die."[3] This empirical evidence is also adduced by Guru Amardas when he advises against the caste system. He points out, "Everyone says, there are four castes, but it is from God that everyone comes. The same is the clay which fashions the whole world ; the same clay the potter moulds into vessels of all kinds. The five elements make up the body's form, and who can say who has less of these or more ?"[4]

Thus the Gurus have denied the validity of the caste on the basis of any supposed difference in the fundamental physical con-

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Gauḍi Kabir Ji, (4-7), p. 324.

[2] The three upper castes are termed as twice-born as the sacred initiation ceremony is held to be their second birth. The fourth caste is not permitted the sacred initiation and therefore they are not considered to have been born second time in the present life.

[3] *Ādi Granth,* Vār of Mājh, Sloka M. 1 (pauḍi), p. 142.

[4] *Ibid.,* Rāg Bhairo M. 3, Chaupadas (1 to 4-1), p. 1128.

stitution of men of the different castes. The prejudice had, therefore, no grounding in the objective facts.

The claim that the different caste men had emanated from the different parts of the Primeval Man is also repudiated in Sikhism. We have already noticed the analogical argument of potter and clay and there being "neither more nor less of it" in every one. It is further added in respect of God that "His caste is castelessness. He is incarnated not, He is Self-existent ... all hearts are illumined by the Light of Lord."[1] Sikhism also denies that caste is prevalent from the beginning. In the primordial state "no man of caste or birth, high or low, could be seen . . . there was no distinction of colour or coat or of the brahmin and the kśatriyas."[2] Guru Nanak declares, "You ought to see the light within all, and not look up for caste as the caste is of no consequence."[3] And he declares on the basis of his intuitive insight that "in the yond also, there is no caste nor the power wielded by them."[4] Again, "God minds not our caste or birth."[5] The superstition that different parts of the Demiurge gave rise to different castes is, therefore, invalid and untrue. In fact, "vain is the pride of caste, vain the pride of glory. The Lord gives shade to all."[6]

Sikhism, thus, consistent with its universalism, refuses to accredit the caste institution in social ethics and its seers, on the basis of their direct intuitive knowledge, deny God having favoured a few by bringing them out from the higher parts of his body.

The Gurus argue that the false notion of superiority of certain castes over the others gives rise to pride and that this pride would be harmful for the realization of the Ideal. Guru Amardas advises, "Be not proud of your caste ; he alone is brahmin who knows Brahma, the only God. O unwise one, be not proud of your

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[1] *Ibid.*, Sorath M.1 (1 & 2-6), p. 597.
[2] *Ibid.*, Maru M.1 (8-3-15), p. 1035.
[3] *Ibid.*, Āsa M.1 (2-3), p. 349.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vār Āsa with Sloka M.1 (3-11), p. 469.
[5] *Ibid.*, Prabhati M.1 (4-10), p. 1330.
[6] *Ibid.*, Vār of Sri Rāg, Sloka M.1 (1-3), p. 83.

caste, for a myriad errors flow out of this pride."[1]

Finally, it is held in Sikhism that the caste is of no consideration in the realization of the ideal. Men of the so-called low caste need not wait to be born again in the next higher caste for the attainment of liberation and spiritual realization. It is declared in the *Ādi Granth* that "whosoever contemplates God, caste or no caste, he is a perfect man of God."[2] The point is further reinforced by reference to the Hindu fables. It is said, "Whosoever is the devotee of God, one must worship him and mind not high or low caste of a devotee; as Sukhdeva (a brahmin) stuck to Janaka and Janaka himself anointed his forehead with the dust of nine seers."[3] Kabir declares, "I am a weaver by caste but patient in mind. And so I utter the Lord's praise in a state of utter poise."[4] A similar lack of concern for any stigma of the low caste is shown by Bhagat Ravidas when he declares, "I am of low caste, with little honour, my birth is low. And still ... I am bound to Thee with the string of Thy love."[5]

Bhai Gurdas brings out this aspect very clearly when he explains, "As the nature of the utensil has no bearing on the purity of the butter-fat, similarly for the holy men, castes have no meaning."[6] He then cites the cases where great saints were born in the so-called low castes and yet reached the high stages of perfection.[7] Here we see a clear trend where the low, according to the caste system, are exalted.[8]

The comparatively greater importance given to the lower one is also seen in the utterances of Guru Nanak. He says, "If he be of a high caste and serves God I can utter not his praise nor fathom his glory ; and if he be of a low caste and serves God, then I

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[1] *Ibid.*, Rāg Bhairo M.3 (1), p. 1128.
[2] *Ibid.*, Basant M.4 (3-2-4), p. 1178.
[3] *Ibid.*, Kanara M.4 (7-2), p. 1309.
[4] *Ibid.*, Gaudi Kabir ji (3-26), p. 328.
[5] *Ibid.*, Bhagat Ravidas (3 & 4-3), p. 486.
[6] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 5, Vār 25.
[7] *Ibid.*, stanza 15, Vār 12.
[8] *Ibid.*, stanza 6, Vār 25.

would indeed offer my skin to be made his footwear."[1]

The tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, declared caste a taboo in the Order of the Khalsa consolidated by him. He says, "True service is the service of these people : I am not inclined to serve others of higher castes; charity will bear fruit, in this and the next world, if given to such worthy people as these. All other sacrifices and charities are profitless. From top to toe, whatever I call my own, all I possess or carry, I dedicate to these people." Could this be tolerated by the high caste Brahmin? Guru Gobind Singh adds to the above passage, "Hearing this the learned Brahmin was ablaze. Malice boiled in him and anger burnt as briskly as straw burns in flame. He could not bear the thought that by such levelling of castes the Brahmins might lose their livelihood. The Pundit wept and wailed at the plight of his neglected order."[2] Again in *Akāl Ustat,* Guru Gobind Singh says, "There is no consideration of caste or membership of *varṇas.*"[3]

In the formulation of the life-rules *Rahitnāmas* the compilers are faithful to the resolve of Guru Gobind Singh when he declares, "I shall not adopt the habits of any creed, but shall sow the seeds of the pure love of God."[4] The first of the Sikhs baptised into the Order of the Khalsa, also included those Hindus who, according to the *varṇa* theory, belonged to the lower castes. The theory of separate duties for different castes was replaced by the same ethical and religious duties for all men. Thus the fundamental equality of all men was ensured by free and voluntary admission to the Order of the Khalsa.

And when the brahmins refused to educate the members of this Order, which included persons of the so-called lower castes, some men were sent to Kashi, the seat of learning in India at that time, to obtain education and then to serve as educators[5] without

[1] *Ādi Granth,* Malhār M.1 (4-1-6), p. 1256.

[2] Guru Gobind Singh, "Hazare Sabad", *Sacred Writings of the Sikhs* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), pp. 272-273.

[3] Guru Gobind Singh, *Akāl Ustat,* 15: 175.

[4] Guru Gobind Singh, *Vachiternāiak,* chap 6, verse 34.

[5] The present tradition of Nirmalas in Sikhism is generally traced to these pioneers of education among the Sikhs.

the distinctions of caste or birth. It is what Bhai Gurdas says, "*Gurmukh* becomes a pundit and preaches to the world. All the four *varṇas* are given the same message of peace."[1] The rejection of the caste system is also incorporated in the code of conduct, the *Sikh Rahit Maryāda,* compiled under the warrant of the Shiromani Gurdwāra Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar.[2]

However, I have come upon a manuscript copy of the *Rahitnāma* claimed to have been written by Bhai Chopa Singh on dictation from Guru Gobind Singhi.[3] (See chapter v, *supra.*) The writer of this copy of the text seems to give some consideration to the caste when he writes, "If a brahmin is converted to Sikhism, double service ought to be rendered unto him, which will accrue into double gain."[4] We also find the Sikhs advised to get their marriages solemnised through brahmins[5] though some one has in lead pencil added Punjabi word *nā* in the margin to change the quality of the proposition into the negative. This addition is clearly

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[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs,* stanza 18, Vār 19; also stanza 19, Vār 23.

[2] *The Sikh Rahit Maryāda,* p. 22, para 1.

[3] This unpublished manuscript, serial number 6124, kept in the Sikh Reference and Research Library, Golden Temple, Amritsar, is a part of the manuscript which consists of a total of 104 folios. The *Rahitnāma* by Chopa Singh is from folio 1 to 96 and from folio 97 to 104 it contains another *Rahitnāma* of Nand Lal, a close associate and court bard of Guru Gobind Singh. The *Rahitnāma* of Chopa Singh is most likely the nearest copy of the original one with some interpolations by the copyist. The possibility of its being the nearest to the original is increased when we find a reference to it made by Tara Singh Narotam wherein he states that the *Rahitnāma* of Chopa Singh contains the hymns of the *Ādi Granth* (p. 116). Also there is a reference by Baba Sumer Singh in the *Sri Guru Tirath Sangraha* made to this *Rahitnāma* which is said to be in accordance with the teachings of the *Ādi Granth.* The manuscript number 6124 also contains the hymns of the *Ādi Granth.* This fact may reinforce our inference that Tara Singh Narotam and Baba Sumer Singh are referring to a copy similar to the one numbered as 6124. We, however, find some spelling mistakes in the case of quotations of the hymns from the *Ādi Granth,* as well as a few substitutions for synonymous terms in place of those used in the *Ādi Granth.* This copy, therefore, seems to be the nearest to the original one, though, for the reasons stated in the text of this book, it cannot be taken for the original itself.

[4] Chopa Singh, *Rahitnāma,* unpublished MS. No. 6124, p. 6.

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 7 (reverse).

of a recent time since the whole manuscript is in old black ink and this addition is in black lead pencil. It is also possible that some reader has interpolated in recent time.

We also find in this manuscript that the Sikhs are advised to marry within their *baran*. The author clarifies that "one ought to marry within one's own *va'znasram, kul,* so that the Sikhs may not get a bad name."[1]

The first two references can be seen to be grant concessions to the brahmins and the last in a vague manner accepts the broad implications of the caste system. As the *Rahitnāma* by Chopa Singh is generally held in high esteem among the Sikhs the occurrence of these two passages lending some tacit acceptance of the caste system by giving some priority to the brahmins has to be explained. There can be two possibilities in this regard: (1) these references are the additions by the copyist, and (2) these are genuine concessions to the brahmins to encourage their conversion to Sikhism as they constituted the learned caste. The second possibility seems to be rather remote as we do not find similar concessions in any other *Rahitnāma,* compiled by the contemporaries of Chopa Singh. On the other hand, we come across a passage in a *Rahitnāma* of Bhai Nand Lal, the court bard of Guru Gobind Singh, wherein Guru Gobind Singh is reported to have addressed Nand Lal in the following terms, "Listen, Nand Lal, I would unite the four *varṇas* in one and lead them to adhere to one God."[2] Nand Lal was a contemporary of Chopa Singh, and in case any inequality in terms of *varṇas* was to be accepted in Sikhism, he ought not to have written in the above categorical terms. Besides this we have already noticed the outright rejection of the caste by Guru Gobind Singh.

The second test in Sikhism, to determine the validity of an injunction, is to see whether it is in accordance with the *Gurbaṇi*[3] (teaching of the Gurus). Generally, *Gurbaṇi* refers to the *Ādi Granth.*

[1] *Ibid.,* p. 4 (reverse). Here *baran* means *varṇa.*

[2] Nand Lal, *Tankhanāma.*

[3] This is the test which Bhai Jodh Singh favours in this respect. *Gurmat Nirṇai* p. 282.

We have already examined the views of the *Ādi Granth* about the caste and have seen that the institution has been repudiated overwhelmingly. Therefore, the passage under reference would be clearly interpreted as alien to the general spirit of Sikhism and the *Gurbaṇi* and hence, unacceptable as authentic. Furthermore, these injunctions do not occur in another manuscript copy of this *Rahitnāma* which is kept in the personal library of the Bhai Sahib of Bagrian. It is an un-numbered manuscript in Punjabi and contains the transcription of other *Rahitnāmas* as well. But while these *Rahitnāmas* have otherwise almost identical injunctions, the injunctions concerning any concessions to the brahmin (Hindu priest and the highest in the caste system) are not traceable.

Similar is the case of the *Rahitnāma* included by Bhai Kahan Singh in *Gurmutsudhākar* where also these injunctions are not to be found. Lastly, we have already seen that the institution of the Khalsa (institutionalised form of Sikhism), as proclaimed by Guru Gobind Singh, is for the avowed purpose of obliterating the caste inequalities.[1] Therefore, Chopa Singh, who claims to look up to Guru Gobind Singh for light, could not have obtained the light from the Guru and yet in his code sought to undo one of the most fundamental principles of Sikhism as reaffirmed by Guru Gobind Singh. We may, therefore, not rule out the possibility that this concession inserted in the text is a later interpolation, perhaps, by some later convert to Sikhism, who was assigned the task of copying the *Rahitnāma* under reference. The concessions to brahmins may be due to the favourable orientation towards them by this scribe.

We may, therefore, conclude that the caste system as a whole is rejected in Sikhism. In so rejecting it the Sikhs mark their departure from the traditional "objective ethics or ethical division of the society of the Hindus." The vacuum so created in Sikhism by the outright non-acceptance of the traditional institution *of varṇa dharma* is filled in by laying down equality as the ethical principle of social relations.

An interesting question may be asked here as to what extent

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[1] Guru Gobind Singh, *Swayyas*, 17.

the Sikh rejection of caste and the acceptance of the ideal of universal brotherhood was influenced by the similar tenets of Islam. The question becomes more pertinent when we find a scholar calling Sikhism "an outstanding example of conscious syncretism," and "its basic convictions having been drawn from Islamic sources and Hinduism."[1]

The historians, while discussing the result of Muslim rule in India during the 15th Century—that is, at the time of the beginning of Sikhism—maintain that "the old Islamic theory of social equality had by this time given way. In practice all the Moslems in India were not 'brothers'. . . ."[2] It is further reported that "the idea of caste itself was carried over into Islam, overriding the fundamental principle of equality . . . ." The rejection of caste and the stress on the ideal of universal brotherhood in Sikhism, therefore, may be viewed as a fresh attempt as in the case of early Buddhist rejection of the caste system. It may, however, be added here that the presence of the Muslims in India and a "change in the atmosphere *may* have facilitated the work of the preachers of *bhakti*"[3] and the influence of the latter on Sikhism is generally accepted. Thus the influence of Islam on the rejection of the caste in Sikhism, if any, may be seen as only indirect and partial.

### 6.7: Equality among classes in Sikhism

Wealth also provides a determinant of socical classes, as against birth in the case of caste system, though social classification on the basis of wealth would be more flexible as wealth is concrete and a separable accident whereas birth is an inseparable accident.

In Sikhism the relation among classes based on economic resources or wealth consideration is envisaged in terms of equality. It rejects the notion of the superiority of the economically better placed class over the others. Guru Arjan Dev says, "The

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[1] John B. Noss, *Man's Religions* (New York: The Macmillian Company. Rev. Ed., 1956), p. 275.

[2] W.H. Moreland and A.C. Chatterjee, *A Short History of India* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1958 Ed.), p. 186.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

wise of the God looks upon all alike, like, the wind that blows alike for the commoner and the king."[1] Bhai Gurdas, similarly, proclaims the ideal "equality of a king and a commoner."[2] It seeks to remove the traditional claim of the better placed to a different and more favourable consideration. The age old hatred of the poor, some superstition that the poor are unfortunate or their poverty is in any manner representative of some evil deeds in the past life, is repudiated in Sikhism. The sympathetic inclination, as in Christianity, is towards the humble and the poor. The attempt is made in Sikhism to institutionalise this equality through various practices. Thus in Sikhism the higher classes are not governed by any separate code of ethics. The king is not above any consideration. As a scholar remarks, "Though men are not equal in ability, they are entitled to equal judgement and value and social equality."[3]

The Gurus also appear to presume that the notion of superiority of classes may arise when one forgets that one's life is rather short and death would level the so-called superiority of the classes. This notion is highlighted in the *Ādi Granth* and Guru Nanak says, "One lives not ever in the world: Neither king nor beggars would remain, they all come and go."[4] Therefore, improper consideration of the superiority of rank are based on a wrong conception of the nature of the world. It is maintained in the first instance that the possession of wealth is not permanent as "neither the king nor the commoner remain in this world for ever, neither the rich nor the poor; when comes one's turn, then nothing is there to help."[5] Thus the ephemeral nature of human life is sought to be made the basis of the declaration that any pride in the superiority of classes is futile.

The moral person, according to the Gurus, is one who treats all in terms of equality. Guru Nanak says, "A true yogi (perfect

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[1] *Ādi Granth*, Gauḍi Sukhmaṇi M. 5 (1-8), p. 272.

[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, stanza 20. Vār 23. *"Rāja-runk brābrī."*

[3] Kapur Singh, *Baisākhi of Guru Gobind Singh* (Jullunder: Hind Publishers Ltd., 1959), pp. 377-78.

[4] *Ādi Granth*, Rāmkali M. 1 (11), p. 931.

[5] *Ibid.*, (44), p. 936.

person) is one who looks upon all creation alike"[1] And approvingly the Guru mentions the *panth* of yogis, the name of which is followed by "*āie*"[2], such as *bāl gadāie*. This *panth* of yogis, out of the twelve, is renowned for its toleration, sincerity and treatment of all as equals.[3] The need for the recognition of human dignity, irrespective of economic classes, is also stressed in an anecdote from Guru Nanak's biography called Bhai Lalo and Malik Bhago's *Parsang*.[4] In this incident Guru Nanak is reported to have refused a rather sumptuous dinner of Malik Bhago for the ordinary bread of the coarse grain of Bhai Lalo. The moral is drawn that the poor ought not to be treated as low, morally and socially. All ought to be treated as the equal irrespective of their material resources. Guru Arjan Dev says, "The wise of God looks upon all alike, such as the wind that blows alike for the commoner and the king.[5] In the same stanza he alludes to fire and asserts that just as nature treats all alike, in the similar way, the wise in God treats all alike.

The examples cited above are simple and are merely meant to stress the need for treating members of different classes as morally equal. It is more a normative prescription than any mere statement of fact or event. The general idea appears to be that of establishing communication among all men irrespective of their material possessions. It is the recognition of human dignity which transcends any extraneous considerations.

**Institution of langar (community kitchen)—a practical step**

The institution of *langar* (community kitchen) was initiated by Guru Nanak and its consolidation and extension was affected by the third Guru, Amardas (1479-1574). The common social dinner and kitchen is to serve as a medium of social integration between

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[1] *Ibid.*, Suhi M. 1 (2-1-8). p. 730.

[2] *Ibid.*, Japji (28), p. 6.

[3] *Śabadarth* (Lahore: Śabadarth Gurbaṇi Trust, 1944). p. 6, note.

[4] Bhai Santokh Singh, *Suraj Prakāsh* (Amritsar: Chatar Singh Jivan Singh). pp. 68-73. The moral is also drawn from this episode that the honestly earned wages have moral superiority over those which may be earned through unscrupulous means.

[5] *Ādi Granth*, Gauḍi Sukhmaṇi (1-8). p. 272.

the monarch and the commoner. The rules of *langar* require that all should sit together at one place and partake of the same food without any distinction of the high or the low. This practice has been carried on and fortified by the rest of the Gurus and is an integral part of Sikhism now. An Indian scholar, Radhakamal Mukerjee, has remarked. "The institution of langar, or the community kitchen, where prince and peasant, rich or poor, high and low born could mess together without social distinction, fostered a spirit of charity on a large scale and also became a powerful binding force."[1]

The tenet of equality and social integration by helping the needy was seized by the various compilers of the *Rahitnāmas* (life-rules), Bhai Nand Lal thus lays down, "Do not show disdain for the poor."[2] And also that, one should not miss to help the needy.[3] According to his code, "A true Sikh is one who helps the helpless and needy."[4] He also prohibits any discrimination among the congregation while distributing the *prasād*[5] (an offering to the Guru which is redistributed among the congregation). The compiler of the *Premsumārag* similarly requires people to share their resources with the "naked and the hungry." He says, "If there is an occasion of helping the others then a person should take it as a kindness of God in having provided him with an opportunity to be of help to the needy."[6] Thus an ideal integration on the basis of equality is "sought to be introduced through simple but effective moral precepts. The bond of integration is to be realized by mutual help. Even the community kitchen is run with the help and contribution of all and not by any one particular person only. The compiler of *Premsumārag* appears to be anxious to ensure that this

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[1] Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Culture and Art of India* (London : George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1959), p. 348.

[2] Nand Lal, "Tankhanāma", *"Nirdhan dekh nā pās bahāva, so tankhāhia mool kahāva."*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] "Premsumārag," ed., Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar*, para 831.

help to the needy may not give rise to any feeling of pride in the person so helping others. According to him the desire to help others should be a part of one's nature in view of the recognition that all ought to be treated as equals in human dignity.

Can *langar* or the community kitchen be regarded as a parallel to communes or indicative of levelling the economic disparities? The material available in the literature on Sikhism does not appear to provide for any redistribution of wealth. Dining in *langar* is representative only of an acknowledgement of social equality and integration. No such injunction of Guru Amardas or that of the earlier and the later Gurus is traceable which requires that food ought always to be cooked centrally and distributed centrally. *Langar* was usually run for those visiting the Guru or the needy and this practice continues even now.

The dictum of *rāja runk brābrī* may, however, be in sympathy with the modern schemes of social security and mutual help. There are specific injunctions in the *Rahitnāmas* where the help to the needy is stressed.[1] One may also find in the *langar* a con-

[1] In the *Rahitnāma* of Bhai Desa Singh we find the injunctions, "If you have wealth, support the poor Sikhs also," or, "Entertain a stranger Sikh." Daya Singh lays down, "A Sikh should regard other Sikhs as his equals." Both of these compilers seem to be more concerned with the conduct of the common brotherhood of the Khalsa and, therefore, may appear here to be rather emphasising equality among the Sikhs. This cannot be taken as indicative of any conscious acceptance by these writers of inequality between the Sikhs and the others. On the other hand the fact of the compilers being relatively more concerned with the brotherhood of the Sikhs, rather than the universal brotherhood, cannot be completely denied because we find in the *Rahitnāma* of Desa Singh atleast other injunctions, such as, "A Sikh should employ only Sikhs for jobs," and, "A Sikh should not break promise given to the other Sikhs." These injunctions may indicate that the ideal of equalitarian brotherhood of mankind was slowly leading to the equalitarian brotherhood of the Sikhs, at least so in the compilations of the post-Gobind Singh Era. There is of course the possibility that Desa Singh was formulating a code exclusively for inter-personal relations among the Sikhs and, therefore, wrote with a limited scope and definite purpose.

We may refer here to a similar injunction in Christianity, "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." *Gal.* 6 : 2, 9, 10.

tinuous reminder of the social equality of all. Second, this institution provides against the immoral social practice of untouchability which is a by-product of the caste system.

There is another provision in Sikhism whereby the needy are rendered assistance out of the Gurdwara collections but, since these collections do not come exclusively from the wealthy class, assistance out of these funds cannot be regarded as a help by the rich to the poor. It is rather a sort of mutual help.

Second, the dictum that we all have common spiritual origin, and are thus members of the cosmic brotherhood, entails that mutual help and harmony is contributive to the unification of that which in reality is unified and appears separated only under the influence of *houmai* (I-am-ness).

We may, therefore, conclude that equality of the economically based classes is in terms of the social equality and human dignity and this ought to be realized in the conduct of a person. It also requires the voluntary and unrestricted help by those in a position to do so to those in need. This ought not to be regarded as charity but ought to be out of the awareness that the other is as much one's part as one's own self because all are united in the terms of the Whole Self.

**Equality of the Guru and the disciple**

The tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, has reiterated another kind of spiritual equality, in that, after administering baptism to the first five entrants to the Khalsa, he himself partook of the same baptism, which was administered to him by the former. Thus the Guru-disciple[1] relationship was also based on equality.

In social and religious congregations, called *sādh sangat* in Sikhism, the distinction of rank is obliterated and the monarch and the commoner are treated alike. This practice is similar to the ones found in Christianity and Islam.

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[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, 41. This Vār 41 is a later addition of some poet by the name of Gurdas and has been appended to the *Vārs* of Bhai Gurdas. The incident cited above, however, is an historical fact.

### 6.8: Relation among men of different religions and nationalities

Historically at the time of the emergence and the development of the Sikh ethics there were, in India, many prevalent religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, and Christianity. However, the struggle for the most part was between Hinduism and Islam, the latter being the religion professed by the more powerful rulers of India. The Sikh ethics has sought to treat people of all religions in terms of equality as it was envisaged in the case of caste and the class relations. Discoursing about the merit of men professing different religions Guru Gobind Singh held, "One may be a Hindu or a Muslim, all human beings belong to one brotherhood of mankind."[1] Bhai Gurdas reports that when Guru Nanak was asked at Mecca whether Islam is superior to Hinduism, the Guru pointed out that the worth was of the followers, and not of the creeds; a wrong act is wrong, by whomsover done; and just as non-fast dye is washed away easily similarly the religious labels are temporary[2] which goes to show that none is better without good deeds and with good deeds all are equally good.

In rigid conformity with ethical universalism the tenth Guru has proclaimed. "God is in the Hindu temple as well as in the mosque. God is addressed in both the Hindu and the Muslim prayer; all men are one though they may appear different. The Hindus and the Muslims-are all one though they may have different habits under the influence of different environments. They are also compounded of the same four elements, earth, air, fire and water. The *Qur'ān* and the *Purānas* (the scriptures of the Muslims and the Hindus, respectively) praise the same God. They are all of one form and one God has made them all."[3]

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[1] Guru Gobind Singh, *Dasam Granth. Hiduo, Turk kuo, Rāfiji, Imām sāfi, mānus kī jāt sabhe ek hi pahachānbo.*

This is an excellent example of the Guru's conquest of his own personal feelings and also a complete absence in him of bitterness towards the Mughals even while they had brick-lined alive two of his four sons and killed the other two in encounters. This came at the top of some of the most serious persecutions directed against him and the Sikhs.

[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, stanza 33, Vār 1.

[3] Guru Gobind Singh, *Akāl Ustat*, 86; 16.

This unequivocal declaration leaves no scope for doubting the conclusion that men of all faiths and nationalities are equal. Consideration of merit alone is the criterion of judgement, irrespective of religion and nationality, as laid down by Bhai Gurdas, when he remarks, "There are in the world many Sunnis, Christians, Musais, Rafzis and those who have no faith in doomsday. Numberless are the *Ferangis,* Arminians, Romans, Africans, Sāids, Turks, Mughals and Pathāns. But whatever and wherever they may be their merit and demerit cannot remain undiscovered."[1]. The attempt is thus made to transcend the creed labels and the geographical consideration to assert the fundamental equality in terms of the ethical perfection.

An injunction based on this tenet is formulated in the *Premsumārag* which requires, "when a stranger, that is, a person of other religion and nation comes to the Sikhs they should accord full respect and cordiality as this would make a Sikh perfect."[2] A slightly different formulation is found in the *Sikh Rahit Maryāda* which requires that though the Sikhs ought to maintain distinctive way of life, they ought not cause injury to the feelings of the followers of other religions."[3] The injunction also requires a sense of toleration and advocates irenic coexistence which may be the result of the proclamation of Guru Gobind Singh cited above. Religious bitterness and strife according to these injunctions are, therefore, ethically un-Sikh.

### 6.9: Status of woman in society

The next question in the Sikh ethics is to express its opinion on the ethical question of the relative position of woman in society. Necessity for it arose due to the conflicting views prevalent about it at the time of the emergence of Sikhism. The social relationship of man and woman is permanent and enduring and it may provide the clue to the moral basis of social relations at large. In order to appreciate the contribution of Sikhism it may be nec-

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1 Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, stanza 16, Vār 8. *Neki badi nā luke lukāi.*

2 "Premsumārag," ed., Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar*, para 835.

3 *Sikh Rahit Maryāda,* p. 23.

essary to trace the general background of the status of woman in India.

The position of woman in the society has not been always the same and while at times she has been accorded a very high status there are also historical and scriptural instances when under some influences she has been relegated to an inferior position. One may often find that in different Hindu scriptures conflicting opinions have been expressed, though it is now generally believed that "in the *Epic* period women did not suffer from any special disabilities as they practised austerities and wore garments *(valkala).* Dhritavata, Srutavati, Sulabha remained unmarried and pursued the life of Spirit."[1] We also find that "in *Satpatha Brahamana* when the husband is about to ascend sacrificial altar he addresses his wife thus, 'Come wife, let us ascend to heavens' and the wife says, 'Yes, let us ascend."[2] This may show that women shared somewhat equal responsibilities and duties.

In the *Rg Veda* husband and wife are described as taking equal part in the sacrificial rites. The *dampati* (the householder and his wife) together prepare and offer the adoration to God.[3] One may also find that "during the Vedic period,...the position of women was generally not unequal to that of men, she had similar education as men, she took part in philosophic debates like men and with men. This shows that men and women were regarded as having equally important status in the social life of the early period."[4] In the case of *Smritis,* however, the conflicting commands are very clear. In some it is held, "Women are to be honoured and adorned by fathers, brothers, husbands and also brothers-in-law." Also, "Where women are honoured the gods rejoice; where they are not honoured, all religious rites are of no avail."[5]

However, in some of the other *Smritis* a lower status has been accorded to women in general. Many of the remarks are directed

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[1] S. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society* (London : Allen and Unwin, 1956), p. 143.

[2] P.H. Valvalkar, *op. cit.,* p. 260.

[3] *Rg Veda,* VIII, 31, 5; Cf. also x, 186, 27, 7.

[4] P.H. Valvalkar, *op. cit.,* p. 260.

[5] *Mahābhārta,* 13, 46, 5; *Manu,* 3, 55-59.

towards depriving women of the right to worship or other religious rituals, as, "sacrifice by a woman displeases the gods"[1] or "the woman who burns oblation will sink into hell."[2], We also find that in case of woman certain sanctifying ritual has to be performed without the recitation of sacred texts (unlike men). She is not to be initiated and her marriage ceremony is to be regarded as equivalent to the male initiation ceremony. "Her service of the husband is considered to be equal to the service of the Guru and the daily household duties are equated to the daily liturgy."[3]

In various other texts, however, she is not only deprived of participation in religious sacrifices but she is described as an instrument of service to the male irrespective of the latter's attitude towards her.[4]

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[1] *Manu*, IV, 206.

[2] *Ibid.*, XI, 36-37.

[3] *Ibid*, II, 67, Cf. *Yaj.* 1. 13 : *Vasishtha*, XXII, 32.

[4] In rather recent times Mahatma Gandhi showed great repugnance for certain disabilities against woman inscribed in the old literature and remarked, "It is sad to think that the *Smritis* contain texts which can command no respect from men who cherish the liberty of woman as their own and who regard her as the mother of the race." (Article, *Harijan*, dated 28th November, 1936). What led to this article was the publication in another Indian paper, the *Indian Swarajya*, of certain scriptural extracts which were, "The wife should ever treat the husband as God, though he be characterless, sensual and devoid of good qualities." *(Manu*, 5-154); "Women should follow the word of their husbands. This is their highest duty" *(Yajna-valkya*, 1-16); "She who fasts and performs rituals, while the husband lives, cuts off the life of the husband. She goes to hell." "There is no higher world for the woman than that of the husband. She who displeases the husband cannot go to his world after death. So she should never displease the husband." *(Vasishtha*, 21-14); "The woman who prides in her father's family and disobeys the husband should be made by the king a prey to the dogs in the presence of a big assembly of people." *(Manu*, 8-371); "None should eat the food offered by a woman who disobeys the husband. Such a woman is to be known as a sensualist." *(Angiras*, 69); and "If the wife disobeys the husband when he is given to bad habits or becomes a drunkard or is suffering from physical ailment, then, for three months she should be deprived of her valuable clothes and jewels and kept away." *(Manu*, 10-78).

[The above translation is not very accurate in each case and it shows some prejudice of the translator in giving slant as well inaccurate translation]. M.K. Gandhi, *Hindu Dharma* (Ahmedabad : Navajivan Publishing House, Rep. 1958), pp. 383-384.

The ideal of asceticism and renunciation *(sannyāsa)* had also its impact on the attitude towards women. The inherent attraction of the female was considered to be a temptation, something against which the *sannyāsi* must be warned and to which he must not be attracted. Woman was thus called a seducer and it was said that "for that reason the wise never remain unguarded in the company of females, as women could lead astray not only the unwise and ignorant but even the learned men and make them a slave of lust and anger.[1] It is for this reason that the same *Smriti* advises also that "one should not sit in a lonely place with even one's own mother, sister or daughter; for the senses are powerful and master even a learned man."[2]

If we direct our attention to the position of women in India in relation to the scheme of *aśramas* we find that women along with *sudrās* (the lowest caste) are not taken into account as far as the management of life through the *aśrama* stages is concerned[3] although it must be conceded that there is some historical evidence that *Vanaprasthaśrama* and even *Sannyāsaśrama* were availed of by certain women during the early Vedic period. Thus apart from some period here and there women have enjoyed high position in Hinduism and particularly during the early Vedic period their position was respectable. It is around the time of the *Mahābharta* that the status of women seems to have been lowered.

**Sikh view about the status of woman**

In such a background of conflicting opinions and injunctions we have to consider the views of Sikhism in regard to the status of woman in society. As renunciation and asceticism is not the ideal in Sikhism the root cause which perhaps partly led to the woman being considered seducers or temptresses is removed. Again, the restoration by Sikhism of the ideal of the life of the householder as superior, morally and spiritually, led to the restoration of the decent and equal status to women. Dorothy Field, writing about

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[1] *Manu*, ii-214.
[2] *Ibid.*, 11-215.
[3] Cf., *S.B.E.*, Vol. XIV, 39.

Sikhism, remarks, "The most notable social improvement was the emancipation of women. Many women found salvation through the Guru's teachings."[1] We find that Guru Nanak protests against any consideration of the woman as inferior. He says, "From the woman is our birth; in the woman's womb are we shaped. To the woman are we engaged; to the 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 woman evil who gives birth to kings ? From the woman is the woman, without the woman there is none."[2] This declaration shows unequivocally the high esteem in which a woman is required to be held in Sikhism.

We find that the socio-religious rehabilitation of women came with the theistically inspired devotional tradition within Hinduism itself.[3]

In Sikhism, however, more widespread and practical steps are advised to be taken for the socio-religious equality of woman. In this connection we find frequent and large number of imperatives against some unethical practices involving women. In the various moral codes of the Sikhs a large number of injunctions deal with the rejection of the following unethical practices : (1) female infanticide; (2) immolation of the widow with the deceased husband, and (3) wearing of veils by women.

The Sikhs also permitted widow remarriage whereby the widow could be rehabilitated, if she so desired. In order to appreciate the great stress in Sikhism on proper moral practices and also its keenness to ensure equal and respectable status for women we may examine the above cited evil practices and bring out the role played

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[1] Dorothy Field. *The Religion of the Sikhs* (London: Murray, 1914), p. 59.

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Vār Āsa M. 1 (2-19), p. 173.

[3] Radhakamal Mukerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 324. He remarks, "In the wake of new emerging Bhakti tradition came the emancipation of woman...The important position Ramananda [whose hymn has been included in the *Ādi Granth*] assigned to women by designating two of them as his apostles was of greatest social significance."

by Sikhism in their rejection and moral condemnation.

**Female Infanticide**

The practice of female infanticide is an unethical practice which is said to have been carried on in the past in many countries besides India. It is traced to various causes. But whatever is the cause the moral horror over it will remain undisputed. We may examine the various causes in order to appreciate the practical steps envisaged in the Sikh ethics for the removal of this evil.

A scholar suggests that "in Rome, Greece, Arabia, India and China women of the upper classes, relieved by the males of the harder tasks both as an effort to keep them young and as a sign of rank, became an economic burden and consequently infanticide fell mainly on the females." He also holds that "the necessity of finding a dowry for daughters contributed to a selection of female children for infanticide in China and India." Second, the cause is also traced to the ancestor cults. According to the same scholar, "The ancestor cults of Greece, Rome, India and China could be transmitted only through the males and this also resulted in the destruction of girl infants."[1] The first contention in terms of economic causes is also supported from a study of the Australian aborigines. The study reports that where women are indispensable for the food supply there no discrimination in infanticide is made between sexes."[2] An Indian historian also cites the difficulty of marrying off a girl as another of the causes of this practice.[3]

The third cause for this practice in respect to India is attributed by R. Fick to the injunctions of ancient scriptures.[4] This is the most controversial conjecture hazarded and we must examine it here in order to dispel the wrong belief which may be created

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[1] A.M. Hocart, "Infanticide", *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. E.R.A. Seligman & A. Johnson (New York : The Macmillan Company, 1953), Vol. VII, pp. 27-28.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[3] R.C. Majumdar, ed. *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, (Bombay : Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, 1963), Part I, p. 822.

[4] R. Fick, "Children, Hindu," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed., James Hastings (Edinburgh : T & T Clark & Co., 1955), Vol. 3, p. 541.

by such a declaration. Let us see how Fick seeks to establish his contention that female infanticide in India had been based on ancient Hindu scriptures.

R. Fick has quoted three ancient Hindu scriptures to establish that according to them people were asked to "expose a new born female child but not a male."[1] The way the scholar has put the proposition it appears to be a categorical imperative of the ancient scriptures commanding people to commit female infanticide but not male infanticide. The three ancient scriptures quoted by the scholar for this proposition are, *Taitt, Samh.* VI, 5.10.3; *Kath S.* XXVII, 9; *and Yaska Nir.* 3.4. He does not mention the fourth, namely *Maitaryani Samhitta,* iv, 6,4; 7,9. Here it may be pertinent to pointt out that in fact it is almost the same line which occurs in the four scriptures and thus instead of saying that four different scriptures command, what Fick has wrongly called female exposure, it would be more appropriate if we were to say that it is the same line which occurs in the four different texts. This would enable us to concentrate on one line and see whether it can be interpreted in the meanings which are accepted by Fick.

The question may now be taken up whether the line under reference can be rendered as "expose a new born female child but not male." It may be stated here that these meanings have not been accepted generally and scholars have rendered this line differently. For example, we find that Keith translates this line as "therefore they deposit a daughter on birth, a son they lift up." In foot note I (on this translation) he clarifies. "This phrase found also in *KS* and *MS* does not refer to the exposure of female children as formerly held; See *Vedic Index* 1,487, and contrast *Weber Ind. Stud.* IX, 481." Similarly, it is held by the scholars Macdonald and Keith (*Vedic Index,* Vol. I, p. 487) that "there is no proof that the Vedic Indians practised the exposure of female children. This conclusion deduced from certain passages in the later *Samhitas* by Zimmer (*Altindisches Lehen,* 319) and Delbruck (see note No. 131 in the *Vedic Index* I, p. 487) has been disproved by Bohtlingk (*Z.D.M.G.*

[1] *Ibid.*

Vol. 44, pp. 494-96 given in note 131 in *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p. 487)."

What would then be a more appropriate view ? We may say that it is wrong to maintain, as Fick does, that scriptures commanded or supported female infanticide. The line correctly interpreted may mean that they simply put aside a daughter on her birth without any rejoicing or any *jātkarma*, that is, the celebrations which usually attended the birth of a son. Similarly, when this line occurs in the *Niryukt* it is quoted to argue that since they give a daughter away to another man (in marriage), therefore, she is not entitled to inherit paternal property. We may, therefore, rule out completely the possibility mooted by R. Fick that scriptures commanded or supported this unethical practice of female infanticide in India.

However, we may not deny the historical fact of the prevalence of the practice of female infanticide in India during a later period. And it is here that the great ethical reform enforced by Sikhism comes in. Incidentally, we may also mention that female infanticide was condemned by Mohammed, the founder of Islam. Reuben Levy refers to the wide prevalence in Arabia of "artificial restriction of the number of females."[1] It is in view of this prevalent practice that injunctions have been included against it in the *Qur'ān.*[2]

This immoral practice is denounced in Sikhism and various steps are envisaged for the eradication of female infanticide. In order to overcome the difficulty in terms of the requirement of dowry to be offered by the bride's father it is laid down in Sikhism that "no dowry ought to be accepted from the bride's parents"[3] and in arranging her marriage social help is required to be offered to the parents of the girl (and also the son) who may experience difficulty in finding matches for their children. It is laid down that "if there is some difficulty in some one's marriage, then Sikhs ought to make efforts and take pains to arrange it in their

[1] Reuben Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam* (Cambridge : University Press, 1957), p. 91.

[2] *Qur'ān* Suraha, XVII. 38.

[3] *Sikh Rahit Maryāda* p. 28, XII.

own family or persuade others for the same." The same compiler advises "against female infanticide."[1]

Because many superstitions are at the root of the female infanticide imperatives are found in Sikhism against the entertainment of any superstition or the consultation of astrologers or soothsayers,[2] requiring further that "female infanticide should not be practised and social relation with persons indulging in it should not be maintained."[3] Persons indulging in it are to be excommunicated from Sikhism permanently and those having any social relation with them are termed punishable.[4] It is declared by yet another compiler that "he who is a Sikh and deals with one indulging in female infanticide would be led to disaster ultimately."[5] In another formulary it is said, "Sikhs should not entertain even in mind the relationship with those indulging in female infanticide."[6]

The ethical judgement in Sikhism over this evil may thus be seen to be severe and extensive. Moreover, as we have seen, apart from denouncing it, all the three possible causes leading to infanticide, namely the economic aspect, the difficulty in finding the match and the superstition are also sought to be effectively removed. In view of the fact that the Sikh Gurus did not have political power to translate their moral disapproval into legislation and make infanticide unlawful, resort was had to the highest form of social and moral disapproval, in terms of social dissociation and excommunication.[7]

## Satti

It is strange that the term *Satti* which means a chaste woman has, by a curious process, been applied to the practice of burning

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[1] Daya Singh, *Rahitnāma.*

[2] *Sikh Rahit Maryāda,* p. 32, IV.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 23. XI.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 37, XVI.

[5] Prehalad Singh, *Rahitnāma.*

[6] Desa Singh, *Rahitnāma.*

[7] This practice was finally declared illegal and termed as murder, punishable as such. Refer *Bengal Regulations,* VI of 1902.

chaste women along with the dead bodies of their husbands.[1] Some vaguely similar customs have prevailed in other countries of the world as well, such as, the death of a king or a chief followed by the custom of immolation, "either voluntary or forcible, of his wives, concubines, attendants and servants so that they might keep company with their deceased lord and serve him in the same way as on earth."[2]

In the case of India, towards the close of the ancient period, some scriptural authority was appropriated to back the contention that self-immolation on the funeral pyre of her husband was the only meritorious course that a virtuous woman could follow. And further that "not only would such a woman enjoy eternal bliss in heaven along with her husband, but her action would expiate the sins of three generations of her husband's family both on his father's and mother's side."[3] Thus hope and encouragement was used to induce women for self-immolation to obtain the posthumous title of the virtuous *(satti)* woman, while there was no such requirement for a man on the death of his wife. "The practice seems to be dated from a very early period. There is a detailed account, preserved by the Greek writers, of a case that occured in the fourth century."[4]

It may be relevant to add here that in the *Laws of Manu* while self-immolation by widows is exalted it is not declared to be obligatory and compulsory. We find the provision that "a virtuous wife who after the death of her husband constantly remains chaste, reaches heaven, though she may have no son, just like those chaste men."[5] Thus the *Laws of Manu* visualise the possibility of a woman living after the death of her husband. However, it is also laid down

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[1] R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 822.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 822. Refer also to his statement that this custom prevailed in India, China, Babylonia and many other countries and there are still some remote traces of it in *hara-kiri* or suicide of the devoted subjects with the death of the ruler in Japan.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 823.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 823.

[5] *Manu*, V, 160.

in the same code that "at her pleasure let her emaciate her body by (living on) pure flowers, roots and fruit, but she must never mention the name of another man after her husband has died."[1]

This practice appears to be in vogue at the time of the emergence of Sikhism. We find reference to it in the *Ādi Granth* but we do not find its mention in many of the *Rahitnāmas* which could be due to its relatively lesser frequency at that time.

However, in one *Rahitnāma,* we find reference to *satti* as a custom rejected in Sikhism.[2]

Guru Amardas declares that "the *satti* is one who lives contented and embellishes herself with good conduct, and cherishes the Lord ever and calls on Him."[3] As the advice of "cherishing the Lord and calling on Him" is the advice to every one throughout the *Ādi Granth,* the above declaration requires widows to conduct themselves as all others do.

The view is expressed by the Guru that in order to be known as virtuous, women ought to maintain families knit by love. The separation on death also should be a matter of feelings. On the whole, according to the Guru, the virtues of the housewife are to be in terms of her role in the family and not in terms of self-immolation. He says, "The women burn themselves on the pyres of their husbands. But if they love their spouses well, they suffer the pangs of separation even otherwise."[4]

**Practical steps to counter this immoral practice**

*Status of the widow and remarriage :* In Sikhism the immoral provision of *satti* was sought to be fully discontinued. The practical solution came by permitting the remarriage of widows just as in the case of widowers.[5] It is, however, pointed out that the widow may remarry if she herself so desires but she ought not to be forced for it. Giani Lal Singh quotes *Gauḍi* of Guru Nanak

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[1] *Ibid.*, 157.

[2] Chopa Singh, *Rahitnāma.*

[3] *Ādi Granth,* Vār of Rāg Suhi, Sloka M.3 (2-6), p. 787.

[4] *Ibid.*, Vār of Rāg Suhi, Sloka M.3 (3-6), p. 787.

[5] *Sikh Rahit Maryāda,* p. 28 (XIII).

from the *Ādi Granlh* in this connection.[1] It is pointed out by him that the widow ought to have the right to exercise her option for remarriage whenever she wants it. Thus, apart from expressing religious and moral disapproval of *satti,* practical measure, such as, the option of widow remarriage as morally right was also taken to ensure a complete eradication of this moral evil, which evil, is also indicative of the unequal status of women in society. Here the *Laws of Manu* may be referred to where he permits only the widowers to remarry,[2] But in Sikhism men and women are given equal option in this regard.

*Wearing of veils by women:* Wearing of veils by women, as prominently seen with the followers of Islam, is also not accredited any recognition in Sikhism. It is a symbol of inequality between men and women. It is laid down in Sikhism that women ought not to wear veils.[3] Whatever be the historical reasons for the practice it is indicative of restriction on the freedom of women and denial of equality.

*Monogamy:* It is held by the compilers of the different codes in Sikhism that under normal circumstances a Sikh ought not to marry when his first wife is alive.[4] Monogamy is often held to be

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[1] Giani Lal Singh, *Sikh Law* (Bhasoud : Panch Khalsa Dewan, 1945) pp. 247-248.

[2] *Manu,* V, 168.

[3] *Sikh* Rahit *Maryāda,* p. 21.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 38. It is sometimes argued that the injunction about monogamy is difficult to maintain in Sikhism particulary in view of the general belief that the Sikh Gurus themselves married more than once. Bhai Jodh Singh, ex-Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, during a personal meeting between us supported the fact about the marriages of the Gurus and pointed out further that in view of this fact monogamy cannot be maintained as an ideal in Sikhism. Some other scholars of Sikhism, such as, Giani Lal Singh of Panch Khalsa Dewan, however, deny that the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, had more than one wife. But it may be pointed out to him that even if one may concede his view point in respect of the tenth Guru, he still fails to explain the case of another Guru who is also generally believed to have had more than one wife. But in view of the fact that monogamy is commanded in the *Sikh Rahit Maryāda* we have to agree that it is the moral precept for the Sikhs today. Refer: Giani Lal Singh, *Twārīkh Guru Khalsa* (Bhasoud: Panch Khalsa Dewan), Vol. 3, p. 651.

preferable on economic grounds and it may be inferred from this that where no such consideration exists polygamy may be indulged into. Guru Nanak, however, appears to advise against any such consideration. In a discourse he refers to this question, thus : "What is the sign of abundance, that one must have in exhaustible treasure of grain and his whole house is astir with wives, daughters and women: And every woman cries over frivolities, and abundance of wives makes the home a bedlam. And whosoever takes, gives not back, and man is ever uneasy, seeking to earn more and more.[1]

The compiler of one code, however, seems to make a concession in the case of the ruler. It is said that if the ruler finds that there is no homogeniety of temperament between himself and his wife he may marry another woman. The only other ground for second marriage is the absence of a male issue. The compiler, however, remarks that "one who does not remarry even in the above circumstances and remains content with the first one, he indeed is a man of great self-restraint. Such a man will be honoured and blessed. The contentment with one wife is the act of great men." It is further clarified by this compiler that in case the wife is able and obedient then the person ought not to remarry under the impulse of lust, as otherwise, he would regret it in the end.[2] These seem to be the checks placed by the compiler on his earlier concession to the ruler. Nevertheless, a similar concession to the commoner does not seem to have been made. The latitude for the ruler, therefore, could have been inspired by the influence of the princely states of the Sikhs which had been established by the time when this code was formulated or copied from some earlier one.[3]

## Chastity

In respect to chastity it is laid down in Sikhism that it is not to be practised by women only. Both men and women should regard adultery as immoral. The compiler of *Premsumārag* rather

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[1] *Ādi Granth*, Sloka M.1 (29), p. 1412.

[2] *Premsumārag*, ed., Randhir Singh, p. 110.

[3] Bhai Kahan Singh fixes the date of its compilation during 1880-85 (*Gurmutsudhākar*, p. 445). The same is quoted by Randhir Singh, *op. cit*, p. 78.

appears to lay greater emphasis on men to desist from it.[1] In another life rule, adultery is stated to be one of the five serious evils from which every one must desist.[2] It is clarified by a compiler that there can be no relaxation in this regard even for the king or the ruler.[3] Chastity and fidelity, thus, are important constituents of the sanctity of the family as well as social relations.

### 6.10: Universal brotherhood

The tenet of equality may appear to be rather formal and howsoever necessary and fundamental for social relationships yet, by itself, it may not be considered as the final ideal by an ethical theory which regards the whole humanity and existence as spiritually related. The social ethics may thus be in need of content in addition to the formal equality. The equality may be maintained without feeling any affection or regard for the person who is so held to be equal. Such bare equality, howsoever attractive it may be for a theorist of abstract polity, would not be of enough significance from the point of the ideal humanistic morality. The material content to the social ethics in Sikhism is also provided from the same premise of spiritual unity which was used for pointing up human equality.

It is said that all people emanate from the same spiritual continuum and to the same ultimate source they will all be returning. The whole of humanity, therefore, is bound by a fraternal relationship. Guru Gobind Singh says, "As out of a single fire millions of sparks arise; arise in separation but come together again when they fall back in the fire. As from a heap of dust, grains of dust swept up fill the air, and filling it fall in a heap of dust. As out of single stream countless waves rise up and being water, fall back in water again. So from God's form emerge alive and inanimate things and since they arise from Him, they shall fall in Him again."[4] This statement is then made the basis for the assertion that

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1 *Premsumārag*, ed., Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar*, para 827.
2 Desa Singh, *Rahitnāma*.
3 *Premsumārag*, ed., Giani Randhir Singh, p. 110.
4 Guru Gobind Singh, *Akāl Ustat*, 87, Unesco tr.

all ought to treat every one else as member of the same human brotherhood.

The purpose of going to the Guru is to learn from him the lesson that the fellow human being is not an 'other'. Guru Arjan Dev says, "Meeting with the Guru, I have abandoned the sense of the other."[1] The other is in fact not an other but a cosharer of the same source of emanation and a part of the same spiritual order. This brotherhood of humanity is thus linked together by bonds deeper than family or national affinities.

The argument of the Gurus seems to be that brotherhood is the reality but it is hidden from us by the veils of *houmai* (individuation) which makes us see a brother as an other. Once this partitioning wall is felled the relationship would be visible clearly. The whole of the social ethics of the Sikhs is oriented towards the demolition of this wall of separation; and the realization of wider and still wider identification is indicative of the progressive realization of the ideal. In order to bring to notice the common bonds of existence in the world. Guru Nanak says, "Air the guru, water the father, great earth the mother. In the lap of two nurses, night and day, the whole world is brought up.[2] The text may show not only the relation of mankind on a cosmic scale but also be a pointer that mankind passes through common environment facing a destiny not unrelated to each other.

The brotherhood of mankind in terms of God being the common father is also stressed by Guru Arjan when he says, "Thou art the father of us all ... all are the partners, thou are alien to none."[3] Here, as in Christianity, the fatherhood of God is utilized to lay down the norm of conduct in terms of brotherhood of man. In yet another passage it is repeated when Guru Arjan Dev says, "Thou are our only father, we are all thy children."[4]

### 6.11: Practical steps to realize human brotherhood

The Gurus do not rest contented with a mere proclamation

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[1] *Ādi Granth*, Bhairo M.5 (1-29-42), p. 1097.
[2] *Ibid;* Japji, Sloka, p. 8.
[3] *Ibid.*, Mājh M.5 (Chaupadas), (2 & 3-2-9), p. 97.
[4] *Ibid.*

of the norm of brotherhood but also suggest practical measures to realize it. The measures are both negative as well as positive.

Negative measures : The negative measures are, (1) complete renunciation of slander of the others *(nindā tyāg),* and (2) renunciation of enmity *(nirvāir).*

Positive measures : The positive measures are, (1) altruism *(parupkār)* and (2) service of humanity *(seva).*

### 6.12: Negative measures

### Renunciation of slander

It is held by the Gurus that one of the great causes of mutual strife and bickering is the indulgence in slander. This evil may not only cause mutual distrust and suspicion among the smaller social groups but may also poison the social relations among much larger groups such as different nations. Guru Arjan Dev says, "First I gave up the slander of others, and then all the cares of my mind were dispelled...I have abandoned the companionship of ego, and, now the friend and the foe are alike to me...."[1] Men too often forget the beam in their own eye but are keen to find out even a mote in others. This is the famous saying in Christianity as well.[2] The slanderer may start a chain of vicious circle and thereby harm the social integration as well as take a person away from the realization of the spiritual unity of humanity. The social value of the slanderer is affected considerably as he is not considered trustworthy. No one believes him.[3] He thus becomes a sick member of the society needing help for his own recovery. There is also a fear that he may spread the disease among the other members of the

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[1] *Ibid.*, Bhairo M. 5 (1-27-40), p. 1147.

[2] While analysing the Christian ethics it is said by George F. Thomas about the judgement which results from censoriousness, that it is "merciless and unforgiving." He says, "The fact that it leads one to arrogate to himself the function of judging which belongs to God alone indicates that its deepest root is *pride.* It is an expression of the egoism that exalts the self at the cost of depreciating others." (Emphasis added.) The consequences being the "exclusion of those we judge from fellowship with us." George F. Thomas, *Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1958), p. 68.

[3] *Ādi Granth,* Bhairo M.1 (4-41-54), p. 1152.

society as well. It is in view of this moral evil of slander that Guru says, "The conduct of the slanderer is immoral."[1]

As pointed out above, the Guru says that after the renunciation of *nindā* (slander or backbiting) one would be able to realize the universal brotherhood as the friend and the foe would then appear alike.

**Renunciation of enmity**

The enmity towards others hinders the development of human brotherhood. The first attribute of the Absolute which men are required to imbibe, is the complete eradication of enmity towards others and a complete check against its development in a person. Bhai Gurdas says, "It is a common practice that men return good for good done unto them, but I am sacrifice unto those who return good even for evil or who are good and kind even to the evil-doers."[2] Thus persons are required not to retaliate to evil with evil but to return it with good. Only thus can a fellow being turned into enemy be won over. Love is the panacea here. Even when evil has to be fought, it is to be done without any feeling of enmity towards the other person. Evil must be resisted without saturating one's self with a feeling of hatred for the evil-doer. It is better to love even the person who may not love us.[3] It is in this sense that while discussing the need to avoid slander we saw the need to look alike upon friend and foe. We will again have occasion to refer to this precept when we discuss three levels of the *gurmukh.* (Section 12, *infra).*

Here it may be added that one who is kind to the kind ones and unkind to the unkind ones may be acting according to the principle of justice. But brotherly love rises above justice in a manner that it includes justice but so transforms it that it becomes consistent with the spiritual unity of mankind.

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[1] *Ibid.*. Bhairo M. 5 (1-41-54), p. 1151 *"Nindak kā maila āchār."*

[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs,* Stanza 12, *Vār* 20.

[3] Cf. also, "Love of one's enemies provides the acid test of whether one's love is a perfect love like God's or is restricted to those whom it is easy to love." George F. Thomas, *op. cit.,* p, 261.

Enmity is the desire to cause harm and pain to others. It is to wreck vengeance on some one. But it is pointed out by Nand Lal that in case any man is injured it is the Creator who would be injured. The Creator is the soul and life of creation.[1] One ought, therefore, to eradicate completely any feeling of enmity and also guard against its development at any stage in life.

### 6.13: Positive measures

### Altruism

Mere absence of enmity and slander, however, is not enough for the complete realization of human brotherhood. It must be, according to the Gurus, realized positively by altruistic activities and social service. In a different philosophical dialogue it is pointed out by Dewey that "the kind of self which is formed through action which is faithful to relations with others will be a fuller and broader self than one which is cultivated in isolation from or in opposition to the purposes and needs of others."[2] In Sikhism the purpose of education is declared to be to initiate the person to altruism. Guru Nanak says "Altruism is the essence of all knowledge.".[3] It is the complete socialisation of the person indicated through his love and concern for others. It is the test which Jean Mouroux lays down when he says that a person is never authentic in any way other than linking and giving himself to another person as with another self.[4]

The test is the same in Sikhism. One of the most important and fundamental norms, in terms of which a person may be evaluated, is this giving away of one's self. Bhai Gurdas says, "The sign of a good man is that he seeks always welfare of others but the bad man is selfish. He does not do good to others."[5] Altruism, there-

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[1] Bhai Nand Lal, *Ath Tankhanāma. Khāliq khalaq kī jān ha, khalaq dukhave nahin. Khalaq dukhave Nand Laiji khāliq kope lage.*

[2] John Dewey, *Ethics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winstone, Inc., 1932), 11, p. 213.

[3] *Ādi Granth*, Āsa M. 1, Chaupadas, p. 356. *Vidya vichari tan parupkāri.*

[4] Jean Mouroux, *The Meaning of Man*, trans., A.H.G. Downes (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1952), p. 207.

[5] Bhai Guardas, *Vārs*, Stanza 12, Vār 20.

fore, is the touchstone of moral development.

**Need to avoid pity and pride in altruism**

The altruism involves the help of fellow beings but there is the danger that this help may in fact appear to degenerate into a sort of social pity. The essentials of altruism, on the other hand, require that the altruist ought not to feel any personal glory in it. The second possibility which an altruist must guard against is the pride which would be amounting to a good action either arising out of evil motive (pride) or leading to the development of an evil sentiment (pride). In order to guard against all these pitfalls the altruist is required to regard his altruism as an opportunity for receiving divine sanctification, since the Creator is there in creation. The need to take it as an expression of divine grace is stressed in a moral code. The compiler says, "When the food is ready, pray for some needy person to come and share your food so that your food may be sanctified." It is further laid down that if a needy person turns up then consider him to be the answer to your prayer and serve him respectfully. In case no one comes you ought to go out and seek out one and if perchance none is available at that time, keep some food separately and then whenever a Hindu, a Muslim or a Sikh comes, serve him the food. Such food is sanctified.[1] Thus a person would be able to avoid the serious evils of pride and feeling of pity and the needy would command equal respect and dignity.

This ideal is also adopted in various other codes of conduct. Chopa Singh requires the Sikhs to consider help to the needy as a rendition unto the Guru.[2] The compiler thus decries the hoarding of one's possessions while his fellow beings may be in great distress. The need of the needy thus assumes as great importance as the treasury of the Guru and helping such a person would be a step in the right direction. Writing about such altruists, P.V. Kanal says, "Such men not only relish the joy of disinterested service but also get out of the corroding worries of standing watch over

[1] "Premsumārag", ed., Bhai Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar*, para 846.
[2] Chopa Singh, *Rahitnāma*.

their hoarded but fruitless and thankless treasures. Altruism is, indeed, the holiest spark in the life of a human soul."[1]

We may also refer here to the formulation of Bhai Daya Singh. He is generally occupied with the injunctions concerning the regulation of inter-Sikh relations, but he also lays down, "To any one who needs help, render it."[2] The term used by him in this case is *kisī* (any one) which shows his keen consciousness of according importance to altruism for all.

Similar views are found in the ethical formulations of Bhai Nand Lal. According to the compiler of *Premsumārag,* the scope of altruism is very wide and includes every kind of assistance towards seeking the good of others. It lays down, "If somebody needs food or clothes or is needy otherwise, share your earnings with him. If somebody needs your help, do not tarry, leave your own work and go to his help."[3]

The author of *Bhakataratnāvali,* a contemporary of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, reports Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru, as explaining that there is a hierarchy of three levels of the *gurmukh* (ideal person) and three levels of the *manmukh* (the self-willed, the evil person).

**Three levels of the gurmukh**

The three levels of the *gurmukh,* in the order of ascendancy are, (1) *gurmukh,* (2) *gumukhtar* and (3) *gurmukhtam.* (1) *Gurmukh :* A *gurmukh* according to this description is "one who does good unto those who do good unto him and returns evil for evil." We may see that the agent here seems to be guided by the virtue of justice in a legalistic sense. The dictum 'do unto others as they do unto you' is the standard of human relations. This norm may be very useful but characterises an ethical man still at a lower stage. (2) *Gurmukhtar :* A *gurmukhtar* is one who has turned his back to evil deeds and his face is towards the teaching of the Guru. If some one does even a single act of goodness unto him, the

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1 P. V. Kanal *Altruism* (Moga: Dev Samaj, 1956), p. 64.

2 Daya Singh. *Rahitnāma.*

3 "Premsumārag", Bhai Kahan Singh, *Gurmatsudhākar,* para 831.

*gurmukhtar* would *always* do good to him. The *gurmukhtar* would never forget his gratitude to his benefactor and would always be ready to help his benefactor in return. He never prides himself for the good he does unto others. He is always willing and ready to help if some one needs his help.

(3) *Gurmukhtam:* The state of the *gurmukhtam* is the apex of human altruism. He is full of wisdom also. He seeks the good of others even if they may seek his evil. It is the highest stage of realization where the altruist is not even remotely effected by any distinction of friend and foe to which we had occasion to refer earlier also. His altruism becomes spontaneous.

**Three levels of the manmukh**

The three categories of the *manmukh* (the evil ones) are also on the similar ethical pattern, namely (1) *manmukh,* (2) *man-mukhtar* and (3) *manmukhtam.*

(1) *Manmukh:* A *manmukh* is that individual who habitually seeks the evil of others. He does not remember the good done unto him but never forgets the evil done to him. The scale of justice here may be seen to have become uneven in that the evil is returned by evil but the good is not returned by good.

*(2) Manmukhtar :* A *manmukhtar* is lower in the scale than a *manmukh* as he always returns evil in return both for the good as well as the evil done to him.

(3) *Manmukhtam :* This is the lowest state of evil to which a person can stoop down. In this category are included those persons who always return evil for any act of good done to them. For repeated good, they repeatedly return evil. They have no faith in the spiritual word. Their rationalisation is that the spiritual word and the good of others is not fruitful for them while the evil done by them to others always leads to their own good. Such individuals are perenially condemned ones.[1]

The predominant idea in this classification may be seen to be in terms of altruism. Here always doing good to others is identified

[1] Bhai Mani Singh, "Bhagataratnāvali", ed. Bhai Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar,* para 673.

with the apex of altruism, the *gurmukhtam*. The *gurmukhtam* is not motivated by any personal good but the good of others becomes his nature. It is a sort of altruistic transformation of the whole self.

Another point which may be noted about this hierarchy is that the general population scatter may be towards the middle of this classification. The extreme cases or the persons belonging to the extreme categories may be comparatively much less though in itself it may not thereby decrease the value of the ideal of the *gurmukhtam*.

It may be relevant to add here that in the above classification the term *gurmukh* is used in terms of altruistic activity. Generally, however, the term *gurmukh* is used to refer to the highest state of self-hood and as a synonym of *sachiāra* (the ideal self).

We may also refer here to the stage of the *gurmukh*. Conduct of the person at this stage, as described by the Guru in the *Ādi Granth*, is that of the trader and not of the lover. The Guru says, "one who is good only when good is done to him and in adversity becomes adverse : Call him not a lover for he trades in love."[1] The ideal in the social ethics of the Sikhs, therefore, can only be the *gurmukhtam* although the simple *term, gurmukh* may be used for it.

This highest ideal of the social ethics of the sikhs is also stressed by Bhai Gurdas. He says, "Rare is the one who does good even to those who may do bad, as the tree yields fruit even to those who may throw stones at it."[2] The examples of the tree, the cotton seed and the *sandal* tree are quoted very extensively throughout his *Vārs* to bring out the goodness in the selfless seeking of the other's good.

**Altruism in helping others to attain salvation**

Altruism even in seeking and obtaining salvation is stressed by the Gurus. In this the approach is similar to that of Mahayana Buddhism with particular reference to its *Bodhisattava* ideal. Like Buddhism, in Sikhism also the person does not entertain an indi-

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[1] *Ādi Granth*, Vār Āsa, Sloka M. 2 (1—21), p. 474.
[2] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 21, Vār 9.

vidualistic ideal of salvation. During the course of a sermon in Buddhism it is said, "Just so a *Bodhisāttva,* after he has accomplished the practices which lead to the full enlightenment of Buddhahood, leads countless beings to *Nirvāna.*"[1]

Evidence in this regard comes to us from two different passages of the *Ādi Granth* with identical wordings except for the addition of one word *hor* which means others also. In a sloka Guru Nanak says, "Nanak *te mukh ujjāle keti chhuti nāl.*"[2] This passage is rendered as, "Glorious are their beings, Nanak, and they save many." The next Guru, Angad Dev, who succeeded Guru Nanak, wrote the whole sloka elsewhere in the *Ādi Granth,* but added the word *hor* for the line to read as, "Nanak *te mukh ujjāle hor keti chhuti nāl.*"[3] This may be translated as, "Glorious are their beings, Nanak, and they save many *others* also." Here it may be argued that the altruistic reference could also be clearly understood in the case of the first passage of Guru Nanak. The question may be asked as to why this term *hor* was added by Guru Angad Dev. The answer is not difficult to imagine. Guru Angad Dev by the addition of this word quite clearly brings out the extraordinary stress placed on altruism in Sikhism even while seeking salvation.

We may see a similar stress in the protest of Mahayana against the *prataik* Buddha of Hinayana as too individualistic an approach. The altruistic ideal of *Bodhiśāttava* in Mahayana is the fruition of this protest.[4]

In Christianity also the suffering of Jesus Christ is a similar pointer in the direction of altruism.

**Social service**

The second positive step towards the realization of human brotherhood is social service *(seva).* This altruism is expressed through social service, and active help to the fellow beings occupies a central

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[1] E.A. Burt (ed.) *The Teachings of Compassionate Buddha* (New York : The New American Library, 1955), p. 131.

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Sloka, p. 8.

[3] *Ibid.,* Vār of Mājh, Sloka M. 2 (2-18), p. 146.

[4] Hardyal, *The Bodhisātta Doctrine* (London : Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1932), p. 9.

place in the scheme of the social ethics of the Sikhs. Bhai Gurdas says, "Sacrifice I am unto that person who sacrifices for others. Sacrifice I am unto one who is happy by serving others."[1]

Social service ought to be rendered in any or all respects. It may be in providing the material requisite, or by rendering physical service, or it may be by comforting the spiritual aspect of the others by reading out scriptures to him. It is claimed by Bhai Gurdas that "material, physical service, like providing food or giving rest to the bodies of others, or reading out the scriptures for their solace, is by far superior to the countless sacrificial fires and performances of ceremonies or mere meditation and worldly knowledge."[2] According to him, "The service of others is enjoined by the Gurus."[3]

Service, according to Guru Gobind Singh, ought to be more of the oppressed and the needy so that they may be uplifted and brought on the same equal level. He says, "True service is the service of these (common) people; I am not inclined to serve others of higher castes; charity will bear fruit, in this and the next world if given to such worthy people as these."[4]

**Social service essentially related with mystic contemplation**

Guru Nanak is of the view that one of the most important effects of devotion and contemplation lies in the attitude of the person towards social service. He says, "When one dwells on the (Guru's) word, one's mind flows out to serve the others and one practices contemplation and self-control by overcoming ego."[5]

In a similar spirit Guru Arjan Dev places the service of creation immediately prior to the loving prayer. The favourite idiom he uses is "servant of the servants."[6] The direction is clear and unequivocal. A person, who has not fulfilled his social loyalties

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[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 5, Vār 12.

[2] *Ibid*, Stanza 19, Vār 14 (*"Gian dhayan lakh jog sabad suhāvani....."*)

[3] *Ibid.*, Stanza 17, Vār 14.

[4] Guru Gobind Singh. *Sabad-Hazare* (UNESCO tr.), 15:175.

[5] *Ādi Granth*, Prabhati M. 1 (7-2), p. 1343.

[6] *Ibid.*, Gaudi M. 5 (1-4-121), p. 204. *Seva karis dās dāsan* ke *anek bhānt tis kari.* See also, *Ibid.*, Bilawal M. 5 (1-14-44), p. 811.

and moral obligations involved in social service, is far removed from any spiritual realization. It is one thing he cannot do without. The prayer is to be preceded by the discharge of social obligations in terms of the help of others.

**Concrete form of this tenet**

The tenet of social service was given a concrete form and the *gurdwāras* (Sikh's places of worship) are required to be the social service centres apart from their role of imparting spiritual instruction. Hospitality and education are to be the watch words. The *gurdwāra* buildings, now, in many cases house literacy classes as well as provide the necessities of life to the needy. Sikhism, thus, closely resembles the general missionary spirit of Christianity.

In order to mobilise resources for meeting this obligation one tenth of one's income *(daswandh)* is required to be the voluntary contribution by the Sikhs for the organised help. It is somewhat on the lines of *zakāt* in Islam.

The *daswandh* serves the dual purpose of organising help for the needy as well as for providing the opportunity to members to participate in the organised social service and thus weld them together in closer ties. It is an approach somewhat similar to that generally adopted in Christianity and is specially exhibited in the altruistic activities of the Mennonite life where "the conscious cultivation of a disciplined brotherhood way of life rooted in a *Biblical* ethics has contributed most effectivelly to this end."[1]

In Sikhism, the code compiled by the central body of the Sikhs (see chapter v, *supra)* directs that "the service is an important ingredient of Sikhism. In order to initiate and introduce the person to it provision on a small scale has been made in Sikh *gurdwāras.* Its simpler forms in this connection are: upkeep (cleaning, etc.) of the *Gurdwāra,* service of the congregation with water, etc., service in the community kitchen, dusting the footwear of the congrega-

[1] Cornelius Krahn "Altruism in Mennonite Life," *Forms and Techniques of Altruistic and Spiritual Growth, a Symposium,* ed., Pitirim A. Sorokin (Boston : The Beacon Press, 1954), p. 328.

tion,"[1] etc.

Here it may be interesting to point out that a sect named *'Seva panthīs'*[2] has grown from among the Sikhs by almost exclusive emphasis on this moral tenet of the Sikh ethics. Seva Das, the author of the book of the *Seva panthī* sect, says that "one ought to serve all persons" because "the holy teachers are happy when the disciple serves humanity. When the person or disciple serves only the Guru and remains indifferent to others he would not be regarded as the lover of God but would be a selfish person." Seva Das explains further that "one who is a lover of God, ought to take to God's attributes. And as God is kind to every one and helps all, neglects none, a person's union with God would only mature when he helps all alike."[3] just as God does so.

In Sikhism the Provider is an often repeated attribute of God. *Dān* (help to others) is considered to be an important character of the self through which it is dyeing itself in the colours of God. Benevolence is generally described to be the most required virtue in the present age. The tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, in the second part of *Giān Prabodh Granth,* in an answer to Jivātma, explains that the practical philosophy of the world is four-fold, namely *rāj dharam, dān dharam, bhog dharam* and *mokśa dharam.*[4] This inclusion of benevolence *(dān dharam)* as one of the four aspects

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[1] *Sikh Rahit Maryāda* (S.G.P.C.). We have referred to it in chapter v, *supra.*

[2] The sect of *Seva panthīs* (social workers) trace their origin from Bhai Kanahia, a Sikh contemporary of the ninth and the tenth Gurus. He is said to have served water to the wounded soldiers, both the Sikhs as well as those of the opposing army. When some one complained to the Guru against it he is reported to have replied that he was doing so in the true spirit of Sikhism, which requires not to distinguish between friend and foe. He was approbated and encouraged by the tenth Guru who is believed to have given ointment to Bhai Kanahia for application tc the wounded soldiers without any discrimination of friendly and opposing armies. This episode is a subject of wide reference and is quoted very frequently in Sikhism as a model for conduct.

[3] Seva Das, *Āsawarian* (Dera Ismail Khan: Devidas Bhagwandas), p. 98.

[4] D.P. Ashta "Gian Prabodh Granth", *Brief Study of Works in Dasam Granth* (New Delhi: Arun Prakashan, 1959), pp. 139-140.

of practical philosophy brings out its importance in the Sikh ethics.

The spirit underlying the service of others is also to overcome the discriminatory attitudes which characterise the state of bondage. Before the distinction between (the self and the Absolute is completely overcome the consciousness of the discriminatory distinction between one self and the other selfs would have to be overcome. The service of the others is a substantial contribution towards such an Ideal. Attainment of the spiritual integration presupposes social integration according to the Sikh ethics. And the social response of the person is to be maintained, with a greater underlying affection and sense of mutual relationship, even after the spiritual integration.

**Service of the Guru**

In Sikhism, we find that great importance is attached to the service of the Guru. Thus in the *Ādi Granth* this theme occurs many times.

The service of the guru is said to yield spiritual realization.[1] A pointer in similar direction is given by the third Guru also.[2] The service of the guru may be inspired from a sense of gratitude because it is with his teachings that all doubts of the mind are overcome and the way is cleared for the attainment of the Ideal.[3]

A question may be asked as to who this Guru is whose service has been stressed so very often in Sikhism. It may be pointed out here that no particular living Guru is acknowledged in Sikhism. It is, however, held that the *Sat Guru's Śabad* (True Guru's word) is the soul of the Guru and the holy congregation is the body of the Guru. Whose service then can be called the service of the Guru? Whose, indeed, if not of the congregation which is the body of the Guru? Thus the service of the Guru is in fact the service of humanity.

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[1] *Ādi Granth*, Gauḍi Porbi, M. 5 (3-15-153), p. 213.
[2] *Ibid.*, Dhanāsri M. 3 (3-3), p. 664.
[3] *Ibid.*, Āsavari M. 5 (1-2-158), p. 409.

**Service of God**

One may also notice great stress laid on the service of God.[1] Again we ask as to whose service it is which may be called the service of God. The answer is given by Guru Arjan Dev in unequivocal terms. He says, "God is intertwined with the servant like the warp and woof. He sustains his servants, and gives them peace. I bring water for his servants, fan them and grind their corn, for this also is the service of God."[2] In this telling passage, the Guru hardly leaves any doubt as to whose service may be taken to mean the service of God. It is, as we have seen in the case of the service of the Guru, the service of humanity in whom God is reflected. In Existentialist ethics we may see that, like Gabriel Marcel, Jaspers also affirms that "the love of one's fellow man corresponds with the approach to Transcendence (God) itself," and further that "perfection in human existence is measured by the accessibility of man to God and to his fellow men."[3]

The Guru says in yet another place that we ought not to make distinction between the so-called good or bad person on the basis of personal prejudice or nearness to one's self for the purpose of rendering service. Any such distinction is indicative of ourselves still being torn by duality (I, mine; and thy, thine). The Guru says that when one has the intuition of the Reality he may see One alone, all over, and then all duality would disappear.[4]

The requisite of overcoming ego for the approval of one's service is again stressed by Guru Amardass[5] which is said to please God.[6]

**General characteristics of service**

It is held by the Gurus that service, if it is to be worthwhile, ought to be done without any consideration of reward. In case any

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[1] *Ibid.*, (3-4), p. 222, See also (1-8-11), p. 225, and (1-12), p. 110.

[2] *Ibid.*, Mājh M. 5 (1 & 2-18-25), p. 101.

[3] George F. Kneller, *Existentialism and Education* (New York Philosophical Library Inc., 1958), p. 94.

[4] *Ādi Granth*, Suhi M. 3 (8-2-4-9), p. 757.

[5] *Ibid.*, Sloka M. 3, p. 1247.

[6] *Ibid.*, (2-27), M. 3, p. 1247.

reward is solicited for the rendition of the service it can only be termed a bargain. It is declared by Guru Arjan Dev, "He who serves without desire for rewards, he alone attains to God."[1]

At another place Guru Arjan Dev explains that "we get eternal bliss through the service of God and merge in the peace of poise.[2] A difficulty may seem to arise here, that, while the service is required to be without desire for reward, as in *Bhāgavadgīta,* still a reward seems to be promised. A person while serving others may look forward to it. It may be submitted here that the Gurus wanted the person not to perform social service only for the achievement of an objective as in that case it would be seen to have hypothetical value and would not be valid for those who do not want to obtain any reward. Desire for reward here may be taken to mean the desire for it outside and beyond the act of service. It may be argued that as the spiritual is not completely away and different from the persons, the act of service to fellow beings is in itself the act of realization of the spiritual without involving any desire for the external reward. The external reward to which the Gurus seem to refer, and which they seek to forbid, ought to be understood as social approbation and mundane gains.

The second important characteristic of the service, as envisaged in Sikhism, is that it ought to be self-imposed and voluntary. An act of social service done under force— social or otherwise—or grudgingly is not of much ethical significance. The Guru says that "service done under compulsion has neither any quality nor is it of much help to any one. An act of service done happily can only be called worthwhile.[3]

Should a person cease to serve others after he has realised the ideal? Is service done merely for the sake of attaining the goal? Could there be a stage when it may be renounced? The answer to all these questions in Sikhism is that the social service ought not

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[1] *Ibid.*, Gauḍi Sukhmani M. 5 (2-18), p. 286.

[2] *Ibid.*, Gauḍi Sukhmani M. 5 (2-18), p. 216. *Seva te sukh pāyā gurmukh sehaj samāyā.*

[3] *Ibid.*, Vār Suhi, śloka M. 2 (3-4), p. 787. *Badhi chatti jo bhare nā guṇ nā kupkār. saīti khuśi swaria Nanak āraj sār.*

to be renounced at any stage, before or after the realization of the ideal. Bhai Gurdas says. "*Gursikh* once seized by the thought of social service continues it till the end of life."[1]

Seva Das, the author of *Āsawarian*, points out that one ought to keep on serving always. This is a reminder that the social participation and response ought to continue throughout the life-time of the person. Self-realization or illumination does not mark an end to the social service. The above author quotes a couplet of Kabir in support of his argument. The couplet means that one ought to serve till the Creator is there, that is, till there is the world and existence. Just as the Creator is not exhausted in providing for others, similarly, one ought not to tire of serving.[2]

### 6.14 : Concluding remarks

Thus we see that in the Sikh ethics there is a great emphasis on the Way of Martha as in Christianity. There is the need for being encumbered about much serving. However, it is harmonised with the exalted Way of Mary also, who had found one thing needful and 'they have chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from them'. It synthesises the two to demonstrate that one does not preclude the other.

What about the status of men in society and morals ? Ought we to recognise any inequality among men in their interpersonal relationship or relation with God ? Here it may be submitted that, as we have seen in the preceding examination, the prominent characteristic of the social ethics of the Sikhs, which has appeared in bold relief, is in terms of universalism and equality, as expressed in practical social institutions. This remarkably resembles St. Paul's declaration. "There is no place for Jew or Greek, there is no place for slave or free man, there is no place for male or female, for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus."[3] In a similar vein, Guru Nanak proclaims, "Every one is high, not one seems low to me; For the Potter has made all vessels; From His light is the light of the three

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[1] Bhai Gurdas, *Vārs*, Stanza 20. Vār 14.

[2] Seva Das, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[3] *Bible, Gal.* III, 28.

worlds."[1] There is then no moral truth in the principle of inequality.

Here we may refer to an interesting study in interpersonal and intergroup solidarity at Harvard University in America in 1950-51. While drawing conclusions from the discussion of the precipitation of friendship and enmity it is remarked by Pitiram A. Sorokin, "Indeed, the very essence of a friendship and loving relationship seems to consist of kindness and understanding between individuals."[2]

It is this truth, in terms of kindness and understanding, which appears to have been realized by the Gurus in Sikhism in their uncompromising emphasis on altruism and service. The brotherhood should not be a pure sentimentalism but ought to be realized in action.

The ideal of social ethics of the Sikhs, therefore, is universal brotherhood—which includes equality and altruism—as expressed in the attitude as well as the conduct of the person. Every Sikh is required to work and pray for this universal brotherhood by praying for and seeking the good of all which is described in Sikhism as *sarbat dā bhallā.*

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Sri Rāg M. 1 (6-14), p. 62.

[2] Pitiram A. Sorokin, "Dynamics of Interpersonal Friendship and Enmity," *Forms and Techniques of Altruistic and Spiritual Growth, A Symposium* ed. Sorokin (Boston : The Beacon Press, 1954), p. 340.

# VII
# SUPREME IDEAL

## 7.1 : Prolegomena

Man, during his journey in socio-natural environments, very often pauses to reflect on some of the problems which may seem to touch him very deeply. The question of any ultimate purpose of life very often appears on the horizon of such an inquisitive mind. The question may sometimes be dismissed with the characteristic refusal to go beyond just what a person has assured himself to be the truth. However, with some other person or with the same person at some other time, the inquiry may appear to be fascinating and alluring. It may invite him to open his mind to possibilities which he had not heretofore entertained. He may then launch upon the adventure of seeking an answer to the above question of supreme ideal. The nature of answers so arrived at may be seen to have given rise to a wide variety of theological and philosophical theories.

Historically, in India, to some extent, the credentials and *bona fides* of all the systems and theories appear to have been accepted or rejected pre-eminently in terms of the answer to the question of the ultimate goal of human life. The role of other factors, however, may also be accepted in this regard. Mention may be made of a particular example of a system which sought either to remain non-committed in respect of this question or did not go as far as man may be tempted to go. Did this system, which we identify as Buddhism, succeed in avoiding the question forever ? Was it allowed to sustain its non-committal attitude ? Perhaps this earlier attitude, along with various other factors, may explain its partial eclipse in India. Again, we find that later Buddhists took up the question of the ultimate ideal with all the gusto peculiar to an Indian mind generally in such matters.

An average Indian today may feel that the question of the ultimate teleology has received too much attention in the past. Some such feelings in the near past may, perhaps, have been one of the conditions contributory to the fact that after Sikhism no major system has emerged in India during the last few centuries. The present ideology appears to be generally parasitical in the sense that it tacitly accepts the truths averred by the earlier systems, without risking to venture into new vistas. Some persons may point to this as meaning a lack of any strenuous mood among the average person of today. But this absence of new systems in itself may also bring to notice the inherent strength of the answers given by the earlier thinkers. A robust persistence of these solutions and truths may be cited in a way to emphasise their vitality and appeal.

Sikhism, which is the last major system to emerge in India, appears to attempt an answer to the question of the supreme goal of life. We have already referred to it in the chapter on *Moral Standard.* The ideal is to be a fully realized self or to be a *sachiāra.* We may now seek to know the spiritual realization of the *sachiāra,* which is, in "Japji" termed by the Guru as the realization of the *sach khand;* and also by various other names in "Japji" as well as other compositions of the *Ādi Granth.* Let us now proceed to examine the view about the spiritual realization or the realization of the Ideal Self as described in Sikhism.

### 7.2 : Sikh view of spiritual realization

While discussing the moral standard we had sought to define the goodness of the acts in terms of their conduciveness to the realization of the state of *sachiāra.* Negatively speaking, this was described as the complete transcendence of the ego. We have also attempted to see the application of this standard in terms of the unity of the self, liberation from imbalances, and regulation of passions by virtues. An effort has also been made to view the role of standard in social relations, that is liberation from I-ness and mine-ness.

We may now take up the third important aspect of this ego-transcendence, namely the spiritual realization. There are two aspects of this realization, (1) *jivan mukti,* that is, realization in life,

and (2) *āvan jān mite, Āvan jān chhute* or *chhuti,* that is, cessation of coming and going or cessation of transmigration and absorption in the Absolute, ( *joti jot samāna).*

As the words suggest the first aspect of this realization refers to the self in its empirical form and the second is the stage after the cessation of the empirical mode of existence.

However, the terms *mukti, mokh dvār, mokh* and *nirbān* are also used[1] along with such other terms as *param pad,*[2] *sehaj awastha,*[3] *turya*[4] or *chautha pad*[5] to signify any one of these two aspects, namely the realization in the life and the realization after life. Therefore, the sense in which any one of these terms is used by the Gurus can only be known by analysing the particular context in which it occurs.

Some brief reference to the second aspect will be made but the text will be generally occupied with the first, namely *jivan mukti,* that is, realization in life, as this has direct bearing on our examination of the ethical theory of the Sikhs.

### 7.3 : Jivan mukti (realization in life)

*Jivan mukti* is viewed from two angles in Sikhism, namely (1) negative, and (2) positive. Generally speaking the same term is used for both but the differences in meaning which it has in each usage are very clear. We shall examine both of these aspects in detail.

#### Negative aspect of jivan mukti

We find that along with *jivan mukti* the Gurus have also used *jivat marna,* that is, die while alive, and other similar terms to denote usually the negative aspect of ego transcendence.

(1) The most common and all-comprehensive negative descrip-

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Sri Rāg M. 1 (1—10), p. 59 ; *Ibid.,* Mājh M. 3 (6-11-12), p. 116 ; *Ibid.,* Rāmkali M. 9 (3-3-81), p. 903 ; *Ibid.,* Bhagat Kabir (1-1-10), p. 971; and Bhagat Namdev (5-2-6), p. 874.

[2] *Ibid.,* Gaūḍi-Bairāgan M. 4 (1-8-14-52), p. 168.

[3] *Ibid.,* Sri Rāg M. 3 (4-19-52), p. 34.

[4] *Ibid.,* Thitti Gauḍi M. 5 (3), p. 297.

[5] *Ibid.,* Sri Rāg M. 3 (6-6-23), p. 68.

tion of this aspect is in terms of the riddance of the ego or the transcendence of the consciousness of individuation. Guru Nanak says, "Call him a *jivan mukta* who is rid of his ego."[1] This is repeated by Guru Amardas when he says, *"Jivan mukta* ... is not riddled with the malady of ego."[2] Thus the all-inclusive characteristic is that the a *jivan mukta* has no consciousness of itself as separate from others and from the underlying source of all. I-ness and mine-ness is the end result of the consciousness of individuation and separation. When this separative awareness gives way to unitive consciousness, by the expansion of consciousness, the self is said to have overcome the *houmai.*

(2) The *jivan mukta* has also dispelled ignorance and darkness.[3] This, however, directly follows from the eradication of consciousness of the ego since the person under the grip of the ego is declared by the Guru to be stark ignorant and this is overcome by *the jivan mukta.*[4]

(3) Apart from the above all-comprehensive characteristic of the realized self there is a mention of other noteworthy features. A *jivan mukta is* said to have erased all vices. As Guru Nanak puts it, "And erased is the vice of one's mind . . . and one becomes a *jivan mukta.*"[5] At another place he repeats the same when he says, *"The jivan mukta* is free because he has got rid of the vice and his virtues redeem him."[6] Such a free one, according to the Guru, is rare. "He forsakes the world's evil, bitter to him they taste."[7]

(4) The realized self is also said to have complete control

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[1] *Ibid.*, Maru M. 1 (7-2), p. 1010. *Jivan mukta so jānia jis vichoṇ houmai jae.*

[2] *Ibid.*, Maru M. 3 (9-5-14), p. 1058. *Jivan mukta. . . houmai rog nā tahaya.*

[3] *Ibid.*, Dhanasri M. 5 (4-2-20), p. 675. *Binas yal andhiara.*

[4] *Ibid.*, Maru M. 1 (7-2), p. 1010.

[5] *Ibid.*, Ramkali M. 1 (4-3), p. 904. *Durmut parhari. . . jivan mukta gut anter pie.*

[6] *Ibid.*, Rāmkali M. 1, Siddha Goṣt (39), p. 942.

[7] *Ibid.*, Gaudi M. 1 (1-11), p. 224.

over himself.[1] He is not affected by the disturbing imbalances.

(5) The ideal self-control of the *jivan mukta* is described in the traditional terms. He is said to have the capacity to regard "pain and pleasure, poison and nectar, honour and dishonour, king and commoner, alike."[2] He can regard both shade and sunshine as the same.[3] Here we should not confuse the *jivan mukti* with any pathological state of apathy but it characterises realized self's capacity, his power of self-control and his ability to control and to regulate the seemingly powerful sway of all these attractions and repulsions. In this the *jivan mukta* reaches the ideal state. Thus, realized self is one who looks upon "pain and pleasure alike"[4] because it is more powerful than these attractive or repulsive valances. A similar view about *jivan mukta* is expressed by Sri Sankaracharya in his *Ātmabodha.* He tells us, "A yogi, who is a *jivan mukta,* after crossing the ocean of delusion and killing the monsters of passion and aversion, becomes united with Peace . . ."[5]

(6) A *jivan mukta* is described as having risen above *treh-guṇ*[6] (three modes) in which, according to the Saṁkhya School of Indian Philosophy, the whole world is entangled and to the operation of which every one is subjected. In rising above the operation of these modes the realized self may be said to be detached from the things of the world, though the Guru tells us that he does not relinquish his social participation. It is in this sense that Guru Nanak states that he has no fear of contamination in the house as was the notion of those who renounced the household. Even Sankara was of the view that realization of the ideal is possible only in the fourth *aśrama* (stage of life), namely *sannyāsa.*

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[1] *Ibid.*, Prabhati M. 1 (7-2), p. 1343. *Jap tap sanjam... Jivan mukta ja śabad sunaya.*

[2] *Ibid.*, Gauḍi M. 5 (7-9), Sloka, p. 275. *Jivan mukta soī kahave, tesa harkh tesa os sog.*

[3] *Ibid.*, Rāmkali M. 1 (24), p. 932.

[4] *Ibid.*, Malhār M. 1 (3-5) p. 1255.

[5] Sri Sankaracharya, *Ātmabodha*, tr., Swami Nikhilananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math. 1947), p. 207.

[6] *Ādi Granth*, Gauḍi M. 3 (3-7), p. 232. *Jivan mukta gurmukh ko hoi... treh gun maite nirmal soi.*

Guru Nanak, however, points out that a *jivan mukta* is not one who leaves the household and moves away from social participation. There is no such necessity of leaving society and taking recourse to the forest. According to Guru Nanak such a man remains detached within the house.[1] This is a significant point of departure from the traditional division of life into four stages in the ethics of the Hindus in which the ideal would be realized only when a person completely renounces the social context and proceeds to a life away from the humdrum of life and its vicissitudes. In Sikhism, while the need for a change in attitude is accepted, the context of this change is required to be social. The person is expected to continue to work for his fellow beings.

(7) Such a *jivan mukta* is humble and has not the slightest vestige of pride in him. According to Bhai Gurdas, the *jivan mukta* has reduced himself to the dust of the feet of others and has thus died in life.[2]

(8) The author of *Gurpratap Surya* mentions that the capacity to face events with equanimity is a sign of having overcome the sway of different valances (*bhaṇa manana man thir kīje*).[3] This is one of the three important states of the *mukta.* The second state, namely the removal from the mind of the consciousness of separation (*tunhanta ko ride bisroṇa),* has already been discussed above. The third aspect refers to the positive realization and will be dealt with when we take up the positive aspect.

**Positive aspect of jivan mukti**

The positive aspect *of jivan mukti,* that is, freedom while living in a body, may now be viewed from various aspects. This is the highest state a person can and ought to realize while in the existential state.

(1) The *jivan mukta* is identified as a person in whom the Gurus' wisdom is awakened. He is said to be awake night and

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[1] *Ibid.,* Rāmkali M. 1, Siddha Goṣti (39), p. 942.

[2] Bhai Gurdas, Vārs, stanza 16, Vār 18.

[3] "Gurpratap Surya," Raś 3, 68. Ed. Kahan Singh, *Gurmutsudhākar,* para 1019.

day which signifies the perfection of his consciousness. His intellectual apparatus is fully serviceable and reaches its zenith. All this comes through his reflection on the Guru's word.[1]

In contradistinction to the person who has lost his thinking power the *jivan mutka* is all reflection.[2] This reflection, apart from intellectual function, involves reflection on the source of all consciousness and existence, namely *Nām.* The *jivan mukta,* according to the Guru, reflects on this universal consciousness *Nām.* The state of feedom while in the phenomenal body signifies this vastness of consciousness which *the jivan mukta* acquires by his contemplation of the Ground of all consciousness. This refers to the purification of mind as well as the ideal state of consciousness which a self is capable of,[3] and may be described as mergence in the Absolute.[4] It is this sense of cognitive perfection of the *jivan mukta* which is alluded to by Bhai Gurdas when he speaks of the *jivan mukta* as "wise within but innocent without."[5] This is when the self reaches the ideal state of consciousness.

The *jivan mukta* is said to know himself because he knows the self.[6] It has searched the deepest recesses within in order to know itself. *The jivan mukta* is wise as this "essence of the self *(ātma)* is known only by the wise in the Absolute."[7] Guru Nanak asks, "What kind is the man of wisdom ?" He himself answers, "He who knows himself, knows alone."[8] Guru Arjan Dev remarks that "millions are seekers of God and reach it in their very self and forsure meet it ."[9]

This knowledge, however, is not the knowledge of the self

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Rāmkali M. 1 (5-3), p. 904.

[2] *Ibid.,* Maru M. 1 (7-2), p. 1010.

[3] *Ibid.,* Malhār M. 3 (3-5) p. 1259.

[4] *Ibid.,* Maru M. 3 (9-5-14), p. 1058. *Har seo sad he rahe sama.*

[5] Bhai Gurdas, *Vār,* stanza 17, Vārs 4.

[6] *Ādi Granth,* Sloka M. 3 (1-12), 87. *Ātma nu ātma di pratīt.*

[7] *Ibid.,* Sukhamaṇi M. 5 (3-8), p. 272.

[8] *Ibid.,* Shri Rāg M. 1 (4-30). p. 25 *Āp pacchane bujhe soi, Gurprasād kare vichār, so giāni dargaha pravān. Cf., also Āp pacchanbas dea vichāra... āvan jān chukaya. Ibid.,* Maru M. 1 (7-2-19), p. 1040.

[9] *Ibid.,* Gauḍi Sukhmaṇi M. 5 (6-10), p. 276.

as an independent and autonomous entity but as the reality to be One (*ek pacchata*).[1] The highest knowledge, therefore, is the knowledge of non-duality. In this we may recognise Sikhism to have some affinity to the traditional non-dualistic traditions of India.

(2) The second aspect of this realization is the affective communion of the *jivan mukta* with the Absolute. This communion is identified as love *(prem, prīt* and *pyār).* The Guru stresses this realization through the use of symbols. He says, "In the cage of love, the parrot utters the words of love, and it pecks at Truth [In the sense in which we have defined truth earlier] and nectar. And when it flies out, it comes not back again, door of emancipation is opened unto it,"[2] He is said to "merge in the Spiritul through love."[3]

The stress on the love-realization is a very prominent feature of Sikhism. It may be traced to the devotional element in Sikhism. The love is noticed in a different ethical background by the ethicist, Nicolai Hartmann. He calls it the love of the remote, which in his scale, appears after the love of the nearest (altruism); the love of the nearest in itself having transcended the self-love (egoism). According to him the "Love of the remotest seeks different measure of efficiency which will last. It is Plato's immortal virtues."[4] In Sikhism it is not the love of the remotest as it contributes to the theory of spiritual constituent in the self, though it agrees with Hartmann when the latter considers this love to be higher than self-love.

The supreme value accorded to love, as one of the fundamentals of the positive aspect of realization, is seen throughout the *Ādi Granth.* Guru Nanak says, "Of what avail is the human birth when one loves not devotion to one's God ; fruitless are one's eats and wears if one be ridden with the sense of the other (to God)."[5] In Christianity, in a similar vein St. Paul proclaims, "And

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[1] *Ibid.*, Maru Solhas, M. 4 (15-1), p. 1070.

[2] *Ibid.*, Maru M. 1 (3-2), p. 1010.

[3] *Ibid.*, Gaudi M. 1 (1-11), p. 224.

[4] Nicolai Hartmann, *op. cit.*, 318.

[5] *Ādi Granth.* Sloka left over from the Vārs, Sloka M. 1, p. 1411.

though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could move mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing."[1] The accent on love in the passages cited from the *Ādi Granth* and the Christian *Bible* shows some similarity of approach in the two traditions. A similar longing and realization is expressed by a Sūfi poet, Ibrahim Adam, who sings, "O God, Thou knowest that in mine eyes the eight paradises weigh no more than the wing of a gnat compared with the honour which Thou hast shown me in giving me Thy Love, or that familiarity which Thou hast given to me by the commemoration of Thy Name, or that freedom from all else which Thou has vouchsafed to me when I meditate on the Greatness of Thy Glory."[2] A similar declaration by the Guru was noticed by us earlier. He reiterates it when he says, "I seek no dominion or pearls either, for I crave nothing but the love of thy lotus-feet."[3]

What is this love, which appears to be so intense, so overpowering, so soothing and which is shown to be of great ultimate value? The answer to this question is not easy as this love *par excellance* belongs essentially to the realm of experience. It is a feeling which cannot be explained by anyone other than the one who experiences it and even in his case the whole description is riddled with mystic expressions.

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[1] St Paul, I Cor. 13.2 and 3. tr. adopted here from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (The Fontana Library, 1964), p. 49.

[2] Edward G. Brown, *A Literary History of Persian Literature under Tartar Domination, 1265-1502* (Cambridge : University Press, 1920), Vol. I. p. 425.

[3] *Ādi Granth*, Devgandhāri M. 5 (2-3-29), p. 534. Sometimes scholars render the word *mukt* in this passage as salvation rather than as pearl. The term, however, can be understood as pearl, crown and also in the sense of *mukti*. But in case the term is to be understood in (the last sense, it can only be taken to refer to the negative aspect of salvation, as love in itself is the constituent of the positive aspect of salvation or freedom. In Sikhism, the mere 'freedom from' is considered inferior and the scholars might be having this 'freedom from' in mind while rendering the above *mukt* in the sense of salvation.

We may say, it is a feeling of abandon, a feeling of comforting closeness, a feeling of attainment, all of which expressions, we may be conscious, fail miserably in communicating it. And yet, it is not doubted that it is described to be the highly valuable experience, one which ranks among the ultimate. As pointed out by a scholar of Christianity, Clement C.J. Webb, "Jesus, in the Gospel of Mark, in answer to the question as to which commandment is the first of all, replied as follows, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."[1] We have already referred to the teaching of the Gurus who place love among the ultimate, the positive aspect of those liberated while in existential life. The stress on it is seen in the views of another Christian scholar who explains, "Love now becomes the superior ethos of the personal, which perfects and completes the inferior ethos of the purely real and institutional."[2] Later, the scholar shows love to mean the same thing as "the revelation of God."[3] Similarly the Guru says, "When I see my beloved God . . . and I utter, O Love, O Love."[4]

We may notice some features of this love as under : (1) This love arises, not out of fear, but from a sense of thankfulness. Guru Tegh Bahadur says, "You have been blest with the body and riches, thou lovest not the Giver."[5] In a similar tone, it is again said, "He who gave you body, riches, happiness and beauteous mansions, why are you not attuned to Him ?"[6]

(2) However, this love is not for the sake of seeking rewards. It may be born of a sense of gratitude but it is not *for* seeking things here or hereafter. A love which is the love for gaining something is declared to be vain. Guru Nanak says, "They who make business of their love vain is their love."[7]

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[1] Clement C.J. Webb, *The Contribution of Christianity to Ethics* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1932), p. 15. The Gospel of Mark quoted is xii, 28 ff.

[2] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *op. cit.,* pp. 49-50.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[4] *Ādi Granth,* Tukhari M. 4 (2-11), pp. 1113-1114.

[5] *Ibid.*, Sloka M. 9 (7) p. 1426.

[6] *Ibid.*, Sloka M. 9 (8) p. 1426.

[7] *Ibid.*, Sloka left from Vārs M. 1 (21), p. 1411.

(3) The demand of love may be strenuous. It requires persistence and continuity. A person who is discouraged and distracted is not in love. Guru Arjan Dev says, "They alone love their God who turn not away from Him . . . Yea, the men of false love fall off (on the way) for they know not the love-way."[1]

(4) Love would demand sacrifice and there is no backing out for a person who loves in this manner. It is his commitment. Jesus Christ has depicted the consummation of love by his supreme sacrifice. Guru Nanak also points out the need for being prepared to sacrifice all for this love. This involves a complete transcendence of the ago or the ego-consciousness. Guru Nanak tells us, "If thou are zealous of playing Love, then enter upon my path with thy head on thy palm. Once thou have set thy feet on this way, then find not a way out, and lay down thy head."[2] In a different background the need for sacrifice in love is highlighted by Hartmann when he says, "It is the abandonment of the present for what is future, uncertain; the sacrifice of his life for another life, for one more valuable, but one that is not his own."[3] According to the Gurus, it is abandonment of any consideration for one's self. It is simply a committal towards the love of the Spiritual.

(5) The gurus say that even worship is the love-worship which is known as *prema bhakti;* again quoting Guru Nanak, "Worship through love and burn your sense of worldly attachment, and see only but One, for there is not another."[4]

(6) The spirit in which the person in love proceeds is utter humility and the same is reflected in his love-realization. He has no pride of his achievements. He approaches love with the conviction that he has not earned merit through them. The spirit ought to be, "I have practised not meditation, nor austerity, nor self-control, nor righteous deeds, but I have cherished in the mind your

[1] *Ibid.,* Sloka M. 5, p. 1412. Cf., also, "He, in whose heart abides the *Nām,* his mind is held, and night and day he keeps faith with his love." *Ibid.,* Sloka M. 1 (1-14), p. 352.

[2] *Ibid.,* Slokas left over from the Vārs, M. 1, p. 1411.

[3] Nicolai Hartmann, *op. cit;* pp. 314-315.

[4] *Ādi Granth,* Sloka M. 1, p. 355.

*Nām,* O Lord, I know not a thing, for little is my wisdom; Nanak prays to thee, O God, I lean on thee."[1] Such a characteristic is peculiar to Sikhism in contradistinction to certain Sūfis, who under the ecstasy *(wajad),* give expression to a sort of frenzy. In Sikhism, while proceeding towards this love as well as while in communion with it a person radiates humility and equipoise.

(7) The expression as well as possession of equipoise is stressed throughout the *Ādi Granth.* Guru Amardas says, "O *chatrik,* utter thou the word, in poise loving the true word, and thou will see everything within thee."[2] In a similar tone Guru Ramdas says, "True is the love of the God-conscious being, through which one attains one's true God, and one is ever in bliss and merges in equipoise."[3]

(8) Love is said to make a person fearless. It is this characteristic which we noticed in the second chapter as well as in the discussion of virtues. We discovered the great stress laid on the need to be fearless. Here we find that this fearlessness arises out of love. Guru Nanak says, "If love is your feed, your doubt and fear disappear; when the Glorious Lord stands at your door, no one can break into your home."[4] This love thus dispels all anxiety and fear of being overtaken again by the failings of finitude. The radiance of the love of the Spiritual makes a person face up to any event.

(9) This love is *wismād,* the aesthetic communion of self with the Spiritual. All that has been said about love is true about *wismād.* It has an element of wonder, the wonder inspired, by the vastness of the love for the Spiritual. The Gurus, however, use interchangeably the two, love and aesthetic communion, in synonymous meanings. The Guru says that everything is *wismād* and thus identifies it with the whole of the existence.[5] While commenting on this Sher Singh says, "...then God is *wismād,* the world is *wismād* and the self is *wismād* and thus all the three merge into the state of *wismād.*"[6]

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[1] *Ibid.,* Āsa M. 5 (4-18-69), p. 388.

[2] *Ibid.,* Sloka M. 3 (56), p. 1420.

[3] *Ibid;* Sloka M 4 (10), p. 1422.

[4] *Ibid.,* Sloka M. 1, p. 355.

[5] Ibid., Thitti Gauḍi M. 4 (11), p. 299, *Nanak sabh wismād.*

[6] Sher Singh. *op. cit.,* p. 239.

(10) We have already referred to *Nām* as the universal consciousness. According to Sher Singh, *Nām is* the "sympathetic and aesthetic communion of man with man and environments." He explains further, "Love and aesthetic appreciation form its basis."[1] This may lead us to conclude that judged from the affective aspect, love is the most important response, if we may say so, the ultimate and the all-comprehensive response of the *jivan mukta* which indicates his aesthetic communion with the Spiritual. This communion is expressed through liv,[2] which is defined by the above scholar as "the continuous feeling of Unity."

Lastly, we may notice that according to the Guru, love indicates the absence of all vices. Guru Arjan Dev says, "His love is so strong that it has overwhelmed all my vices."[3] This would, naturally, take us to the next part of our analysis, namely the actions of the *jivan mukta.*

We may now take for analysis the third aspect of *jivan mukta,* that is, his realization as indicated in his actions.

(1) The all-comprehensive realization in the sphere of actions, according to the Guru, is the altruistic activity of the *jivan mukta.* This is called his *rahit* (the conduct). Guru Nanak remarks, "When one dwells on the word, one's mind flows out to serve the others . . . On hearing Guru's word, one becomes *jivan mukta.* His conduct is pious (or true) and he is ever in bliss."[4] In fact the test of the spiritual realization is in the conduct of the person, and this conduct of the *jivan mukta* is said to be *sacha,* in terms of which we have identified the moral standard in the present book.

(2) Even the contemplation of the One is said to be through deeds. Guru Nanak says, "If one disciplines the mind . . . and through deeds contemplates the true One, then he is ever detached."[5] The contemplation is thus not an idler's contemplation

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 242.

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Basant M. 1 (6-4), p. 1189. *Āp pachāne rahe liv lāge, Janam jeet gurmut dukh bhāge.*

[3] *Ibid.*, Kedara M. 5 (2-1-9), p. 1121.

[4] *Ibid.*, Prabhati M.1 (8-2), p. 1343, *Jivan mukt ja sabad sunya, sachi rahit sacha sukh paya.*

[5] *Ibid.*, Bilawal M.1 (Thitti) (10), p. 839.

but a contemplation of deeds. The stress on the practice is also quite prominent in the teaching of Guru Amardas when he says, *"jivan mukta* is one who practises the word of the Guru."[1]

(3) According to the Guru, actions are reflected through the attitude of self towards others. Among others, the actions which he calls forgiveness, are the characteristic of a person named by the Guru as emancipated.[2] He has no inclination for vengeance. His actions, therefore, are completely free from bitterness which a person may harbour if he does not forgive others. In a similar vein Jesus Christ has said, "Forgive them for they know not." This is the broad spirit of the actions of the *jivan mukta.* Actions of forgiveness are the actions of ego-transcendence. A person riddled with the desire for vengeance is a person loaded with ego-consciousness. Actions of forgiveness are the same as those of charity. True charity is the response of the person which implies overlooking the faults of others even when those may appear to have a bearing on him. It is then that the actions of a *jivan mukta* may show their superiority over the actions of a person charged with ego-consciousness.

(4) Actions *(kār)* of the realized self are, according to the Guru, in accordance with the universal will *(hukm)*[3] which we had earlier described as good will or rather holy will as operating within him. At the stage of final realization actions of the self are declared to be in complete harmony with *hukm.* The conduct *of the jivan mukta* or the realized self, therefore, attains the highest moral perfection and goodness.

We have seen that in Sikhism there is a great stress on the moral aspect of the human action. The Guru says that a realized self can do no evil.[4] We may, therefore, not agree with the author of the *Premsumārag* who seems to suggest that at this stage the distinction between moral and immoral is also lost.[5] The writings

[1] *Ibid.,* Maru M.3 (9-5-14), p. 1058.

[2] *Ibid.,* Gaudi M.1 (1-7), p. 223.

[3] *Ibid.,* Japji (37), p. 8.

[4] *Ibid.,* Gaudi Sukhmani M.5 (3-8), p. 272. *Braham giāni te kachoo bura na bhaya.*

[5] *Premsumārag* ed., Randhir Singh, p. 135.

of the Gurus are very clear on this point. The citation above, that the realized self can do no evil,[1] is an unequivocal indicator that such a moral laxity as suggested by the author under reference is grossly against the spirit and moral teaching of Sikhism. It is perhaps for this reason that Bhai Kahan Singh has not included the last chapter of the *Premsumārag* in the copy edited by him in the *Gurmutsudhākar.* The possibility of this part having been interpolated at some stage cannot also be ruled out.

The realized self, or *jivan mukta,* is, therefore, realized from all aspects. The three aspects of his personality, namely cognitive, affective and conative reflect this realization.[2]

### 7.4: Jivan mukta and Bliss

We may now ask the question whether or not the *jivan mukta* realizes bliss. The question is necessary because we had noted earlier that he is completely detached from the feeling of pain and pleasure, and we may like to know whether he rises above even bliss which is generally distinguished from sensual pleasure and pain. In case he transcends even bliss we may conclude that the *jivan mukta* is ushered into a void.

However, we find that, according to the Gurus, the realized self is Bliss and thus *jivan mukta* does not exist in any abandoned land of void and nothingness. On this point Guru Nanak says, "When the soul realizes the Absolute, it is bliss."[3]

The realization of Bliss is due to the fact that the Absolute is Bliss and when the *jiva* realizes the Absolute, it itself is unfettered Bliss. Guru Ramdas expresses this view when he says, "Those who know the true Guru, know the God to be One alone, and see Him, the Blissful to pervade all over, and they know their self

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Gaudi Sukhmani M.5 (3-8), p. 272.

[2] It may be proper to add here that as all these aspects reflect the ultimate realization, and all of these participate in the highest attainment, the Gurus sometimes may refer to any one alone in terms of the highest realization. From any such reference we should not form the idea that the Gurus regard any one particular aspect, so referred to, as the only clue to the realization.

[3] *Ādi Granth,* Maru M.1 (7-1-18), p. 1039.

and attain unto supreme Bliss."[1] Guru Ramdas also repeats, "Lord, the Embodiment of Bliss came into my heart."[2] Similarly Guru Arjan Dev says, "When I examined myself, I revelled in Bliss."[3] All this points to the fact that according to the Gurus the Absolute is of the nature of Bliss and as the self in essence is not different from it, on realization it is also Bliss.

Bliss indicates the realization of the love as well. According to Guru Ramdas, "True is the love of the God-conscious being, through which one attains one's true God. And one is ever in Bliss and merges in equipoise."[4] Bliss reflects the transformation of the egoitry will by the universal, good will.[5]

This view of Sikhism distinguishes it from Nyāya school of Indian philosophy.[6] However, a similar view of Bliss as the realization of the *jivan mukta* may be found in the teaching of Sankara when he says that the *"jivan mukta* realizes Bliss on his realization of his true nature as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss."[7]

### 7.5: Realization after destruction of the body

Ultimate Realization, that is, realization unencumbered by the body, is viewed in Sikhism from two aspects. Speaking negatively, it is identified as cessation of transmigration. It is also variously described as end of coming and going, or overcoming the round. The positive aspect is called mergence of light in Light. It is also called union.

Guru Amardas says, "The true fare is God's true love, for through the true *Nām* one gathers Bliss. And so being Bliss, one lives eternally and is not cast in the womb again. And one's soul merges in the over-soul of the True One."[8] This passage quite clearly

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[1] *Ibid.*, Maru Solhas M.4 (15-1), p. 1070.

[2] *Ibid.*, Sorath M.4 (2-7), p. 607.

[3] *Ibid.*, Gaudi M.5 (2-38-107), p. 187.

[4] *Ibid.*, Sloka M.4, p. 1422.

[5] *Ibid.*, Sloka M.5, p. 1425.

[6] S. K. Maitra, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

[7] Sri Sankaracharya, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

[8] *Ādi Granth*, Sūhi M.3, p. 769.

points out to the two aspects of this realization. One is that a *jiva* is not born again in this world. The second and positive aspect is that it is united with God and thus realizes its supreme ideal.

That the realization after cessation of existential life is a continuation of liberation experienced by the. *Jivan mukta is* fortified by a declaration of Guru Amardas. He says that the one who dies while alive is blessed, because he cherishes truth in the heart through the Guru's word. It is further said that truth is the feed of such a God-conscious being, and his life is stainless, his mind is devoid of evil. He is an ocean of virtues. Consequently, he comes not, nor goes and he is born not to die again.[1] We may, therefore, say that the path of a person from *jivan mukta* to the mergence in the over-Light marks a continuity. It is perhaps due to this fact that the same expression, mergence of light in Light, is also used by the Gurus to designate realisation even when the person is living an embodied life. Thus we find Guru Nanak declaring, "If the soul of man merges in the over-Soul, and the mind is attuned to the higher mind . . . ,"[2] also, "... then one's light merges in the All-Light . . . and one is filled with ecstasy for he has wisdom to love . . . "[3] In a similar tone, Guru Amardas says, "And my light has merged with the All-Light and my mind is happy."[4] Now certainly in all these passages, the Gurus are not referring to realization after leaving the body, because then the reference here to wisdom and the mind being happy would simply not be understood. The only alternative interpretation is that the Gurus in these passages are referring to the realized person while embodied *(jivan mukta).* The above passages, however, make it clear that for the Gurus the most important characteristic is the union—the same which is expressed as mergence of light in Light. And once the *jiva* realizes this union, the self transcends the consciousness of ego and emerges as *jivan mukta.* The factor of body, then, is immaterial. And as both the aspects have this important characteristic,

[1] *Ibid.*, Basant M.3 (2-9), p. 1175.

[2] *Ibid.*, Sri Rāg (2-20), p. 21.

[3] *Ibid.*, Āsa M.1 (5-1), p. 411.

[4] *Ibid.*, Mājh M.3 (3-24-25), p. 124.

namely ego-transcendence, common to them, the Gurus refer to them by the same expression, of light merging in Light.

We find direct reference to the realized self when it is said that, "Contemplation of the blissful God releases you from the round of births and deaths."[1] Guru Ramdas says about the same, "His light is blended with the All-Light, and he attains to God . . . and mounts to the supreme state."[2]

In this Sikhism may be seen to have close affinity with the traditional view in India, such as, the one expressed by Sankara. According to him also, "On destruction of the *upadhīs* [conditions] he, the contemplative one, is totally absorbed in Viśnu, the All-pervading Spirit, like water in water, space in space, and light in light."[3] In Sikhism, this ultimate light is not identified as Viśnu, which is also the name of a Hindu deity, but the Absolute is simply termed Light as in *"Joti jot samāna"* or *"milna"*. It may, however, be argued that Sankara did not have that particular deity in mind when he used the name *Viśnu* but that he was simply providing a familiar name for the Universal Form or Absolute. It is a tragedy of human frailty and ego that too great stress is laid on names and too little on the spirit. The moment one finds that the universal principle is being referred to by the name, as current in some other religions, the ego or separativeness surges forth accompanied by a sense of rejection of the notion so named. The Gurus, in Sikhism, therefore, appear to be anxious to avoid the arousal of this resistance and rejection by either using the neutral terms like Light or by using names which were current in all religions, without accepting any division of gods or deities. The stress is on One Absolute, in terms of which every one is related and, which every one ought to realize.

### 7.6 : Path of Spiritual progress : Various Khands

It is interesting to notice the process of realization in Sikhism

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[1] *Ibid.*, Sārang M.5 (2-66-89), p. 1221.

[2] *Ibid.*, Āsa M.4 (1-5.12), p. 446.

[3] Sri Sankaracharya, *op. cit.*, p. 209. In Sikhism, also the same expression is very often used, for example, "as water mergeth in water, so doth his light merge in All-Light" *Ādi Granth*, Gaudi Sukhmani, M.5 (8-11), p. 278.

as described by Guru Nanak at the end of Japji in the *Ādi Granth.* The process comprising of the *khands,* generally rendered by scholars as levels or stages, is very important for the understanding of ethico-spiritual progress of man. It may, however, be submitted here that it has not received the proper attention which it deserves. Scholars generally emulate each other in hurriedly referring to the *khands* without pausing to analyse them or the spirit of their description. In recent times even the heading of these *khands* are taken for granted without examining the possibility of any other explanation. Description of the *khands* has consequently suffered at the hands of these scholars who in their hurry to arrive at some conclusion have not considered it necessary to pay any serious attention to them. The description in these *khands,* however, may in a way be explained as the broad summary of the ethico-spiritual process which we have been discussing so far.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that in Buddhism we find the various stages of spiritual progress, namely *Bhumīs.*[1] which are four and eight, in Mahayana and Hinayana, respectively. In a way, *aśramādharma* of the Hindus also describes the various stages of spiritual progress. The difference in this respect, however, lies in the fact that in Sikhism the *khands* do not stand for controls as in Buddhism, nor can they be described as division of life as implied in *aśramādharma.*

**Preliminary analysis of the khands**

Let us first make preliminary observations about the *khands* and then follow them by their analysis to discover their real nature.

The process of realization described in these *khands* is a five-fold movement. When we add to it the 'pre-dimensional movement, mentioned by Guru Nanak, in the passage preceding their description, the total folds appear as six. These may be counted as, (a) the pre dimension. No specific name is given to it by Guru Nanak, but it is the most crucial one as it describes the spirit in

[1] N. Dutta, *Aspects of Mahayana Buddhism and its relation to Hinayana* (London: Luzac & Co., 1930), p. 238.

which the seeker is to proceed. It is somewhat on the pattern of *pre-bhumī* (stage) in Buddhism; (b) the *dharam khand,* generally rendered as region of customary or conventional morality; (c) the *giān khand,* the cognitive dimension; also called knowledge dimension; (d) the *saram khand,* the aesthetic dimension; (e) the *karam khand,* the action dimension and (f) the *sach khand,* the integrative apex, (the Truth).

Thus we can see that the field of realization is six-fold. But then it may be possible for us to discern that the first two and the last one may not be called dimensions in the sense in which the remaining three can be so named. The first, namely the pre-dimensional, is a pointer to the spirit of progress and while it may be very crucial for the progress, it is, in itself, not an independent dimension. Again the second, namely the *dharam khand,* the field of customary morality—as it is described by Sohan Singh[1]—is an urgent reminder that a person must accept the duties of the situation in which he is placed, before he embarks on the voyage of self-realization. We shall refer to it later also but here we may only submit that it denotes the contextual requirement of the person who is to set out on the trail of spiritual progress. We must concede the great importance of this requirement also but may as well notice that in signifying the necessity of performing duties, it may not be taken as a dimension of progress. Thus while acknowledging its mention as a *khand* and a very important *khand,* it may not be necessary to regard it as a dimension of spiritual progress if it signifies only the "region of conventional morality" as referred above.

We may now elaborate the earlier remarks about the apex, namely, the *sach khand.* It is the ideal which a person is to realize. It may be mentioned here that Guru Nanak does not speak of it separately but joins it with the *karam khand* which could be taken to mean that it is not an independent dimension but stands to represent the integration of all the three aspects, namely the knowledge-dimension, the aesthetic-dimension and the action-di-

[1] Sohan Singh, *op. cit.,* p. 96.

mension. The provision of the *sach khand* shows that all these are not isolatory but are integrated. The *sach khand,* thus, is the apex which indicates the integration and harmonisation of the three—cognitive, affective and conative dimensions of progress. As the indicator of the colligation of these all, the *sach khand* stands for highest perfection. It is a sort of collet in which these three are held. In terms of context the *sach khand* is not any transcendental region but denotes our familiar field of human drama and endeavour, that is, in our own present context. In terms of perfection it is the highest since it is described as the abode of the Absolute, *vāse Niraṇkār.* It is not a separate dimension of development but represents a unifying or integrative state, binding together, in zenith, the three-dimensional progress.

We are consequently left with three dimensions, namely the *giān khand,* the *saram khand and* the *karam khand,* which, respectively, are knowledge-dimension, aesthetic-dimension and actiondimension. With this preliminary observations into the background, let us now examine the various *khands*—dimensions—in detail.

### 7.7 : The pre-khand stage

*The pre-khand,* as noted earlier in this book, is a very important aspect of the ethico-spiritual progress in Sikhism. Guru Nanak, just before the commencement of the various *khands,* lays down the attitude in which the moral agent is to proceed. It demands a certain view point or achievement from the person setting out on this journey of moral transformation. It requires the acceptance of some basic truths which may purge the moral agent's mind of certain wrong notions and create in him a certain receptivity. This is the stage of initial mental renunciation, the renunciation of I-ness or mine-ness or the efficacy of certain things which one may have been long accustomed to.

According to Guru Nanak,[1] the seeker ought to accept at this stage that "it is not in our power to speak nor in our power to keep silent. It is neither in our power to seek nor in our power to

[1] *Adi Granth,* Japji (33), p. 7.

give. It is neither in our power to be born (or to live) nor in our power to die. It is not in our power to have consciousness, knowledge and reflection. The way to cross the sea of existence is not in our power. He[1] (referring to the Absolute) has the power and He is the doer. None is high or low." The Guru here requires the seeker to accept the spirit or notion that it is not within his power to do any thing. Every thing is happening according to certain laws which may be called divine grace. None is high or low for this grace. We will discuss the Sikh view of grace in the *karam khand.* Here it suffices to say that the person undertaking this journey accepts the belief that the whole of ethico-spiritual progress, which he is about to undertake, is a matter of divine grace and not alone due to his own power. There is no room for pride here. The notion that I have the power is a false belief.

We find a similar requirement, in a different background; in Buddhism, for example, the seeker is required to shed this false notion in the *Pre-bhumī* stage, that is, the stage prior to the commencement of the spiritual progress. A *Puthujjana* is denned in the *Majjhima Nikaya* as "one who labours under the delusion of I-ness and mine-ness. Not knowing the true law, he develops attachment to things which he should avoid."[2] Likewise, in Sikhism in the *pre-khand* stage the seeker must accept his insignificance in the total scheme and realize that the whole universe is working according to the laws identified as divine grace. The renunciation is that of the efficacy of ego[3] or any claim to an exception from

[1] Bhai Vir Singh interprets *jis* in this stanza as the person and not God and converts the whole proposition into a challenge, "He who regards that he is power behind all these acts, let him act and see its uselessness" *(Santhya Guru Granth,* p. 161). We may submit that a challenge at this stage seems to be against the spirit of the whole passage. The seeker is commencing the journey and when he has been asked to renounce certain false notions, he may not be asked to go back to empirically validate it. In fact the disciple here is already taken to be prepared to traverse the journey of spiritual progress and reach the apex. The term *jis,* therefore, is used here for the Absolute or Omnipotent.

[2] N. Dutta, *Aspects of Mahayana Buddhism and Its relation to Hinayana* (London: Lucaz & Co., 1930), pp. 248-49.

[3] Cf., also, *Sabh gun tere mai nahi koi.* All the excellences are Thine, none are mine, *Ādi Granth,* Japji (21).

the working of the Law. The *pre-khand* stage, therefore, must be considered to be a difficult one as the seeker has to re-orient his attitude. In spite of its great importance this stage, however, has not received the attention it deserves. This stage is, to a great extent, the turning point: central and key to the whole journey. The person who may entertain any pride, whether of secular power or spiritual power, and consider himself higher and others lower, is, according to the above description a person who is not yet fit to commence even the first stage of the progress. Another thing to be noted is that the seeker may be accepting this truth at this stage on the testimony of the teacher though in the *giān khand* he may see directly that every thing is working according to certain laws, which are called by us divine grace and which laws do not permit exceptions.

We may now commence the analysis of the next dimension, namely the *dharam khand.*

### 7.8 : The dharam khand

We now come to the first khand mentioned as such by Guru Nanak by the name *dharam khand.*[1] *The* term *dharam* is derived from the root *dhṛ* which signifies "to sustain or uphold." Historically we see that the word is used in some passages of the *Ṛg Veda.* However, during the Vedic period another term *Ṛta* was also used and this carried some moral sense as well which appeared to be lacking in the case of the word *dharma. Ṛta* not only indicated the set and fixed course of natural events and objects like morning, evening, moon and sun but it came to acquire some moral reference also when it came to be generally accepted that any violation of *Ṛta* was an evil or sin. Gradually, however, the notion of *Ṛta* was superseded and the term *dharma* came to acquire the moral content of *Ṛta* also.[2] The development in the notion of *dharma*

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[1] *Ibid.,* Japji (34), p. 7. In Punjabi dharma is written as dharam.

[2] V.P. Varma, *Studies in Hindu Political Thought and Its Metaphysical Foundations* (Banaras: Moti Lal Banarsi Dass n.d.), pp. 80-87. "The moral significance that it (*Ṛta*) had was slowly attached to the concept of *Dharma* which by far became the more important and meaningful concept."

and its gradual expansion in connotation is witnessed as such in the period of the *Brahmaṇās* and the *Upaniśads*.

Now when we come to Sikhism, *dharam* appears to signify both the meanings, namely the laws according to which the objects of nature are working in their rhythmic uniformity, as well as performing the function as exemplified in the socially approved precepts. The common element may thus be seen as the performance of function which is given a moral context. In the stanza where the *dharrn khand* occurs in the *Ādi Granth* the background is that of various forces of nature working with regularity. Days, nights, seasons, dates, days of the week, air, water, heat, nether regions and other events are mentioned as the context in which *dharti* (the earth, from the same root as *dhṛ* from which *dharam* is also derived) is set up for the performance of one's duty. The Guru says that there are many types of creatures and there are many ways of these creatures. Their names are numerous. Each one is viewed in terms of his actions or functions. Following Sohan Singh, we had earlier called it the region of conventional morality. We may now slightly modify it to say that here duties are accepted in terms of voluntarily accepted social functions. It is the sort of moral situation in which every one normally finds himself before he makes an attempt to progress beyond the mere performance of his socially assigned duties. This meaning is partially conveyed also by the notion of *raza* as examined earlier in chapter V *(supra.)*

The *dharam khand,* therefore, may be spoken of as the moral context in which all of us are normally residing. In itself it is higher than the stage at which a person does not accept and fulfil his role as voluntarily elected by him. But it is lower because here the person is merely accepting morality as already determined for him through the conduct of others and he has yet to reflect upon it. Though it may also be said that even here one would notice an element of ego-transcendence. In so far as the person accepts the social obligations involved in the role he has chosen to play he transcends the ego to some extent in foregoing some claim to exception.

We may ask if there are any specific duties mentioned by the Guru in connection with the *dharam khand.* The answer is in the

negative. The Guru has not laid down any specific duties. It could perhaps be due to the simple reason that, as already demonstrated by the Guru, there are countless spatio temporal possibilities in terms of social environments. It would, therefore, be impossible to lay down specific duties in each case. As Sikhism does not contribute to the idea of special duties of castes, etc.,—such as *Viśesa dharma*—it leaves scope for the situational duties arising out of the peculiarities of existential situations.

Is there any moral principle laid down which may apply to all, irrespective of the situational peculiarities is another question which we may pose. The answer this time is in the affirmative. The cue to the most general moral principle that we find here is that one ought to perform one's function to the best of one's ability[1] just as all the objects of nature, mentioned earlier, keep on performing their functions. Here *Ṛta* and *dharam,* which we referred to in the beginning of this *khand,* seem to fuse and produce the moral content or principle. But to this is appended the requirement of progress also. The person in the *dharam khand* not only performs his function to the best of his ability but has also an eye to progress. The pointer to this latter requirement is given by adding *"Gayā jāpai jaī",* (he who is going appears already to have gone). The moral agent not only cultivates moral virtues and performs his social obligations, but appears also to be moving towards wider horizons. These wider horizons we shall refer to in the next tri-dimensional progress.

However, before proceeding further, we may also state here that in the same stanza we find that those who have performed the duties of their stations, namely *panchas,* receive Grace *(Nadri karam pavai nisān).* This statement affirms the belief of Sikhism that it is due to Grace that man is able to perform his actions and proceed further. The statement of Grace in the very first stage also demonstrates the fact that Grace does not suddenly intervene at some later stage of the journey, but is an accompaniment of the moral agent right from the beginning of his effort. In fact this determines the spirit in which whole progress is to be made. We

[1] We have referred to this aspect in chapter V *(supra.)*

have already referred to this aspect in the *pre-khand* stage, where the seeker accepted the belief that he is himself powerless and now he is again reminded of the same in the very first stage. A very large majority of the interprefers of Sikhism, who do not pay attention to this very important provision both in the *pre-khand* as well as in the *dharam khand,* look for the provision of Grace at the fourth stage, namely the *karam khand,* taking shelter under the equivocal word *karam,* to which we shall refer in some detail when we take up its analysis. The special emphasis here on this aspect is with a view to the controverting of the interpretation of those scholars of Sikhism who appear to miss *nadri* (Grace) here and then project it on to the dimension known as the *karam khand,* reducing the latter entirely to what they call "region of Grace." We are here continuously seeking to point out the stress on the need for the spirit, implied by the notion of Grace, with which the moral agent is to proceed. Let us now take up the examination of the tri-dimensional progress of the moral agent.

### 7.9 : Second stage : Tri-dimensional progress

**General characteristics.** In the second progressive stage the person is required to seek tri-dimensional realization. These three *khands* are the *giān khand,* the *saram khand* and the *karam khand,* which are respectively, the dimensions of knowledge, aesthetics and action. All these three are to be carried to their ideal ends in an integrated manner. It is a simultaneous process of gradual realization in all respects. Action without knowledge and aesthetic feeling would be blind just as knowledge and feeling without being translated into action would be barren sentimentalism—a painted ship on a painted sea. Knowledge and feeling are to function in harmony with action. But, in so far as the realization of the ideal of all these three is concerned, they mark a sort of simultaneity.

Those interpreters who do not pause to take into consideration this very important fact of simultaneous realization from all aspects appear to be led to a strange notion. They give the impression that the seeker, on his journey through *khands,* first carries the knowledge to its ideal limit, while not paying attention to

the aesthetic and the action aspects of realization. This is the possible impression which may develop when, Sher Singh, a scholar of Sikhism, while referring to the *giān khand* says, "The defect of the intellect makes us emotionally alive and we enter a region of happiness"[1] (i.e., the *saram khand).* The above used words of the learned scholar "defect of the intellect" and "enter"' (the next region) may be noted here. This clearly makes the journey of the seeker through the knowledge *khand* only negative. It also gives the impression that the seeker first finishes with knowledge and *then enters* the region of feelings. Let us see whether this view can be conceded.

We may submit that this interpretation, in terms of dissatisfaction with the defect of intellect, makes the stanza only negative. It is being suggested by the author under reference that because the seeker is dissatisfied therefore he proceeds further. The scholar dismisses *giān khand,* the dimension of knowledge. But the seeker cannot do without knowledge and, therefore, Sher Singh is obliged to interpret the next two dimensions also in terms of knowledge. He does so by taking support from the fact that the Guru mentions some clues to knowledge in the *saram khand* and the *karam khand* so as to interblend and harmonise the three aspects of the realization. But let us see first whether it is necessary to declare the fruits of this dimension of knowledge *(giān),* as merely negative.

In the first instance, it may be submitted that, this undue stress on the negative is against the whole spirit of the stanza. According to the Guru, the seeker acquires the knowledge of the various traditions and reflects upon it.[2] This indeed is the positive gain. The negative aspect lies in the fact that this wide and deeper knowledge helps him in ego-transcendence. He will see not the defect of the intellect, as the above referred scholar suggests, but will realize the futility of the ego. In this realization, the intellect is indeed helpful to the self. The tone is thus not pre-dominantly

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[1] Sher Singh, *op. cit.,* p. 253.

[2] *Ādi Granth,* Japji (35), p. 8. *Kete siddha budh nāth kete kete devi ves, kete deva dānava man kete kete ratna samund.*

negative in respect to the knowledge and the intellect but is pre-eminently positive.

It may also be asked whether the scholars would be prepared to say that a student who reads science and the history of philosophy, and further developments in it, would regard, both the fact of knowledge and the act of knowing as a defect in the intellect. Would the above scholar be willing to accept that the best of education ought to be without such knowledge? Does not such knowledge involve the use of the intellect? Did not Guru Nanak himself undertake journies to various places to discourse about the various traditions of learning and many further developments of these traditions? Is it not a fact that Guru Nanak himself used intellectual arguments to expose the absurdity and self-contradiction involved in many superstitious notions? Would the above author be willing to maintain that it is defective and therefore requires to be superseded? Surely the scholar does not appear to accept this position. His statement, therefore, about the defect in intellect can be regarded as a *reduction ad absurdum.*

Let us now examine the notion that the seeker first finishes the *khand* of knowledge and then proceeds to the *khand* of feelings and then to the next. A somewhat similar position in this regard also appears to have been adopted by another scholar of Sikhism, Surinder Singh Kohli. We may examine the statements of these two scholars as representative of this opinion as between themselves both of them cover quite a long period of time, in terms of their books under reference. Surinder Singh Kohli also talks of transition from one region to other. He says, "This realisation takes him into the next region, *i.e.* the region of Effort *(saram khand),* wherein he beautifies and purifies his mind and intellect."[1] The meaning of the expression "takes him into the next region" comes almost to the same position as already discussed in the case of Sher Singh. In both cases the thinking is in terms of "either-or" and not "and-also." Here progress is not being conceived in terms of simultaneous and gradual progress on all sides but appears to be

[1] Surinder Singh Kohli, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

as finishing one and then superseding it by another. Apart from the strangeness of this position, as well as its implications, it may also be submitted that the position is not depicted in this manner by Guru Nanak himself. On the other hand it may even be argued that he has amply provided for rejecting this fragmentational progress by showing that the ultimate is to be reached in all these aspects and not by supersession of the one by the other and the self realized from all angles is represented in the apex, the *sach khand,* which is already seen to be the indication of an integrated realization.

This confusion can be clarified if we view the tri-dimensional progress as vertico-horizontal rather than linear-horizontal. In the latter view, the impression conveyed is that one proceeds in a straight line on which occurs, first, one stage of knowledge, which is traversed fully and then begins the stage of aesthetics *ab initio,* which is also traversed fully and so on. But the expression vertico-horizontal appears to be nearer the view of the Gurus by whom the self is required to progress simultaneously on all the three sides toward the ideal which is described as the *sach khand.* We may also see that *khands* as described by Guru Nanak are not completely isolatory but the elements of one are interwoven into the other, thus presenting a picture of an integrated progress.

In order to bring out this integrated view in broad relief and steer clear of the possible confusion in the understanding of the proper characteristics of *khands* the use of the term dimension has been preferred here over that of the stages or regions for rendering the tri-dimensional progress of the *giān,* the *saram* and the *karam khand.* It is also because of this possible confusion that we shall prefer to use the expresion *vertico-horizontal* to depict progress rather than employ any symbol in terms of *linear-horizontal* progress.

With this background let us now analyse the contents of *khands* in some details.

### 7.10: Dimension of knowledge (giān khand)

We now come to the dimension of knowledge, *(giān khand).* The stanza of the *Ādi Granth* which contains the description of this dimension, tells the seeker about the vastness and the depth

of everything. He learns that there are many kinds of wind, water and fire. This is indicative of varieties of geographical regions with different climates etc. There are many regions of men and many uninhabited low lands and mountains. There are even many solar systems.[1]

Second, apart from learning about the various physical phenomena, the seeker also learns about the various religious and mystical traditions. There is not one religion or one prophet or one enlightenment. There are leaders of many religious groups and many saints. There are also many traditions and various kinds of learning. A scholar divides this second part into two aspects. He shows that there are: "(*i*) the religious traditions of people with which their mythologies are closely linked and (*ii*) the cultural traditions with their literary and historical aspects, which also contain their efforts in the field of learning and wisdom, *i.e.*, science and philosophy."[2] The scholar thus brings out all the aspects of knowledge, namely physical, religious and cultural. The last two seem to cover philosophy as well.

One thing which may loom very prominently in this dimension of knowledge is continuation by the Guru, of the theme of countless possibilities. One may be impressed by the fact that in this stanza the terms *kete* and *kete kete* (many and many many) occurs eleven times! The whole impact of the stanza, right from the beginning to the end, is that of expansive vast ness. There seems to be no end to knowledge. The gain here is two-fold. The positive gain in terms of the knowledge and the wisdom is a very important gain. The negative gain is in terms of the person becoming aware of the futility of egoism when faced with such vast possibilities in respect of the knowledge. There every thing is in terms of "many many" and when the person compares himself with such an expense the individual ego pales into insignificance. The ego as motive which led to narrow-based actions is seen directly to be based on the wrong conception that 'I' is something more impor-

[1] *Ādi Granth*, Japji (35), p. 7. Kete *inda chanda sura kete mandal des.*

[2] Sohan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

tant than others. The *gurmukh* (seeker) here knows that there is not one 'I' but there are countless 'I's' strung together in terms of existence. The proper ethical attitude, therefore, is not in terms of the egoistic 'I' but in terms of 'We'. The 'We' itself is not to be attached to any particular social group but stands for the whole creation. The existence has inter-related vastness. The whole effort of the *khand* is to serve the dual purpose of removing narrow egoism and open up a panoramic vista of deep and widespread knowledge. The curtain of falsehood, which obstructed from his view the scientific, cultural and spiritual efforts of diverse countries and habitation, is removed and these come to be respected and understood. The understanding and acceptance of inter-relatedness gives him a sense of harmony with the socio-physical environments. He is able to see the One running through this panoramic vastness. He is then filled with "music, bliss and aesthetic enjoyment." The mention of this aesthetic realization also in the last line of the stanza shows that the ideal end reached in this dimension is intertwined with the aesthetic aspect, which is gradually and simultaneously being realized along with the realization of the ideal end in the dimension of knowledge. This joy and bliss may also be due to his adoption of a comprehensive point of view in which the individuation of the self is seen to be a falsehood *(kuḍe pāl)*. Here the good of all ceases to be distinguishable in essence from the good of the self.

### 7.11: Dimension of the aesthetic realization (saram khand)

The need for aesthetic realization is also stressed by Guru Nanak. It is done in the stanza dealing with the *saram khand.*[1] This dimension has been variously interpreted depending on the language from which the scholars regard the word *saram to* have been adopted here. Those who regard it as having been taken from Sanskrit term *sarama* (meaning effort) decribe it as a domain of spiritual effort.[2] There are, however, some other scholars who regard it as

[1] *Ādi Granth,* Japji (36), p. 8. (The word *saram* has also been used in the 28th stanza).

[2] *Śabadarth* (Lahore: Śabadarth Gurbaṇi Trust, 1944), Vol. 1, p. 7, note 29. Another scholar, Surindar Singh Kohli also follows this meaning.

derived from Persian word *Śarm* (meaning shyness and reserve) and consider it to be a stage of "Inward Orientation."[1] Another scholar of Sikhism, Bhai Vir Singh, renders it as a "domain of bliss."[2] Perhaps he reads in this term Sanskrit word *'sarman'* (written as *Śarman*) which means "shelter, joy, bliss and delight."[3] In more recent times a scholar has called it the "Domain of surrender."[4]

Let us see what light is thrown on the definition by the content of this stanza itself. Guru Nanak says, "In the *saram khand* the communication is in terms of form or *beauty.*"[5] Here unique form is fashioned *(Ghāḍat ghāḍie bahut anūp).* He further says that the state of the self in the *saram khand* cannot be described, and any one who makes this attempt would eventually realize his error.[6]

The Guru then provides the clue that the aesthetic realization is not in terms of sensibilities alone because it is a type of realization, which comes by the fashioning of the cognition, mind, reason and intuition *(Surat mut man budh . . . surā sidha kī sudh).* The allusion is also made to the mode of beauty which comes from the discernment of those whom people call gods and perfected persons.[7] A question may be posed as to why the Guru adverts to perfection in congition and intuition in the dimension of aesthetic realization. An answer could be that realization is a harmonious process and the reference to the fashioning of the intellect and intuition in the dimension of aesthetic realization, therefore, is to bring to notice this fact of togetherness in the realization of the seeker. Also, it can be argued that but for this mention, the aesthetic realization would have appeared to be merely a matter of feeling. The dimension, as depicted by the Guru, shows it to be a

[1] Sohan Singh, *op. cit.,* pp. 79 and 98.

[2] Bhai Vir Singh, *Santhya,* p. 164.

[3] Monier Monier-Williams, *op. cit.,* p. 1085.

[4] Gopal Singh, *op. cit:* Vol. I, p. 11.

[5] *Ādi Granth,* Japji (36), p, 8. The term *rūp* is used to mean the both.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*

fusion of the cognitive and the aesthetic aspects. The views of Guru Nanak as expressed in the *saram khand,* thus, may be taken to indicate the fusion of truth and beauty in their realization by the self. The seeker has realized not only knowledge but also the discernment of beauty, in the socio-physical environment with which he is in perfect harmony.

Which then is the correct interpretation, from out of those examined in the initial stage, of the *khand* ? It may be seen that fundamentally there seems to be no serious difference among the various interpretations. While all of them appear to agree in respect of the broad contents of this dimension, variation is in terms of the title. Guru Nanak may be said to be using this word in the special sense which includes the aspects stressed in the various interpretations noted by us. The interpreters may be right and true in what they assert. The error would arise if they claim that what they have stressed is 'the' whole truth. Guru Nanak, in view of the special use of the term (and some possible confusion), defines the contents of the stanza in the very first line when he says, "The medium in the *saram khand* is 'beauty or form," *("Saram khand ki bāṇi rūp."*[1] *Rūp* may be understood either in the term of form or beauty). This dimension, therefore, seems to be that of aesthetic realization.

But, it may be contended that the seeker would be imperfectly realized without the perfection of conation and action. What about the effort or action ? And this inquiry takes us to the third contemporaneous dimension, namely *karam* (action).

### 7.12 : Dimension of action *(karam khand)*

We now come to the third dimension of this tri-dimensional progress of the seeker, namely the *karam khand.* This is a very important dimension in the sense that in a way it is the acid test of the realization of the Ideal self.

However, before proceeding further, it may be mentioned here that Sikhologists (the scholars of Sikhism) are not agreed upon calling it a dimension of action. We will examine in detail the

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[1] *Ibid.*

conflicting views in this regard after first making ourselves conversant with the contents of the stanza which contains the description of this dimension.

In our analysis of the *saram khand,* we saw the fusion of the cognitive and the affective. The present is the completing link of this inter-linked journey of tri-dimensional progress.

According to Guru Nanak, the medium of this dimension is energy, strength, or power.[1] Here the person is described as brave and mighty. He is said to be saturated with Ram.[2] The selection of the symbol Ram is more meaningful than has hitherto been noticed. It may either mean God or it may seek to convey the characteristic for which Ram as a deity is known in India. The *"Raghu kul Rīt"* characteristic is that of 'unity of conviction with action". One may die but not abandon the resolve or word. The dimension thus indicates the self which has the courage of conviction. Nothing deters him from what he has learnt to be good. We have already noticed in a different perspective, the stress on courage and bravery in Sikhism, while examining the virtue of courage.

Here the seeker is realizing, simultaneous to his gradual realization in the dimension of knowledge and aesthetics, the universalism in action which he acquires in the dimension of knowledge. His actions reflect that there is no distinction of 'mine' and 'others'. Spiritually, too, he realizes the Absolute in terms of which all are spiritually related. This realization of universalism is reflected in his actions.

One also finds that this region is reached not only by men but is equally open to women. So we find that here *Sīto Sita,* is the symbol used for the ideal woman. In fact Sita is always held high as the ideal woman in India. Some Sikhologists however, interpret this line, *"Tithai Sīto Sita mahima mahe,"*[3] as "there they dwell in His glory through joy or sufiering."[4] Thus *Sīto Sita is* taken to mean "joy or suffering," which is the state of the realized self. The term Sita appears to be taken in the sense of Sīt

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[1] *Ibid.,* Japji (37), p. 8. *Karam khand ki bāṇi jor..*

[2] *Ibid., Tithai jodh mahābal sūr, Tin mahā Rām rihā bharpūr.*

[3] *Ibid.,* Japji (37), p. 8.

[4] Sohan Singh, *op. cit.,* p. 100.

(cold). This translation may have some merit of fitting in with the spirit of the passage if we say that the realized self, in this dimension, has a sense of abandonment. However, the interpretation of *Sīto Sita* in the sense of depicting Sita as the symbol for womanhood in general has not only the merit of fitting in with the spirit of universalism in this passage but it also brings out the stress on the equality of woman in Sikhism even in the highest realization, which was seen as an important aspect of the social ethics of the Sikhs. This interpretation, therefore, could be presented as appearing to be more apt and reasonable.

Technically too, the term *Sīto Sita* refers to some person here. The line which contains this reference occurs as the first line in a pair of two and the whole scheme of the passage consists of pairs of two lines each, the first of the lines referring to a subject (a person) and the second containing some additional predicate about him. For example, after the first pair of two lines which describes the title of the dimension, the next pair declares, "There are brave and mighty" in the first line and in the second line it says, "In them is filled the essence of Ram." The first line of the next pair says, "There are *Sīto Sita* enveloped in glory" and the second line adds, "their state cannot be described." And again the first line of the next pair declares, "They neither die nor are they cheated," and the second line adds, "in whom is the essence of God" (symbol used is Ram). And the same scheme is followed in the next pair of the last two lines.

It is, therefore, clear that in the first line in which *Sīto Sita* occurs the Guru is referring to some person and not to the condition of any person. The reference, consequently, is to Sita, which symbol denotes the 'ideal woman'. The use of two words *Sīto Sita* however could possibly indicate both men and women'. But then, it also could merely be to emphasise the expression. However, it appears to be most cogent to say that some person is being referred to here and this conclusion is aslo supported by our earlier technical examination of the passage.[1]

[1] And for the similar reason the interpretation by Harnam Singh of the term *Sīto Sita* as 'inextricably knit' cannot be accepted. Reference to Harnam Singh's interpretation has been made by Gopal Singh in the form of a note to his English translation of the *Ādi Granth*, p. 11.

The Guru also mentions that this action-realization is accompanied by Bliss. In this way the *karm khand* is integrated with the dimension of the aesthetics as well as that of the knowledge. Bliss is due to the 'spiral-like' harmonious progress which the seeker has made and by which he has realized the ideal. It is the self which has realized the ideal in the tri-dimensional spiral-like integrated progress which is represented in the apex of human realization, namely the *sach khand,* which we are now to examine. But, before we undertake the analysis of the *sach khand,* let us first clear some conflicting views expressed about the nature of the *karam khand.*

**Conflicting views about the real nature of the karam khand**

We had occasion earlier to refer to the fact that all the Sikhologists do not agree in calling the *karam khand* the dimension of 'action'.

Broadly speaking the views concerning the nature of this dimension can be divided into two groups : (1) those which take it to mean the dimension of action and (2) those which take it to mean the stage or domain of Grace.

The view contained in the second group needs to be examined in some detail to see the grounds for preferring the interpretation in terms of Grace.

**The cause of this confusion and controversy**

The cause of this confusion and controversy is due to the use by Guru Nanak of an equivocal word *karam.* This word can be understood in two meanings. If it is taken by the Guru as emanating from Sanskrit word *karma,* it would mean action. However, if the usage is in terms of its meaning in Arabic language, it may be called Grace.

It may also be added here that for the most part the controversy is only about the title of the *khand,* since the contents of the stanza are almost universally interpreted in terms of 'power, strength and energy' of the realized self, such as, Ram, who is known for his actions.

**The view that the karam khand is the domain of Grace**

The view is expressed by Sher Singh when he says, "The fourth and the fifth stages"—by which he means, the *karam khand* and

the *sach khand*—"in the development of our mental outlook have respectively the divine grace and the true divinity itself as their object."[1] A similar view is expressed by Sohan Singh when he writes, "Force or power is the rule of the Region of Grace.[2] Gopal Singh, in his translation of the *Ādi Granth,* holds the same opinion when he writes, "And then is the Domain of Grace."[3] Another scholar, Surinder Singh Kohli, also renders it in similar meaning when he remarks, "These efforts lead him into the next region *i.e.* 'the region of Grace'."[4]

**The view that the karam khand is the dimension of action**

The view has also been expressed, on the other hand, by some scholars that *karam khand* is to be interpreted in terms of action. We find that Ernest Trumpp interprets it in this manner. His translation reads, "The character of the region of works *(karam khand)* is power."[5] He uses here the word works for action. Max Arthur Macauliffe, similarly says, "Force is the attribute of the realm of action."[6] In an analogous manner, the editor of *Śabadarth* views it in terms of action when he renders it in Punjabi language as *"amal"* and *"karṇi"*[7] (action).

In a way, it may be noticed here that the interpretations of *karam khand,* in terms of action, are rather old and in recent times it is being understood in terms of grace by relatively a large number of scholars.

**Analysis of the controversy**

We may, thus, notice a controversy about the correct interpretation of this dimension. However, what may intrigue any student of Sikhism is the fact that none of the scholars listed here

[1] Sher Singh, *op. cit.,* p. 253.

[2] Sohan Singh, *op. cit.,* p. 100.

[3] Gopal Singh, *op. cit.,* p. 11.

[4] Surinder Singh Kohli, *op. cit.,* p. 368.

[5] Ernest Trumpp, *op. cit.,* p. 13.

[6] Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion* Vol. I. p. 216. (In note No. 2, he appears to explain that by the realm of action he means 'the world'. But he does not elaborate this note to state any view point in detail).

[7] *Śabadarth, op. cit.,* p. 8.

have felt it necessary to explain why they prefer to interpret it as they do in their writings. Nevertheless, the question is crucial as a decision in this regard may determine the role of practice or action in Sikhism. The question assumes greater significance from the view point of ethics. We may, therefore, examine the question of the right interpretation of the *karam khand* in detail and see if we can arrive at some conclusion in this regard.

Let us analyse the problem from four angles: (1) examine the possible meanings of the word especially in terms of its different usage in Sikhism; (2) adduce some technical evidence, if available, to determine its usage here; (3) advert to the spirit of the stanza to see whether it throws any light in this regard; and (4) discuss (a) whether there is any need for interpreting it in terms of grace and (b) whether this interpretation of grace would be in harmony with the general notion of grace in Sikhism.

**Possible meanings of karam**

A student of Sikhism would find that *karam* has been used in various meanings in the *Ādi Granth,* the principal scripture of the Sikhs. Therefore, care has to be exercised when we base an interpretation on the possible meanings of this word. We must attempt to understand the sense which it occupies in a particular context. The term is used prominently in the following meanings in the *Ādi Granth :*

(I) *Karam* is used in the sense of law of retribution, for example, in *"Karam dharti sarīr jug anter jo bīje so khate."*[1] It is in this sense that A.C. Ewing uses it when he says, "The law of Karma is a principle of justice decreeing that all shall be rewarded and punished in proportion to their good and bad deeds."[2]

(2) *Karam* in the sense of works like liturgical sacrifices, ceremonials and rituals. Sometimes, the Gurus also use the compound term *karam kānd* to convey this meaning of rituals and sacrifices. At some other times, however, the simple terms *karam*

[1] *Ādi Granth*, Sri Rāg M. 5 (5-1-4), p. 78.

[2] A.C. Ewing, "Awareness of God," *The Journal of Royal Institute of Philosophy*, Vol. XI, No. 151. Jan. 1965. p. 14.

is employed to convey that sense of liturgical sacrifices, ceremonials and rituals. For example, *"Karam kānd boh kare āchār"*[1] and *"Karam karat badhe ahnav"*[2] both provide the sense of *karam kānd. Karam* in this sense has been rejected, in Sikhism, to be any value as seen above.

(3) *Karam* is also used to convey the sense of Grace or Mercy. This usage has been adopted in Sikhism and in the *Ādi Granth* from Arabic language, example being, *"Karam hovai Satguru milai."*[3]

(4) There is yet another sense in which this term *Karam* is used in the *Ādi Granth.* In this sense it stands for moral actions or proper acts. The example is provided when Guru Arjan Dev, while condemning an evil person, says, "He has lost sight of all *karam* (moral acts).[4] In the same sense Guru Nanak had earlier said, "Actions and practice is the creeper, the God's Name is the fruit." *(Karam kartoot bail bistāri Rāmnām phul hua).*[5] Here the creeper is a symbol used to convey the 'way of climbing or reaching' because the creeper climbs a tree or a wall.

In an unequivocal manner Guru Gobind Singh has declared, "Oh Grant me that I may never avert from moral action."[6] In most passages, however, the Gurus do not use Śubh as prefix to *karam* to denote moral action but simply use *karam* to denote that meaning.

**Historical background of the tenent that ritual acts are the moral acts**

A question may be asked as to who regarded the rituals and ceremonials as moral acts and duties. Historically, out of the schools of Indian Philosophy, Pūrva Mīmāmsa, and particularly the Bhatta school of the Pūrva Mīmāmsa appears to have taken this position. This school, according to S.K. Maitra, "represents the extreme externalistic conception of morality and accepts ceremonialism in all its arbitrariness." According to them, "the sacrificial acts in

[1] *Ādi Granth*, Gauḍi Gaureri M. 3, p. 162.

[2] *Ibid.*, Gauḍi Kabir ji (4-6), p. 324.

[3] *Ibid.*, Mājh M. 3, p. 109.

[4] *Ibid.*, Dhanāsri M. 5 (2-32), p. 676. *Karam dharam saglai khove.*

[5] *Ibid.*, Āsa M. 1 (1 to 3-8), p. 351.

[6] Guru Gobind Singh, *Dasam Granth. Śubh karaman te kabhuṇ nā taruṇ.*

themselves constitute dharma."[1] They use the word *karma* for these sacrifices and ceremonials.

**Rejection of this view by other schools of Indian Philosophy, as well as by Sikhism**

We find that this view is controverted and rejected by other schools of Indian Philosophy. Thus, while discussing the attitude of Saṃkhya and Vedanta toward *karma,* in the sense of rituals, Bal Gangdhar Tilak states, "Although the Non-Dualistic knowledge of the Brahman mentioned in the *Upaniśads is* fundamentally different from the Dualistic philosophy, yet from the view point of knowledge both these paths were equally antagonistic to the prior ritualistic path of Action."[2] However, it is pointed out by S. Radhakrishnan that "the performance of sacred rites is normally the prelude to the pursuit of wisdom. Even Śamkra, who insists on the radical opposition between karma and jñāna, allows that good karma, in this or in an earlier life, is the cause of the desire for truth."[3]

When we come to the Buddhists, we find that they, "contest or even deny" the importance attributed to liturgical action and penances as "for them an act is essentially action that can be morally qualified."[4]

The standpoint" taken by the Gurus in Sikhism seeks to deny this nexus between act and sacrifice, ritual and ceremony. The Guru says that one's ritualistic conduct is condemned. It is also said to lead to ego.[5] Guru Arjan Dev also appears to reject this type of works when he says that the more one takes recourse to these acts, the more is one involved.[6] Both these rejections are to be under-

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[1] S.K. Maitra, *op. cit.,* p. 91.

[2] Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Srimad Bhāgvād Rahasya* (Poona: Tilak Brothers, 1936), Vol. II, p. 761.

[3] S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (New York : The Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 374.

[4] Louis De. La Valle, "Karma," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed.,* James Hastings (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1955). Vol. VII, p. 674.

[5] *Ādi Granth,* Gauḍi Guareri M. 3, p 162. *Karam kānd boh kāre āchār biṇ nāve dhrig dhrig ahankār.*

[6] *Ibid.,* Āsa M. 5, p. 385. *Karam karet jia ko janjār.*

stood only in terms of ritualistic acts, for otherwise these would be contradictory to the view of acts as expressed in (d) above while discussing the possible meaning of *karam.* However, Guru Gobind Singh makes it very clear that one ought not to avert from moral actions as already stated *(Śubh karman te kabhuṇ nā taruṇ.)*

**The important role and moral qualification of karam in Sikhism**

It was generally held in India that actions bind a man in the sense that he is tied down to the world and is not able to obtain salvation. Guru Arjan Dev puts this problem in the form of a dilemma. He states, "If one does deeds, one is bound; if not, one is slandered: and thus one is ever attached in mind and remains full of care."[1] What is then the solution offered by him. He hints at the possible solution at the same place and it consists in "by God's Grace, looking upon pain and pleasure alike and seeing God within every heart." One may take this to mean that the acts can be understood as binding if these are motivated by hopes, passions, fears and egoism. But these are not binding when done for righteousness to realize universality. We have already referred to the clarification given by Guru Gobind Singh that one ought not to avert from righteous acts.

Second, according to Guru Arjan Dev, the *karam* ought to be done without any desire for the fruit. He says, "And does deeds *(karam)* but cares not for the fruit thereof, such a *Vaiśnāva's* faith is the pure faith. He seeks no fruits for the deeds he does."[2] This position has some similarity with the one held by Krishna in the *Bhāgvadgīta:* It is said there that "desireless Energism *(naiskarmyá)* is better than total Renunciation."[3] We have referred to this aspect in the chapter VI *(supra).* It is held in Sikhism that one should perform all acts in the name of God and such acts would not bind him. Guru Arjan Dev says, "And then I surrender to Him, meditation, austerity and religious observances, and all acts of *dharma,* I offer to His fire and forsake my ego."[4]

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[1] *Ibid.,* Maru M. 5, p. 1019.

[2] *Ibid.,* Gaudi Sukhmani M. 5, p. 274.

[3] Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *op. cit.,* p. 779.

[4] *Ādi Granth,* Āsa M. 5, p. 391.

And, in the New Testament also, we meet a similar view when it is said, "Whether therefore you eat, or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."[1] This 'doing all...' is what we have been calling 'doing acts . . . without desire for fruit', which acts ought to be done and which do not bind a person.

Third, an act ought not to give rise to ego. The act which gives rise to ego leads not only to the loss of its moral significance but is a positive evil in itself. Guru Arjan Dev explains it this way, "I was devoted to the acts *[karam* and *dharam]* and was puffed up with ego [*garbh*] and loved not God for a moment, and all this was of no avail."[2] Guru Amardas similarly warns the seeker of this danger when he says, "He does deeds and practises righteousness, piety and self discipline, but within him is greed and vice, all this that the ego-centric practises availes him not." (*"Karam dharam such sanjam kare anter lobh vikār . . . "*).[3] The proper acts or moral acts, therefore, are so only when accompanied by a purity of motive.

Fourth, a *karam* ought not to be performed merely to please others and obtain their favours or to play to the gallery to manifest ego. Guru Arjan Dev tells us, "All *karam* are the manifestation of ego if one is out to show off to others, or please others; one leaves this world sad and in sorrow."[4] It ought to be something like the left hand not knowing what the right hand does. One ought not to make a public show of one's goodness as it may be either caused by ego or may cause ego to develop.

Lastly, the Guru has also stressed the need to practise the good and not to merely talk about it. Guru Arjan Dev condemns such a person when he says, "He instructs others but practises not he himself, he knows not the quintessence of the word,"[5] This unequivocally indicates that all that one learns to be good, ought to be practised in ones acts. And without such a practice in 'acts' other realiza-

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[1] *Bible.* St Paul. 1 Cor 1031.

[2] *Ādi Granth*, Dhanasri M. 5, Ashtapadis, p. 687.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vār of Rāg Vihagda M. 3, p. 552.

[4] *Ibid.*, Rāmkali M. 5, p. 890.

[5] *Ibid.*, Āsa M.5, p. 380. *Updes kare āp nā kamave tāte sabad nā pachana.*

tion in terms of knowledge or aesthetics cannot be called complete. That would only be a sort of meaningless *updes* (speech).

In view of this great importance accorded to practice and action, we may be inclined to regard *karam khand* as the dimension of action. In so interpreting it there will be no clash with the general temper and spirit of Sikhism.

**Technical evidence to determine the nature of this dimension**

Let us now see if any technical evidence can be found to decide the nature of this dimension. By technical evidence we understand the general scheme of titles of these stanzas which contain the reference to these *khands* in the Japji of Guru Nanak.

In this connection we see that Guru Nanak has used the titles of all the *khands (dharam, giān, saram, karam* and *sach)* from Sanskrit language. It seems, therefore, most probable that the *karam khand* which occurs in the same series in between the *saram khand* and the *sach khand* is also being used by Guru Nanak in the sense of its Sanskrit usage. According to this usage *karam* means act or what Bal Gangadhar Tilak has called "energism."

Now, there seems to be no special reason for singling out the *karam khand* to interpret it in terms of its meaning in Arabic language, while the rest of the four are understood by the Sikhologists in terms of their usage in Sanskrit language.

This indirect technical evidence would thus favour its interpretation in terms of Sanskrit usage of the term *karma,* that is, act or practice.

**Evidence from the spirit of the stanza regarding the nature of the dimension**

We may now refer to the general spirit as reflected by the contents of this *khand* to determine the question of its title and characteristics. The principle medium of the *karam khand* is in terms of "Power or energy" *(karam khand ki bani jor).* Now, it may be said that "energism" and *karam* in the sense of acts harmonise excellently. We have already referred to the rendition of *karam* as energism (in the sense of acts), by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, while analysing the doctrine of the *Bhāgvadgīta.*

Second, we may also submit that one of the scholars of Sikhism, referred to earlier, who calls the *karam khand* the domain of grace, while analysing its contents, concedes that the seekers in this *khand* are persons of "awakened courage and great deeds."[1] He further admits that "when the universal spirit flows into and fills the devotee it builds in him such a strange strength, it creates such tremendous springs of energy in him, that he becomes a man of great deeds."[2] So we may see that in so far as the spirit and the content of the *khand* are concerned these are interpreted in terms of deeds and acts even by those who otherwise call it the domain af grace. But if we are going to interpret its contents in terms of acts and deeds will it not be appropriate that we also call the *khand* the dimension of acts or deeds?

Third, we notice that even the general notion of God in terms of Ram, mentioned in this *khand, is to* stress deeds or acts since Ram is acclaimed in the Indian tradition for his acts and deeds. Ram is understood both in the sense of God as well as the socialised concept of an active and ideal man of deeds. It is generally conceded that when Ram is used to denote God it is sought to convey this latter connotation of great socialised deeds and acts. It would seem correct, therefore, to interpret the *karam khand* in terms of the dimension of actions or deeds.

**Interpreting the karam khand in terms of grace; question regarding need thereof and its coherence with the general notion of grace in Sikhism**

We may now take up the twin questions regarding (a) any necessity for understanding the *karam khand* in terms of grace and, (b) whether such a view of grace would be in harmony with the general notion of grace as understood in Sikhism.

(a) Let us first take up the question of any necessity for interpreting it as grace.

The protagonists of the view that the *karam khand is* the domain of grace may argue that the principle of grace is a major belief in

[1] Sohan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

Sikhism and, therefore, it should be accorded a major role at the end of human development. Now, in view of the fact that divine grace is indeed a very important part of the general beliefs of the Sikhs, the above argument may appear very forceful.

We may, however, submit that nothing has been said here so far to deny the truth of the importance of grace. In fact, our whole attention was directed in the *pre-khand* stage to show that the devotee, in order to proceed on this journey of ethico-spiritual progress, must accept the belief that everything he is able to do is due to grace of God. That is a fundamental assumption or postulate of the whole belief in Sikhism. Again, while discussing the *dharam khand,* a reference was made to the similar requirement of the acceptance by the devotee of the role of grace.

Similarly, we have stressed, in the chapter on the Moral Standard, that the spirit of the whole progress lies in the awareness on the part of a person that he is humble and that, in this spirit of humility, he ought to surge forth for the realization of the Ideal Self.

Now, in view of the fact that supreme importance has been given to grace as determining the very spirit in which the devotee realizes the whole ethico-spiritual ideal, there appears to be no necessity to interpret the *karam khand* again in terms of grace. We may even say that according to the logic of the case even the *giān khand,* the *saram khand* and the *karam khand* along with the *pre-khand* and the *dharam khand are* in the same underlying spirit of humility and belief in grace. There seems to be little justification or necessity then to interpret the *karam khand* in terms of grace.

(b) We may now ask the second question whether the interpretation of the *karam khand* in terms of grace would be in harmony with the general notion of grace in Sikhism.

**The view of grace as held in Sikhism**

It may be submitted here that the Gurus have made amply clear that grace,[1] as used by them, determines the fundamental spirit

[1] The terms prominently used in the *Ādi Granth* to convey the sense of grace are *nadar, gurprasād* or *prasād, karam, mehar* and *kirpa.*

in which the whole of the progress is to be made by the devotee. Guru Nanak says, "With grace have I met the Guru."[1] The first step then is in terms of grace. We also find that Guru Arjan Dev devotes a whole *aśhtapadi* in "Gauḍi Sukhmaṇi" to aver that all the progress and functions of the devotee ought to be done in the spirit of acknowledging the role of grace (*Gurprasād*).[2] Guru Nanak at yet another place completes this process and says that "Union" is also by grace.[3] The *sach,* which is the ideal, is also realized in grace.[4] Guru Ramdas also says that the path is known by the grace.[5] The delusion or ignorance is overcome with grace.[6]

However, we get a very clear indication of the views of Gurus on the subject when we find the description of the whole process of realization given by Guru Nanak in the closing stanza of "Japji" immediately after the description of the *khand.* Here he uses the analogy of a smith beating gold to turn out the final production.[7] The self in this description undergoes the whole process of fashioning and shaping. Towards the end of this description Guru Nanak makes a very important observation which may be central to our present discussion. He says that all this process of realization, however, is an act of only those who have been favoured by grace, *Jin ko nadar karam tiṇ kār.* This is rendered by Sohan Singh as, "However, only those who receive the favour of His Grace may conduct themselves in this way."[8]

This shows that the tenet of grace in Sikhism, which determines the spirit in which the whole progress is carried on, ought to be understood as a sort of simultaneous concomitance of the whole progress. Each and every act from the beginning is per-

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[1] *Ādi Granth,* Maru M.l, (2-2-11), p. 1054. *Nadar kare ta Guru milai* and cf. *also Ibid.,* Vadhans M.I, (3-2), p. 558. *Nadri hukam bujhia hukam rihia samāye.*

[2] *Ibid.,* Gauḍi Sukhmaṇi, (8-6), pp. 270-271.

[3] *Ibid.,* Gauḍi M. 1 (6-3), p. 222. *Nadar kare taṇ mail milae.*

[4] *Ibid.,* Sri Rāg M. 1 (6-3), p. 55. *Nadar kare sach payāya.*

[5] *Ibid.,* Saloka M. 4 (6), p. 1422. *Nadar kare jis āpni so chale Sat-guru bujhia.*

[6] *Ibid.,* Āsa M. 5 (6-23), p. 356.

[7] *Ibid.,* Japji (38), p. 8.

[8] Sohan Singh, *op. cit.,* p. 103.

formed with the belief that grace is a constituent of the act. It makes the act a totality. We may also name such an approach as a coeval theory or simultaneous concomitance theory of grace and action.

This view of grace may be seen to have some similarity with the concept of *Prapatti* in Ramanuja, especially with the later development of markata-nyaya which holds that the "devotee collaborates with God."[1]

**View of grace entailed if the karam khand is interpreted as domain of grace.**

Let us now see the type of theory of grace entailed if we regard the *karam khand* as the domain of grace. The view of the Sikhologists who regard it so is that a devotee continues making progress on his own throughout the earlier *khands*—that is, the *pre-khand,* the *dharam khand,* the *giān khand and* the *saram khand*—and when he reaches the *karam khand,* grace suddenly intervenes to reward him. We may name such a theory as the precipitant theory of grace or sudden intervention theory of grace. We have called it the precipitant theory because by this view the individual, through his actions in the earlier *khands,* precipitates the intervention by grace.

Such a view can be seen clearly to militate against our earlier conclusions regarding the general view of grace as held in Sikhism in terms of simultaneous concomitance or the coeval theory of grace.

In view of this we cannot help but conclude that an interpretation of the *karam khand* as the domain of grace would conflict with the notion of grace held in Sikhism.

**7.13: Survey of the results of the analysis of the karam khand**

Summing up the results of this analysis we may say that the *karam khand* should be taken to mean the dimension of action. Its provision as a necessary dimension serves the purpose of a continuous reminder that the whole progress is to be judged functionally. It expressly provides against any lack of contact with the

[1] Cf. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Brahma Sutra* (London : George Allen & Unwin, 1960), p. 57.

socio-physical or the socio-moral environments. In the absence of this dimension the mystic intuition could have swung the person away from his socio-moral environments and lured him away from what is symbolised in Sikhism as *grihasia* (household). But the stipulation of the *karam khand* as a necessary constituent of this realization does not permit a self to turn away from or renounce the social situation altogether. It is rather paradoxical that those Sikhologists who regard the *karam khand* as the region of grace argue elsewhere that practice is the ultimate test. Bhai Jodh Singh, as mentioned earlier, regards the *karam khand* as the domain of grace. But he writes in an essay, "And now I come to the *last* point. Religion is *life*. It does not consist in mere beliefs and dogmas. Nobody is going to accept truth from you if he sees none of them exemplified in your life."[1] (Emphasis added.) This scholar clearly expresses his tacit acceptance of the need for the dimension of action.

Another scholar, C.H. Loehlin, in *The Sikhs and their Book,* appears to protest against this comingling of grace and act. He says, "It is significant to note that Guru Arjan at times breaks through the bonds of *karma* and in accordance with the New Testament teaching gives grace full place as when in the *Sukhmani* he says 'By grace all may be saved'."[2] It may be submitted here that what the author terms "at times breaking through" is in fact not 'at times' and, second, it is not "breaking through." As we have been witnessing throughout our examination, Gurus are seeking to synthesise the two essential aspects of the act. This synthesis, perhaps, is misconceived by the above scholar as "at times breaking through." The Guru may in certain passages stress one aspect, depending upon the special' point in a discourse, but the whole doctrine has to be interpreted in terms of its general spirit and we must take into account those passages also where this general spirit is quite clearly stressed.

There is another conjecture hazarded by the same scholar in

[1] Jodh Singh, *Some. Studies in Sikhism* (Ludhiana : Lahore Book Shop, 1953), p. 129.

[2] C.H. Loehlin, *The Sikhs and Their Book* Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing House, 1958), p. 64.

regard to the notion of grace in Sikhism where it may not be possible to agree with him. Loehlin suggests that "it is possible that Guru Arjan learned this from the New Testament teaching, as there were Christian theologians and teachers in many parts of India in 1600."[1] Here it is clear that, while no one may question the fact of the various influences traceable in the doctrine of Sikhism in general, in itself the conjecture hazarded above may not be conceded to. First, the notion of grace, as we have seen in the text of our preceding discussion, was posited by the founder of Sikhism, namely Guru Nanak Dev, and was carried on by the succeeding Gurus. Now, Guru Arjan Dev comes as the fifth Guru in the order of temporal succession of the ten Gurus in Sikhism. Thus Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru, was continuing the tenet of grace as proclaimed from the first Guru onwards. Second, it may be added here that even the notion of *prasād* (as in *Gurprasād)* to which the above scholar refers in *Sukhmaṇi* of the fifth Guru, apart from its being used by the first Guru as well, was known and proclaimed by Ramanuja (11th Century) who, according to S. Radhakrishnan, "...believes that salvation is possible not through *jñāna* and *karma* but through *bhakti* and *prasād* [grace]."[2]

Therefore, for the reasons cited above, it would not be possible to accept the view of C.H. Loehlin that Guru Arjan learnt it in the year 1600 and introduced it into Sikhism.

Consequently, we may conclude with the observation that the tenet of grace is synthesised with the necessity for the practice or act of the person himself. The two stand in a contemporaneous relationship and are essential in the scheme of self-realization.

### 7.14 : Sach khand, the Ideal

*The sach khand* marks the apex of the integrated tri-dimensional progress of the seeker. It is the final state of the person who reaches the simultaneously integrated ideal in terms of the *'giān saram* and *karam khand'*. He may, therefore, be described as *sachiāra*. This was the ideal which we referred to in Chapter

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[2] S. Radhakrishnan. Indian Philosophy Vol. II, p. 703.

II (Moral Standard, *supra.)* This is the ideal of the *Jivan mukta* and constitutes the final realization.

We are told that the perfected self finds here the vastness of knowledge *(Tithai khand mandala varbhand, je ko kathe tā ānta nā ānt).* He has the direct intuition of this vastness. In the *giān khand,* also, we had found that the knowledge was described in terms of vastness or expanse. The devotee has learnt about his outer and inner environments. There is an impact of vastness. Here in the *sach khand* the self reaches the end of this expansive knowledge and intuits an undescribable unified vastness *(Tithai loa loa ākār).*

The adept views it, contemplates it and is filled with joy, (*Kar kar vekhe nadar nihāl. . . vekhe vigase kare vichār*).[1] This may be called a mystic experience in terms of direct intuition. It is an experience of realizing *Nirankār* (the Absolute). The self has both intuitive knowledge *(vekhe)* as well as bliss *(nihāl)* and *(vigāse).* How about the will and the act, it may be asked. According to Guru Nanak, the will and the act also simultaneously realize the ideal as there is here a perfect homogenity of the will of the *sachiara* with the universal will which is good *(jiv jiv hukm tive tiv kār).* This stress on the act may be due to the fact that the Absolute itself is described as dynamic, *"kar kar"* (acts unabated). What else would be the characteristic of the self, which realizes it, if not this unabated activity in direction and harmony with the universal will described as good (*Jiv jiv hukm tiv tiv kār*)?[2] Yes, what else indeed, if not this absolutely perfect activity?

Guru Nanak, thus, presents the ideal of all-integrative comprehensive self-realization. The self which has realized the ideal universalism in its tri-dimensional progress ends up in the realization of comprehensive self as depicted in the *sach khand.* The description of this *khand is* short and terse. Guru Nanak ends by saying that to describe it is rather difficult (*"Kathna kaḍara sār"*). But we have have had sufficient clues to form some general notion about it. This, then, is the ideal depiction in the description

[1] *Ādi Granth,* Japji (37), p. 8.

[2] *Ibid.*

of different *khands*.

**Concluding Remarks**

The discussion heretofore has shown Sikhism to be pre-eminently an integrated doctrine, recognizing the great importance of the perfection of will and action as the executive aspect of the tri-dimensional progress of the self. The spiritual realization is included in this progress as well as in the apex. This view highlights the need for realizing in practice whatever is realized by the self as a whole. This practice ought to be continued upto the last moment of existential life and thereafter the self would merge in the All light, All Bliss and all Activity *(Jot, Ānand* and *Kartā)*.

If we are required to name such an approach we may call it "Integrative Spiritual Practicalism." But then, on second thought, it may occur to us that even the name Sikhism may serve the same purpose, if we understand it in the above context. We may, therefore, call it Sikhism in the sense of Integrative Spiritual Practicalism. It is a progress with roots intertwined and branches interwoven.

# VIII
# CONCLUSION

Ethics is the science of values in human conduct. We have sought to discover for ourselves and present somewhat systematically the values in human conduct as taught by the Gurus in Sikhism.

We have discovered a humanistic moral standard viewed in the spiritual context. It is the realization of the ideal self, called *sachiara.* Wherefrom has this notion of *sachiara* been derived ? It was noted that this ideal was derived from the nature of the Absolute called *Sat, Sach or Sachiar.* The Absolute in Sikhism is conceived as Activity *(Karta).* The self-realization is patterned on the nature of the Absolute. The self, through its cognitive, affective and conative functions, is to proceed to its ideal realization.

However, the moral agent proceeds with the notion and in the spirit that realization is not to be through his own conduct or efforts unless it is simultaneously accompanied by grace. This provision of grace determines the whole spirit in which the activity of self-realization is to be pursued. Nevertheless, the accent on moral actions as the necessary factor in self-realization brings into broad relief the stress placed in Sikhism on values in human conduct.

The objectivity of these values is ensured by grounding them in the Absolute but these are to be realized subjectively by the pursuer through their inculcation in his conduct.

Whether any and every one can carry on the effort of self-realization is an ethico-psychological question. This question is also conjoined with the requirement of spiritual realization in terms of devotion *(bhakti).* As in the case of the ethico-psychological question, in *bhakti* also, the problem is raised whether devotion is possible in an impure heart. Devotion, in a way, is a matter of attitude towards the object of devotion. Time and again the mys-

tics have talked of the need to purify the heart for the perfection of this attitude.

The first and the second problem, namely the ethico-psychological and the devotional, both come practically to the same conclusion by stressing the need to control and conquer different passions and propensities recognised by them as immoral and harmful for the unity of the self. In Christianity one notices the recognition of this truth. We have already referred to a very comprehensive examination of different passions in their ethico-spiritual context by Saint Thomas Aquinas. The view is also expressed by the Stoics that each person must make his soul the regulating power of his life activities and should not cave in under the impact of the gruesome forces of passion and evil propensities. Spinoza and Kant similarly appear to have been deeply influenced by Stoicism in their ethical theories. The noteworthy distinction between action and passion made by Spinoza finds a ready parallel to some extent in the autonomy and the heteronomy of the will as visualised by Kant.

In Sikhism, also, great stress is laid on the need to overcome these passions and evil propensities for emancipation from these oppressive evil forces and also to realize the unity of the self. This emancipation alone can ensure the autonomy of the self. The self under the sway of these passions is very frequently called *manmukh*. The passions and propensities recognised generally in Sikhism are concupiscence, covetousness, delusion or attachment, anger and pride. We have already seen the grave danger to the moral agent who does not regulate them and thereby fails to ensure the steadfastness of the self. We have also referred to similar views as held by the different schools of Indian Philosophy. We may here conclude by making the observation that the Sikh ethics has a remarkably similar approach to this problem of regulating passions and propensities except for the fact that in Sikhism these are required to be sublimated, by virtues, as the springs of action rather than by physical torture or recourse to asceticism.

Is the self, relieved from the oppressive influence of these inclinations and passions, to remain vacuous ? Is a person required

only to overcome his passions? The answer in Sikhism to this question is in the negative. The self is to regulate its actions through the virtues. The virtues are the qualities of the self as witnessed in its conduct and accomplishments. The virtues cited generally in Sikhism are to be cultivated as permanent traits of conduct. These are comprehensive and all inclusive. The list discussed in the present book includes wisdom, truthfulness, temperance, justice, courage, humility and contentment. These may be spoken of as cardinal virtues in Sikhism.

We have discovered during our examination of the virtues that great stress is laid on the conduct of the moral agent who imbibes these virtues. Again, this list of virtues in Sikhism can be seen to have some affinity with both the Western as well as the Eastern approach to the question of virtues. In this it is also pertinent to add that in terms of the application of these virtues to all persons, Sikhism is closer to the general Western notion of virtues. In the West generally these are the virtues which every one may be required to acquire and similar view is held in Sikhism. However, in India the virtue such as courage was sometimes considered to be a specialised virtue *(Višesa dharma)* of generally the warrior caste. These virtues are thus identified as the imperatives for different castes. Sikhism, which breaks through this notion of the specialised virtues, is sometimes itself referred to as the warrior class created for the protection of others. We have, however, discovered here that the stress in Sikhism is laid on the need to cultivate all the virtues and Sikhism is not to be reduced to a sort of communal or national guard. The general impression which appears to lay emphasis only on the martial aspect of Sikhism thus commits a fallacy of substantiating a misconception. Whatever are the historical or political reasons for the popularizations of this one-sided image of Sikhism we can say, on the basis of our discoveries in the present book, that the moral approach in Sikhism is that of all-comprehensive cultivation of virtues. At times the stress on courage in Sikhism is meant mostly to awaken the sense of authenticity in man but it would be wrong to interpret the whole of the Sikh approach to life in merely these martial terms. Our study here amply

provides against such an exclusive interpretation which otherwise seems to be popularly accepted on the basis of insufficient evidence or as illicit generalization. We must reiterate that in Sikhism a person is advised to cultivate these virtues and that all persons are required to cultivate all of the virtues. *Raza* as the moral principle of duties envisages the performance of one's function to the best of one's creatively progressive ability and *rahit* apart from relating a person to the organisation, also stresses the role of moral duties.

We have also discovered that apart from treating virtues as personal moral traits, the persons are required to qualify their social acts by moral principles. The principle of equality may thus be seen to be intimately connected with the virtue of justice. We also find that the metaphysical notions of Sikhism are directly applied to social relationships. It is conceived in Sikhism that all are spiritually related. There is an underlying spiritual unity which runs through all. But due to the influence of consciousness of individuation *(houmai)* we fail to discern this unity of all. The Gurus generally appear to prefer the use of the term *houmai* (I am-ness) over *avidya* (ignorance). The term *houmai* seems to highlight the fact that the moral trouble lies in the human failure to discern this element of unity. Also the human error in mistaking the individuation as the reality is brought into broad relief. Thus men are not separated from each other in reality. It is only this consciousness of individuation which causes the wrong belief. In the social relationships of the moral agent he is required to direct his efforts to the realization of this underlying spiritual unity of the self. The typical phraseology used is that of 'seeing one in all'. However, in what Sikhism may be said to differ from similar approches is its stress on the need to realise this unity in terms of action.

While discussing social ethics we had occasion to point out that sometimes even those idealistic systems which are acclaimed in India as contributing to the theory of universalism, in fact, tacitly or openly were constrained to permit the perpetuation of practices which, in conduct, nearly are tantamount to the denial of this universalism. The institution of caste system in India has proved

to be the acid test for the acceptance of universalism, the minimum of which may be said to be indicated through the acceptance of equality. Sikhism fulfills the requirement of this acid test by a complete rejection of the caste system and the promulgation of the equality of all men. The heavy price which it had to pay for this rejection of inequality by provoking the wrath of privileged persons is a matter of history but may be alluded to here to cite the high esteem in which this equality is held by the Gurus, and the extent to which they were willing to go for accepting the logical implications of their universalistic approach.

But we may be asked whether the social relations ought not to go beyond this mere equality. We have noted that as a minimum this equality is a necessity but the social relations are required to go beyond this more equality. The ethics of the Sikhs requires realizing in conduct the tenet of the universal brotherhood of mankind. Apart from the conquering of those passions and propensities which may hinder this realization we also notice the stress laid on the need to renounce enmity and slander. On the positive side altruism and disinterested social service are presented as ideals for the realization of human brotherhood. Social conduct is a step towards the extension of the sphere of moral and spiritual activity. It is, what may be called, applied spirituality.

Is social conduct not binding? Ought not a man to renounce the social involvements and commitments by taking recourse to a life of seclusion ? The answer of the Gurus, as we have found, is in the negative. In Sikhism a complete embargo is placed on the renunciation of the social context of one's ethico-spiritual activity. Even worship is socialised and it is given the name of *sat sangat* (the company of good persons). This *sat sangat* is not constituted of some ascetics who have left their homes for their spiritual quest. Such ascetics would be entering into a dialogue with the laymen from an entirely different background and thus would not prove helpful to the persons who are seeking to surge forward spiritually even while continuing their social function and participation. The *sat sangat* as envisaged in Sikhism is constituted of the social group of the good persons who sit together and reflect on the

various problems along with the performance of the spiritual function of worship. In these groups the self learns to associate itself with the larger social groups and thus relieves the stress on the individuality of the self which might accrue from the egoistic approach to worship. This may also help the person in overcoming social conflicts which may arise when persons are not willing to identify each other as spiritually related, devoid of artificial distinctions of caste or class. Thus we may discern that apart from refusing the permission to abandon the social context, the Sikh ethics also seeks to weld all together and thereby enable them to realise their spiritual-relatedness. *Sat sangat* also becomes a medium of the ethico-spiritual education.

In examining the concept of the supreme ideal we have discovered that Sikhism has adopted the traditional terminology *of jivan mukti, mokh dvār, nirbān, param pad,* and *sachiār.* It has both the negative and the positive aspects and emphasis is laid on both these aspects of realization. It is the highest good to which a self aspires or what it realizes. It marks both freedom from as well as freedom to. It is freedom from bondage to individuation. The separation and alienation of man from man and of man from God haunts the self. Fear and anxiety, bom of this consciousness of alienation, dissolve in the unitive experience of the self. This unitive experience is realized through the conserted efforts of the whole personality, along with grace, and the realization also is reflected through cognition, affection and conation of the self. Here the person does not cease good actions. We may say that his actions become spontaneously moral *(sehaj subhāe).*

Such persons, to whatever spatio-temporal environments they may belong, are the fervent hope and the ideal of humanity. The world seers have sought to create, and recreate, such an authentic person. Here is the point of convergence of the great humanistic world traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism. It is the narrowness or ego which may so incapacitate the person that he does not recognise this convergence.

Whether the Sikhs have measured up to this ideal is an open question. Much self-introspection may be required for an honest

answer. Even an occasional authoritarian egoism is quite against the great universalistic spirit of the ideal of the Sikh ethics. Again, we may say that, dogmatism is contrary to the moral tradition which stresses the need for wisdom and also the necessity to explode the shell of superstition. An open mind and an open heart, coupled with strenuous mood, in the spirit of blissful equipoise, realizing the Oneness of what appears to be the pluralistic and an endless creative activity is the great hall-mark of the ethics of the Sikhs. In this we find Sikhism attempting a synthesis of mysticism with realism in the ethico-spiritual realm of human beings.

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