

PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES OF SIKHISM

LATE DR. AVTAR SINGH

Editor

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PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES OF SIKHISM

by
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FOREWORD

Philosophical Perspectives of Sikhism is a collection of research papers, presented by late Dr. Avtar Singh at seminars held in India and abroad. In the research papers, collected in this volume, the author has brought to bear on the selected themes the perceptiveness of his deep understanding of the Sikh doctrine.

The singular credit of introducing Sikh philosophy as a teaching subject in the Department of Philosophy at Punjabi University, Patiala, goes to Dr. Avtar Singh. During his long association with the Department of Philosophy, he always tried to establish the autonomy and uniqueness of the Sikh thought through sustained research.

The present book is dedicated to the tricentenary celebrations of the birth of the Khalsa.

PUNJABI UNIVERSITY
PATIALA

JOGINDER SINGH PUAR
VICE-CHANCELLOR

INTRODUCTION

While editing *Philosophical Perspectives on Sikhism* by Dr. Avtar Singh, it was clear to me that this book is actually a tribute to the teacher from a student. I tried to collect the research articles of late Dr. Avtar Singh ji (31 January, 1931 to 16 March, 1991) with the help of Sardarni Avtar Singh, Bibi Rajpal Kaur. Dr. Avtar Singh was my guide for Ph.D. and I still remember how he inspired and motivated me to register my name for Ph.D. Those were the very hard and critical days of my life and I was going through a sort of mental trauma with my little daughter to be brought up all alone. It was Dr. Avtar Singh who asked me to apply for the registration in Ph.D. I requested him that mentally I was not in a position to do any studies. He told me that he knew it well that is why he was asking me to involve myself in further studies and as a teacher he knew it well how to motivate a student to work. It was not difficult for him to judge his student's capacity. Late S. Daljeet Singh (I.A.S. Retd.) was a close friend of Dr. Avtar Singh. They were used to hold long meetings to discuss the Sikh philosophy and the issues related with Sikh academics. It was Dr. Avtar Singh who introduced his Ph.D. students to S. Daljeet Singh. Whenever S. Daljeet Singh visited Dr. Avtar Singh he would always invite us to participate in the discussion. Both were trying to solve the basic problems related to Sikh studies. When S. Daljeet Singh came to know about my Ph.D topic he was a bit hesitant because of the seriousness of the topic. He knew it well that till that time even in Indian Philosophy one could find only Dr. Satchidanand Murty's thesis "Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedanta". But when I completed my thesis and got Ph.D degree S. Daljeet Singh was also very happy and recommended my name for the conferences to be held in U.K., U.S.A. and Canada on Sikh studies, in 1990. For all this recognition I owe a lot to Dr. Avtar Singh's able guidance and encouragement. It was also due to Dr. Avtar Singh's orders that I took the responsibility of the publication of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib's* English Translation (Vol. III & IV) by late Prof. G.S.

Talib. First I was reluctant, he asked me to take it as a service to the scholars interested in Sikh studies.

Dr. Avtar Singh got retired from the university as a Professor in Philosophy on 31 January, 1991. At that matured and enlightened stage, he had long plannings in his mind. God never willed so and what happened is history. I still remember how on the *Bhog* of my little daughter he spoke on the medical ethics. He himself died because of the lack of that medical ethics. I gave this shocking news to S. Daljeet Singh. He was very much impressed by Dr. Avtar Singh's sharp intellect and deep understanding of Sikh Philosophy. S. Daljeet Singh knew that Dr. Avtar Singh had attended so many seminars in India and abroad and had written many papers. He asked me that as a student of Dr. Avtar Singh it was my duty to collect these papers from Mrs. Avtar Singh and publish them in the form of a book and that would be a great service to the community as well as to the Sikh Philosophy. I had some meetings with Mrs. Avtar Singh but I could not dare to ask and the much needed job got late. Another reason for taking this task into hand was that S. Daljeet Singh also left for his heavenly abode without seeing the works of Dr. Avtar Singh in the form of a book. Then I felt guilty and one day I went to Sardarni Rajpal Kaur with my request and the last wish of S. Daljeet Singh. She asked for some more time to regain her lost spirit and sort out the articles. After some time she co-operated with me and handed over the articles with tears in her eyes. This is how I am the editor of this book.

When we look into the Sikh Philosophy as an academic discipline Dr. Sher Singh seems to be the pioneer but according to my mind it was Dr. Avtar Singh who emerged as the pioneer of Sikh Philosophy in the academic circles. There are reasons for this. Dr. Avtar Singh wrote his thesis for Ph.D. degree from the Panjab University on *The Ethics of the Sikhs* under the guidance of Dr. (Miss) Ruth Reyna, the visiting American Professor. That was first systematic and scientific work on the Sikh Ethics. He has been teaching philosophy in various Govt. Colleges in Punjab for some years and then he was appointed Reader in Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies at Punjabi University, Patiala in 1969, where he did research in Sikh Philosophy. Then he was selected in the Department of Philosophy where he was appointed Professor. It was there that he worked hard to establish Sikh Philosophy as an academic discipline. It was for the first time that the Sikh Philosophy was introduced as an independent teaching subject in any university of India. Punjabi University Patiala is the first University in

India to introduce the papers in Sikh Philosophy and Sikh Ethics for the Master's degree under the able guidance of Dr. Avtar Singh. In 1978 he visited East Germany and then again he attended a conference related with religion in Moscow. That was the start which never ended till his death. He visited so many universities all over the world to represent Sikh Philosophy and propagate Sikh Religion also. He remained important member of Council for the World's Religions (CWR). He was very anxious to introduce the Sikh clergy to the Inter-Faith societies. He was the one to introduce Prof. Darshan Singh Ragi, then *Jathedar* of *Akal Takhat Sahib* to Council for the World's Religions (CWR) and after that Prof. Manjeet Singh, *Jathedar* of *Takhat Sri Kesgarh Sahib* also joined them. He wanted to popularise Sikh Philosophy and Sikh Theology far and wide. Because of his power of argumentation and clarity of mind he held important positions in the seminars. Along with Dean of Faculty he held the post of Dean Academic Affairs of the Punjabi University Patiala twice. He was the member of the Babri Masjid Committee formed by the Government of India along with other important religious leaders.

He never wrote for the sake of writing but always rose to the situation through his papers. Put any academic question before him and answer would flow from his mind like a spring. When I was doing my Ph.D. I had the occasion to observe such situations. He always encouraged me by observing "Your Ph.D. thesis is a first logical work of its kind". He guided me to find the appropriate terms from *Gurbani* equivalent to the terms available in Western insights. It was definitely a difficult task but it was carried out in the guidance of Dr. Avtar Singh. Whenever I got very much puzzled, Dr. Avtar Singh always came to my rescue. His was a very different style. He would put the question to you, then give you the time for thinking, if you could not make it out he will help you. For example, we were to find some term for "understanding". This term has a particular connotation in epistemology. He asked me to find the equivalent term in *Gurbani*. I concentrated for some time and suggested a few terms. He immediately jumped to conclusion and asked me "Is it not *ਝੋਲੀ*?" It was not very easy to work with him because he was a very hard task master and as a teacher he was a role model also. He believed in perfection. I was always afraid to go to him as student but otherwise people around him liked to enjoy his company especially over a cup of coffee. These were the good times of the Philosophy Department. Because of him the department was known world wide. I had met only two such teachers in the whole

of my studentship period who had very deeper impact upon me as a teacher. First was Dr. Ajit Kumar, Sinha, head of the Philosophy Department at Kurukshetra University. The second one was Dr. Avtar Singh. Both had deep interest in their students. He suggested to his students the topics for Ph.D. research with a planning. He wanted to evolve a school of Sikh Philosophy through his Ph.D students. He always used to say that he was sowing the plants which would be full fledged trees one day. He was very fond of plants and flowers. Every time he went to America, Japan or some other country he would bring seeds of flowers and plants with him, and all around his house in the lawns you could see them in full bloom. As a student of Philosophy this indicates a lot to me.

He regularly tried to establish the independence and uniqueness of Sikh revelation through research students and his research articles. While going through this book one can have the vision of the insights of Sikh thought brought forward by Dr. Avtar Singh. He has dealt with many aspects of Sikh philosophy. I would like to cite a few examples. While writing on the "Sikh Perspective of Culture and Integration" he says, *"The true living lies in the devotion to the ideal, substitution of fear by courage, honest livelihood and social service. Guru Nanak did not approve the culture of the hungry. The dictum for him was to earn with the sweat of the brow and to share with others. The hunger is a disintegrating factor of social life. The non-productive life may end with the praxes, concomitant with the situation of scarcity. Guru Nanak, by stressing the dignity of the work and labour, sought to raise the man above the gravitation of the matter. A sincere devotion to work is an honest devotion to the spiritual. It is also an important aspect of the integration and culture. The enduring bounds of integration can be sustained only through justice... A non-participatory society can become sullen and resentful. But a participatory society can become the glowingly integrating nation. If we look at the national integration only as a political goal, it would appear as mere matter without form. It may fail to inspire people to move in the direction of actualising their potentiality."* He was a trained philosopher of Sikhism and had deeper understanding of the tools for the scriptural studies. While writing about the "Moral Principles in Sri Guru Granth Sahib" he observes, *"It is obvious that many moral virtues extolled in one scripture, also find a mention in the other scripture. This may tempt the students and scholars of the moral systems to indulge in a "patch" comparative study. This patchwork*

would consist of tearing out of context some elements from the moral structure of one scripture and comparing it indiscriminately with similar looking elements in another tradition. Such studies may, consciously or unconsciously, provide justification for describing the later scriptures as 'syncretisms' of the older ones. Some of the studies of Sri Guru Granth Sahib have suffered from this defect due to the use of grossly misunderstood mythology and function of a comparative study of scripture and tradition."

At one place he writes, "*The Sikh Gurus' saintliness is not in having destroyed anger, pride, etc., something which is a mere myth. Their saintliness is in remaining thoroughly unaffected by these strong passions. Not for a single moment do they forget that they are mere soldiers of light.*" At one place while describing the situation of India before the arrival of Sikh Gurus he says, "*The feelings of a slave mother often create feelings of humiliation in her brave son. Her joys and woes look petty to him as they are all connected with her master. Their narration provokes contempt in him. The communication between the mother and the son gets broken. This state of affairs had come to be between India and her brave sons before the advent of the Gurus. India has been cultural unit for thousands of years but those brave sons had forgotten the face of their mother out of shame-... Mother India was no longer pious goddess.*" While writing about the "Revelation in different Cultures and Societies" he opines, "*But apart from these canonical difficulties which all religious traditions have to face when they stress the experience and contact with God in terms of human presence and encounter, the mere fact that the Sikh scripture has included the sacred hymns which articulate about the revelation of God in a widely different cultural contexts, makes this scripture worthy of wider and deeper appreciation and understanding. It may, perhaps, provide a key to cross-cultural and trans-cultural reality of God's revelation, without committing anyone to the rejection of the tenets of one's faith.*"

Symbols and rites play an important role in any religion because every revelation has its own symbols and rites for its manifestation. In Sikhism five 'K's, i.e. *Kes* (hair); *Kangha* (comb) for the proper maintenance of the hair; *Kachhera* (short breaches or underwear); *Kirpan* (sword); *Karha* (iron bangle) are the basics to the Sikh Theology. In the article "Symbols and Rites in Hope for Harmony among Men of Faiths" Dr. Avtar Singh describes beautifully the meaning and importance of sword. "*Let us cite a symbol which finds place both in the material as well as the spiritual traditions. The*

spiritual perception of the sword is Love, Freedom, and Immortality. The ethical meanings are of Justice and Benevolence. The materialist perception of the sword is conflict, fear and authoritarian subjugation. The preliminary spiritual perception of the sword symbol leads to freedom from materialist attachment and the vanquishing of the ego and the fear which arises from such materialist-attachment. However, when the material in the sword symbol predominates, its impact is inverted. It becomes an instrument of causing what it seeks to remove. But the moment we transcend its materiality, it becomes the first step towards Love." Just a few more examples through which I would like to indicate his insights. In "Guru Tegh Bahadur—A Re-Appraisal" he writes, "*Guru Tegh Bahadur, however, points out that a slavery of these praxes not only causes suffering for man even in his actions motivated by them, but it also causes immense harm by obstructing man in his efforts to realise the life-ideal. We are reminded by him that this failure is grave as this reduces the whole life to a mere struggle for gaining the objects of sense-satisfaction... Guru Tegh Bahadur has reiterated this theme so often and so strongly that many of his readers who did not have time or patience to look for the complete structure of his teachings have attributed and described this aspect of his teachings, as a withdrawal from the world. To some, this also appears to be a kind of pessimism. It is the failure to study Guru Tegh Bahadur.*"

Sikhism is a societal religion and it advises to realise the supreme ideal while leading the family life and earning one's own living. In the "Ethics of Marriage and Family", Dr. Avtar Singh avers, "*Sikhism gave a new name to the marriage. It was called Anand (Bliss). The Anand is different from the Sukha (pleasure or happiness). Although marriage signified a physical relation but the ideal embodied into it went beyond mere sensory experience. The word Anand indicated a physical immanent as well as a spiritual transcendent. The withdrawal from the physical by the ascetic monk was substituted by the realization of the transcendence in the Anand. The fulfillment was thus more meaningful and more valuable....The final Lav marks the completion of the transformation from the hectic aimless wandering of the individual into a new union....The marriage is not only a physical union but also a withdrawal from the superficiality of the world. In fact this union is symbolic of the much more significant and meaningful movement, in togetherness, towards the highest ideal"*.

With this it has been indicated that Dr. Avtar Singh lived

philosophy in Sikh Spirit. The book **Philosophical Perspectives of Sikhism** has much more to say. It is multidimensional book exploring many aspects of Sikh philosophy and religion along with the life and teachings of Baba Sheikh Farid, Bhai Vir Singh and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. He had a capacity to build a perspective out of men like Sant Harchand Singh Longowal. He has opined on whole life aspects and established through his articles the philosophical perspectives of Sikhism.

I hope readers and students of Sikh philosophy will enjoy reading this book. There may be many mistakes as the press copy could not be foolproof in Dr. Avtar Singh's absence. Being his student I beg pardon for that. I am very grateful to Bibi Rajpal Kaur that she has the courage to believe my words and co-operated me and helped a lot to collect all this material. I could not express my thanks and gratitude in words to Dr. J.S. Puar, our Vice Chancellor, who permitted me to publish this book. It is all due to his grace that we are able to see these research articles in the form of a book. My thanks are due to the students of Dr. Avtar Singh: Dr. Nirbhai Singh who evaluated the manuscript, Raj Kumari Balinderjit Kaur who checked the first proofs and Dr. Balkar Singh who encouraged and helped me a lot in the whole process of publication. I am very thankful to Dr. Hazara Singh without whose co-operation and understanding of the publication work, we cannot have a book in such beautiful form. He is in the habit of watching even the minutest details. My thanks are due to Dr. Frank Kaufmann, Executive Director, the Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace, who accepting our request, wrote his thoughts on paper and obliged. Lastly I am very much thankful to my steno S. Parminder Singh Sandhu who took all pains to type and arrange the articles in the form of press copy. In the end I will say that whatever shortcomings are there in the book are mine and whatever is good, the credit goes to late Dr. Avtar Singh.

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GURNAM KAUR
HEAD

REFLECTIONS FOR PROFESSOR AVTAR SINGH

FRANK KAUFMANN

The invitation from Drs. Balkar Singh and Gurnam Kaur to offer thoughts on paper for my beloved elder Dr. Avtar Singh while an honour is onerous as well. The great hills on the path to completing such an assignment grow not only from the magnitude of Dr. Avtar Singh's life, but from my own emotions as well. Few if any aroused from within me the kind of love and fondness as I felt for Dr. Avtar Singh. His passing was for me a personal loss, despite our origins as professionally related. If a man can have more than one father, then Dr. Avtar Singh was surely one of mine.

In life and death, Dr. Avtar Singh provides irrefutable proof that the measure of a man is found in those who love him. Even now, so many years after his passing, I continue to find myself in places where fond memories of Avtar are exchanged. It is not just that such occasions continue to arise for these many years, but that they arise among such good and righteous souls. The friends of Avtar reveal a heavenly life through quiet example. They are people whose love for God illuminates my own, and whose historical greatness is concealed by their humility and their humanity.

I first came into contact with Dr. Avtar in 1985 when he came to us as a conference participant and later to become an advisor to the Council for the World's Religions (CWR). (I was its executive director.) For all years from then until his untimely passing Dr. Avtar worked hard pursuing the high ideals of the CWR with tirelessness and enthusiasm rivaling my own. The CWR dream of harmony and cooperation among the world's religions, and the deepening of spiritual purity among the world's believers was a perfect match for Avtar's own predilection. For this end Avtar travelled the world, and travelled his own native land. In fact, the tragic auto accident leading to Avtar's passing happened as he sped along Indian highways pursuing his ongoing mission in the service of God's providential will.

I was blessed to be with Avtar in a vast variety of different social and cultural environments; from small villages in the Punjab to Greenwich Village in New York City, from the edge of our beds in shared hotel rooms to seated on the daises of Gala international Congresses. Most important of all, however, was the time I could spend with the lovely wife and family of Dr. Singh, and the time we spent together with my own family.

It is my firm belief that a man must be seen and known in more than mere public situations before his true character and greatness can be affirmed. It is too easy to exhibit would-be qualities of character and leadership when seen only in public occasions. It is the quality of a man's most intimate relationships, and his behaviour in circumstances emptied of positions and titles that show more fully if his virtues are deep seated.

Avtar blended an unusual mixture of talents. He was eminently likeable. People from all stations felt at ease and at home with Avtar. While ever the scholars' scholar ready always to pursue metaphysical queries with rigour and creativity, he was equally at home on the floor with children, or tapping his feet to a jazz band on the streets of New York City. Dr. Avtar Singh produced an impressive corpus of social, philosophical, and theological reflection in essays commissioned by the CWR.

Over the years, as I laboured to fulfil my responsibilities as CWR executive director, I frequently relied on Avtar's guidance and advice. He proved a reliable source of insight not only in matters pertaining to Sikhism but also to larger questions and issues of inter-religious relations. In addition to Dr. Singh's scholarly prowess and his inborn piety and spirituality, he possessed a special quality which made him ideally suited for intimate collaboration with the CWR. He like many of his colleagues always preferred straight talk and the truth over expedience, or personal comfort or benefit. He never shied away from controversy or sought a concealed or comfortable path when pursuing what is right, or when seeking to alleviate injustice or oppression. From the earliest times, despite his sterling and devout Sikh piety, Avtar blazed a trail as a great defender and admirer of Reverend Moon, the CWR's founder and leading light.

From my many precious experiences with Avtar, it may be one event above all which led Drs. Balkar Singh and Gurnam Kaur to invite me to this honour of contributing here. A friend of mine, Mr. Gural Singh, a California businessman and philanthropist, is also a great

admirer of Avtar. At the time of Avtar's sudden and tragic passing, Gурpal and I shared many moments of consolation and mutual encouragement. Soon after this time I had a vivid dream that offered some comfort which I quickly shared with Gурpal on the phone and described my dream. I explained that I had travelled up a steep mountain pass at first on mule, and then by foot for some days. Eventually I came to a clearing which revealed a large crystal clear mountain lake. It was a snowy scene, and on the far side of the lake stood a small, primitive edifice of wood. I followed the path around the lake to the cottage, and inside I met a far younger Avtar; around 40 years old or so. He greeted me, seemed to exude a touch of sadness or remorse, but simultaneously seemed striving to don an air of serenity and cheer for my sake. He explained, that he has been posted here to carry out "his new mission". His new mission, he explained was to work with religious leaders for the sake of unifying the world's religions.

I finished my narration, and waited eagerly for Gурpal's response, hoping that I had told him something pleasing. Instead there was silence, an oddly long silence. "Gурpal? Are you still there?" After some moments, Gурpal said gravely, "Frank, who told you of this place, or where have you read about it?" I thought it an odd question. "I know nothing of any such place Gурpal, I just told you, I saw this scene in a dream." I was surprised that Gурpal was distracted by the place, as I thought he would more likely have reacted more strongly to my mention of this interesting notion of the deceased Avtar "receiving a mission." "Frank, you have just described Hem Kunt Sahib," said Gурpal, and proceeded to explain to me its significance in Sikh history.

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MORAL PRINCIPLES IN SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB

A PHILOSOPHICAL SURVEY

Moral principles form an important and integral part of the scripture, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. The scripture is in itself multi-dimensional. It is not only our contact with the subtle and the spiritual but it also guides and demands obedience. It is the latter which is also definitive of its Guru function. However, we may lose the richness of the meaning conveyed by the word Guru if we render it as a mere 'teacher' because the word teacher may register in our minds only the secular function of communicating knowledge. The word Guru for the scripture may sound a little unfamiliar in the context of the earlier religious traditions but it not only indicates the status of the scripture but also emphasises its association with the spiritual as well its command of obedience to its guidance. Therefore, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, not only illumines but also motivates and directs. In the present paper we shall be concerning ourselves with the guidance-obedience aspect of the *Guru Granth Sahib* which is the anchorage of the 'belief-attitude' structure in the faith and tradition.

However, before proceeding any further, we may face a difficulty. We have used words such as knowledge, belief and attitude, and are about to begin our study of the moral principles as communicated and held desirable by *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. But the religious language, which is the medium of the above-referred communication, has often been subjected to various critical examinations in the general philosophical dialogue. We may attempt here a brief answer to a critical question relevant to our discussion.

An interesting discussion in respect of the religious

language has often been centred around the question whether ethico-religious statements are cognitive or not. The word cognitive is an adjective of the noun cognition, which means 'the process of knowing, knowledge or the capacity for it; also a product of this process, as a perception or notion'. We may, therefore, suggest that perhaps it may be more meaningful if we use the word cognition or cognitive in respect of person and his experience. It is not the quality of a statement but a statement about his experience, or more appropriately, a statement of analysis of personal experience. An over simplified analysis, useful in some contexts, perhaps, may lead us to the wall when stretched beyond its primary objective of attempting an analysis of human experience. The division of cognitive, affective and conative is not a statement of fact but an attempted analysis of human experience. While such an analysis may not be objected to, it is imperative for us to remember that these are merely abstractions and do not represent any final and total divisions. It is pointed out to us by a scholar (M. Oakeshott) that 'it is not, of course, wrong to attempt an analysis of experience, to distinguish (for example) sensation, reflection, volition, feeling and intuition; the error lies in supposing that in so doing we are considering activities which are different in principle and can be separated from one another finally and absolutely. They are the products of analysis, lifeless abstractions which (like all such) call out to be joined to the concrete whole to which they belong and whence they derive their nature'. He further reminds us that, 'all abstract and incomplete experience is a modification of what is complete, individual and concrete, and to this it must be referred if we are to ascertain its character' In the light of the above discussion, we may underline two submissions. First, that cognitive is not the quality of the statement but of the experience, and second, experience, in its anchorage in a person or persons, factually speaking, refers to his whole self and not to cognitive, affective and conative aspects. The ethico-religious propositions, therefore, may not be devoid of knowledge-content in an actual or concrete situation. Any view contrary to this may perhaps be unempirical and verifiable only in an analysis. The ethico-religious language, therefore, may be a fusion of belief and

attitude as witnessed by us in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

We may now refer to another basic aspect of our submission in respect of the moral principles in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. First, we may notice that *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is, relatively speaking, a recent scripture, of a recent major religious tradition in the world. A new faith and scripture has to establish its functional uniqueness at the social and psychological level. It is imperative for a new vision, and religion based on that vision, that it may lay down a clear statement of its ethical teachings so as to gain the initial acceptance and a sustained adherence thereafter. A reading of the scripture will convince a person of the truth in this submission. The desire to communicate and to change in the desirable direction often also needs a continued use of certain referents in a dialogue. But this cannot be done without risking some ambiguities and equivocations to which we may refer now.

We may notice that various kinds of scholars have been attracted towards a study of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. We may here direct our attention to two categories of scholars in this regard. There are a few who have hinted at the lack of a systematic and significant ethical structure in the teachings of the Gurus. The second category includes those who have written papers wherein they have traced the echo of some of the important virtues of their own scriptures and faith, repeated in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as well. Unconsciously, perhaps, they seek to describe the moral principles in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as miniature reflection of the basic truths of their own scriptures. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, on their reasoning, is merely a reiteration of the great ethical visions of the older scriptures and faiths to which these scholars may belong. Any one who has undertaken a serious study of the literature hurriedly produced during the quincentenary celebrations of the birth of Guru Nanak, might have some idea of such a phenomenon. A comparative study of scriptures and their ethical teachings is a double-edged methodology. It has indeed attracted the attention of the scholars for some time in the past. But it is also important for us to notice the difficulties involved in this approach as some of the recent studies of values and virtues

as outlined in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* have been examined and talked about from, what is very loosely described as, comparative study. It is obvious that many moral virtues extolled in one scripture, also find a mention in the other scripture. This may tempt the students and scholars of the moral systems to indulge in a 'patch' comparative study. This patch-work would consist of tearing out of context some elements from the moral structure of one scripture and comparing it indiscriminately with similar-looking elements in another tradition. Such studies may, consciously or unconsciously, provide justification for describing the later scriptures as 'syncretisms' of the older ones. Some of the studies of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* have suffered from this defect due to the use of grossly misunderstood methodology and function of a comparative study of scripture and tradition. A comparative study may, however, appear to be fruitful if moral principles are compared in proper contexts and the value of each structure is properly understood. Some of the orientalist and indigenous scholars have tended to forget this truth. We may now proceed to make a brief statement of the moral principles and their springs in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

First, we may begin with the observation that *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is deeply committed to a belief in the reality and existence of one God. The value and meaning of human life and conduct derive their authenticity from such a belief. Even a cursory glance at the hymns of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* will convince a person beyond doubt about its deep and passionate devotion to the seeking of God's Love and obedience to His Will. The structure of the moral principles, therefore, stands on this firm rock of the faith in God and love for God's Will. An action is right or an ideal is good if it contributes towards the realization of God. We ought to keep in view this deep monotheistic commitment of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* before attempting superficial comparisons or proclaiming similarities with agnostic or atheistic traditions. Unfortunately, some of the recent studies are badly tripping here.

Second, the seeker of God ought to live an ethical life. An immoral person is neither worthy of, nor attains to, the

love of God. Thus the relationship between an ethical life and belief in the reality of loving God is both functional as well as necessary. In the context of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, it may be described as 'a priori'.

Third, the life scheme of the agent on the moral path consists of expanding his limited and narrow consciousness so as to experience the divine. The moral consciousness, therefore, must keep pace with the expanding human consciousness and mystic experience. We are also reminded that the realization of God as truth (*Sach*) ought to be indicated in the conduct (*āchār*) of the person who is seeking and realizing God. Any dichotomy between the realization and conduct is, therefore, not approved. The subjective and social test for the spiritual realization hinges on this necessary, continuous, and harmonious relationship between *sach* and *āchār*. This is one of the important factors characterising the uniqueness of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*'s view of the ethico-spiritual realization. It is easy to see that there are great social and personal implications of such a view for people from all walks of life. It clearly suggests a continuity of moral and spiritual purpose in the seemingly mundane and manifestly spiritual objectives and activities connected therewith. We shall leave the application of this moral teaching of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* to the individual conscience and imagination.

Our fourth submission follows from the third. We notice that the scripture under review lays great stress on the need to earn one's livelihood by honest means. The stress on this virtue shows the modernity of the faith. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* has expressly forbidden any violation of another man's right. It advises man to respect the rights of others as scrupulously as he observes the religious taboos. This indicates the social emphasis of the scripture. It does not respect a living by alms. It also forbids withdrawal from the social participation and enjoined work and sharing. Thus the activities which appear to be purely secular to a superficial eye, are viewed in the sacred perspective. This restores a balance and harmony between different elements of a man's life.

We may now refer to the major cluster of virtues which

find a central place in the moral scheme. Other elements of the desirable activities may also find their complementary positions. The cardinal virtues appear to be Wisdom, Courage, Contentment, Justice, Humility, Truthfulness, and Temperance. I have, elsewhere, dealt with these virtues in greater details. Here we may only refer to their general characteristic which emphasises the need to practise in one's conduct the desirable virtues. We may also, in passing, refer to the great importance of the virtues such as wisdom, courage and humility which are desirable not merely as personal traits but also contribute to the social life.

We shall now proceed to the sixth statement. It deals with the moral qualities related to the corporate and social life. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* does not accept the validity of the '*varnāshrama dharma*' which formed the basis of the earlier social ethics. It, instead, sought to substitute it with its own vision of the desirable norms for social relations. These are based on the principles of social equality and human brotherhood. The caste institution and its various forms are expressly rejected. The ideal of human brotherhood is based in the transcendence of the ego and social service. The importance of *sevā* is another aspect of sharing one's resources with the fellow beings. The primary qualities of *sevā* are its voluntary nature and its inspiration from love. It is the expression towards the fellow beings of whatever one feels towards God.

SIKH PHILOSOPHY

(1) THE MORAL FERVOUR

One thing which distinguishes Sikhism from all other civilized religions is its positive and daring approach to anger, pride, desire, possessiveness and ignorance. From ancient days Indian seers have been denouncing them as evil. The Jains, the Hindus, the Buddhists, all alike have been preaching a conduct which should totally avoid these five deadly sins. The Gurus have also called them sins but their approach has not been one of avoidance but of conquest. In a way one could say that Sikhism is perhaps the only religion which has developed a monistic conduct. It is one thing to preach theoretically that God alone is truth, but to give a discipline to all human actions, based on this belief alone, requires spiritual boldness and a different vision.

There are several religions which preach that God alone exists. He alone is *Sat*. But if we examine their ethical system we find that they have a lurking fear of some force which is other than God. Call it sin or evil whatever you like. They have given it many names. They seem to be preaching that a virtuous man should avoid its snares or his soul is lost. Christianity and Islam have accepted this dark, anti-God, element as Satan or the devil. A basic dualism has thus crept into those systems. It is of God and mammon. Whatever attempts Christian and Muslim philosophers and theologians might have made to re-establish monism, the fact remains that their practical life on all steps reflects belief in two supreme entities: one bright, luminous, kind, loving, and the other dark, wicked, cruel.

It goes to the credit of Hinduism that after having realized philosophically '*EKAM SATYA*', that God alone is *Sat* or existent, they have not accepted the existence of the

dark power against God. Neither Shaivism nor Vaishnavism nor the *Bhakti* cult believes in the independent power of a dark being, misleading man and taking him away from God. All the major *purānas* bear ample testimony to this. Dualism has been altogether removed from the realm of faith by believing that one of the powers of God is *Maya* and this power has the speciality of having too many forms without any substance.

Man's intelligence and love – the two cardinal forces of divine birth – are lost in the mirage of *Maya*. It is not only wicked but often assumes shapes better in appearance than *Sat*, the existent, the real itself. A simile is drawn from the fact that an artificial diamond is brighter than the real diamond. A layman is more likely to go for the artificial than for the real. The real Alladin lamp is lesser in shine and could be exchanged for an ordinary lamp because of the latter's better shine. This trade has been going on in the world ever since man has existed. Man has been giving up real love under the blinding light of the false one. It has been the pleasure of God to bestow such powers on *Maya* that she could take up shapes brighter than God himself. *Maya* could be called the Terrible Mother whom psychologists discovered in the last few decades. I will return to this subject later. I would like to say at present only that the religion of the Hindus differs from those religions who have accepted the existence of Satan and have thus created an irreconcilable rift of dualism in the soul of man.

But the Hindus also could not find a way to translate this belief into human conduct. If not their religion, their code of conduct or ethical system is very much based on an avowed dualism. A dichotomy persists in their faith and action. They do not believe that there is any other reality except God. God is both immanent and transcendental. Still their code of conduct does not show that they believe, these misguiding forms of *Maya*-anger, desire, pride, possessiveness, ignorance-also to be manifestations of God. Their faith must logically preach that these negative forces are mere outer forms and have no malice as their motive. The Fifth Guru said, "Nanak, none is evil." Thus was the dichotomy overcome in Sikhism.

It was left to the Sikhs to remove this dualism from the active life. If I want to avoid anger, pride, desire etc. in my actions, I am bound to recognize these deadly five sins to be existent. Thus evil gets recognition from soul. The soul is *Sat* and whatever it recognises shall also become existent for it. In a mood of constant avoidance, the Hindus have given an independent existence to these five forces. The Hindu soul is obsessed by them. *Maya* has thus become for Hindus what evil or devil is for Christians and Muslims—a force anti-God. It was not intended to be such. It was only the step-mother in whose lap the soul is to play in order to acclimatize itself to the conditions of the world. *Maya* is only the Dragon-Mother, *Sursa*, who is not to be opposed, for as Fichte said, opposition grants existence to the not-being. Hanuman takes rebirth from her by directing all his cleverness against her opposition. He does not fight her. He treats her with respect and manages to take rebirth from her by quickly coming out of the same mouth through which he entered. His attitude towards *Sursa* is typical and this is perhaps what the Hindu genius had imagined to be the correct approach to *Maya* or *Asat* or Non-existent. He is neither afraid of her nor contemptuous. He is not angry either. He does not argue with her. He does not recognize her powers by surrender or attempt to destroy. All these four attitudes first go to establish the opposite as real. This benefit he does not want to give to *Sursa*. She has a boon from Brahma that whosoever passes her way shall have to enter into her mouth as her food. Hanuman evolves an entirely original approach. He matches her determined obstruction with cleverness. The element of cleverness in man is given to him to face *Asat*. He has to use it as an instrument of love and not as an end in itself. The motive behind it is his *Bhakti* or Love for Rama. It is love which is impetus and the prime-mover.

This further explains the Hindu concept of the evil as non-existent, *Maya*. It is not real. It becomes real only for the ignorant who hate or fear it or accept it or feel angry at it. One has to approach it with a sportsman's spirit. He fights the opposite side with all seriousness with a purpose to win. But this fight has neither hatred nor anger.

The Sikh ethics is typical in that, in the true Indian

tradition, their attitude is not one of avoiding anger, hatred, possessiveness, desire, pride. By avoiding you establish them. The Gurus taught that emphasis should be on the substance and not on the form. Substance is the real. Form belongs to the realm of the unreal. Anger, hatred, etc., are mere forms. They will cease to be sins if you make them instruments of Divine light, i.e., love. The attitude of avoidance will give them a separate existence. It would be acting against the basic creed of monism. The only existing factor is God who is love. Man exists only as a spark of that light. Anger, desire, pride, etc., are non-existing entities. They are mere forms which ought to be utilized in the service of God. This is the only way to conquer them. If you fight the passions of anger, desire, etc., you make them resistant and stronger. If you directly subdue them they stealthily enter your inner soul and take their revenge in some of the weaker moments. The right way to conquer them is to make them slaves of the element of love in you. This element is soul or God.

It was a positive and scientific approach. The surrender of passions to love is not easy. It involves a cycle of psychological rebirths. The passions in their intense surge tend to eat up the human soul. The soul takes its rebirth from the eater only when it realized that the eater is unreal whereas the soul is real and the real cannot be eaten or destroyed. '*Nainam chidanti shastrani*'. It is only faith in God or love which can manage a rebirth for a brave soul from anger, pride and other deadly sins.

The Sikh Gurus' saintliness is not in having destroyed anger, pride, etc.— something which perhaps is a mere myth. Their saintliness is in remaining thoroughly unaffected by these strong passions. Not for a single moment do they forget that they are mere soldiers of light. They have done penance not to curb human frailties but to let the divine spark merge. For them *tap* does not mean any torture to body or any suppression of human infirmities. The Gurus realized that to walk on earth, God has made man a queer combinations of the things of light and shade. The so-called infirmity, if properly controlled and subjugated to the Divine light inside, proves to be an essential power to break the '*chakrave ūhā*' of the wicked. They meditated on God with a firm determination to

feel Him in their heart as love. It was the descent of God in time and space. Perhaps nothing could be a better gift to posterity from a great man than piercing of the complex of space and time. In the playful scheme of things of God, Divinity in its pure, untainted form stays out of this complex. It is given to man to invite it or not inside time and space. The Gurus prepared their corporal frame to boldly invite the Lord. They realized it was not mortification of flesh that could do this. Human body is the epitome of creation. Whatever is there in it is in a miniature form. To regulate and discipline it in such a way that its negative urges get completely controlled requires a wedding with death. This the Masters knew. The penance of Guru Angad and others is a typical illustration of this. They do not go to the forest. They sit in their house like Guru Tegh Bahadur and meditate and realize the divine meaning of their existence. All the saints since the medieval days have been singing of the vanity of physical tortures and self-denial. The Gurus went a step ahead. They said that it is a matter of courage. One gets from God only what he dares. The sinews and veins, the very heart has to conquer fear of death and destruction, if God is to descend or awaken in our body, though descent and awakening are equally imperfect expressions of a phenomenon which cannot be described perfectly.

The Gurus do not refer to the *Chakras* and *Kundalini* like the Yogis. By the time they appeared a countless number of Yogis had already met their doom by concentrating on the art of unfolding the upturned lotuses, the *Chakras*. They knew it was wrong to use any force to awaken them except courage. When courage surges, no Yogic effort is needed. By themselves the lotuses bloom as in the natural course. Courage is their time-keeper. Courage is their master-Lord. It is mastery over Time which appears in man as courage. Courage is born of a courting with death. "I have shaken my hands with winter my friends. My hands are blue with his hand-shake." So could the Gurus, say, to quote the language of Nietzsche.

The Gurus attached no special uniqueness to the life of one dedicated to God. Such a one was an ordinary being, like the others. Even the first Guru preferred to live as an ordinary

farmer, working in the fields with his two sons, facing several doubts even disobedience from them—like an ordinary father. The Gurus' lives were an exercise in courage.

It is difficult for man to brave the fears that surround human life. The fear of the blade and the bullet, of water and frosty winds and of the unknown fate are enough to break the courage of the strongest. But one who braves all these fears, gets reborn through them and he alone is given the subtlest fear, i.e. awe, which is known to have dazed the brightest saints. The Gurus had prepared themselves for this final encounter. The effect of awe could awaken no corresponding sensation in them. They had developed an eye in this careful long journey which had, as they say, "kept watch over man's mortality." It was an eye of compassion and forgiveness. It was the eye of the divine. It could not flinch before awe. When the Master came in his million-horse-driven-chase, such dust and blinding awe was but natural. The Guru had awakened by the single power of courage so as to receive him with a step, unstaggered and firm.

Here is a religion of negatives. Nothing natural is forbidden. Even the hairs that grow naturally have not to be shorn off. Better remain closer to nature or even *Maya* for the object is neither to question nor to fight *Maya*. The object is to outwit her. Singular fortitude and courage are required for such a game. It is this spirit which did not let malice or fear of personal grudge rise in the soul of the Gurus. All the time they never forgot that they had to win. The lesson that Krishna taught in *Gita* had been most diversely and wrongly interpreted. "Thou has not to desire the fruit". This command of the Lord had come to mean almost a murder of the motive. Our race had developed a faith in action for action's sake. The Rajputs would fight only for bravery and honour without ever making victory as their avowed goal. Even to this day a devout Hindu wants simply to do good deeds without a motive. Not to be bound by any desire of fruit or motive does not mean a destruction of it. It further means wastage of human powers in killing motives. Concentrate all your powers, even motives—this was the clairon call of the Gurus. Surrender your soul to God Who is All Light and Love. Once you have done it you have not to fear the bondages of

motives. Even motives shall serve the Lord. It was a simple philosophy which very much agreed with common sense and no wonder that thousands and thousands of people from all the four castes and even Muslims thronged at their feet to find the road which grants worldly glory and bliss in the same action.

Here the Guru's concept is very much akin to that of the Tirthankaras. Control your soul and you have controlled everything. Do not bother about your desires, thoughts or motives. The source of all these is the soul. Surrender it to the Lord. It is lazy by habit like a python. It just wants rest and therefore adjusts in every situation. Do not let it sleep. Do not let it compromise. It has to awaken and remain active. Unless the soul has surrendered its pride its beauty cannot awaken which is the same as the Lord. Unless it has tasted the sweetness of God, it cannot realize what light is.

Joy is blinded and lost in its own follies. The soul shall keep on wandering from one life to another. But once it has experienced the flicker of Love and once surrender has risen in it as its strongest passion, it gets into direct communion with the Lord and then all that it does or desires, no matter how ordinary it is, becomes an offering to God. In his eternal fire everything gets renewed and transformed. Even a bloody battle becomes a sacred thing.

It is important to note that the Gurus have nowhere given any importance to *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram*. On the contrary this trio has been considered as the finest flower of all philosophy in the east as well as the west. Not only philosophers, but also poets called it so. Keats said:

*Beauty is truth and truth beauty
That is all that ye know on earth
And all that ye need to know.*

Instead of this trio, the emphasis of the Gurus has been on *Sat*, i.e. the existent, the real, the popular way for Sikhs to greet each other is: *Sat-Srī-Akāl*. There lies underneath a deep psychological meaning in this choice of the Gurus. It would seem that the main cause for the downfall of Hindu as well as Greek civilization was their emphasis on *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram*. They considered this trinity to be the most secular face of God. But a closer examination would show that God is

present in the human soul in a more elementary form than this trinity and this trinity is in fact an outer manifestation of that essence of God in us. God lives in us as *Sat*, as the Being. The ontological reality is here and now. It exists. We feel it in the form of our Being or Love. Truth is what this essence speaks. Beauty is the shine it imparts to our face and body when we allow it to live in us untarnished. Good is what it does without compromising with anything. As such Truth, Good, Beauty are *Asat* when placed against this essence of God in us, i.e. Love. Whatever is *Asat* or non-existent can be changed into other forms. Truth is *Asat* for it is an outer manifestation of the essence *Sat* though it expresses the True one. It is not the true one. The Sikh slogan has been therefore: 'More important than truth is a true man'.

(2) BEYOND TIME 'AKĀL'

They called Him beyond Time—*Akāl*. This was for the first time that God was worshipped as Timeless. No doubt this is one of the many names attributed to Him. But it is the Gurus who enshrined this name. To remember Him as the One whom Time cannot touch being itself only a manifestation of His, was highly exciting and hopeful to a race in despair. Time seemed endless for they were hard times indeed, when the foreign rulers had established themselves on the soil. Life hung on a thread. There was darkness all around. To worship Him as *Brahman* was not enough to wipe the gloom from the eyes of the common man. It did not enter the dark recesses of time where his soul was imprisoned. But it was really heartening to learn that the Divine cannot be touched by time and is greater, in fact is the Creator of time and that in this insignificant enslaved, dishonoured body of ours lives none else but He Himself as our individual soul. Thus even we cannot be touched by time.

The feelings of a slave mother often create feelings of humiliation in her brave son. Her joys and woes look petty to him as they are all connected with her master. Their narration provokes contempt in him. The communication between the mother and the son gets broken. The son also feels small in going and asking from someone the thing that he most needs: Circumstances often weave such a web that he cannot get it

otherwise. He resorts to momentary pleasures or stealing of the desired thing.

This state of affairs had come to be between India and her brave sons before the advent of the Gurus. India has been a cultural unit for thousands of years but those brave sons had forgotten the face of their mother out of shame. The Rajputs in Rajasthan, the Punjabis in Punjab, the Marathas, the Southern people had all lost the ingrained sense of belonging to the same mother. Mother India was no longer the pious goddess-like mother whose hair spread over the white neck of Himalayas and whose lotus feet were washed by the ocean. She had been dishonoured, raped, looted and enslaved. All her glory was shed. She was a slave woman. Therefore her sons preferred to call themselves by their province or city rather than as Indians. This break of communion between the mother and the sons had its worst effect on the women-folk. They carried the tales of the woes and joys of Mother India in their songs and talks, finding no response in man. It seemed as if men, in their pride did not want to remember their dishonoured and raped mother.

In medieval days in India communion broke down between women and brave, virtuous and learned men. Women started being considered as the companion of the courtier, with no higher destiny to pursue. It was the same woman who had been a companion of man in his highest pursuits in ancient days. A *Yajna* by Sri Ram without Sita ji was considered incomplete. Yajnavalka had made his wives Maitreyi and Gargi constant companions of his philosophic adventures. *Pandavas* had made Kunti and Draupadi regular guides in their wars against *Kauravas*. In fact the best philosophers and *rishis* and warriors had been inspired and guided by women. Such was the faith in woman and her virtuous being that Rama staked everything to protect the honour of his wife and brave *Pandavas* forgot everything except the vow to revenge the little act of dishonour that had been done to their common wife. They accepted the provocations aroused by Draupadi as wise pieces of advice.

But in the medieval days no such faith was felt in women even though thousands of them had started burning themselves to prove their chastity in Rajasthan. All this

sacrifice could not succeed to win a place of honour even for a single woman, as friend, philosopher and guide to some great thinker or warrior. Shankaracharya, the greatest intellectual of medieval days denounced them outright. So did the greatest poets of middle ages. Woman came to be considered as a positive hindrance in higher pursuits. The philosophers, poets and warriors were no longer interested in the freedom of India. They had left Mother India, and, as a natural sequence, women to their confusion, sorrow and folly. They were in search of a heaven away from her. Their philosophy therefore grew wings and became more and more abstract. The fine synthesis of this world with the other was lost. The warriors did not think of the honour of India. They were busy with petty quarrels and personal glorification. The dynamic spirit of the *Guptas* was lost. The effort was to cut out their individual fates from the destiny of the race in the vain hope what they could find their heaven in this way. They did not want to share the dishonour of the race, nor to fight and strive for the restoration of its honour, for the whole affair seemed to be very humiliating. The best among them became therefore impractical dreamers while the ordinary man oblivious of the critical task, became busy with the stolen pleasures of life.

The Gurus broke this torpor. They came to share the grief and dishonour of the race. The tormented soul of Guru Nanak recorded the woes of his time. His heart was outraged at the shame heaped upon the people and the cruelties perpetrated. The Gurus refused to consider women as hindrances in the spiritual journey. Like ancient *rishis*, from Guru Nanak onwards, they lived in families. They did not wish to keep the world of woman closed to themselves. They in fact enriched their vision from it. They pleaded for woman's emancipation. They stood for the race's freedom and honour. Guru Tegh Bahadur did everything to persuade Aurangzeb to give her rightful freedom of faith back. Finally, when nothing worked, they took to the steel. They were conscious of the weaknesses of the race which was a mere sparrow before the enemy who was like a hawk. But sparrows shall fight the Hawks.

"Sure shall I make one dash against a lakh and more.

Then and then alone shall my Mother call me Gobind Singh."

The Indians had been bearing all kinds of suppression of their culture and social virtues. A fallacy had developed among them that to grow indifferent to pain and inhuman tortures is to conquer them spiritually. The Gurus challenged his myth. They realized that what the race had styled as a spiritual reply to atrocities was in fact an attitude of negativity.

The Gurus gave to love the importance that they gave to nothing else. At all other costs this flame is to be kept alive. It is the direct manifestation of God in us. The form of love in a person in fact shows the level of his spiritual attainment. When human love realizes itself to be but a spark of God, its movement and pleasure in transient things starts fading and a deeper interest rises in it to express its source, i.e. God.

The racial habit of passive grief was an inhuman adjustment with the monstrous situation when the only valuable thing given to men, i.e. love had been extinguished. This adjustment springs from our unconscious. Whenever love is killed in our life, we willingly adopt passive grief as an alternative. It is considered heroic not to weep, not to protest, not to question. Such perverted virtues are the outcome of the racial sin of accepting passively the murder of the divine element in us.

The Gurus said that it was no virtue to hide your face from the plunderer. It was rather carrying his shame in your eyes.

(3) *HAUMAI*

The Sikh approach is monistic. The procedure is of surrender. The layman surrenders his soul to the Gurus. The Guru surrenders his soul to God. The way is of willing subordination to God, i.e. Love or Light.

The individual self has the power of God in miniature form. Ignorance plays upon his imperfection. He builds with those powers a small island for himself. This is his *haumai*, his *ahankāra*. This isolates him from the Lord. Will is the power which can make a windowless monad of him as well as a soldier of Light and Love. Active participation in the Lord is advocated. It is possible through an act of will. Here the Sikh Gurus differ from other teachers in a major way.

Surrender to the Will of God has been generally understood to be the same as the destruction of personal will or desire. Hence there has been no dearth of saints who have likened desires to serpents who ought to be crushed by one who seeks God. According to psychologists, destruction of desires cannot usher the advent of the Divine Will in us. The Gurus have talked of a positive way. You cannot be in communion with the Will of God by destroying your individual will. A higher effort and determination are required for this. Your individual will is the only link you have with the Divine Will. Instead of destroying your will, make it an instrument of God's Will. The One has transformed into many not only at the spiritual level, but at all levels. The Gurus seem to be saying that this transformation is taking place at all time everywhere. Wherever life is, there transformation is. At the levels of thoughts, feelings and will the same one is appearing as many. None can reach the one by destroying the many. The wise ones learn the spiritual art of rolling back the many into one. To hear the clear call of the one amidst the myriad calls of the many, requires sincere love. It is here, more than anywhere else that the importance of love is proved. In the clamour and cry of a thousand warring desires, it is love alone which gives you a trace of the Divine Will. One unawakened by this love is more likely to let pass the Divine Will as one of the many wills. He will know that it is the real will, the only will and all other wills are nothing but its vulgarizations, nothing but the change of the real into so many unrels. It requires the power of love to understand His scheme.

But those who do not realize this central theme of all creation, i.e. love, find themselves preys to ego, *haumai*. These are two alternatives. The one who goes for *ahankāra* or individuality has not traced yet the home of the lover. Even at the highest spiritual stage, the Gurus never gave any value to their individuated selves. "If I knew Him should I not describe him." (Japji) Such is the humility that Guru Nanak practised. The last Guru went so far as to curse those who thought of building a memorial to him.

(4) THE MYSTICAL SWAY

In the days of the Gurus, due to a long history of sloth and inertia, mysticism had degenerated into a form of

practical escapism. The *upanisadic* mysticism was beyond intellect. After all intellectual adventures, when the seers found them incapable of revealing the Lord, they used a language which did not convey a definite thing. Later on, after the invasions had sacked the vitality of the race, the cowardly thinkers used mysticism as an escape from reality. The Gurus refused to do so. They banished mysticism from practical life.

C.G. Jung says, "The possession of the mystery cuts one off from intercourse with the rest of mankind." The Gurus neither attained nor aimed at such isolation. They were in constant communion with the people. They broke all barriers between the mystic and the common people. God is not a mystery. No secret or special religious practices were required to invoke Him. We can be in direct communion with Him if we surrender ourselves to Him.

Haumai or ego, is the reverse of *Hukum*, i.e. a will surrendered to God. A true Sikh has to change *haumai* into *Hukum*. Though they have not talked in detail of their spiritual experiences, yet important hints are available. One who by devotion and surrender to love would exchange *haumai* for *Hukum*, will get the divine gift of mystical sway. The Gurus asked their disciples not to stop here, to give no importance to the mystical sway which was no more than a snare. Most of the saints have preferred to stop at this. Patanjali had also warned the *yogis* not to lay much store by such powers. To value them is the same as to miss the end. There is no magical power or miracle with the Sikh Gurus. Like the finest of the seers, like Mahavir and Buddha, they refused to attract people to religion through miracles. They invoked love itself. For one to be able to do this great penance and self-purification are needed. Like speaks to like.

The Gurus inflamed the spiritual spark in the heart of the Indians. The racial consciousness or life-force, through a long career of self-negations, had been atrophied. It had reached a stage when the Indian soul was no longer living. The Gurus had realised the danger. For a country with such an enlightened past it was all the more suicidal. In remote past the Indian soul had touched the supreme heights of evolution, had realised its essence. Now all that wisdom was becoming a subtle bondage. More important than wisdom is

the motive behind it. If the motive is of fear or self-withdrawal, wisdom will become a deadly weapon in its hands. In the spiritual language, it becomes a huge merciless serpent which coils round the soul and makes it its own prisoner. The Indian soul has suffered long under this pathetic bondage and too many words are perhaps not required to show what I mean. All our wisdom had been poisoned by a spirit of negation. What should have led the race to higher conquests and fulfilments both here and hereafter, brought only disaster, wastes and pessimism. Why? This was the question that struck Guru Nanak. Why this darkness? asked Guru Nanak, and his anguished soul cried, "Shall I never come out of it." He faced the problem realistically. There was a fundamental difference between the approach of other contemporary saints and of the Gurus. The saints talked of escape. Sankaracharya had paved the way for it by his brilliant conception of *Maya*. Tulsi Das, Ramanuja, Vallabha and all other saints were influenced by this life-negating spirit of Sankaracharya. They all agreed on one point at least that it was possible to build a different world within this tormented world of ours and, instead of lamenting for what man has made of man, a wise man should build his private spiritual world and live in it, establishing a close link with God. The Gurus said, No. Not for me, said Guru Nanak, any private world of self-exaltation. Where the common man suffers, there is my field. The Gurus were the first in the medieval days to make an attempt to win back earth for the children of God. They were realistic enough not to be satisfied with any imaginary or spiritually animated world. They were clear that they had to share the common life and its sufferings. They did not mean to use their spiritual powers to build an ivory tower for themselves. They rejected the notion of private, elevated, capsuled life. They did not bow to the forces of darkness. They did not seek compromises for themselves. Whoever was an enemy of the masses, was the enemy of humanity. This approach naturally brought them face to face before a mighty empire and, as time passed, they had to fortify themselves militarily against its injustices and tyranny. This gave a new shape and concept to the Sikh faith. Originally, militaristic activity was not at all envisaged. Guru Nanak lived as an

ordinary farmer with his two sons and wife and later on Guru Angad, at that time a disciple, also joined the holy farmer family. Never once the idea to take up arms seems to have struck him.

The Sikh militarism is therefore not an essential part of the creed. It is the turning of philosophers into warriors as a matter of exigency, as a response to their time. Their history records one of the finest dreams, of the awakening of wisdom. Their wars were only expressions of a deeper inner vow of total fearlessness. This is the vow that Guru Nanak took and this is the vow that every Sikh takes to this day. Splendid must have been the sense that led the Gurus to trace the maladies of human soul. In the *Mahabharata* anger was discovered by Vyas as the root of sins. But much water had flown down the Indus since Krishna called Arjuna to give a battle to the antihuman. Mephistopheles tells the witches in Faust:

“Much water has flown down the Seine and culture had time enough to reach even the Devil since we met last.”

Instead of anger, fear had come to be the central vice in the Indian soul. It had become the root of all sins. It had grown and nurtured in a subtle way. The Indians began avoiding square issues and leaving politics to rulers and society to self-acquisitive individuals. This artifice they had contrived in order to keep their peace undisturbed. But peace is not retained in this way. The storm had entered the soul. It could be quietened by leaving those torn by it to themselves. It was a hidden form of cowardice for philosophers to leave the layman with his problems and go for an isolated life. It was the pathos of distance that had entered the soul of the higher ones. When their turn came to give a lead to the erring and confused masses, they stood aside. The bank had broken on a winter night and in cold dark waves millions were struggling. The captains at this time preferred to retire. This was a betrayal. It grew gradually to a deep-seated fear. The Indian people started fearing everything. The rulers they feared. The *sadhus*, *tantriks* they feared. They feared even God. They feared to love. They feared to worship openly. To speak the truth was out of the question. In the medieval ages, even those known for their boldness like Kabir, confined

themselves to parables. There is not a single treatise composed in medieval days which speaks boldly and factually of the wretched conditions of the people and the atrocities perpetrated on them. Fear had silenced wisdom. There is no history of those days, no autobiography or other record to bring to us a sensitive appraisal of the soul of India. Fear had coiled the soul. The Gurus therefore made courage the cardinal virtue. Fear became the source of all ill. So shall courage become the source of all good...this seems to have been the thinking of the Gurus.

(5) SIKH COSMOLOGY

There is not much talk about the cosmos and of the situation of the various worlds in Sikh scriptures. It is very rarely that one comes across such allusions. Nonetheless, they have described worlds which a true seeker experiences psychologically like the *Dharam Khand*, *Gyān Khand*, *Saram Khand*, *Karma Khand*, *Sach Khand*.

Gyān Khand is the world which a true seeker experiences intellectually. It is full of light. The flames of thought keep it bright. A million brooks of joy are there whose origin cannot be traced. Another trace is given in Japuji:-

The source-spring of illuminated action is *Karam Khand*. A seeker can unfold these hidden worlds within his body.

Nirankār, the Lord beyond space and time, resides in Sach Khand.

The Sikhs fall in with the age-old Hindu concept of millions of worlds. Thus they have no fear of contradiction from modern science. What the *Yogi* or Sikh experiences psychologically is the correct clue to this wonderful creation of God. All these worlds are enfolded in the small human frame by the Creator and a seeker unfolds vast stretches of space and time within himself. Thus when the Sixth Guru Har Gobind sits fully armed on the throne in obedience to the wish of his father, Guru Arjan, he realizes within himself the injunctions not only of his father, but of his predecessors as well.

The Sikh discipline lays great emphasis on human virtues. It is not for men to become a God. "Greater than truth

is a true man," said Guru Nanak. Human virtues are important. Here arises the need for spiritual discipline. *Nām Yoga* and meditation as well as self-restraint were preached and practised by the Gurus with the sole objective of letting the soul of man retain its human qualities against all odds. It was their firm belief that for a communion with God and to be able to express the Will of *Wahiguru*, i.e. God, retention of the human virtues was very essential. This emphasis of theirs is of utmost importance, the full value of which has not been realized so far. In fact in this single ardour they have managed to retain the best of both the worlds. The *vedantists* did not care for this and as a result, to exhibit the divine light which had no form or character, the human soul tended to expand itself to breaking stretches ... an effort in which human qualities were lost. The *sanyasis* had little to offer which was of relevance to human life. In fact human virtues were relegated to the background and a saint was considered to be in no need of them. This error helped in the rise of such dark systems as the *Kapālikas* and *Aghories*. All the philosophic systems had become averse to human miseries. Instead of taking a human interest in them, the *Yogis* tended further to humiliate the layman by telling him that his sufferings were symbols of his sinful life.

The Gurus insisted that the first thing a true Sikh has to ensure is the development of human virtues. Let the soul be first worthy of the body. Then alone will it be worthy of God. The fact that a human body has been given to us is to be justified by moulding the soul in such a way that it grows into human virtues of man. Only such a soul is capable of understanding the message of God.

The Sikh Gurus have given a code of conduct to their disciples which must awaken the soul in them. The moment the soul awakens and becomes active, space and time give it the form of a serpent. Every invisible power, when it tries to express itself through matter, gets automatically the form of a snake. It seems to be a universal phenomenon. Look at wind, electricity, sound or any other invisible power. The moment you try to take their imprint on matter, you find they take up serpentine coils. If you watch the wind agitating a river you find the wind gets the form of a serpent. Similarly when

science learnt to record sound, it found sound to be of the shape of a serpent again. It seems space and time contrive to clothe soul with the subtle body of a serpent the moment it wills to express itself in our body. This 'will' comes to the soul of one in hundreds. But all his dreams get shattered for space and time, as has been their custom, give it immediately the subtle body of a serpent. It is called the subtle body, the astral body or the *sukshma-sarīra*. The Sikh faith lays no store by this subtle body. It rather advocates a discipline which empowers the soul to command space and time to provide a subtle human body instead of a serpentine subtle body. The first step in Sikh discipline is therefore the timing of space and time. The subtle body should be human. The saint in Sikhism should be more human than the ordinary men. Only such a man has known the art of awakening his soul, of making it express itself in the body and yet not to get it tempered by the subtle intermediate body of a serpent. If you get the subtle body of a serpent, all your wisdom and virtue, all your love act as a serpent. The motive behind the human becomes the serpent. Hence the wrath and curses and flashing eyes and floating hairs of the traditional saints. The Sikh totally disapproves such a conduct. Guru Tegh Bahadur was a Guru because, even in face of enormous cruelty and heartlessness, his soul did not lose its virtues of human patience and calm. His divine origin was illuminating his sorrowful face with the radiance of love. His divinity was in doing away with the subtle body.

Here I would like to infer from the few words of the Gurus their original interpretation of the *Kundalini* power in man. The *Tantriks* and medieval *Yogis* are unanimous on the point that it is the hidden or residual power lying coiled as a serpent in the root of our existence. In the absence of clear philosophic discussions on the part of the Gurus, much reliance shall have to be put on logical inferences or deductions, in interpreting their thoughts for the modern reader. Prior to Patanjali's *Yoga-Sūtra*, neither the *Upanisads* nor the Jaina and Buddhist systems speak of the *Kundalini* as a serpent-like force. I think when the *yogis* visualized this enormous power it had already been given the serpent-form by space and time, the two intuitions of the soul. The

medieval *Yogis* saw *Kundalini* in this degenerated form and standardized it. While reading the intense importance to human virtue given by the Gurus, it struck me as highly thought of the Gurus, it is very significant that they have placed a true life even above Truth. This bold statement gives me sufficient clue to infer that the Gurus never thought that the snake was the inevitable form given to *Kundalini*. It is rather due to an error and ignorance that *Kundalini* is accepted in the snake form. In a truly evolved soul, *Kundalini* will take up a human form. It is this human form that we find in the awakened *Kundalini* of men like Guru Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. Their incessant flow of undying energy at no time is blind or inhuman. It was indeed a miracle. It should be quite confounding to modern evolutionists like Bergson, to see that even the primal life-force, the *elan-vital* in her wildest, torrential flood in a human being could be so well measured and moralized.

Energy and the ideal have ever been the two ancient dreams disturbing the eye-lids of man. He had always been moved by them. Sometimes they got energy realized in the personality of a Temur, Chenghiz, Atilla or Napoleon. At some other cross-road of history they found the human ideal realized in a Christ, a Tirthankar or a Buddha. But never the same man wielded weapons and lived a life of hectic activity and energy without compromising the ideals. I think the type of hero Neitzsche dreamt of in Zarathustra, had already appeared as Gobind Singh. It is a pity that he never knew of him.

The goal of the Sikh Gurus was not beyond Good and Evil. This philosophic concept had already taken the followers of Sankaracharya to a point from which there was no return. They had broken the human bounds This ideal ultimately produced *Kapalikas* and *Aghoris* and several such systems which laid no emphasis on the purity and essential humanness of our conduct.

The Vedic concept was never beyond good and evil. Good has always been the ideal. The difference between a great seer's and an ordinary man's actions is only this that the seer has knowledge of a deeper and more effective good of which the layman is unaware. Even as God does good to us,

which we cannot understand, so a great man's actions may not be entirely comprehensible to ordinary man. Nonetheless they are nothing but good. The Vedic seers never thought that a highly evolved man was exempt from the necessity of adhering to good actions or ethical standards.

Actions belong to the world of *Asat*. Therefore the good and evil actions both are *Asat*, illusory. Why then be so particular about their distinction? This seems to have been the argument of the followers of Sankaracharya. This resulted in indifference to political miseries and the common joys and sorrows of life. It also helped in the growth of callousness, cruelty and insensitivity in the social life.

Guru Nanak recorded, on the other hand in the most sensitive words the miseries and agonies of common man of his time. He suffered the commoner's yoke...a true sign of greatness. No doubt Sikhism also holds only God to be the truth. The world is a multi-coloured show without substance. Actions in such a world are also of the nature and stuff of which the world is made. But, the Guru would say, this was no logic for not doing strictly good actions. The task before man was not to live in the world of *Maya* with detachment. This illusory world has to disappear, has to become a non-entity in the soul of man. This has to be realized as a positive force and not as a mere notion.

The deepest and spontaneous fountains of action in man are not beyond good and evil, but only good. The Divine appears in us as the impetus of good actions alone. Evil is no opposite of Good as an impostor is no opposite of a true heir; as a false Guru is no opposite of a true Guru. In fact but of the many tricks of *Maya* it is one, and a very confounding one to appear as the opposite of God and thus gain the seat of the rival. The Gurus would say there is no rival to Him. Only He is. He is good. Evil is not His opposite. Therefore, the idea beyond good and evil is meaningless and misleading. Evil is not the opposite of good but a veil drawn by ignorance, a play enacted for the blinded and those who revel in folly.

The Gurus gave a wild shock to the serpent coiled round ... the racial genius. They said emphatically that good actions were the sole carriers to *Nirvana*. It was erroneous to think that they too bind. They are of the very nature of God. God does not bind. They dispelled this age-old philosophic error and awakened the race to its pristine wisdom.

GURU NANAK'S CONTRIBUTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Guru Nanak's philosophy is an important landmark in the history of Indian Philosophy. The ideas of man's excellence and the nature of reality appear to have been very prominently articulated in it. One finds in it the deep awareness of the ideas and concepts of the earlier philosophical heritage of the Indian Thought. Any person who seeks to understand the philosophy of Guru Nanak to any significant depth is very soon convinced of the need to look more widely in order to appreciate more deeply the meaning and significance of the message called Guru Nanak's philosophy. The tradition of the *Nirmala* scholars of Sikhism laid so much emphasis on this comparative relation of Guru Nanak's philosophy with its earlier monistic schools that they adopted some of the earlier used terms and sought to develop concepts which did not mark any violent break with the earlier traditions without sacrificing the need to highlight the uniqueness of the new 'given' truth. The *Nirmalas* who went to Banaras for interaction with the scholars of the earlier tradition appear to have well understood the challenging nature of their mission. It was felt by them that before a message could transform, it had to be understood and accepted. I may pause here and submit that the intention of the present paper is not to narrate the history of the Non-dualist tradition of the *Sikh Nirmala School*. A reference has been made to it merely to underscore the point that the earlier Sikh scholars were acutely conscious of the need to highlight the unique message without losing sight of the context of its exposition.

However, even at this early point in the development of my theme, it may seem to some that my elementary submission can be controverted by looking through nearly all the present

books on Indian philosophy. It may be pointed out to me that if Guru Nanak's philosophy were a landmark in the Indian philosophy, how is it that almost all the current works on Indian philosophy were without any detailed and deep studies of the philosophy of Guru Nanak? How is it that almost none of the texts on Indian philosophy contain any significant discussion or elucidation of Guru Nanak's philosophy or the Sikh philosophy in general? I do not propose to answer this question at this point but will return to it later.

I have said in the beginning of this paper that the idea of man's excellence has been very prominently articulated in Guru Nanak's philosophy. The metaphysical articulations of this tradition are not entirely for any abstract and theoretical purpose. Even where a theoretical discussion is undertaken, the goal of transforming the self is clearly visible. The *Siddhas* are very acutely reminded of the need for social praxes by Guru Nanak. What is the nature of this model of excellence which appears to be the key note of Guru Nanak's philosophy? We may very briefly state the outlines of it as a detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

First, we may begin with the observation that Guru Nanak's philosophy is deeply committed to the experience of the reality and existence of one God. The value and meaning of human life and conduct derive their authenticity from such an experience. Thus, Sikh philosophy is based in experience. Even a cursory glance at the hymns of Guru Nanak will convince a person beyond any doubt about its deep and passionate devotion to the seeking of God's love and obedience to His Will. The structure of the moral principles, therefore, stands on this firm rock of the experience of God and love for God's Will. An action is right or an ideal is good if it contributes towards the realization of God. We ought to keep in view this commitment of Guru Nanak's philosophy before attempting further analysis. Unfortunately, some of the recent studies of Sikhism have failed here. Any interpretation of Sikhism or Guru Nanak's philosophy in terms of some historical events alone or some social principles which require rejection of God are against the basic tenets of Guru Nanak's philosophy.

Second, the experience of God's reality also requires of

the seeker to imbibe ethical values in his personal and social life. An immoral person is neither worthy of, nor attains to, the love of God. Thus the relation between moral life and the belief in the reality of loving God is both functional as well as necessary.

Third, the model of excellence for the seeker on the moral path requires the agent to expand his limited and narrow consciousness so as to experience the divine. The moral consciousness, therefore, must keep pace with the expanding consciousness and mystic experience. We are further reminded that the realization of God as Truth (*Sach*) ought to be indicated in the conduct (*āchār*) of the person who is seeking and realizing God. Any break between the realization and the conduct is, therefore, not approved. The subjective and the social test for the spiritual realization hinges on this necessary, continuous, and harmonious relationship between *sach* and *āchār*. This is one of the important factors characterising the uniqueness of Guru Nanak's view of the ethico-spiritual realization. It is easy to see that there are great social and personal implications of such a view for people from all walks of life. It clearly suggests a continuity of moral and spiritual purpose in the worldly as well as spiritual objectives connected therewith.

Our fourth submission follows from the third. We notice that Guru Nanak has laid great stress on the need to earn one's livelihood by honest means. The stress on this virtue shows the social awareness as integral to Guru Nanak's view of excellence. Guru Nanak has expressly forbidden any violation of another man's right. It advises man to respect the rights of others as scrupulously as he observes the religious injunctions. Thus the ideal of a non-exploitative society is very firmly grounded in the spiritual goal itself instead of reducing man to the status of mere matter in the name of this virtue. Guru Nanak upholds the dignity of man as a spiritual being. It strongly forbids a living by alms. It also argues against withdrawal from social participation by emphasising the ideal of work and sharing. Thus the activities which appear to some systems as purely secular and material are viewed by Guru Nanak in the sacred perspective. It, thus, restores a balance and harmony between different elements of

man's life. Apart from this, Guru Nanak regards wisdom, courage, contentment, justice, humility, truthfulness, and temperance as the desirable qualities of human conduct. I have elsewhere explained the nature of these virtues in greater detail.

Our fifth statement is important and requires acute attention. It deals with the moral qualities and the structure relating to the corporate and social life. The earlier Indian philosophy, including almost all the schools, had a limited objective. They were to function and interpret the given texts within the laid down social structure. This created great difficulty for even the earlier tradition of the non-dualists. While the logical conclusions of their speculation pointed to one kind of social order, they had to lend credence to another kind of social structure which was considered to be equally 'given' and sanctified. The "Orthodox" faced an unbridgeable gulf between the speculative and the practical. This also remained an issue of judgement with them in terms of which subsequent contributions to Indian philosophy were approved or disregarded. We are not seeking to pass any value judgement with regard to the compulsions of the earlier speculative systems. They had indeed their application in chartering out a path of spiritual evolution through a process of re-births. The causal law of *karma* was seen to transcend the earthly time. The spiritual evolution was unaffected by time and was regulated only by *karma*. Guru Nanak who modified the view about the law of *karma* sought to make it equally applicable to the evolution within the span of single life. There is no serious contradiction between the two. Guru Nanak has showed a possibility where the earlier tradition could uphold their non-dualist Truth in its social structure also. Occasionally this was disputed by some contemporaries of Guru Nanak but it has now come to be gradually accepted by the Indian thinkers and the society. The message of Guru Nanak, as an insider to the Indian philosophical tradition, has been accepted by the Indian society as a proper exposition of the continuity of the non-dualist truth and the equality of opportunity in the social life. Guru Nanak's cardinal metaphysical view of non-dualism harmonised well with its assertion of the human brotherhood. The equality of

opportunity and social justice are, for Guru Nanak, articles of spiritual submission. These are upheld, not in the name of matter which constitutes the humanity of man, but the non-dualist truth of his spiritual being. He has shown that inequality of man and the cruelty involved therein, may become the basis of materialist society but should be regarded to be against the spiritual nature of the self. The ideal of human brotherhood is based in the transcendence of the ego and dedication to social service. The importance of *sevā* (social service) is in sharing one's resources with the fellow beings. The primary qualities of *sevā* and the mission based thereon are characterised by its voluntary nature and its inspiration from love. It is, according to Guru Nanak, the expression towards the fellow beings of whatever one feels towards God. The *sevā* is, thus, the continuation of the love for God.

A post-script to the nature of *seva* may be added here. Arising from love of God, it requires that we ought not to set ourselves up as judges of man. The value of 'seeing but not judging' is a well known religious injunction. It is our experience that social bonds are often damaged beyond redemption when we intentionally or thoughtlessly continue judging others regardless of our own human limitations. Guru Nanak has emphasised the need to destroy this root of social strife and enmity. It is to be replaced by the spiritual life of sacrifice and service, which is nothing but love for God.

It is now easy to see that Guru Nanak's philosophy is both the directional as well as the sustaining factor in the uplift of man. A study of his philosophy from this standpoint may, therefore, become not only a source of solace for those who seek to be reassured about the inherent strength of their beliefs and practices, but also be, a meaningful contribution to a general understanding of man's religion and philosophy. The need for this reappraisal may also arise from the fact that generalisations based in a particular development of a certain religious tradition have often become the wrong side of the telescopic view of man's noblest struggle to transcend his imperfection and smallness. A degeneration in some man-made institutions at a certain historical pause have sometimes been interpreted as hints in dying cultures. It may, therefore,

be useful to remember that criticisms against certain downhill movements of man's history have not been the exclusive concern of those who have rejected religion, but have also attracted the eye and effort of those who have felt that religion and its philosophy is the most important factor which could re-direct human history towards its upward progress. It is this contribution of Guru Nanak's philosophy which is the subject of study here.

Without resorting to expletives, I will refer to a minor aspect of Guru Nanak's philosophy which has made a great contribution in shaping a forward-looking culture. Guru Nanak, at a very early age sought to redeem man's spirit from the mesh of those beliefs which sought to convert hunger into a virtue leading to spiritual evolution. The dangerous and suicidal consequences of any cultural pattern raised in the glorification of hunger are obvious. Such an attempt is 'acultural' in nature. Guru Nanak has expressed his strong disapproval of the 'hunger-culture' and parted with all he possessed even at an early age to emphasise the teaching that material well-being is an element of man's game in the world. What was required was a correct and balanced attitude towards matter. Its rejection was not important just as its glorification was unnecessary. A rejection of material well-being arises from an obsession towards it and also represents a misinterpretation of the self's relationship with the world. Although such a relationship may have its basis in the social institutions yet their negative impact on man's culture is both obvious and historical. An acceptance of hunger as a mentality is bound to encourage attitude which rejects work and effort. If hunger is the ideal, work will be considered as anti-ideal. Any theory of work which characterises it as bondage is bound to encourage only cave-cultures. It may attract man towards food-gathering societies instead of food-growing and technology which may free man from the bondage of the matter and the miseries resulting from this bondage. Guru Nanak has, thus, overcome the importance and centrality of matter by making it a slave of his will and spiritual strength. It marks a positive triumph of man's spirit over the matter.

How is it that such an idealist philosophy of Guru

Nanak is not found in the present general texts of the Indian philosophy? I will take up this question now and conclude the paper with it. I have often heard people saying that Sikhism is one of the youngest religions of man as some sort of explanation for its not being so very widely articulated. This may be perhaps a very small factor. And it may also be pointed out against it that the rationalists and the empiricists schools of the modern western philosophy represented by Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitze, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume are almost the contemporaries of the exposition of Sikhism in India. On the Indian scene too, some of the renderings of the Indian philosophy current in the academic world today are the result of the interpretative effort of the twentieth century. So the 'young religion theory' may not command much credence. Shall we then blame the scholars of Sikh philosophy for their failure to present and emphasise how Guru Nanak's philosophy has not only gained from the rich heritage of the Indian philosophy but has also enriched it by his experience of reality and its communication. Perhaps the philosophers will have to share some blame. Their engagement with the Idealist philosophy of Guru Nanak needs to be intensified. However, it has often occurred to me that there is a characteristic of Guru Nanak's philosophy which enables it to transform without attempting to convert with the shocking suddenness of the conversion. Although swift and prominent, conversion may remain superficial and ephemeral. The transformation begins from within and gradually engulfs the whole self. It attains in depth what it intentionally foregoes in the explosive momentariness of its effect. It is this transforming character of Guru Nanak's philosophy which succeeds without tilting, blends without jarring, and directs without giving the feeling of pushing. It prepares man and leads him towards transformation. Surely, this philosophy needs concerted and sustained efforts by the philosophers to understand it and to share their understanding with others. Incidentally, it will also lead to their own spiritual evolution, which is the goal of Guru Nanak's philosophy.

SIKHISM AND DIALOGUE OF RELIGIONS

Sikhism has often been described as syncretism or conscious syncretism. It is said to be a product of the impact of Islam on Hinduism. Some Christian scholars have also attempted to see the reflection of Christian precepts in Sikhism and have concluded from it that the Sikh Gurus imported these into Sikhism from Christianity. A similar claim is also sometimes made about the reflection of Buddhism in Sikhism.

It is not my purpose here in this brief paper to prove or disprove the truth of these claims. I have cited them merely to illustrate that Sikhism is the most recent religion and has in some ways benefited from the other religious traditions. It was remarked by Taylor that "No living theology has arisen from mere intellectual curiosity and the serious theologies have always come into being as the fruit of reflection upon lived and practised religions." Sikhism, likewise, reflects the acceptance and rejection of many principles and precepts of the other world religions. Sikhism may, therefore, be seen as an attempt at creative dialogue of religions. This dialogue may, in itself, be due to spiritual needs but it seems also inspired by a desire to establish the glory of religion and to make it more effective in the psycho-social realm. I, therefore, propose to highlight those factors, some of which are reflected in the Sikh history and the teachings of its Gurus and which, I hope, will be helpful for restoring to religion, its effective role in individual and social life. I may, however, add that this paper does not claim that these principles are better practised by the followers of any one religion than those of the others.

The first thing that impresses us is the great importance of correct knowledge. Its crucial significance in any dialogue can hardly be over-emphasised. But in actual life it seems that the followers of any one religion, by and large, hardly try to

understand and know their own religion, much less the religion of other people. Much of what we know about other religions is often based on our scanty knowledge passed on to us either based on prejudice or with a view to feeding our prejudice. The important inference which we draw from the life of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, is that we should try to have first-hand information about our own as well as other religions. Guru Nanak went to the sacred places of other religions, met their religious leaders and entered into a dialogue with them. The point is obvious, but pertinent; in order to understand other religions, we should visit their places of worship, read their scriptures and also keep in mind the historical context in which things were said or done. It may be pointed out that the necessary spirit during the dialogue should be that of a keen student. It is remarked by Guru Nanak during a dialogue with the *Siddhas*, "How can one learn if one thinks that he already knows?" It may be interesting to note that Sikhism, as indicated by the very use of the term Sikh—meaning a student, a seeker—is committed to the philosophy of dialogue, where we approach others with a keen desire to learn the correct and, perhaps, also to unlearn the incorrect. It may sound too obvious to say that different does not mean inferior or superior. But we must remind ourselves of this great truth all the same while participating in a dialogue. Incidentally, this also brings out the need for humility as the necessary spirit of a true dialogue.

Here we may reflect a little more about the need of correct knowledge of other religions through a sympathetic dialogue. We may notice that today religions are threatened with the loss of influence not because of any conflict with scientific beliefs or discoveries but because of the clash of the followers of one religion with other religions in the *name of the religion itself*. The most often cited indictment of religion is the social conflicts caused and perpetuated by historical religions. In many cases the conflicts were partly due to the fact that the conflicting parties did not have correct and enough knowledge of each other's true religion. This leads to the obvious argument in favour of a positive dialogue of religions which has great potential from the point of view of the correct knowledge of other religions. We may even go to

the extent of saying that ours is the age of dialogue in the various fields of human aspirations and achievements. The same should be more consciously extended into the fields of the knowledge of religions. We hope that a true dialogue would end with greater understanding of each other's views and would go a long way towards eliminating prejudices and promoting respect and understanding.

The second necessity for the survival and effective role of religion lies in its ability to support and promote an ethical life among the members and others. Guru Nanak was asked as to who was superior, the Hindu or the Muslim. Guru Nanak's reply was that without good conduct both would suffer and with good conduct both were equally good. This brings out very clearly the overwhelming importance of morality in religion. Guru Nanak has said that truth is the highest of all, but true conduct is higher still (S.G.G.S., p. 62). We may say that the cause of religion is not served if, on one hand the followers of one religion talk of the universalism of their religion, and on the other hand they show extreme narrow-mindedness and lead unethical lives. Guru Nanak reminds both the Hindus and the Muslims that it is difficult to be real Hindus or Muslims because in fact the religions require a continuous life of high morals. We may add that to be a true Buddhist, Christian or Sikh, likewise, involves the necessity of an ethical life. It may not be wrong to say that only a truly moral person is fit for undertaking any meaningful and inspiring socio-spiritual dialogue. The recognition and actual living of this lesson will undoubtedly be of great assistance in making religion more significant in the individual and social life.

If the above argument for the close involvement of morality and religion is accepted, it may be relevant to ask as to what kind of ethics may emerge from this dialogue of religions. Here it may be helpful to examine a negative case to arrive at a proper conclusion. By this process we may see as to what type of morality is not in keeping with the claims of religion. We see that many times people claim religious experience and assert that there is only one God, but on the other hand express through belief, sentiments and actions that there are sectarian gods who support the followers of any one particular religion only or that there is one God but it is *their* God. The inevitability of the clash of the people professing

different religions, or belonging to different sects within the same religion, in this case becomes obvious. This, in due course of time, leads to the loss of any effective role of religion in the daily life of man. This clearly shows that universalistic ethics is an inevitable requisite for the efficacy of religion in the modern age. The fact that such has been the urgent reminder of the Sikh Gurus and the founders of other religions, is an added argument in favour of universalistic ethics.

The need for the universalistic ethics leads to another important requisite for the survival and effective role of religion. It is clear that the universalistic ethics argues against the promotion of isolationism and narrow conservatism by religion. Isolationism and extreme conservatism are against the spirit of a dialogue and also push religion to an antithetical position against the process of social change. Rapid social change is the hallmark of the modern age and a tribute to its genius. It is easy to see that isolationism may become a reinforcing factor for not only narrow religious orthodoxy but may also seek to introduce socio-economic primitiveness. This is neither good for the health of the religion nor for the people it seeks to protect and comfort. Isolationism in many cases is also due to fear of the others. Guru Nanak has reminded the people that just as there is only one sun but many seasons, in the same way there are countless forms of the same one active God. Secondly, just as there are countless ways in which God may express himself, there may be countless ways of doing certain things. Social change may, therefore, be the expression of the same range of possibility and spiritual dynamism. The denial of creativity and social change, thus, is anti-God and anti-religion. Isolationism and orthodoxy, therefore, are just the opposite of what their votaries want them to be. They are also against the spirit of a progressive dialogue.

However, it may be proper for us to remember that social change, if carried to an extreme in pace and stage, may become so oppressive that it may lead to the denial of individual and social freedom. The modernism sought to be ushered under its garb may in fact be worse than the denial of it. A reasonable synthesis with the conscious recognition for

adoption and facilitation of social change, therefore, is the best solution under the circumstances.

It may, however, occur to us that while we are talking about the adoption and facilitating of social change, quite an opposite view has also sometimes been accepted. It has often been suggested that the spiritual experience is possible only when one has ceased to participate in the social activity. As religious experience is the highest ideal of religion, we see that if the view about the separation of the social and the spiritual were to be correct, then quite clearly religion has not a very significant role in the social affairs of man. It may, perhaps, also be possible to have short-cuts to the religious experience which do not involve social participation. It may then be said that whatever social codes and values are brought out in the name of religion are merely extracurricular activities of the religion proper. It is, therefore, necessary for us to see whether such a view can be granted or whether such a view would do any credit to the religion or the society.

The suggested separation of the social and the religious may first be objected to on grounds that if the dialogue of religions is the great necessity of our age and if the dialogue is possible only in the society, then quite clearly the renunciation of the social is the renunciation of the dialogue. Second, the alienation of religion from the daily life of man would diminish the influence of religion in the social affairs of the humanity. Third, it may even be suggested on the testimony of the religious leaders that such a separation of the spiritual from the social is not necessary. We see from the lives of the Sikh Gurus as from the lives of the other religious founders that religious experience is possible even while one is living a common householder's life. According to Guru Nanak, if one wants to have religious experience then he should walk in the *razā* of God. This may be taken to mean that a person who continues doing his daily duties to the best of his ability has loving remembrance of God and is always on the lookout for helping others, is a person who walks in the *razā* of God. Such a person who feels in harmony with natural and human environments and continues his activity, obtains the grace of God and has the experience of living in communion with Him. Perhaps no separate catastrophic type

of explosive experience is identified as spiritual experience. The naturalness or *sahaj* is an important mark of the activity towards religious experience and also indicative of the fact of God-realization. Thus we see that God-realization is not in any manner antithetical to social participation but that social commitment is in fact a necessary factor in religious life. This undoubtedly shows us that the ability to live in *razā* is an ability to live in society. Optimism is the hallmark of walking in *razā*. Guru Nanak's use of the word 'walking' (*chalnā*) along with *razā*, as a necessary condition for the religious life, is very significant. It indicates that *razā* does not mean abandonment of activity but is the determining spirit of the whole activity.

If the above stress on the fact that religious life and social commitment are not mutually contradictory but complementary is accepted, then it is easy to see that the importance and usefulness of religion in social life will tend to grow. If it could be realized that the joy of selfless sharing is an aspect of religious life then religion will be seen as an aspect of social activity.

We may now briefly answer to a possible objection against the views expressed in this paper. It may be pointed out that the argument here appears to be assuming that there is such a thing as the religion, while in fact there are religions which differ from each other in dogma and cult. Any talk of universal prescription may therefore smack of quakery. It may also indicate ignorance of the historical process. It must be admitted that there is great force in this objection. It is, however, possible for us to see equally clearly that there are some common maladies from which the historical religions have suffered. Proposal of remedies, rather than complete inaction may be of help. These remedies will have to be applied by the leaders and teachers of each religion, to which may be added the fruits of collective wisdom gained from the dialogue of religions such as the one being attempted here.

In conclusion, we may say that ours is the age of dialogue. Religious conflicts and disputes are anti-religious and self-defeating. Sikhism by creatively relating the truths of the world religions to the needs of the time has shown the vast range of the possibilities of religious dialogue.

IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE INDIAN CULTURE

Indian culture is essentially of the nature of a spiritual message. Its principle and eternal values are in its communicative character. It can be safely said that India never had anything like the secular culture in the West. The worldly and the seemingly non-spiritual aspects of the Indian culture and tradition only appear to be so. This perception arises partly from superficiality and indicates an error of mistaking the 'seeming' as the seen. An often made comment by some about the 'secular' character of the Indian culture is a case of the failure of analysis.

Second, even the word 'secular' as used and understood in the West has been transformed into a spiritual expression in India. It is now generally used for 'more spiritual' in the sense that it signifies an invitation to a mutual and harmonious co-existence of 'many' spiritual perspectives of the Real. Indian culture, thus, refuses to be identified as any thing other than a spiritual process. It declines to be identified as material in character and incessantly seeks to reveal the inner spiritual dimension even of the outer and the material existence of the 'many'.

Unlike the Western tradition which has acquired its religious civilisation from Palestine and the culture from Greece and Rome, the Indian culture is rooted in the Indian soil. The problem of harmonising the culture as polarised in the West is not important for the Indian mind. The latter simply perceives and interprets the material as the gross reflection of the Spiritual. It experiences no tension as the former is only relatively real. The genesis and the regulating factors of the Indian culture are in its received spirituality. All springs of the Indian culture are rooted in India and

nowhere else. This is important to remember if Indian culture has to be understood and meaningfully communicated.

What are the springs of Indian culture? The question may be answered as follows: The nature of the Indian culture is "auditory" and its springs are in the *Sruti* of the *Rishis* who communicated it as the *Vedas*. The *Rig Veda* tells us that the Spiritual reveals to us as "auditory". This auditory character of the revealed spiritual has determined and continues to regulate the cultural expression of India. The auditory source of the Islamic spirituality places it closer to the Indian Vedic tradition than to the Western which is centred more in the visual nature of the revealed spiritual. The *a priori* nature of the revealed spiritual of the "auditory" appears to have subsequently directed the soul of the Indian people to seek and obtain the spiritual sustenance from preferably non-visual sources. The development of the visual dimension of the Spiritual expression has, it can be argued, led to a very late development of the *mūrtī* as the visible art form symbol. The word *mūrtī* has not been used in the *Rig Veda*. The commonly used word for a material and visible art form is *but* (बुट). This, however, is a post-Vedic variation of the word Buddha. Since a very high form of the religious sentiment and piety of the Buddhists found expression in the preparation of the sculptures of Buddha, these abounded in great number in northern India and these described as *but* became the targets of destruction by the early invaders of India. The *but* is not the same thing as *mūrtī*.

It may be interesting to mention that the *Rig Veda* word for the visual art form symbol appears to be *pratīk*. One of the important use of the *pratīk vāt* is for *agni*, the Fire. We may remember that *agni* is the presiding deity and by its very nature it cannot be formed into a *mūrtī*. The cult of the visible art form symbols, therefore, partly could not receive the place which the auditory art form symbols very spontaneously came to acquire.

The auditory character of the revealed has thus exercised a far more pervasive influence than we seem to have noticed so far. The *kīrtan* and the spiritual hymns have determined in a significant manner the whole course of the Indian culture. In it also lies the cue to the bonds of integration. Its non-divisive and participatory character have

brought more people together than we generally appear to appreciate.

The *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Scripture of the Sikhs which occupies the central place in *this* Indian tradition, is revered as the revealed *bānī*, the *Sruti*. This is very effortlessly comparable to the earlier spiritual tradition of India.

It is probable that the visual art form symbols found in later day India and also associated with the *Pahārī* and other schools of paintings of Krishna-forms are not unrelated with the auditory revelation of the Flute. The Flute communicates as well as transforms. It signifies a culture of a very pure form.

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikh spiritual tradition, has seen the value of reviving the *Krishan avtār*. It was re-translated under him and it now forms a part of the *Dasam Granth* which is accepted as a sacred literature of the Sikh spirituality. The Guru's fondness for *Krishan avtār* is understandable as he regarded it as his heritage. The *karmā mārga* of Krishna and his flute are seen as an enchanting confluence of *Sruti* and its communication.

The Gurus have not regarded even the sword as the material object. It is described as spiritual and the representation of Durga as the symbol of this spirituality. It may be worthwhile to pause and ponder on how close is sword to the word. Only an 's' is added before the word to make it sword. It is *Logos*. The sword in Sikhism is a spiritual being and is not to be taken as an ordinary weapon of offence or defence. It is impossible to think of it as a weapon of violence and cruelty. It is not a weapon of punishment in the material sense. The spiritual perception of the sword is a development of the earlier Indian heritage. It may also be mentioned that a sword adorns even the interiors of the Parsee (Zoroastrian) Fire temples. It is seen as a spiritual being.

Guru Gobind Singh, in his autobiography *Bachiter Nātak*, has mentioned his intense meditations. He has, also, very unambiguously traced the ancestry of the founders of his tradition to Lava and Kusha, the sons of Rama. This has been the accepted belief among the followers of the Guru. There

are many subtle aspects of the great Indian traditions which have manifested very impressively the rise of the Spiritual on our land. A deeper understanding of their unitive character can save us and our precious scarce resources. It may also help to eliminate the emotional trauma which a lack of perception of our culture is bound to generate. This brief note, it must be recognised, is not written in the spirit of polemics but is only a speculative effort at understanding the Indian culture.

THE SIKH PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURE AND INTEGRATION

Man's moral perceptions have a long history. His ideals and norms have been often influenced by the environments in which he had to live and to the fashioning on which he had sometimes spent a life-time. The Aryans who moved into the land surrounded by water on the three sides and the Five Rivers flowing across it, must have felt somewhat differently at the moral ideals and norms which they had inherited and accepted in the lands of their earlier habitation. A wholly new situation of moral transition needed a very challenging adjustive response. The *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Brāhamanas*, the *Puranas* and the later literature appears to emerge in response to their new experiences. The changing moral ideal of the man in his new praxes had given rise to the development of new life-style and in this process laid foundations of a dynamic civilization and culture. Some of the Zoroastrian moral notions and the words used for them found a new application in the land of Five rivers.

The hymns of the *Rig Veda* present a kind of new culture which enabled man to live and grow in the new world. A couple of centuries passed and then emerged on the scene of the Five rivers another cultural thrust. It had its origin farther than the earlier home of the *Aryans* and the Zoroastrians whose culture had, by then, overcome the initial trauma of finding a resting place in the new composite situation. The new cultural pattern now introduced to the Indian situation was influenced to the varying degrees by the teachings of Islam. It had a somewhat more codified form of norms and vision of the moral ideal. It added many more elements to the already composite nature of the moral ideas. Some of the new patterns perhaps varied among some small insulated groups although they showed signs of greater common factors in the

larger ones. The earlier arrived value and cultural pattern of the Aryans showed its strength in diffusion, acceptability and stability. The recently, relatively speaking, arrived pattern of the victorious seeks and obtains a new gestalt with the support of its strength. A new composite culture gradually starts taking shape. The moral goals and norms also show the impact of the new historical development. The *Aryans* and the Muslims, in this new composition, both agitated as well as strengthened the values of human survival and development. The Five Rivers did not remain a mute witness of this interaction.

A few centuries later, a young man entered a rivulet (*Bein Nadi*) and when he emerged from it, he proclaimed a negative injunction—*Na ko Hindu.Na Musalmān*.

Some persons, referring to this great vision, appear to make it out as a statement. It appears to me as an ethical injunction. The same man, as a very young boy, had told his baptising priest to make the initiation thread a collect of moral values. His name was Nanak, later known as Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion. His negative injunction appears to have suggested that the composite culture was to be grounded in the ethical and spiritual values. The present paper is inspired by this historic moral vision, and seeks to analyse the ethical dimension of the composite culture of India, and also to examine the moral nature of integration, both for the individual as well as for the society.

We may, at this point, pause for a while and refer to the two other visions which have developed on the Indian soil and have made very significant contribution to its culture. The two have appeared on the Indian horizon prior to Sikhism. These two, described in the Indian philosophy books as heterodox schools, are Buddhism and Jainism. Both of these have developed into great traditions. Buddhism has, as we know, influenced cultures far beyond the shores of India. In a manner almost similar to Islam, Christianity has come to India and has made a penetrating impact on the life-style of a large number of Indians. We may also submit that, in addition to these religions, there are many devotional saint traditions in Bengal, South India and many provinces of the country which have made very significant contribution to the culture of

India, and have given it an identity which may be described as its composite culture. This contribution by the various regions of the country are indispensable *individuals*, without which any notion of unity would be a faceless and empty identity. Thus, although nearly all the countries of the world have some cultural identity, the form of this identity is very closely related to the contents which impart it its distinctness. The identity of the Indian culture is similarly the resultant whole, a whole which would not be what it is, were some parts of this whole to be not its parts. At the same time it may be useful to remember that even the parts, alongwith the whole are undergoing a change. Some of these parts are experiencing the change at a pace faster than the others. Some of the elements responsible for the difference in the pace of change among the parts may be partly due to their inherent nature. Some cultures are more poised for encouraging and sustaining change in the individual attitudes and social conduct. But apart from some of the elements of the culture facilitating a faster pace being rooted in the culture itself, there is sometimes a very important role played by individuals who may give a very radical orientation, inclusive of a heightened receptivity to change and movement towards the realisation of the ideal. While I am saying this, I have in view the culture of the Punjab and the form given to it by the Sikh Gurus, and the perception of this form by their followers. I must admit that most of the generalisations which I am about to make are not formed in accordance with the empirical tradition of the measurements. The reflections are more speculative in nature and are therefore somewhat philosophical in character. I may claim credibility as an 'insider' but then it may also limit the claim as I might have been too favourably impressed by some teachings and events which may be rated differently by those who may be somewhat removed from the site and range of the experience. The mitigating factor, perhaps, could be that inspite of the large size of our country, the unity in terms of the cultural heritage, and the newly awakened pride of the Indians in their collective history is creating an objective as well as sympathetic appraisal of the different elements of the composite culture of our country. Hopefully, this will provide

the required safeguard against unfounded enthusiasm and irrational prejudices. We may, therefore, be able to view and evaluate the cultural directions both at the regional and the national level to some reasonable extent. After making this preliminary qualifying statement, I may now proceed to refer to the contribution of the culture based in the events and the teachings of the Sikh Gurus to the collective cultural direction of our country.

Guru Nanak, as we have stated a short while ago, defied his parents and the baptizing priest by refusing to wear the sacred thread, which would have, as a *Kshatriya*, formalised his status as the 'twice-born' in the then accepted *varna* hierarchy, apart from completing a religious ceremony required to be performed according to the code. It must have been considered quite a defiance on the part of a young man. In the similar context, the third Guru, Amardas made it obligatory for anyone seeking to meet him to first sit in the common kitchen (*langar*) alongwith others regardless of his own material status or the caste consideration. He had the rule laid as '*pahelay pangat, pāchhe sangat*'. The visitors were required to defy their cultural conditioning and wash themselves off their separative notions. The sitting together and eating was an act of wilful defiance, an experience of overcoming something which had, by then, become a matter of habit or a second nature. It was both a defiance of the divisive and also the fostering of a unifying bond.

The fourth Guru, Ramdas, the founder of the present city of Amritsar and the *Harimandir* (the Golden Temple) went a few steps further in the direction of defiance of the existing culture-value pattern and got the foundation of the *Harimandir* laid by a Muslim saint, Mian Mir. The new temple was to welcome all.

The prominence that comes from defiance claimed its price and the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, was tortured to death. The social disregard for the tradition invited political intervention and the fifth Guru became the first martyr of the new religious and value vision. The sixth Guru, Hargobind, intensified the pace of defiance. Instead of giving in, the persecution led to the intensification of the degree of defiance. Guru Hargobind entrusted the task of building the *Akāl*

Takhat (temporal 'throne') to the two most pious Sikhs, Bhai Buddha and Bhai Gurdas. The former had been performing the ceremony marking the succession of the Guruship, and the latter was the scribe of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Guru Hargobind also raised a force of the dedicated and devout persons to defy the forces of the imperial power. The ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, who was the son of the sixth Guru, and had spent many years in the meditation and spiritual contemplation, comes to the scene. He did not himself wear the sacred thread, but agreed to champion the cause of those whose sacred thread was being removed. Instead of defying the mighty emperor from a long and safe distance by remaining at Anandpur, he volunteered to go to Delhi and carry out his act of defiance in the face of the emperor himself. His son, Guru Gobind Singh, institutionalised the new way of life and restated the norms with enhanced vigour and enthusiasm. One of his disciples, Banda Singh Bahadur, performed such acts of defiance and bore the torture with such glory and calmness that the great poet of our country Shri Rabindranath Tagore was moved to write a soul-stirring poem *Bandi Bir* depicting the scene. The poet's sensitivity saw in the great event the advent of a new culture. Man appears to have conquered the greatest enemy of his development. The 'fear' stood vanquished. The seemingly natural instinct to withdraw was replaced by a conscious decision to challenge. The matter accepted the supremacy of the form. The potential was asserting to realise itself.

How had all this happened? Was it a very sudden chance event? In reply it may be submitted that the development was taking place from the time of the first Guru itself. Guru Nanak Dev had in the very first sentence of *Japuji* referred to God as 'without fear'. A person seeking to win His love and to realize oneself had to accept the above as the ideal. The name of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, literally means 'brave wielder of sword'. The theme of many hymns of the Guru teaches man to face the challenge and grow, rather than run and die in spirit although alive in body.

It appears that individual attitudes and the social behaviour can be the result of, as well as lead to, two broad kinds of culture. I may, for want of better terms identify them

as 'insecurity culture' and the 'culture of the secure'. Persons and communities may accept their situation as insecure and seek to restore the balance towards security by drawing inwards. The social may yield place to the personal and the private. The insecurity resulting from the interaction with the outside may be neutralised by reducing the interaction. The concern for the external would then be increasingly reduced and the attention to the personal and the private, non-interacting elements of the life be increased. It is not being denied that there may be very genuine individual withdrawals also. But we are presently discussing the withdrawing attitude as the gross social phenomenon resulting from hostile environment. The nature and direction of the cultural pattern would be obvious in this case.

We have earlier talked of defiance as the newly emphasised trait in human life. The Gurus displayed this characteristic very prominently in their own life-style. It was also emphasised in their teachings. We are in this paper using the word defiance in the sense of the act of the seed when it overcomes the outer crust and seeks to sprout. However, a mere defiance may remain aimless and fruitless. The second element stressed by the Gurus is the *direction* alongwith defiance. The emphasis on the direction of development has provided the positive achievement. The first step in the newly stressed direction was the bringing together of the different parts of the society into a more-coherent whole. The highest goal in this process of integration is self-realization through the social to the spiritual. The spiritual or the ideal is to be realised by expanding the narrow, separative and divisive consciousness. Guru Nanak had called this narrowing, dividing veil as *kurhai pāli*. In reply to a question, *kiv kurhaie tutai pai*, (how to demolish the false wall) asked by Guru Nanak himself, he later gives the answer *tan haumai kahai na koi...* (is not guiled by ego). There are two levels at which *haumai* leads to disintegration. First, it tends to promote narrow divisions among men. The person under its absolute sway proceeds in the direction of social disintegration. It also seriously limits the social role of the individual. It may even make the person oblivious of the destruction and harm caused to others either by seeking to

merely promote one's own selfish interest or by not coming to the rescue of those who need his help. The latter is sometimes nearly as destructive as the former. Guru Nanak has described the cultured (*vidyā vīchārī*) as person who keeps the social good in view. The social is not unrelated and, therefore, not devoid of its claim. The feeling of insecurity that comes from interacting with the other need not be neutralised by withdrawing from the inter-action but ought to be fully removed by actualising the really existing spiritual bond underlying the social inter-action. The person has to perceive the higher in order to rise above the conflicting lower. The integrating character of the higher is the only direction which can ensure a secure growth in the direction of the ideal. When the mother of Guru Gobind Singh's children asked him as to the whereabouts of her children — the two had in fact died fighting in the battlefield against unequal odds and the other two had been bricked alive — the Guru, pointing to the thousands present in front of him, is reported to have said, "what if the four have died, thousands are living. See the four in these thousands." So the path of integration lies through sacrifice, and the realization of the larger and the higher. The lower does not remain lower, defiance does not degenerate into selfish arrogance. The direction towards the spiritual, through the social becomes a powerful culture.

Guru Nanak's view of excellence, as seen by us earlier, requires the seeker to expand his limited and narrow consciousness so as to experience the divine. The moral consciousness, therefore, must keep pace with the expanding consciousness and the mystic experience. We are told that realization of God as Truth (*sach*) ought necessarily be expressed in the conduct (*āchār*). Guru Nanak preached *sachoh orey sabh ko uppar sach āchār* (Truth is higher than everything, higher than truth is true living). A break between the realization and the conduct is not approved by Guru Nanak. There are great social and personal implications of such a view for people from all walks of life. The true living lies in the devotion to the ideal, substitution of fear by courage, honest livelihood, and social service. Guru Nanak did not approve the culture of the hungry. The dictum for him was to "earn with the sweat of the brow and to share with

others". The hunger is a disintegrating factor of social life. The non-productive life may end with the praxes, concomitant with the situation of scarcity. Guru Nanak, by stressing the dignity of the work and labour, sought to raise the man above the gravitation of the matter. A sincere devotion to work is an honest devotion to the spiritual. It is also an important aspect of the integration and culture.

Guru Nanak has laid great stress on non-exploitation and justice as the important characteristics of the individuals and societies. An exploitative society, he felt, was a disintegrating society. He says that 'to usurp the rights of others is as sinful as the eating of the cow for a Hindu, and the pig for a Muslim.' The enduring bonds of integration can be sustained only through justice. An ability to recognise it is not merely a moral virtue, it also characterises a degree of spiritual realisation.

There are two events in the life of Guru Gobind Singh which ought to be mentioned in the perspective of an integrating culture. Guru Gobind Singh sent some Sikhs to Banaras for interaction with the scholars of the earlier tradition. The departure of the new tradition was not without an effort to understand and integrate the earlier cultural heritage. These Sikh scholars, later known as *Nirmalas*, greatly developed the non-dualist philosophy and integrated it well with the spiritual and social visions of the Gurus. Second, Guru Gobind Singh got the earlier sacred literature of the country translated in the language of the lay. The *Chaubīs Avtār*, the *Krishna Avtār* and the related literature was thus made available to the people. In the *Bachiter Nātak* (a biographical composition of the tenth Guru) Guru Gobind Singh refers to his relation with the earlier tradition. Both of these are great cues to the Guru's vision of the integration. It shows that transformation can be achieved through the path of understanding. A non-participatory society can become sullen and resentful. But a participatory society can become the growingly integrating nation. National integration is not the end of the road, it is a continuation of the journey. If we look at the national integration only as a political goal, it would appear as mere matter without the form. It may fail to inspire people to move in the direction of actualising their

potentiality. The life and the teachings of the Gurus can provide us with a direction for a more meaningful and fruitful integrating culture.

The Sikh Gurus appear to have felt distressed over the relegation of the earlier Indian literature to oblivion. They recognised the need to transform the same with a view to bringing it closer to life. Guru Nanak has thus preserved the experiences and expressions of the earlier Indian saints—Hindu as well as Muslim—and these are now integral part of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the present Guru of the Sikhs. The *bānī* of these saints, in some cases, is now available only in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. This shows the amount of emphasis of the Sikh Gurus on the open approach. An open-mind and an unprejudiced heart alone can bring together individuals and societies. It is an important cue for those seeking to integrate communities into nation. Guru Nanak is said to have visited the places of importance for different religious traditions. Does it not signify that those treading path of growth and integration ought to cultivate a sympathetic understanding of one's cultural environments. Ignorance in this respect is often only half a step away from a possible hostility and enmity. The effort to know the other often takes one closer to it and thus becomes the first and the difficult, but the ultimately very rewarding and integrating step. The Guru's example to reach out to sympathetically understand views different from one's own may be seen to be the earlier and the more potent forms of what has now come to be known as comparative study of religion. I have called it as the more potent form because it points to something beyond understanding and establishes a rapport with what earlier seemed to be wholly other. An appreciative awareness leads to the realisation of the higher bond. The genuine understanding is a liberating element in human relationship. The shackle of prejudice falls and the man is able to see the larger truth. The dialectical opposition is seen as lower and as yet unformed. The opposition of opposition is neither dialectical nor development. It is just stagnation and decay. Some of the modern theories of social relationship based in mere matter suffer from this previous fault. The opposition of the opposition may only amount to neutralisation and not result in

any growth. The genuine development is rooted in sympathetic understanding and interaction with one's environment. This is an important teaching of the Sikh Gurus.

I may pause here to make a minor comment. It has sometimes appeared to me that any talk of synthesis is just another way of referring to a process of making something smaller out of the larger. The cue to a rich culture may come from the other direction. It may come from making the large into the larger. An important aspect of culture is that it overflows. A synthesis may result in containing or arresting the overflow. It is in this context that we ought to see the stress of the Gurus on the need to expand the ego and to overcome the narrow self-consciousness. The cultured is at ease because he is in tune with the growing and the developing. Any over-emphasis on the synthesis may characterise the awkward and the ill-at-ease.

We have earlier said that a cultured person (*vidyā vīchārī*) does good to others. The good of the others is concretised through *sevā*. The idea of *sevā* has been given new meaning. First, it has been institutionalised as a social goal. Its important element is the 'cleaning up'. It may also assume the form of keeping the religious and social places clean. One of the outstanding feature of *sevā* is its emphasis on social hygiene. The Indians have, for a very long time, understood and emphasised the virtue of personal hygiene. The Guru made it clear that hygiene is not complete if it does not include the social cleaning-up. The great stress of this aspect of the social life in the fifteenth century by the Gurus, and its continuing recognition in the social norms of the Sikhs must have been very singular then as it appears to be even today. The hundreds and thousands of devotees engaged in tidying up and cleaning the sacred places is one such example. The removal of the dirty and the ugly is the first important step towards the creation and realisation of the beauty. The sloth has to be replaced. The socialisation of the 'cleaning-up' promotes culture as well as integration. It is an important engagement of the individual with his living environment. The Gurus have taught that the free and voluntary (and not *badhī chattī*) service is a step towards the realisation of the goal.

Another noteworthy element of the new direction is the compilation of the *Guru Granth Sahib* in rhyme. The rhythm and harmony reflected in the articulation of the mystic is not new in India. The *Rig Veda* is an early excellence in spiritual poetry. The great stress on the social participation through *kīrtan* of the sacred by all, without any distinction of the low and the high, the lay and the priest, must have appeared as a great effort to give a new, and much needed direction to the human consciousness. The stirred and shaped feelings culminate into a widened awareness. It is a culture turned towards the ideal. The inward does not remain neglected and obscured but gains the opportunity of becoming the manifest and the influential. The praxes receive a direction in which unity is gained by widening the narrow. It is not our principal objective here to elucidate the impinging of the literature on the culture. We are merely hinting at the liberating effect of this kind of interaction. The great tradition of Bengal, as also of other centres of culture, is a testimony of how a community singing of the sacred can raise the humans to great heights and foster more intimate relationship.

The Punjab economy has been agricultural in nature for many centuries. Its folk art and culture bears a deep imprint of its agricultural society. Its men and women sing and dance in unison with the conditions of a benevolent nature. Its desire to grow more and more of better and better still has tended to influence the life-style of its people. The festival of *Baisākhī* marks the beginning of the harvesting period. Most of the actions performed in the folk dance, popularly known as *Bhangrā*, depict the events of agricultural process. The festival of *Baisākhī* is also important for the Sikhs for it marks the day of their transformation into the *Khālsā*. Guru Gobind Singh, on this day, institutionalised the Sikhs into the order of the *Khālsā*. Many on this day in the year 1699 A.D. returned from the festival of the *Baisākhī* to the harvesting of the fields with the ideas of new transformation. The fast moving sickle and the equally fast germinating idea of the new culture did not end with 1699 A.D. but is a living reality till today. The spirit infused the matter with a new form.

I am now going to ask a question which I have earlier posed in different forms. How is it that such an idealist

philosophy articulated by Guru Nanak and his successors is not found in the present general texts of the Indian philosophy? I have often heard people saying that Sikhism is one of the young religions of man as some sort of explanation for its not being very widely disseminated. This may be perhaps a very small factor. And it may also be remembered against this answer that the rationalist and the empiricist schools of the modern Western philosophy represented by Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Berkley and Hume are almost the contemporaries of the exposition of Sikhism in India. On the Indian scene too, some of the renderings of Indian philosophy current in the academic world today are the result of the interpretative effort of the twentieth century. So the 'young religion theory' may not command much credence. Shall we then blame the scholars of Sikh philosophy for their failure to present and emphasise how Guru Nanak's philosophy has not only gained from the rich heritage of the Indian philosophy but has also enriched it by his experience of reality and its communication? Perhaps the philosophers will have to share some blame. But we may all also realize the need to discuss and highlight various Indian perspectives of theoretical and social philosophy having direct and powerful bearing on culture and integration. The present paper is a very small effort in this direction.

ETHICAL TEACHINGS IN SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB

A serious and systematic study of the ethical teachings in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is important for various reasons. We propose to examine and discuss the same in the context of its relevance to the Singh Sabha movement. It is generally conceded that the Singh Sabha was inspired and sustained by the desire of the Sikhs to seek and assert their identity derived from the teachings of their Gurus. The Sikhs felt a keen urge to propagate and thereby preserve the fundamentals of their faith with the zeal of a mission. We seek to continue this urge in this brief paper.

First, we may notice that Sikhism is, relatively speaking, one of the younger religions of the world. A new faith has to establish its functional uniqueness at the social and psychological level. It is imperative for a new vision, and religion based on that vision, that it may lay down a clear statement of its ethical teachings so as to gain the initial acceptance and a sustained adherence thereafter. A continuous appraisal and its propagation, therefore, is very necessary.

Second, some scholars of other faiths have, either due to ignorance, or due to some other considerations, hinted at the absence of any significant ethical structure in the teachings of the Gurus. A somewhat similar effect also appears to be created by some scholars of other religions, who either due to ignorance or due to some other gains, have written papers wherein they have traded the echo of some of the important virtues of their religion, repeated in the Sikh religion as well. Unconsciously, perhaps, they seek to describe the Sikh ethical thought as a miniature reflection of the basic truths of their own religion. The Sikh religion, on their reasoning, is merely a miniature tribute to the great ethical visions of the older and

more well-known religious traditions to which these scholars belong. Any one who has undertaken a serious study of the literature produced during the quincentenary celebrations of the birth of Guru Nanak, might have some idea of such a phenomenon. A comparative study of religion or their ethical teachings is a double-edged methodology. It has attracted the attention of the scholars for some time in the past. It is important for us to notice the difficulties involved in this approach as some of the recent studies of values and virtues as taught by the Gurus have been examined and talked about from, what is very loosely described as, comparative study. It is obvious that many moral virtues extolled in one religious tradition, also find a mention in the other religions. This may tempt the student and scholars of the moral systems to indulge in a "patch" comparative study. This "patch-work" would consist of tearing out of context some elements from the ethical structure of one religious tradition and comparing it indiscriminately with similar elements in another tradition. Such studies may, consciously--or unconsciously--provide justification for describing the younger religions as "syncretisms" of the older faiths. Sikhism, and some studies of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* have suffered on account of this grossly misunderstood methodology and function of a comparative study of religion. A comparative study may, however, appear to be fruitful if structures are compared as a whole and the unique contribution and value of each structure is properly understood. The elements--both ethical as well as metaphysical--can be known and evaluated only in the context of the structures and their comparative study.

We may usefully refer to the great attempt of the Singh Sabha at the scholarly as well as popular level to free the faith from the ambiguities to which it was being gradually led during the nineteenth century. Therefore, whatever we have been talking about so far is in continuity with the efforts of the Singh Sabha to bring in bold relief the unique and crucial contours of the faith. And, now, after cautioning ourselves against possible pitfalls of any superficially comparative study, we may proceed to make a brief statement of the structure, ethical structure of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

First, we may begin with the observation that Sikh

religion is deeply committed to a belief in the reality and existence of One God. The value and meaning of human life and conduct derive their authenticity from such a belief. Even a cursory glance at the hymns of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* will convince a person beyond doubt about the passionate devotion of the Sikh religion to the seeking of God's love. The ethical structure, therefore, stands on this firm rock of the faith in God and love for God. An action is right or an ideal is good if it contributes towards the realization of God. We ought to keep this deep monotheistic commitment of Sikhism before attempting superficial comparisons or similarities with agnostic or atheistic traditions.

Second, the seeker of God ought to live an ethical life. An immoral person is neither worthy of, nor attains to the love of God. Thus the relationship between an ethical life and belief in the reality of loving God is both functional as well as necessary. In the Sikh context it may be described as '*a priori*'.

Third, the life scheme or the agent on the moral path consists of expanding his limited and narrow consciousness so as to experience the divine. The moral consciousness, therefore, must keep pace with the expanding human consciousness and mystic experience. Guru Nanak, also, reminds us that the realization of God as truth (*sach*) ought to be indicated in the conduct (*āchār*) of the person who is seeking and realizing God. Any dichotomy between the realization and conduct is, therefore, not approved. The subjective and social test for the spiritual realization hinges on this necessary, continuous and harmonious relationship between *sach* and *āchār*. This is one of the important factors characterising the uniqueness of the Sikh view of the ethico-spiritual realization. It is easy to see that there are great social and personal implications of such a view for people from all walks of life. It clearly suggests a continuity of moral and spiritual purpose in the seemingly mundane and manifestly spiritual objectives and activities connected therewith. We shall leave the application of this moral teachings of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* to the individual conscience and imagination.

Our fourth submission follows from the third. We notice

that the Gurus have laid great stress on the need to earn one's livelihood by honest means. The stress on this virtue shows Sikhism to be a modern religion. Guru Nanak has expressly forbidden any violation of another man's right. He advises man to respect the rights of others as scrupulously as he observes the religious taboos. This indicates that Sikh religion lays great emphasis on the social religion. It does not respect a living by alms. It also forbids withdrawal from the social participation through work and sharing. Thus the activities which appear to be purely secular to a superficial eye, are viewed in the sacred perspective. This restores a balance and harmony between different elements of a man's life.

We may now refer to the major cluster of virtues which find a central place in the moral scheme. Other elements of the desirable activities may also find their complementary positions. The cardinal virtues appear to be, Wisdom, Courage, Contentment, Justice, Humility, Truthfulness, and Temperance. I have, elsewhere, dealt with these virtues in greater details. Here we may only refer to their general characteristic which emphasises the need to practice in conduct the desirable virtues. We may also, in passing, refer to the great importance of the virtues such as wisdom, courage and humility which are desirable not merely as personal traits but also contribute to the social life.

We shall now proceed to the sixth statement. It deals with the moral qualities related to the corporate and social life. The Gurus have not accepted the validity of the *varnāshrama dharma* which formed the basis of the social ethics of the Hindus. They instead sought to substitute it with their own vision of the desirable norms for social relations. These are based on the principle of social equality, and human brotherhood. The caste institutions are expressly rejected. The ideal of human brotherhood is based in the transcendence of the ego and social service. The importance of *sevā* is another aspect of sharing one's resources with the fellow beings. The primary qualities of *sevā* are its voluntary nature and its inspiration from love. It is the expression towards the fellow beings of whatever one feels towards God. It is thus the continuation of the love for God. It is important to add here that the love for God also implies that we ought not set

overselves up as judges of man or men. The Sikh prayer and ethics holds in high esteem the equality of "seeing but not judging". It is our experience that social bonds are often damaged beyond redemption when we intentionally or thoughtlessly continue judging others regardless of our own human limitations. The Gurus have emphasised the need to destroy this root of social strife and enmity. It is instead to be substituted by social life, which as noticed by us earlier, is an extension of our love for God.

We may now conclude this brief study by referring to the ultimate realization of the Supreme Ideal with which we began this paper. The highest good, according to the Gurus, involves the fusion of the inspiration from the mystic experience into the ethical expression of man. This realization is sought, as well as expressed, through a life of love, devotion, and surrender. It is this which denotes *razā*, as also the life lived in *Hṛkm*. With this we end our introduction to the ethical teachings in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

THE ETHICO-SPIRITUAL MATRIX OF HARMONY

A SIKH PERSPECTIVE

A religious person is beginning to feel a little uneasy. It has been his faith that the world is undergoing designing through the spiritual. Although the spiritual itself is being called by different names here and there yet an experiencing person can, with some effort, allow the different articulations to flow through him and experience the harmony in the communication. And this is the view expressed by the Sikh spiritual preceptors—the Gurus as they are called in Sikhism. Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh tradition, travelled far and wide to the places of importance associated with the different religious traditions. He went there to absorb the experience of the designing spiritual and also to meet the persons of religious merit belonging to those traditions. He sat with them and talked of the spiritual in the self. He saw the designing through the finite individual. The *Guru* proclaimed the 'relation' of all to all in the designing expression. He vehemently denied 'nonrelationship' among the elements of the designing whole. He experienced and communicated the continuity and harmony within the continuity. A religious man is beginning to feel a little uneasy now because the vision of the spiritual in the design is becoming blurred to the 'open eye' of the closed mind of the materialist person. The inability to evaluate and provide relative access to the material resources seems to him to be the only problem and goal of life. The facile truth of this view seems to blur the spiritual vision and thus threatens to render the person blind to his spiritual mission as well as in his correct appraisal of the immediate material environment. Even his own spiritual continuity with the fellow spiritual beings

does not seem to exist. I am also beginning to feel the uneasiness of the religious man.

A few decades ago I used to feel convinced of the futility of the conclusions of the materialist. The prejudice of his view against the spiritual continue to be based on a lack of his experience of the spiritual. His dogmatic acceptance of some socio-political doctrine is an obvious reason. When I said that a religious person is beginning to feel a little uneasy, I did not mean that the religious person is getting influenced by the materialist. I meant that the religious man is beginning to feel that there is a yawning gap between his goal and the efforts made by him and the like of him. He senses the need for a much more intense effort to experience and articulate a truly religious perspective so that the common journey towards the spiritual is made less arduous and more fruitful. While sitting during the final banquet of the Assembly of World's religions, I suddenly had a vision of the spiritual coherence which could be in the offing. The present seminar also seems to be a right step in this direction. This effort needs to be sustained for a spiritual evolution and enrichment of the humankind.

The Sikh Gurus have held that the path to the spiritual enrichment is two-fold. Guru Nanak has made it clear that the spiritual realization is not possible without the life of virtue (*Vin guna keete bhagat na hoi*). The path to the spiritual lies through the ethical. The goal of moral perfection requires a seeker to withdraw from the base and the divisive. A concerted effort to overcome the slavery of the matter and the strife based therein is an important ingredient of the moral life. The moral realization involves the awareness that the material, although important for some needs of life, is also responsible for keeping the human at a lower level. It does not mean that we should not make efforts to improve the use of matter. All efforts to improve the quality of the material life may be seen as useful work but it has to be remembered that the material falls in the category of the means and should not be mistaken as ends. An improvement in the quality of means is desirable but it cannot be regarded as the substitute for the moral and the spiritual.

It is our submission here that the journey for real harmony has to begin with the self and not with the external

material environments. The improvement in the material means may only be contributory factors. A failure to realize this would confuse the seeker in his search of the factors and stages leading to the unitive character of the social, moral and spiritual life. An engagement with the moral endeavour requires the awareness that the social harmony is not possible without the harmony within the individual.

How shall we realize the harmony 'within' the person? Guru Nanak adjures that an awareness of the need to set one's mind to a state of peace and harmony is the first step in this direction. The problem with most persons is that they are not aware of the need to cultivate the inner harmony. If the mind comes to see the futility of the overtiring inner disturbance or imbalance, the self will then be motivated enough to seek the freedom from this inner disturbance. This may also prove to be the first and important step towards social harmony.

The Sikh thought appears to accept the traditional Indian view that the five motivational praxes, namely concupiscence, covetousness, attachment or delusion, ire, and pride (*kam, lobh, moh, krodh and ahankar*) need to be understood and regulated. The human emotions and actions influenced by them need to be properly regulated. It is rather unfortunate that this aspect of man's personal and social life is left to the trial and error process of learning. The effort to provide insight in this regard is rather missing. This is a part of the moral self-regulation. The Sikh view, however, is different from the traditional view in the kind of self-regulation which ought to be pursued in this respect. The Sikh religion has emerged in India as a faith which emphasises social role for the seeker. It does not permit the regulation of emotions by the renunciation of the social interaction. Its interpretation of the above cited five praxes is also in line with this commitment of the Sikh tradition. The Sikh Gurus have stressed the need for a socially relevant inner equipoise and harmony.

The harmony within the self is to be expressed through a life of virtues. Some of the desirable qualities of the conduct emphasised by the Sikh religion are wisdom, courage, justice, and dynamic contentment. A coward not only lacks inner harmony, but also contributes to the subversion of freedom

and social harmony. He invites aggression and also becomes a victim of it. A truly meaningful inner and social harmony can only be achieved by men of courage who may combine in their life the qualities of fortitude and the art of valour. Wisdom ensures that the courage does not degenerate into dogmatism. It helps the mind to free itself from the narrowness which tends to invade the mind and emotions of the individual. The virtue of wisdom also guides the human life towards greater and higher development. The virtue of justice braces up the man against any doctrinal totalitarianism. It enables the individual to see that the rights and life of the individual are important. It moves him to struggle for the freedom of the individuals. There are systems which may deny freedom to the individual in the name of some principles. The virtue of justice will enable the individual to realize that any social harmony raised on the denial of rights of the individual will be shortlived and enforceable through denial of freedom. The virtue of dynamic contentment is bipolar in character. It enables the individual to interpret his failures and achievements in moral and spiritual terms. It enables the man to stand in the face of oppression and not go down for ever under the weight of unfavourable odds. We have prefixed 'dynamic' to contentment to express the Sikh maxim '*Chardī kalā*'. It teaches the seeker of inner and social harmony to ever remain in a state of buoyancy and bounce back into a correct posture from positions of failures as well as triumphs. The Sikh greetings... '*Wāheguru jī kī Fateh*' reminds the individual that the 'victory is of the Lord'. A balanced person is one who is neither discouraged by the failures nor feels bloated by achievements. He, however, remains in the state of '*Chardī kalā*'. No one need fear such a person nor venture to scare him. Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth founder of the Sikh religion, has described such a person as the truly wise being. There can be no better guarantee for the ideal social and religious harmony than to work and to encourage the development of such moral beings.

What ought to be the social praxes of such a person. I am tempted to make a general statement here. It is my belief that the moral, through the social, leads to the spiritual. Deciphered, the statement means that only a moral being who

fulfils his social role may proceed in the direction of the larger spiritual whole. The spiritual is thus the stage of fulfilment and not the suppression of the individual as some non-spiritual goals seem to envisage. The overemphasis of the social in the secular may encourage the achievement of the social harmony through the suppression of the individual and his freedom. The inter-religious harmony, nurtured in the matrix of the spiritual, on the other hand, enables the individual to achieve his inner spiritual being by realizing his spiritual continuity and relationship with the social as elements of the spiritual experience. The 'other' is then experienced as not entirely other. The frontiers of this experience may expand from the near bio-environment to the point of including the whole humankind as elements of the same spiritual continuum.

There are two possible aspects of this spiritual realization. The one aspect refers to the social praxes of the moral being treading the path of inter-religious harmony. Its value is seen through the concrete ideal of seeking the ideal of human brotherhood. The second aspect, which is continuous with the first, is the mystic experience of the spiritual harmony which includes and embodies the vision of the social as cohesively bound in the spiritual. We shall first refer to the concrete ideal of human brotherhood and its bonding character.

I have often heard the phrase 'Dialogue of Religions'. I was myself earlier fond of using this expression to suggest an exercise of understanding various religions. It appeared to some others as promising a possibility of sitting firmly in one's own religious tradition and opening out a talking window. I have often felt that this is a great but only an initial step towards realizing the goal of human brotherhood. However, we should remember a few points in this highly desirable but equally highly difficult enterprise. Apart from the initial requirement of raising oneself significantly high in the deeper understanding of one's own faith, it also requires an openness towards the ultimate Spiritual. Second, there is no dialogue of religions in the sense of the meeting of the traditions as such. The dialogue is of the individual or the groups comprising of the individuals, belonging to two or

more traditions. The dialogue is, therefore, of the individual and its fate or the outcome is directly linked with the level of the individuals entering the experiencing of the dialogue.

Third, all genuine dialogues have elements of discovery and conversion for all. The meetings which lack this are only exercises in reiteration and even when carried out very intensely achieve only a very low level of success. A true dialogue is an adventure in spiritual development. It is characterised by the enrichment of the seeking and the experiencing self. It helps to shed the falsity of the adamant ego. It is a step 'forward' and 'higher'. I am advancing this concept of the dialogue as I find it in the views of the founders of the Sikh tradition. The Sikh religion itself has been, and continues to be, regarded by some as a spiritual dialogue between various religions. The Unification Church also appears to me to be undergoing this process of enrichment through the wider spiritual experience. Its desire *to give* is the expression of its experience of the universal in the spiritual continuum. It involves altruism, which ensures its bonding character. It is my view that dialogue is not a shrinking process but an expanding one.

Here we may pause to clarify a point. I have said that a genuine dialogue involves conversion. I am conscious of the general use of this word to often describe the visible, ritualistic and formal change of the members of one religious tradition to another. It may entail the establishment of new social and community relations. The change may also proclaim the adoption of a new code of marital relationship, food taboos, *rite de passage* and a few other allied imperatives. Such a change is often resented by the members of the religious groups to which the convert belonged earlier. This resentment is sometimes sought to be expressed through the political instruments of the state. The possibility of the change in the religious affiliation through a dialogue and its consequent disapproval by the community which the person leaves is often sought to be softened by assertion that a dialogue is with a view to strengthening one's faith in his religious beliefs. It appears to me that such a reassurance is wholly unnecessary. The social concern in this regard is valid only to a certain point. Its uneasiness against coercions is

understandable. Its postulation that a dialogue is not to, or will never, facilitate change and growth, appears to me somewhat misplaced and not quite true. The conversion in the dialogue, or through a dialogue, is an open question. It may not lead to formal and ritual change mentioned above. But I wish to submit that such a change was not in my mind when I made the submission that all genuine dialogues have elements of discovery and conversion. The conversion I am suggesting there may be in the cognitive, affective and conative experiences and expressions of the concerned individuals. It may lead to a healthy change and growth in this regard. Most of us have experienced it in our life although it may remain amorphous and operative at various levels of the conscious life. It is interesting to realize that religion invites a person to open up and grow. It is the social, and many times the political, which feels threatened by this opening up. Having felt alarmed by this open-mindedness, the socio-political setups turn around and blame the growing religious consciousness as anti-dynamic and anti-change. Thus religion is accused of a characteristic which it does not have. Religion always encourages change and growth. The dialogue of individuals in religion is one example of it. The protagonists of the dialogue of religions, therefore, need not assume defensive and false postures. They need not deny the virtue of their venture.

Let us now refer to the second aspect of the spiritual realization, namely the mystic experience of the spiritual harmony. The dialogue of individuals in religion may help to level the experience of the seemingly sharp and uneven cutting edges of the various religious traditions. The unevenness is often man-made and history-sustained. It is more traceable to physical and material environments. It is possible for the spirit of man to experience them as levelled. As the mystic journey rises higher than the material, the physical unevenness does not touch the soaring spirit. The dialogue of the individuals in religion may also prepare the person for the experience of the smooth and the bondedness of the religious co-partnership. The divisive is then seen as narrow. The 'different' is experienced to be 'not-different'. The harmony in the seemingly different appearance asserts its being. This is

only the beginning of the mystic togetherness. It enables the individual to experience '*sangat*' (togetherness in the Holy). There may or may not be any significant difference in the outwardly appearance in the person from his earlier appearance. But the cognitive, affective and conative aspects of the experiencing self gradually shed the impact of the narrow and the limiting divisiveness. The individual, as individual, moves towards the expanding consciousness. Here the presence of the preceptor is of great help. He knows the way. The saints are the common heritage of humankind. One of the important signs of a mystic is his desire to give and continue giving. His presence is comforting for the members of the *Sangat*. The other sign of the saint or the mystic is his limitless courage and bravery. He neither threatens anyone nor accepts a threat from anyone. We had earlier referred to this quality of the realizing seeker while discussing the virtues which ethical life involves. The virtue of courage was, at that stage, an ethical quality of conduct. The present state is expressive of his spiritual realization and is linked with the realization of the bond of being together. The '*giving*' or '*flowing out*' is the most important element of life here. The *sevā* or *parupkār* (service of others or altruism) are at this stage not moral qualities but the spontaneous expression of the spiritual. It is effortless 'giving'. The Gurus have used the word *sehaj subhāv* to convey this state of person. The seeker, however, does not renounce the social membership. He may continue with his usual economic and other social functions and will not be a parasite in this respect. His spiritual ascent does not require of him to become a recluse. His presence and contact will inspire others to experience the spiritual and be transformed in this process. His emotions do not enslave him. The discord of unregulated emotions gradually yields place to the spontaneous emergence of harmony and love. The source and form of freedom, at this stage, is not self-assertion. It is replaced by the realization of the self through the sacrifice of the narrowing and limiting smallness of the discordant man. All this does not happen in any utopian and unreal world. The scene of this activity is our familiar society. Of course there are stages and levels of this growth just as there are stages of growth in general. However, we are of the view that this

journey towards the spiritual alone can foster and sustain any meaningful harmony. The other kind of patch work, at best, is transient and often a source of more intense disharmony than the one which was found in the beginning.

We may conclude with a postscript. Our experience is that most of the discords arise from inversion of values. A real effort for inter-faith harmony should, therefore, be made to direct human attention toward higher moral and spiritual ideal. The shortsightedness of the materialist often becomes infective and destructive. There is need to go beyond the superficial and illusory urges for the lower and the divisive. The creative and lasting harmony is the accompaniment of the ethical and the spiritual. The dynamic content of the latter is qualitatively different from the restless agitatedness of the materialist. A genuine understanding and respect for the spiritual in person can be the lasting foundation for harmony of the people reaching the spiritual through different faiths. A social consciousness nurtured in this manner is our best guarantee for the convergence of the life and the spiritual ideal and is sustained in creative harmony.

SIKH IDENTITY AND CONTINUITY A PERSPECTIVE FROM ETHICS

One of the most difficult areas of human knowledge relates to comparative studies. There is a significant increase in the quantum of tension when this happens to be the area of contemporary religions and history of the societies where such religions have emerged. The questions about Sikhism are in a way, not very different in this respect from the identical questions about the historical identities of Christianity, Islam, or the faiths of the *Aryans* before and after their entry into the land now known as India. Buddhism and Jainism have experienced no less confusions about the real identities at the hands of the lay and somewhat overzealous interpreters. We are, therefore, approaching the subject matter of our present paper without any illusion of its final acceptance. The debate shall, perhaps, continue.

We may notice an important aspect of the comparative study before we proceed any further in this direction. There are two broad aspects of the work to be done in this area. We may name them as the micro approach or the macro approach to the subject matter. In terms of ease, the macro approach is to be preferred and is, in fact, preferred by many people. The macro approach is generally visible in the work of some of the scholars who are either themselves 'outsiders' or approach the subject of their study as outsiders. The conclusions arrived at are often so general that they appear to be fair and easy to grasp and accept. A significant thrust of this methodological approach lies in viewing or portraying the subject matter of their study as syncretic in character. They fuse the earlier-side end in the history of the tradition but under pressure to explain the distinctness, they plant the departures in the mid-point or the end-side point in the history of the tradition.

The micro approach has to be adopted with great patience and care. In the case of religions, it requires a spiritual inspiration which is the real corrective as well as the guide for understanding religions, and partly their histories. It requires hard work and a good amount of objectivity and regulation of emotion. The scholar has to overcome the temptation to magnify the trivial and the insignificant. Although the insider is generally gifted with greater possibilities of understanding his tradition, yet the amount and intensity of differences among the insiders should warn us that everything need not be fair and final even in the work of insiders. The micro approach can of course be in some respects adopted by the 'outsiders' with satisfactory results, if the agenda were 'understanding', and not rejection or refusal to understand the experience at hand.

Apart from the above two paths, there can also be a fairly good combination of the two approaches. The results differ from each other in the gestalts resulting from these at combinations. Most of the synthesis stories display this approach.

We have set out this brief analysis of the three approaches to the comparative study of the religions in general and to Sikhism in particular. The purpose of this early submission is two-fold. First, we have sought to hint at the tensions involved in the comparative study and the possible way out adopted by the people. Second, it is sought to highlight the fact that the two approaches may lead to different results because of the difference in the approach itself.

Herein we shall seek to adopt a path somewhat akin to the micro-analysis approach. This will, hopefully, enable us to keep in view the dynamics of the inner inspiration and thus maintain the authenticity of the work. The paper is rather brief and seeks to analyse and interpret the main theme of the argument. We may begin first with the central concern of the Sikh theology.

The Sikh theology is that area of Sikh Religion which has been a subject for continuous interpretation. It is, however, not unusual to come across a few laments by those who feel sad that the twentieth century displays a singular

lack of awareness of the need for expounding the Sikh theology. A still more interesting observation was presented during a conference on Sikh studies. The learned scholar appeared to be bothered by the idea that there were not many younger interpreters of Sikhism. The only persons acknowledged by this scholar as authentic seekers of knowledge in this area were those who were trained well away from the country of origin of Sikhism, and tended to follow or prefer a certain methodological approach to the interpretation of Sikh history, or the extended application of the Western models of anthropological interpretation. The conceptual model of the tribal rituals and *rites-de-passage* were made applicable to the Sikh society, without even recognising the inappropriate consequences which follow from this stretched and stressed approach. This historical, as well as the anthropological approach, does not appear to even notice the evolutionary process in the praxes of the people they seek to study and analyse. Many of the practices which were continued by some convert families for some time even after their initiation into the Sikh religion have been taken by the anthropologists and the historians as the 'Sikh rites', thus displaying a singular lack of the understanding of comparative study of the Sikh society, religion, and theology.

There are two noticeable characteristics of the normative imperatives and ideals. The normative cannot be established in terms of the actual conduct or practice. The anthropologist, the historian or scholars of the like studies are pretty close to their discipline as long as they follow this rule of their game. They may, however, seem to be astray from their course when they infer the normative from the actual. The normative is the critique in terms of which the actual is analysed and evaluated. It does not permit us to establish the normative from what we may tend to believe as being perceived by us. Such a difficulty may become multiplied several centuries away from the times of the inference by the anthropologist, sociologist, historian or the like disciplines. One may, to some extent, attempt a history of the morals in this case but the compiler must in this, clearly distinguish between the history of the morals and the history of the events, including the personal or social conduct. Such a distinction is very crucial

for both the scholar of the normative or the social sciences. In recent years some historians or anthropologists appear to have overlooked this and thus, either involuntarily, or perhaps, by choice, created an illusion whereby the actual conduct of some individuals or groups on their way of change or conversion, have been presented as the normative. Of times such inferences are in the face of the injunctions to the contrary. For example, we are aware of the injunctions by the Gurus in the *Guru Granth Sahib* against various practices based on superstitions. We are also aware of the often cited incident where the Gurus had tested the awareness of his follower against the superstitions. But all this has not deterred some scholars from creating the illusion that the Sikh society has consisted of, or consists of 'Goddess and grave worshippers'. Unfortunately some scholars appear to be greatly impressed by the empirical dimension of the generalisations made by them. The human finitude has often impelled people to seek strength or success through superstitious actions. But this does not reflect the normative teaching of the traditions to which they belong. There need be no theoretical confusion on this score.

We have a modest programme in this brief paper. Its objective is to direct the attention of the keen students of Sikh religion, theology and ethics to take notice of the various serious and sustained efforts, to interpret or re-interpret Sikh theology. Let us begin by stating the nature and scope of Sikh theology before discussing its main contents.

The word theology is often used to refer to various kinds and aspects of knowledge relating to God. It may refer to "knowledge of God and the supernatural; religious knowledge and belief, especially when methodically formulated". It is also used for "the critical, historical, and psychological study of religion and religious ideas", or it may signify "a system of religious theory or observance". While this may be the general outline of the subject generally referred to as theology, there is a wide variation in the actual contents of the various doctrines described as theology of different religions or of the sects within a religion. It is a rather difficult work to pronounce as to which statement of each religion or each sect within a religion is theology proper. However, we may seek to

limit our inquiry to the exposition of Sikh theology, and within Sikhism, the attempt will be to deal with the mainstream statements.

Historically, the tradition of interpreting the revelation or the Word of God in Sikhism is as old as the tradition itself. The companions of Guru Nanak and the subsequent *Gurus* may have been called upon, by themselves, or by those around them, to interpret and explain as one whole the elements of the revelation and their intra coherence. The existence of the different levels of the seekers of knowledge must have also made this process of interpretation a continuous one. The added need for this continuous interpretation could have been the departure point of the new doctrines from the traditionally accepted social codes of morals and ethics. As theology is generally bound with the personal and social conduct of the related individual, the new frontiers of theology also invariably influence the ethical perceptions and actions. Thus, although there may be ethical conduct which may not be consciously grounded in theology yet the converse does not appear to be true. And, where the new religious revelations have directly aimed at social and moral ends in view, the need for a continuous interpretation is obvious and easy to see.

Sikhism is directly grounded in the revelation received by Guru Nanak. His subsequent journeys in India are said to be made in the company of Bala and Mardana. Even apart from these companions, Guru Nanak is recorded to have met many saints and religious leaders during this phase of his life. In a dialogue, recorded as the "*Sidha Gosht*" in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, he is asked by the *sidhas* to expound his doctrine. The dialogue is rich in theological exposition by Guru Nanak. We encounter the simple and the complex as the two ends of the dialogue in the "*Sidha Gosht*". The seemingly simple question asked by the *sidhas* about the doctrinal identity of Guru Nanak is answered by the latter in a step-by-step ascending manner of the exposition of God's nature and the knowledge of His nature. Towards the higher and the more complex end of the dialogue, the esoteric seems to speak to the esoteric. It is a very fine and illuminating example of the exposition of Sikh theology which conveys the profundity of the revelation through the symbols of everyday use.

The second Guru, Angad, the third Guru, Amardas, and the fourth Guru, Ram Das, have respectively spent time with their earlier preceptors and companions. The exposition of the religious knowledge and belief by the former for the latter is easy to imagine and understand. A typical Eastern style of describing this process is 'the lamp lighting the lamp'. There is no break or darkness in between the lighting of the two lamps in succession.

The role of the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, is worthy of special mention in any understanding of the history of Sikh theology. Apart from being himself a *Guru*, he has brought to fruition a tradition of compiling the *Guru Granth Sahib*. It is often said that the *Guru Granth Sahib* is the only scripture of a major world religion which was composed and established during the life-time of the founders themselves. This has obviated the possibility of any subsequent interpolation. Guru Arjan Dev got the whole *Granth* finally compiled and his trusted scholarly companion, Bhai Gurdas, was the principal scribe for the first recension of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The present form is of this origin and authenticity.

Bhai Gurdas has also authored some compositions. His writings have often been termed as 'key' to the *Guru Granth Sahib*. His long association with the fifth Guru has led people to believe that he is the first theologian of Sikhism, other than the Gurus. His personal status is that of a highly authentic expositor of the Sikh theology. His *Vārs* are a close reflection of the present authentic scripture.

A similar claim is often met with in respect of the second scribe of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, Bhai Mani Singh. His compositions are also attempts at the reflection and exposition of Sikh theology as in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. He is said to have acted directly under the guidance of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. He is the last important link in the chain of the major Sikh theologians who were contemporary to the Gurus.

The Sikh theologians who have followed after the cessation of the chain of Ten Gurus in Sikhism in 1708 A.D., have proceeded in various directions in their exposition of the Sikh theology. Let us briefly notice two main streams, both of whom have sought to remain close to the Sikh traditions. The

Gianis, somewhat in a general manner, have sought to remain the exponents of the Bhai Mani Singh tradition.

The *Nirmalas* have emerged as the important theologians of the Sikh religion during the recent past. They have expounded the Sikh religious knowledge and belief both substantively as well as analogically. The latter has been done by using the notions of the earlier schools of the Indian philosophy and religion. It appears to have been easy for them to explain the originality of the revelation received by the Sikh Gurus by calling the *Guru Granth Sahib* as the *fifth Veda*, as the status of the divine revelation (*Śruti*) was being conceded by the people at large only in respect of the Vedas. The *Nirmalas* did not call *Guru Granth Sahib* as the fifth *Veda* as a scripture continuous to the earlier four *vedas*. The use of the figure 'fifth' is more with a view to stressing the analogy so as to drive home the view that the *Guru Granth Sahib* is yet another independent and original revelation. The use of this analogy has, however, been sometimes misinterpreted.

In *Giani* tradition the Sikh theologians have proceeded towards their goal in somewhat traditional manner, wherein their closeness to the Sikh mainstream has remained influential for a longer time. Some of them have claimed to continue the Bhai Mani Singh tradition. There are, however, other developments also in this area. Bhai Vir Singh is a very outstanding theologian whose mainstream acceptability is of an outstanding status. His contribution to literature infused with the Sikh ideas and exposition of the theology proper is of a very significant nature. The mystic quality of his poetry, as well as his famous epic *Rana Surat Singh* (1905 A.D.), which has been described as "the sole epic in Punjabi with a religio-ethical theme" is very impressive. By this time Bhai Vir Singh was "already famous as an exponent of the teachings of Sikhism through his exegetical writings no less than his historical novel *Sundari*..." The Sikh penchant for intermingling the theological with the social, as observed by us earlier, is continued in *Rana Surat Singh* also. It has been pointed out that "*Rana Surat Singh*, a deeply religious work in spirit, enshrines also a powerful social message". In it, the *Rānī* is "exhorted to shed her own despondency and to find a

new path of ascent to a fulfilment that is both spiritual and ethical” Anyone interested in knowing the Sikh attitude towards theology has to keep in view the Sikh perception of the concern of God with the social and the ethical. The theological cognition is not without the ethical impulse and ideal. The ethical is the meeting point of God-His knowledge-Man axis. This fundamental nature of Sikh theology is seen in Guru Nanak's the “*Sidha Gosht*” as well as the lay, but devout, expression in *Rana Surat Singh* of Bhai Vir Singh. The often quoted saying of Guru Nanak that “Truth is higher than everything but higher still is true conduct”, is expressive of the dynamic nature of which is the subject-matter of theology. It is in view of this new, but unmistakable, dimension of Sikh theology that Sikh theology is what it is.

Guru Nanak has, in the very first credal statement with which the *Guru Granth Sahib* begins, described the ‘One’ as ‘*Sat Nam*’ ‘*Karta Purukh*’. It is a reference to God and He is described as *Karta Purukh*. He is also, both in the scripture, as well as at the common and lay level, referred to as *Kartar*, the ‘Doer’. The Gurus have sought to convey their experience of the revelation in a somewhat unusual manner. Our efforts to comprehend the uniqueness of this revelation will have to take due and proper notice of this underlined nature of Sikh theology. The usual and the conditioned response will not do the required job. It is here that most of the Western as well as the Eastern scholars have failed to comprehend what must be comprehended. The credal statement, popularly called *Mūl Mantra* in the *Guru Granth Sahib* has only at a later stage referred to God as *Akāl mūrat*. The current use of *Akāl Purukh* is historically of much later usage. The word *Wāheguru* is also very often used by the scholars as well as the lay Sikhs to refer to God. One of the recent Western attempts at expounding of the Sikh theology appears to have underlined only *Akāl Purukh* and *Wāheguru* as the core concepts. Such an attempt often leads to the fusion of the Sikh dynamism into the quiescence of the theology and ethics prior to Sikhism. Once the *Kartā* in the *Kartā Purukh* is conveniently or unintentionally lost sight of, two distortions emerge almost immediately. First, Guru Nanak has repeatedly stressed the dynamic and the active nature of God as an

example for the humankind to follow. This is a very significant and crucial identity of Guru Nanak's message in the fifteenth century. The *Kartā Purukh* is also described as *Nirbhau* (free from fear). Any scholar who fails to notice this identity in the fifteenth century is bound to feel puzzled by the dynamic ethics of the subsequent Gurus. Such an error can be both intentional as well as unintentional. The latter can be corrected when the scholar comes across the literature written on the original lines. But when some scholars, even when aware of this position, seem to remain persistent in their claims that Sikhism has suddenly deviated from the path of the earlier Gurus during the period of later Gurus, then we may not be entirely wrong in doubting the bonafides of their unwarranted conclusion. We are all aware of the logical difficulties of the theory of *Karma* prior to Sikhism. It is the revealed authority of the Gurus imperative that one ought not to shun or escape from the duty of the ethical actions. Such ethical actions, Guru Nanak and other Gurus have told us, do not bind the person into the cycle of the transmigration. This is in very sharp and total departure from the earlier held view of *Karma*. This departure is a complete discontinuity with the earlier tradition and is the shaping of a new ethical identity. Second, the nonacceptance of the sacred thread as initiation into the privileged three upper castes is a very significant ethical co-relate of the theology of *Kartā Purukh*. Nearly all the philosophers acquainted with Indian Philosophy are aware of the doctrinal implications of this identity. However, many anthropologists and historians, seem to either not notice it or reject it for reasons best known to them.

The absolute and the continuous identity of the ethical teaching from Guru Nanak's *upar sach āchār* to Guru Gobind Singh's *shubh karman te kabhu na taru* is easy to see and understand. The founders of the Sikh religion were, obviously, stressing the continuity of the ethical chain. And this was being done in discontinuity to the earlier notion that even the good actions or *shubh karman* bind the self to the *sansāra*, and, therefore, ought to be renounced or abjured. The Guru have totally departed from the earlier Indian ethics in this respect. The law of *Karma* in the earlier Indian systems was the mainspring of the *varnāshrama dharma*,

which provided support to the institution of caste and the impulse for the withdrawal from social participation. The earlier social ethics was developed on an entirely different model. The Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, gave up this model and instead developed the new structure of the ethics which universalised the participatory role of action rather than the restrictive and the withdrawal of the action. This is an extremely important development in Sikh ethics which has influenced the Indian society subsequent to its emergence. The Indian society has gradually imbibed the teachings of the Guru and it may be seen today to depart very significantly from its earlier teaching on the subject. A significantly large number of contemporary Indian scholars and social leaders have derived remarkable inspiration from the teachings of the Gurus on this score. Tilak, Tagore, Vivekananda, and Radhakrishnan are only a few names which may be mentioned but the list may be large and impressive. The ideals of the social ethics propounded by the Sikh Gurus has provided the impulse for many ideals of social concern and service as witnessed by us in the modern India as well. The Sikhs have to take due and inspiring notice of this impact on the general Indian social life. The insistence of the Gurus on freeing the social ethics from the caste imperatives may not be so well appreciated in the changed social situation today, but its emergence and open advocacy by the Gurus is the first and very modernising attempt to proclaim the freedom of man in the name of God. Freedom of the self is made the foundation of the social freedom. Some of the ideals of freedom proclaimed by the western society in the nineteenth and twentieth century are very clearly perceived in the teachings of the Gurus in the fifteenth to the eighteenth century India. This freedom is based in the spiritual and social equality of the human beings.

We may pause here and make a submission. In recent times some persons have sought to interpret this love of Sikhism for freedom and equality merely as a struggle for some particular class of people. However, the teachings of the Gurus for participation in the social life, as well as their ideal of freedom and equality should not be interpreted merely in material terms. The Gurus have always held the spiritual as

higher to the material. They have taught us to regulate the material by the spiritual which they regard to be higher. Any effort for the equality without inspiration by the material may tend to generate tension and conflict. But the Gurus have inspired freedom and equality from the mainspring of the spiritual which may initiate and sustain the progress towards the ideal in harmony and equipoise. The spiritual basis of the social relation seeks to free the human beings from the partisan conflict. The Guru has taught us that the basis for judging the issue are moral and spiritual. If an act were wrong then it is wrong regardless of whosoever has done it. Similarly if it were right, then it is so regardless of whosoever is involved in it. The tradition of holding even a colleague to be wrong, or serving water even to your enemy is a teaching which is grounded in the moral principle. The issues are not judged on partisan basis but are evaluated on the moral and the spiritual grounds. In this lies the strength of the Sikh ethics.

THE ETHIC OF SECULARISM AND MULTI-RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

Man's birth is considered to be a significant event in almost all the societies of the world. It is followed by various ceremonies at different social levels. Most of these ceremonies are related to some particular religious tradition. Thus, almost from the very beginning of one's life, an identity determined by some religious tradition is gradually acquired. The membership of the religious group is, in this manner, almost *a priori* being determined and imposed. The human instincts, needs and behaviour, is then sought to be regulated in terms of this identity. The identity, in itself, is both integrative, as well as separative. The religious consciousness arising from the religious identity is integrative with reference to the tradition into which one is initiated, as well as to the ideals towards which the normative activity of the group is directed. It is separative from the other groups in membership as well as in terms of the customs, codes and taboos. Some attempts have been made in the last century or so to dissociate this identity-separativeness from the religious groups and substitute it by the national or ideological principles of political separativeness. The identity-neutralisation is sought to be effected through the equivocal normative principle termed secularism. We shall have occasion, later, to refer to the equivocal nature of the norm called secularism. Presently we may proceed to refer to the multi-religious Indian society and the problems arising from this religious pluralism. We may ask the question whether this pluralism can yield to harmonious and balanced individuals and society or it has to be replaced by the identity neutral secularism.

There are numerous religious traditions which have found a home in India. We find here the followers of nearly

all the major religious traditions of the world. Among the religious believers here are the followers of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Although these faiths have originated elsewhere in the world, yet the number of their devotees in India is very impressive and significant. Some religious traditions have originated in the Indian soil, and include among them the followers of the Vedic seers, the Jainas, the Buddhists, and the Sikhs. There are many other sub-religious groups also for whom their deviations from the major religious traditions are meaningful and important. We may also notice that *religions which have originated in India have also spread in other countries*. In many such cases the faith-structure has undergone some changes which have resulted in new and distinguishing marks of the faith-structure. India has thus not only received the religious messages from other lands, but has also shared with other countries the vision and message of the seers and mystics of Indian origin.

Among the religious traditions which have come to India from other lands, Islam and a prominent section of Christianity, has come as the religion of those who have sought and obtained political power in this country. Although the missionaries of these traditions have also acted independently sometimes in opposition to their fellow-religionist rulers, yet, by and large, these men of missions have drawn and received political support and encouragement. In turn the merchants and the rulers have also received the blessings of the religious men of their missions. The religious leaders and the political powers have thus very often acted in close collaboration.

We may now notice another aspect of the human societies. In many countries of the world a state of religious monism is noticeable. The phrase '*religious monism*' here merely signifies a state of near total predominant position of any one religious tradition accepted by the people living in those countries. The people may be described as the followers of Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism. Almost all the people living within the geographic boundaries of the concerned country may accept Jesus Christ, Prophet Mohammad, or Buddha as the founder of the faith and the giver of the code to

be followed by the faithfuls of the tradition accepted by the people of the country. They may share a common religious or national sentiment. Any one who looked at the social situation from an obscuring distance may conclude that these people share a common spiritual experience and their opposition, if any, was directed only against 'other' religions or different nationalities. The outsider may be greatly impressed by this phenomenon of religious unity in its inspiration, and may read in it a commonality of expression. Although by now a doubt has arisen even in the mind of the writer of this paper whether the sentence, "In many countries of the world a state of religious monism is noticeable" does in fact refer to any country widely known to people, yet a superficial eye has often been led to this experience. People have sometimes idealised actual social situations into a completely integrated and harmonious living experience, deriving the bases of this harmony from the membership of the identical religious tradition. Does this mean that the cause of conflict and violence is only traceable to the religious pluralism? An affirmative answer will easily be seen as oversimplification and blind prejudice.

Let us now refer to the word secularism which we have earlier described as equivocal. We are familiar with the two generally expressed views about the meaning of this word. We may, however, first acknowledge that the word secularism is often used with the effect of waving a magic wand. It has been, presented through both of its interpretations, as a principle for regulating human conduct. Both the meanings emphasise its normative character, and seek to establish an ethic of harmonious and cooperating society. The alleged evil effects of the religious monism as well as religious pluralism are said to be amenable to its balancing influence. In recent years a very vocal minority of men have presented secularism as a soothing alternative to the religious traditions. In this form it appears to be antithetical to the membership of the religious groups. The secular in this sense denotes people who have given up faith in religious experience and organisation. The advocates of this antithesis of the religious often seek to substitute religion and its related structure by an ideological tilt and reinforce it with recreation. The sports as physical

exercise and recreation is presented as the more satisfying substitute for religious consciousness and its expression. The social and political relations are regulated in terms of economic factors of production and exchange. Religion is described as the attending outcome of the earlier mode of economic activities which must be replaced with the new secular outlook on life, which, *inter alia*, represents the evolution of new phase of production and exchange. The removal of religion from the human scene is said to be the major contributing factor for the removal of all tensions and conflicts from the society. Secularism is also claimed to be able to remove inactivity and usher in the era of unbounded dynamics. This is indeed a very promising alternative. But, is it so?

We have often also heard being claimed by some that secularism is not an anti-religion concept but only connotes equal respect for all religions. Interpreted in this sense, it can be a very valuable quality of the political system where the laws may be so made and operated, that persons professing different religions may stand equal in all respects before the majesty of the political law. Such an equality before the Moral Law was also stressed by Kant. Secularism, in this sense, characterises the neutrality of the State towards different religious traditions. The State may not be against religion in general or any one religion in particular but may allow the votaries of different faiths to freely practice what they regard as their faith. It may, of course, be expected from all the followers of different traditions that they will extend the same freedom to others which they seek for themselves. Any contravention of this principle would be consciously and vigorously avoided. The political component of secularism would refuse any claim by any one religion for a special and more favourable consideration. The moral aspect would require the voluntary grant of freedom to others and treat everyone and his religious belief as an end for themselves. Such a secularism appears to be fascinating and fruitful. There are, however, some difficulties which threaten to mar the simple elegance of the solution called secularism. We may refer to only two of these difficulties.

First, it is an experienced fact that some actions

performed in presence of the commands and codes of one religion may give positive offence to the members of the other religious group. An extension of this may also lead to the confrontation and strife between two or more sub-groups of the same religious tradition. Second, there is a category of actions, done in the name of some religious sect or group, which may appear shocking to the conscience of man irrespective of their religious affiliation. Again, such a resentment and rejection may be felt by the other sub-groups of the same religious tradition. What shall be the injunction of our secularism in the above cases of inter, as well as intra-religious tensions and differences in the understanding and implementation of the religious injunctions?

Shall we now ask the question whether all the tensions and conflicts between the members of the different religious traditions are religious in character? It is not the intention of this paper to undertake a sociological or political analysis of the conflicts among various sections of the society. Our purpose is merely to point out the complexity of the problem which eludes any simplistic and easy solution. Our question, 'Whether all conflicts are essentially religious in nature' may impress upon us the need to analyse and understand the nature of religion itself. It may also invite us to go beyond our own religious experience and seek to understand sympathetically the religious experience of those professing faith in different religions. This promises to be a far more meaningful and fruitful education which may remove many of our prejudices and the conflicts based therein. A religious impartiality implied in secularism may not go as far as a genuine and deeper understanding of the different religions, as well as for those professing them. The admiration may soon change to love and cooperation. This promises to achieve what secularism may find beyond itself.

Every religious tradition has an inbuilt moral philosophy. It may happen that sometimes the moral element may not receive the emphasis commensurate with its importance. This downgrading, however, is very expensive both in terms of human emotions as well as the possibilities of the religious knowledge. As almost all the religions are committed to ethical norms, a fit and proper solution may lie

in re-emphasising the ethical and the people be motivated to realize the norms in actual practice. A complete harmony in the thought, feelings, and deeds is a more lasting and true solution of the problems arising from the multi-religious society in India. While secularism may have to be content with the ethic of tolerance, the moral element of the religion may invite people to love, cooperation and mutual aid. Man has many finer feelings deeply embedded in his real self. There is need to awaken him to realize his self. Indian society, which is deeply religious, has great potentiality in this respect. It has also a rich religious heritage as testimony to its spiritual genius. Should we be willing to loose all this for an alien graft? Will not more and deeper religious experience be the ultimate ideal? Will not the richness of the multi-religious offer greater scope and possibility of experimenting with the truth and realizing it? This experience and the ethic arising from it may transform man and society. India would then be a happy place to live in and an example for others to emulate.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN 'REBIRTH'

A belief in the phenomenon of rebirth appears to answer many questions which arise during a man's life. It is, in an important manner, an attempt to explain birth by reference to 'prebirth', or an effort to understand and accept the present life by postulating an earlier phenomenon of a similar kind. It can, thus, be seen as an explanation of the continuity of life in spite of an apparent experience of its termination at any one point in time. Second, a great diversity in the life-patterns and modes is an experienced fact of life. The concept of rebirth can, therefore, also be seen as an explanation for continuity as well as diversity. The seemingly irrational aspect of the diverse inequalities are thus sometimes explained by a rational principle of causation, termed *karma*. The concept of rebirth and *karma* are, therefore, not mere idle superstitions. We can view them as very serious attempts by human mind to understand rationally the phenomenon of life and the principle regulating it. It is a significant speculative effort of man.

Rebirth, as an hypothesis, involves multi-dimensional issues. Some of the explanations sought to be offered through the concept of rebirth may not appear to be equally cogent to every one. We are, in this paper, seeking to refer only to the ethical issues which may arise from, or depend upon, the acceptance of rebirth as a satisfactory explanation. Even among the ethical issues so involved in it, we may examine only the problem of moral obligation so as to see how far a satisfactory explanation can be derived from it.

We are familiar with the views of philosophers who derive the 'imperative' of the moral obligation from our obligation to make ourselves perfect. In a general way, we may say that most of the thinkers who regard the ethical goal to lie in self-realization may be persuaded to accept the

possibilities of realizing it in time which may extend beyond the present life. We do not mean to denigrate the resolve of those devoted to the realization of the goal within the single life-span, but a large number of thinkers who visualise the moral goal more rigorously, may feel convinced that a single birth would not give them much scope to realize the goal meaningfully. The human life is very seriously limited on its two ends. The available time may just not be enough to realize the perfection of the self. If self-realization is conceived as a meaningful moral goal, it may be necessary to convince oneself that all efforts made in the present life would be rendered futile due to the irrational factors of disease and accidents, many of which are neither of one's own seeking nor one has any effective control over them. It may sound rational and reassuring to believe that the fruits of one's efforts are cumulative and continue beyond the mortality of the human body. Man's moral obligation acquires a meaningful form and becomes a more alluring motive for the deontologists as well as teleologists. Both Socrates as well as Kant have spoken of the immortality of the soul. While Socrates has not elaborated in great detail his view of immortality expressed in rebirths, the theory of 'postulates' of morality outlined by Kant clearly implies the phenomenon of rebirth. Such a view is in obvious opposition to the Christian eschatology, and more in tune with the thinking and experience of the Indian sages and philosophers. Kant has, therefore, not expounded such a view merely on the strength of the tradition inherited by him. We may also submit that Kant's postulates of morality are not mere idle flights of phantasy nor should we dismiss them as very minor aspects of his ethical theory. If moral phenomenon is real for Kant, then immortality 'postulates' can easily be seen as his best rational argument in support of the moral obligation. If "we are under a moral obligation, not merely to act rightly on all occasions, but also to make ourselves perfect" then "it must be possible to reach it." And "we should not be perfect until we had no inclination to act wrongly."

We may, at this point, make it clear that all the thinkers who regard 'rebirth' as necessary to enable the self to realize itself or to become perfect may not agree with each other with

regard to the nature of perfection which is the goal of man's moral life. Kant has visualised the realization of perfection as 'becoming purely rational'. The Indian sages have generally described it in spiritual terms. Both Kant as well as the Indian thinkers appear to suggest that there can be an end to 'rebirths' on realization of the goal.

Guru Nanak has also, in a number of hymns, talked of births and rebirths. For him *mānus janam* is an 'opportunity' to move forward to realize the goal. There are also passages which suggest that man wanders through various forms of life and then gets the opportunity to realize the goal. The expression *chaurāsī lakh jūni* is used as a phrase to emphasise the vast forms of life through which the human life sustains itself to obtain the 'opportunity' to realize the ethico-spiritual goal which will mark an end to the process of rebirths.

Thus, rebirth, seen from another angle, also signifies imperfection of the one who is born again. Since perfection would lead to the termination of this cycles of births and rebirths, the rebirth is sometimes viewed as a punishment for having failed to realize the goal. It has, therefore, a negative aspect also. Positively, it is an opportunity for improving the balance. Negatively, it characterises the earlier failure to realize the final.

Is the realization of the supreme Ideal entirely due to one's past and present actions or *karma*? Is the calculation mathematical in the sense of ten right and three wrong karma resulting in the balance of seven *karma* credits? Is only the number and not the quality of the *karma* that will finally determine the balance and result in birth or its cessation? Is there such a thing as the integrated quality of the life as a whole? These are some of the questions which worry not only a lay man but also become posers for the learned philosophers. We are familiar with the view which holds that even right actions may lead to rebirth as the individual has to enjoy the fruits of his action. We are told in the *Chhandogya Upanisad* 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 *devas*, 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. (V, 10-3-0)¹. A solution offered through the concept of *nishkām karma* is a serious effort to overcome the process of rebirth without renouncing the *karma* itself. Adynamism is, therefore, not necessary for the cessation of the cycles of rebirths. The realization of, and the realized reality is dynamic in essence. This may expose as lies the views of those who charge idealistic positions as essentially non-dynamic. We also discover in it the conceptual richness of the Indian tradition.

However, it may appear to some that we are being led to a baffling oversimplification. We may be asked whether right actions done and rebirths attained for obtaining perfection would not be binding in character? And, whether perfection sought is different in nature than the formal nature of the right action? A question may also arise whether the right action leading to perfection is not in itself a progressively perfect action. We may reduce all these to the question whether the stuff of the right action is not of the same nature as the goal itself. If by stuff, we mean the formal nature, then the answer plainly would be in the affirmative. If the perfection-seeking action is dynamic, so is the goal to-be-realized. The metaphysical notion of reality is thus determined by the ethical. Guru Nanak has emphasised this aspect.

We may, therefore, conclude that the question of rebirth and *karma* are essentially and pre-eminently ethical in nature. The groundwork of metaphysics involved in it has a practical end in view. The theoretical notion is, for explaining and guiding the practical.

REFERENCE :

1. Chandogya Upanishad V, 10.3.0

MORAL ARGUMENT IN SIKHISM

In Sikhism, the major premise in the moral syllogism is the statement of the moral authority. Having said this, I must now hurry to explain as to why I have started writing this paper with a statement which should have been perhaps made after doing some groundwork in this regard. My anxiety to be brief with the argument can only be a partial excuse for adopting this approach to my subject matter. May be I will provide some more possible reasons for it as I continue with my understanding of the issues involved in it.

The problem of moral authority is the central problem of moral theories based in religious or spiritual traditions. In Sikhism we find ample support for this view. The question, why should I be moral is answered in terms of a reference to the moral authority. Sometimes this question can be inferred from the reply or statement in the scripture. The reason for man to be moral and also to adopt a particular approach to the moral goal is found in the spiritual nature of his being. It appears that the moral authority for man lies outside his humanity. Now such a view may be objected to on various grounds. First, any reference to authority in morals would turn the view into an authoritarianism. This may be regarded to be a serious objection. The tribal and customary morality has generally been described as authoritarianism, in character and superseded through the passage of time and advancement of mankind. The answer that any reference to 'heritage' is also a reference to authority may not be considered to be reply.

Some of the recent thinkers have raised their banner against reference to heritage. The 'binding' character of this notion has been an argument against its moral character. If a person is not 'free' every moment 'to will' in any way he

chooses 'to will', he is not free 'to will' hence his willing lacks the fundamental ingredient of freedom to be regarded as moral will. There is a long history of dispute on this account and any one familiar with the problem may be aware that the last word has not been said on this account as yet. The fact that some early supporters of this view have themselves been reduced to 'heritage', superficially understood and blindly followed, may still not be considered to be a convincing reply. All institutionalisation of the 'heritage' or 'authority' based therein may be rejected as elements of moral syllogism. The history of the institutionalisation may be additionally cited as a material argument against such a view, although it may have to be conceded even by a strict objector that all traditions do not invite this charge in the identical manner and to identical extent. In what do these traditions differ which influences them to be closer to the moral character of the syllogism? This is an important question which may indicate a possibility that moral syllogism does not necessarily become non-moral by a simple reference to authority contained therein. We propose to suggest that generally a moral authority made by men in the name of men, and imposed externally, would make them non-moral, Such may be the case of 'humanisms' and 'humanitarianisms'. Such approaches are essentially socio-political or economic, and the least moral or spiritual. An inability to see this may cause embarrassment both theoretically as well as practically. Here we are not suggesting any difficulty about the way some people use those words, but are referring to the concepts themselves. Humanism and all its shades would have to concede that the moral authority is located within the humanity of man, and it is this which is being denied by us in the context of Sikhism. There are other moral theories too, which may be holding a view similar to ours. It is easy to see that those moral theories which talk in terms of 'moral law' applicable to all men, angels and God may be practically pointing to a similar notion of the moral authority. Although, one of the very rigorous formulations of such a view has also conceded the idea of God's intervention as the moral argument for the existence of God. A somewhat similar view of grace in Sikhism also appears to mitigate the rigour of the moral law

and makes it more homogeneous with its religious and spiritual context. But it is reiterated time and again, that man is not the measure of everything. If there is a measure, it is in terms of the spiritual. '*Mana hari jī terai nāli hai*' and "*mana tūn joti sarupu hai...*"(S.G.G.S. P. 441) are assurances to man that he 'can feel' the presence of the moral and the spiritual and should not therefore feel dismayed. The locus of the moral and the spiritual is so close and solace giving, that man is not disheartened by the thought of being slave of matter and being judged by no law other than the one made by himself. A gentle nudge, a soft whisper, to direct his attention to the spiritual truth of his being, when properly heard, suddenly raises him above the world of caprice, whim and fortuitous possibilities, and transports him to the universe where the need and nature of moral action are not only understood but also seen as imperatives. The Sikh moral thought at this stage is seen to be transforming the will of man. One is even tempted to say that Sikh moral philosophy does not emphasise the 'convincing' nature of the argument so much as it stresses the transformation, it seeks to effect. The *mānas* (*manusha*) becomes the *devatā* on earth. He goes about his earthly obligations fearlessly. The world of duality and obsessing fears cease to influence his life. An ordinary person does not remain ordinary any more, he scales heights which appeared to be forbidding before his transformation.

An important feature of his spiritual authority is the enthusiasm it generates; '*jūjhan ko dāo*', (S.G.G.S. P. 1105) in the moral arena, keeps him moving. It provides him both with the argument as well as the necessary energy to continue. This continuous movement is also the essential element of his culture. It is culture which is infused by the moral, and directed by the spiritual. This alone gives meaning to his movement, and this judges him by this movement. The authority vested in his co-seekers is also derived from the same source. It does not arise from their humanity, it emerges from their journey towards their goal, as directed by the moral. Their will, infused by the spiritual, is not externalism and authoritarianism, but the very essence of their moral journey and the enthusiasm for the path. In moral action, the enthusiasm is not affective in character, but is the element of

the will itself. It is an element which is informed by the need to hurry towards the goal, as directed by the moral authority. Shall we call such a view monistic ethical theory? The answer could be in the affirmative if we were to concentrate on the source of the moral authority.

It might have been noticed that we have so far not outlined any moral code following from our discussion of the moral argument and the underlying moral authority. It may be submitted here that it is not the object of this paper although one may discern some general principle of conduct in it. A more specific and detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

We may now conclude this paper with a reference to the various gains of this discussion. First, we have noticed that the moral philosophy occupies an important place in Sikhism. Second, the moral theory supported by it, derives its validity from the general spiritual standpoint held by it. Third, it seeks to transform the will, both by establishing its contact with the spiritual, as well as by infusing it with an enthusiasm for the moral action. We have sought to underline the element of transformation of the will in this process. Thus the nature of moral argument is such that it transforms and not only informs the will. Fourth, the intimate participation in the spiritual, in the company of the co-seekers, prevents the individual from alienation. This relation is more binding and enduring than the humanly created social obligations. Fifth, such is the nature of the moral argument that it is addressed to all without any reference to caste obligations or class interests. Such divisive references are completely absent in it. Sixth, the unique notion of the Guru in Sikhism, provides the cue to the interaction of the moral seeker with the spiritual. It may be very misleading to translate the term Guru as 'teacher' because Guru is a metaphysical notion in Sikhism and not material or social in its nature or its being. A more detailed analysis of this notion in the context of the major premise of the moral syllogism in Sikhism is a very promising area of work for the scholars but here we are only hinting at its role in the formulation of the moral argument in Sikhism. We hope that this brief paper will lead to more detailed interpretation and deeper understanding of moral philosophy of Sikhism.

A CRITIQUE OF MORAL ARGUMENT

Moral Argument, as a subject of Symposium, offers a possibility of various perspectives on an important element of human thought and conduct. The word argument appears to suggest a rational possibility in conjunction with the moral sphere which concerns itself with the human conduct. It may, however, be possible for a seeker of 'reasons' to bypass a direct encounter with the conduct part of the suggested subject matter. The why of the moral obligation as well as the why of the values may become an absorbing subject of study without examining the unique or general content of the moral obligation or the specific content of the various values termed moral. Which of the approaches is more fruitful, or more philosophical, are questions which may defy any finality in their answers. People familiar with the contemporary discussions on the subject are well-aware of alternative possibilities of cogent analyses attempted in this area. We may undertake a brief study of our subject to explore the formal character of the subject itself.

We may begin with a reference to the tradition which does not grant any final separation between the fact and value or Reality and Value though we are also aware of the views which may reject any idea of the capital R and capital V. It is customary to use the word *sach* for fact as well as Reality. This may suggest some continuity between the two. The philosophical systems which assume that reality is reflected in the phenomenal world may suggest this continuity by using the word *sach* for fact as well as reality. One such tradition also uses the word *sachiārā* for value or morally valuable. The rationale for this usage appears to be a view that fact and value are separable only in abstraction. A vision of the whole phenomenal world as moral arena may provide experiential basis for such a view. We may recall F.H. Bradley who held

that "every aspect of life has goodness and realizes the Good, and we have seen, on the other hand, that no one aspect has goodness by itself and that none is supreme." We are also familiar with traditions which hold that the whole world is a field of moral activity. Such systems deny that there is any non-moral fact. Such an illusion of the self-sufficiency or exclusiveness of the non-moral, it is argued by the upholders of the supra view, arises from a partial perspective. It is described as an illusory view because it is based in an abstraction of the abstract. In further support of this argument, the non-factual nature of the abstracted abstraction is also cited. But then it may appear that this submission requires a little more clarification.

We may begin with the observation that the word fact may be used in a highly general as well as in a unique sense. In the general sense, occurrence and existence, may be termed a fact regardless of being known or in any way being in a position to influence human activity. It may be further added that the case of such an influence on the human conduct may be accidental and not essential to its nature. It is obvious that such a definition of fact may only have a very partial relevance to our use of the word in the present discussion. The fact which is constitutive of value and vice-versa is a fact of life and man's world. It is this unique, although pervasive, sense in which the word fact is relevant to any meaningful discussion of relationship between fact and value. We are referring to this aspect of fact which guides as well as is guided by value. It may be useful to recall the Latin origin and meaning of fact which partly hints at its activity aspect. We may find that fact does not mean only the quality of being actual but also in a very significant sense alludes to 'deed' and 'act'. The close and integral relationship between fact and value in this sense will be useful to remember in the present discussion.

We may now proceed to make our second submission. It may be pointed out here that the 'thing' aspect of fact is also kept in view in this perspective. It may be suggested that value is not always a non-relation. We may even go so far as to entertain a possible belief that value in the human world is a relation. Value is always a value-for. An experience of this

aspect of value will go a long way in appreciating our argument. We should, however, hasten to add that we are not seeking to resolve the traditional tension between the intrinsic and instrumental value. A critic of our view may be in a hurry to anticipate our argument and seek to pin us down on our oversight to remember the 'useful for elementary analysis' although somewhat misleading, one may add—division grounded in the instrumental and intrinsic value. We may answer our critic that the above statement about value as value-for is not to deny any categorisation of values. We may also add that the relation suggested in value-for is not temporal but dialectical. It may be noticed that by suggesting the relation-aspect of value we have made a significant progress towards ethical pluralism. Secondly, the realization that value makes no significant sense except as value-for impresses us with its meaningfulness in life and man's world.

We may now deal with another aspect of the moral argument. A critique of moral argument may have to begin with the elementary task of analysing the nature and scope of an argument. We are aware that a logician uses the term argument to denote a unit of discourse in which reasons are presented to support a belief. An argument, therefore, may be broadly seen to be constitutive of two parts namely a statement of a belief, and the statement of the reasons for this belief, the reasons may also be called 'proof' or evidence. An argument may sometimes appear to emphasise only one of these two aspects but argument is a whole which includes both the parts. It may also be useful to remember that an argument may be distinguished from a mere assertion, the latter being a statement of belief only without providing the reasons or evidence on which they are based. A moral argument, therefore, may be distinguished from a mere moral assertion. It may, however, be added that a moral assertion need not always be non-rational. We are aware of the usual polarity often stressed between knowledge and belief but the same is neither logical nor necessary. In fact we are using the word belief in a broad sense. A moral assertion, therefore, may not explicitly state the evidence as it may regard the required evidence as self-evident. This, however, by itself does not make up for the need for the evidence when it is

expressly called for. It may be helpful to refer to the kind of questions which raise the issue of adequate evidence in support of a moral argument.

A moral argument may raise either of the two questions: First, why should I regard 'this' as moral and not its contrary or contradictory? Second, the question, why should I be moral? may also be raised to seek reasons for moral obligation. The latter seeks a proof that justifies morality. We are familiar with the two possible extreme positions which have been adopted by the moral philosophers; some holding that the question lacks philosophical meaningfulness while others asserting that it is a meaningful philosophical question. Some of those who declare it to be a meaningless question appear to assume a particular view of moral epistemology. Prichard, for example, thinks that an answer to the question "Why should I be moral?" is impossible because 'the apprehension of what we morally ought to do is immediate, direct, and self-evident and in that respect similar to our knowledge of mathematical truths'. It is further contended by him that 'if a proof or any additional support is offered in support of what we morally ought to do, this additional consideration can motivate but not justify. It may, however, be possible to avoid the controversial epistemology assumed by Prichard and still argue for the meaningfulness of the question as done by Stephen Toulmin in *The Logic of Moral Reasoning* and *Reason and Faith*. Instead of adopting an epistemological approach the argument of Toulmin is based on logical grounds. According to him the question 'Why should I be moral,' amounts to asking 'Why ought one to do what is right?' He appears to argue that to say that something is right, logically implies that one ought to do it. Therefore, the question of moral obligation is a vacuous one because it turns out to be asking "Why ought one to do what one ought to do?" He seems to conclude that ethical reasoning can provide justification for doing this or doing that, for adopting this social practice or that; but providing a justification of morality as opposed to expediency is not a philosophical task. We can, however, cite others who maintain contrary views in this regard and hold the question to be meaningful in seeking to know whether moral reasons are superior to reasons of

enlightened self-interest. A meaningful answer, it is proposed, will show that moral reasons are superior to reasons of self-interest because the universal obedience to rules of self-interest must lead to 'one against the other', a situation termed by a thinker as 'the state of nature'. A closer analysis of this position, however, will show that it does not deny the contention that the notion of moral obligation provides its own justification.

We may now refer to an interesting theory of moral reasoning which appears to controvert the supra contention of Toulmin but at the same time points out that this kind of thinking has hit upon an important insight "that moral reasoning does not necessarily proceed by way of *deduction* of moral conclusions from nonmoral premises." R.M. Hare, in this connection, suggests that 'moral reasoning is not, typically, any kind of straight-line or linear reasoning from premises to conclusion.' He proceeds to enumerate four necessary ingredients in moral argument whose combination governs a man's moral opinion on a given matter. The logical framework in these ingredients is described as prescriptivity and universalizability, both of which are necessary. Hare also describes these two as basic rules of moral reasoning. We, however, find that the logical framework of universalizability soon haunts Hare's structure of moral argument and he makes a very important observation in his work *Freedom and Reason*. He concludes his discussion of moral argument with the remark that 'in this respect, all moral arguments are *ad hominem*.' We propose to work out an implication of this realization of R.M. Hare but we do not suggest that he would approve this extension of his insight. In fact he appears to shut himself out on such a course partly because he considered it to be an implication of his morally neutral theory. Our extension of his insight takes its starting point from the statement that all moral arguments are *ad hominem*. Our explanation for the same is that moral arguments are basically arguments about human conduct in the context of human situation. We may clarify that the word human used here refer to the human personality as a whole. Secondly, the expression *ad hominem* is understood in the sense of 'related to' or 'about' human beings because it directs our attention to

the man rather than to the formal vacuum which is a necessary condition for the unconditional truth of the hypothetical universalizability. A frustration on this front may direct our argument to the *ad hominem* nature of the moral argument. But we may gain an important insight in this partial process. We may be tempted towards an Idealist view of the moral argument which considers that the third ingredient of the supra cited moral argument, namely inclination, is a crucial pointer towards the human aspect of the basic framework of the moral argument.

What are the implications of an Idealist view of the moral argument? One may, without necessarily committing all the Idealists to the present view, suggest that a moral argument involves a reference to self-realization as its basic constituent. Any logic in the moral argument, minus this ingredient, will tend to be argumentative without helping us to resolve the moral problem. We may add that various views about the nature of the self to be realized and the context in which it is to be realized are available to us as a result of cogitations by various theorists and practitioners of ethical systems. The self we have in mind at the present moment is a total and comprehensive self, spiritual in nature and inclusive of cognitive, affective and conative aspects in their organic combination. At this point we may be charged of importing an obscurantist element in our discussion of the moral argument but we may not be seriously bothered about this charge as it is more ideological than logical in nature. What we are seeking to suggest is the self-evident fact that moral arguments are not about walls or tanks unless of course these have some relation with man in his human situation. We also want to add that human situation is essentially spiritual in nature. Man's world is not a world of mummies or fossils. Any moral argument which tends to overlook this ends up as lame in procedure as well as conclusion.

We may submit that self-realization in the spiritual context requires *sarbat dā bhallā*, that is, good of all, as an aspect of self-realisation. The dictum of *sarbat dā bhallā* epitomises an ethical resolution of idealist monism with human pluralism. It also seeks to provide the answer to the question raised earlier by us whether moral reasons are

superior to reasons of enlightened self-interest. We may, however, notice a difficulty of the idealist view point. It implies a progressive realization and this, in turn, points to various levels and degrees of realization. A satisfactory aspect of the same, of course, lies in the awareness that man, in his human situation, is on the move and therefore any sense of failure or guilt consciousness may be provisional and overcome by reminding oneself that one has, after all, not exhausted the possibility of progressive march towards self-realization. Any moral argument which may tend to breakdown due to an impasse arising from a materialistic positivism may perhaps find a resolution in the idealist's premise of self-realization. What is the source of moral obligation in this theory of moral reasoning? or how shall we answer the question 'why should I be Moral'?. The reply to the above question may be that the source of moral obligation is the spiritual nature of the self or I should be moral because I am 'I'. This answer only appears to be a tautology but in fact seeks to direct our attention to the peculiar nature and situation of the self. Any attempt to locate the source of moral obligation outside the self may only give rise to more, and not always to less, difficult questions.

We may conclude the exploration of the moral argument with a sense of tentativeness about it. There is, of course, a need for greater attention to the Idealist view-point which may seek more agreement about the nature and framework of the moral argument without losing in this process the moral context of the argument.

ETHICS OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY A PERSPECTIVE FROM SIKHISM

Woman and man are results of a Union. The actual facts of this Union may vary in their emotional background but, in effect, it is the testimony of the mergence and union of the two into a single coherent growing whole. In a very deep and significant sense, it is a cue to a spiritual process. The path of the two becoming one is a progress toward growth; a harmony of higher order.

Sikhism, a non-ascetic religious tradition, arose in India in the fifteenth century with the birth of Guru Nanak in Fourteen hundred and sixty nine. There were nine other spiritual preceptors who followed him and their hymns are now preserved in the Holy Book, *Guru Granth Sahib*, which is regarded as the living preceptor. The Sikh Preceptors called, Gurus, very powerfully, preached against withdrawal from the family bond, themselves got married, and had children from their marriage. This was in sharp contradistinction to the growing respectability of the ascetic mode of life as a model for spiritual growth. The Sikh preceptors, called Gurus, were even charged by the ascetic monks to have mixed poison with the ascetic nectar. There appear to be two strong objections raised against the family institution by the ascetics. The woman was treated as an inferior being. Any union with her was, therefore, regarded as a 'fall' for the ascetics. Second, the family union was viewed as limiting the movement of the man who must travel or move to the forests in his spiritual quest. The marriage was a snare which held the man back in bondage.

The Sikh Gurus very strongly questioned both of these arguments against marriage and the family institution. 'How is woman an inferior being?' they have asked. There is a

lengthy and recurrent argument to establish the equality of woman with man. In their own family the women, came to occupy an honoured place. The women were encouraged to acquire the education which was available in those days. Second, the spiritual preceptors themselves undertook long journeys to the spiritual centres and frequently returned to their own family-life at the end of each spiritual quest. Thus, by their own practice, they showed that the marriage or the family-life, was not a handicap to the spiritual life. The ideals were, in this manner, also practised. Guru Nanak, the first preceptor in the Sikh tradition, was probably the most travelled Indian spiritual leader of his times. He travelled to all the four corners of India and went even to the Islamic religious centres in the Middle East. After every long journey, most of which were made on foot, he would return to his family and then again take off for yet another spiritual odyssey. The family was thus shown to be no hurdle in the spiritual interaction. The restoration of the woman to social equality and the demonstration of family to be no impediment to the fulfillment of the urge for the spiritual realization helped to release the family from the negative prejudices earlier held against it. The higher value placed on the social non-participation of the monk was sought to be replaced by the still higher value of the life of the house-holder. The tenth Guru Gobind Singh ji proclaimed the futility of going to the forests in search of God or to seek there a union with Him. A call for return to the home and the family was very powerfully raised and sustained by the Sikh Gurus. A new ethics of family relations was held high in place of the earlier social ethics which supported withdrawal from the family as the necessary condition for freedom from bondage.

Sikhism gave a new name to the marriage. It was called *Anand* (Bliss). The *Anand* is different from the *Sukh* (pleasure or happiness). Although marriage signified a physical relation but the ideal embodied into it went beyond a mere sensory experience. The word *Anand* indicated a physical immanent as well as a spiritual transcendent. The withdrawal from the physical by the ascetic monk was substituted by the realization of the transcendence in the *Anand*. The fulfillment was thus more meaningful and more valuable. The Sikh

marriage ceremony called *Anand Kāraj*, is performed by chanting the holy scripture, *Guru Granth Sahib*. There are four hymns (*Chār lāvān*) which are recited and sung while the bride and the groom go around the Holy Book four times. It will be interesting to refer to these four hymns as these hymns throw valuable light on the view of marriage in the Sikh tradition.

The first circumambulation is accompanied by the following recitation:

The first circumambulation confirms my commitment to the life of the householder and its duties (*parviri karama*). I am sacrifice to the Lord...

The *parviri karama* is then explained by the Guru to include a learning of the holy texts, these being as sacred as the knowledge of the Real and His revelation. This leads to the discarding of the evil and a confirmation to the path of righteousness. The good conduct is accompanied by meditation on the Name Divine as per the Sacred texts. Supplications are made to the holy Preceptor and this removes the sins and evil. Through God's kindness, the self attains the spontaniety and tranquility.

The second hymn of the marriage ceremony is recited as hereunder:

With the Lord the second *Lāv* the seeker is united by the spiritual Preceptor, the great being, to the noble qualities.

To the Lord I am a sacrifice:

I am imbued with the Lord's Fear,

And this makes me fearless in the world.

And this also removes the impurity of egoism.

...

I become a witness to the manifestation of the Lord,

The Lord is seen as pervasive everywhere.

He is seen in all creation,

Within and without only the Lord is seen.

This union with Him makes the devotee sing the songs of joy,

...

The unstruck music resounds as the second circumambulation is initiated.

The third hymn of the marriage ceremony depicts the

higher state of the couple in their joy and their attitude towards the world, it is as follows:

With the third *Lāv* the mind is free from passion (*Vairāg*). And experiences the pure joy.

...

The devotee is united to the Lord,
 And attains the good fortune,
 This attainment is sung alongwith Lord's praises, and
 the Holy word has been uttered,
 the devotees are fortunate in attaining Him.
 And the inexpressable has been expressed,
 the divine note is sung by the heart,
 With great fortune, the devotee contemplates Him,
 ...With the third *Lāv*, the mind becomes free of the
 passion for the world.

The final *Lāv* marks the completion of the transformation from the hectic aimless wandering of the individual into a new union which is both social as well as spiritual. A new householder family has come into being under the comforting umbrella of the spiritual preceptor and the Lord. It marks the beginning of a new spiritual mission lived in the worldly surroundings. Nothing is given up but everything acquires a new meaning and significance. It recites as below:

The fourth circumambulation, marking the attainment of the Lord, enters equipoise (*Sehaj*).

I am sacrifice to the Lord:

Through the holy preceptor's guidance,
 The Lord is realized, And He tastes sweet to the mind
 and body.

...

Such are approved by the Lord,
 And their desire for being absorbed in the Lord's
 meditation.
 The Divine melody is struck as Felicitation.
 The nuptials has been thus brought about by the Lord.
 The Lord's Name blooms in the bride's heart by His
 blessing,...The fourth *Lāv* marks the attainment of
 Immortal Lord.

The above, somewhat abridged, presentation of the

hymns recited at the marriage ceremony called *Anand* in Sikhism may be noticed for the following few important features :

The participating partners are reminded that the marriage is not only a physical union but also a withdrawal from the superficiality of the world. In fact this union is symbolic of the much more significant and meaningful movement, in togetherness, towards the highest ideal. It is a conquest over the passions of conflict.

The marriage is an affirmation of the social and the moral duties which are associated with the institution of family. It is, thus, a resolve to surrender one's ego to the imperatives of the moral law. It is a commitment to strengthen the social relation in a spirit of harmonious growth. The Sikh Gurus have, in the very first hymn of the marriage ceremony, very clearly shown the need to synthesise and harmonise the worldly social duties with the transcendent ideal. The reference to the holy Preceptor is with a view to reminding the bride and the groom that they are not the only partners of the social relations arising in the new context. The desire to accept and to be guided by the Preceptor will safeguard the family from the emotions and the impulses which may wreck it in the absence of the healthy influence of the saintly Preceptor or the company of the holy. The husband and the wife also accept the Fear of the Lord which liberates them from all earthly fears. Many conflicts and hesitations arise from fear. The Sikh Gurus have taught that once the family accepts the discipline and Fear of the Lord, the sense of safety and security arising from such an acceptance will liberate the family from the bondage to the earthly fears including the fear of failure. The Gurus have, elsewhere in the scripture, often shown the nexus between fear and cruelty. The acceptance of the Fear of the Lord will restrain the intra-family cruelty or its social expression. The Fear of the Lord is, however, not to be understood as the rule of the external. It is an internalised discipline and self-regulation. The family, as the elementary social unit, is enriched by this internal self-regulation.

The internalisation of the spiritual order also arises from the faith and experience of the family members that God is everywhere. They do not have to go anywhere else for this

realization. This Presence of God, when accepted and experienced, has tremendous potential both as internal self-regulation as well as external Presence which Witnesses everything.

The third hymn tells the wedding householder that a withdrawal from the worldly passions is the real renunciation. It is an asceticism which is realized without renouncing the social participation by the householder. The social obligations are performed and the family structure is not demolished. The life of the householder acquires symbolism of the lotus which has its roots in the muddy earth but it shows its detachment by remaining above it. The *vairāga* here is not marked by a change in the social location but by a change in the attitude even while living in the family situation. This *vairāga* is not characterised by a sullen non-participation in what is going on in the family. If this were the state of the householder, it would be worse than a recourse to the forests and the hills. Since human life is a great occasion to realize the ideal, there is very little time for giving in to the negative emotions. The withdrawal is to be only from a bondage to the passions. Otherwise, the life is to be lived fully and wholeheartedly. The hardships of the life is a small price which the householder has to pay for enjoying the fruits of social participation and the spiritual realization which lies ahead of it. The mystic dimension of the family union ensures for its members a freedom from the bondage to the transitoriness of the vanishing passion. The third hymn invites the marrying couple and the family to a new level of mystic enjoyment of the union without recourse to a withdrawal into the traditional ascetic mode of living.

In traditions prior to Sikhism, the marriage and family was considered a religious requirement for most of the people for getting a progeny of a male child—to continue the family lineage. The male child was required to perform the ceremony on the death of the father which alone could obtain salvation for the departing family head. This tended to convert the marriage and the family into a mere means. Often great cruelty ensued from the inability of the family to have a child. Mostly this failure and the resentment resulting from it was directed against the female partner in the family. The Sikh

Gurus have not required this role of the family. A very powerful effort was also launched against any denigration of the woman in the family or the larger society. The marriage and family was, thus, established firmly on its even keel on its own account.

The fourth circumambulation and the hymn of the marriage ceremony solemnizes the progress of the couple to a higher balance and equipoise (*Sehaj*). A 'coming-together' initially tends to disturb the balance and may thus result in negative, or even in a kind of strange positive, tensions. The equipoise (*Sehaj*) is the goal of the new relationship. It can help to sustain it more permanently. It can enable the family to absorb the possible conflict-tensions. A prolonged unresolved tension may fuel the fire for ascetic withdrawal. A fruitful progress towards the spiritual realization may be hampered by the impulse to blame the 'other' in the marriage and family. What is meant to unite may end in rending asunder.

The last hymn assures the couple in marriage that the spiritual realization signifies an experience of sweetness both in the body as well as in the mind. There is no renunciation of the physical. On the contrary, the test of the equipoise is that there is harmony both at the physical as well as the mental level. Nothing is, thus, lost. The equipoise is the state of the newly evolved and transformed dynamic whole. There is richness in this whole and no impoverishment to its elements.

The witness to the *Sehaj* is the divine melody within the self of the couple. This is the Felicitation of the Lord and His blessings which accompany the continuous voluntary efforts of the family towards its Ideal. This is the Sikh perspective of the ethics of marriage and family. The Sikh Gurus have viewed it as the progress of the individuals, their ascending social relations, towards the spiritual and Ideal. It is an upward swing without snapping the dynamic earthly and material roots. Here is Self-Realization through self-fulfillment and not through self-abnegation.

MORAL ECOLOGY AND VALUES TRANSMISSION: SOME ISSUES IN GENERATION CHANGE

Values-transmission is an essential characteristic of the human society. The vision of the values sustains and inspires it towards a more adjusted movement for the goal. The general view of some values, conceived as eternal, helps to lend an element of stability and continuity to the social groups which are otherwise in a state of movement and flux. The content of these values may sometimes undergo some change but their relatively stable form sustains the conative structure in a manner which minimizes the hard jolts and shocks which would have been otherwise felt as disturbing and destabilising changes by the society. How does this happen?

Every generation has heard of two general statements about the values-continuity from the one generation to the other. We know the elders' nostalgia about the values of their times, and we have also noticed the young people's complaint that the new values of their own age were not being perceived properly by their elders. What is the truth and where is the catch?

The thinkers have very wide and major differences among themselves with regard to the understanding and interpreting of this change and the process involved in the change. They have often interpreted the ontological inheritance as a continuity of form and unchangeable nature of the reality. Sometimes they misread their own epistemological difficulties and limitations to be the genuine reflections of the character of the reality itself. The students of the phenomenon of the values-transmission and the generation change have not remained uninfluenced by this difficulty. The spiral of the values-ascension, when not perceived in the perspective of the spiritual evolution, can often be the major factor in the different understandings of the

changing and transmitting nature of the values in general and the moral values in particular.

We may begin by pointing out that there is an evolutionary dimension of the moral criteria. Some of the values are too obviously intimately related to the survival strategies of each society in its dealing with nature and the interaction among themselves. There are two aspects of this values transmission and its acceptance by the younger generation of the people. The emphasis on the transmission is often closer to the heart of the elders. There may be an honest and sincere effort on their part to ensure the healthy value-ecology for the younger generation. However, an element of zeal is clearly visible in the society where I have generally lived. Apart from the nostalgia of the elders about the value-environment of their own times, there is also a general feeling of concern for the moral health of the succeeding generations. I have often wondered about the real nature of this worry. It has, on many occasions, struck me that this concern is more with the 'devilling' of some of the value-violations of their own times. The younger people are not keen to conceal many of the acts which were earlier consciously or unconsciously sought to be done under some sort of cover. The requirement of the deference to the tradition and the society was sought to be fulfilled by concealing an act which was not considered to be approvable by the society. The younger generation now does not appear to show the same amount of anxiety to sustain the same level of concealment in respect of many of its acts and expressions. In many cases it does not conceal at all and thereby seeks to overcome the tensions of a divided self. Perhaps it also satisfies their impulse for self-assertion. It is not uncommon for us to see this 'opening up' being described as value-degradation or permissiveness which is regarded as perverse by the senior generation. It may, however, be helpful to notice that a part of this now value-culture is merely an evolutionary strategy. The growing population and the shrinking space may not leave much room for withdrawal and concealment.

The spaciousness of the environment is giving way to escalating pressure of the number of the human-beings who have to participate in the sport of existence. The competitiveness arising from the larger human presence in the

face of relatively slower growth of means, coupled to their uneven availability, calls for a new balance and moral ecology. The deference for the traditional values have to either assume different forms or get buried under the seeming arrogance of denuding the expression of the human impulses. Some of the values cherished by the higher and middle level societies are not similarly regarded by the people growing up in the packed slums. On the other hand we must also remember that certain levels of concealment may be somewhat present in nearly most of the societies. It is often a device to express a genuine gratefulness and therefore derives its strength from the retributive nature of the moral sentiment. Its total rejection, therefore, may also cause aberrations. A healthy appreciation of the newly needed balance is called for. It may also be seen that all the problems of the values transmission and the generation change are not related only to the process of the rejection of the earlier concealments. The 'opening up' only partially represents attempts at seeking new dimensions and levels of the moral ecology. There are, however, some ways in which this negative attitude towards the 'covering up' is exploited to ensure the alienation of the new from the larger open world. The movement towards 'opening up' is then contained and isolated in another manner. How is this done?

Some of the value-tensions in the world, especially in some parts of Europe and Asia, among the younger generations often sustain and contribute to the global attitudes in their negativity and rejection among their own elders. The managers of the socio-political affairs in different countries sometimes build and maintain the global tensions on the strength of these psychological attitudes towards values. The sneer in the seeming moral comment 'Oh the West' is not unoften one of the factors used for sustaining tensions between the East and the West. Sometimes, and in some countries of the Europe, the political exigencies of retaining power has led many ideologies to use the moral sentiment, supposedly contained in the above sneer, to keep their own people in continuous subjugation and behind the illusions of the moral curtains. The global tensions have been reinforced on the strength of the supposed effort to retain or revive the native values, some of which are also identified as moral

values. A few of these systems are witnessing an 'opening up' now. If a genuine effort is made to allow this 'opening up', we are bound to witness lesser global tensions. If some nations were to stop the misapplications of the notion of the moral for their political ends to merely retain power, the scope of appreciation of the moral values by the younger and the present generations will also increase. It may, in turn, increase the intra-generation understanding on this front. The forward-looking nature of the moral values would also become clearer to the succeeding generations.

All this may suggest to us that the generation change calls for a reappraisal of our existing moral ideas. We may have to seek light from the converging moral notions of different traditions. Here we may cite some such teachings from the Sikh tradition. Sikhism has grown in the modern India, and is, relatively speaking, very young. I propose to bring to our notice the moral syntheses whose reflection may also be seen in the general Indian and the other cultures of the world. We may, in particular, draw to our attention the newly emerging religious traditions in the world which, in their moral teachings, emphasise the 'unity' or 'unification' as an important theme and objective. Let us begin with the teachings of the Sikh tradition in this respect.

Here we may mention two important moral ideas derived from the Sikh teachings which can also be noticed in many other traditions. The one emphasises the idea of duty in general, and the other refers to the notion of the moral goal. The duty in its most general form conveys the idea of self-regulation. At the first glance, this may appear to be somewhat unconventional presentation of the idea of duty. In Sikhism, as in many other global traditions, the person is continuously reminded of the need to concern oneself with the idea of regulating the lower by the higher in his individual self as well as in his social relations. The moral law requires the person to regulate the narrower by the wider. This process may involve two steps.

First, the moral agent has to initiate and sustain the idea of self-regulation. This will enable the person to perceive the reality of the moral problem. The person, as born physically, experiences a process of natural growth and development. At the physical level, the impulse may condition it to its narrow

concern with the gross pleasure-giving drives and needs. However, the social environment may also direct his attention to the distinction between what he seeks and what he ought to seek. He may also learn to distinguish between the lower and the higher dimension of what he may or ought to seek. The Sikh Gurus remind the self "*mana tūn joti sarūpu hai, āpnā mūlu pachhān*" (O' self thou art the form of the spiritual realize thy real higher being (S.G.G.S. page 441). This duty is the Sikh tradition. It has often appeared to us that in spite of the 'so obvious' nature of this dictum of the duty, it has not received its due importance in the initiation of the present and the future generation in the moral notions. The moral law states, 'Regulate the lower by the higher in the self'. The moral duty requires of the individuals to guide their conduct by this imperatively. The idea of the higher is to a qualitative notion. It is a qualitative distinction whereby the self views the need to perceive the moral nature of the higher, as also its imperative character.

It may be pointed out at this point that the imperative of regulating the lower by the higher is sometimes mistaken as the counsel of asceticism and withdrawal. This is not the intention of the Sikh Gurus to interpret the moral law in terms of restraints and withdrawal. The moral law encourages conduct in the direction of fulfilment which comes from seeking the higher in conduct. The most important point to remember in this connection is the need to perceive and realize the balance between the synthesising of the lower in the higher. The realising of the spiritual balance is characterised by the knowledge that the material is the lower to the spiritual which is higher. But it does not embody the imperative that the material is to be altogether given up also in the act of asceticism. Guru Nanak has prescribed the path of a householder and the social participant. He made it very clear that this path of regulating the lower by the higher does not require the moral agent to completely withdraw from the material or social participation. The moral characterises the balance between the self-control and the total surrender to the egoistic self-fulfilment. The moral lies in this balance and not in the extremes, as both of these extremes indicate the narrowness of the self which is characterised by them. The Gurus are, however, very emphatic that the material, being

lower, ought to be subjected to the regulative character of the spiritual which is both prior as well as higher. The spiritual has not evolved from the material but is prior to it and is eternal in character. This truth is to be imbibed and practised in the human conduct. It is not being suggested that the above balance is easy to achieve but then this is the moral effort and the attending strenuous nature of the duty to make it.

Our use of the word 'balance' may suggest to some persons that we are conceiving the moral law in static terms. The Gurus have regarded the moral law in dynamic and on-going terms. The balance is ever-ascending one achieved through the movement of the self in the direction of his goal.

The ideal or the goal of the human movement has, over some decades now, been presented as the material or the spiritual welfare. We have come across numerous attempts at elucidating an ethical ideal in terms of either one or the other of these two value systems. The human suffering in the West arising from the two major wars has often contributed to the disenchantment of the humankind with the one or the other of the above two goals. An excessive anguish arising from the two World Wars would, however, pale into insignificance when compared with the number of casualties taking place even long after the wars have ended. The reduction of the human casualties to mere 'numbers perished' in the so-called post Wars peace era ought to arouse our moral consciousness against it. The intra and inter national obsession with the material has often led to self-defeating consequences. The moral goal, for us, ought to include the material welfare of the humankind in the movement towards the spiritual realization. We have to remember that the moral goal reduces and removes tensions on its path. We have to share this wisdom with the coming generations. But the need for realising the truth of our conflicts and tensions, and the resulting casualties of human life should awaken in us the vision of the moral goal. The peace effort mounted on the war-machines has failed. It has to ride the moral crest.

The coming, as well as our generation, has to radically reorient our ethical theories. We shall have to reject any presentation of the social or the moral goal which has to be raised over the dead and decaying bodies of the fellow human-beings. Whatever may be the compulsions, the moral goal

cannot, and does not, thrive in the graveyards and the cremation grounds. Our social and political world scene is somewhat demoralising. The post Wars period appears to have generated more physical, mental, and spiritual suffering than we may be willing to tabulate. The moral goal does not lie on this path. It may perhaps only contribute to the growth of the evil and the unjust. We have to cleanse our moral lenses and remove the fog and dirt of the times we are going through. The vision of the moral goal will then show to us that the material welfare of the householders and others is included in the journey towards the higher spiritual realization of the self. The moral goal will then be seen as the ideal of the whole. The meaning of the moral in terms of the whole can alone be the fulcrum of values in the present times and the future normative world.

We may now view an important or crucial application of this notion of the moral as 'the whole'. The Sikh Gurus have considered it important to remind the human beings that they are higher in relation to their environment but this does not absolve them from their duty towards the rest of nature which also is God's creation. The moral duty lies in sustaining the balance in the environments around the humankind. The Gurus have incorporated this concern in their teachings regarding the ethical and spiritual duties of mankind. Its global dimension is easy to comprehend. The moral agents have to treat their physical environments as fellow entities deserving consideration and just treatment. In India, the attitude towards physical and bio-environment marks a continuity in its moral dimension. Any wanton destruction of nature ought to evoke the same level of disapproval as may be forthcoming in case of tensions among the human beings. The people in the world are now becoming increasingly aware that the moral duty does not end with intra-human relations. Gurus repeated references to "*Qudrat*" are meant to awaken among the humans a sense of moral duty towards the nature and its ecology. A great amount of cruelty imbibed by the humans is the result of their failure to learn in the early phase of their life, the duty to look around them with the same degree of kindness which they learn to bestow on their human environment. Even in case of the later, the goal would be more meaningfully and significantly realized if the former

could be treated as continuous to it. Many of our social attitudes and actions tend to follow the same pattern of conduct which we adopt in general towards the objective world. Although the moral teachings of the parents and teachers seek to impart a sense of duty towards the humankind, yet their failure to emphasise the moral dimension of the whole towards the whole, tends to seriously limit the realization of their above goal. It is imperative that we impart to the coming generation this teaching. There is a very urgent need to arouse the moral consciousness of the coming generations towards the shrinking power of nature to defend itself against the growing power of the humans to destroy it. We have to learn and teach that cruelty towards the humans and the nature is immoral. It stems from our denial to perform the moral duty towards the creation. It betrays our obsessive compulsiveness towards the ego. It merely reinforces the narrow immediate concern of the ego and fails to notice the wider obligations of the self towards the spiritual through the social and the physical environments. The future will witness more and more power of the humankind over his natural environments. But this power will have to be regulated by the moral consciousness that the humans have a duty towards the nature and, therefore, any exercise of power over the nature will have to be within the moral parameters. We owe to nature the kindness which we seek from it. Let us not do to it what we do not want it to do to us. Our kindness towards nature will not only show our moral culture but also contribute to our survival amidst it. The movement of the humankind in the utilisation and destruction of nature will not only result in our own suffering but also show our lack of moral culture in this respect. The coming generations have to learn this moral lesson very early in life because their expanding future is very closely linked with the shrinking borders of the benign nature. Any legislation by the State can only seek authority and reinforcement from this moral obligation of the humankind. Let us display the moral motto "The moral ecology includes the human, the living, and the nature." Let the coming generations inherit this wider moral vision and the values based therein. It has to become the mass moral movement for the coming centuries!

2. VALUES COMMUNICATION AN EASTERN IDEALIST PERSPECTIVE

Values are abiding feature of man's personal and social life. Every act of a human being expresses a choice or reinforcement of some choice. All non-reflex actions contain an element of preferring the one over the other or others. Communication is another aspect of man's sojourn in this universe. Although the form of communication may change with place and time yet the essential feature that man seeks to communicate with fellow men, under conditions of freedom may remain present almost always. A person may feel less than human if he is deprived of this right and opportunity to communicate with *homo sapiens*. Even those seeking to withdraw from communication, through a voluntary choice, as acts of spiritual realization or self-realization, may seek to communicate through their example and the choice is thus expressed through this example.

Thus values and communication stand out as significant and prominent aspects of man's very nature itself. With some slight difference of emphasis here and there, this view may be conceded by most of us. Those choosing to differ from us may be exercising their own choice, and seek to communicate this choice through their negative communication.

In recent years, some societies have sought to regulate or deny this fundamental human urge for communicating. Often such denials are initiated and sustained for some values held high by those who enforce limitations on the human beings, right to communicate as well as be communicated to. In a very general sense such denials are more often the result of certain materialist ideologies sustained through claims for greater efficiency in regulating the access to materials and resources. We may not enter into a further examination of this aspect of some of the materialist societies denying the need as well as the possibility of free communication. We may, in passing, only point out that materialism and the ideologies based thereon, have a greater tendency to fall a prey to this fallacy that communication-denial may ensure and sustain value-access.

In contradistinction to such communication-denial with the value-relatedness of the materialist, the Idealist, by the very nature of his position, advocates and supports freedom in communication as the very essential element of human society. But apart from this the idealist also says much more about the nature and mode of communication.

Speaking from the background of Indian idealist position generally, and its development in Sikhism particularly, a communication involves three elements: Communicator, Communication, and Communiquee—the person to whom the communication is addressed. It is maintained here that the last two are closely interconnected. A communication is a ‘communication to’ and its nature is largely decided by the person to whom it is addressed. Perhaps this may be conceded by most of the people. But where the idealist begins to assert that what is sought to be communicated amounts to a communication if it is able to evoke the knowledge which is already in the communiquee, then the common listener, unless this submission evokes in him the knowledge which he has, fails to follow the idealist. But unless the listener realises this, he will not grasp the depth of this issue.

We may put this in more concrete and clearer terms. We are seeking to stress the importance of the level and kind of knowledge of the person to whom a communication is addressed. The emphasis in the idealist tradition on the need to realize the self, or to actualise the potential seeks to convey this. The primary responsibility is not of the person communicating, but of the person who has to ‘know’ this communication. The materialist tradition often fails to notice the emphasis which the problem of communication needs to lay on the nature of the self with whom the communication comes in contact.

In case where the communication fails to evoke the value-perspective it intended, a major cause of breakdown may be traceable to the ‘subject’ of communication. The subject, in this case, is the ‘end’ of the communication and not its source. We may cite the case of the virtue of courage. A communication will realize its objective in case of one group while the same communication may fail to elicit any

response in another group. Some Indian traditions have sought to explain this through the theory of *karma*. We have a slightly different perspective on this. We seek to interpret it in a non-circular manner. Our interpretation promises to be more fruitful for its application to culture and education. The future of mankind may, to a significant extent, depend on an appreciation and application of this idealist view of values and communication.

INCLINATION AND OBLIGATION

Man's inclination and obligation is one of the perennial subjects of study by man himself. Such an engagement, however, has often produced different results partly depending on difference in perspective as well as varied emphasis on elements of the similar perspectives. One of the definitions of inclination is in terms of "the tendency of a wish to issue in action." We are further told that "when we are inclined to do any thing, we are not merely conscious of an impulse to do it, but we to a certain extent approve the impulse." Viewed in this sense, inclination has a normative aspect. We may, however, at this early stage merely suggest that inclination may also be negative in content in the sense of not-to-action. Some of the various forms of this negation may be either not to issue in the required amount of action or not to seek 'more' than the required goal of action. It may perhaps be better to say that the latter refers to a lack of great enthusiasm to action.

Secondly, the view about human inclinations is based in the general view about human nature. Sometimes, man has viewed himself as cast in the image of God. This has given him confidence and boosted his morale. It has helped him to forget his earthly roots or at least to minimise their power over him. The Ideal has appeared to him as the real. The ennobling effect of such a realisation has enabled him to scale heights which formerly appeared forbidding. These may be seen as elements of the miracle caused by a favourable self-image. The dynamics of the tendency of a wish to issue in action leading to self-realization can be well judged in this connection. The role of prophets, of founders of religion as leaders of men is too well-known to be discussed in great detail. Notwithstanding the charismatic interaction of the

leader with those whom he leads, the view of human nature propounded by him is not accepted by all.

The humankind, indeed, has not always been oblivious of its material foundations. The expressions, such as, the 'demands of flesh', 'the human in man' are often used with great sincerity and conviction. While the second phase may admit the possibility of there being something more than mere human in man, the first is generally used to claim consideration for the materiality of man. Humanism, or its more acute form of scientific humanism, sincerely argues that man is a differently formed matter and therefore essentially subject to all the laws of matter and motion. There is a wide variety of modifications of such a view. In recent times there are two factors which have significantly contributed to the material view of man's nature.

A systematisation of the observations of changes in the biological world has led to the greater development and coherence of the view termed evolution. After a period of initial hesitation and scepticism the evolutionary hypothesis has gradually gained some acceptance in the academic world, including the non-diehard in religion. It is unusual now to encounter the kind of rejection with which the view of gradual development of species met earlier. There are, however, some aspects of the evolutionary view which are difficult to be accepted in their totality. The principle of natural selection or the survival of the fittest are often advanced as the statements of fact, although their factual nature is partly dependent for its validation on the general theory of which they happen to be an element. In its extreme form the law of natural selection lays too much emphasis on the 'natural strength' of the survivor who is the creator or perpetuator of the species. Unfortunately, the popular mind views this 'natural strength' of the survivor who is the creator or perpetuator of the species. Unfortunately, the popular mind views this natural strength in brute terms and also appears to derive support for it from some aspects of our contemporary life. Some evolutionary expositions of human nature have often led to a distorted view about inclinations of man. We are not unfamiliar with the portrayal of personality as emerging from a ruthless exercise in pride and egoism. In their anxiety to

ensure a uniformity of hypothesis, some evolutionists emphasise the animality in man rather than recognise the transcendence of mere animality in the humanity of man. It is vehemently proposed that "man is an animal." It is claimed that "Every day, the work of thousands of scientists brings further confirmation of the fact...man must be thought of as an animal, simply the present end-product of evolving terrestrial life." From this the next assertion seems to be simply derived. It is said that "animals, including man, are governed by instinct." We are told that this "is repugnant to most people. Even anthropologists, who know man to be the ape's cousin, frequently consider his behaviour is wholly determined by a culture or by 'reason' rather than by such instincts as cause butterflies to breed or birds to build nests." There are other and sometimes less strongly expressed views but their essential thrust appears to be similar. In a general sense, it is argued by some of those contributing to the evolutionary view that a correct interpretation of human nature lies in interpreting it as the behaviour of man animal, his inclinations being not very different from those of the biological world around him. It is claimed that man's inclinations also pursue the objectives of bodily health and adaptability, mental vigour and flexibility, and emotional richness and stability which are to some extent favoured in the struggle for existence. These trends are biological, social and psychological. It is not difficult to see that man emerges in this perspective as a being who is exclusively concerned with the preservation and perpetuation of his physical self. Even the apparently selfless actions are re-interpreted as expressions of inclinations which are selfish in nature.

We may now refer to another view of human nature which claims great depth in its contribution to the understanding of human behaviour. We are aware of the contentions of the psychoanalysis school of psychology. Freud, Jung, and Adler have delved deeper into the layers of consciousness and have sought to establish that the inclinations of man are in fact some deeper urges which are known only when the human mind is subjected to a certain kind of analysis. This school has displayed tremendous insight in the understanding and treatment of emotional difficulties.

Their success has lent great substance to their claims about human propensities which have remarkable ability to disguise themselves. The outwardly visible human inclinations, therefore, may mislead a man. It has also indirectly lent some support to the development and sustaining of a fear that human inclinations, are fundamentally non-acceptable socially. There is something unclean about them and therefore they have acquired a person. The overwhelming religious and moral fervour has often been interpreted as a mask for some deeper and disguised inclinations. It is claimed in the time of these psychologists that much of adult personality rises out of the effect of the human environment upon the brute carvings of the infant. The practical success achieved by psychoanalysis as a therapy has been cited as evidence of its validity as an analysis of human nature. Even though these psychologists have differed amongst themselves in identifying the precise nature of the element of human nature seeking to disguise itself in its expression but almost all of them agree about the process of disguise.

The success of psychoanalysis has so greatly impressed people that even some religious organisations have set up institutions of pastoral counselling with a therapeutic emphasis. During the course of my contact with the persons working in the area of religion, I have met some priests who have acknowledged that they accept the doctrine of psychoanalysis as valid and useful part of their programme of pastoral aid through confession of sin in private. They claimed with some amount of satisfaction that they were practising psychiatry with a religious touch. Their claim about the human nature did not appear to be very different from that of the psychoanalysis. A few of them even accepted the libidous nature of man's inclination.

We may now direct our attention towards the view of man's nature in certain Indian religious traditions where the human propensities are described in terms of *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobh*, *moha* and *ahankāra*. These five are described as the elementary propensities motivating human beings. Man is said to be naturally moved by the elementary desires which regulate even his social actions. These propensities are said to be normal natural to man. These, as impulses, become very

powerful and can influence the various aspects of human personality. We may refer to John Down who reminds us 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.”¹ These propensities are complex and often lend support to one another in facilitating or inhibiting action. In a different philosophical perspective Spinoza and Kant have also recognised the presence of elementary impulses or particular desires which motivate man’s actions. In the case of determinists, such as Spinoza, this amounts to human bondage from which the freedom is realized by attaining knowledge about them. In a widely different sense which, however, is not entirely without some over-lapping, the psychoanalysis also seeks to bring to the conscious level these impulses which regulate the direction and intensity of human actions. A study of human behaviour, however, reveals that there are four inter-rotated groups of motivation: (1) The first group includes a cluster of five motives which in their unrestrained form are termed as moral evils necessitating their sublimation and regulation by (2) actions arising from the consciousness of the obligation towards the higher. The latter includes virtues, social motives and the urge for the spiritual. It is common knowledge that undue abandoning of the self to the directions of the *kāma*, *krodha*, *moha* and *ahankāra* is self-defeating as instead of leading to peace and happiness sought by the individual, they keep a person in a state of restlessness, apart from their serious social repercussions. This leaves no scope for the peace of the self or wholeness and happiness.

We should, however, hasten to add that the regulation or control of the above-mentioned propensities is not to be affected by any violent forcing of one’s will through special ascetic practices or inflictions on the body. Guru Nanak says, “He who tortures his body to whither away, is not approved” (*Adi Granth*, 1-12, p. 226). 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 from the self defeating selfishness in the natural way by sublimating them by virtues and by recourse to the company of the realized

selves. We shall refer to the social aspect of this a little later. Presently we may notice that in the ancient Indian thought there are variants of these propensities which are required to be controlled and redirected. In fact the theme of the five sins is very popular in India. It is also familiar to Buddhism. (*Dhammpada* 370) In the *Great Epics of India*. Honkins gives some lists of the Five Sins that the *Yogin* must cut off. The recognition of the inclinations requiring attention and regulation in terms of higher motives is also emphasised by Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead. Russell holds 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..." (*The Education and Good Life*, p. 147). The need for self-regulation is underlined by Whitehead who points out that "the only discipline important for its own sake is self-discipline and this can only be acquired by a wise use of freedom" (*The Aims of Education*, p. 46).

Our discussion so far has shown that there are inclinations which require to be recanalised in two respects. First, the lower desires and propensities ought to adopt higher-order expressions, with a view to improving the quality of the life. The tendency of the wishes to issue in action ought to be towards wisdom, truthfulness, temperance, justice, courage, humility, and contentment. We presume that the energy directing the inclinations attains higher level of fruitfulness when it flows through the virtues, some of which have been listed above. It is a matter of common experience that barring a few cases, the remaining vast number of persons can realize a better level of harmony and adjustment within the self when the direction of their inclinations is towards higher-order expressions. It is our contention here that such a direction can be through an act of voluntary choice in most of the cases. We are intentionally not discussing the cause of the failure in the case of the rest even though a study in respect of these promises to be interesting. The example of ego and the like is too exceptional to be made a part of the discussion of the general rule, although one may notice the recent tendency of some thinkers to generalise the rare and the exceptional. A question may be raised whether

we are contributing to the view of perfectability of impulses and human behaviour in proposing a first-order and second-order expressions of the propensities. We may refer to an interesting symposium which examined the question, "Can Human Nature Be Changed?". It has been reported in the *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 12 (1952) under the title "*Human Nature Can Change*". The participants in the symposium include Herold Kelman, president of the American Institute of Psychoanalysis and editor of its journal, and Paul Tillich, the noted American theologian, along with two other scholars. Herold Kelman begins by pointing out that the affirmative proposition, 'Human nature can change' prompts many questions and to them a host of possible answers "What is human nature, essentially? We do not assert that man by nature is inherently destructive and only secondarily constructive. Nor do we agree that innately he is both good and bad. *Rather do we believe that in all human beings there is the potentiality, as a lifelong tendency and direction to realize and to fulfil his possibilities as a human being and as a particular human being, as circumstances permit.*" (Emphasis added.) It is this potentiality of man to seek a second and third or fourth level expression of his inclinations and thereby seek self-realization. We are aware that the last expressed concept, namely self-realization has suffered distortions not only as a concept but also as precise nature of the ideal it seeks to convey. But that, by itself, is not adequate and final argument against its relevance in respect of man's inclinations viewed in the context of his obligation.

And that brings us to the second aspect of our subject. What do we generally mean by obligation? What are the grounds of obligation? Obviously, the concept of obligation is fairly wide. Broadly, it conveys the notion of deontological as well as teleological 'ought', although we are familiar with philosophical views which use the term exclusively in any one of the two aspects of this moral idea. It is said that man's inclinations are his effective desires or wishes may be directed towards certain claims termed rights, this, by its very claim, also grants a 'claim upon' itself which we may term as its obligation. What is the ground for this 'claim upon' which every one is required to recognise and accept? Our quest for

an answer may require us to refer to some of the prominent reflections on the subject.

One of the very impressive examples of the sense of obligation is encountered in the dialogues of Plato. We may refer to the dialogue in which Socrates provides us with a stringent definition of obligation, by refusing to escape from prison when it was suggested to him by Crito that an opportunity for such an escape could be so provided. Socrates invites Crito to consider the matter objectively. He says, "imagine the laws and government to come and interrogate me: Tell us, Socrates, what are you about? Are you, by an act of yours, going to overturn us? Do you imagine that a state can subsist in which the decisions of law have no power, but are set aside and overthrown by individuals?" We might reply, 'Yes, but the state has injured us and given an unjust sentence.' Suppose I say that. 'And was that our agreement with you?' the laws would say. 'Or were you to abide by the sentence of the state?...' "Are you going to run away and turn your back upon the agreements which you made as a citizen? And answer this question: Are we right in saying that you agreed to be government according to us in deed and not in word only?" Socrates then asks Crito, "How shall we answer this, Crito? Must we not agree?" We had earlier described this statement of Socrates as the stringent definition of obligation. The moral overtone of Socrates is obvious. We may, perhaps, do better to modify our statement and call it as the Ideal notion of obligation. What is the nature of our obligation towards others part of which is regulated through the State? Some thinkers have suggested that our obligation arises from the process of social contract. Philosophers, such as Locke, Hobbes and Rousseau are the modern supporters of the view. Locke bases such an obligation into a felt need for "Comfortable, safe, and peaceable living, one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any that are not of it." For Hobbes peace and defence of himself, in a general sense, provide the grounds of obligation. Rousseau talks of the need to "maintain themselves" leading to the agreement reached between individuals as the obligation struck through contract. It can be seen that in each case the theory of social contract is

closely linked with the two other important notions, namely a view of human nature and the doctrine of natural law and rights. The second theory of obligation may be found in the writings of the thinkers known as Utilitarians. The doctrine of interest and advantage appears to be the key to the understanding of obligation for David Hume. Bentham is impressed by pain and pleasure as the sovereign masters of obligation. The pragmatists are almost likewise convinced of usefulness as the core of obligation.

What have the Idealists to say? Here we may cite a higher promising view of obligation in the context of man's social institution and state. The nature and ground of obligation seems to arise from the social organisation as the higher self. We may refer to Hegel who holds in his *Philosophy of Right* (pp. 155-156) that "the state is the actuality of the ethical idea. It is ethical mind *qua* the substantial will manifest and revealed to itself, knowing and thinking itself, accomplishing what it knows and in so far as it knows it." We are also told that "the state is absolutely rational inasmuch as it is the actuality of the substantial will which it possesses in the particular self-consciousness once that consciousness had been raised to consciousness of its universality. This substantial unity is an absolute unmoving end in itself, in which freedom comes into its supreme right. On the other hand this final end has supreme right against the individual, whose supreme duty is to be a member of the state."

It may be interesting and useful to recall here the perspective of modern Idealist tradition of Sikhism in Indian Philosophy. It views human inclinations in terms of its moral standard of self-awareness but a dynamic realization of its potentiality as well as self-awareness and bliss in surrender. 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*, a feeling of individuation indicated in a narrow or limited point of view and activity. The problem, for morality or, for that matter, for the whole of life, is how to widen or abscind this narrow or too limited point of view, centered in

and around selfness, so that man may realize the greater self or the real self. This real self is termed by Guru Nanak, *Sachiāra* which is the apex of self-realization. The morally good person, according to this approach, would be one who rises higher and higher, and moves *away* from his narrow view-point of life and function and *towards* the larger or wider self, namely *Sachiāra*. An act is good in so far it is conducive to this realization, the apex being the highest good. The person on this journey of self-realization develops himself from various aspects. The highest level of self, it is described as universal point of view, universal aesthetic communion and universal will. Here is action (*kar kar*), here is consciousness (*vekhai*), and here is bliss (*nihāla*). This is the highest good to which man aspires. He is a complete person in the sense that he seeks good spontaneously. The self has no consciousness of being different from others and this is reflected in its actions and functions. He has been gradually moving to this state. 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, cognitive, affective and conative) may not be comprehensible. The prominent description of this self is that of ceaseless activity (*kar kar*) and harmony between will and action. The self 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.

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 term of self-realization — than to live in society of other selves 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. Sikhism does not permit this ‘running away’ from the social. One must accept the social as the necessary and essential factor in self-realization. The social duties are not viewed separately in this perspective.

Before closing the present statement, we may refer to a dialogue of Guru Nanak with *Siddhas* reported by Bhai Gurdas (*Var* 1-42). The *Siddhas* asked Guru Nanak to show them a miracle. Guru Nanak is said to have replied, “I have no power for miracle. I obtain all my power from the Word and *Sangat*. Away from *Sangat* there is not a mole to support me.” The *Sangat* means socio-spiritual togetherness. It is the ideal which Sikhs seek to realize through Gurudwaras and community participation to which they invite all others.

Just a few words now in self-defence. Our critics may say that we are confusing political and moral obligation. Such an objection, however, will only show that the critic has not fully grasped our contention. Similarly, the traditional objections against self-realization are futile against our submission here. Their description of self-realization as selfish-realization will not hold in view of our emphasis on social context of self-realization. It may also, perhaps, be said that psychologists have shown the self to be merely a conglomeration of desires and wishes of a certain kind. Such a view, however, is grounded in highly questionable metaphysics, may be our reply. We have offered the concept of *Sangat* as the context in terms of which inclination and obligation may attain a normative fusion and also be message of hope for the Idealist Seeker as well as be the ideal for unsocial and unintegrated individual. Is it not a view worth further exploration ?

REFERENCE :

1. John Dewy, *Human Nature and Conduct*
(New York; Modern Library, 1957 o.p. 195

THE SIKH PERSPECTIVE OF VALUES AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The phenomenon of social change and permeation of values are known aspects of man's world. The students of various disciplines are keenly interested in this characteristic of man's individual and collective life. It is, therefore, not very surprising when students of philosophy of history as well as philosophy of religion are also attracted towards it. The present paper is a brief attempt to understand the role of religion in promoting values which have bearing upon the process, broadly described as social change. Religion has played a very significant role in human affairs and its special importance in the Indian context is too obvious to be emphasized. A study of the present nature may, therefore, be not only useful but also necessary for those who seek to understand human experience as a whole. The contribution of our nation, in terms of Indian religions and its heritage, promises to be fruitful for a proper evaluation of religion as a positive factor for facilitating accelerated pace of social change. The experiences of thinkers in different geographical and cultural contexts may indicate and support different generalisations. But it may not be proper to accept without examination those generalisations as true for our nation as well. Any dogmatism in this respect will be antiphilosophical. In this submission lies our justification for the present study.

The influence of religion on values and social change is generally conceded. It appears to be accepted even by those who emphasise the support of religion to 'dis-values'.¹ It is, however, also felt by them that "on a higher spiritual and moral plane, religion is not necessarily inconsistent with the idiom of science and the ethos of progress."² This statement indicates that there are different levels of religions some of

which, or some elements of which, may promote values which impede positive social change. A study of the role of religious traditions in India may encourage our agreement with the above statement of the scholar suggesting the existence of various levels and kinds of religions. We may now point to the existence of other factors of socio-economic environments and culture which add to the complexity of the phenomenon. Any over-simplified generalisation, in this situation, may only indicate subjective preference. At the same time, it is helpful to remember that our situation is not very helpless. The highlighting of difficult nature of our task and our refusal to accept either form of dogmatic extreme without doubting their truth is more in a manner of philosophical understanding than any surrender to pessimism.

Before proceeding further, we may reiterate our position. We have, so far, presented two statements, seemingly contradictory, but in reality pointing to two different truths, namely religion hinders the growth of an ethic conducive to progress; and religion is not inconsistent with ethos of progress. We have taken this contradiction to merely indicate the existence of different kinds and different levels of religions. Let us now face the general problem of social change and the relevance of religion to it. The process termed social change has been an undeniable element of man's world. People may differ in their assessment of the pace but the process is, by and large, conceded. Religions and metaphysical systems may differ in denying or attributing absolute value to the process of change but the fact of its empirical experience is generally not denied in religions. We may now mention an important but obvious thing in this connection. The speed of social change in the pre-urban industrial society has been, relatively speaking, very slow. In those days, changes very often took more time than the life-span of the individual. These were, therefore, not very clearly noticed. Consequently, the changes taking longer than the life-span of the participant members, presented an illusion of slow or static societies. The individuals at this stage of social life also appear to have been greatly motivated by religious belief and emotion. It might have been, therefore, one of the factors which lent credence to the opinion that religion is anti-social

change or acts as speed-breaker to the otherwise faster pace. This may sound to be an oversimplification by those who are looking for one of the scapegoats in religion. But this also takes us to the examination of the question 'what is the influence of religion on the pace and direction of change?' It will be readily seen that an answer in terms of simple yes or no is neither possible nor perhaps desirable. We find that different religious traditions have supported different views. The positions ranging from an unmoved absolute to the ceaseless momentariness have appealed to the religious minds. But apart from preaching certain metaphysical views, religious traditions have encouraged the social march towards the realisation of the ideals. Religious traditions are predominantly normative and it is natural for them to encourage the members of the faith-group to move in the desired direction. This is mostly true of the higher religions, or at the higher level. It may be admitted that primitive religions, or the religions of the primitive people are not being considered in the present survey and argument. The movement of the faith-group members towards the ideal also characterises the change which may be different in respect of the speed with which different parts of the society may change with reference to each other. The cause for this lag may be complex and may not be identical in different societies.³ We may now proceed to make another suggestion. It is a known fact of history that some religious traditions have motivated and encouraged an accelerated pace of social change by not only rejecting the prevalent-stable value structures of the social groups but by also offering socially more satisfying values through religious practices. The transformation brought about by some religious traditions in the secular and social areas might easily pass ideal targets of the secularly conceived revolutions. Religions are known to have changed men who were earlier accustomed to socio-economic drubbing. We may recall the inspiration by the *Bhagvad Gītā*. Zoroastrianism and Sikhism in recent India are some of the possible examples supporting this view. The social change precipitated and sustained by some religions may even be measurable. A contrary view may perhaps be empirically falsifiable. Need for greater research in this area is, of course,

indicated.

We may now touch upon a crucial aspect of the present subject, namely the value structure supported by religion and its relevance to social change. It has been often suggested by the sociologists that no other societal phenomenon is more resistant than religion to scientific explanation. We may also notice that a study of values in this area only adds to our difficult task. One set of our troubles lie in the need for objectivity as well as insight based in empathy. A proper balance between the two will be useful for any meaningful study. We may, however, see some merit in the suggestion that relatively more fruitful study and evaluation, regulated by possible objectivity, may be possible in the area of one's own faith. The superficiality involved in the other alternative of analysing faiths other than one's own may, sometimes, be misleading. Secondly, every religious tradition involves actual and ideal values. The two are not entirely unrelated but an analytical distinction between the two is possible. For the present discussion we propose to regard those values as actual which are advanced by a religious tradition as the norms and values necessary for religious reflection in secular and social affairs. These values are meant to guide the faith-group members in their onward march towards their highest ideal, or the ground of all values. Different socio-religious groups living together and participating in the same cultural context may realize different levels of efficiency even in their material and secular affairs. The actual religious values of the groups may thus form a continuity with their achievement level in other fields. While the role of other factors may not be completely denied, yet the great efficiency to mobilise people to great height may be traceable to the religious leader as well as the social structure of the actual value group. We may cite the example of Zarathustra and the contemporary impact of the values taught by him in the ancient Persia and of the Sikh *Gurus* in the recent India. Zarathustra replaced rituals of animal sacrifices by a high moral paradigm, and thus established a continuous whole of value-society-religion. We know that philosophers have not only interpreted the world but have also changed it. Ideas have great motivating force. The religious values and ideas, when accepted by

people, have gone still further, in transforming personality and society. We have, upto now, suggested great influence of religion in changing society through values. We may now proceed to mention some of the most general values which are held to be not only necessary but also participate in the ultimate and ideal spiritual realization. It has been suggested that neither spiritual realization is possible nor wholesome without the practice of these values.

We may digress at this point and notice some values which came to receive great support from the physical and biological world. It may be mentioned here that we are not, in any way, seeking to belittle the scientific findings in these areas, nor trying to suggest that what follows is universally true. Such a possible inference will be against the main thesis of this paper. We may now continue with our digression. We were about to say that scientific theory of evolution gave acceptance to the description of the change-process as 'survival of the fittest'. However, for quite some time this did not remain merely a descriptive statement but also became a normative judgement. The society tried to march an advance over this value-situation by emphasizing the more attractive one of 'live and let live'. It appears to have been pleaded by some that even though let and let live was not a sciento-cognitive description but it represented the compromise value of not hindering the progress of the fit without injury to the 'not so fit'. A complementary value expression was found in 'tolerance' which was considered to be a great functional value. Tolerance, however, has been rather a more of strategic value than something ultimately acceptable both to the religionists as well as those who are disenchanted with religion and support totalitarian societies which "act from the fundamental assumption that the course of history and natural events has been fully *revealed* to them"⁴ (Emphasis added). For the latter, that is totalitarians, tolerance is believed to be a necessity till they are able to overcome the dissent. For the religionist, tolerance falls too short of the values such as love and human brotherhood. Religious ethics aims at replacing the normative dictum 'survival of the fittest' by "cultivate yourself and help others to cultivate in a manner conducive to their self-realization." Here value-realization is felt to be

fused with the personality-culture in the normative sense. The balance in this personal and social culture is sought to be regulated by the value termed '*santokh, santosh*', from the root '*tus*' meaning contentment and happiness. It is a positive value. The members of the society are required to do their utmost for production in various fields but consumerism, devoid of social and spiritual considerations, is not encouraged. The voluntary surrender means a practice of non-exploitation. Thus non-consumerism and non-exploitation are religiously conceived and spiritually required values. We may mention a value-cluster from Sikh religion without which a member's religiosity is held to be fake and un-Sikh. These values are *dharam di kirat, nām japnā, vand chhaknā*. Translated, these are, honest livelihood, spiritual contemplation, and sharing your earning with others. Neither of the three stands by itself. The simultaneity of the three leads the agent to higher freedom. The goal of social change lies through them. However, it is important to remember that these ideal values can become functional only when institutionalised. The value of *vand chhaknā* becomes operational when institutionalised through *langar* and other allied form of sharing. A Sikh, wherever he goes, seeks to set up these institutions to operationalise the ideal values of sharing and praying.

It may appear to some that socio-economic context of our discussion is mostly rural-agrarian society. A doubt may, therefore, be raised whether religion and multi-religious societies can be considered as positive factor in the viable models for the scientific and technological stages of social evolution. There is great force in this apprehension and it cannot be cast aside without proper consideration. In reply, it may be briefly submitted that we have kept this aspect of our problem in view. It is partly because of this that we have based our study in two religions as the base-models. These religions, namely Zoroastrianism and Sikhism have flourished in agricultural societies. In fact their important values and institutions seek to guide and operationalise agricultural activity.⁵ But these two religious traditions have also adapted and functioned very well in the contemporary technological and industrial societies.⁶

We may here refer to a discussion of the paths of progress in Corporations, as the elements of 'man's industrial' and technological era. We may find great truth in the simple remark of a sociologist who reminds us that "there are other ways to grow—for example, in wisdom and virtue—besides just getting bigger."⁷ We Indians, as a nation, are keenly interested in a solution which characterises a synthesis which does not alienate us from our heritage of wisdom and virtue, for which we are known through history. It may, therefore, be in our ultimate interest to identify and emphasise those values which will help us to progress in the industrial and technological areas without getting alienated from our own self. Philosophy, as an intellectual discipline, has a great task before it. It may perhaps be useful to remember that the goals of clarification and understanding are linked with guidance and motivation. In this respect, Indian philosophy and religion, as closely related vision and springs of inspiration, can make important contribution to the frantic search for a suitable model and direction, both in the developed as well as the developing world. The cue to such future destiny of man may bring the realization that man and his spirit are higher than the matter that he seeks and shapes.

An objective and proper understanding of the present focus may help us to weed out the negative, and preserve the positive values of religion at the higher level, for not only understanding the changing society but also to change it in the direction of the desirable values. This is the concluding submission of our critique.

REFERENCES:

1. Cf. "Religious orientations shape attitudes to work, wealth, and happiness, and hinder the growth of an ethic that would be conducive to progress." S.C. Dube. "Religion in a Secular Society." *Contemporary India and Its Modernization*. (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1974), p 130
2. *Ibid*, p. 131
3. We may refer to a study of the influence of values and norms on the development of some national cultures. S.M. Lipset refers to several norms of particular importance in this respect. While commenting on this, a scholar points out that "In Lipset's illustration one may note the influence of norms on value preferences. However to admit this influence is to admit merely a causal connection between norms and values. Other such equally causal factors are physical environment, the 'age' of the culture as a historical entity, its heritage of heroes and prophets and so on." (Emphasis added)

Ratna Dutta, *Value in Models of Modernization* (Delhi : Vikas Publication, 1971), p. 78

4. Karl Jaspers, "The Task of Philosophy Today. " *Man and Philosophy*, (Max Hueber Verlag Munchen, 1964) p. 37
5. If one takes Zoroaster's social environment, his fight against nomadism and for an agricultural society of cultivators into consideration, it becomes understandable why Zoroaster's view of human duty and work is mainly agriculturally oriented. Ekehard Kule, *The Parsees in India, A Minority As Agent of Social Change* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1974) p. 255.
6. One may refer to a letter dated November 23, 1898, of J.N. Tata (a Zoroastrian) written to Vivekananda where the value of inner-worldly asceticism is made functional through institutionalisation. J.N. Tata writes, "I very much recall as this moment your views on the growth of the ascetic spirit in India, and the duty, not of destroying, but of diverting it into useful channels. I recall these ideas in connection with my scheme of research institute of science for India... It seems to me that no better use can be made of the ascetic spirit than the establishment of monasteries or residential halls for men dominated by the spirit, where they should live with ordinary decency, and devote their lives to the cultivation of sciences-natural and humanistic." Ibid, p. 258.
7. Wilbert E. Moore, "Evolution, Revolution, Reaction," *Readings on Social Change* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1967), p. 94 also "But the values of character, of good will, love and communion can be unlimitedly appropriated and shared by the have-nots, whether whole people, classes or individuals. It is the cultivation and development of character and the moral values of self-discipline, co-operativeness and solidarity that accordingly can alone safeguard progress in the cramped and precarious modern world. *Religion* is the stimulus of the values of character that it raises to their highest potential, throwing open the possibilities of man's *shared living* with the fellow creatures of the universe in a measure not accessible to power, knowledge or art. It is the supreme value of the ordering and direction of progress, the grand passion and insight for a total engagement in the life of society through goodness, love and service which are essential for the survival of man's reason, and for its direction as a potent equipment for his evolutionary destiny". Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Social Structure of Values* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., n.d.) p. 408.

PEACE, RELIGION AND NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Peace is one of the basic features and essential requirements of civilized life. This, however, is the form and ideal, and not merely a description of some civilizations in the distant past or of contemporary social life. We are mentioning it in the very beginning for the simple reason that we want to emphasise the normative character of the virtue, termed Peace, regardless of the fact whether it was, or was not, fully practised in the past. It is only when we keep in view this aspect of Peace that we may be able to see its relevance for all ages: past, present and future. The human imperfection or failure in this regard is only an added argument for the conscious choice and practice of Peace to enable man to move on to the next and higher level of biological and spiritual evolution.

Second, the virtues have, in their practice, remarkable susceptibility to influence by cultural patterns and mores. India has, in spite of almost incessant attacks and occupations by the people who came from other lands and cultures, survived in its characteristic option for peace and synthesis. Here we may notice that even traditions which were shaped and nursed carefully to assert the authenticity of human life and struggle against tyranny, were grounded very firmly in the ideals of love and fearlessness. A reading of the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, reminds us of the ideal of neither violating the self-respect of others, nor capitulating to any such attempt by the others (*bhai k̄hūn kau det nahi, nahi bhai mānat ān*). This tradition has imparted a dynamic character to the spiritual ground for social relations envisaged in the ideal of Peace. It may, therefore, be fruitful if we seek to revitalise our consciousness of the religious heritage, with

a view to use its energy for motivating men to realize the positive contents of a peaceful World. This is the reason for our thinking of Religion while talking of Peace.

Third, India is a land of multi-language, multi-religious, and multi-racial groups. A facility to foster peace, through *geo-bond* or geographic identity, may be convertible into an international reality, by its example and influence. The expression 'geographic' is here used in its original but general meaning of 'earth-rootedness'. National consciousness, in this sense, is the fundamental awareness of deeper relationship which transcends any or other differences. It is a demarcation of the viable larger group, which of course does not exclude still larger groups of men coming together, to contribute positively for sustaining through building a happy and evolving family of man. National consciousness, in our context, is the urgent and absolutely necessary requirement for the national and international peace. It must contribute towards organising efforts by every member of the nation to achieve higher levels of economic prosperity and emotional harmony. We may recall our struggle for independence and near-mythical contribution of stalwarts, such as Mahatma Gandhi. A national consciousness may now inspire efforts to recapture and sustain the ideal of national unity and peace, inspired by our moral and social visionaries. This may be a smaller, but necessary, hop before the final jump.

After introducing ourselves to the three inter-related outlines of our subject we may now proceed to examine their contents in a little more detail. Let us begin with Peace. The word may indicate both negative as well as positive state of national and international relations. In its negative connotation, the word Peace may be used for the much talked-about 'tolerance'. This is a negative aspect of peace as tolerance may merely indicate 'forbearance without approval'. It may be inspired by, as well as strongly reinforce, psychological tension born of disapproval. Calls for mere 'co-existence' are often masked pleas for tolerance. In itself, it indicates a state of affairs higher than lack of tolerance. But it suffers from the defect that it is neither deep nor lasting solution of the problem of relations. It is not denied that the idea and practice of tolerance is almost as old

as the man himself. It may also be conceded that it has its utility in most of the social, religious, economic and political relations. We may further add that religious conflicts in the Western world during 16th and 17th centuries might be responsible for the emergence and use of the word 'tolerance' itself. We are reminded by a scholar that "It was only after painful struggles that the mind of Western Europe was emancipated from the conviction that it is the essence of religion to be intolerant". We thus see that the transition from essentially intolerant to inessential intolerance was worked out in the religious view of the social relations. This negation of the negative, however, does not result in the mathematical positive. In the psychological sphere, it merely results in generating a different type of tension. In the East, generally, and in India, particularly, we have sought to view peace as a tension-free positive state of human relations. The foundations of such a peace are to be laid in love and sacrifice of the self. The ideal of *samanabhava*, as interpreted and propagated by Mahatma Gandhi, reminds us of the genuine elements of the human peace. The negative meanings implied in tolerance may often be a sanction for the perpetuation of the race for the survival of the fittest. This, incidentally, might have been the process involved in the last leap of biological evolution resulting in the emergence of man. But it cannot be elevated as the ideal in the world where humans, though weak, humble and underdeveloped, merit, as well as have right to, live and prosper. Our concept of Peace, therefore, demands more positive contents. We have hinted at this while mentioning love and sacrifice of the self as the foundations of human peace. We may now add cooperation as the third element. The positive aspect of self-sacrifice lies in the cultivation of expansive consciousness. The narrow egoistic awareness is transformed into ever-expanding consciousness towards cosmic realization. This consciousness prevents us, from within, from cornering all opportunities and resources. A person who only thinks of himself and continuously plans to further only his interests soon creates explosive situations disturbing peace. It is an elementary lesson that dissatisfaction and fear have never supported mansions of peace. This is the essential feature of Peace at

the individual, social and international level. The ambition to possess by dispossessing or cornering resources and opportunities is self-defeating. True Peace is in growing and helping others to grow. This view of Peace introduces us to the most important positive characteristic of peace. It lies in work and not in withdrawal. There is cooperative participation and not negative renunciation. Thus, true peace is cooperative building up and development for the good of all. When we raise a falling, or fallen one, we, through him, cement the bond which is Peace. Peace, therefore, is not a state of society but a living relation. It is not something which prevails but something which lives. The living tissue of Peace is the man himself. This concept of Peace is forward-looking, and optimistic.

After this elementary introduction with the positive and human peace, we may now seek to discover the role which religion can, and ought to, play in fostering peace. Religion is pre-eminently a process and ideal of union. The very word religion itself derives its meaning and validity from the act of binding together or uniting. It may be conceded that at the highest level, the primary object of union is sought in God-realization. But what is sometimes forgotten is that union with God does not involve the exclusion of union among men and through men. Religious consummation envisages binding together of man with man before it can realize the zenith of its union with the Ground of all creation. One of the essential tests of spiritual realization is related to the conduct of the person. We ask, 'Is his consciousness and conduct unitive or separative?' In case of the latter, we may declare his realization to be fake and misconceived, because socio-spiritual realization is a single continuum. Hatred for the fellow-humans and love for God do not go together. In fact even an apathy towards men and loving urge towards the Divine is, in the religious realm, an inconsistent conduct. One of the very first lessons learnt at the feet of the realized masters refers to the state of *nā ko bairī nahīn bigānā sagal sangi ham kau bani āeī*. (S.G.G.S. p. 1299). It is the preliminary religious state of neither regarding anyone as enemy nor a stranger, but cultivating harmony with all. The whole burden of Mahatma Gandhi's religious and political life

is also seen to be on this firm rock. He continued throughout his life, the struggle for the socio-political values but his source of strength and direction for the struggle was always regulated by his spiritual commitment. We have to rediscover Mahatma Gandhi for ourselves to fully comprehend the possibilities of ethical and spiritual regulation of the social and political objectives and conduct. Such a call for rediscovery may sound strange in the land of Mahatma himself but its urgency cannot be sacrificed to its novel nature. There is need for a re-evaluation and application of Mahatma's vision for realizing peace which comes through 'binding together' or union-based harmony.

Here we must pause and seek to understand a traditional charge against religion. We are very often reminded by critics that religion has caused many conflicts and many atrocious aggressions have been committed in its name. Peace, therefore, may be possible only when social relations are regulated pragmatically in a religion-free society. Religion, we are advised, should in this set up be limited to the bounds of the subjective self. We may not have the time here to fully discuss the untenability of such a superficially grafted view but we may hint at it by submitting that ideologies, which are often offered as alternatives to religions have bred more cruelty and barbarious violations of the humanity in man. It is now the experience of mankind that more blood-shed has been caused and misery against the personality of man perpetuated in the name of these so-called ideologies. It is therefore easy for us to see that the fashionable charge of aggression against religion is based on only a partial underlining of human history. It is, in a way, a fallacy of substantiating an abstraction. Even a cursory glance at the recent history of man will not fail to show how powerful men or nations have sought to exploit others in one garb or the other. Ideologies, in view of their superficial modernity, have provided more situations of heightened suggestibilities facilitating acts of individual and organised violence. It is, therefore, easy to realise that when the same spirit of exploitation attempts and succeeds in sheltering itself in the institutional crevices of religion, the failure is of man and not that of religion. We may now take up the second indictment

against religion as a potent ground for peace. It has been opined by some that it breeds inactivity and is used as a sedative to blind people to inflict misery and exploitation. The peace generated by religion may, therefore, be a peace of grave. Whatever might be the bases for experiences of people coming to this conclusion, or accepting this conclusion without experiences the unbiased testimony clearly contradicts such a generalisation. In fact, the religious men do activity. We may here refer to the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur. A hurried reading may cause the illusion that the Guru is advising withdrawal and renunciation of the social context. A teaching to free oneself from the slavery of attachment may be misread as a call for inactivity. However, such a conclusion meets its experiential falsification in what happened in Delhi when he struggled against exploitation of the weak by a might of the emperor and finally even laid down his life for the right of people to live their lives. We can cite examples at other levels also to show how religion has inspired men to great activity, individually and socially. The example of Mahatma Gandhi readily comes to our mind. His whole struggle derived its meaning and purpose from his religious experience.

What can be the contribution of religion to peace may be the next question for us to deal with? In reply, we may submit that cardinal elements of religion lie in *faith, love* and *service*. It is taught by religion that man's existence is neither accidental nor meaningless. Similarly, the brotherhood of man is the realization of the spiritual reality. Even if a person is not able to see it initially, such a realization is inspired and sustained by faith. It is faith in the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. The faith in the omnipresence of God in His creation is the preamble of religious creed. It is almost a universally accepted truth in religion. This, incidentally, also acts as the major premise for realising our intimate and inestrageable relation with the fellow human beings. Our faith in God becomes the mainspring of our deeper faith in man. A wider popularisation of this faith and its practice can provide us with the much-sought deeper bases of enduring peace. We have just mentioned the practice of this faith. We may now suggest its practice in love and service. The

Sevagram-*ashrams* set up by Mahatma Gandhi, and elements of service in other religious traditions, require a more comprehensive and wider understanding and acceptance. We are, at this point, only hinting at the great potentialities of these religious elements in the service of Peace.

We have now arrived at an important stage in the development of our theme. We shall at this point look for the proving ground for the ideas considered so far. We may, in this context, suggest the cultivation of national consciousness as the tangible and concrete expressions of our sincere desire for Peace. It is not denied that ultimate ideal of Peace demands its extension to international or cosmic limits but, for our present purpose, we may take the case of our own country to view the implications of Peace at the national level. The choice of our own country might appear to be appropriate when we remember that states of our country are bigger than many European countries, and many of our cities might be larger than the city-states of the early Greeks. Second, Peace through prosperity in India is included in the programmes for prosperity based Peace in the world. India is a part of the world and we are presently, concerned with it directly for our understanding of, and working for, the human peace. This may be our concrete contribution towards world Peace.

We had earlier noticed that India is one of the most multi-language, multi-religious, and multi-racial societies. We must seek to discover and actualise the bond which will make different men "cooperate for the same end of prosperity, peace and harmony among men of good will." It is a search for the "comprehension of the cooperative force of overcoming barriers of language, distance and deeply rooted prejudices." We may, in this quest, direct our attention to the earlier passage where we had outlined national consciousness as the fundamental awareness of our citizens which transcends any or all difference in the spirit of a cooperative endeavour to work for the common prosperity, and happiness. However, we must realize the difficult nature of our task if we mean to attain the objectives and not merely voice niceties. The first step in this direction lies in overcoming the state of helplessness and despondency which necessarily arises from cultural estrangement and alienation. We must remind all

generations of their common bonds of heritage and inculcate a sense of inspiring pride in it. Unfortunately, under the influence of various factors, we have alienated ourselves from our earth-rootedness and common heritage. Some have even come to suspect the value of our national culture and have conducted frantic, as well as meaningless, search in other cultures and social techniques. The loss accruing from this self-destructive criticism has made them autumn leaves, greying in their own estrangement. This is a state of self-caused misery. One of the very useful techniques in psychotherapy lies in making an individual conscious of the real malady causing damage at the sub-conscious level. The national psycho-therapy, in a way, may make us conscious of our sub-conscious suppression of our national and cultural uniqueness. Let us depart from our prepared texts in the class-rooms and remind the younger generation of the common heritage and inter-twined fate of all Indians. This national consciousness may be reinforced by identifying areas of national endeavour where we may do our utmost to further the interests of humanity. This may give us higher levels of self-confidence, and individual initiative may, in this process, become an indistinguishable part of the national initiative.

We may now conclude: An attempt has been made in this paper to suggest a few elements of peace which ought to characterise the quality of human conduct in his journey to peace, and through peace. For this we may also propose a change in the traditional ideal of "live and let live" to be replaced by "Grow and help others to Grow." This is the real peace as well as the true *mārg*.

ECUMENIC PERCEPTIONS AND IDEALS IN HINDUISM AND SIKHISM

There is hardly any religious vision in the world which does not have potential for ecumenicity of some kind inbuilt to its internal experience and social expression. The religion not only seeks wider attraction but also attempts to sustain the attracted wide variety of people into its fold. The ecumenism is, in this way, not only the character of the starting spiritual experience but a continuing need and ideal of its prophets and followers as well.

It is also the starting and continuing concern of Reverend Sun Myung Moon, whose early ideal of the "Unity of the Christian Church" and the present 'unification' church is an expression of the ever widening ecumenical spiritual vision. Ever since my meeting with Reverend Sun Myung Moon and Reverend Chung Hwan Kwak, I have felt greatly impressed by the spiritual revelation leading the people to embrace more and more in the spirit of love and self-sacrifice. Moved by this spiritual revelation, our great friends in the Council For The World's Religion are developing this Council into the world's biggest forum for an ecumenic venture of intra-religious and inter-faith perceptions and ideals.

There are three dimensions of the elements of Ecumenicity in Hinduism and Sikhism. Our task of presenting these dimensions as 'The Hindu View' is, however, fraught with many difficulties. The beliefs which are now often identified as Hindu view are so widely divergent from each other or sometimes in such conflict with each other that regardless of what is said, a contrary view can always be presented with some degree of cogency, and certain historical evidence can also be adduced in its support. Those who like to entertain a purist view of the *Advaita Vidanta*, find it to be a

wholehearted and exclusive advocacy of Truth and Knowledge as the final path of self-realization. All other events and activities are seen to be merely 'on path' adjuncts or supports which are finally perceived to be illusions and, therefore, non-existent in reality. However, an *Advaita* follower, in his search for knowledge of the reality cannot, in principle, uphold that 'Truth is sectarian' in character or that there is anything like an impossibility of everyone knowing it without being formally associated with any particular sect. Any real notion of Truth, as Truth, has to be an ecumenical idea in character. The search for Truth or the knowledge of Reality may be initiated from as many centres as are the seekers in the world, and all of them, in principle, are capable of realizing it. All the Hindu seers, who realized the Truth must have experienced it in the ecumenical spirit and character. There appears to be a subtle recognition that a close-Truth view is merely a human limitation. It may be a necessity of human finitude but cannot be the nature of the infinite. The whole of Hindu search for Truth has waged a ceaseless effort to retrieve the ideal of Truth from the recurring fences of sectarian claims to it. The Epics, the *Vedas*, the *Upanisads*, the six schools and the laterday spiritual developments in Hinduism show a sustained effort to separate the goal from the path, although it has often led to the introduction of many more pathways to it. The sects have bound the seeker to the goal but have not fettered him to the paths. There are many claims to the exclusive routes to the goal but the very logic of such claims have revealed the elements of the ecumenism. The exclusiveness claims are paradoxical in nature. The claims for their truth are the admissions of the other possibility. The presently understood concepts of the relativity of the dimensions bring to our minds the knowledge of the possibility of reaching it from various points of departures. The same point of arrival necessarily involving the same point of departure is a concept which is derived from awareness of the finite and not applicable to Infinite Truth and the Infinite Knowledge of it. The geo-counterpart of the thought-systems and worship patterns therewith have introduced element of vastness and variety within Hinduism. We may call it as *intra-Hindu ecumenism*. Every growth and development

entails ecumenism, whether it be formally identified and proclaimed as such or accepted unconsciously and in the course of slow and gradual change. The negative aspect of this growth is seen as a compromise and on many occasions resented as such. A 'return' to the earlier or the 'reformation' is then not unoften sought or actually introduced. But all reformations carry the ecumenical dialectic a step further in this direction. It leads to the compromise of the compromise. There is no going back and a recognition of this aspect of the search for the Truth at various levels of the individuals can go a long way from freeing humankind from a needless attempt at reversals. God does not forsake His creation at any point, and openness is a continuous invitation for movement towards Him. Truth here is being conceived as God and pursued as the goal.

The Truth and sects have been the goal and the character of the earlier Indian tradition spread over vast area and long time. The freedom for pluralistic possibilities of reaching truth has arisen from the inner experience and outside social conditions. It has a wide spectrum between the earlier *Brahmanical* and the later Hindu character of its doctrinal content. The latter is a development in its ecumenical society which continuously undertakes reappraisal of its truth movement and rule compliance. The search for truth has been widening its ecumenical base.

Although there are numerous ways in which the earlier Indian philosophy and religious sects can be classified and grouped, yet we seek to view it in three phases, pro-Sikh Hinduism, Hinduism from the fifteenth to the middle of the twentieth century, and from nineteen hundred forty-seven till date. It is rather a very broad and bold division. We have done it merely for making some generalised statement. One could, perhaps, also make different classification and arrive at somewhat different generalisation subserving different objectives. Our approach is more a doctrinal and comparative one.

There are some important features of the earlier Indian society upto fourteen hundred and sixty-nine (the birth of Guru Nanak). There was the entry of the *Aryans* into Panjab and the subsequent moving into the other parts of India. The

general view that the *Vedas* were revealed in the Punjab shows that the development of the new religion of the *Aryans* took place in the Punjab. It later spread to the other parts of India and the acceptance in Hinduism of the many sacred deities and practices which were native to India prior to the *Aryan* coming to India shows it to be a very open thought system although the word ecumenical as being used here is an extended sense. We are aware that assimilation is not ecumenism in the general sense. In the historical sense of its use it is reflected initially in the intra-tradition coming together of the different sects for an understanding and the application of the different interpretations of the common spiritual heritage. We are using the ecumenical word for the Hindu approach to the assimilation of the native tradition because this assimilation did not neutralise their identity. On the contrary, it led to the extension of the seal of validity to other traditions as well. There was also some internal insulation of the earlier notions of their own. Nevertheless there was acceptance of the different to be also valid and worthy of preservation. It is not being suggested that nothing was lost or destroyed. There are always, in all the societies, such cycles of change whenever it faces a new thought system or structure of beliefs and worship.

In the middle of the fifteenth century India, Sikhism claimed a fresh revelation and the new religion saw many notions of the Islamic monothism to be in concord with its own religious experiences. The first and important feature of the Sikh religion was its overwhelming ecumenic approach not only towards the faith stock of its origin but also towards an entirely different religious tradition namely Islam. Its disregard for the distinction conferring caste, sought to extend still further the bounds of the intra-Hindu ecumenism. Its consequence was the impetus to openness and admission of the respective validity of inter-pluralism, which is the indirect but important core of ecumenic ideas and practice. The position of the lower caste persons and untouchables acquired a new and higher degree of validity. This happened within Hinduism because as far as the Sikhism was concerned, all the persons who were earlier considered low were now granted an equal status. It did not merely raise their status but

demolished all bases of any distinctions of the higher and the lower castes. This was not intra-ecumenism, but inter-ecumenism. A fresh spiritual experience was being proclaimed alongwith an ethical value system which sought to bring to an ecumenic opening not only the earlier sects but also the newly introduced spiritual vision from the Middle East. The spectrum at its widest point appears to be tangent even to the religious places of both the spiritual traditions of the East and the Middle East. The earlier house of the *Aryans* had also contributed the *Sūfī* mystic ecumenism which centred around the love of One Truth. The Sikh Gurus honoured this vision and sentiment and included the hymns of the *Sūfī* lover of One Truth, Sheikh Farid, in the scripture which it was compiling for the 'New Man' who sought and respected Truth even beyond the humanly drawn social demarcations. It was indeed a very unique opening towards the larger spiritual self without any consideration of the smaller constraints imposed by the limitation of the matter. The material may be the vehicle of the spirit which accepts love and surrender as the bases for the realization of religion. Any religion which recognises *Bhaktī*, and, or search for truth as the primary aims cannot deny the world-wide relationship among the seekers of *Bhaktī* and truth. The genuineness of the *Bhaktī* element is known by the love it generates. We are often told in the Sikh congregations about the visit and petition of the Hindu saints from Kashmir to the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, to defend the faith against the strongly launched campaign of forcible conversion to the faith of the rulers. His own response, as well as the concurrence of his young son, the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, was for a surrender of the ninth Guru for martyrdom. We have cited this well known incident for two reasons. First, Guru Tegh Bahadur is one of the most outstanding models of the *Bhaktī* contemplation in India. He had spent long years in the adoration and *Bhaktī* of God and had voluntarily allowed himself to be twice bypassed for the office of the Guru. And as a epitome of *Bhaktī*, he did not hesitate in surrendering himself for martyrdom for social and religious cause, of an ecumenic character. It is, therefore, wrong to accuse religion and religious perceptions of causing and supporting narrow and negative passions. The negative

emotional responses of the human beings arise from an inverted perception of the material world. The ruthless urge for possessing what does cause destruction! Guru Nanak, the first *Guru*, recorded his anguish against the invading armies of Babar into India. Guru Nanak was a religious preceptor but his emotional expression for a social concern shows how religion has come to the rescue of the sufferer and stood by him. How the pain and the torture of the other person have evoked an empathic concord in the religious person is also amply visible in the life stories of the *Gurus* and their followers. The teachings of the *Gurus* on this theme are so numerous and powerful that no body can miss noticing them in the scripture as well as the history. In many cases the earlier ecumenic notions and teachings of the great Hindu *Bhakatas* are found in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. In the face of this evidence, of the large heartedness and everwidening concern of the Hindu *Bhakats*, as collected and preserved by the Sikh *Gurus* in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, it is easy for us to see the great heights to which the ecumenism of the Hindu *Bhakatas* had reached. It, therefore, appears to be an erroneous charge against religion that it promotes the narrow and oppressive emotions leading to conflict. The evidence of the potential and actual ecumenic elements in the Hindu and the Sikh *Bhaktī* sentiments also finds its counterparts in the other faiths of the world. The list of the great mystics of love and compassion in Christianity begins with Lord Jesus himself and continues through its long history. Similarly, Prophet Mohammad, the *Caliphs*, the *Imams* and the subsequent *Sūfī* mystics including Sheikh Farid have left enough evidence of their ecumenic perceptions of the spiritual love and its expression in the human society. The great concern of Lord Buddha and Lord Mahavira are also known for their spiritual and social love for men. We can easily find such examples in the life of Zarathushtra and other religious founders and in the history of the faiths founded by them. The Parsi cousins of the earlier arrived *Aryans* into India have also displayed an outstanding example of seeking to understand and live their faiths in the worldwide context of fellow religionists and persons of other faiths. The recent religious vision and faith system of the unification church is

yet another impressive example of how ecumenism is inbuilt element of a genuine spiritual inspiration grounded in love of God and of His human beings. The more one comes to know of its spiritual principle, as well as the social conduct of its founder, its Apostles, executive administrators, and other members, the more one feels touched very deeply by its ecumenic concern.

There is the third element of ecumenism which is reflected in the combination of the search for Truth, Love, contemplation including surrender, and social service much beyond the community bounds of one's sect or religious tradition. A question may be raised here. Is ecumenism merely a matter of intellect, or does it also need to be reflected in the activity of the persons involved in it? The Sikh view requires a complete harmony between the thought, word, and act. Guru Nanak's long and continuous journeys to the faith centres of the other sects and ecumenic meetings were continued even by Guru Gobind Singh. The latter Guru moved from Patna to Anandpur through Paonta and then to Nander in the South. This covers a big part of India. He also recovered the classical religious literature and it forms a part of the *Dasam Granth* associated with his name. But apart from this intellectual effort of the Gurus in which we come across the most outstanding ecumenic examples of the *Guru Granth Sahib* and *Dasam Granth*, we also learn of the ecumenism in action initiated by the Gurus. Beginning with the imparting of education to all without any feeling of discrimination, sharing of the food with everyone who comes which is absolutely different from any charity feeding the acceptance of the martyrdom for the cause of others, the Sikh Gurus have presented a wide spectrum of the ecumenism in life and social activity. Thus ecumenism is not perceived as a mere intellectual assent to the possibility of truth lying beyond the boundaries of one's faith-system, but it extends to even dying for defending these truths, or rights to these truths. The voluntary surrender of one's life for defending the right of others to live their religions, is a unique conative ecumenism. There are countless teachings and examples of this aspect of the social concern in Sikhism. We also find that the Hindu saints had showed their concern for generating resources to

provide for the comforts of those people who came to the religious places, or to religious people, for seeking spiritual knowledge or to escape from the mundane miseries. The whole idea of setting up *Tīrath* (pilgrimage) centres as common access to a shared centre of spiritual solace is an old Indian notion. The often repeated story of how river *Ganga* was sought and received for the greater social good is an inspiring teaching for others to emulate. The banks of the river *Ganga* have attracted saints and devotees of many Hindu sects, and an intellectual and social ecumenism has been witnessed there.

This is, perhaps, also the place to mention two religious movements which have been influenced by Sikhism and have stayed close to the banks of the river *Ganga*. It may, perhaps, not be fair to limit them in this way; nevertheless, these two traditions have stayed close to the *Tīrath* (pilgrimage) centres where the Hindu sects are also located. These include *Uddāssī* and *Nirmalā* movement. The former is claimed to be inspired by Baba Siri Chand, the son of Guru Nanak. The *Nirmalās* trace their commission to the command of the Gurus to acquire the traditional learning and share it with all without any discrimination or distinction. The *Nirmalā* saints are great exponents of non-dualism. Most of them dress up in saffron clothes and combine the Sikh *rahit* with the non-dualistic teachings of the Sikh Gurus. These saints have often entered into ecumenic meetings with the non-dualistic sects of Hinduism. They have held on to their own teachings as well as interacted with others. They have produced a good number of learned persons who were well versed in the traditional Indian learning.

We may now briefly allude to the third phase of the ecumenic developments in Hindu and Sikh perceptions and ideals. We can refer to this period as beginning with nineteen hundred and forty-seven till date, in a very general sense. The growing national movements prior to this period had a significant religious overtone. Although these are witnessed even now but the increasing pressure of secularism has not often tended to blame religion for all the social and material ills. The advocates of secularism have tended to assume two postures. These are related to the two possible meanings of

the word secular. In the usual negative sense it means the lack of any religious identity or association. The generally used Indian version however refers to it as equal respect and tolerance of all the religions. The Indian version opens up the ecumenic possibilities very significantly; The usual charge of the negative secularism against the narrowness and socially harmful divisiveness of religion is somewhat misplaced and gross in its accusation. It seems to arise from a prejudice against religion without adequate and objective analysis. The Indian society is even today deeply religious in outlook and practice. There is, however, great need for the coming together of all the sects and religious traditions for greater ecumenic understanding of their own religions as well interacting more harmoniously in their social interaction. We hope that the Council For The World's Religions will continue its prophetic task of bringing greater light and effort to promoting and accelerating this pace of ecumenic perceptions and ideals. To this we should all sincerely dedicate ourselves.

We should then be able to go beyond the negative secularism. Our ecumenic fulfilment may show that nothing need to be whittled away from the richness of a genuine religious life, nor there is any need to opt for the meagreness of the merely secular. Towards this we may move.

THE NATURE OF GURUSHIP*

The comparative study of religion is one of the most thrilling and bold ventures of man to transcend the subjective theological frontiers and to attempt a view of the religious phenomena from a wider perspective. Occasionally, it also enables a person to have a deeper understanding of one's own faith in the light of some central or key notion of another religious tradition. This purpose appears to have been planned in *The Nature of Guruship*. It may be seen as a valuable and fruitful attempt by the Christian College, Batala, who first organised a Seminar on the above subject and have now published the seminar papers, numbering eighteen, in the form of the book under review. The book indeed has all the merits and faults associated with a seminar situation. The subjects dealt with cover an ambitious expanse and include Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh religious traditions wherein the idea of Guru is searched for and presented as cogently as the subject matter appears to inspire the contributors. The religious developments, such as *Namdhari*, *Nirankari*, and *Radha Swami*, have also received equal attention in the volume. The writers of the papers appear to be conscious of the fact that their view has to be presented to those who may or may not belong to the religious tradition of the writer and this concern to communicate has often diminished the authentic meaning which the idea of Guru has in various religious traditions. Some writers have even sought to soften the hard tradition with a view to make them appear more rational and exalted. Here the writer does not attempt to present a structure which could do justice to the doctrine as well as the practice but attempts to tailor the phenomenon to

*Edited by Clarence O. Mc Mullen,
(I.S.P.C.K., Delhi. 1976. PP. 217; Paper back. Rs. 30)

his conception of the Guru in his religious tradition. This may not satisfy the 'outsider' who has some idea of the tradition and also in the process only adds to the confusion of the 'insider' who belongs to the related tradition. The writer sounds more like a prophet than like a student who seeks to understand and explain. An attentive reader may even feel that the writer is not explaining but explaining away the subject matter of his study.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part deals with the scriptural view of Guruship. Dealing with Hindu Scriptures, B.B. Chaubey observes that in the early portion of the Vedic literature we do not come across the word *Guru*. He then proceeds to give us an enumeration of other words used for the teacher and the performer of certain religious rituals. The paper of J.M. Sharma deals with the nature of Guruship in *Arya Samaj*. In a lucid and crisp manner he illustrates the idea of Guruship in *Arya Samaj* by referring to two events in the early life of its founder, Swami Dayanand Saraswati. We are told how Dayanand was disappointed with his father as Guru. Subsequently, though Dayanand met number of gurus, *yogis* and teachers, not one could come up to his ideal of a *guru*. He then realized the need to study the ancient sources of Hinduism and it was this decision that led Dayananda to his guru, Swami Virajananda Saraswati, who hailed from Punjab but lived in Mathura. Swami Virajananda, we are told, was a scholar of Sanskrit grammar. According to Mr. Sharma, Swami Dayananda has defined *Guru* as he who dispels wrong notions and leads to right knowledge. It is obvious that *guru*, in this sense, is a person who teaches.

We may now refer to Fr. Martin Poothokaren whose paper deals with "The Priest as Guru." He begins with the observation that this paper looks at the concept of priesthood only from Roman Catholic point of view. He also points out that the concept and functions of the priest are not identical in all Christian Churches. According to him, Jesus was himself called "the High Priest". We are also told that the 'priesthood of Jesus is continued in the Church'. And 'the Pope is the visible head of the Catholic Church and successor of St. Peter, on whom, Christ promised. He would build His Church. It is the Catholic belief that Pope, as the head of the

Bishops, enjoys infallibility by virtue of his office when he officially teaches the Universal church on matters of faith and morals. Another Christian scholar, M.Caleb, has also dealt with 'the Nature of Guruship according to the Christian Tradition.' He begins by soliciting us that 'the idea of guruship comes from Indian religious traditions and not from Semetic ones...' He then proceeds to state 'the functions and nature of a *guru*, according to the Indian tradition...' He enlightens us about the post-Vedic, Buddhist, Tantric and Sikh traditions. However, he, at this stage, forgets to make any distinction between the *gurus* in different religious traditions and appears to assure that nature and function of a *guru* or *Guru* is identical in various religious traditions. And on *page seventy* three we find him beginning his paragraphs with 'The prophets' and 'The gurus' without feeling any necessity of revealing to the bewildered reader the identity of 'the guru' or the religious traditions he is talking about, or has in mind. The omission, however, appears to be an intended one because we find that he actually lumps all the Indian religious traditions together and assumes that all religious traditions originating in India agree in their idea of *guru* or *Guru*. We have a hint of such an assumption in his statement that 'the prophets unlike the *gurus* and teachers in the Indian tradition...' (P.74). He sums up his deep analysis with the observation 'The *gurus* and the prophets, and Jesus all have a deep experience of God and all share it with others. They are all communicators of divine truth. They are all God's *spokesmen*.'

One may, at this point, recall the statement of the Editor of the book, C.O., Mc Mullen, that the papers dealing with the Sikh and Christian scriptures definitely see the *Guru* as God. Obviously, this conclusion does not appear to be well supported by at least some papers, including the one by M. Caleb. One may, however, refer to the paper of Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, whose paper on 'The Concept of Guruship in the Sikh Tradition' described by the Editor as the orthodox view, is perhaps the clearest statement in respect of the Sikh religion. Professor Talib points out that the Sikh tradition has 'imparted a multiplicity of new connotations and implications.' He explains that 'on the one hand, it (*guru*)

refers to the human Preceptor, the medium so to say, between the seeker's self and God. On the other, it signifies the Creator.' He has an explanation for this equivocation. According to him the reason 'that Guru should have been employed for God as also for the human Preceptor' is traceable to the 'mystical postulate of the merging of the perfect Preceptor's self into the Divine Reality, in which it is immersed'. He assures us that 'in the Sikh tradition there is no confusion regarding the term Guru when it is used for man and when for God'. He also stresses the point that 'nothing in the philosophical thought of Sikhism suggests *worship* of any human person or any object other than what in the *Guru's* teaching is known by names like *Ek Oankār, Kartā Purukh, Akāl, Pār-Brahm, and Nirankār.*'

All this is informative and clear. But a reader may feel that the papers in respect of Sikhism fall far short of any real statement about the nature and status of God as Guru, Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh as Gurus and *Guru Granth Sahib* as *Guru*. Secondly, the qualitative differences in meaning of the word *worship* when used in the context of God, or Guru as the 'Sacred' are neither explored nor communicated. It is common knowledge that *Guru Granth Sahib* is considered to be 'sacred' in the Sikh tradition. It assumes the role of the 'concrete-sacred' and helps to arouse and sustain the religiosity of the devotee. It is, therefore, not proper to dismiss this phenomenon as 'erringly worshipped' or 'error in worship' as a writer has done. A much more useful academic approach would, perhaps, lie in attempting an analysis of the religious consciousness of the person who seeks to invest the 'concrete-sacred' with the divine attribute and grounds his religiosity in this feeling of the divine presence. One may remind the upholders of the 'error school' that there are all shades and levels of religious consciousness which the members of a religious tradition experience and manifest in respect of elements which may occupy a crucial and central position in their faiths. However, the writers of various essays may point out to us that the division of the 'popular' and 'doctrinal' is relevant and academically meaningful. Further, an academician, they may argue, is concerned with the doctrinal approach and as such he cannot

help attributing a negative value to what he considers to be a departure from the doctrine as taught by the founders. And this precisely seems to be the approach of most of the papers. The writers have very sincerely attempted to present the nature of guruship as they expect 'is' the doctrine in their religious tradition. This, in itself, is quite an achievement, because the seminar is planned in an inter-religious setting. We are told by the Editor 'that the *guru* is a present reality which Christians need to take cognisance of; not only for their spiritual life but also *for the development of an Indian Christology*.' We hope that the book will help to realize this objective. The book, on the whole, is highly readable and informative. It is also useful for the students of Comparative Religion.

LOVE OF WISDOM
A PERSPECTIVE IN THE RELEVANCE
OF METAPHYSICS

The immediate provocation for writing these lines came from a small event. I was visiting a Saint and when I arrived there, I found the Saint surrounded by a large gathering. It was an assorted kind of group. The number of persons present were many times more than the ones who had been joining our courses in Philosophy, even though the ones who came to us for the 'love of wisdom' could have the additional motivation of being able to 'bake the bread' with the degree which our system promised and which was important for the art of obtaining an appointment in the trade. Even after making an allowance for the explanation that to us came only those who sought a degree, or that the Saint was not only a dealer in wisdom but also retailing charms, or dispensing supernatural grace, it still disconcerted me to acknowledge that men of all educational levels took his discourse more seriously than the seriousness with which a few of those who came to us, listened and understood what we said in our class rooms. While our 'analysis' failed to evoke much interest or some understanding, the Saint was being heard very attentively on the subjects, such as nature of reality and our knowledge of it. Many of you may be wondering as to why I am saying all this.

It is not the intention of this paper to compare religion and philosophy, nor to sing praises of the practitioners of faith, but merely to highlight that the urge for metaphysics is being kept alive by the lay seeker of knowledge. But is it really so?

It may be pointed out to us that what the Saint was doing could not be termed as metaphysics. And this may also

involve the question, 'How do we define metaphysics?' The persons who deny that the Saint was 'doing metaphysics' may have a particular definition of metaphysics in mind, and the objector may also, although not necessarily, hold that the method and the language used by the Saint was not as refined as the one required by the metaphysical concepts. The jargon of the philosophers doing metaphysics, it may be pointed out to us, is different from the one being used by the Saint. But then, does the jargon of the philosophers always convey more clearly what is sought to be conveyed? How do the teachers of wisdom carry on their philosophy lecture in the class room? Have they, or have they not, experienced the need to choose expressions which they have known to be inaccurate but necessary steps for reaching to the level of the seeker of the knowledge? Is the Saint adopting any different course? Shall we not seek to know whether metaphysics must necessarily be always worded in a language very different from the one used in the ordinary discourse?

We are familiar with the views of those who have opted for propositions, which are different from the ordinary language propositions. Similarly, some persons have voiced the need to devise a grammar which will eliminate the confusing meaning of 'existence' in the propositions containing the words, 'is' or their equivalents. Should we not devise the language, grammar and logic which may describe only events and relations? Should we not do away with the language and logic which gives rise to the mistaken notions of Substance and Attributes? Will the Saint become irrelevant for all those who opt for the use of the new language? For me, it is difficult to accept that metaphysical system building is symptomatic of only 'language failure'. The language, it is known, has undergone great changes. We also know that many a time the modern interpreter of the ancient thought is only re-paraphrasing the given texts, in the language of his own times. A change in the language is, therefore, a witnessed phenomenon. But should this, by itself, lead to the exclusion of metaphysics from the world of philosophy?

An impatient listener may interject at this stage and point out to us that the change in the grammar and logic sought by those interested in the elimination of metaphysics,

would have it based in the 'sensory verification' criterion. Such naive 'necessary' and 'the only' criterion-of-knowledge claims had been raised in the past also but they lacked the arrogance of the modern claims. What is the modern view in respect of the language of knowledge? or should we change the question to ask, what are the modern views about the nature and use of language? Does it consist of mere communications of the definitions in use? Is it meaningful only when it is so used? It may not, perhaps, be possible to undertake here a detailed examination of the various approaches to this subject matter. We may, however, refer to the view that language is a tool which needs to be 'sharpened'. Our anxiety is that occasionally this view also leads to the conclusion that there are areas of human experience which cannot be tackled with these very sharpened tools and are, therefore, either not worthy of attention or at best can only be treated as emotive expressions. Thus, it is possible that a certain view of truth may be made to point to a certain kind of language and logic, or it is also possible that a certain view about the nature of language and logic may lead one to a particular view of truth. The sensory-criterion may mislead one to a package view of language and logic. We are seeking to point out that such a procedure is not philosophy but a working out of the implications of a view, if and when so held by a believer. In itself, it is no less a faith than the one displayed by the follower of the Saint. There is, additionally, one difficulty about it. The emphasis of this view is mostly negative and restrictive. It seeks to limit the human experience to certain preconceived limits in the name of the meaningfulness of the language. We are not denying that there are levels of development in the communication as well as the understanding of the communication. Perhaps those seeking to take the language beyond the domain of the ordinarily intelligible frontiers are also conscious of the limits of the language. Their dissatisfaction with it is also articulated by them. But the levels of intelligibility cannot be turned into the sole basis for the rejection of the reality to be communicated. The human experience cannot be made a scapegoat for this failure of a human institution. Should metaphysics be sacrificed at this hurriedly raised altar of the "universally

intelligible meaningfulness"? Is this love of wisdom or the contemporary version of the medieval purging of the soul, or an intellectual form of forced 'Sati', The Saint also experiences a difficulty in the use of language but he seeks to overcome the difficulty rather than giving into the difficulty. Shall the lovers of wisdom not follow him in at least the spirit of his endeavour? So much for the rejection of elimination in the name of the language. We may now proceed to see whether the human experience requires of us to eliminate metaphysics. Is there no difference between it and the dreams and illusions? Is this experience as irrational as the dream or a mirage? Has the human wisdom, at its highest best, through all its heritage, only been duped due to a mistaken use of language? or, does metaphysics arise from the human experience and the need to analyse and understand this experience? The first is a very presumptuous statement which may be held more as a prejudice than any genuine love of wisdom. We are familiar with some modern attempts where a plea has been advanced that the earlier philosophers were not 'doing metaphysics' but only analysing language in the modern sense. Shall we accept the view that philosophers have remained ignorant of all this till its discovery by the recent thinkers who are keen to prove that no intelligent person has ever attempted a metaphysical system building? Is it not a case of converting a 'Thesis in view' as the 'truth that is'. It might have escaped the notice of such persons that metaphysics is not an accidental by-product but the prime aim of the philosophers since the ancient Greeks in the West and the Vedic lore in the Indian Culture. Similarly, it may be submitted that metaphysics is not argument about the parts, nor would it remain satisfied with the arguments about the parts. It seeks a completion into a system. Anyone who has been fascinated by this venture must have experienced that the seeker of wisdom is forced into the raising of the whole system. Therefore, is there any chance that metaphysics came into being only as an accident? One must stretch even one's credulity very far to entertain this statement of those opposed to metaphysics.

Any reference to the history of philosophy with a view to recreating the whole scene in a light very different from the

one in which it has been presented so far may only be an attempt in polemics without any substance. We may, therefore, not be unduly impressed by this rejection, done in the name of the 'supposed' historical misunderstanding.

We may now proceed to submit that the lovers of wisdom ought to undertake with greater vigour and sustained effort the system building of metaphysics. Such an activity arises from the very being of the self. It is innate to the self. Any denial of this urge is unnatural and unnecessary. A metaphysician seeks to interpret his experience of the reality. His interpretation is with a view to understanding and also communicating his understanding of the experience. And the more he seeks to interpret, the more intensely he feels the inner urge to seek further the perfection and completion of the system of metaphysics according to his best understanding of it. A continuous urge to perfect, and to continue perfecting is the path which the lovers of wisdom should travel if they want to remain closer to the urge which has created philosophy, and which will perhaps also sustain it. There is a point at which various systems of metaphysics fuse and one is able to see lines of convergence. It is an experience of the wider harmonies which govern the laws of the perceptibles and what lies beyond the perceptibles. The scene becomes clearer as one advances on this path. The concepts and ideas are perceived as real. The system of thought becomes the system of reality. Or should we say that, the system of reality becomes the system of thought. Or then, the system of reality is seen as the system of thought. It appears to me that the last is the goal of this quest. Am I inclined in favour of an idealist metaphysics? The reply is in the affirmative.

Somebody might be wondering as to what has happened to the Saint which had provoked me to write this paper. I must confess that I am still bugged by the thought that he is indulging in metaphysics and is a very serious rival contender for the audience I am wooing. Where he went beyond the goal consciously set up by philosophers, as lovers of wisdom, was the ease with which he delved deeper and beyond the world of phenomenon. While I also sought to travel there, the ease in his case came from his mysticism. His metaphysics sought its perfection in mysticism whereas my consciously chosen goal

appeared to fall shorter of his achievement. As a student of metaphysics my engagement with the attempt at perfecting my system would satisfy me although I could speculate about the goal of the mystic who was seeking to realize his being by merging his self in the realization itself. His contact with those seeking knowledge through him brings him back to the need to communicate and participate in his bio-environment. His activity has often suggested to me that it is perhaps not impossible to transcend what has hitherto been regarded by me as some kind of difficult step and many times also avoided by the lovers of wisdom. But, is even the world of metaphysics not fascinating for the seekers of wisdom? Is it not more relevant today than it has ever been before? My hunch makes me answer in the affirmative.

THE METHODOLOGICAL STATUS OF ANALOGY IN THE RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

Religion constitutes a vital area of human experience and expression. We are, however, aware that the range of what is called religious is fairly wide. Similarly, the range of human activity, called language, has great differences in its form and level of acuteness which the thought can and does assume, in its expression. It is a known fact in human experience that such wide possibilities often lead to situations when even particular, much less general, propositions, may not convey identical meanings to the two persons in a dialogue. We are alluding to these difficulties at a very preliminary stage in our paper for the reason that our assessment of the methodological status of Analogy requires of us to keep in view the possibilities of the difficulties which may arise from differences in the association of experiences which provide content to the meanings.

The students of comparative religion and comparative philosophy are well aware that language is a great help as well as a hindrance in communicating religious truth both in inter-faith as well as intra-faith, and in philosophical expressions meant as communications. Some of the important developments in philosophy have arisen as solutions to this predicament. The problems may be few and simpler while we are at the perceptual level. But the area of knowledge covered by the perception of particulars is rather small. The magnitude of the problem becomes larger as we proceed towards the general and the ideal. Even a Plato, fond of the dialectical method of logic may appear to be using the language of poetry. The myths and metaphors are some of the stages which are meant to help the seeker of the knowledge of form or idea. The final insight, however, is not bereft of the

rational but, in being the most universal, appeals to the reason in man. The rational in man is not outside man, because when it is fully externalised, it becomes an abstraction and as such fails to communicate the universal which it earlier could convey through participation in the universal. The reason in man participates in the rational of the universal form or the ideal. Let us view this in this perspective of religion and its highest truth-vision.

We may at this point refer to the various methods of valid knowledge recognised by various schools of Indian philosophy. The non-dualist *Advaita Vedanta*, for example, admits six distinct means of valid knowledge, namely perception, inference, verbal testimony, comparison, postulation and non-apprehension. Each is called a *pramāṇa*, the instrument (*kārṇa*) of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*). We are here seeking to concentrate on verbal testimony and analogy. The latter may be viewed as comparison, although it may perhaps be better to view it as analogy. The reason for our present concentration on *Shabad* and analogy lies in our engagement with the religious traditions where the knowledge of the highest universal is in the form of a communication. This communication is often described as revelation or sometimes termed as Guru. The latter seeks to impart it a character of light or spark which removes darkness. The removal of darkness not only relieves man of his inability to see but also positively inspires in him the knowledge which he already has by being of the same rational stuff which he comes to realize. The locus of the realisation is the person himself, and the goal of his activity is to have the experience of the universal.

We may now direct our attention to the fact that one of the important goals of religion is to have experience of the highest and the most universal. Such an experience may range from a gross vision of idol, religious place, God, or the Reality which supports or underlies the phenomenal. It is often also termed as the highest reality which transcends the ephemeral and the changing world of the particulars. The goal so envisaged, is conceived as yielding to various levels of understanding. A person seeking to have this experience may either attempt it directly through a process of intuition and

meditation or may be led to have an insight into the nature of the highest through the teaching of a Guru or a teacher. Although some religious traditions may have a unique conception of the nature and role of Guru, yet the need of guidance by those seeking, from the ones who have sought and obtained, is by and large conceded. But then how does the realized seek to help others to realize? It is generally held by various traditions that every one has various levels of possibilities in his being able to be helped. The process of communicating the realization, therefore, involves two factors. First, it involves communication itself, and second, the communication has to be adjusted both to the nature of the truth to be communicated as well as the level of the one to whom it is to be communicated. The first may involve the use of language or of non-language media or technique. We may here deal with the religious situation involving the use of language media.

We may perhaps be saying the self-evident thing when we say that the process of communicating the knowledge for realization involves an inferential stage. It involves an inductive leap. We are terming it inductive because it may involve the knowledge of the more general and universal than the one which is communicated through perception. Secondly, the formal ground of induction, namely the principle of the uniformity of nature, is one of the strong factors in leading one to obtain the more general knowledge. Although it may be conceded that the use of the causal law is not strongly indicated in this process, yet the assumption of causation in a remotely related sense cannot be entirely ruled out.

After this preliminary reference to the formal grounds of induction, we may offer a very general statement about the nature of Analogy. We have already referred to it as a method of inference which is closely related to induction. The method of reasoning in Analogy lies in 'drawing inferences concerning the unobserved' entities on the basis of what has been observed. It, however, uses a kind of analysis which differs from the use of scientific method in induction. But it certainly uses the inductive leap in that it leads to the knowledge of that which is not perceived on the basis of persuasive comparative perception. We may add here that the

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inference drawn through this process may only be probable although the quantum of probability may itself vary in different instances and kinds of analogical reasonings. This contingent aspect of analogical inference is an important element arising from its empirical nature. It may be suggested here that, by itself, the analogical reasoning may not suffer from this infirmity, particularly when the comparative element of analogy plays only a suggestive and persuasive part with a view to removing the blinding ignorance and thereby enabling the universal and the general to reveal itself in knowledge.

It may not be very difficult for us to see that the role of the person suggesting analogy is not that of an external authority. Even when he appears to be repetitive in citing instances for analogical inference his role is of more a kind of midwife so well-known to us as outlined by Socrates in *Meno*. The Guru at this point is more like a philosopher than like a political power imposing his ideology. The significance of *Shabad* in this context assumes a revelatory character.

FENCE AROUND GOD

God, when I was young, always appeared to be full of power, everywhere, and knew everything. When I looked up in the sky, He appeared to me as spread limitlessly. My idea of the infinite was not well developed then but the deep receding blue sky suggested a limitless continuity. I prayed to God in the religious shrine, in my class room, in bed, sometimes even while playing. I remember submitting prayers to him at all places and all times. I must confess that I never doubted his power to accomplish for me whatever I needed or wanted. Some of my supplications now appear to me as naive and unnecessary. But then I was only a very young child and had certainly no inkling that I would become a student of religion and philosophy for nearly all my adult life.

I was living in India and finished my high school in 1947 the year that India got its independence and also its division. My memories of this period are hazy but some are certainly painful. Our house and family, like that of everyone else, experienced great tension. Some of our neighbours and friends migrated to the other side and some of our relatives arrived from over there. Many of my earlier beliefs about religion and interfaith relationships, according to friends, were not very mature. Religion was often held responsible for the carnage when, in fact, the real cause was a desire to possess what belonged to others. Evening prayers in our house became disturbed and irregular. The tension was very intense and too close. The fence around God appeared to be growing in height.

The post-partition Punjab State in India witnessed a growth in religious activity. Many of the older shrines associated with the life of saints and founders of religion were repaired and renovated. Religious congregations grew in numbers and people noticed a general atmosphere of piety.

The Sikhs have always been an intensely religious people. A Sikh man becomes conscious of his turbaned identity quite early in life. The religious places of all other religions also witnessed a spurt in the religious concern of the believers. There occurred an enhanced emphasis on the need to maintain identity and purity in following the directives of the religious tradition. Prior to partition, identity codes were not prominent. Afterwards they came to be underscored and stressed more boldly. The growing fence between religions bore the notice no trespassing!

Somewhere the subconscious mind of people picked up the new idea of a God who was powerful but worked behind the tall fence and in secrecy. I often heard the phrase "we don't know" instead of the earlier answer "God knows." People were transposing their own ignorance onto God, the Omniscient. There was, and still is, a great need to raise the level of intellectual effort to comprehend the true nature of God and to communicate it as convincingly as possible. This process needs to be pursued with gentleness and love. It helps to remove ignorance and false prejudice. There is an urgent need to understand intellectually the spiritual teachings of one's own religion as clearly as possible. This awakening should then be followed by an effort to know other faiths as thoroughly as possible. My general experience is that ignorance places undesirable fences around God.

After 1947, India experienced a growing interest in Indian philosophy and religions. A new generation of scholars trained in Western methods sought to apply a newly synthesized methodology and understanding to the analysis of the theology grounded in Indian religions. A growing Indian nationalism influenced the native interpretation of theology. The new political boundaries continued to affect the tenor of interfaith movements. Similarly, missionary work provoked distrust because of the past historical experience. The non-theologians sought to interpret theology in socio-political terms. The richness of theology and its contribution to the interfaith movement was restricted to a narrow interpretation and was denied a fair hearing. In the face of religious conflict, a new panacea of social relationship was presented in the guise of secularism.

The supporters of secularism unfairly accuse and condemn theology for evils it does not have. Secularists proclaim that nonreligious interpersonal movements are far more fruitful and desirable. They maintain that theology and its implications are necessarily divisive and cause human agony resulting from conflict among various faiths. There are myriad similar accusations against religion and theology. The motivation for this campaign is obvious. Theologians sometimes accept false accusations against religion as perhaps not entirely false. Religious people and theologians seem to have started entertaining doubts that perhaps religious commitment prohibits harmonious interfaith movements. But is that so?

Does the interfaith movement deny the possibility of different faiths? Is it inevitable that persons participating in the interfaith movement will have to deny the theology envisaged in their own faiths? It is my submission that, when theology is truly God-oriented, it is bound to encourage the feelings of respect and mutual attraction of all persons although they may belong to different religious traditions. But when theology is wrongly conceived as man-dominated, it tends to acquire the characteristics of human weakness. Only an earth-bound and man-dominated theology may consider the interfaith movement to be in conflict with theology. There are three principal ways in which we may look at the theological implications of the interfaith movement. First, we should notice that much is being said about theology by its opponents. A genuine criticism functions as a word of caution. It informs us of what we should avoid in our journey for the truth. But there is also much motivated and distorted criticism of religion and theology. The springs of such criticism are often socio-political ideologies. A genuine theologian can see through this easily and should dismiss it promptly.

Second, sometimes exclusiveness may be a genuine effort to maintain the purity of faith. The theologian in this case may be an honest person, and this is a healthy attitude. It is perhaps possible to persuade this kind of theologian that the interfaith movement, by widening one's religious view, adds to the purity of one's life of faith. An expanding view is

closer to the truth of God's nature. The truth is the highest form of purity. The interfaith movement is a journey towards the largeness of the sacred heart. The divine invites all, and shuns none! So an honest and genuine skeptic of the interfaith movement may be won over for the holy togetherness.

There is a third possible perspective about the theological implications of the interfaith movement. The persons holding this view are enthusiastic for the joining of heads, hearts and hands in sharing and reinforcing each other's faith. It generates in them an ability to abjure the smallness of conflicts and to cultivate a large-hearted kindness. It may range from the preliminary desire to avoid the hurting comment, to the point of surrendering one's all for the upliftment of others. Moral values may become indissolubly intertwined with an intense desire for the spiritual welfare of others. For persons at this level of spiritual life, the Sikh prophets have said '*koi na dise bāharā jīo*' (None is seen as an outsider). What they give to others is far more than they keep for themselves. The courage that comes from holding such an enthusiastic view can enable believers to overcome the hurdles that come their way. Their theology is God-oriented.

You might wonder why we have talked of false charges against the theological implications of the interfaith movement. You may also perhaps try to guess the purpose of my earlier biographical narration. The biographical episodes show how the notion of God can be partly influenced by the social and political events in a person's life. I also wanted to draw attention to the process of raising a fence around God. In this process we first abstract and then concretize the abstract. It is a life long habit of singling out the small from the large and the seemingly unmanageable whole which overflows the narrow limits of human perceptions. This process of looking at the whole from a limited angle of vision is natural, and in ordinary circumstances the only one available to us. An important point to remember, however, is that a person who respects his own tradition has the potential of coming to respect the traditions of other faiths. Here I offer an important implication of theology. If God is one and if He alone is the Creator, then all that are created by Him have a

right to be respected. All faiths derive their light from the one light and all lights are the instruments of removing darkness. Thus all lights are welcome! Once we accept this as faith in God, the interfaith movement will be seen as conducive to our efforts to realize God. If we become aware of the possible effect of the disturbing experiences of life on man's views of 'our own faith', and 'another's faith' it may be easy to see that it is a relation of faith to faith and therefore a relation among brothers.

There is a great need for the coming together of people of different faiths to demonstrate the goodness that naturally flows from such meetings. It is our reasoning here that any theology grounded in the experience of God will show the social necessity and the spiritual conduciveness of interfaith dialogue. A superficial and unanalyzed acceptance of all that has happened in our life without looking for the deeper, spiritual significance often results in lives lived without the realization of the real and true Being of God. Negative judgements of the theological implications of the interfaith movement are unwarranted and a backward step.

There is another noteworthy religious teaching which has an important lesson for the interfaith movement. We have learnt from the testimony of the prophets that God is love. It may, therefore, be accepted that God is realized through love. We have been told in Sikhism that "*jin prem kīo tin hi prabhu pāyo*" (Those who love, realize Him). As God is love, the theological implication of the interfaith movement is that of a path leading to the grace of God's love. Any contribution of people in this direction is a step towards God. An effort to bring together the seekers of God's love is in itself an indication of the love for God. We may remember two important aspects of the theological implications in this regard. Negatively, human insensitivity, from indifference to extreme hatred and cruelty, is a denial of God. Positively, God being love, theology teaches us to be likewise to others. Kindness and altruism are not merely moral acts but also spiritual steps toward God. It is the human expression of what a person seeks from God. The ability to help others is derived from God's grace. The ascending levels of interfaith represent ascending levels of receiving God's grace. An uninhibited and

uninterrupted contribution towards interfaith trust and interfaith dialogue is the shining of divine light and love.

We are now in a position to face a question. If theology holds that God is Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent, then should we not accept the privilege of God to cause as many revelations as He is pleased to, anywhere He chooses, and in any form He likes? The faiths of humanity are expressive of His unfettered Freedom and Omnipotence. Our finitude and our limitations are our own finitude and limitations. God is Infinite and Limitless. He is free to inspire anyone and free to grant His vision to anyone, anywhere. The humility that arises from an understanding of the theology of God's limitless power awakens in our hearts the desire and respect for an interfaith movement.

The interfaith inspiration is then an additive factor in God's limitless expression. It is the bonding together of people of faith. The ethic that will follow from this realization will enrich and sustain the spiritual life of all people.

Theology is not merely an intellectual act of separating theoretical articulation from the experience of God. A proper theology is always based in the experience of God. And this experience liberates us from the narrow and the lower, and unites us with the wider and the higher. Interfaith dialogue is thus an attempt to dismantle the fence around God. Theology can render great help in this joyous movement towards the divine ideal. This may lead us to the real happiness which comes from the true perception of theology and what it can offer for the ethical life.

In conclusion, the interfaith movement for understanding and harmony is a potent instrument for removing the weeds of ignorance and demolishing the fences around God. Beyond is God, and the human understanding of him, known as theology.

REVELATION IN DIFFERENT CULTURES AND SOCIETIES

A PROLEGOMENA

Culture is a developing mode of the Humankind. It is an expression of its onward march towards its seemingly undefined but somewhat consciously striven-for goals. In this process the individual culture and social culture tend to be influenced by each other. Neither of the two is static in character. Any perception of the culture as a fact, at a given time, is only due to the character of the perception in which even the events are perceived as static frames running into each other due to the motion imparted to it from the outside. The perception of the culture, and the culture itself, are two different, although related, factors in human existence. We have made this initial statement with a view to sharing the context in which our understanding about the revelation of God in different societies and cultures will be articulated.

We may make two initial submissions. First we may say that individual culture and social culture—or the culture of the society—may be at two different levels. Apart from the difference in the intellectual levels of the different individuals leading to the zig-zag pattern of the social culture, the collective culture of the society itself may be in contrast with the individual culture. There may be individuals who may display a much higher level of intellectual and spiritual development than seen in the other members of the society around them. This may be, we may suggest, due to revelation of God as inspiration. While the material in and around the individuals may appear to be the same, some individuals may be seen to be far ahead of others in the revelation of God as inspiration in them. These ‘higher’ individuals may also differ among themselves due to varying levels of revelation or

inspiration. Second, some of the members of the same group of the 'higher' may emerge as the 'founders'—as a founding process—and thus receive and express still more higher levels of God's revelation as inspiration or inspiring experiential input.

The examples to support this view are easy to find and cite. In every instance of the emergence of the 'founder' in the ripening or ripened spiritual environment, we may witness very high levels of inspiration as signs of God's revelation. There is an expression in the Sikh tradition, *Chardī Kalā*, which is used to indicate higher levels of ascendancy arising from the receiving of the 'Spiritual' (*Nām*). The receiver of this grace is in a state of enthusiasm and this flows out from him in the form of ceaseless altruistic activity. The narrow limits of 'mine' and close group limitations are replaced by the expanding social concern. One of the important signs and test of this revelation through inspiration is the 'burgeoning forth'. It lends an expansive vision. There is a significant change in the person receiving this revelation. His bonds with the limiting and the narrow get loosened. The culture around him does not bind him to its frontiers. It may, however, be added here that the revelation at this stage is neither fully concrete nor complete. The person participates in his social culture. The material environments are not given up although their hold over the inspired person is not as firm as over the uninspired members of the same cultural milieu. The social loyalties do not snap but assume new meanings. Every culture witnesses such revelations through inspiration.

There is another level of revelation in which the person receiving it suddenly experiences greater incidence of assistance or realization of one's wishes which may, or may not be, attributable to any significant efforts on one's own part. The grace at this level is more obvious and convincing to one's own self. One's culture is not the limiting factor at this point. One might be born in any society and any country and at any time. The granting of one's wish through non-natural means is a known phenomenon through all periods of human history. It is obvious that the concrete forms of the wish as well as its content may differ in various cultures but its broad form is identifiable. We seek to submit that the mere

difference in the culture is not an inhibitory factor for the occurrence of this phenomenon. However, it may be perceived that some cultures may appear to be more conducive than others in sustaining higher levels of spiritual beings. It may be an interesting issue for research to discover the level of correlation between different cultures and the receiving of the revelation. Nevertheless one thing is noticeable in this respect. While some cultures may be more congenial to the emergence of revelation as the realization of one's wish or receiving of revelation as assistance, there does not appear to be any culture which may be completely bereft of it. Someone may say that the 'wish-granting' may only appear to be revelation while in fact it may be due to unknown process of causal factors over which the individual may not have the control. This lack of control may suggest to him the nature of the phenomenon to be spiritual while it may only be a case of delayed effects following from the earlier natural causal factors. It may be difficult to argue that such an explanation may not be true in some cases. The human limits to the knowledge of all the factors of the cause necessarily leading to some effect, although in different time-scales in some cases, is a known aspect of causality. We are not ascribing revelation to such cases. Most of the factors of such an unknowable natural causality may also have some close connection with the related cultural scene. An advance in knowledge in this kind of causality may also help to remove some ignorance in this respect. But even after such mistaken cases of the perception of the revelation are understood properly and classified as such, still there are many cases of genuine revelation as 'assistance'. There is an element of subjective certainty. While the person who receives this revelation may be absolutely convinced about it, he may not find it easy to enable others to perceive it.

One of the important elements of the effect of this revelation may be in terms of an enhanced ability to perform one's task and to increase the sharing of the fruits of one's efforts with others. His ability to comfort others is multiplied manifold and we may also notice a spontaneity and ease with which this comfort is transmitted. Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh Religion, has called it *tarai tarāei* (swims and

enables others to swim across the existence). The beings who reach higher levels of assistance-receiving, move towards higher levels of comforting. It may often cause some suffering to themselves but this suffering may not be experienced by them. They may surprise others by their success in matters which may be seen by the others as rather impossible or very difficult. It may also be the case sometimes that the enhanced ability with one's goal or wish achievement may not be completely known or understood by the person attaining it. It may perhaps be useful to refer to a distinction between 'sought' and 'bestowed' wish-fulfillment. The former is the most common aspect of human life on earth. The difference between the desired and the given keeps a person in a state of 'seeking'. All the 'seeking' is not always unrelated to what one finally obtains. The proportion and relation between what one obtains and what a person had sought may very often depend on the levels of individual and social levels of the rational elements of culture. The quantum of unrealized proportion of the wishes and sought-for goals may be, in most of the cases, far more in a culture which is dominated by the irrational elements. The rational march of the culture seems to lend an increasing balance between the sought and the obtained. As the rational is not unrelated to the spiritual, the increase in this balance is, in a large number of cases, spiritual in character. It is very closely related with the enhanced ability to perform one's task and to share the fruits of one's efforts with the others.

We have suggested here that revelation may sometimes be in the form of 'assistance'. We now proceed to submit that a sign of such a revelation may be that the person who receives such a revelation does not experience depression even though he may fail to obtain the desired results in other areas of his efforts. Any failure does not appear to frustrate such a person. We may also draw a clear distinction between frustration and depression. It is at one of the earlier levels of revelation where the person becomes free of all the feelings of depression. The loss of possessions or relations does not seem to touch him. These may happen to him but fail to cause any depression in him. The revelation, at this stage, may be viewed as an enlightenment which may free the individual

from any relationship with the surrounding suffering and depression. The spiritual in the revelation enables him to rise above the matter-related tension and depression. The heroic mood and attitude may be the spontaneous experience and expression of such a person. He may perceive the suffering but also know the causal factors and remain above it. The attitude of the prophets, in the face of persecution and the infliction of the unmerited pain and suffering shows that the suffering does not touch the inner core of their being. The inner core is then imbued by the revelation and this destroys the usual nexus between the suffering and depression. The phenomenon of persecution may remain but it may fail in its intended object of intimidation and demoralisation. The individual may display superhuman qualities as a result of this level of revelation. This person may seem to rise above the culture of his milieu and provide a new context and direction for his fellow beings. We may notice here that there is no other area of human knowledge and practice which is influenced more by the learning through example than the spiritual and the religious. There are a very large number of the people in every culture and society who seek examples for their guidance. This element is often responsible for citing miracles in support of the claims of revelation. Even when the person receiving the miracles may refuse to perform any miracles or vehemently disown any desire for the same, the seekers of examples may claim to be witnesses to such unusual and unnatural performances by the spiritual beings among them. The examples are very closely related to the various elements of the related culture and therefore tend to be seen more as events in culture, or cultural events. The seekers of boons from these spiritual beings tend to overlook the universal elements stressed by the receiver of the revelation. The 'following-through-examples' is the important social aspect of the common people's life and it is this aspect which lends the local or the cultural identity to the phenomenon of revelation through wish-fulfilment or 'assistance'.

We may now refer to the higher level of revelation where it is presented as a communication involving language. There are traditions, both in the East as well as in the West, where the revelation through the 'Word' is recognised and accepted.

The scriptures are often said to be the revelation. The 'revelation' in this context has to be understood in two senses. First, these are revelation in the sense that God is perceived, by the selected and the chosen 'special person', as God really is. Second, this perception leads the chosen person to sing the praise of God as he perceives it, to compose the hymns, or perhaps to describe God in prose. Although the hymns are obviously composed by the chosen person in a language and grammar grounded in his culture, yet these are revelation in the sense that these record his perception or experience of God. A careful reading of the scripture of Sikhism, the tradition to which I belong, shows that statements made about the greatness of God have great identity and convergence although these were recorded in different cultural contexts. The Sikh scripture, called *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, contains hymns composed by saints who lived in different places at various times and belonged to many religious traditions, principal among whom were the Hindus and the Muslims. Their co-presence in the scripture treated by the Sikhs as 'revealed' during the last few centuries is a very interesting phenomenon and worthy of greater attention by those interested in God's revelation in different cultural contexts. Some of the saints, other than the Sikh Gurus themselves, whose hymns are included in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* have lived apart from each other by a couple of centuries, spoken different languages and participated in widely different cultural settings. It is not difficult to imagine that they also differed from each other in some of their cultural values. We have, among these saints, the Muslim ascetic mystic-Sheikh Farid; the midway critic of cultural values-Kabir; and the devotional fundamentalist-Ramanand. We do not find a prominent mention of the opposing nondualist stalwarts-Śankara and Ramanuja-although the non-dual revelation is given great prominence in the above scripture. The term *bānī* (the word) is used for revelation in this context. And the hymns of the *Bhaktas* (Saints) are called *Bhakat bānī*. We have earlier said that these saints whose sacred hymns have been included in the Sikh scripture differ from each other in the cultural roots and the contexts of their portrayal of the Divine. The incarnations of the Divine, described as

Revelation, mentioned by some of these *bhaktas* are rooted in the traditional Hindu religion. These *bhaktas* appear to revel in their experience of the Divine as incarnated. These incarnations are frequently referred to as Rama and Krishna. The interest in a proper spiritual interpretation of these incarnations is also seen in the compositions associated with the tenth or the last human Guru of the Sikh tradition. In this case, Guru Gobind Singh got the classic Epics, *Krishan Avtār* and *Rām Avtār* reproduced in the popularly understandable language and idiom. The word *avtār* in these Epics stands for the incarnation. Guru Gobind Singh has not included these in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. But then the hymns of the *bhaktas* included in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* extol the incarnations of God as Krishna and Rama. And included in the hymns of the Gurus themselves are the numerous references to the revelation of God in His rescue mission of His devotees. How do these references co-exist in the *Guru Granth Sahib* with the Muslim mystic hymns which do not accept that God ever incarnated Himself in the human form? The Sikhs themselves do not accept the traditional Indian notions of God's incarnations. Their exegetes are often found explaining these references to the Epic incarnations as symbolic or analogic references. They maintain that Rama's is a reference to God and not to any historical human figure. It is also sometimes said that the inclusion of incarnation-revelation could perhaps be due to the fact that their spiritual audience often were Hindus for the most of whom the only way to comprehend God was in terms of these incarnation-revelation. The adoration references aided their comprehension. On the other hand, the *Gurus* have very often referred to the human and finite aspect of the historical persons and have expressly denied that God is born in the manner of the human birth. God has even been referred to as a formless Form. But then there are also a large number of references to God which portray Him as a Person although He is conceived as an Infinite and Eternal Being. So the references to God in terms of human like-traits are meant to reassure the human being that Supreme Being is not altogether unrelated to man although He transcends the mere humanity of the humankind.

But apart from these canonical difficulties which all religious traditions have to face when they stress the experience and contact with God in terms of human presence and encounter, the mere fact that the Sikh scripture has included the sacred hymns which articulate about the revelation of God in widely different cultural contexts, makes this scripture worthy of wider and deeper appreciation and understanding. It may, perhaps, provide a key to a cross-cultural and trans-cultural reality of God's revelation, without committing anyone to the rejection of the tenets of the one's faith.

Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh spiritual tradition travelled to the spiritual centres of the various traditions although the cultural, including the language, varieties of the places where these centres were located were amazingly different from each other. But in spite of these differences, this man of spirit could experience the richness of God's revelation and his hymns are an abundant testimony of God's revelation in various cultures.

In the present century, Reverend Sun Myung Moon presents a very interesting spiritual phenomenon. He has appeared on the Korean soil and has displayed very significant spiritual characteristics which show a remarkable blend of the earlier cultural context and of his spiritual revelation. His consecration of the 'holy' grounds in and around Seoul during his earlier phase of self-recognition is an important lesson in knowing how revelation first appears as something sought outside amidst the cultural setting. The growing levels of self-recognition, did not alienate him from the cultural context in which he appeared but at the same time his self-recognition has enabled him to go beyond the compelling and limiting bonds to which a person would have felt attached who was not so spiritually placed as Reverend Sun Myung Moon. An attraction towards his spiritual Being among the people in Japan and America are historic pointers that self-recognition and the recognition of the Spiritual in him did not limit him to his own culture nor did it, at the same time, alienate him from the culture of the land of his appearance.

Reverend Chung Hwan Kwak, I have often heard him,

telling us the earlier phase of this Spiritual appearance. I have been particularly impressed by two characteristics of this spiritual appearance. First, Reverend Chung Hwan Kwak has told us as to how, in spite of difficult days of privation and suffering, he remained attached to the Spiritual Being of Reverend Sun Myung Moon. This shows that Reverend Moon was enabling Reverend Kwak and other companions to intuitively realize Reverend Moon's self-recognition. This indicates that the spiritual level of the companion is also raised by the ascending levels of the spiritual revelation. The companion and the Prophet, display a remarkable empathy which remains inspite of not so very encouraging material and social environment. Second, the loyalty, felt and lived, by the companion is of great spiritual value. Its ethical nature is a witness of its spiritual root. Anyone who knows Reverend Kwak must have felt impressed by his genuine loyalty for his spiritual Preceptor. In the ethico-spiritual context such a loyalty is a testimony of the spiritual Preceptor's revelation of the inner core of his spiritual Being. We are aware that Reverend Sun Myung Moon has greatly influenced his companions and he has *lived for others*, many of whom like myself, have come from divergent cultural and societal surroundings. A long time ago I came upon the statement about the supreme importance of Loyalty in ethics. Maybe, this recognition of loyalty, and freedom, in the context of higher spiritual ideal, partly led Reverend Moon to America and he saw God's special Hope and Purpose in it. Reverend Moon's continued hope here shows his high regard for the value of loyalty for the friends and the Ideals.

A little while ago we had referred to the ethico-spiritual quality of 'living for others'. It is the most essential characteristic of God's revelation that it displays as well as promotes 'living for others'. Guru Nanak has said "When one *knows* then he lives for others". It is a spiritual quality. We may here recall the opening remarks of Reverend Sun Myung Moon on the historic occasion of his visit to South Korea on December 11, 1985, when he outlined "The Path of Korea for the sake of the world". He says: "To see the beautiful mountains and skies of my homeland again and to be able to stand in front of you tonight evokes emotions in my heart that are hard to describe. I believe that you have come here tonight in order to welcome a man who has dedicated himself to the Will of God and the ideal of 'living for others' rather than an individual called Rev. Moon. It is this fact that makes this

meeting today, a truly historical event” (p.1). His ‘Words of Greeting’ were devoted to this theme. I sat there listening to him and getting introduced to his perception of the spiritual revelation. Next day, we got an opportunity to visit the house where Reverend Moon had lived during the earlier phase of spiritual self-recognition. I stood at the window and looked through it towards the hills at the opposite side. On enquiry I was told that Reverend Moon has established his earliest holy grounds at those hill tops. I saw, in my imagination, Reverend Moon reaching out from that window. I then suddenly realized what Reverend Moon had meant by “living for others”. Reverend Moon had reached out and was continuing to reach out beyond his immediate surroundings. The cultural surrounding in which the revelation enabled him self recognition did not function as the limiting boundary. Rather it provided him with nourishment to sustain him in reaching out and “living for others”. Ever since then I have considered the revelation in terms of its “freedom bestowing” characteristic, and the strength of a culture in terms of its support and nourishment in “reaching out” and living for others. The difference in culture or in the society, as the background factors of a revelation, may contribute the same strength as the homogeneity of cultural factors with the revelation. Secondly, when revelation takes place at different places and different times, it testifies to God’s omnipresence and omnipotence. It is an occasion to rejoice and an opportunity to be a witness to His Glory. The difference in cultures and societies imparts a beautiful shade to this blend. The witnesses to this revelation do not feel any estrangement or alienation from their culture or society. There is no need for transcending one’s culture or society. Rather these may provide a genuine satisfaction and encouragement for reaching out and “living for others”.

The above perception, to my mind, is the only normative interpretation and guidance for understanding God’s Revelation in different cultures and societies.

Reverend Sun Myung Moon had imparted a vision to us. His Companion has highlighted and communicated it to us. It is now our option to explicate its far reaching possible application and to proclaim it creatively. This, we are sure, will contribute greater coherence to any meaningful comprehension of revelation in different cultures and societies.

SYMBOLS AND RITES IN HOPE FOR HARMONY AMONG MEN OF FAITHS

The Self in man appears to have been blessed with immense potentiality. He is, however, not often able to realize this fully within a single span of life. He pursues the goal in hope and sometimes in distress but finally leaves the world in a state of Hope for being somehow able to continue his quest beyond the opportunity of a single birth in the jostling world of pluralistic perceptions and assurances. His faith is, generally speaking, determined for him before his birth and he inherits a large number of symbols and rituals as a sort of predetermined cultural factor. It is not difficult for us to recognize that a large number of these symbols act as conditioning elements which evoke favourable or unfavourable prejudices within him or in others about him. Although the person remains endowed with an infinite possibility of rising above these given perceptions, yet the response of the individual is not always grounded in this infinite possibility of rising above his given perceptions but he often merely continues the game of the 'givenness' of the inherited way of knowing the known and acting in response to it.

Is there any hope for him? And if the answer to this question is in the affirmative, then, in what lies the hope and how ought he to go about realizing what he desires and hopes to achieve?

We have, a little while ago, said that man, in most of the cases, inherits the symbols and rituals. We may pause here and analyze the notion of symbols and rituals. The symbols have been a subject matter of study by various disciplines. The sociologist and the anthropologist, the specialist in the Science of language and literature, the scholar of religion and

philosophy have all been attracted towards an understanding of the nature and content of symbol. We do not want to tread this path. Here it is our desire to hazard a moot opinion about the nature and function of the symbol in the context of our present dialogue.

In most of the cases the symbol is material in nature or has a material aspect. As matter, it has the usual characteristic of the matter. It evokes a possessiveness for the matter within the human being. It tends to promote exclusiveness and is, therefore, often divisive in character. A powerful aspect of its function may be to distract the person from what is around him as a whole. It, thus, seeks to break his relation with a part of his own environment. It compels him to withdraw from harmonious participation with his total surroundings. Its own character of identity-bestowing function is to influence the breaking away from the social around him and the spiritual within him. It is the drawing out of the man from what is really precious and the 'spreading-outness'. The materiality of the symbol attracts the material in the human being and although it is lower as compared to the spiritual, yet the matter seems to be more powerful in this division-effecting influence.

It may be pointed out to us here that it is not the material in the symbol that lends to it the divisive identity. It may be argued against us that the real character of the symbol lies in its form, and therefore if anything were to blame, it is the form which may be the cause of the division-lending identity. The specificity may be seen to lie in the form. This objection appears to be formidable.

Our reply to it is that the objection seems to be based on an understanding that we are basing our presentation on the Platonic division of matter and form. But this is not the case. Although there is great depth in the theory of Plato yet here we are viewing Matter in opposition to the Spiritual. In terms of hierarchy, the matter is lower than the spiritual and at the point of the commencement of the ascent, the matter gradually loses its ability to hold on; its vertical strength decreases in great disproportion to its relative position. The qualitative element in the ascent exerts far more influence than the horizontal quality of the matter.

The material in the symbol struggles hard to keep the seeker fixed or to tilt him towards itself. But every step taken by the self in the person to transcend the materiality of the symbol is greeted by a qualitative support of the spiritual. A continuous effort in this direction leads to the annihilation of the symbol. The materiality evaporates, conceding to the qualitiveness of the spiritual beyond. The annihilation of the symbol is testified in nearly all the religio-mystical traditions of the world. The transcendence of the symbol by the spirit leads it to the realization of the higher revelation. The spirit moves from the manifestation in the matter of the symbol to the revelation in the higher realization. It is the beginning of the next phase of the homecoming. The person is still in the human form but he does not show any sign of disdain for the symbol. He knows that the symbol is futile if its concrete nature is considered immortal or even of significant permanence. The transient nature and function of the symbol, once known to the seeker, leads him beyond the lure of its materiality. The person also comes to know that the being of the symbol, once known to the seeker, leads him beyond the lure of its materiality. The person also comes to know that the being of the symbol is not of the nature of the dialectical triangle where the matter is regarded primary, as is done by most of the materialists. The Hegelian dialectic had the merit of conceiving the idealistic thrust of the vertical movement of the dialectic. The materialist is a double victim of his self-imposed illusion. He first bestows concreteness and permanence on the symbol and then seeks to present it as an upward assimilative process of the synthesis. His material observation impresses him with the pluralism of the phenomena but the spiritual within him urges and forces him to concede the unitarian upward movement. His symbol struggles between the idealistic monism and material pluralism. This symbol of the movement suffers primarily from its inner contradiction. The first contradiction seems to arise because the matter of the symbol is assigned a connotation which is alien to its definition. Second, the 'matter' of the symbol fails to facilitate transcendence beyond itself largely due to its very nature, inasmuch as it lacks the vertical quality.

Let us cite a symbol which finds place both in the material as well as the spiritual traditions. The spiritual perception of the sword is Love, Freedom, and Immortality. The ethical meanings are Justice and Benevolence. The materialist perception of the sword is Conflict, Fear, and authoritarian subjugation. The preliminary spiritual perception of the sword symbol leads to a freedom from materialist attachment and the vanquishing of the ego and the fear which arises from such materialist attachment. However, when the material in the sword symbol predominates, its impact is inverted. It becomes an instrument of causing what it seeks to remove. Its materiality involves it in a contradiction with itself. But the moment we transcend its materiality, it becomes the first step towards Love. Thus its material end is the cause of fear, its transcended end is immersed in love. Here I may cite a hymn of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion. He says, "If you are fond of playing the Love, Enter my Way with your head on thy palm. Once you step on this path, You may lay thy life but not turn away." (*Guru Granth Sahib*, page 1412). The Love symbol demands surrender and the conquest of fear. It may be interesting to state here that the initiation ceremony in the Sikh religion is called *amrit chhaknā*, (immortality). The Sikh, after this ceremony, is described as *Khālsā* (pure). The ceremony itself is performed by stirring the sweetened water with a double-edged *khandā* (sword). The recitation of holy hymns accompany the performance of the whole ceremony beginning from the preparation of the *amrit* to its administration. The five *Khalsa* persons preparing the *amrit* sit in the *bīr āsan* (the posture of courage). The *amrit* is administered to both men as well as women. The symbol of the double-edged sword is instrumental for generating *amrit*, the elixir of immortality. The double-edged sword symbolises both the material end as well as the ascending spiritual path. The material end, if not transcended, will merely be either the cause of fear or the reaction to it. On the spiritual side, the physicality of the sword gives way to Freedom and Love. A careful analysis of this symbol in many other religious traditions also shows that the symbol of sword—or other symbols of immortality—are operative only on the spiritual

plane, and on this plane it can give meaning to Harmony through Freedom. Any other kind of transcendence of the symbols may give rise to authoritarianism which in turn may have to be sustained through many different materialistic symbols. These symbols, in due course, may become instrumental in the denial of freedom and so on.

It might be stated here that although we had started with a statement that symbols are material in nature yet we have in the subsequent analysis perceived a possibility of reaching their material end and transcending it. It has however injected a faint bipolarity in the meaning of the symbol. We may now proceed to undertake a theoretical analysis of the rituals to see their function—the actual as well as how it ought to be—understand their place and role in the faith—pluralism in human societies.

We want to suggest that at the point at which the faint bipolarity of the symbol is transcended, the unitive character of the rite takes over. It is our submission here that rite, as a technique to relate the seeker and the sought, has an overwhelming spiritual character. The symbols are here subservient to the symbols. It may sound a strange statement at the superficial level. Such has been the campaign against the rituals—even where the symbols have replaced the rituals—that most people have stopped analyzing the real nature of the rituals and have considered it worthwhile and prestigious to claim that all rituals stand rejected by them. But there is an insight in the *Divine Principle* by Reverend Sun Myung Moon. He refers to the state of religion where they are “attached to the authority and rites of the church, while the inner contents are corrupt”. (p. 532) Again, while referring to the present day situation, he points out that “priests and ministers” are “captive to the traditional church rites and authority and it is becoming spiritually darker every day”. (*Ibid.*). There cannot be more powerful condemnation of the “rites and authority” even by the opponents of religion. This shows that the men of faith and religious leaders are no less concerned with the possible barrenness of the captive rites than the opponents of religion. Every act associated with religion is not a rite. The rites, although spiritual in character, have often displayed tendencies of being influenced by

materialism and the evils connected therewith. In this, the rite seems to be directly opposite to the symbol. While one faint end of the bipolarity of the symbol shows the signs of leading to the spiritual by permitting itself to be transcended, the rite, on the other hand, shows the corruptibility on the initial end. Once the rite escapes or is freed from this materialistic capitulation, it may perform the task assigned to it. At the second stage in the spiritual journey, it is under great pressure of those who seek to make it the means of material gains. We cannot defeat this design of the materialist in the spiritual guise by throwing away the rite in disgust.

We have been told by Reverend Moon that the “rites” which hold the seekers and ministers of church as “captive” show the signs of having been corrupted and further corrupting those who follow them. This is often true. The materialist greed, the lure of natural gains and a relaxing of the idealistic vision during the course of time, can blur the real nature of the rite. Its inner impulse to help the individual to relate himself with the higher is often blurred by the dust which it may gather with time. Anyone who is put off by the rust may have to forego the use of the technique which may be concealed under them. What we have to guard against is the “inner corrupt contents” and not the path of the rite itself. A question may arise here as to the form of the ritual which may be retained while the historical content may be open to reevaluation. Let us observe, at this point, the relationship of the symbol and the rite. One of the important aspects of this relationship lies in the consecration of the symbol by the rite. The Symbol will remain lifeless without this consecration. The Symbol’s relationship is established through the rite. We may suggest here that the consciousness of the “I” may change into “I-you” relationship at the Symbol level but it will change into the “We” relationship through the rite. The relating and the binding of the social relationship into larger wholes is accomplished through the “We”- inducing nature of the rite. Of course, in terms of contents, the rites may vary from the simple to the very complex procedures and techniques. Some of the rites may emphasize a little more the physical nature of the performance whereas the others may seek more of the spiritual contents. The influence of the time

and the culture is also, often, a very important element. The "confusion of language" may also suggest the need for a greater "unification". Let us look at some more relevant aspects of the rites for a proper understanding of their cohesive role in the interfaith harmony.

We are familiar with the use of many words for the rite. In India, the use of the word 'sacrifice' is often used for the rite. The hymn singing is also seen as not without a rite import. It may be added that often the sacrifices do not involve any destruction of life. The *yajna* may be simple as well as elaborate and complicated. It may have a highly mystical element beyond the comprehension of many of those initially participating in it. The corrosive element of time may disable some of the participating individuals from any real understanding of it. Of course there are rites which do not have the direct objective of making the participants understand the meaning of it. It is the final end or the objective which is emphasized in the human consciousness. The uniting factor in the relationship establishing objective of the rite, we may be told, works without being consciously comprehended. The rite, it may be explained to us, is not necessarily a mere cognitive exercise. The verbal accompaniments of the rite may have sometimes long passed in disuse and therefore beyond comprehension of many. Generally, prophets and founders of new religious traditions arise at this point and "articulate" the rite in the new language. We also notice occasional efforts to revive the use of the language which has fallen in disuse among the lay.

Can there be a completely non-verbal rite by which we may accomplish the task of establishing non-conflicting relationships? Is there a way of identifying and establishing the rites which may only contribute to the establishment of harmony? Perhaps it may be necessary for us to see why the harmony among men is disturbed. Is the presence of many different rites the sole cause of the human conflict? Is the rite the major or the only cause of human degradation, corruption, or lack of complete harmony among persons of different ideologies and faiths? Perhaps, we should make another submission here to point out that there are many other words which loosely convey meaning of rite. We have earlier

mentioned the word 'sacrifice' or *yajna* in this context. We may now refer to the words such as 'worship' and 'feast' used in connection with a religious situation. There are a number of acts within one's religious tradition which may be described as rites by the outsiders while the insider may insist that it was his mode of worship of God or the higher spiritual Being. The ceremonial in the worship does not alter the essential character of the latter. The mode of the worship may show very wide variance from one religious tradition to another or from one individual to another within the same religious tradition. Will it be desirable to deny to man all forms of his worship? Is it anti-religious to express one's gratefulness for Grace, or to Surrender to Him, or to Remember Him if all or any one of these are expressed or performed in manners culturally suggested or ingeniously conceived? Is any or all forms of standardization, for individual or social purpose, to be enforced in a totalitarian manner?

GURU TEGH BAHADUR

A RE-APPRAISAL

A study in Guru Tegh Bahadur promises one of the most interesting and fruitful insights into the evolution of the religious traditions in general and the Sikh faith in particular. An effort in this direction, however, is not without some serious difficulties. His martyrdom, through a violent death, has deservingly attracted the keen and full attention of the historians as well as other students of the Sikh religion. However, a disproportionately small effort has been made to explore and relate the value-system which alone can provide the real and proper understanding of his life and teachings. A brief and modest attempt is being sought to be made through this paper to highlight the normative aspect of his hymns and life. A creative application of this understanding may perhaps be helpful in a proper evaluation of his life and martyrdom.

The hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur very vividly portray the human predicament. We are continuously reminded that realisation of the self is the ideal.¹ Sometimes this tension between the ideal and the actual is described in spiritual terms as the failure of man to realise *Nām* but the same is also emphasised as the normative struggle of the self to overcome the bondage to the ever disturbing emotional valances such as *lobh*, *moh māyā*, *abhimān*, *kām*, and *krodh*.²

An analysis of the conduct motivated by *kām*, *lobh* and *moh* reveals the anguish to which a person under their sway is condemned. The person is continuously seeking to meet their over-pressing demands and loses all sense and purpose with reference to his real life-goal. The supreme ideal involved in the human journey is spiritual but the claims of *kām*, *lobh* and *moh* are sensual and ephemeral. The gains in this direction are merely illusory and devoid of any sense of satisfaction or

fulfilment. The pleasure in this exclusive concern with the ever-seeking cycle of sensory pleasure merely adds to the pain and suffering. *Abhimān*, *ahankār* and *krodh* add to this human misery and anguish. Apart from being self-destructive, pride and anger are socially harmful. The bond of human-brotherhood crumbles under their weight. Thus, their overpowering control over man harms him individually as well as socially. Guru Tegh Bahadur, however, points out that a slavery of these praxes not only causes suffering for man even in his actions motivated by them, but it also causes immense harm by obstructing man in his efforts to realise the life-ideal. We are reminded by him that this failure is grave as this reduces the whole life to a mere struggle for gaining the objects of sense-satisfaction. Man, in this mode of life, is hardly different or higher than most of the animal kingdom. According to Guru Tegh Bahadur, man loses this chance of human birth to transcend the lower and realize the spiritual height and presence within him. Guru Tegh Bahadur has reiterated this theme so often and so strongly that many of his readers who did not have time or patience to look for the complete structure of his teachings, have attributed and described this aspect of his teachings as a withdrawal from the world. To some, this also appears to be a kind of pessimism. It is the failure to study Guru Tegh Bahadur in totality which has introduced some distortions in a study of his life. This has led some analyses to be conducted under the fallacy of substantiating an abstraction. If we read the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur carefully, we will not fail to see that his emphasis on sense-negation cannot be interpreted as life-negation. On the other hand Guru Tegh Bahadur shows a remarkable sensitivity and emphasis on life-affirmation. We have till now sought to point out that the Guru has laid great emphasis on the need to regulate the lower by the higher in man and this constitutes the true human freedom and fulfilment. After this brief introduction with the imperatives of personal culture, we may now proceed to view the ideal in the social context.

We are reminded by the Guru that we ought not to renounce social participation. The ideal is to be sought and realised while living in society. In *Dhanasri* as well as *Jaitsri*,

Rāgas, the seeker is dissuaded from renouncing the social. The Guru asks the question as to why should a person renounce the social and take recourse to the forests. The lover of withdrawal is told by the Guru that the ideal of his realization is not in the forests but within him. Any temptation to withdraw from the social commitment is, therefore, termed as misdirected. We learn from his life that social service and even the sacrifice of the self for the social cause are the proper ethical virtues to be cultivated. This is the secret revealed by the *Guru* to the seekers.

It is obvious that improper social company incapacitates a person from pursuing higher moral and spiritual goals. We are, therefore, taught by Guru Tegh Bahadur to shun and avoid the company of the immoral persons. It is our common experience that the company of serious seekers of the higher ideals alone can sustain a person in his arduous upward march. The comments and company of the un-helpful and immoral persons is not only disgusting, but also a positive hindrance in any programme of ideal realization. The path of ethical and spiritual goals is difficult though rewarding. Consequently, we need all the help from those around us. A thoughtless or intentional discouragement or misguidance can cause immense harm to the ethico-spiritual seeker. The need for proper company is all the more necessary in programmes which exclude any choice of recourse to forests for self-realization.

We have mentioned the need of social participation for spiritual realization. The social conduct, however, has to be free from fear and violation of what belongs to others. We may recall the reaction of Guru Tegh Bahadur when he was attacked and injured by supporters of Dhir Mal, who claimed Guruship for himself. It is said that these people also looted and plundered what belonged to Guru Tegh Bahadur. The admirers of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Sikhs reacted very sharply to this and in turn not only brought back the belongings of the Guru but also carried away in anger what belonged to Dhir Mal. We are told that as soon as Guru Tegh Bahadur learnt of this act, he directed his followers to return the property of Dhir Mal. In spite of the fact that the provocation was initiated and caused by Dhir Mal himself, yet

the Guru felt that it was improper and immoral to take away whatever belonged to others. We have already mentioned his consistent emphasis on the ephemeral nature of the mundane things. His anxiety to ensure respect for the property of others, along with a right to practise one's faith is therefore obvious. One of the important teachings of the Guru relates to the cultivation of detachment towards earthly goods and this attitude is sought to be realized through absolute inviolability of what belongs to others as property as well as social and individual rights. Second, Guru Tegh Bahadur spent a major part of his life either in meditation or in undertaking long tours to propagate his mission and faith. He is also known to have helped the needy and helpless through his abundant charity. Respect for personal freedom and possession are noteworthy elements of his social ethics. We may now refer to another crucial aspect in Guru Tegh Bahadur's teaching, namely, the emphasis on the *nirbhai pad* as a quality of social participation and spiritual realization. Guru Tegh Bahadur has often referred to *nirbhai pad* as ideal-realization. It may, therefore, be possible to infer that the Guru views the social and the spiritual as a continuum.

The description of the highest realization as the *nirbhai pad* also appears to indicate the ideal of fortitude as well as valour. It is usual for most of the people to associate *nirbhai* with valour only. However, the life of Guru Tegh Bahadur appears to indicate that willingness and actual sufferance for truth and social rights is also a quality of fearlessness. Even a little reflection will convince us of its truth. It is generally conceded that a perfect person or a realized self is fearless. A person who lacks this quality of conduct cannot be termed as realized or perfect. Second, the highest reality is termed as *nirbhai* and this, in turn, shows it to be a normative element in spiritual realization.

We have now arrived at a very important stage in the development of our theme. We have, uptill now, briefly pictured the ethico-spiritual profile of the seeker as outlined by Guru Tegh Bahadur. We may now talk about the supreme ideal alongwith the spirit and stages of its cultivation. In *Rāga Devgandhārī* Guru Tegh Bahadur refers to the inclination of the mind to avoid good actions. On the other

hand *moh* and *mamtā* bind the man to the fruits of his actions. A person who performs good actions to reap their fruits eventually finds himself bound to the fruits of those actions. Guru Tegh Bahadur, therefore, teaches the seeker to sacrifice his attachment to the objects of sensory pleasure and suffering through the process of sacrifice. On this path we begin with the sacrifice of the worldly objects. This is done through the cultivation of non-attachment towards them. Second, we sacrifice the emotional pleasure and pain associated with the personal achievements and failures. It is termed as *sukh dukh dono sam kar jāne, aur mān apmānā*. The third stage of the *arpan* or sacrifice consists of the renunciation of any sense of merit. (*sabh augun mo main*). Thus the seeker becomes aware of his bondage and consciously sacrifices it at the altar of God whose graceful shelter he seeks. The seeker affirms his utter helplessness and implores God to save him through grace. (*rākh lao sarnāī*). The consciousness of bondage and helplessness is the final and turning point on the path of self-surrender and sacrifice. One is reminded of the affirmation of the seeker in the *Japji* of Guru Nanak where he realises that “it is neither in his power to speak nor in his power to remain speechless...” This consciousness in *Japji* occurs just before the commencement of the journey through various *khandas*. This journey ends up in *sach khand*, which is conjoined in the same stanza with *karam khand*, wherein the seeker is re-born in the consciousness of his divine power of grace. A similar end is shown to occur in the *Shalokas* of Guru Tegh Bahadur wherein the seeker becomes aware of *bal chhutkio bandhan pare....* This, however, is followed by the realization of the divine grace and its concomitant energy of divine power. The word *tumre* in the line *sabh kich tumre hāth main* refers to the Divine and is not related to the seeker of the Guru. A contrary interpretation may introduce confusion and distortions in our understanding and evaluation of the *Guru* and his teachings. What will be the distortions? This question may be posed here. In reply, we may point out the possibility of misunderstanding the highest state of *samarpan* marked through complete surrender of ego-consciousness and its bondage as some biographical admission of empirical helplessness and pessimism. The *tyag* or *haumai* and consciousness of the *kūre pāl* by the seeker may be

mistakenly associated with some crucial moments in the life of Guru Tegh Bahadur. This, however, will merely display one's ignorance about the ethico-spiritual path in Sikhism, as well as present an unacceptable portrayal of a Guru in the Sikh religious tradition. After pointing out a possible misreading of the text under discussion, we may proceed with the positive description of the *mukta* as pictured in the succeeding *sloka*. The seeker, at this stage, realises freedom from bondage and experiences unbounded power to perform the righteous deeds. The tension between the ideal conduct and the actual mental energy of the egoistic mind gives way to the final dynamic equipoise. The self is not only free from the bondage but also experiences freedom to *nek karam*. We have earlier referred to the tension when the mind did not direct actions termed *nek* by Guru Tegh Bahadur. In contradistinction to this state of bondage to evil, the self in *bal hūā, bandhan chhute...experiences* Divine presence and power in him whereby he continues unabated ethical activity and spiritual realization. This shows how the presence of the Divine is imperative for the fulfilment of the quest for authentic selfhood which is different from egoistic existence. It marks the transcendence of the given for the reality of the 'sought'. However, it is necessary for us to remember that the quality of the struggle is directly determined by the fact that the whole effort is voluntary and not the culmination of a series of biographical compulsions or difficulties.

We may now conclude this brief statement on Guru Tegh Bahadur. We have attempted to outline the teachings of the *Guru* with regard to the life-ideal. This has introduced us to his view of perfection as well as the path leading to its realization. One of the positive gains of this study of his ideal has, incidentally, thrown ample light on his life to enable us to reject some of the planted or misinterpreted evidence regarding him. What kind of life Guru Tegh Bahadur must have led? Obviously it must have reflected the high moral level which we have traced in his teachings. An objective and fair study cannot reflect anything different from this conclusion.

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2. *Rag Gauri* M.9 (2-1)

ETHICS OF SHEIKH FARID

Sheikh Farid is a seer who lived in an age separated from us by a few centuries but his hymns and teachings have a freshness which makes them sound as the expression of a contemporary mystic. Even a lay reader finds in them a blend of existential realism with the ethico-spiritual idealism. The concepts used by the Sheikh may be traceable to the religious vocabulary of Islam, but the ideals conveyed through them overflow the limiting bonds of any particular religious tradition. His ethics, therefore, is valid for all times and all people.

I have based the present study almost entirely on the hymns attributed to Sheikh Farid and preserved in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the scripture of the Sikhs. I have analysed these hymns with a view to present a systematised statement of his ethical ideas. In this paper comparative references and evaluation has been scrupulously avoided as such an attempt could have been made only in a very superficial manner in such a brief statement. The idea of a comparative similarity between his ideas and the approach of the Sikh Gurus may, however, be suggested in a general sense by reminding ourselves of the fact that these hymns occupy a place of pride in the scripture of the Sikhs.

We may now proceed to state and analyse the ethics of Sheikh Farid. The hymns of the Sheikh make a person profoundly conscious of the great pervasiveness of suffering.¹ Their analysis reveals that this awareness of Sheikh Farid does not appear to be cognitive. It is, in fact, a spontaneous emotional experience and expression. The recurrence of the theme does not appear to be a planned and logically conceived moral lesson but rather seems to signify the intensity of the experience which finds its catharsis in a repeated expression.

It may also provide a cue to his intense concern for the humanity; a concern which impels him to find and present an ethical and spiritual solution to this problem. The pervasive fact and principle of suffering may be looked at from two angles: the cause of suffering and the effect which the consciousness of suffering may yield. The awareness of the motiveless malignancy of the nature or a purposeful design of the supernature may lead to despair and anguish or to hope and courage. It is the latter which may direct us towards ethical and spiritual activity.

We may now proceed to examine the theme of suffering in some detail and try to find out the ideal towards which such a realization of suffering may tend to encourage.

Sheikh Farid does not regard human life as random or chance concurrence. It is not just a stage in the progressive causal series of material evolution. On the contrary he regards it to be an event characterised as opportunity. He conceives the world as "the world with man" in it, and regards man as "the man with teleological mission" integral to his existence. The world and life, therefore, require to be taken much more seriously than many actually regard them. The spring of suffering lies in this tension. The fact of suffering, according to this logic, is caused by an inversion of values. Thus what comes at the lowest in the value scale appears to usurp the higher or the highest place in human choice. This causes and sustains the suffering.

The above statement is expressed as follows. The Sheikh tells us that the life is ephemeral. According to him, "Sheikh Farid has grown old and his body is unsteady (But then) even if one could live for hundred years, ultimately his body is to perish."² Again, he points out, "how long can be a race on the terrace? You have only limited days in this world."³ The Sheikh tells us that "these eyes have seen many people dying but," he adds, "still every one appears to be bewitched by selfishness."⁴

The second thing to be realised is the transitory nature of the material things and worldly riches. He describes the world as concealed fire.⁵ The material riches are "poisonous stems" covered by "sugar"⁶ which conceal their real nature and lead the man astray. He points out that sugar, jaggery,

loaf sugar and buffalo's milk are indeed sweet but these are nothing in comparison with the ideal of man.⁷ The Sheikh emphasises that the worldly riches are worthless as the rich as well as the poor are ultimately reduced to dust.⁸ Any preoccupation with things of such transitory value is, therefore, self-defeating.

The idea of suffering and its cause is completely derivable from the above premises. The impermanence of man and his longing and attachment to the equally transient things as the cause of human suffering has actually been put forward as a "noble truth" in Buddhism. But Sheikh Farid's uniqueness does not lie in this portrayal. In his hymns we see the introduction of another element. The Sheikh alludes to the future punishment. He even cites two examples of unmerited punishment⁹ and uses the "bell" and striker to symbolise the intensity and severity of the undeserved punishment. These draw the attention of a reader and a listener to a dreadful possibility; one which may generate great fear and anguish. This should be remembered as a very important part of Sheikh Farid's structure. He seeks to remind us that if such intense were the punishment when the receiver had not merited it, how severe it could become in case of people who are the guilty ones. It may be relevant to add here that, according to Sheikh Farid, all those who did not strive to realise the Supreme Ideal were included among the guilty. This is the third important tension in his structure, as most of the people may, relatively speaking, be among the defaulters. Here the sense of guilt is not being attributed to the commission of any positive sin; but the absence of the directional progress towards the Idea, by itself, is being characterised as guilt. This, however, in itself, is not being traced to any First Sin or Primordial Sin as in the case of Christianity. Some commentators of Sheikh Farid have used the concept of *māyā* to explain this guilt of man but the hymns of the Sheikh do not appear to say so.

We have now three points in the dialectical tension of suffering, namely transient life, a compulsiveness to seek physical and social things which are also impermanent and of deceptive value, and the consciousness of a grave possibility—the award of punishment or even unmerited punishment. The

last appears to mark the climax. It is in this situation that we are shown the hope-beam, the laser which dissolves the existential fear.

We are asked by Sheikh Farid to dispel the fear of death.¹⁰ The message comes from the grave. The journey to the grave is described as the journey towards the home. Here even those who did not have a house in the world come to have one. The inevitability of death is in fact its weakness. The fact that death cannot but come shows it to be itself a servant. Why fear the servant?

Our attention is, therefore, necessarily directed towards the master. The master, God, is the supreme ideal for Sheikh Farid. We are told that even though a long and curious river is seeking to destroy the trees and the banks with its strong and swift current yet it can cause no harm to the one whom the Master has in his mind.¹¹ This is Hope. We are assured of the grace of anguish. Sheikh Farid tells us at a number of places that God-awareness is soothing and heartening. It is the panacea.

It is at this stage that we become aware of the ideal but we are still to learn the way. The Sheikh tells us that mere verbal recitation or remembrance is not very useful. There may be many belonging to this category.¹² Sheikh Farid makes it clear to us that not words but actions constitute the way. In his words, "those who remain sleeping,¹³ do not realize the ideal. These actions in this world, according to the Sheikh, "constitute the testimonial in the court of God."¹⁴ In yet another hymn he emphasises the need for moral actions in this world and their ultimate efficacy before God, the Judge.¹⁵

The Sheikh continues his guidance and proceeds to explain the way. The personal morality, he points out, requires a consistency between the inner and outer life. It indicates the purity of heart. A person is immoral and not fit to tread the path if he wears a glittering mask but his heart is as black as a dark night.¹⁶ A saint is not an exception to this norm.¹⁷ Thus, consistency and harmony in the inner development and outer expression is the first step towards the realization of the Ideal.

The next step is to overcome greed. It is this propensity

which generally breeds dishonesty. Our guide tells us that one should feel satisfied with the bare but honestly earned bread. One should not be tempted by the affluence of others.¹⁸ Sheikh Farid lays great stress on the need to cultivate contentment. According to him the contented person will surely realize God.¹⁹ In the realm of personal morality, the virtues of honest livelihood and contentment with one's own share are the two main springs of all moral activity. This, however, has to be combined with humility. This virtue, according to the Sheikh, makes one abstain from the wrong use of power even though one may be very powerful.²⁰ The quality of humility, therefore, is not only a characteristic of social conduct but a process and expression of self-discipline. The virtues of honesty, contentment and humility are the pillars of moral and spiritual progress.

In the sphere of social ethics, Sheikh Farid requires us to do good to others. It is the expression of love. If you seek a loving God, you have to be a loving person yourself. One ought not to, therefore, cause an injury to anyone.²¹ The cultivation of altruism and love may be continued to a stage where we do good even to those persons who may cause an injury to us.²² This indicates our realization of our narrow self when we become genuinely conscious of the humanity in every individual. This is an integrating awareness. Altruism and love is the social and ethical expression of this experience.

We are now required to direct our attention to the third dimension of our progress. It may be added here that it is not to be understood as a stage which comes in life *after* the other two aspects of personal and social developments have been completed. Sheikh Farid reminds us that it is not something to be postponed to the old age.²³ The dimension of spiritual development is coeval with the other two spheres of evolution and realization. The first requirement on this path is a belief in the grace of God. We realize and express our faith in Him by remembering His grace.²⁴ When we become conscious of the whole universe as His grace, we appear to be getting in tune with Him. Sheikh Farid tells us that when we surrender ourselves to Him we realize everything. We become the masters.²⁵ This state is attained and indicated through our

continuously remembering God, the Supreme Ideal. The formula is simple: If you seek to survive the suffering, surrender yourself to the Supreme Self.

We may now summarise and conclude this paper. The structure of Sheikh Farid's ethics lies in his awareness of the human tragedy and its three-dimensional dialect. He is, however, not a council of despair. His message of hope shows us a three-fold path which helps us in attaining personal balance and poise, social harmony and spiritual beatitude.

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SHEIKH FARID HIS RELEVANCE TO THE STUDY OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Sheikh Farid is a Muslim *darvesh* or saint of the twelfth century who lived at Ajodhan, a place near the city of Multan in Punjab. He is separated by nearly three hundred years from Guru Nanak, the first *Guru* and founder of the Sikh tradition. He has also preceded by about four centuries and a quarter the editing of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Sacred Book of the Sikhs, which was proclaimed to be the last and perennial *Guru* or preceptor of the Sikhs. The very inclusion and the presence of the hymns of a Muslim saint, such as Sheikh Farid, in such a Sacred Book, is a matter of great curiosity and interest for the students of Comparative Religion. This scripture for the Sikhs provides the physical contact with the Sacred and is the fountainhead of all living spirituality in the past and the present-day Sikh religious experience. For them its very presence converts the profane and the secular into the sacred and the spiritual. The hymns of the Gurus in the *Guru Granth Sahib* are regarded as the revelation and communication of the Lord as well as devotional expressions directed towards Him. This enigmatic and unique phenomenon relating to the presence of Sheikh's hymns in the *Granth Sahib* makes the great Sheikh very relevant in terms of the study of Comparative Religion. We may, however, add that such a fruitful area of research, along with possible pragmatic application of the knowledge based thereon, has not as yet received the attention of the students of the discipline of Comparative Religion. As it ought to we will endeavour to do this here and explicate materials that are of interest from the perspective of Comparative Religion. We will attempt to suggest some basic statements initially which may also be analysed in terms of Comparative Religion.

First, it should be emphasised that Sheikh Farid was a good model of authentic Muslim piety and an ardent follower of the Islamic religious tradition. In his *Slokas* in the *Guru Granth Sahib* we find the Sheikh stressing the duty to perform the five prayers (*namāz*), observe *wuzu* before the prayer and to go to the mosque (*maseet* in Punjabi). He uses the harsh word 'dog' for those who do not perform the *namāz* and bow their head before God.¹ This may be seen to be in line with the Sufi tradition after Al Ghazali who is credited to have made Sufism acceptable to the orthodox circles who were formerly unfriendly to mysticism in Islam. About inclusion of the hymns of Sheikh Farid in the Sacred Book of the Sikhs, the various traditions in Sikhism point out that Guru Nanak, the first and founding prophet among the ten in Sikhism, visited Pak Pattan (Ajodhan) and met Sheikh Ibrahim, a successor to Sheikh Farid's spiritual throne and tradition. The Guru expressed the desire to hear the *kalām*, utterances or hymns, of Sheikh Farid. He appears to have noted down the *kalām* of the Sheikh. Guru Nanak is also known to have been writing down his own hymns as and when he verbalised them. The hymns of Sheikh Farid together with the *bānī* (sayings or utterances) of Guru Nanak was later passed on to the fifth Guru through second, third and the fourth Gurus. An interesting event took place in connection with the *Slokas* of the Sheikh. The Gurus not only preserved the *Slokas* in the form made available to them but also added some verses on those themes in their own names. These additions numbering eighteen out of a total of one hundred and thirty *Slokas* are not interpolations and have been variously described as clarifications of the intended meanings or correctives against any possible misunderstanding of the desired meanings. The addition of the word, 'na' meaning *no* and carrying the sense of "don't" in some of the parallel *Slokas* written by the Gurus, on a superficial reading, may give the impression that the Gurus are contradicting the Sheikh. One may, however, argue against such a view with a fair degree of cogency that the very fact the *Slokas* of the Sheikh have been collected by the first Guru and handed down by the succeeding Gurus to the fifth Guru—the one who compiled and edited the first recension of the Sacred Book—is

indicative of their deep regard for this Muslim saint. They would not have sought to preserve and communicate the same to others if these were considered by them to be contradictory to their own spiritual experiences and social ideals. It is, however, possible that the Gurus sought to give new meanings to the ideal and practice of self-surrender, emphasised by Sheikh Farid in these *Slokas*, for the benefit of their own followers and readers.

There is one interesting aspect in terms of understanding other religious traditions that emerges in the light of the visit of Guru Nanak to the spiritual seat of Sheikh Farid's tradition. It brings to our attention the great need for personal encounter and some kind of direct experience in understanding another man's tradition. It is only such an experience and a related dialogue which could shed light on the relation between two religious traditions which would essentially be built on the relation between religious men belonging to two different traditions. The experience of Guru Nanak and the subsequent Gurus shows that some differences between religious traditions are only partial and perhaps not vital, and the experiences of the one tradition could easily be appropriated in the context of another tradition. What is needed therefore is a personal encounter with men of other religions which could initiate the process of understanding and appropriation. A Professor of Comparative Religion has rightly lamented that "persons of different faiths either have not talked together at all, or have talked not with each other so much as past each other."² The very fact of the inclusion of the Sheikh's *Slokas* in the *Guru Granth Sahib* shows for us, therefore, that the two traditions, manifestly different, are yet comparable and compatible.

Before we proceed further we may add another thing which will undoubtedly be of very great assistance in understanding the comparability of the Muslim, the Sikh and the Hindu religious concepts. There are three very crucial texts which can be enormously helpful in this context. Two of these, namely *Siddha Gosht*,³ and the hymns and *Slokas* of Sheikh Farid⁴ are included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The third is an independent composition, written by Guru Gobind Singh to Aurangzeb, in the form of a letter in Persian poetry.⁵

Its first twelve couplets devoted to the praise of God are of great comparative value. Its author, Guru Gobind Singh, was familiar with the *Slokas* of Sheikh Farid as part of the *Guru Granth Sahib* and he must have studied the Islamic religion fairly well as is indicated by these twelve couplets. It, therefore, can become an interesting study for those looking for an authentic use of comparable religious concepts. The translations of this text from Persian language into Punjabi, and commentaries thereon, will be a matter of added interest in this field. The ease with which they may render *Sharīat prasat* into *dharam rakhiak* can be highly informative and suggestive.

We may now direct our attention to another important point in the study of the Comparative Religion. It comes to our notice when we read the hymns and *Slokas* of Sheikh Farid as they are in the Sacred Book of the Sikhs. In almost very first stanza we come across a reference to *Pul Surāt* by Sheikh Farid.⁶ And in this context he seems to refer to the difficulties which the soul may have to face while crossing this bridge. He mentions the deafening noise of the condemned ones and seeks to use this as a deterrent to those who have strayed away from the path of God or those who have slackened their pace. We are aware that the belief in such a bridge is Zoroastrian in origin in its known and systematised form. It is an integral part of its eschatological doctrine. It has often been suggested and agreed to by many scholars that in Judaism it came to replace its earlier doctrine regarding events which take place after the death of a person. Its reflection in Christianity and its very significant adoption in Islam are known and accepted facts of the History of Religions. In Islam it becomes an important element in its after-life belief. The Zoroastrian *Chinvet* bridge and the Islamic *Pul Surāt* portray the same eschatological acceptance. The occurrence of this concept in the *Slokas* of Sheikh Farid, which have found a respectful acceptance in the Supreme Scripture of the Sikhs, raises some interesting questions. It is possible that all the adherants or followers of Sikhism might not have understood the meaning of this word. And, therefore, the commentators and the people discoursing on the Scripture must have been required to explain the origin and meaning of

this concept. Two important questions may arise here. First, did this signify that belief in *Pul Surāt* either became or was understood to be a part of the after-life belief of the Sikhs? The second question may be, how did the listeners take it? We will attempt to examine the first question only. It is known to the students of Sikhism that any influence which the concept of *Pul-Surāt* may have in this regard is only symbolic. It signifies the great difficulties on the path of realization. It picturises the torments and doom of the wicked and the unbelievers. The hazards on the way are linked to the sharp breadth of a hair and the edge of a dagger. But a belief in this matter does not appear to go beyond this point. We may now suggest a hypothesis in the light of this knowledge. It is possible, we may say, that a central concept of any one creed may find a place of respect and acceptance in another man's scripture. But the mere existence of such a concept in two different religions need not be a sufficient ground for suggesting any parallelism or syncretism. This may, therefore, serve as a caution against hasty conclusions. All theories concerning continuity or discontinuity among religious concepts and precepts require a comprehensive and contextual study of the doctrinal structure as well as the entire tradition. On the other hand, attempts to view the origin of religions or any one particular religion as a phenomenon in vacuum and therefore unique and discontinuous may not also bear a scholarly scrutiny. The preference for such kind of "separation" seems to be largely due to subjective and historical factors and as such is not "objective" enough.

Another factor that strikes us here is that the prophets and founders of religions exhibit lesser inhibition in learning from other religions, and even in accepting and transplanting the truth that they may find in other religions, and towards cross-fertilization of ideas. Such Catholicism and irresistible urge for truth and devotion, regardless of the fact of its association or being a part of another religion, tends however to diminish after the death of the prophet or prophets. The urge to consolidate may sometimes overcome the urge for universal love, truth and good through fruitful encounter with others—which may also signify openness. Now all attempts to understand and appreciate truths outside one's own faith-by-

birth may be rejected in the name of 'purity of religion'. Then possibly, another Man of God should come in order to bring back the spirit of the prophets, after which, however, there may be again a lapse into stagnancy and conservatism.

At an earlier stage in this paper we had occasion to mention that the *Slokas* of Sheikh Farid were collected by Guru Nanak and came to be passed on to Guru Arjan, the fifth among ten founding Gurus of Sikhism. Guru Arjan consolidated all the spiritual experiences or may we say, inspirations and revelations of the preceding Gurus including those of his own, in the Book. He also included in this Book the devotional hymns of the saints from different parts of India including the *Slokas* of Sheikh Farid. This Book also includes some poetical expressions of great reverence for the spiritual mission, inspiration and revelation 'of the' and 'to the' Gurus themselves. It was then installed as the 'Supreme Scripture' or the 'Sacred Book' and became the object of great reverence and devotion. It also came to be known as "the Word" or "the revelation". The tenth Guru, who included the hymns of the ninth Guru in the Sacred Book finally and formally installed the Sacred Book as the last *Guru*. It thus assumed the final form of the scripture which contained the guidance and light for those seeking the Revelation or Word of God. It came to be called the *Guru Granth Sahib*. This made the Sikhs *ahil al-kitāb*, the people of the Book. The inclusion of the devotional or spiritual guidance given by Sheikh Farid in his *kalām* or the path pointed out by him, called by us here as Shari'a⁷—in its non-technical sense—might have called to the minds of some Muslims the Islamic use of the word *Ahil al-kitāb*. At this point we may deliberately overlook the attitude of the followers of any one of these traditions towards the other in the past and address ourselves afresh to a brief exploration of the possibility that this Book could be considered a revealed one. This may help us in correctly understanding the desired attitude of the men of one faith towards the scripture of other faiths, particularly the one which believe in *tawhīd* or One God. The fact that God revealed the Book to the Apostles and Prophets before its revelation to Prophet Muhammad is generally granted on the testimony of the Prophet himself. We are here engaged in an

attempt to find out whether God could have revealed the “mother of the book” to the bearers of His message after Prophet Muhammad. The arguments in favour of such an inquiry could be in terms of purely scholarly interest or a philosophical speculation actuated in the mind of a student of Comparative Religion. As the present paper is not exclusively concerned with this question, our treatment is bound to be brief. However the problem is complex and such brief examination could rightly be accused as tending to obscure almost as much as it seeks to portray. Its chief merit, however, may lie in its suggestion of the problem which may be examined afresh by some students of religion. Its pragmatic value may lie in seeing the unity and uniting the seers.

According to the *Quran*, God tells us that “Yet no apostle has produced any miracle except by God’s permission. For every age there is a book. God abrogates and confirms whatever he wishes, and he has with him the mother of the book” (13:38-39)⁸. The message that every age has a book and omnipotence of God, of abrogating and confirming whatever He Wills, technically at least, cannot deny the possibility that He may abrogate His earlier Will not to reveal after a certain revelation. Such a developmental view of God and religion may be in a better position to accommodate and accept the expanding frontiers of human knowledge in sciences, arts, and religion itself. This may also help in a proper understanding of the other scriptures. Two objections may be possibly raised against even this brief submission. First, it may be said that this discussion sought to be raised here is not relevant to our topic. Second, it may be argued by some that the paper seems to overlook the whole history of opinions on the subject of the *Qur’anic* view of revelation and also its attitude towards other scriptures.

In reply it may be submitted that the objections at this stage are rather premature. We are not over with our loud thinking as yet. Secondly, as pointed out earlier, we have deliberately overlooked the historical discussion of this question in order to suggest a possibility of some fresh reconstructions on the subject. When we hinted at the possibility of God’s power to abrogate and confirm whatever

He wishes, we were merely seeking a power for God which would be very readily granted by theists believing in His omnipotence. If this is granted then we may also submit that revelation could be of the Book itself or it could also be as *inspiration* in terms of the Book. It is only in this sense that the devotional utterances or directions to obey God could be considered as revelation in the revealed Books. It is in this sense that the *Slokas* of Sheikh Farid and saints could be considered as revelation through inspiration.⁹ The devotional as well as the directional could be regarded as elements of this process. Even a little analysis will show it to be not only in conformity with the grace-theologies but also an essential part of their premises and conclusions.

Sheikh Farid is generally described as a Sufi mystic. We may, therefore, now look at him from this perspective, on the basis of his *Slokas* and hymns in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Three questions may be raised in this connection: What are the Sufi terms and symbols most used by him; and the important mystic stages indicated by him. This will, it is hoped, tell us whether his way was, in any way, in conformity with or opposed to the general contemplative approach of the Sikh Gurus. Thirdly, does Sheikh Farid show any influence of the Indian Bhakti movement in his Sufi mystic approach?

Before we seek to answer the first question raised above, it may be interesting to point out that Sheikh Farid has not made an abundant use of the word "*Sufi*" in his *Slokas*. In fact he has used it only once and that too in his criticism against those who wear *Sūf*¹⁰ but are hypocrites. This may perhaps indicate that even during the life-time of the great Sheikh there were persons who called themselves *Sufis* but did not live upto the moral and spiritual ideals indicated by this term. His disapproval for them is indicated in the *Slokas*.

We may now take up our first question, namely the Sufi terms and symbols used by Sheikh Farid in his *Slokas* in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, together with the important mystic stages indicated by him. In reply it may be submitted that the task is fairly difficult and calls for an exhaustive comparative study of the words used by the Sheikh. A study of the Sufi *Istlāhāt*¹¹ as compiled by Iraqi in his *Kuliat*, together with similar other compositions, shows great ingenuity of the Sufi

mystics in using words of the ordinary speech with profound symbolic meanings. The word *Sir* (head) for the divine intentions, *Alaf* (in Urdu-*chārā*-green fodder) for low physical appetitives, *Zar* (Gold) for worship and contemplation (i.e. *riāzāt*) are only a few such examples. There are some *Slokas* which seem to suggest a more profound meanings than the ones now found in various translations and commentaries. This may show an area of study for the students of Comparative Religion. It may be added here that *Awāraf-al-Māruf*, the text of the Suhrawardy school of the Sufis, which was also used by the Chishtia Order at Pak Pattan, may be helpful in this direction. A complete answer to the first part of the question, obviously, calls for more exhaustive study than what may be possible in this short paper.

We may, however, take notice of an important aspect of mysticism and symbolism in the *Slokas* and hymns of Sheikh Farid. It may help us in a comparative understanding and evaluation of the influence of Indian Bhakti movement on the mystic symbolism of Sheikh Farid. A study in this area may show him to be one of the pioneer, if not the earliest, Muslim mystics in India to adopt the symbolism of bridegroom and bride to express the craving of heart for heart, of the soul for its perfect mate which appears as lover to him. The portrayal of the mystic fulfilment as the consummation of the beloved by the Lover may not be, in itself, a novel symbolism for the mystics. We are familiar with such symbolism among the mystic saints of the Bhakti movement in India and Christian mystics in the West. The Song of Songs in the New Testament has been immensely popular among the Christian mystics. We find that “for St. Bernard, throughout his deeply mystical sermons on the Song of Songs, the Divine Word is the Bridegroom, the human soul is the Bride.”¹² He tells us that “Nor are there found any expressions equally sweet to signify the mutual affection between the Word of God and the soul, as those of Bridegroom and of Bride; inasmuch as between individuals who stand in such relation to each other all things are in common, and they possess nothing separate or divided....”¹³ St. Teresa, the Christian woman mystic, is of the similar view when she says, “He has thus designed to unite Himself to His creature: He has bound Himself to her as

firmly as two human beings are joined in wedlock and will never separate Himself from her.”¹⁴ There are other Christian mystics also who have expressed themselves in identical symbolism, though such love-feelings and expressions are denied about some Christian mystics.¹⁵

Sheikh Farid expresses his anguish over unfulfilment in the symbolism of a lover and the beloved¹⁶ in the following words. He says, “This night I couched not with my Lord; My limbs are all in torture with unfulfilment: I ask the woman cast off, In what agony must thy nights be passed.” In the *Guru Granth Sahib* identical symbolism has been used sometimes to express the craving of the self for God. Therefore, Sheikh Farid’s use of the symbols of beloved and Lover are found to be in general harmony with the devotional mysticism in Sikhism, though this is not its major characteristic.¹⁷

The second important mystic symbolism used by Sheikh Farid is that of ‘journey’¹⁸. Two types of journeys are visualized. The first marks the path from birth to death. He says, “Farid, this bird of life is a passing guest; The world is a lovely garden: Hear the drum of departure beaten since dawn; Get ready for the journey hence.”¹⁹ This theme is repeated by him many times. The second journey is the mystic’s progress towards his goal.

The inevitability of the human journey from life to death is stressed by Sheikh Farid to prepare the seeker for his detachment from the worldly things and sentiments.²⁰ It is to make the traveller conscious of what he must surrender before he may qualify for the second pilgrimage. The surrender of the external subservience should be accompanied by internal purifications which are both psychological as well as spiritually-oriented.

Before we may proceed to state and examine the mystic journey, it may be necessary to point out that Sheikh Farid does not use the usual technical terminology of the Sufi mystics such as *Warraha*, *Tauba*, *Twakkul*, *Zuhad*, *Khauf*, *Marifat* and *Fana* etc. although terms such as *Sabr* and *raza* are found in his writing in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The absence of the technical terms, however, does not mean an absence of the indication of the path and its requirements. It is

possible that Sheikh Farid was seeking to popularise the way by de-technicalising the indication of the spiritual goal and the mystical path. This has often been the general approach of the Sikh Gurus themselves. It may, perhaps, also be a case where the knowledge of the actual mystic stages and path is made a part of esoteric initiation.

Whatever might be the reasons for the absence of a mention of technical terms—and we cannot rule out the possibility of both the above-mentioned factors acting together as a cause—the cultivation of the principal ethico-mystical virtues or states seems to be the actual path for the seeker. The first, namely detachment, is mentioned and stressed by Sheikh Farid so often that it almost appears to be a case of over-emphasis. It begins with an expression of dissatisfaction with the subservient attachment with the objects of senses. Sheikh Farid tells us that these objects are really poisonous even though coated with sugar.²¹ There is no place for greed in this scheme of progress.²² The detachment is accompanied by increasing renunciation.²³ The Sheikh continuously tells us of the impending old age²⁴ and inevitability of death.²⁵ One is almost reminded of the Buddhist practice of meditation on death requiring the seeker to go to the cremation grounds and remain there to experience and cultivate a sense of disgust for the transient world and objects of senses.²⁶

One, however, cannot miss to notice that this distraction from the worldly is being gradually replaced by attraction towards God. In this both, the seeker as well as God, are attracted towards each other.²⁷ This reciprocity of the attraction by God is indicated by His grace in saving the seeker from the hidden fire clouding thought and vision.²⁸ His external dependence is replaced by his trust in God.²⁹

The second important and comprehensive virtue is charity. It requires of you to overlook the faults of others.³⁰ There is no place for revengefulness, or for an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.³¹ On the other hand you are advised to go and kiss the foot which has kicked you. The seeker is required to do good even towards those who are themselves bad.³² One is spontaneously reminded of the Sikh ethics according to which “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.”³³ This virtue may be seen to combine the negative renunciation as well as the positive love for the fellow beings.

The previous two virtues, namely detachment and charity, primarily determine our attitude towards the world of objects and behaviour towards other persons. The third ideal quality or virtue mostly relates to the purification of one's self. One has to clean one's self of the supreme impurity of pride and cultivate humility. As God is innocence incarnate, it does not behove the seeker to be proud.³⁴ In the words of Sheikh Farid, “Become thou the dust of the footpath if seeketh thou a vision of God everywhere.”³⁵ We are further told by the Sheikh that this humility is not indicative of ignorance but is based on the real knowledge. Its perfect realisation marks the state when one knows and yet he is humble and innocent.³⁶ Humility is, therefore, one aspect of devotion towards God.

The ideal cultivation of the above stated virtues accompanied by progress in mystical experience leads to a stoppage of wander. One puts an end to a recourse to jungle as one realises that God is in the heart.³⁷ It is, what the *Quran* tells us, ‘closer to one's jugular vein’. This state marks an end to the quest in the ‘outward’ and directs itself to the inner ecstasy. This experience of the bliss is the state of freedom of the narrow self, called individual.

The state of ecstasy also appears to be a transitional state. The highest state of the mystic realisation seems to be, what Sheikh Farid calls, *sabr*³⁸, usually translatable as patience. However, it may perhaps be more appropriate if we call the state of *sabr* as *equipoise-in-fulfilment*. No one can miss the mystic experience of God if “*sabr* is the bow, *sabr* is the bow-string and *sabr* is the arrow.”³⁹ The use of *sabr* three times in one *Sloka* is more meaningful than so far noticed by the students of Sheikh Farid. The next *Sloka* is still more telling in its import of *sabr*. The Sheikh tells us that “*sabri* are in *sabr*, this is their sustenance (or sustaining fuel and energy). They are the nearest to God. They do not divulge their secret.”⁴⁰ Sheikh Farid then makes the profoundest as well as unequivocal statement of his mystic journey. He whispers into the ears of the seeker, “*Sabr* is the goal of the

journey; If thou hold on to it steadfastly, you will expand into the mighty flow of the river and never then shrink into a small stream."⁴¹ This is elevation of the self. The frail little limited stream joins the ocean. It is the highest fulfilment. One cannot miss to experience the profound meanings of this symbolism, one which are equally difficult, if not impossible, to convey in the known vocabulary of human language. A student of Comparative Religion may find that mystics in almost all the religions, at this point, forsake the ordinary language of communication and take recourse to symbols, and expression becomes more poetic than intellectual. It is what the Sikh Gurus call, *sehaj awasthā*,⁴² in deeper meanings than hithertofore realized, and with some difference 'Sāmādhī in the Hindu context.'⁴³

However, a paradox as it may seem, some mystics continue to talk about of the 'inexpressible' and share the same with the fellow seekers. To this group of mystics, Sheikh Farid pre-eminently belongs. This is the ethico-mystic approach to the experience and expression of the highest reality. It does not allure the person away from his social context. In fact it not only confirms him in his work of social redemption but also gives it new depth and meaning. We are, therefore, familiar with the phenomena where the mystics have laid firm foundations of some institutions and traditions.

To conclude: The discussion so far has been with the main objective of stressing the great importance of Sheikh Farid for the students of Comparative Religion. He may thus be seen as a light house preserved with affection and devotion in the *Guru Granth Sahib* for nearly four hundred years. His light may not only illumine the path of a student but may also remove the darkness of separative human passions. The unflinching regard for the teachings of a saint or a prophet revered by one religious tradition, by the prophets and followers of another religious tradition, unaffected by the socio-religious or religio-political conflicts in the life-history of their communities, may not only be highly suggestive for the students of religion but also be a testimony to the pragmatic possibility of an ideal for the religious humankind. This may thus become the major premise of the upward moving human dialectic.

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10. *Sloka*, 50
11. Iraqi, *Kuliat* (Chapter on Sufi Istalahat)
12. Evelyn Underhill, "Mysticism and Symbolism," *Mysticism*, (London : Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1960), p. 132.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 138
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15. Cf. "We spoke of the voluntarist mysticism of the Middle Ages and its parallel, the mystic Bhakti of the East, as a mysticism of exaggerated emotion where the "I" and the "Thou" flow together in a unity of intoxicated feeling. Eckhart (Christian mystic-Author) knows nothing of such emotional orgies..." Rudolph Otto, *Mysticism East and West*, (New York, N.Y. : Collier Books, 1962), p. 231.
16. Sheikh Farid, *Sloka*, 5.
17. In Sikhism God has also been addressed as, 'True Lord' and 'Our Father'.
18. Guru Granth Sahib, Rag Asa (3-2) and Rag Suhi (4-1).
19. *Sloka* 79.
20. *Sloka* 2, 18 and 29.
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28. Sheikh Farid, *Sloka*, 3.
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33. Avtar Singh, *Ethics of the Sikhs*, (Patiala : Punjabi University, 1970), p 192.
34. Sheikh Farid, *Sloka*, 4.
35. *Ibid.*, 16. Cf. Bhai Gurdas, *Vars*, Stanza 16, Var 18. “*Jivan mukta* has reduced himself to the dust of others and has died in life.”
36. Sheikh Farid, *Sloka* 128. Cf. also, Bhai Gurdas, *Vars*, stanza 17, Var 4.
37. *Ibid.*, 19. Cf. Guru Nanak, *Guru Granth Sahib*, Maru M.I. (7–2–19), p. 1040. “Realises in his self – ... All going and coming ceases.”
38. It appears that Sheikh Farid uses this word in a technical sense and a cue to the understanding of its meaning may have to be sought only in the *Slokas* themselves.
39. Sheikh Farid, *Sloka* 115.
40. *Ibid.*, 116. Cf. also, “Having become *Haqq* it was necessary to conceal himself; i.e. to behave like God and not show himself, for God Himself has called Himself the Coverer.” Professor A. Schimmel, “The Martyr-Mystic Hallaj,” *Numen*, Nov. 1962.
41. *Ibid.*, 117. It may interest us to know that *Sabur* is one of the ninety - nine most “beautiful names of Allah” in the *Quran*.
42. Avtar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 204. We may here also recall the treatment by Al Ghazali, of the *sabr* in the fourth part of *Ihya*, which describes the virtues that make blessed.
43. The *Yogi*, or disciple, who has by these means overcome the obscurations of his lower nature sufficiently, enters into the condition termed *Samadhi*, “comes face to face with facts which no instinct or reason can ever know.” William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, (New York: New Americal Library, 1958), p. 307.

RELIGION AND NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS— RELEVANCE OF BABA SHEIKH FARID

Man has, during the course of evolution, often come to some difficult periods of social life. The process of social change, when checked by social institutions of his own making, has sought and found different outlets. His institutions have, thus, either undergone modifications or complete collapse. This process of choice and rejection is a permanent feature of man's life, even though it may appear to be more pronounced at certain periods rather than others. An effective and conscious effort to deal with the impediments has often been described as the characteristic of progressive societies. In this process, however, sudden, and sometimes violent changes, called revolutions, are also known as socio-religious, or religio-political phenomenon. We are, today, at the threshold of an age which appears to be moving towards both evolutionary as well as revolutionary transformations of personal and social life.

We must, therefore, realize that it is our collective responsibility to see the nature and extent of changes which are imperative for the contemporary society if we wish the evolution to be fruitful and progressive. This is the challenge and the posterity will judge us by our courage and response.

However, the task of selecting a meaningful and effective alternative becomes relatively easier if we look to the teaching and lives of the men of realization and vision who have not only shared their divine experiences with mankind but have also transformed socio-religious institutions. We may, here, refer to the two great religious traditions of the East, namely Islam and Sikhism. To this we may add the great Hindu religious consciousness which has

made significant contributions to the religious and social life in India.

There have been a large number of Muslim saints in India and elsewhere who have been comforting the suffering humanity which sought their help. A very crucial aspect of their life is either sometimes overlooked or is not emphasised as much as it ought to be. The fact to be recognized is that the saints have been rendering spiritual and material help to all who approached them, without any consideration of the religious traditions to which they belonged. We have, before us, the highly impressive example of Baba Sheikh Farid who is known to have shared whatever he got with those who needed it. He thereby converted men to a divine love. He, thus, intensely followed the Quranic teaching that God is *Rabb al ʿālmīn*. An ethical transcendence of the seemingly institutionalised faith in God and His grace. He used to teach about the ephemeral nature of human life and inevitability of death. A number of research papers and popular essays have appeared which centre around his tragic view of life. He has been, very often, described as a person who has stressed—or overstressed—the fact of human tragedy. Such an understanding of Sheikh Farid, however, misses the major thrust of his teaching. Sheikh Farid has sought to remind man—and remind him continuously—that man's journey on earth is rather short, and consequently it should not be wasted in social strife. He is often seen ridiculing religious and sectarian bigotry as a waste of human life. His emphasis on the transient nature is with a view to make us realize the great and urgent need to back away from strife and controversies initiated and perpetuated in the name of religion. Instead of becoming victims of ego and narrowness in life, he teaches us to open up to the sweetness of human brotherhood in the knowledge of one God. Thus *faith* and *love* are seen as the true springs of life and devotion. Incidentally, this was seen to be the real import of his vision and teaching by the Sikh Gurus who included his divine poetics in their holy scripture, *Sri Guru*

Granth Sahib. We may, thus, notice the first element of human transcendence of the narrow human fetters. This may be the basic characteristic of the biological as well as spiritual evolution. In fact, the intense concentration on the self, which made the last leap of the evolution a possibility, now requires to be transcended so that man may further continue his evolution.

Any exclusive and sole preoccupation with the self, and not with the environments including natural as well as biological, may hinder man's transition to trans-man. It, therefore, becomes our urgent duty to consciously make efforts to transcend the bounds of narrowly conceived humanity in man. The teaching of Sheikh Farid is a centuries old message, with the freshness and urging of our own age.

We may, now, briefly allude to the spirit of the saints and realized selves in the context of what we have been saying so far. It refers to the ease and spontaneity with which they exhibit trans-human attitudes and conduct. Guru Nanak, the first-founder of the Sikhs, is said to have obtained the hymns of Sheikh Farid and found them similar to his realization and message. Guru Nanak was born to Hindu parents, and yet his spiritual evolution made it possible for him to overlook the institutional boundaries and realize the value of divine love even across humanly created institutional barriers. This is the great significance of Guru Nanak's vision and teaching. Subsequently, Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru, incorporated the hymns of Sheikh Farid into the *Guru Granth Sahib*. This scripture was installed by him as the centre of faith, and the Sikhs regard the *Guru Granth Sahib* as the most respected object and seek its guidance in all affairs of their life. The inclusion of Sheikh Farid's hymns in such a scripture is a most significant phenomenon. Even a little reflection will make us conscious of the great possibilities of inspiration and activities motivated by such a transcendence of the institutional boundaries, and of the extension of one's acceptance beyond the superficial bounds of the spiritual psyche of man. We may, at this stage, suggest the potentialities of such a precedence for fostering national consciousness based in human brotherhood. We have

intentionally limited our analysis to the bounds of national consciousness, instead of working it out to the further areas of cosmic consciousness. We have done it for suggesting its experiment at the possible level of geographical continuity. Second, this seems to be a great need of a multi-religious society, such as ours. Third, the present limited discussion would seem to be relevant in the context of a study of Sheikh Farid's teaching as found in the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

The argument, hinted at, and developed so far, seeks to envisage the cultivation of national consciousness grounded in faith and love. The teaching of Sheikh Farid and the trans-institutional acceptance of its value and validity by the *Gurus* in Sikhism has been cited to visualise a possibility to national consciousness inspired by faith and love. In fact the faith of man in man may find its consummation in faith of man in God. Similarly, the love of man for fellow countrymen may extend itself into his love for God. A converse of this possibility can also be worked out in terms of existential dialectic.

We may now refer to Mohammad Iqbal, a great son of our country and continent. As a student of philosophy I have always been attracted towards that period of his life when he sought to translate his philosophical vision into an overwhelming national consciousness. A scholar, while writing about the development of political philosophy of Iqbal, reminds us that "the message of the poet for the people of India was that of *love and faith*." Many years later, while discussing the problems of India, Iqbal wrote: "It is, and has always been a question of *faith*. Our *faith* too depends on affection and understanding. What we need for a swift solution of the political problem of India is *faith*."¹ Similarly, another scholar reminds us that "For multilingual India, where differences had been preserved between upper and lower castes, and between Hindus and Muslims, Iqbal's poem about the necessity of overcoming these internal differences and strengthening unity among Indians took on a special patriotic ring-...And at this time Iqbal was calling on his compatriots to create a *nayā shiwālā* (new temple) in which religious barriers would disappear and love for mother India

would prevail.”²

The writings of Iqbal, just referred to, appear to support our view that faith and love, as essentials of religion, can provide enduring foundations for a deeper and positive commitment towards national consciousness and activities based therein. We may now refer to history and find a support for our view.

An important element of national life in a multi-religious society may consist of tolerance. The tolerance itself, however, may be due to various motives. These motives may be both “lower or higher, negative or positive.” Following Toynbee we may say, in his words, that “the lowest negative motive for toleration is a belief that religion is of no practical importance, and that therefore it does not matter what religion our neighbours profess. The next lowest negative motive is a belief that Religion is an illusion, and that therefore it is idle to inquire whether this or that form of Religion is true or false or right or wrong. The next lowest negative motive is a prudential one arising from the observation that a resort to force is apt to provoke a resistance which may recoil upon the aggressor.” We may also see some truth in Toynbee’s statement that “our current Western experience is now showing us that toleration inspired by such negative (and lower) motives is precarious.” An indication of the higher motive seems to be based in the realization that “religious conflict is not just a nuisance but is a *sin*.” It is further said by Toynbee that “toleration does not become perfect until it has been transfigured into *love*.” Such a transformation comes from the realization that “all human beings who are seeking to approach the mystery in order to direct their lives in accordance with the nature and spirit of Absolute Reality—or, in theistic terms, with the will of God—all these fellow-seekers are engaged in an identical quest. They should recognize that they are spiritually brethren and should feel towards one another, and treat one another, as such.” This is how an historian of religion supports our lessons which we have earlier derived from the teachings of Baba Sheikh Farid. A positive dialogue of religion, started by Sikh Gurus, by including the hymns of Baba Sheikh Farid in their scripture,

is also an unmistakable pointer in the same direction.

We may now conclude our submission with the statement that national consciousness is the first and necessary step, under the present circumstances, towards the realization of cosmic human brotherhood. Second, national consciousness based on political considerations alone may be neither complete nor fruitful and fecundous. The true reply to our quest, therefore, may lie in faith and love as taught by Baba Sheikh Farid, or other men of spiritual realization, revered in different religious traditions.

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BHAI VIR SINGH'S PERCEPTION OF SIKH PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

Bhai Vir Singh is an outstanding mystic and a poet of faith, hope, and equipoise. His style is so gentle and persuasive that he communicates his perception of the spiritual life in a manner in which it sinks into the inner self without one's becoming conscious of it. His subtle message is received very clearly and followed by the individuals almost instinctively. His abilities are those of the seers who transcend the barriers of time and can see the phenomenon which has already taken place or the one towards which history appears to be moving. There are very few saints of the twentieth century who reach his prophetic ability to combine mystic poetry with ethical values in a manner in which he teaches without appearing to be teaching. His contribution to the art of spiritual life is seen all over the vast literature produced by him. I will, however, seek to draw your attention to the "sole epic in Punjabi with a religio-ethical theme", namely *Rana Surat Singh*. My special reason for focusing light on this epic is that it portrays the recurrent historical situation in which humanity in general, and the Sikhs in particular, have found themselves after every cycle of ascendancy-dismay-ascendancy. The present general mood of the seemingly forlorn Sikh society appears to be presented by Bhai Vir Singh through the character of Rani Raj who experiences the despair after the death of her husband, Rana Surat Singh. Was this the general feeling of the Sikhs after they had lost their rule to the British? Is Bhai Vir Singh merely presenting a political mood of the Sikhs through the anguish of Rani Raj? There is an interpretation of this epic on this line. And there is some degree of cogency in such an interpretation. We, however, want to suggest that the anguish of Rani Raj is a continuously recurring experience and

emotion of the human beings during their sojourn on earth. The epic, is, therefore, normative and not entirely historical. The separation, and a continuing series of separations is also the subject matter and temper of another famous Indian epic. But in case of Rana Surat Singh the separations do not occur in continuous series. They have occurred once in the death of the Rana. But then a fairy appears before Raj and revives in her the moral necessity of performing one's duty. Yes, Rana is dead but the performance of the duties of Rana through Raj have to continue. The fairy tells Raj:

*"Oh Raj dear, thou are a great devotee
And love-linked with the memory of your lord
To your position, it is not becoming, so I feel
To let time fly past,
Thou are not just another woman
Like thousands of them
A queen thou are
And the needs of your subjects are thy concern
Their burden is on thy shoulders
And it befits you not to seek to escape from it.
Answer thou the clarion of duty
With love and devotion.*

The fairy continues telling Raj that one is sustained in the world or at the Divine Court only through the performance of one's duties and not by taking to the ascetic withdrawal. The queen is gradually retransformed into a being who fixes her attention on the Ideal of self-realization through the performance of one's duty. She is not led to the life of a mere householder but as an active leader of the human beings. It is easy to see that Bhai Vir Singh seeks to remind his countless readers that despair and anguish need not be allowed to break them. The queen here is not being roused from slumber but being restored to the performance of her duty with disregard to her personal anguish. As Iqbal had said:

(Tu Shaheen hai, parvaz hai kām terā)...

(Thou are a bird royal, thy duty is to fly And there are many more worlds for you to fly to)

This is a message of faith and hope. Bhai Vir Singh has mastered this art of enabling a person to see beyond death, beyond one's personal anguish, and thus restored the spiritual

character of faith and hope.

We may notice here that Bhai Sahib is not consoling the person in despair. There is no call for a negative contentment or for 'bearing' what has to be borne. There is no attempt on his part to create a contrast of human helplessness with the ruthlessness of the power of nature to destroy. Even where we find such a reflection, it is merely to mark the starting point of ascent. Bhai Vir Singh is an idealist in his metaphysics. This is the reflection of Sikh philosophy in his epic *Rana Surat Singh*. Unlike many other poets who would present death as the starting point for generating a consciousness about the might of nature and teaching the humans to surrender to this supremacy of the *prakriti*, Bhai Vir Singh shows death to be a mere helplessness of nature which can very easily be neutralised by continuing to perform one's duty and not allowing the anguish or despair to over-run the soul. Rani Raj is being gradually led to recover her faith and see that the moral is higher than the material. The fairy tells the widow, Raj

*Were you to withdraw and become a recluse,
Withdrawing yourself to the corner of the room
Suppressing your gifted ability
Thou shall not meet Divine approval
Gurus have taught
The Bondage snaps and freedom comes through
duty.*

Raj is then graduated into the nature of duty. In this case, she is the ruler and the leader of the people. Bhai Vir Singh has first told the human beings through the lesson to Raj that one whose charge it is to look after others is not allowed to wallow in the grief of personal loss. One may lose husband, mother, father or brother but as Bhai Sahib gently reminds Raj:

*Remember, people are God's children
So seek always to temper Justice with Love.
True Service to God lies in this O'lady.
Treat not people to be thy slaves
They are your tender charge,
Wealth of the state is thy sacred trust
Spend it for the well being of the people,
To do good to the public.*

Bhai Vir Singh has then gone on to induct Raj to *rāj* (to rule). She learns the patience, firmness, commitment to ensure fair play and a dedication to defend the rules of the game. The *sat-sang* is the scene where ethical and spiritual training is being imparted in such a manner by Bhai Sahib that instead of renouncing the social concern for the transcendent Reality, Raj is being shown the transcendent light to illumine her earthly path. Here is Bhai Vir Singh at his spiritual height. His deep and vast learning of Sikh philosophy and ethics is clearly at work in gently raising the person, not only to stand on her or his feet, but to ride the horse.

It appears that Bhai Sahib disapproves any drowning of the grief, any loss or suffering, into shrieks, high notes, or breast beating. Even the initial protest against injustice is recorded so gently that we do not notice it as a discord. One is, very naturally, reminded of the Babar *Bānī* of Guru Nanak and the scene of Saidpur. Like death, Babar had come. The unequal bout of death and the helpless maidens had left the latter cold and dead. Guru Nanak's voice to show the unfairness of this encounter, in the end, leads him to see the cosmic will at work. But Guru Nanak did not react to this by withdrawing from the social scene. There were nine more Nanaks and you encounter ever ascending levels of *Chardī Kalā*. The *rāj*, these Nanaks visualised was a *halīmī rāj*, gentle, devoid of personal rancour, fearless and just. This *halīmī*, as we see in the preparation and training of the widow queen, Raj, by Bhai Vir Singh, comes not only by withdrawing the ego but continuing the activity. As we know this queen Raj is none else but we all!

We are being told to shift our gaze from our ego and continue the performance of our duty despite any sense of despair arising from various vicissitudes which invariably accompany our life-journey on earth. Anyone who reads this epic in the continuing ups and downs of history, recovers at the end with redoubled optimism and courage. One notices the spirit of the *Bachiternātak* and the *Zafarnāmā*, showing the direction and not letting one fall even when earth seems to have been knocked off from under one's feet. Bhai Vir Singh's characters stand on earth but are not earth bound. And this is for us to emulate.

Bhai Vir Singh had drawn to our notice the Sikh philosophy and culture as seen by us so far. It is the culture which says, "Thou shall rise and not remain fallen" It is a culture which calls the human beings to defy the gravitation of the earth to pull you down. Inspiration and enthusiasm are shown to us to be the important elements of growth and development. In contradistinction to the matter-bound culture, which denies freedom, and at best is merely redistributive in character, the ideal culture shown in the *Rana Surat Singh* is through and through spiritual, and creative. Our country and our people can rise like a phoenix, dedicate themselves to the service of the humanity, and regain the ascendancy by proclaiming the primacy of spirit over the matter. This is what the ten Nanaks and their light in the eternal *Guru Granth Sahib* proclaims. And this is what Bhai Vir Singh has taught us through his poetry and has highlighted in the epic *Rana Surat Singh*.

A PROLEGOMENA TO THE METHODOLOGY OF INTERPRETING MAHATMA GANDHI

Many years ago I was walking by a stall displaying titles by or on Mahatma Gandhi. I was attracted towards a small booklet with the interesting title, *Ethical Religion*, by Mahatma Gandhi. A few lines were addressed "To the Reader" which appeared to have been reproduced from the paper *Harijan* of twenty-ninth April in the year 1933. This brief passage occurring even before the introduction to the book is sure to arouse some kind of reaction in the minds of students of philosophy as well as lay men long accustomed to the usual values of judgement. The Mahatma also appears to have regarded this aspect of his perspective to be important as may be seen by the prominence and emphasis laid by him on it.

The passage reads: "I would like to say to the diligent reader of my writings and to others who are interested in them that I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search after Truth I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop at the dissolution of the flesh. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment, and, therefore, when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject."

Even if one were to overlook the Mahatma's claim that his growth will not cease even after his death, we are still left with the puzzling statement which challenges our traditional notions of the true being not self-contradictory.¹ Some of the assessments of Mahatma Gandhi, seeking to patch-up his

inconsistent actions to present a self-consistent model are bound to be a frustrating exercise in the above sense. The Mahatma needs a different methodology for being interpreted correctly and followed honestly. Let us outline some theoretical possibilities in this regard.

One of the usual and often heard remarks about the Mahatma is that he was a practical person. It is sometimes pointed out by the upholders of this view that the Mahatma was fundamentally a politician—and I have noticed some people using it in a fairly negative manner. So the inconsistencies in conduct are explained as the exigencies of his politics. Such a thought is also used to comfort those whose profession and practice may be inconsistent and at variance with each other. Thus some persons swearing by democracy may be subtle dictators. When such a discrepancy is brought to their notice, they may argue that their actions are practical with a view to achieving certain ends. Such a submission may be seen to rest on their assumption about the inconsistency of the means and ends. Was the Mahatma a practical person in this sense? Did he contribute to the pragmatic theory of truth? In reply, we may refer to the Mahatma's emphasis on the purity of not only ends but also the means geared to realize those ends. It can be shown that the notion of a practical man, as is generally known to us in our cultural setting, is not isomorphic with the above notion. While emphasizing the purity of the self seeking certain ends, the Mahatma, in the supra cited book says that "...instead of thinking of the wickedness in themselves, men brand religion itself as humbug and go on acting and living as they please." (p.3). Again, this is not a practical approach in the traditional sense. Any methodology of interpreting the Mahatma, in terms of his ends and ideals alone, therefore, may be partial as well as misleading.

The critic of Mahatma Gandhi may say that it is perhaps not necessary to assume or prove that the Mahatma was articulating any perfect system of moral values. His failure to be consistent, therefore, may be taken as a defect in his moral theory. Such a critic may be impressed by the 'universalizability' as the criterion of the moral law. We are familiar with the moral theory wherein the moral imperative is

interpreted in this sense. Does the inconsistency of the Mahatma arise from this lack of universalizability? Is his inconsistency an argument for claiming and making exceptions? If such were the view of Mahatma Gandhi, his critics may say, it amounts to a violation of the moral law. What has the Mahatma to say to this? And surely this is a grave charge!

Mahatma Gandhi, referring to the ideals of the Ethical Societies, approvingly refers to a writer and says, "All that needs to be said about the author is that he practises whatever he advises others to do. We would only appeal to the reader to try to live up to those moral precepts that appeal to him. Then only we may regard our efforts as having been fruitful." It is obvious that a person holding the view that a moral man is one who "practices whatever he advises others to do" cannot be charged with claiming and making exceptions in his own favour. We may, therefore, safely infer that Mahatma Gandhi does not interpret his claim for inconsistency in this sense of the denial of universalizability of his ideals and conduct. In fact his positive and emphatic support to seek harmony between the universal aspect of the moral law and the individual's obedience to it, impresses us with the rigorous nature of his moral belief. In a significant sense it is also the formal condition of the moral criterion. The Mahatma's statement about the inconsistency, therefore, requires to be interpreted differently.

Let us attempt the most simple approach to the understanding of this serious matter. We may take a common sense view of the matter, as some may say. In this sense, the Mahatma may be simply taken to mean that whenever, there is inconsistency between two writings of the Mahatma, the later of the two is the one which may be taken to be depicting the truth and the ideal. In support of this view, it may be said that the Mahatma was a simple man, unconcerned with the exposition of any system or theory of values. We often meet people who lend great support to this line of thinking. They are also often greatly impressed by the claims of such researchers that the Mahatma was a neurotic person, neither capable of, nor interested in, any system building, much less, theorising about any ethical theory. Such a view is also

sometimes advocated about great men of religion. Such a generalisation has some superficial force and may appeal to those who feel easily satisfied with the obvious and the peripheral. One may, however, wonder, how a person given to long periods of vows of silence and meditation can be described as a person who could or did avoid attempts at thinking out systematically the nature of ideals sought to be realized by him. It is undeniable that the Mahatma was attracted towards the sacred writings, which in the Indian tradition, discuss the problems of ethics and religion in an intertwined manner. How else could he have used his time during which he sought some withdrawals from the concrete and the direct? How else except by reflecting on the direction and nature of perfection he considered desirable for himself and others.

It is, therefore, required by the demand of minimum fairness to the Mahatma as well as to our objective of a fair appraisal of his views, that our commonsense approach does not degenerate into a naive over-simplification. It is also therefore necessary that his statement about inconsistency is not interpreted in terms of a certain chronological ascendancy. The Mahatma says that if any body finds any inconsistency between any two writings of his, the one articulated later ought to be accepted, If this were interpreted in the literal historical sense, then we shall have to abandon a very large part of the writings of the Mahatma and concern ourselves only with the last years of his life. Further, there will be perhaps no difficulty as long as all the interpreters of Mahatma Gandhi have isomorphic views on all the aspects of the writings of the Mahatma. But, as this may not always be possible, the simple adjudicating factor available will be the date on which the Mahatma's interpreters are relying upon for their opinions and conclusions. Once the accuracy of the date is established, the matter would end there and then. However, only a very few thinkers will be willing to accept this game of 'date-point' controversy to evaluate the coherence of the Mahatma's views. The acceptance of this methodology will also considerably reduce any meaningfulness from discussions in assemblies and seminars, including the one we are holding here today. Any real difference of opinion in various papers

would be open to settlement merely by citing the relative dates on which the Mahatma has written one thing or the other. Also, all the views will have to be very carefully scrutinised against all the subsequent writings and the related material attributed to the Mahatma. One need not deny some and relative importance of this element, but to make it the sole factor in interpretation of the Mahatma is perhaps neither possible nor necessary. What else could have been the intention of the Mahatma when he sought to sanctify his inconsistencies?

Let us underline the sentence of his statement, which reads, "...I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly..." Mahatma Gandhi is obviously accepting inward evolution of self-realization as the moral standard in terms of which the coherence of all his views can be better evaluated. Self-realization, as the moral standard, points to the existence of various levels. It is possible that some important element of the higher may so supercede, or, as well as include, the lower that the latter may appear to be inconsistent with the former, but the later, in taking into account the earlier, is higher as well as more comprehensive. We may, therefore, interpret the later in the sense of the higher. The Mahatma has said that he is "not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent." But then by seeking to provide a principle to decide as to what must be changed in case there appears to be an inconsistency in his views, Mahatma Gandhi is not sanctifying inconsistency. On deeper reflection, he may appear to be equally keen to avoid inconsistency, which of course, he does by identifying the later, mature and higher, as the more valuable. Such a view is in keeping with the principle of self-realization in ethics. The person on this journey of self-realization develops himself from various aspects. It is what you may also call "growing from moment to moment." This self-realization, however, should be differentiated from selfish-realization in which a person may seek to realize his ambition for the sake of which he may be willing to trample all moral values. The development, about which we are talking here is moral development. The notion of growth, therefore, means replacing or regulating the lower by the higher. What kind of moral duty can arise from this principle.

The Mahatma says:

“Let us take first, our private habits which are unknown to all but ourselves. We are responsible for them since they affect our character; but this is not all. We are responsible for them also because they affect others. Every person ought to control his own impulses, and keep his soul as well as body clean. ‘Tell me,’ says a great man, ‘what a man’s private habits are and I shall tell you what he is or will be.’”(E.R., p. 28). and he continues to say: “One ought to have a fixed aim in life. If we do not discover *our life’s purpose* and keep steadily to the course we shall be swept along like a rudderless ship on the high seas; we shall falter on the (moral) path. Man’s highest duty in life is to serve mankind and take his share in bettering its condition.” (p.29).

The path of self-realization is difficult and it involves self-discipline of a very high order. The Mahatma also points out through the above-cited passage that the context of self-realization is social. The inconsistencies on this path may only arise from the process of growth and development. In fact the inferior appears to be inconsistent because of being lower, and when so judged from the point of view of the higher.

Let us now seek to apply our methodology to the subject of our seminar. How should we set about the task of the education for citizenship? The use of the word education may include both its formal and institutional as well as its wider and non-formal aspect. The former is somewhat directly manageable and the latter requires a more indirect but comprehensive planning and execution. Again, the results in the former may be obtainable in far lesser time than through the latter. But it may be conceded that the ends realized through the latter may be more lasting and fruitful than the results realized only through the formal and the institutional means. Incidentally, it also brings to light the need to attempt a synthesis between the two in the sense that the social may not be completely isolated from the personal and the formal. It must, however, be remembered that, whether separately or through a synthesis, the process of education ought to provide the element of freedom of growth and development. The education of men, for howsoever laudable purposes it may be,

ought to be conceived differently from the training of lions in the circus. What we are saying is obviously difficult but then are we all here to outline the easy and the inferior? The education, therefore, shall have to be conceived as a process which will enable the individuals to realize themselves. Self-realization is education and education is self-realization. It is a continuous process of replacing the lower by the higher. It involves a process of development and evolution. It does not rule out mistakes in the growth of an individual and his journey towards the ideal. It only means that when the individual discovers that he has made the mistake—and a person on the path of education, is always seeking self-examination—he ought to be open to grow beyond the mistake. It also means that he will seek to regulate the lower by the higher. The inconsistencies manifest on this path are, as one may put, part of the game. At a certain lower level, the person may make a genuine mistake either due to failure of assessment or due to being overpowered by passions of a certain kind. Both of these can be suitably overcome by seeking to grow beyond the powerful bondage of emotions as well as to perfect the ability to assess. It is this progressive march towards self-realization which makes education what it really is. Mahatma Gandhi here reminds us that “true morality, true civilization and true progress are always to be found together.” (E.R, p.7). Such a desire, according to him impels us to “to improve ourselves and to do good to others.” (p.8). He adds that we should “have perpetual longing to become better and do more good.” We may agree with Mahatma Gandhi in defining education in terms of this “longing to become better.” Such a definition, both in terms of education for citizenship as well as in harmony with our methodology of interpreting the Mahatma, appears to be very apt and fruitful.

Let us now direct our attention towards the objective of this education, namely the realization of citizenship. While the education in this context may be considered to be a means, the end aimed at is the ideal form of citizenship. How shall we determine this form? Shall we have recourse to the Platonic method? Perhaps, it may be better for us to first say that we are not aiming at in our present search. The obvious and the

superficially attractive may then be relegated to its proper and subordinate position. I have often heard my very learned social scientist friends talking about education as knowledge production. A corresponding jargon has also emerged to integrate the quantitative methodology of the empirically observable and verifiable as the qualitatively-desirable. In concrete terms, even the friends who originally appeared to be attracted towards the education of the citizens for citizenship have tended to end as second-rate historians of the process of the development of the notion and its measurable aspects. They have, at best, sought to become reporters and half-hearted pathfinders. Not quite a few of them are content with the re-hashing of the conclusions and insights which are based in completely different data and its cultural setting. Their major role appears to be of explaining away the differences between the two worlds, so that whatever does not appear to be in keeping with the proclamation of their oracle master, has no right to exist both as an ideal or as phenomenon. Comparatively, even a tight rope-walker appears to be far more at ease than our ideologically committed friends who must throw away their own heritage and tradition to gain power through the support and collaboration of the slave-masters who cover the vulgar struggle and exercise of power with the romance of the remote and the different. What would you say of a person who casts away his mother because other people have told him that she is not so beautiful? Yet its corresponding intellectual counterpart goes unnoticed or is often defended in borrowed terminology.

Our objective in saying all this is simple. We want to direct our attention to the element of earth-rootedness as an element of our citizenship. Gandhi Ji has, through his notion of *Swadeshi*, sought to seek wider application of this earthrootedness. The acceptance of this 'earth-relation' is to accept the different with the same sympathy and regard as the identical or the similar. Contrary to the cynical view of human nature, this approach is more congenial to the nature of man as it has emerged through the long cooperative struggle of man to become what he has evolved to become. The people who are convinced that the world is permeated with only selfishness very often seek to generalise the failure

of their own ambition to triumph over the other. Such generalisations are poor education for citizenship. Only a more balanced and sober appraisal will truly reveal the enduring bond in the seemingly fragile human relations. Gandhi Ji has sought to emphasise the need to direct our attention to the realization of the deeper bonds of fellow social beings, rather than getting angry over the superficial and the selfish activity of the few. It is only a tyrant who seeks to generate the illusion that everyone is acutely selfish and therefore what the tyrant does is merely natural and therefore, perhaps, desirable.

Mahatma Gandhi asks, "how can a damp matchstick kindle a log of wood?" (E.R.30). How can those who are absolutely convinced that the world consists of only selfish people, be fit vehicles for imparting education for citizenship? So every person has to begin with himself and then establish contact with the like-minded to generate some enthusiasm about the moral nature of the world we live in. All this, however, has to be conceived in terms of growth and development in the social context.

An important conclusion appears to follow from this. A person charmed by growth and development will not allow himself to be lured away from his path by the ideas of stability and security. Although one may not deny the moral validity of the State, nor ought he to adopt the same series of actions in an independent society, as he was obliged to take recourse to in a dependent society, yet his "fixed aim in life" requires of him to continue his efforts at self-improvement and treating the efforts of others to improve themselves with "love, kindness and generosity", as Gandhi Ji would say.

We may pause at this point and face a possible criticism. We might be told that we have, as yet, not outlined some specific programme for the education for the citizenship. But then, that was not our objective. We were merely seeking to apply a certain methodology of interpretation to discover the general course which any meaningful education for citizenship should take. We may however, add a postscript to this prolegomena. Our country has been under domination of one kind or the other for a fairly long time. All through this period we have been taught to look

and respect our duties. Even before these dominations, the word 'right' was understood more in the sense of duty than the modern sense of right. Gandhi Ji struggled hard to make us conscious of our rights and a total commitment to realize them. Would it not be a proper education for citizenship if everyone is expressly trained to seek and safeguard his rights? And the awareness and efforts for rights is very different from the exclusiveness of the selfishness. A closer look at our contemporary scene may reveal that people are neither aware of nor keen to defend their rights. This is a dangerous situation and whatever benefits may accrue to some who may cry hoarse that we are not conscious of our duties, they will be destroying the fabric of freedom and self-respect for their petty and short-lived gains. A consciousness of one's rights is, therefore, an important element of our sense of self-respect. And with Gandhi Ji we may say "it is also a part of my duty to respect myself as I respect others." (E.R, p.28). A free, peaceful, happy and democratic India, shall be the fruit of this realization.

REFERENCE

1. "Inconsistency in an ethical statement or principle, or in a group of them, is a fatal defect. If someone uncovers an inconsistency in our ethical views, we feel he has made a mortal thrust; something must then be changed. Indeed, this is one point on which perhaps everyone in the history of ethical theory has agreed." R.B. Brandt, *Ethical Theory: The Problems of Normative and Critical Ethics*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice Hall, 1959), p. 16

THE ROLE OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PHILOSOPHER

A REFLECTION ABOUT THE LEGACY OF S.RADHAKRISHNAN

In my earlier days in the college, I had often heard a lot of cynical, and not very complimentary, comments about the ways in which philosophers tend to forget their surroundings and often 'wonder' even about the simple events and affairs. Their portrayal as 'those engaged with matters beyond' usually added to the mirth making references to their profession. The often repeated references to the 'great philosophical wisdom of India' and its heritage did not seem to add much to comfort the situation of the new entrant to the Philosophy course in a college. It may be interesting to imagine how S.Radhakrishnan might have responded and reacted to the similar puns and comments while he walked through the portals of Madras Christian College when he was studying in this great educational Institution of our country. After a lapse of many decades, I am intrigued to ask the question as to how the contemporary Indian philosopher has perceived his role.

It will not be our objective to inject any sense of pessimism in our presentation. Any pessimistic conclusion will be a disregard towards the legacy of the work done and the direction shown by Dr. Radhakrishnan. Any illusory euphoria will also be a disregard towards his love for truth. Our effort, therefore, ought to be for an objective perspective.

Let us start by noticing that philosophers seek the knowledge of truth, not only in the regions of distant sky, but also in their social surroundings and inner spiritual self. It is a great reminder to the contemporary Indian philosophers by S. Radhakrishnan that "philosophical thought belongs to the

context of life.” The ethical and the social values and institutions are, therefore, as important agenda for the contemporary Indian philosophers as their concern with the philosophy of language and the propositions of science. We are all familiar with the famous Socratic saying ‘Knowledge is Virtue’. It appears to me that Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan brought back the reflections of the great Indian thinkers from the books of the ancient wisdom to provide the values and norms for our contemporary social praxes. The cumulative contribution of this intellectual effort towards the refinement and sustenance of the ideal of social and political freedom is obvious. It goes to the great credit of the teachers of Madras Christian College that they helped Radhakrishnan in viewing his intellectual goal with great clarity and encouragement. So, Radhakrishnan’s work appears to me to be a great reminder to the contemporary Indian philosophers that a deep and sincere work in researching the ancient wisdom is not without its effect in shaping the social and political life of their own period. I may add here that the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, had, some three hundred years ago, revived the ancient Indian thought and literature, and arranged for its rendering in the language of his contemporary life. The old heritage should not be abandoned merely because it is old and distant in time. Their contemporary application should be properly understood and striven for.

In this context, we may add that a careful reading of the interpretative work of this great philosopher reveals that the ascending levels of the objectivity in research are matched with increasing influence in directing oneself, as well as the society around, towards more and more freedom from falsehood and injustice. Even while dealing with the non-dualist tradition of the earlier Indian philosophy, Radhakrishnan clearly perceives the need to be truthful in one’s statements and appraisals. Radhakrishnan seems to remind us that truth and objectivity are to be the constant values of the philosophers. The philosopher in him seems to know that truth will not hurt, nor will it ever become the basis of injustice. He was himself a person of great compassion and showed great concern for the social welfare of the humankind. His love for the truth did not convert it into an exercise of

arrogant torture of those who have not as yet emerged completely from the superstition and darkness. He saw that there are various levels through which human beings may pass before being fully released from the bondage of being limited and depressed.

Here may be the place to notice that although he was very well versed in the ancient and the contemporary philosophical thought of the world, yet he did not think it necessary to alienate himself from religion and the related culture. Thus, he appears to have left us with a legacy of living a religious life and enriching the social interaction with the spiritual realization from the domain of religion and cultural heritage. The contemporary Indian philosopher undergoing the strain of the split between his society and the spiritual heritage may be able to derive some comfort and great direction in which he may benefit from the truths of religion and the demands of the modernising society. Today our country is facing a crisis of 'secular fundamentalism'. It appears to have become a dogmatic conviction of a few persons that only a secular thought of a certain kind promises to be a philosophical and social panacea. Such a conclusion is merely adding to the confusion in the thought and lives of our people as it may mistakenly lead us to alienation from our own culture. If India has a great contribution to make to the contemporary life and philosophy, it is principally in the domain of the spirit and the religion. The concern for the affairs of man is neither anti-religious nor necessarily secular. Any seeming impression to the contrary may be the result of some impulse but it is neither, perhaps, necessarily historical nor abundantly normative. So, the contemporary Indian philosopher has a very important and urgent role as reminded by Radhakrishnan. The truth of religion may not be rejected due to the prejudices of some human beings. The contemporary Indian philosopher may work in as many fields as he wants, but he cannot afford the luxury of rejecting the Indian spiritual and religious traditions without hurting himself very grievously in this process. A healthy balance in this regard will greatly contribute to the nascence of the philosophy he seeks to realize and articulate. We may refer to what Radhakrishnan has written in the preface to the first

edition of the second volume of the *Indian Philosophy*. He says, "I have tried to adopt, what is acknowledged to be, the true spirit of philosophical interpretation, viz., to interpret the ancient writers and their thoughts at their best and relate them to the living issues of philosophy and religion." Unlike many other countries in the world, India has the rare and very rich distinction of interaction between the speculative and the experiential mode of knowledge. Here is the opportunity to examine and share the knowledge of the spiritual as perceived and reflected upon in the East and the West. Most of the religious traditions of the world have found an hospitable intellectual meeting place here. And the contemporary Indian philosopher has a role to play! Will the philosopher accept the invitation and lead to the permeation of his intellectual work into the social and the ethical life of the communities around him?

And this question takes us to the second aspect of the contemporary Indian philosopher. We shall raise a question which has a very important theoretical content. Although almost all of us are aware that very strong diverse positions have been adopted by various thinkers on this issue, yet this, by itself, is not enough deterrent to the raising of this question. In a theoretical polemic, we may ask whether we philosopher, qua philosopher, can completely free himself from the emotional and the aesthetic aspect of his life and the society around him. Since literary experience and expression is also included in the aesthetic and the emotional aspect of the being, the life engagement of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan can be seen as a model by us. The poise, rhythm, and harmony are not only the traits of the purely emotional but also characterise the intimate boundaries between the purely intellectual and the purely emotional. Perhaps an extreme level of purity in this case may be only an abstraction. At the known level of human existence, the meaningful fusion is not only true but also desirable. Even the pure non-dualist speculation in India is not without its *bhaja Govindam* element. A commitment for *Jnāna* without love is only a simulated ideal or possibility. It signifies only a withdrawal or a refusal to perceive and live in the 'whole'. A subtle appraisal of Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy* (Volume I) proclaims

it to be “not a formal history and a dry intellectual discussion of ideas but a work of *feeling* as well as of thought, an exposition of living interest.” (*Quest*). Radhakrishnan has himself also reminded us that ‘to understand their thought we must learn to *feel* and *understand* their world as they felt and understood it....’ (“Fragments of a Confession”). When we talk of *jnāna* and *bhaktī*, we do not exhaust all the aspects of the fusion between the cognitive and the affective. Even at the secular and the human level, the conscious desire and will to overcome all the impulses for the ugliness and the cruelty may be a small but very important effort for the human beings to make and sustain. Similarly, it may not be enough to intellectually assent to the common source of human life and self, but the actual feeling—and expression of such feelings—is an important element of the work of the contemporary Indian philosopher. Any inability of perception of this dimension of his role can lead him to only partial and sterile direction.

Over the long years of our journey as the students of philosophy, it has always impressed us that the monistic as well as the pluralistic philosophical positions commit us to a realm of feelings which show our relationship with others as well as require a warmth of feelings for them. A contrary position is generally a surrender to the unformed impulses and illinformed ideas. It may not be the place for us to enter into a very detailed and elaborate examination of the various positions assumed by the thinkers of the different schools. As is well known to us, the origin of various schools may be traceable to the heightened emphasis on any one element at the expense of the others. We are reminded by Dr. Radhakrishnan that “the fundamental cause of the discords of the world, the chaos of thought in politics, the confusion of standards in ethics is due to intellectual specialization at the expense of the cultivation of the whole man.” (“Religious Disciplines”) However, it would also be wrong to go to the other extreme and deny the vast commonality of the ground among them. It may be important to know the differences but it will be unphilosophical to overlook the agreements. The attitudes of preference, as well as the emotions supporting them, need not necessarily be always divisive. Their strong binding character is also obvious and a desirable direction for

the philosopher. Any progress in this direction promises to be very fruitful and satisfying.

An important issue is raised by Dr. Radhakrishnan when he asks: "How can we rise above the present vision of the world with its anarchic individualism, its economic interpretations of history, and materialist views of life?" His own reflection shows him "that this world of *maya* has thrown our consciousness out of focus. We must shift the focus of consciousness and see better and more. The way to growth lies through an increasing impersonality, through the unifying of the self with a greater than the self. Prayer, worship, meditation, as well as philosophy, art, and literature, help to revive and purify the inner being and predispose it to the contact with the divine." It is obvious that Radhakrishnan has a more comprehensive and coherent role for the philosopher in view. His preference for this ideal, however, does not commit him to any passive role for the philosopher and the saint. According to him, "Religion is the conquest of fear...The marks of genuine religion are *abhaya* or freedom from fear, expressing itself in harmony, balance, perfect agreement between body and soul, between the hands and the brain, and *ahimsa* or love." Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, had also defined the 'knower' or the Philosopher as one who has conquered 'fear'. The highest being has also been described by Guru Nanak as 'fearless'. It is an integral part of the Sikh thought that the knowledge makes the being fearless. We have, just a little while ago, cited Radhakrishnan who has also characterised the person with *viveka*, or the discerning knowledge, as a fearless being. Here the example of Socrates may come to our mind. The philosopher detests nothing more than the demeaning fear, and his 'knowledge' raises him above the dehumanising character of a fearful person. It is here that his knowledge of the immortality of the soul raises him above the compulsions of the earthly compromises. The fear does not lead him to lies or untruth.

A seeker of knowledge, who is not swayed by fear, may experience a keenness for the goal. And this enthusiasm in him is very infective and may result in the transformation of the society around him. The philosopher is a very enthusiastic person. The contemporary Indian philosopher has to

internalise this historic mission. His philosophical engagement leads him to the awareness that his task is continuous and ever-ascending. Radhakrishnan, while elaborating the Sikh philosophy, epitomises its teaching in the statement "A static perfection is another name for death." ("Sikhism", *Radhakrishnan Reader*, p.371). A philosopher seeks his own freedom from smallness and bondage and also participates in the freedom-seeking activities of the others. Guru Nanak reminds the seeker of the knowledge that "he alone knows, who earns by the sweat of the brow and then shares it with others." Radhakrishnan, in his writing on Sikhism, referred to above, highlights the Sikh teaching that "The Individual comes forth from God. is always in Him as a partial expression of His will and at least, when he becomes perfect, manifests God's will perfectly." (p.371). A somewhat similar teaching of Kant in the modern period of Western philosophy may come to one's mind, where good will moves to the frontiers of the holy will. There is a spontaneous compulsiveness in the social direction of a philosopher's creativity.

The contemporary Indian philosopher cannot, and ought not, remain satisfied with the ever widening horizons of knowledge and ever refining aesthetic sensibilities. These have to flow out in shaping and directing his conative life. The philosopher has to train his own mind and then involve himself in the training of the other minds. Such a training, however, is not limited to the task of the intellect. It moves on to intuition. The latter, in the words of Radhakrishnan, is the "spiritual apprehension or the kind of awareness of real values which are neither objects in space and time nor universals of thought." (*Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 485). He reminds us that "it is unfortunate that insistence on intuition is often confused with anti-intellectualism. Intuition which ignores intellect is useless. The two are not only not incompatible but vitally united." (*Ibid.*, p. 485). The intuition, in itself, leads the philosopher to the enhanced pace of creative activity. Radhakrishnan is very clear about it when he says that "Intuition is not only perfect knowledge but also perfect living." (p.487). The philosopher knows that all activity, merely because it signifies dynamism, does not make

it automatically desirable. Radhakrishnan has pointed out that “the backward or those who are still children in the game of life allow their activities to be governed by automatic attractions and repulsions but their activities are by no means free. Only when man attains unity, when he has discovered his whole nature and ordered it, has he the right to say “I will” (p. 491). And the contemporary Indian philosopher has to say, clear and loud, “I will”. He does not appear to have much option. Even his asceticism has to be through action. He is participating in that stage of evolution when his personal achievements have to be reflected through his social actions. Perhaps a closer relationship among the philosophers may make their contributions more fruitful than the isolated and individual actions, although even the relevance of the latter cannot be denied. Whoever and wherever he is, he has a meaningful role to play. And he must play it. His kind is not plenty in number and he must, in all humility, accept his role.

Let us recall the role S. Radhakrishnan saw for himself. He says: “The practical bearing of philosophy on life became my central interest from the time I took up the study of the subject. My training in philosophy which began in the years 1905 to 1909 in the Madras Christian College, with its atmosphere of Christian thought, aspiration and endeavour, led me to take a special interest in the religious implications of metaphysics.” (*Ibid.*, p.475). A span of about eighty years separates us from the times of his inspiration and the sense of his goal. But the freshness and the relevance of the role has not dimmed a bit. We have to run our portion of the relay race to enable life to cross the next hurdle of evolution, both material as well as spiritual. In this seems to be the philosophical heritage for our country and in its light shines the path and role of the contemporary Indian philosopher.

FAITH AND ETHICS IN POLITICAL LIFE

A STUDY IN SANT HARCHAND SINGH

Sant Harchand Singh is a link in the tradition of Punjab whereby the men of faith have wandered into affairs of the state and its management programmes. The inspiration for such an easy entry of saints into politics is provided by the history of the Sikh tradition itself. The ethical teachings of the Gurus also point out that only those who are virtuous and see God in everyone are fit to guide others. Apart from this, the spontaneous respect which a saint receives for his impartiality and his love for all marks him out as eminently suited to decide issues between men fairly and thus sustain a co-operative social living.

So Sant Harchand Singh's emergence in politics appears to be well supported by the tradition and the moral text. I met Sant Harchand Singh when he came to our house some years ago to meet Sant Fateh Singh. The latter had come to stay with us and had asked Sant Harchand Singh to look him up there. Earlier to this I do not have any vivid ideas about interacting with him.

During the last twenty years we had occasion to watch Sant Harchand Singh's steady progress in Sikh religion and politics. Basically, he was a simple, God-fearing man who was approached by people for his intercession with the State Government officials, ministers, and not unoften for spiritual boon.

In due course of time I came in contact with two other saints of the Sikh religion. The four of them always impressed me as people determined to do good for the society. They met at my house a number of times and talked of God and also of the affairs of men. Sant Harchand Singh was generally the quieter kind but there were issues on which he entered into

discussion in a very animated manner. He also often referred to my professional and personal interest in the religious and spiritual matters. He used to say, "how much I envy your anonymity in this proximity to the social and spiritual leaders."

Sant Harchand Singh had felt that often people pushed him too much to obtain even small favours through him. He felt an urge in him to defy what he was being forced to do and instead perform actions that he considered right to do. He experienced the tension between 'what is' and 'what ought to be'. I also remember that often he expressed the desire to withdraw from the conflict-ridden humdrum of life. His desire to reduce tension 'within' him and 'around' him sometimes resulted in a life process of social and political compromises. He sought a balance which he felt he could achieve but knew it to be elusive and not easy to obtain and maintain. Any one who cared to see the inner moral struggle in the life of Sant Harchand Singh in his early phase of development could not help observing that a well meaning person was seeking to overcome the compulsions of the material life.

He started life from a fairly unknown point in the socio-political history of Punjab but managed to forge far ahead of others. He also sought to cultivate the humane qualities of cordiality and humility. He was a peace loving person by nature although he also acquired, in the process of his career, the deftness needed for political manoeuvres and strategies so very necessary in the highly competitive rural politics of India.

Sant Harchand Singh had to face a very acute but the usual dilemma of Punjab politics. There were many people of his community who felt that the community had not achieved what rightly belonged to it. There were the opposing perceptions that the community was asking for something which it ought not to seek. Sant Harchand Singh had to maintain his community membership as well as his image of reasonableness towards the others. What he said to the members of his own community regarding various matters, and the extent of his differences with some of them, was mostly expressed in the exclusive intra community meetings. It often dismayed and annoyed many of them without always

satisfying the other parties to the inter-community disputes. Since he did not articulate his dissatisfaction with his own colleagues in public, he was sometimes misunderstood both by those who were close to him as well as others who were far away from him. But all the same, many remember his smiling benign face even through his differences in opinions with him. He held certain views in respect of the various political goals and the strategies required for their realization and sought to remain steadfast in respect of these visions. This, however, does not mean that he did not change his opinions on any issue.

Sant Harchand Singh often altered his course of action when he discovered the inadequacies of any expected programme and the related ideas. He was continuously seeking to know what to claim and how much to concede. This is the most difficult part of the political art. It becomes still more tough for a political leader who comes from a religious background, his religiosity proves to be double edged for him. What he gains by way of credibility because of the people's trust in his spiritual attainments, also raises people's expectations of his very exemplary kind of transparent honesty and consistency in his political life as well. This reduces his adjustive and tight rope walking options and he is forced to go through various programmes even when they may hurt him personally. The spiritual man in politics is always on test.

This is, perhaps, not the place or the occasion to undertake a critical and thorough analysis of the life of Sant Harchand Singh. It may, however, be the right occasion to suggest that the life of Sant Harchand Singh offers a great potential and scope for our understanding of the possibilities of the application of the teaching of Sikh religion and ethics to the complicated political problems as well as the goal of establishing harmony between men of all faiths. It may also provide us with an insight into the kind of creative and lasting peace for which the people spread over the country can aspire and also sustain.

We are at a very important stage in the refining and casting of our options for the kind of society we want to establish and the nature of ideals by which we ought to

regulate it. Has Sant Harchand Singh anything to say about this? He appears to answer that we ought to follow the teachings of the Gurus. We may make mistakes but we should pray to God for a continuous guidance, and seek to live the divine message of love and mutual help to enable everyone to achieve the moral and spiritual goal. Men may, for this end, not merely exist but work and live 'with dignity' and a sense of ideals. This alone can yield creative peace and coherent harmony. The saints have an abiding and fruitful role to play in establishing such an ideal society which will not only provide for the just distribution of material goods but will also inspire people to realize their inner spiritual being.