

# Sikh Religion and Hinduism



G.S.Sidhu M.A.FIL(London)

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# Opinions

1. At last there is a book which differentiates in detail what Hinduism and Sikhi are. For a long time, nearly 99% authors, Europeans as well as those of the Indian Origin have been muddling the two. Time and time again we heard that Sikhi is the essence of Vedas, it's an offshoot of Hinduism; Jap Ji of Guru Nanak Dev Ji is a copy of Bhagvat Gita. Lately, Hindu politicians as well as scholars have been hammering down our throat that the use of the word 'Ram' in Guru Granth Sahib, makes it a Hindu scripture; therefore Sikhs are Hindus.

Even greater tragedy is that our own so-called scholars never examined things in detail; just one sheep have been following another. Few had the guts to quote Bhai Kahan Singh Ji Nabha's book "Hum Hindu Nahin" (written at the turn of the twentieth century); accepted by few but hated by many under the misrepresentation by the media. No body bothered to ask the Guru. A crystal clear answer exists in Guru Granth Sahib Ji, "nah hum Hindu nah musalman, Allah Ram ke pind pran," (ਨਾ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ॥ ਅਲਾ ਰਾਮ ਕੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਪਰਾਨ) GGS page1136.

In my opinion, this book is a thorough analysis of all the major books of Hinduism and is a very scholarly contrast with Guru Granth Sahib Ji's bani. Scholars like Swami Ram Thirath Dhandi Sanyasi have been heavily quoted by Sidhu Ji. Dhandi Sanyasi had a lifelong experience of Hindu religion and its scriptures, and later accepted the great disparity which existed between the two religions, and became a Guru's Sikh before his demise.



I had requested Sidhu Ji to produce a scholarly work like this on Hinduism and Sikhi, since he had done similar work on Islam and Christianity. He looked at me and said, “health permitting and with help forthcoming from you, I’ll do it.” I must admit that I have not been much help in the production of this book, but he has done a brilliant job single handed. May the Guru bless him with long and healthy life to produce more books of this calibre.

Dr Hardial Singh Dhillon, PhD CBiol.,MIBiol; Cchem.,MRSC; Cert Ed

A Sikh Advisor and [Ex] Director of Multifaith Centre

University of Derby (England)

**2.** Like his previous books Mr. Sidhu has tried to record the facts about Hinduism in his book “Sikh Religion and Hinduism”. As usual this book provides documentary evidence and references which can be easily verified. The facts quoted by him can be very helpful in understanding the various rituals and ceremonies of the Hindus living cheek by jowl amongst us.

Sikh religion is based on Guru Granth Sahib and is independent and distinct from all the prevailing religions in this world. It has its own independent philosophy and practical approach for the collective development and welfare of mankind. Clearly two things about Sikhism are not found in Hinduism. It has only One God as compared to the multitude of Hindu gods and goddesses and it has only One scripture as compared to the thousands in Hinduism. Its philosophy is also unique and it differs from all other religions except in certain ethical domains which remain the same world over.

These days some dera vallas have become self-styled Sikh preachers. They misinterpret religion and corrupt Sikhism through mythical stories from Hindu sources. Their misinterpretation of

Sikhism and political clout are causing a lot of damage to Sikhism and the gullible people are being led astray by their devious tricks. Mr. Sidhu has brought out the facts behind these stories which can go a long way in clearing the fog. May Akal Purkh grant him health and prosperity to continue this service.

(Dr. Sarbjit Singh) 16.04.2010  
RH1 / E-8, Sector-8, Vashi, Navi Mumbai – 400703  
Radio Chemistry Division,  
Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai – 400085.

**3.** The book entitled, ‘Sikh Religion and Hinduism’, is a comparative study of two important Eastern Religions. It brings out the fundamental aspects of Sikhism and Vedic scriptures including Upanishads, Puranas, Simirities and Bhagwad Geeta. A sequential comparison of Vedic literature and tenets of Sikhism makes it useful for beginners of religious studies. The book interoperates the subject matter impressively and succeeds in its purpose.

The author compares the parallels between both scriptures. First the contents of the Vedic literature are outlined followed by the corresponding and relevant thoughts from the Sikh scripture, the ‘Guru Granth Sahibji’. Whilst discussing the creed of these religions, the author has successfully highlighted both the similarities and the dissimilarities with the effective use of relevant quotations.

Importantly, the book relates to some vital aspects of the discussion with religious and social implications of both religions. For instance, God and His images, nature of worship, complexity of rituals, pitfalls of social division, violence in religion etc. It specially compares the most revered book of Hinduism, the Bhagwad Geeta, with Japuji Sahib, the emblem of Sikhism. The author has clearly taken on a ‘Herculean task’ to write about such a

vast topic. Nevertheless, he has succeeded in introducing a subject of great importance for beginners.

Overall, the book presents a succinct view of the Vedic and Sikh scriptures. The author is worthy of praise for handling the subject with clarity and has served the Sikh Community well. This book complements his earlier publications on Sikhism namely, 'Concepts of Sikh Religion' and 'Sikh Religion and Hair'. I congratulate him whole -heartedly.

Dr.Gurmel Singh Sidhu,

Professor California State University, Fresno, CA

Ubc74@aol.com

4. My first introduction to S. Gurbachan Singh Sidhu came about in 1992 when on a visit to London I visited the Sikh Missionary Society's book store in search of a volume of Guru Granth Sahib. While there I ran into a treasure trove of pamphlets on various topics relating to Sikhism, in English. I helped myself to all of them. They were all authored by him.

Soon after I tracked him down to his house in the United Kingdom. He graciously not only accepted my phone call but was also very supportive of our effort to publish literature on Sikhism in English for the Diaspora youth. Our initial conversation over the phone resulted in his book '*Sikh Religion and Christianity*' in 2001. In quick succession came the publications of his books '*Sikh Religion and Islam*', "*An Introduction to Sikhism*" (2003) and '*Panjab and Panjabi*' (2004). Since then he has written many more books but we were able to publish only these four.

In 2003 Prof. Gurtej Singh and I held six conventions in six countries in six weeks at Kuala Lumpur, Sidney, Toronto, Philadelphia, London and Chandigarh, in addition to smaller gatherings in Bangkok, Thailand and Vancouver, Abbotsford and Calgary, in Canada. It was during the second convention in Chandigarh that I and Mr. Sidhu met for the first and only time when he made a special effort to drive to Chandigarh for a short visit with me while he was in India during his regular annual visits to hold free eye and other clinics.

By this time it had become clear to me that in spite of the many Hindu practices that had crept into Sikhism, it had nothing in common with Hinduism. With that thought in mind I approached Mr. Sidhu about writing a book comparing Sikhism and Hinduism. He did not say 'yes' and he did not say 'no' because he knew that unlike the three occidental religions Hinduism had no single definite religious scripture which he could consult. Now he has done it. I was ecstatic to hear from him when he asked me if I would read the draft and send in my opinions. Although Mr. Sidhu has written so many books on Sikhism I find this one most important. I hope it will receive the widest possible circulation in the Panjab, in addition to the Diaspora. In this book our youth can discover the treasure our Gurus gave us, a treasure which I had unfortunately missed while growing up in India

I express my gratitude to Mr.Sidhu for writing this book because I feel vindicated in my belief that other than the fact that Guru Nanak was born in a Hindu family, there is nothing in common between the faith he was born into and the faith he gave birth to. There is no better way to highlight the core concepts of this book other than in Mr. Sidhu's own words:.. *“Sikhism is based upon the writings of the Sikh Gurus inherent in the Granth Sahib. These writings are the*

*basis of real Sikhism. Anything outside the Granth has a value for the Sikhs only if it agrees with what the Sikh Gurus have written. A close examination of the Guru's philosophy proves without any shadow of doubt that Sikhism has nothing in common with any world religion except certain principles of ethics and moral norms which form an inalienable part of all world religions."*

Preparation of this book, and his other books, has entailed tremendous effort and time by the author involving a lot of valuable time and personal out of pocket expenses. Sikhs, as a nation scattered all over the globe, owe him gratitude for not only this wealth of information but also as an example in SEWA, a salient concept of Sikhism. We wish him good health, long life and continuation of this sewa.

Hardev Singh Shergill

President Khalsa Tricentennial Foundation of North America Inc.

Editor-in-Chief The Sikh Bulletin

[editor@sikhbulletin.com](mailto:editor@sikhbulletin.com) May 21, 2010

Sardar Gurbachan Singh Sidhu is a founding member of The Sikh Missionary Society UK set up in 1969, to promote better understanding of Sikh religion, especially amongst Sikh children.

After writing introductory literature for children, Sardar Sidhu took up comparative studies to bring out the independent nature of the path of *Sikhi* (preferred to western term "Sikhism"). Both, Christianity – the majority community religion in the UK – and Islam, actively seek converts to own religions. They target the more vulnerable age groups in the minority communities, and especially young Sikhs. Having written studies comparing Sikh religion with these two Semitic traditions, Sardar Sidhu has now turned to Hinduism. The underlying reason is the same which prompted Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha to write his much acclaimed

comparative study, *Hum Hindu Nahi (We are not Hindus)* over a hundred years ago. That reason is the open *Hindutva* agenda to treat *Sikhi* as an offshoot of Hinduism.

*Sikhi* is a revealed and revolutionary, whole-life theo-political (*piri - miri*) system. It is based on Guru Nanak Sahib's description of the Timeless, Unborn, Creator Being. Any apparent similarities between *Sikhi* and other world religions are the universal human values which are integral to *Sikhi*, and towards which the orthodox world religions continue to aspire through interfaith dialogue. Otherwise, *Sikhi* is an independent system with own distinct ideology, institutions and identity. The main objective of human life is harmony with the One Source of all creation by whatever Name called. It is achievable here and now through constant God awareness (*Naam simran*) and social activism (*sewa*), while living an active life of a householder.

Sardar Sidhu's in-depth research of the diverse, and often self-contradictory, Hindu belief systems, brings out the reasons why the egalitarian New Age simple path of *Sikhi* rejects the myth-based gods, goddesses and supernatural entities of the dark ages and the consequent superstitious practices. *Sikhi* rejects the degrading caste system, a common feature of the conglomeration called "Hinduism".

On behalf of The Sikh Missionary Society UK, I commend this publication, *Sikh Religion and Hinduism*, to students of world religions

Teja Singh Mangat      8-10 Featherstone Road

Hon. General Secretary Southall, Middlesex UB2 5AA

The Sikh Missionary Society UK (Regd)

E-mail: [info@sikhmissionarysociety.org](mailto:info@sikhmissionarysociety.org)

Tel: 44 (0)20 8574 1902 Fax: 44 (0)20 8574 1912

# Acknowledgments

In writing this book I have consulted numerous Hindu books whose names appear at various places in the text. It is not possible to thank all translators by name. However I am especially indebted to the following because I have used their source material more than once throughout the book

"**Maa Gaytry**" published by Jan Gian Parkashan New Delhi 15 May 1969

"**The Bhagvadgita Or The Song Divine**" *published by Gita Press Gorakhpur 1964 edition.*

"**Bhagvadgita as it is**" by Bhagtivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Bhagtivedanta Book Trust Bombay 1972 Edition

Translation of **Rig Veda** by *T.H.Griffith (1896)*

Translation of **The Mahabharata** by Kesri Mohan Ganguli (1883-96)

I am obliged to the following scholars who kindly read through the draft and sent in their valuable suggestions for the improvement of the book.

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Dr. Hardial Singh University of Derby- England

Dr. Sarjit Singh USA

I am also obliged to my friend Sardar Bakhtawar Singh Sehra who has, as usual, prepared the book for the press. My grateful thanks also go to Dr. Amarpreet Singh Deol and his team who have very kindly attended to the proof reading and printing of the book.

G.S.Sidhu

5 September 2010



# Foreword

Prof. Sarjit Singh Sandhu

The readers have been waiting for the publication of *Sikhism and Hinduism* for a long time after the publications of books by S. Gurbachan Singh Sidhu on *Sikhism and Christianity*, and *Sikhism and Islam*. The author has done a commendable service by producing these three books. This book is likely to clarify many misunderstandings of Sikh philosophy which people wittingly or un-wittingly have introduced into Sikhism. I give a few examples of some distortions which non-Sikhs have surreptitiously introduced into our religion.

In writing a foreword to the book *Guru Nanak: Founder of Sikhism*, written by Dr Trilochan Singh.<sup>1</sup> Dr Sunil Kumar Chatterji inserted the following paragraph which went unnoticed for a long time. “*The faith preached by Guru Nanak was nothing new for India, it was basically the old monotheistic creed of the ancient Hindus as propounded in the Vedas and the Upanishads- the Vedanta with its insistence upon Jnana or Knowledge of the One Supreme Reality. And the monotheistic basis was fortified, so to say, to put the matter in a simple form by Bhakti or faith as inculcated in later Purantic Hinduism. The Sikh Panth was nothing but a reformed and simplified Sanatana Dharma of medieval times*”.

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<sup>1</sup> -Sunil Kumar Chatterji, Foreword in Trilochan Singh; *Guru Nanak: Founder of Sikhism*, Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Sis Ganj, Chandni Chowk, Delhi, 1969.

In the same vein Dr S. Radhakrishnan, the ex president of India stated<sup>2</sup> “*Sikh Gurus do not claim to teach a new doctrine but only renew the eternal wisdom. Nanak elaborated the views of Vaisnava saints.*”

According to Dr Gopal Singh, some have described Sikhism as an offshoot of the Bhakti cult inspired in its main tenets by Kabeer. Others have taken it to be synthesis of Mohammedan monotheism and the Hindu metaphysics. One scholar has even suggested it to be a crude form of Buddhism on account of its insistence on Nirvana minus its atheism. A school of Sikhs, called the Nirmalas, who are well versed in Sanskrit and the Hindu scripture, has been interpreting it as a Vedanta creed at best an exposition of the Bhagwad Gita.<sup>3</sup>

The sovereign identity of the Sikh doctrine is worked out well in terms of its growth and development in the dimensions of time and history. Looking from this point of view Sikhism constitutes a higher state of evolution of thought, in which the earlier basic category of substance yields place to spirit as the generic concept of religion. In other words, against the general Vedantic concept of static, spatial; immanence of Brahma'n (substance) in the world, the Nanakian philosophy demonstrates the emergence of superior concept of self-realization. It has redefined the role of religion in

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<sup>2</sup> Dr S. Radhakrishnan in Trilochan Singh, Jodh Singh, Kapur Singh, Bawa Harkishan Singh and Kushwant Singh; Selections from the Sacred writings of the Sikhs; Samuel Weiser, Inc., New York; 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Gopal Singh; Sri Guru Granth Sahib; Publisher World Book Centre, New Delhi, 1996; Vol. I, p xx.

the society and brought about a societal shift in the purpose of religion.<sup>4</sup>

The books, written by S. Gurbachan Singh Sidhu have successfully differentiated Sikhism from other faiths. I am sure that the present book will similarly differentiate it from Hinduism which is entering into Sikhism through the back door. This book is going to be essential and useful reading for the basic understanding of Sikhism by those who are educated only in the English medium. I really appreciate Mr. Sidhu's effort and pray his long life.

Sarjit Singh Sandhu

Former Professor and Head Chemistry Department, Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar (India).

Former Director, Punjab State Council of Science and Technology, Chandigarch.

Secretary, International Sikh Institute for Research and Teaching, Hercules, CA, 2008

\*Email- [sarjeetsingh@juno.com](mailto:sarjeetsingh@juno.com); phone-208-344 -0761;

Address- 2566 Waterbury Lane, Boise, ID 83706; USA

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<sup>4</sup> Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia; The sovereignty of the Sikh Doctrine; Bahri Publications, New Delhi, 1983; p 27.

## Introduction

Of all the religions of the world, Sikhism is the youngest and perhaps the most misinterpreted. For the last hundred years or so, different religions have tried their best to prove that Sikhism is not a self-contained religion but a synthesis of other religions. Sometimes such claims result in ridiculous situations. Islam and Hinduism have nothing much in common and yet both, from time to time, have claimed Sikhism to be a branch of their respective religions.<sup>5</sup> Obviously Sikhism cannot be a branch of two fundamentally opposing religions. On coming to Britain I discovered that Christians too did not wish to be left behind; they too claimed Sikhism to be based on Christian principles.<sup>6</sup> In order to separate the grain from the chaff, I wrote two books one titled “Sikh Religion & Christianity” and another “Sikh Religion & Islam” to identify and clarify the areas in which Sikhism differed from these religions. Readers of these books have been writing to

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<sup>5</sup> For this also read A.C.Bouquet's "Sacred books of the world" Or McLeod's "History of Religions" .These writers think that Sikhism is a hybridization of Hinduism and Islam

<sup>6</sup> Read “The Sikhs and their scriptures” by Dr. C.H.Loehlin.

me to produce a similar book identifying clearly where Sikhism differs from Hinduism.

This demand is not baseless. It appears to be based on a number of statements made by some Hindu scholars who claim that Sikhism is a simplified form of Hinduism. Some have even written books to prove their point. In these books they either quote references from non-Sikh (and unauthentic) sources, or misquote the passages of Gurbani. Following are some of the books and statements that have come to my notice

1. "Guru Nanak and Hindu heritage" by Dr. K.L.Rao
2. "Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh" by Dr. Arvind Sadashiv Godbole.
3. "The Sikhs" 1989 Columbia University (See page 16).
4. Mr. M.K.Gandhi
  - (a) "My belief about the Sikh Gurus is that they were all Hindus. I do not regard Sikhism as a religion distinct from Hinduism. (Young India 1.10.1925)
  - (b) The Granth Sahib of the Sikhs is actually based on the Hindu scriptures. (Collected works of M.K.Gandhi page 284)

This tendency has also been visible in the media and among the political leaders. Following are some of the statements that came to my notice.

"All Hindus are Sikhs and all Sikhs are Hindus" (Raju Bhaya RSS)

"Those who were Indians are Hindus and if one was not a Hindu he could not be an Indian." (RSS Chief Mohan Bhagvad at Bhopal)

There is no denying the fact that all religions have some common ground in certain areas especially in ethics but it would be the height of foolishness to claim that the living and thriving religions

of today are based upon those religions which started earlier. A new religion stands on its principles. If the principles enunciated by the old religions remain unchanged, a new religion cannot get off the ground.

Sikhism is based upon the writings of the Sikh Gurus inherent in the Granth Sahib. These writings are the basis of real Sikhism. Anything outside the Granth has a value for the Sikhs only if it agrees with what the Sikh Gurus have written. A close examination of the Guru's philosophy proves without any shadow of doubt that Sikhism has nothing in common with any world religion except certain principles of ethics and moral norms which form an inalienable part of all religions.

I have been reluctant to write on Hinduism. My first difficulty was to answer the question "Who is a Hindu?" If you ask this question to a Sikh, a Muslim or a Christian they will name their respective scriptures, Granth Sahib, The Quran and The Bible as their guidebook. A person who belongs to a 'book-religion' will have no problem of his religious denomination. But this is not so with Hinduism where the number of religious books rises to thousands<sup>7</sup> and the number of their gods and goddesses runs into millions. Monotheist Hindus are not many. Majority of them are polytheists. Some worship Brahma, some Vishnu, some Shiva, some Sri Ram Chander, some Sri Krishna and some others worship animal gods. Some do not worship the male Gods at all. They worship numerous goddesses (like Kali, Parvati and Lakhshmi etc). Some will fast on the Shivratri (sacred to Shiva) the others will fast on Ekadashi (sacred to Vishnu). Some regard Vedas as the only Hindu scriptures others say that all Hindu religious books are equally

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<sup>7</sup> It is believed that there are more than a thousand Upnishads alone.

acceptable. Some venerate Tantras as scriptures, others reject them altogether and no doubt some others are atheists.

Sikhism is strictly monotheistic and the Sikh Gurus emphatically say, "*There is one God, One scripture and one line of thought*" (Guru Granth Sahib Page 646).<sup>8</sup> Any idea not found in the Granth, however good, cannot be associated with Sikhism.<sup>9</sup> In addition Sikhism considers religion as not only a moral and spiritual force but also a social force amply demonstrated by their Gurus through personal examples. In this sense Sikhism agrees with Hebert Spencer who says, that religion is "the weft which everywhere crosses the warp of history". It acts as a spiritual and social force and not as a ritual. The Sikhs have truly lived their religion in history and proved that its principles are egalitarian, uplifting and unique. Sikhism Instructs the Sikh how during life one should conduct oneself and how one should exert influence on the society for a moral and altruistic change.

Hindus often try to corrupt the Sikh doctrines and condemn Sikhism as an insignificant religion. They usually make use of Bachittar Natak, a book they assign to Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs and leave no stone unturned to prove that Sikhism is a branch of Hinduism.<sup>10</sup> They know full well that even this Granth does not condone Hinduism, Islam or Christianity.

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<sup>8</sup> ਇਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਇਕੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਇਕੋ ਸਬਦ ਵੀਚਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੪੬)

<sup>9</sup> In every research into the general history of mankind it is of essential importance to hear what the nation has to say of itself; and the knowledge obtained from such sources has a value, independent of its historical utility. (Malcolm "A Sketch of the Sikhs- Asiatic researches)

<sup>10</sup> Its name 'Bachittar Natak' is recorded in the Granth itself 151 times. Its old copies do not carry the name "Dasam Granth" and the SGPC never accepted it on par with Guru Granth Sahib, the treasury of Sikhism. At present there are four extant copies of this Granth which vary in contents and details.

They quote spurious portions selectively and ignore those portions of this Granth which attack the fundamental principles of Hinduism. It is for this reason that in this book I have quoted copiously from Bachittar Natak to expose the nefarious tactics such unscrupulous people are adopting.

I have tried to collect material from many authentic Hindu sources. At first glance it would appear to the reader that there is more of Hinduism in this book than that of Sikhism. This criticism, I must admit, may be valid. The idea in writing this book is to bring home the myths of Hindu religion to the notice of the Sikhs. It was the religion of their ancestors, a religion that they have now renounced. This will give them the opportunity to assess whether their new adopted religion is any better than the one they abjured. In doing so, they will also find the basic differences between the two lines of thought. The portions about Sikhism have been deliberately left shorter than those of Hinduism because the Sikhs have Guru Granth Sahib to verify their beliefs but the Vedas, the Brahmans, the Simrtis and the Upnishads (being in Sanskrit) are not within reach of the ordinary Sikhs.

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

G.S.Sidhu 1.1.2010



# Chapter 1

## Vedant

### 1.1 What is Vedant?

Etymologically the word ‘Vedant’ is derived from the Sanskrit root “vid”<sup>11</sup> which means ‘wisdom’. Rig Veda used it in this sense as a noun at least once.<sup>12</sup> Vedant is a combination of two words. “Ved” (or Vid) means ‘wisdom’ and “ant” means ‘end’. The Vedas are thus considered the “terminal knowledge” (ultimate knowledge). Some scholars state that ‘Vedant’ means the gist of the Vedas recorded at the end of the Yajur Veda.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Modern word “ਵਿਦਿਆ” is derived from this root.

<sup>12</sup> It is in this sense that the Sikh Gurus and scholars have used the word Ved at many places. For example ਸੂਰਜੁ ਇਕੁ ਵਰਤਦਾ ਲੋਕੁ ਵੇਦ ਅਲਾਏ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ), (It is common knowledge that there is one sun for all of us.). ਲੋਕੁ ਵੇਦ ਗੁਣ ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਚ ਅਰਧ ਸਰੀਰੀ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰੀ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ) "ਵੇਦ ਪਾਠ ਮਤਿ ਪਾਪਾ ਖਾਇ॥" (knowledge dispels ignorance) *"The word Ved does not always mean the four Hindu books called the Vedas. Ved means "supreme wisdom" (Braham Prashar Samhita Chapter 4)*

<sup>13</sup> ਸ਼ੁਕਲ ਯਜੁਰਵੇਦ ਸੰਹਿਤਾ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਤਤਵ ਗਿਆਨ ਦੇ ਬੌਧਕ ੧੮ ਮੰਤਰ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਅਨੇਕ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਸਹਿਤ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੈ ਵੇਦ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ “ਵੇਦਾਂਤ” ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ । ੨. ਵੇਦ ਦਾ ਨਿਚੋੜ, ਵੇਦ ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ । ਵੇਦਾਂਤੀ:- ਵੇਦਾਂਤ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ ਦੇ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਾਲਾ. ਵੇਦਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਗਿਆਤਾ । (ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼ ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੦੮) .Prof. Max Muller however says, "Vedant is a technical term and did not mean originally the last portions of the Veda, or chapters placed, as it were, at the end of a volume of Vedic literature, but the end i.e., the object, the highest purpose of the Veda".

Vedant is one of the six classical orthodox systems (Samhita) of Hindu philosophy.<sup>14</sup> Shankra (788-820AD) preached advait (non-dualist) Vedant. Sri Ramanuja (1017-1137AD), a worshipper of Vishnu, disagreed with Shankra and preached Bhagti as the means of salvation. Later Madhvacharya (1197-1276 AD) preached Dvaita Vedant (dualist Vedant).<sup>15</sup> In course of time another form developed which came to be known as qualified non-dualistic (Vishishtadvaita). The Bhagvad Geeta has played a strong role in preaching the Vedant philosophy. The systematization of Vedantic ideas into one coherent treatise was undertaken by Badarayana in the *Vedant Sutra* which was composed around 200 BC.

At present the number of *Vedic Samhitas* runs into thousands. It is also believed, and not without reason, that in the later *Samhitas* some parts are spurious which the later commentators may have interpolated or altered as they liked.

Having said all this we must also state here what Sri Krishna says about Vedant.

*“I am whom the four Vedas seek to know; nay, it is I who am the author of the Vedant as well as the Knower of the Vedas.”*  
(Bhagvad Geeta XV. 15)

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<sup>14</sup> ਛੇ ਘਰ ਛੇ ਗੁਰ ਛੇ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੫੭). The difference of philosophy in the six has never been bridged.

<sup>15</sup> Sri Ramanuja advocated worship of Vishnu whereas Madhva advocated pluralist standpoint to religion.

## 1.2 Historical developments

For a long time Vedas were considered the supreme authority and the followers of Rig Veda produced *Brahmanas*, *Sutras* and *Aranyakas* to explain the text and to clarify the concepts. The Atherva people on the other hand advanced counter or anti-vedic arguments and produced the *Upnishads*.<sup>16</sup> Their conflict was so serious that the Rig Veda scholars did not admit the sanctity of the Atherva Veda or that of the *Upnishads* for a long time. Eventually when they did recognize it, they called it "Vedant" which meant something outside the boundary of the Vedas and not so sacred. Vedant has left an indelible influence on the Indian mind and is still a living tradition although its old meanings have undergone a sea change. Today Vedant has come to be considered a collection of *the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, the Sutras, the Simrtis, the Geeta, and the Puranas*. It also includes the school of philosophy which interpreted and re-interpreted the *Upnishads* time and time again.

*Upnishads* preached withdrawal from the struggle for existence and a life of asceticism.<sup>17</sup> Almost all *Upnishads* recommended subjugation of desire by self-mortification. The believers resorted to various physical exercises (84 in number) like cleaning the inside of the body, smearing the body with ashes, going naked in

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<sup>16</sup> *Upnishads*, either renounced ritualism or re-interpreted it in purely philosophical terms. Between 900-500 BC about 108 *Upnishads* were written as commentaries on the Vedas.

<sup>17</sup> This is where Sikhism differs. It instructs its followers to live in the society, earn an honest living and help others. ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ॥ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੬). ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੋਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੪੫)” ਇਕਿ ਵਣ ਖੰਡਿ ਬੈਸਹਿ ਜਾਇ ਸਦੁ ਨ ਦੇਵਹੀ, ਇਕਿ ਪਾਲਾ ਕਕਰੁ ਭੰਨਿ ਸੀਤਲੁ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਵਹੀ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਭਸਮ ਚੜ੍ਹਾਵਹਿ ਅੰਗਿ, ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਧੋਵਹੀ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਜਟਾ ਬਿਕਟ ਬਿਕਰਾਲ ਕੁਲੁ ਘਰ ਖੋਵਹੀ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਨਗਨ ਫਿਰਹਿ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤਿ, ਨੀਂਦ ਨ ਸੋਵਹੀ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਅਗਨਿ ਜਲਾਵਹਿ ਅੰਗੁ ਆਪੁ ਵਿਗੋਵਹੀ ॥ ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਤਨ ਛਾਰੁ ਕਿਆ ਕਹਿ ਰੋਵਹੀ ॥ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਖਸਮ ਦੁਆਰਿ ਜਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸੇਵਹੀ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੮੪)

hot and cold weather, not to use speech and hate women etc.<sup>18</sup> These exercises were believed to bring humans closer to reality (God).<sup>19</sup> Their greatest contribution is that for the first time concepts like Ishwara, Universe, soul, salvation and Yoga etc. entered the religious thought. They grafted metaphysics to religion and discussed such topics as devotion, behavior and self-control etc.<sup>20</sup> which had some relevance to life. They talked of Atma and Parmatma as one. Morality was also given some importance.<sup>21</sup> The relationship between the material world and Brahm began to gain significant importance through them. It is for this reason that some Hindu scholars have reserved the word “Vedant” only for the Upnishads. According to these scholars the highest bliss is contained in the Upnishads (*param sreyo syam nishannam*). Rishi Vyasa was one of the major proponents of this period and is greatly revered as the father of this philosophy.<sup>22</sup> His *Brahma Sūtra* and the concept of the Supreme Spirit, the eternal, self existent, immanent and transcendent ultimate reality was the special contribution of this school to the Hindu religious thought after the Vedas. Another significant addition to religious thought was the idea of “know yourself” which the Upnishads preached.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Some argued that individual souls are an illusion, others opposed it.

<sup>19</sup> The Sikh Gurus rejected all these practices as useless waste of time. “ ਪਾਠੁ ਪੜਿਓ ਅਰੁ ਬੇਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿਓ, ਨਿਵਲਿ ਭੁਅੰਗਮੁ ਸਾਧੇ॥ ਪੰਚ ਜਨਾ ਸਿਉ ਸੰਗੁ ਨ ਛੁਟਕਿਓ, ਅਧਿਕੁ ਅਹੰਬੁਧਿ ਬਾਧੇ॥ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਇਨ ਬੀਧਿ ਮਿਲਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ, ਮੈਂ ਕੀਏ ਕਰਮੁ ਅਨੇਕਾ॥ ਹਾਰਿ ਪਰਿਓ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਕੈ ਦੁਆਰੈ, ਦੀਜੈ ਬੁਧਿ ਬਿਬੇਕਾ॥ ਮੋਨਿ ਭਇਓ ਕਰ ਪਾਤੀ ਰਹਿਓ, ਨਗਨ ਫਿਰਿਓ ਬਨ ਮਾਹੀ ॥ ਤਟ ਤੀਰਥ ਸਭ ਧਰਤੀ ਭੁਮਿਓ, ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਛੁਟਕੈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੪੧)

<sup>20</sup> Roots of the topics like omnipresence of the deity, power of mind, and transmigration etc can be traced in Taitryya upnishad

<sup>21</sup> This is where Hinduism comes a bit closer to Sikh way of thinking although their aims differ.

<sup>22</sup> “ਸਿਆਮ ਵੇਦ ਕਉ ਸੋਧਿ ਕਰਿ ਮਥਿ ਵੇਦਾਂਤ ਬਿਆਸਿ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ” (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ).

<sup>23</sup> Geeta is a good example of this concept.”Bhagvad Geeta is also known as Gitopanishad. It is the essence of Vedic knowledge and one of the most important *Upnishads* in Vedic literature.”(“*Geeta As It is*” by Swami Prabhupada page ix)

What went against the *Upnishads* was that they were more philosophical than practical. They failed to become a working ethic and therefore did not reach the common man. In spite of their departure from some of the Vedic rituals they largely remained metaphysical to the extent of ignoring dynamism<sup>24</sup> which is what a practical religion requires. They mainly deal with forms of meditation (austerities) and are full of commentaries on the Vedas.

Later the Puranas associated upnishadic philosophy with certain gods. They even named their Puranas after the gods (i.e. Vishnu Puran, Shiv Puran Matsya Puran etc) in which they believed. They eulogized their own gods through incredible and most often supernatural happenings which later became a part of history. The concepts of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva may have originated from the Three *Gunas* (Rajo, Tamo and Sato) but now they began to be worshipped as Avatars (incarnations). The main discussion in the Puranas and the other Shastras centred on creation. Some (for example Sankh and Yog Shastaras) argued that God (*Purush*) and matter (*Parkirti*) existed together right from the beginning. Others argued that God was supreme and matter (*Parkirti*) was created by Him.<sup>25</sup>

Two parts of Vedant are usually referred to as *Uttara Mimansa*, (the latter enquiry) and *Purava Mimansa*, (the 'former enquiry'). Purava Mimansa deals with explanations of the fire-sacrifices and the Vedic mantras while Uttara Mimansa deals with the esoteric teachings of the *Aranyakas* (the forest scriptures).

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<sup>24</sup> Against this Gurbani preaches ਆਗਾਰਾ ਕੂ ਤ੍ਰਾਪਿ ਪਿਛਾ ਫੇਰਿ ਨ ਮੁਹਡੜਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੯੬) ਉਦਮ ਕਰੇਦਿਆ ਜੀਉ ਤੂੰ ਕਮਾਵਦਿਆ ਸੁਖ ਭੁੰਚ॥ ਧਿਆਇਦਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਮਿਲੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਤਰੀ ਚਿੰਤ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੨੨)

<sup>25</sup> "If matter were uncreated it must be equal with God- a second God. If there were two first principles, they would be incommunicable without a third, which would be the ultimate principle. Plainly the one must come from the other and yet more plainly matter from God rather than the reverse. To be Lord of all God must have created matter." (Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Vol. IV page 125)

Vedant is not one definite philosophy recorded in some religious book where it can be studied and commented upon. It is a collection of sayings and statements in various Hindu books the number of which runs into hundreds if not thousands. They do not speak in one voice therefore contradictions abound in them. For example, according to one school Jiva (humans) and Brahma (Reality) are identical; according to another view humans are not identical with Brahma but not separate from Him. A third school finds them distinct and separate having nothing in common. In spite of this their contributions to religious thought cannot be belittled. They have discussed most religious concepts threadbare so much so that even atheism has been brought to the level of respectable religion through hair-splitting but mostly convincing arguments.<sup>26</sup>

Vedant sums up religion through some Mahavakyas (Postulates ਪੂਰਵ ਸੰਕਲਪ). They are

1. All that exists is Brahm “*Sarvam Khalividam Brahma*”. Brahm is the only reality. The world is illusion (*maya*). Contrarily some Brahman Granths do not agree with this. They consider the world as real.

2. Human soul (*Atma*) is Brahm. “*Aham Brahamasmi* “(I am Brahm)

3 Everybody is Brahm. “*Tattvasmi*” (Soul is Brahm, therefore you are Brahm)

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<sup>26</sup> Brihaspati Rishi started “Charwak” religion which was entirely different from the main line Hinduism. It was atheistic and opposed the Vedas tooth and nail. It is believed to have started around 600 BC. A similar religion was started in Iran (Persia) by Hassan Ibn Sabah. These people did not believe in the existence of God and resorted to open sexual activities. ਚਾਰਵਾਕ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ ,” ਅੰਨ ਅੰਨ ਸੇ ਹੋਤ ਹੈ ਘਾਸ ਘਾਸ ਸੇ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਜੀਵ ਜੀਵ ਸੇ ਹੋਤ ਹੈ ਅਵਰ ਨਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਕੋਇ ॥ His philosophy was, “ਪੀਤਵਾ ਪੀਤਵਾ ਪੁਨਾ ਪੀਤਵਾ ਯਾਵਤ ਪੜਤਿ ਨ ਭੂ ਤਲੇ ”( ਪੀਓ ਪੀਓ ਹੋਰ ਪੀਓ ਤੇ ਉਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਪੀਓ ਰਹੇ ਜਦ ਤਕ ਬੇਹੋਸ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਧਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਡਿਗ ਪੈਂਦੇ”

4 All Vedantic Granths believe in *Chaturvarna* (four classes: Brahman, Kashatrya, Vaish and Shudra)

5. Although the Various Granths differ from each other in many ways, majority of them consider the Vedas to be infallible.

6. All consider sacrifices to gods a necessary part of religion.

According to Vishnu Puran *Prakirti* (*matter*) is the origin of the universe. Sankh Darshan believes that *karm* (action) was the byproduct of *Prakirti* (*matter*).<sup>27</sup>

Jaimini denounces Vedant as a snare and a delusion, According to him what Vedant teaches is that ‘self’ is different from the body and outlives the body. Such knowledge alone is not enough. The self must have the aspiration to go to heaven. But it can't go to heaven unless it performs Vedic sacrifices. According to him Vedic rituals (*Karmakand*) are the only source of salvation.

Vedant, sometimes rightly called *Brahmanism*,<sup>28</sup> may be summed up in the following dogmas (i) Belief in the chaturvarna (four castes). (ii) Sanctity and infallibility of the Vedas. (iii) Sacrifices to gods (iv) a collection of intellectual but often contradictory somersaults.

### 1.3 Sikh point of View

Most of Vedantic thought is based on the Upnishads, which deal with forms of meditation, rituals and asceticism. They are

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<sup>27</sup>These ideas are alien to Sikhism where God is believed to be the originator of everything including *Prakirti*.

<sup>28</sup> Some people name ‘Vedant’ as *Brahmanism* and claim that it is full of absurd conceits, quaint fancies and chaotic speculations.

commentaries on the Vedas and as such claim to be their essence and the backbone. The Sikh Gurus disagreed with the rituals, the Vedas and the Upanishads. They propounded their own philosophy which they left for their followers in Guru Granth Sahib <sup>29</sup>The Vedas recommend worship of gods and goddesses whereas the Sikh thought centers round one God.<sup>30</sup>

There is no denying the fact that the writings of some Indian sages of diverse backgrounds are incorporated in the Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib. These writings are compatible with Guru Nanak's religious philosophy. There are no quotations or translations from the texts of Semitic and Hindu religious books in Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru says, Neither the *Vedas* (four Hindu texts) nor the four *Katebs* [Semitic texts: the *Torah*, the *Zabur* (Psalms), the *Injil* (Gospel), and the *Quran*] know the mystery of the Creator because God does not have a mother, a father, a son or a brother. <sup>31</sup>These religions accept that God was born (as in Hinduism where gods have parents) or in Islam (where Muhammad is considered as God's friend/prophet) and in Christianity (where Christ is called God's only son). According to Sikhism to say that 'Humans are God' is a heresy born of man's arrogance and ego<sup>32</sup> (p.1136).

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<sup>29</sup> ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਜੋ ਦੀਸਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਜਮੁ ਜਾਗਾਤੀ ਲੂਟੇ। ਨਿਰਬਾਣ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾ ਨਿਮਖ ਸਿਮਰ ਜਿਤੁ ਛੂਟੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੪੭)

<sup>30</sup> ਏਕੇ ਸੇਵੀ ਸਦਾ ਬਿਰ ਸਾਚਾ ਦੂਜੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਕਾਚਾ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੪੯) ਏਕਸ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਭ ਧੰਧੁ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਮੋਹੁ ਮਾਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੪),॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਾਚੇ ਅਨ ਟੇਕ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਕਾਚਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੯੬)। ਖਸਮ ਛੋਡਿ ਦੂਜੈ ਲਗੇ ਡੁਬੇ ਸੇ ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੦) ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਉ ਛੋਡਿ ਲਰਿ ਭਜੈ ਦੇਵ ਕੋਈ ਅਉਰ। ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਭਰਮਤਾ ਫਿਰਹਿ ਲਹਹਿ ਨ ਸੁਖ ਕੀ ਠਉਰ॥ (ਰਹਿਤ ਨਾਮਾ ਭਈ ਪ੍ਰਹਿਲਾਦ ਸਿੰਘ)

<sup>31</sup> “ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਜਾਤਾ ॥ ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਸੁਤ ਭ੍ਰਾਤਾ” (page 1021)

<sup>32</sup> ਸੋ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਜੋਨੀ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੬ )



For a religion to survive it must preach worship of God and have an element of spiritual uplifting element. It should also have the egalitarian approach of bringing people closer to one another. Vedant does not satisfy these conditions because worship of numerous gods is contrary to these principles. According to Sikhism “The worship of God alone can be the basis of religion”.<sup>33</sup> Mathematical digit 1(one- <) used in *Mulmantra* leaves no doubt about the oneness of God in Sikhism. Bhagat Namdev criticised Hinduism and Islam on this count. He says, “*The Hindus are blind and the Muslims are one eyed.*”<sup>34</sup> By this phrase Namdev means that Hindus have many gods (and are blind to one universal omnipotent God) but Muslims believe only in one God. However even Muslims are off the track (one eyed) when they consider the non-Muslims as *Kafir (infidel)*.

Vedant is full of contradictions. There are at least six different philosophies in it. One Granth says one thing another says the opposite. This causes confusion and disbelief. It was for this reason alone, if not for others, that Hindu scriptures were rejected by the Sikh Gurus. Another reason for its rejection was that Vedantic literature is full of obscenities which are an anathema to morality. In addition it supports class distinctions which are totally refuted by Sikhism. Sikhism is a unified system of beliefs which neither contradict each other nor are in anyway antisocial. They gravitate around the worship of one God.

According to Sikhism the world is real because it is created by the all pervading omnipresent God<sup>35</sup> and all else in the world, which

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<sup>33</sup> ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕੁ ਸਮਾਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੩੦)॥

<sup>34</sup> ਹਿੰਦੂ ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਤੁਰਕੂ ਕਾਣਾ ॥ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਸਿਆਣਾ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੭੫)

<sup>35</sup> ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਖੰਡ ਸਚੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ॥ ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਲੋਅ ਸਚੇ ਆਕਾਰ ॥ ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਕਰਣੇ ਸਰਬ ਬੀਚਾਰ ॥ ਸਚਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਅਮਰੁ ਸਚਾ ਦੀਬਾਣੁ ॥ ਸਚਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਸਚਾ ਫੁਰਮਾਣੁ ॥ ਸਚਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਕਰਮੁ ਸਚਾ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ (ਪੰਨਾ

man gets attached to, is unreal.<sup>36</sup> Sikhism says that rituals have no value for humans and that man's salvation does not lie in rituals but in rightful action.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand Vedant is based on Vedic sacrifices (ਹੋਮ ਯਗ). These sacrifices do no good to anybody. They simply waste resources and add to pollution. The Guru says, "*Homa sacrifices, austerities and pilgrimages have no use for the society. If you remove your ego and submit to God you will help yourself and leave good influence on others.*"<sup>38</sup>

Again the language and concepts used in the *Upnishads* are turgid and open to various interpretations. Also, the various contradictory mythical stories turn Vedant into a *Chakarvyuh* (a labyrinth).<sup>39</sup> The Guru advises the Sikhs to keep away from this *chakarvyuh*. His instruction is "*Forget about the contradicting ideas of the Vedas and the semetic books and pin your faith in God alone.*"<sup>40</sup>

੪੬੩) ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੈ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸਚੇ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ ॥ ਇਕਨ੍ਹਾ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਸਮਾਇ ਲਏ ਇਕਨ੍ਹਾ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਕਰੇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥ ਇਕਨ੍ਹਾ ਭਾਣੈ ਕਢਿ ਲਏ ਇਕਨ੍ਹਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਵਿਚਿ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੬੩)

<sup>36</sup> ਕੂੜੁ ਰਾਜਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਪਰਜਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਸਭੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਕੂੜੁ ਮੰਡਪ ਕੂੜੁ ਮਾੜੀ ਕੂੜੁ ਬੈਸਣਹਾਰੁ ॥ ਕੂੜੁ ਸੁਇਨਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਰੁਪਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਪੈਨਣਹਾਰੁ ॥ ਕੂੜੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਕੂੜੁ ਕਪੜੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥ ਕੂੜੁ ਮੀਆ ਕੂੜੁ ਬੀਬੀ ਖਪਿ ਹੋਏ ਖਾਰੁ ॥ ਕੂੜਿ ਕੂੜੈ ਨੇਹੁ ਲਗਾ ਵਿਸਰਿਆ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ ॥ ਕਿਸੁ ਨਾਲਿ ਕੀਚੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਚਲਣਹਾਰੁ ॥ ਕੂੜੁ ਮਿਠਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਮਾਖਿਉ ਕੂੜੁ ਡੋਬੇ ਪੂਰੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਵਖਾਣੈ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਤੁਧੁ ਬਾਝੁ ਕੂੜੋ ਕੂੜੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੬੮)

<sup>37</sup> ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੨)

<sup>38</sup> ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਜਪ ਤਪ ਸਭਿ ਸੰਜਮ ਤਟਿ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਹੀ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਮਿਟਿਆ ਆਪੁ ਪਏ ਸਰਣਾਈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਗਤੁ ਤਰਾਇਆ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੯)

<sup>39</sup> ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਦਸੇ ਗਏ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਗੜਬੜ ਮਚੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ । ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਕੋਈ ਉਚਤਮ ਕਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਯੁਕਤੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਖਿਚੜੀ ਬਣੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ ।.....ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਧ ਵਿਸਵਾਸ ਫੈਲ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ (ਅਲਬੈਰੂਨੀ- ਕਿਤਾਬ-ਅਲ-ਹਿੰਦ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੰਸਕਰਣ ਪੰਨਾ ੪੨)

<sup>40</sup>ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ਸੁਧਿ ਲੋਹਿ" (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੦੨) ਵੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਕੇ ਭੇਦ ਸਭੈ ਤਜਿ, ਕੇਵਲ ਕਾਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਿਧਿ ਮਾਨਯੋ ॥ (ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ) ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਸਤਰ ਬੇਦ ਸਭੈ ਬਹੁ ਭੇਦ ਕਰੈ ਹਮ ਏਕ ਨ ਜਾਨਯੋ॥(ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

The supreme source of inspiration for the Hindus is Vedant but the Sikh Gurus clearly state that for the Sikhs the Guru Granth Sahib is the only spiritual guide.<sup>41</sup> The Sikhs are instructed to follow the Guru as the preceptor and Gurbani as an inspired word.<sup>42</sup> Unbroken uniformity of thought is the hall mark of Guru Granth Sahib and all through the Granth each Guru says “*Avoid confusion and pray only to one God. This is the surest way to salvation.*”<sup>43</sup>

**ਪੂਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸੁਨਿ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ॥ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਨਿਕਟਿ ਕਰਿ ਪੇਖੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੯੫)**  
**Listen to the teachings of the perfect Guru and consider**  
**the supreme Lord Closeby. (Guru Granth Sahib page 295)**

<sup>41</sup> ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਭ ਦੇਖੇ ਜੋਇ ॥ ਉਹਾਂ ਤਉ ਜਾਈਐ ਜਉ ਈਹਾਂ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੯੫) “ਨਾਨਕ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੋ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਗੁਰੂ ਨ ਛੋਡੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਦੂਜੈ ਨ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੮੭) “ ਮੂਲੁ ਛੋਡਿ ਡਾਲੀ ਲਗੇ ਕਿਆ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਛਾਈ” (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੨੦) ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੬੫)

“ ਜੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਮੁਹਿ ਫੇਰਹੋ। ਈਹਾਂ ਉਹਾਂ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਗਿਰਹੋ ॥ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

<sup>42</sup> “ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਹੁ ,ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਕਵਾਏ” (੩੦੮) ਕਬੁਧਿ ਮਿਟੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੪੪)

<sup>43</sup> ਤਜਿ ਸਭਿ ਭਰਮ ਭਜਿਓ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਟਲ ਇਹੁ ਧਰਮੁ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੯੬)॥ ਕਹਿ ਕਬੀਰ ਇਕ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਇਆ ਜਗੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਅੰਧਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੩੮). A Hindu scholar named Swami Nitya Nand Ji studied most of the Hindu scriptures all his life under his Guru Brahma Nand Ji. Eventually they both rejected Hinduism and accepted Sikhism as their true religion. Swami Nitya Nand Ji in his book “Guru Gian “ writes, “ਗੁਰ ਬਾਣੀ ਸੇ ਬੜੁ ਕਰ ਕਲਯਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕੋਈ ਔਰ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਹੀ” (ਪੰਨਾ ੫) To those who follow the Vedas ,the Guru says, .”ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਾਧ ਮਗ ਸੁਨਿ ਕਰਿ ਨਿਮਖ ਨ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵੈ ॥ ਦੁਲਭ ਦੇਹ ਪਾਇ ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਿਰਾਵੈ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੨੦) ॥ ਦੋਹਰਾਣੀ ਕਿਆ ਨੀਸਾਣੀਆ ॥ ਖਸਮਹੁ ਘੁਥੀਆ ਫਿਰਹਿ ਨਿਮਾਣੀਆ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ੨੨)

## Chapter 2

### The Vedas and Sikhism

#### 2.1 The Vedas

Vedas are the sacred books of the Hindus.<sup>44</sup> They are considered eternal, without beginning (*Anadi, Anitya*)<sup>45</sup> and *Apaurushya* (not created by man). It is believed that the Hindu priest-poets passed on the hymns orally from generation to generation through listening (*Shruti*) until they were written down by about 1500-1000 BC. Rig Veda is the oldest.<sup>46</sup> The other Vedas are the Yajur Veda, Sam

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<sup>44</sup> "Vedic knowledge is complete, for it is above all doubts or errors." (*Geeta as it is by Swami Prabhupada page xvi*) "ਵੇਦ ਸਭ ਸਤਯ ਵਿਦਿਆਓਂ ਕਾ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਹੈ। ਵੇਦ ਕਾ ਪੜ੍ਹਨਾ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਨਾ, ਸੁਨਨਾ ਸੁਨਾਨਾ ਸਭ ਆਰਿਓਂ ਕਾ ਪਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ। (ਮਾਂ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੦)

<sup>45</sup> The Sikh Gurus did not consider the Vedas eternal (*Anitya*). Mundak Upnishad agrees with this view. It explains that there are two types of knowledge: Spiritual knowledge (*Maha vidya* or *Pra vidya*) and Ordinary knowledge (*Apra Vidya*). Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sam Veda and Atharv Veda are called by this Granth as ordinary perishable knowledge (*Apra vidya*). The Guru Says, "ਸਾਸਤ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਬਿਨਸਹਿਗੇ ਬੇਦਾ" (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੩੭)

In 1966 the Supreme Court of India defined the Hindu faith as follows for legal purposes: "Acceptance of the Vedas with reverence as the highest authority in religious and philosophic matters and acceptance with reverence of Vedas by Hindu thinkers and philosophers as the sole foundation of Hindu philosophy".

<sup>46</sup> Considering the high degree of linguistic and philosophical content of the Vedas, scholars think that hundreds of years must have been needed for all the hymns found in the Rig Veda to come into being and that centuries must have elapsed between the composition of the earliest hymns and the completion of the

Veda and Atherav Veda. All the four Vedas are written in archaic Sanskrit, and are much beyond the understanding of the ordinary people. Their subject matter differs from one to the other but they mostly concern the *Yajna* (ritual sacrifice) which runs through all of them. Vedic subjects range from Agriculture, cattle rearing, trade, religion, sacrifices, and festivities etc. Here and there, one finds matters relating to seduction, incest, abortion, conjugal infidelity, deception, and robbery as well. Some hymns refer to wars between the Aryan invaders and the local people. In such hymns derogatory terms have been used for the indigenous people of India.

1. The Rig Veda contains hymns relating to various gods and goddesses or departed parents (*Pitr*). for recital by the chief priest (the *Hotre*)
2. The Yajur Veda contains *Mantras* to be recited by officiating priests (the *Adhvaryu* )
3. The Sam Veda contains hymns to be chanted by the general priests (*Udgatr*).
4. The Atherav Veda is a collection of spells and incantations and *Mantras* for curing diseases.

Vedic culture is supposed to have lasted up to 500 BC and later broke into six different schools mentioned earlier. The remnants of Vedic religion and culture are still to be found in Kerala where the Nambudripad Brahmans still carry out the old practices based on the Vedic hymns.

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Samhita of the Rig Veda.”(Winternitz) Maxmuller suggested that in its present written form the Rig Veda is not older than 1200 BC.

## 2.2 The importance of the Vedas

The Hindus consider the Vedas *Apaurushya* and divine and hence infallible, free of faults, failings and frailties of humans. Their authority cannot be questioned.<sup>47</sup>

*“Those who perform action with some interested motive as laid down in the three Vedas and drink the sap of Soma plant, and have thus been purged of sin, worshipping me through sacrifices, seek access to heaven; attaining Indra’s paradise as the result of their good deeds, they enjoy the celestial pleasures in heaven.”<sup>48</sup>*  
(*Bhagvad Geeta IX.20*)

Rig Veda’s literary and historical importance cannot be easily ignored.<sup>49</sup> On the one hand, it outlines the history and the culture of the ancient period and on the other, it provides us with the origins of the Indian Philosophy which has influenced the thinking of every Indian up to the present day. *“In the history of the world the Veda fills a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill. As long as man continues to take an interest in the history of his race and as long as we collect the relics of former ages, the first place will belong forever to the Rig Veda.”*  
(*“Ancient Sanskrit Literature”* Max Muller p.63).

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<sup>47</sup> “Anything performed without the direction of the Vedas is called *vikarma*, or unauthorized sinful work.”(*Geeta as it is*’ by Swami Prabhupada page 53)

<sup>48</sup> In this book all quotations from Bhagvad Geeta have been culled from”The Bhagwad Geeta” published by Geeta Press Gorakhpur 1964 Edition. I am told that this translation is considered to be the best translation of the Geeta.

<sup>49</sup> It is commonly believed among Hindu circles that writing appeared in India in the 3rd century B.C. when Brahmi script began to be used. It is at this time that Paila collected the hymns of the Vedas and under the guidance of Vyasa put them in writing.

## 2.3 The Rig Veda

Rig<sup>50</sup> Veda is known as the oldest book of the world. It is supposed to have been composed in the Punjab roughly between 1700–1100 BC. Some drag the date further back to 3100 BC. Some other historians believe that Rig Veda may have been composed in the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Millennium BC on the banks of River Sarasvati.<sup>51</sup> Majority of scholars however believe that the Rig Veda was composed on the banks of River Sutlej (Panjab) by many Panjabi authors (including some women) around 2500 BC. Winternitz (*History of Indian literature* p.63-64) believes that Rig Veda may have been composed in Afghanistan.

The total number of extant manuscripts of Rig Veda is considered to be around 80 out of which thirty were discovered by George Buhler, Franz Kielhorn and others from Kashmir, Gujarat, Rajputana and central provinces in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are now stored at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute at Poona (Maharashtra). The oldest of these manuscripts is dated 1464 AD. Currently they are a part of UNESCO's "Memory of the World" Register. Complete text of the Rig Veda is available only in five manuscripts. Thirteen of these manuscripts contain commentaries by Sayana (a well known Vedic Scholar). H. H. Wilson was the first person to make a complete translation of the Rig Veda into English (published in six volumes during 1850-88AD). Max Müller

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<sup>50</sup> The word 'Rig' is derived from Sanskrit word 'Rich' which means 'praise'. Rig Veda contains praises of gods.

<sup>51</sup> Panini classified the hymns according to the modes. *Shruti* (revealed), *Prokhta* (announced), *Krita* (composed), and *Vyakhyana* (explanatory) Winternitz (*History of Indian literature* p.63-64) believes that Rig Veda may have been composed in Afghanistan.

consulted 24 of the different texts and used Sayana's commentary for translating this Veda into German (1849-75AD).

A brief detail of the contents of the four Vedas is given below.

## 2.4 Contents of the Rig Veda

There are 1028 hymns (known as Sukta) in this Veda. They are arranged in 10 Chapters (known as *Mandals*) and dedicated to different gods and goddesses. The first hymn concerns the worship of god *Agni* (fire) (ਅਗਨੀਮੀਲੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਹਿਤੰਗ ਯਾਜਨਾਸਯ ਦੇਵਮ ਇਤਵਿਜਾਮ"). It contains no invocation (ਮੰਗਲਾਚਰਨ) to God. "God" is not mentioned in this Veda except for some very brief mention here and there and at the end of the Veda. We give below the full text of the first hymn of this Veda.

1. I Laud Agni, the chosen Priest, god, minister of sacrifice, the Hotre, lavishest of wealth.
2. Worthy is Agni to be praised by living as by ancient seers. He shall bring hitherward the gods.
3. Through Agni man obtaineth wealth, yea, plenty waxing day by day, and most rich in heroes, glorious.
4. Agni, the perfect sacrifice which thou encompasseth about verily goeth to the gods.
5. May Agni, sapient-minded Priest, truthful, most gloriously great god come hither with gods.
6. Whatever blessing, Agni, thou wilt grant unto thy worshipper, that, Angiras, is indeed thy truth.
7. Over the earth and over heaven, O Agni, thou, Son, hast ever spread above thy Parents. Come, Youth fullest! to those who long to meet thee, and hither bring the gods, O Mighty Victor.
8. Ruler of sacrifices, guard of Law eternal, radiant One, Increasing in thine own abode.



9. Be to us easy of approach, even as a father to his son: Agni, be with us for our weal. (1.1, 1-9 Translation by T.H.Griffith)<sup>52</sup>

Some other deities mentioned in the Rig Veda are Indra (rain god), Vritra, Soma, Adityas Mitra-Varuna, Usha, Vishnu, Rudra (storm), Pushan, Brihaspati, Dayus, Pita, Prithivi, Surya, Vayu, Apas, Parjanya (the thunder and rain god), Vach (the word god), Vasus, Rudras, Sadhyas, Ashvins, Maruts, Rbhus, and Vishvadevas. There are also hymns dedicated to some rivers (ie Sapta Sindhu, and the Sarasvati River).<sup>53</sup>

Brief details of the 10 Mandals (Chapters) are as follows. 40 hymns fall under no heading.

**Mandal 1** contains 191 hymns. Hymn 1.1 (given above) is addressed to god Agni. Other hymns are addressed to Agni, Indra, Varuna, Mitra, the Ashvins, the Maruts, Usas, Surya, Rbhus, Rudra, Vayu, Brhaspati, Visnu, Heaven and Earth gods.

**Mandal 2** contains 43 hymns addressed mainly to Agni and Indra.

**Mandal 3** has 62 hymns dedicated to Agni and Indra and the Vishvadevas.

**Mandal 4** comprises 58 hymns addressed to Agni, Indra, Rbhus, Ashvins, Brhaspati, Vayu, and Usas,

**Mandal 5** has 87 hymns addressed to Agni, Indra, Visvadevas, the Maruts, Mitra-Varuna and the Asvins. Two hymns are dedicated to Usha (the dawn)

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<sup>52</sup> For Vedic hymns we have used H.H.Griffith's translation throughout the book.

<sup>53</sup> The most sacred rivers (Ganges and Jamuna) are nowhere mentioned as such in any of the Vedas.

**Mandal 6** has 75 hymns, mainly addressed to Agni and Indra, and some other gods, like Pusan, Ashvin, Usas, etc.

**Mandal 7** comprises 104 hymns, to Agni, Indra, the Visvadevas, the Maruts, Mitra-Varuna, Asvins, Ushas, Indra-Varuna, Varuna, and Vayu, Vishnu and others. It also contains some hymns dedicated to Sarasvati (goddess of learning).

**Mandal 8** has 103 hymns addressed to various gods and goddesses.

**Mandal 9** comprises 114 hymns, entirely devoted to *Soma Pavamana* (The sacred drink of the Vedic Scholars of old)

**Mandal 10** has 191 hymns addressed to Agni, Indra and various other deities. *Nadi Stuti* hymns are in praise of rivers like Sapt Sindhu, Sarasvati etc. (RV 10.75). It also contains Syana Purusha Sukta and the Nasadiya Sukta (10.129) which deal with creation of the universe. The marriage hymns (10.85) and the death hymns (10.10-18) are still of great importance to the Hindus in the performance of *Grehya* rituals.

## 2.5 The ‘creation’ according to Rig Veda

1. Then was neither non-existent nor existent: there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it. What covered in, and where? And what gave shelter? Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?
2. Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal: no sign was there, the day's and night's divider. That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature: apart from it was nothing whatsoever.

3. *Darkness there was: at first concealed in darkness this all was indiscriminate chaos. All that existed then was void and formless:* by the great power of warmth was born that unit.
4. Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit. Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the existent's kinship in the non-existent.
5. Transversely was their severing line extended: what was above it then and what below it? There were begetters; there were mighty forces, free action here and energy up yonder.
6. Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation? The Gods are later than this world's production. Who knows then whence it first came into being?
7. He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it, whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.

(Hymn No.10. 129)

1. The sacrifice drawn out with threads on every side, stretched by a hundred sacred ministers and one, this do these Fathers weave who hitherward are come: they sit beside the warp and cry, Weave forth, weave back.
2. The Man extends it and the Man unbinds it: even to this vault of heaven hath he out spun it. These pegs are fastened to the seat of worship: they made the Sama-hymns their weaving shuttles.

3. What were the rule, the order and the model? What were the wooden fender and the butter? What was the hymn, the chant, the recitation, when to the God all deities paid worship?
- 4. Closely was Gaytry conjoined with Agni, and closely Savitar combined with Usnih. Brilliant with Ukthas, Soma joined Anustup: Brhaspati's voice by Brhati was aided.**
5. Viraj adhered to Varuna and Mitra: here Tristup day by day was Indra's portion. Jagati entered all the gods together: so by this knowledge men were raised to Rishis.
6. When ancient sacrifice sprang up, our Fathers. With the mind's eye I think that I behold them who first performed this sacrificial worship.
7. They who were versed in ritual and metre, in hymns and rules, were the Seven Godlike Rishis.

Viewing the path of those of old, the sages have taken up the reins like chariot-drivers.

(Hymn No.10. 130)

These hymns need to be read with other Hymns in the same *Mandal* to understand them accurately. Here are some other quotes on this topic from the same *Mandal*

- 1 "First Agni sprang to life from out of Heaven: the second time from us came Jatavedas. Thirdly the Manly-souled was in the waters. The pious lauds and kindles him the Eternal (10.45.1)

“Let us with tuneful skill proclaim these generations of the gods,  
that one may see them when these hymns are chanted in a future  
age.

2. These Brahmanaspati produced with blast and smelting, like a  
Smith Existence, in an earlier age of gods, from non-existence  
sprang.
3. Thereafter were the regions born. This sprang from the  
Productive Power.
4. Earth sprang from the Productive Power the regions from the  
earth were born. **Daksa was born of Aditi and Aditi was  
Daksa's Child.**
5. For Aditi, O Daksa, she who is thy daughter, was brought forth.  
After her were the blessed gods born sharers of immortal life.
6. When ye, O gods, in yonder deep close clasping one another  
stood, thence, as of dancers, from your feet a thickening cloud  
of dust arose.
7. When, O ye gods, like Yatis, ye caused all existing things to  
grow, **then ye brought Surya forward who was lying hidden  
in the sea.**
8. Eight are the Sons of Aditi who from her body sprang to life.

(Hymn10.72,1-7)

5. “From him Viraj was born; again Purusa from Viraj was born.  
As soon as he was born he spread eastward and westward o'er  
the earth.
6. When gods prepared the sacrifice with Purusa as their offering,  
its oil was spring, the holy gift was autumn; summer was the  
wood.
7. They balmed as victim on the grass Purusa born in earliest time.  
With him the deities and all Sadhyas and Rishis sacrificed.

- 8. From that great general sacrifice the dripping fat was gathered up. He formed the creatures of-the air, and animals both wild and tame.**
9. From that great general sacrifice Rcas and Sama-hymns were born: Therefrom were spells and charms produced; the Yajus had its birth from it.
10. From it were horses born, from it all cattle with two rows of teeth: From it were generated kine, from it the goats and sheep were born.
11. When they divided Purusa how many portions did they make? What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet?
12. The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanya made. His thighs became the Vaisya; from his feet the Shudra was produced.
13. The Moon was generated from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth; Indra and Agni from his mouth were born, and Vayu from his breath.
14. Forth from his navel came mid-air the sky was fashioned from his head. Earth from his feet and from his ear the regions. Thus they formed the worlds.
15. Seven fencing-sticks had he, thrice seven layers of fuel were prepared, when the gods, offering sacrifice, bound, as their victim, Purusa.
16. gods, sacrificing, sacrificed the victim these were the earliest holy ordinances. The Mighty Ones attained the height of heaven, there were the Sidhyas, gods of old, are dwelling.

(Hymn 10.90,5-16)

1. "In the beginning rose Hiranyagarbha, born Only Lord of all created beings. He fixed and holdeth up this earth and heaven. What god shall we adore with our oblation?"
2. Giver of vital breath, of power and vigour, he whose commandments all the gods acknowledge The Lord of death, whose shade is life immortal. What god shall we adore with our oblation?"
3. Who by his grandeur hath become sole Ruler of all the moving world that breathes and slumbers; He who is Lord of men and Lord of cattle. What god shall we adore with our oblation?"
4. His, through his might, are these snow-covered mountains, and men call sea and Rasa his possession: His arms are these, his are these heavenly regions. What god shall we adore with our oblation?"
5. By him the heavens are strong and earth is steadfast, by him light's realm and sky-vault are supported: By him the regions in mid-air were measured. What god shall we adore with our oblation?"
6. To him, supported by his help, two armies embattled look while trembling in their spirit, when over them the risen Sun is shining. What god shall we adore with our oblation?"
7. What time the mighty waters came, containing the universal germ, producing Agni, Thence sprang the gods' one spirit into being. What god shall we adore with our oblation?"

8. He in his might surveyed the floods containing productive force and generating Worship. He is the god of gods, and none beside him. What god shall we adore with our oblation?
9. Never may he harm us who is earth's begetter, nor he whose laws are sure, the heavens' Creator, He who brought forth the great and lucid waters. What god shall we adore with our oblation?
10. Parjapati! thou only comprehendest all these created things, and none beside thee.

(Hymn 10.121,1-1)

In passing we would like to record here the views of Manu Simrti on this point. Manu Simrti says, *“Then, I, desiring to produce created beings, performed very difficult austerities, and thereby called into existence ten great sages, lords of created beings. Mariki, Atri, Angras, Pulsatya, Pulaha, Kratu, Praketas, Vaishsshtha, Bhirgu and Narda. They created seven other Manus possessing great brilliancy, gods, and classes of gods and great sages of measureless power.”*<sup>54</sup>

## 2.6 Yajur Veda

This Veda is supposed to have been composed between 1,400 and 1000 BC. According to Vayu Puran “pleased by the austerities of

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<sup>54</sup> Entirely different stories of creation are given in “Taitryra Brahmana.” and “Shatpath Brahmana” although the time of the creation is not mentioned anywhere. Gurbani simply says, “ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਠੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੈ ਆਪੈ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ((ਜਪੁ)



Yagyavalk the sun god appeared on a horse and offered the hymns of Yajur Veda to him.”

It has two major parts. The White Yajur-Veda contains verses necessary for the sacrifices in *Yagya (burnt offerings)* such as Agnishtom, Ashava-medh, Narmedh, Go-medh and Rajsuya etc. The Black Yajur Veda incorporates discussions. This Veda was translated by Arthur Berriedale into English in 1914.

Yajur means invocation (sacrificial mantras) therefore this Veda came to be known as the Veda of sacrificial mantras (yajus). They were chanted by a particular class of priests called Adhvaryu. It contains many verses borrowed from the Rig-Veda and adapted for actions at the sacrificial rites like Darsa puranmasa (sacrifices for full moon), Pinda pitrya *yajna* (sacrifices for ancestors), *Agni Hotra* (sacrifices for fire), *Chaturmasya* (sacrifices for seasons). Human sacrifice was performed in *Purusamedha* and horses were sacrificed in *asvamedha*. The most important ceremony was *Agnichayana* (Building a sacrificial altar to fire) which lasted for a year.

Following is its first hymn as translated by Mr. Berriedale..

### **First hymn**

- a. For food thee, for strength thee!
- b. Ye are winds, ye are approachers.
- c. Let the god Savitr impel you to the most excellent offering.
- d. O invincible ones swell with the share for the gods, Full of strength, of milk, rich in offspring, free from sickness, from disease.
- e. Let no thief, no evil worker, have control over you.
- f. Let Rudra's dart avoid you.

- g. Abide ye, numerous, with this lord of cattle.
- h. Do thou protect the cattle of the sacrificer. (Kand 1 Parapathaka 1 hymn No.1)

## 2.7 Contents of the Yajur Veda

It has seven Kandas (chapters). Each chapter is divided into sub sections called Parapatakas.

### Kand 1

Parapathaka 1	Hymns 1-8 are about milking cows. 9-14 are about altar and sacrifices.
Parapathaka 2	Hymns 1-14 Soma sacrifices
Parapathaka 3.	Hymns 1-14 Victims of sacrifices to Agni and Soma
Parapathaka 4	Hymns 1-46 Agni worship, and Soma sacrifices
Parapathaka 5	Hymns 1-11 Modes of rekindling fire and special sacrifices
Parapathaka 6	Hymns 1-12 Full moon sacrifices & sacrificer's part in them
Parapathaka 7	Hymns 1-13 As above
Parapathaka 8 offerings	Hymns 1-22 Rajsuya Sacrifices and

## **Kand 2**

Parapathaka 1.	Hymns 1-11 Special animal sacrifices and fulfillment of desires
Parapathaka 2	Hymns 1-11 Animal sacrifices to Agni, Aditi, Indra and Maruts
Parapathaka 3	Hymns 1-14 Special sacrifices
Parapathaka 4	Hymns 1-14 as above
Parapathaka 5	Hymns 1-12 New and full moon sacrifices & part of <i>Hotre</i> (priest) in them
Parapathaka 6	Hymns 1-12 As above

## **Kand 3**

Parapathaka 1, 2 and 3	33 Hymns as Supplements to Soma sacrifices
Parapathaka 4	Hymns 1-11 Optional, occasional and special sacrifices
Parapathaka 5.	Miscellaneous supplementary hymns for sacrifices

## **Kand 4**

Parapathaka 1.	Hymns 1-11 placing of fire in the fire-pan
Parapathaka 2.	Hymns 1-11 the preparation of the ground for fire

Parapathaka 3.	Hymns 1-13 the five layers of bricks
Parapathaka 4.	Hymns 1-12 the fifth layer of bricks
Parapathaka 5.	Hymns 1-11 Offerings to god Rudra
Parapathaka 6.	Hymns 1-9 the preparation of fire
Parapathaka 7.	Hymns 1-15 the piling of fire & offerings on it

### **Kand 5**

Parapathaka 1.	Hymns 1-11 placing of fire in the fire-pan
Parapathaka 2.	Hymns 1-12 the preparation of ground for fire
Parapathaka 3.	Hymns 1-12 the second layer of bricks
Parapathaka 4.	Hymns 1-12 Preparation of the fire altar
Parapathaka 5.	Hymns 1-24 Piling the fire altar. Horse sacrifices
Parapathaka 6.	Hymns 1-23 sacrificial offerings to various gods

Parapathaka 7. Hymns 1-26 Offerings connected with the limbs of the sacrificed victims.

### **Kand 6**

Parapathaka 1.-4 44 Hymns. The exposition of the Soma sacrifice

Parapathaka 5. Hymns 1-11 Special sacrificial cups for various gods

Parapathaka 6. Hymns 1-11 The exposition of sacrificial offerings to Daksha

### **Kand 7**

Parapathaka 1. Hymns 1-20 Ekaha and Ahina sacrifices

Parapathaka 2. Hymns 1-20 The Ahina sacrifices

Parapathaka 3. Hymns 1-20 The Sattaras

Parapathaka 4. Hymns 1-22 .....do....

Parapathaka 5. Hymns 1-25 The Gavam Ayana and horse sacrifices.

## **2.8 Sam Veda**

The Sanskrit word Saman means melody. This Veda is, therefore, known as the Veda of melodies and its greatest contribution is music. All its hymns (except 75 of them) are culled from the Rig Veda (Most of them from the eighth and ninth books). Hymns have been slightly changed

for rhyming and some hymns are recorded more than once. It served as a songbook for the priests (*Udgatr*), who took part in the performance of important sacrifices in which the juice of the soma plant, mixed with milk and other ingredients, was offered as a libation to various deities. The earliest parts of this Veda are believed to date from 1000 BC.

There are three extant rescensions of the text of the Sam Veda Samhita; the Kauthuma rescension is current in Gujarat, the Jaiminiya in Carnatic and Kerala, and the Ranayania in the Maharashtra. Only the Kauthuma is available in print. Using Sayana's paraphrase Professor Wilson translated it in 1842 AD. Mr. H.H .Griffith produced another translation in 1893AD.

It has two parts. The first part contains four Kandas (Chapters). They are (1) Agneya Kanda, (2) Indra Kanda (3) Pavamanam Kanda, and (4) Aranyam Kanda. The second part known as the Uttara Archika contains the remaining hymns.

The Veda starts with invocation to Ganesha “Om. Glory to the Sama Veda! To Lord Ganesha glory! Om” And the first hymn is dedicated to god Agni as follows

1. Come, Agni,<sup>55</sup> praised with song, to feast and sacrificial offering: sit as Hotre on the holy grass!
2. O Agni, thou hast been ordained Hotre of every sacrifice by Gods, among the race of men.

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<sup>55</sup> It is significant that right from the Rig Veda 'Agni' has been worshiped as the supreme deity by the Hindus. In course of time various other gods began to be worshipped but Hindu marriages are still celebrated by worshipping the 'Agni' god. Havan is a prayer to 'Agni' where various offerings are made to fire. Hindu ceremony of Arti can not be held without "Agni"(fire).

3. Agni we choose as envoy, skilled performer of this holy rite  
Hotre, possessor of all wealth.
4. Served with oblation, kindled, bright, through love of song may  
Agni, bent on riches, smite the Vritras dead!
5. I laud your most beloved guest like a dear friend, O Agni, him  
who, like a chariot, wins us wealth.
6. Do thou, O Agni, with great might guard us from all malignity  
yea, from the hate of mortal man!
7. O Agni, come; for other songs of praise will I sing forth to thee.  
Wax mighty with these Soma-drops!
8. May Vatsa draw thy mind away even from thy loftiest dwelling  
place! Agni, I yearn for thee with song.
9. Agni, Athervan brought thee forth by rubbing from the sky, the  
head of all who offer sacrifice.
10. O Agni, bring us radiant light to be our mighty succor for thou  
art our visible deity!

(Translation by H. H. Griffith)

Sri Krishna mentions this Veda in the Bhagvad Geeta as follows:

“Among the Vedas, I am the Sam Veda; among the gods, I am  
Indra. Among the senses I am the mind; and I am the consciousness  
(life energy) in living beings. (Bhagvad Geeta X.22)

Hymns of the Sam Veda are all dedicated to various gods and  
goddesses. Although Sri Krishna claims that he is the author of the  
Vedas, he does not appear to attach much importance to those who

follow the Vedas. He says, “The fruit gained by these people of meager intelligence, however, is perishable. The worshippers of gods attain the gods; whereas my devotees (however they may adore me), in the end attain me alone.” (Bhagvad Geeta VII 23)

## 2.9 Atherva Veda

Atherav Veda Samhita produced by the Athervan sect of the Brahmins, is described by Mr.B.K.Ghosh (The Vedic age p.236) as “a prayer book of simple folk, haunted by ghosts and exploited by Brahmins”. The word Athervan means “magic formula.” The text has Athervans which deal with white (holy) magic and Angiras which deal with black magic. All sorts of charms, spells and incantations concerned with protection against demons, spirits and disaster, securing victory, healing diseases, defeating opposing armies or magicians, harming enemies, enticing women (Satrikarmani) etc<sup>56</sup> can be found under Angiras. Another part deals with plants, medicines, and various diseases and poisons.<sup>57</sup> The Indian system of Ayurvedic medicine is based on this part. Part four deals with marriage, females, rivals and kings. In total, this Veda has 731 hymns divided into 20 chapters. The 20th Chapter records hymns borrowed from the Rig Veda. Some sections of this Veda are in prose which may have been written sometime after 900

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<sup>56</sup> ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ “ਕਾਮ,ਕ੍ਰੋਧ,ਲੋਭ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਹ” ਨੂੰ ਕਾਬੂ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਅਥਰਵ ਵੇਦ ਮੰਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ “ਕਾਮ” ਨੂੰ ਉਤੇਜਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ॥ “ਪਾਠੁ ਪੀੜਓ ਅਰ ਬੇਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿਓ ਨਿਵਿਲਿ ਭੁਅੰਗਮ ਸਾਧੇ ॥ ਪੰਚ ਜਨਾ ਸਿਓ ਸੰਗ ਨ ਛੁਟਕਿਓ ਅਧਿਕ ਅਹੰਬੁਧਿ ਬਾਧੇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੪੧)

<sup>57</sup> *Sarpa-Vidya* (Knowledge of snakes), *Bhuta-Vidya* (Science of ghosts), and *Daiva –Vidya* (Art of hypnotizing) are also discussed in some later *Samhitas* like *Shatpatha Brahmana*. ਵੇਦ ਅਥਰਵਣ ਬੋਲਿਆ ਜੋਗ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਈ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)



BC. Two versions of this Veda are available one in Kashmir and the other in Orissa.

## 2.10 Contents of the Atherva Veda

This Veda is full of charms and magical formulas on various topics. We have listed them in groups to save space.

II.36 and II.60	Charms for obtaining a husband.
VI.82	Charms for obtaining a beautiful wife
III.23 & VI.11	Charms for obtaining a male child.
VII .35	Charms to make a woman sterile
I.34 & II.30 VI.8, 9, 102	Charms to secure the love of a woman
III.25 & VII.139	Charms for arousing passionate love of a woman
VI.130, 131,132 VII.38	Charms for arousing the passionate love of a man
I.14 & III.18	Charms of a woman against her rival or co-wife <sup>58</sup>
VI.138	Charms for depriving a man of virility.

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<sup>58</sup> Charms to this effect can also be found in the Rig Veda .See Sukat XVII (C XLV). According to Gurmat a Sikh is instructed to have faith only in God and not to care for any magic. “ਭਾਈ ਮਤ ਕੋਈ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਕਿਸੀ ਕੈ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਿ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਇਆ ॥ ਜਰਾ ਮਰਾ ਤਾਪੁ ਸਿਰਤਿ ਸਾਪੁ ਸਭੁ ਹਰਿ ਕੈ ਵਸਿ ਹੈ, ਕੋਈ ਲਾਗਿ ਨ ਸਕੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਲਾਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੬੮)

## 2.11 “The Fifth Veda”

Some post-Vedic Hindu Granths, which include Ramayana and Mahabharata, began to be called the "fifth Veda". This movement was initiated by Chhandogya Upnishad where we find the first reference to it. These two great epics still exert tremendous cultural influence throughout India and some adjoining countries.

“At first there were four Vedas. Then Vayasdeva explained them by the *Puranas*. Then, for those incapable of understanding these, he gave the *Mahabharta*, in which there is *Bhagvad Geeta*. Then the *Vedanta Sutra*, which summarizes all Vedic knowledge. Last, the *Vedanta –Sutra* was explained in *Srimad Bhagavatam*.<sup>59</sup> (*‘Geeta as it is’* by Swami Prabhupada page xxiv)

At the time of using the hymns of the four Vedas, the Hindu rishis were particular in wearing special coloured dresses. Rig Veda readers (*Hotre*) wore blue, Yajur Veda readers (*Adhvaryu*) wore red, Sam Veda readers (*Udgatre*) wore white clothes. The readers of the Atherava Veda wore light black colour.<sup>60</sup> “*Shudras* are not permitted to recite the Vedas” (Prashar Samhita Chapter 2 )

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<sup>59</sup> Although we know that Mahatma Budh did not believe in God as the Hindus do, still Mahatma Budh has been classified as an incarnation of Sri Krishna. “From Bhagavatam we understand that Lord Budha is the incarnation of Krishna who appeared when materialism was rampant and materialists were using the pretext of authority of the Vedas. (*‘Geeta as it is’* By Swami Prabhupada page 71)

<sup>60</sup> ਬਗਾ ਰਤਾ ਪੀਲਾ ਕਾਲਾ ਬੇਦਾਂ ਕਰੀ ਪੁਕਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੯)॥ ਰਿਗ ਨੀਲੰਬਰ, ਯਜੁਰ ਪੀਤ, ਸਵੇਤੰਬਰ ਕਰ ਸਾਮ ਸੁਧਾਰਾ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

## (a) The Ramayana

Ramayana was first written by Rishi Balmik.<sup>61</sup> It is the story of Sri Ram Chander who is supposed to have lived in the Treta Yuga.<sup>62</sup> The scholars however conclude that the Ramayana could not have been written before 400 BC.

It consists of 24000 verses (*Shalokas*) arranged into 500 cantos (*Sargas*) in six books. The seventh book is *Uttra Khand* which details the life of Sri Ram Chander after he returned from the exile and resumed kingship.<sup>63</sup> The remaining six books are *Baal Kaand*, *Ayodhya Kaand*, *Aranya Kaand*, *Kishkandha Kaand*, *Sunder Kaand* and *Yudh Kaand*. Each *kaand* is further divided into *Sargas* of which there are 647 in number.

There are around 300 variants of Ramayana in India, Malaysia, Burma, Ceylon, Cambodia, Thailand, Nepal and other countries of the world. The Indian recensions of Ramayana are mostly based on the Bombay, Bengal or South Indians versions. Here and there the details differ but the main story remains the same.

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<sup>61</sup> Most historians now agree that Balmik composed Ramayana around 5<sup>th</sup> century AD because it contains references to Buddhism and the Greeks who invaded India with Alexander (326 BC). It is believed that Balmik borrowed the details of Ramayana from the Buddhist sources and changed them to suit his story line. Balmik did not treat Ram chander as god. Later Tulsi Das wrote *Ram Chrit Manas* in which Ram Chander is projected as incarnation of god Vishnu.

<sup>62</sup> This has been the belief. The name of Ram chander is not found in any of the four Vedas. Ram Chander son of Dasrath is first mentioned in the Buddhist Granth Dasrath Jatka written about 500 BC. Here Dasrath is stated as being the king of Benares and Sita is mentioned as the sister of Ram Chander. Ram chander married his sister Sita in the forest.

<sup>63</sup> The scholars believe that the seventh chapter (Uttra Kaanda) may have been added later. This chapter is not read by the Hindus at home in the family.

It is believed that the original Ramayana contained only 24000 verses to honour the 24 syllables of the *Gaytry mantra*. 1000 verses were arranged into each book under the caption of each letter of the gaytry *Mantra*. The number of verses in the present Ramayana is now 40,000. Although the story revolves around Ram Chander, the line of thought throughout is the same as found in other Hindu books. For example division of the society on the basis of castes,<sup>64</sup> reverence for the cow (in Baal Kaand I-54 a cow creates forces for Vashishta to avenge Vishvamitra), Story of Gautam and Ahalya (I-48-16 to 32) and visits of Hindu gods Brahma and Indra (ie in Agni Parikhsha Kaand and Ayudhya Kaand) etc. are common.

The book opens with Narada arriving in Balmik's hermitage. On being asked about the most virtuous human in the world Narda tells him the story of Ram Chander up to the point where Ram Chander leaves for exile (Verse I.1.24) into the Dandaka forest and then in *Sarg* two Brahma appears and says "*You shall versify the heart pleasing and merit-yielding legend of Sri Ram Chander* (verse I.2.35) and complete the Ramayana. Balmik sat on the banks of river Tamasa and composed twenty four thousand verses of the epic. He then trained his disciples Lava and Kusha, (the sons of Sri Ram Chander and Seeta) to sing them in the streets of Ayodhya. On hearing their sweet songs Sri Ram Chander brought the boys to his palace,<sup>65</sup> and summoned all his ministers and relatives to listen to the ballad sung by them.

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<sup>64</sup> In our time Mahatma Gandhi is noised about as the opponent of castes system. The fact however is that Mr. Gandhi condemned only untouchability. He never questioned the doctrines of Hinduism which acted as a source of caste system. He loved Geeta but Geeta itself supports caste system.

<sup>65</sup> Ayodhya is described as the city of splendour and grandeur with royal gateways, archways and impassable profound moats (1-5-13) with river Saryu flowing closeby. Its buildings were studded with gems (1-5-15). It had multi-

The epic has no dedication (*manglacharan*) to God and nowhere talks about God. Its first verse is as follows:

*The Sage-Poet Balmik inquisitively asks a thoughtful studious sage, a sagacious thinker, and a sublime enunciator Narada, about **a human being** who is perfect in all human endowments. [1-1-1]*

## **(b) The Mahabharata**

Mahabharata is perhaps the longest epic poem in the world.<sup>66</sup> It is believed to have been recited by Rishi Vyasa to god Ganesha who wrote it down. Scholars however believe that it existed in the form of popular stories of gods and kings in the middle of the first millennium BC. Such stories were recited by traveling bards, minstrels and dance-troupes, etc. The composition may have started assuming its present form around 400 BC.

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storeyed skyscrapers (1-5-16). Archaeologists have yet to discover the glories of the lost city of Ayodhya.

<sup>66</sup> There were many different *Mahabharata* versions available in India, Burma, Ceylone, China, Indonesia and the other surrounding countries. No standard *Mahabharat* was available. The Hindu scholars collected all varying versions between 1919 and 1966 and produced a standard *Mahabharata* known as *Critical version*. It was published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Puna and runs into 13000 pages divided into 19 volumes. It was this version which was televised in 1980. The script was prepared by Dr. Rahi Masoom Reza and the series was directed by B. R. Chopra and his son Ravi Chopra. Followed by the *Harivamsha* in another two volumes and six index volumes, this is the text that is usually used in current *Mahabharata* studies for reference This work is sometimes called the 'Pune' or 'Poona' edition of the *Mahabharata*.

It continued to grow out of its original 24000 verses right up to the time of Gupta period by which time it was also produced in prose. By the sixth century the number of its verses rose to 100,000 and it came to be known as *shatasahasri samhita*. By the time of the first century it had 20 books (*Parvas*). At present only the first 18 *parvas* are considered to be the complete and authentic text of *Mahabharata*.

Its most important parts are (1) the **Bhagvad Geeta** (book 6) and (2) the story of Nal and Damyanti (Aranyaka Parva Book 3). Bhagvad Geeta is a highly philosophical and religious discourse based on a sermon supposedly delivered by Lord Krishna to his disciple Arjuna in the war of *Mahabharat*.<sup>67</sup> *Harivansha* is another important part of this epic which outlines the genealogy of *Hari* (*Lord Krishna*). Here and there the myths, fables and supernatural incidents stretch the credulity of the reader.

Simply put the story is based on a war of succession which broke out between the descendants of two brothers known as Dhritrashtra (or Kuru) and Pandu.<sup>68</sup> The two families came to be called Kuru and Pandu families of Hastinapura. It was a dynastic struggle. Kuru was the senior branch of the family of which Duryodhana (son of Dhritrashtra) was the eldest Kuru but he was younger than Yudhishtra, the eldest Pandu (Pandu's descendant). Both

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<sup>67</sup> "For one who once bathes in the sacred Ganges water of *Bhagvad-geeta*, the dirt of past sins is washed away for all time. (*'Geeta as it is'* by Swami Prabhupada. Page xxv) According to historian A.L.Basham this war may have taken place around 1200 BCE

<sup>68</sup> Dhritrashtra had 100 sons. Pandu had two wives and no sons. He abandoned the world and went into a forest to live there incognito. His wife Kunti gave birth first to Karna (son of sun god) and later to Yudhishtra (son of Yama), Bhima (Son of Wind), and Arjuna (son of Indra). Pandu's other wife Madri gave birth to twins called Nakula and Sahdeva (sons of god Ashvan).

Duryodhana<sup>69</sup> and Yudhishtra claimed to be first in line to inherit the kingdom. The war is supposed to have been fought at Kurukshetra (now in Haryana state of India). Lord Krishna supported the Pandus who came out victorious in the end.<sup>70</sup> Bhishma (the oldest ancestor of both factions) was dying when he gave Yudhishtra the following discourse (this lasted for 50 days and covers books 12-13).

1. There is no sin in five types of lies. Lying in jest, lying to a woman, lying at a wedding, lying to save a teacher, and lying to save one's life.
2. The highest duty of kings is to revere Brahmins.
3. A woman is sinful and the root of all evil. She is as dangerous as a poisonous snake or a burning fire but at the same time all pleasures and enjoyments of men depend on women.
4. Cows are like stairs to heaven and can grant every wish. One should never go without worshipping a cow morning and evening. Everything is attainable through cow worship.

At Duryodhana's death bed Drona's son Asvathama came to tell that he had sneaked into the camps of the Pandus and killed all their remaining warriors, women and children as they slept so that

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<sup>69</sup> “ਬੁਢਾ ਦੁਰਯੋਧਨ ਪਤਿ ਖੋਈ, ਰਾਮੁ ਨ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਕਰਤਾ ਸੋਈ” ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੨੫)

<sup>70</sup> It is said that the war lasted for 18 days and according to *Mahabharata*, Yudhishtira estimated that six million people were killed in this war. (See Books 5-10 of *Mahabharata for details of the war*)

the Pandus will have no heir to the throne. At this Krishna cursed him by saying that he would wander the earth for 3000 years.

The epic ends with the death of Krishna, the annihilation of his dynasty (the Yadavs) in a drunken brawl 36 years after the war. The Pandus walked towards the North Pole (supposed to be the heavenly abode *Svargarohana*) and their bodies dropped dead one by one on the way except that of Yudhishtra. Along with his dog Yudhishtra reached the gate of heaven but the gatekeeper refused to let him enter unless he drove his dog away. Yudhishtra refused at which the dog revealed himself to be Yudhishtra's father. They were then respectfully taken inside only to find that Dhritrashtra (and the other Kurus) were in heaven and his own brothers (the Pandus) were in hell. Yudhishtra declined to live in heaven and asked to be joined with his brothers in hell. He was then told that it was his last test and that the illusion was created to test his love for truth. Here the *Mahabharata* ends. The last Parva (19<sup>th</sup>) is titled "*Harivansha*". It details the history of Lord Krishna. His death is interpreted by the Hindus as the beginning of *Kali Age* (कलियुग) in which morality, right action and virtue will end in chaos leading to the ultimate dissolution of the world order.

Adi Parva (The Book of the Beginning) tells that Sauti narrated this story (in fact Mahabharata is a chain of stories in stories) to the assembled Rishis at the Sarpasatra (snake sacrifice) of Janmeja at Texla. Sauti outlined the history of the Bharata and Bhirgu races in detail leading to the birth and early life of the Kuru princes. The first chapter starts as follows:

*Om! Having paid homage to Narayana and Nara, the most exalted and to the goddess Saraswati, the word Jaya must be uttered. Ugrasrava, the son of Lomaharshana, surnamed Sauti, one day*



*approached the great sages, who had attended the twelve years' sacrifice of Saunaka, surnamed Kulapati, in the forest of Naimisha.*

The book has been translated into English by Professor J.A.B. Van Buitenen (University of Chicago). Another good translation available in English is done by Ganguli.

## **2.12 The Origin of the Vedas**

The origin of the Vedas is shrouded in mystery. Different Hindu scholars have given different information about its originators. Some Hindu scholars call the Vedas *Apaurushya* (not composed by man) and *sanatan*. By the word *Sanatan* they mean that the Vedas have been eternally pre-existing. They came into existence even before the universe was born. Modern mind however cannot, believe that something came into being ex-nihilo.

In Puruha Sukta, Rig Veda itself answers this question and says that the three Vedas emerged from the sacrifice of a mythical being (Purusha). **From that great general sacrifice Rcas and Sama-hymns were born: There from were spells and charms produced; the Yajus had its birth from it. (Rig Veda 10.90.9)** The fourth Veda is Atharva Veda . It is mentioned as having sprung from god Indra.

The Brahad Aranyaka Upnishad says that Vedas came out from the breath of the great being. <sup>71</sup> "The three Vedas represent three

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<sup>71</sup> The same view is held by the great Hindu scholar Swami Prabhupada who writes, "All the four Vedas—namely the *Rg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sam Veda* and *Atharva Veda* – are emanations from the breathing of the great personality of Godhood." ('*Geeta as it is* ' by Swami Prabhupada page 53)

*things speech, mind and breath of the great being. Speech is the Rig-Veda, mind the Yajur-Veda and breath the Sama-Veda."*

Some Hindu scholars believe that the Vedas were created by Brahma.<sup>72</sup> Matsya Puran says that first Brahma uttered the Puran and only then the Vedas issued forth from his mouth. The Vishnu Puran too ascribes them to Brahma but adds that, "From his eastern mouth Brahma formed the Rig verses (*Gayatra*). From his Southern mouth he created the Yajush verses, from his Western mouth he formed the Saman Veda and from his Northern mouth came out the Athervan Veda".

Some other Puranas have different views. According to Bhagvad Puran the Vedas sprang from the four-faced creator, as he was meditating. Rig Veda and Yajur Veda emerged from God's eyes and the Sam Veda came out from the tip of his tongue. Atherva Veda was the produce of his head. As soon as the Vedas were born, they each assumed a *kshetra* (human body?). Nighambodh Ghat in Delhi, on the banks of river Jamuna, is considered the sacred place where the Vedas are supposed to have emerged from the Jamuna into the world.

The Shatpatha Brahmana and Kaushitaki Brahmana too expound theories. Shatpatha Brahmana attributes the origin of the Vedas to Parjapati. Parjapati produced the three worlds by saying, "May I be propagated". As soon as he said this, the earth, the air and the sky came into being. Parjapati infused heat into them which created god Agni. Agni composed the Vedas.

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<sup>72</sup> This has been the most popular view. "Vedic knowledge was imparted by God in the heart of Brahma, the first living being in our universe, who passed it down through his sons and disciples. (*Geeta as it is* by Swami Prabhupada London page Xvii). The Sikh Gurus accepted this view and wrote, "ਚਾਰੇ ਵੇਦ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਕਉ ਦੀਏ ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਕਰੇ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੨੩).

Chhandog Upnishad agrees with this view but says that Agni produced Rig Veda, Vayu produced Yajur Veda and the sun produced the Sam Veda. Another explanation in the same Upnishad is that Parjapati created water from his speech (Vach) and then said, “May I be propagated”. Immediately an egg appeared from the water. Then three times he said, “Let there be, let there be, let there be” and this created the three Vedas.

According to Manu Smriti “From fire, wind and the Sun He drew forth the threefold eternal Veda called Rik, Yajus and Saman for the due performance of sacrifice.”(Manu Chapter1.23)

Another explanation found in the Puranas is that Hiranyagarbha issued the sound ‘OM’ from his mouth. ‘Om’ resounded through the earth, air and sky. Then appeared the goddess ‘Gaytry’ out of it and produced all the Vedas, the Rig, the Saman, the Athervan, and the Yajur Veda. The same source is accepted in the Bhagvad Geeta.

Another story is also current among the Hindus. It is said that a demon named Shankhasura defeated gods (*devas*) and hid himself in the ocean. The *devas* approached Lord Vishnu for help. Vishnu incarnated as *Matsya Avatara* (fish god) and killed Shankhasura. He blew the conch-shaped bone<sup>73</sup> of Shankhasura’s ear and head. This produced the sound **Om** from which emerged the four Vedas.

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<sup>73</sup> The conch (शंख) is therefore, considered sacred and is worshipped by the Hindus through the following Mantra: *Twam puraa saagarot pannaha, Vishnunaa vidhrutahakare, Devaischa poojitha sarvahi, Panchjanya namostu te*, (Salutations to Panchajanya, the conch born of the ocean, Held in the hand of Lord Vishnu, and worshipped by all *devas*”.)

Other explanations are supplied by some other Hindu Granths which claim that mind is the ocean. From this ocean the gods dug up Vedic science using speech (Vach) as the shovel. Taitreya Brahmana explains the mystery by saying that the Vedas came out from the beard of Parjapati.

## 2.13 Who is the real author of the Vedas?

It is a myth to consider that the Vedas are *apaurushya* (not composed by man). Aspersions have been cast upon the names of some authors (such as Brahma) associated with the Vedas because these personalities are mythical whose names are associated with almost all Hindu legends of the old times.<sup>74</sup>

Rishi Yaska disagrees with the view that Vedas are *Apaurushya* (not created by man). Gautma the founder of Nyaya philosophy claims that the Vedas were composed by very competent intellectuals. He says, "*Each particular hymn has its deity to whom the Rishi, seeking to obtain any object of desire, addresses his prayer.*"

Hindu scholars have produced *Anukarmanis (indexes)* to all the four Vedas. The *Anukarmani* prepared for the Rig Veda<sup>75</sup> by Katyana is considered to be the best. The author lists the names of the clans and the individuals who contributed the hymns to the Rig Veda. Although some hymns are composed by single authors but

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<sup>74</sup> ਵੇਦ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਦੇ ਰਚੇ ਹੋਏ ਨਹੀਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਸ਼ਿਸ਼ਟ, ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਮਿਤ੍ਰ, ਭਾਰਦਵਾਜ ਆਦਿ ਅਨੇਕ ਰਿਖੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਣਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੂਰਯ, ਅਗਨੀ ਵਾਯੂ ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਆਦਿ ਦੇਵਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਹੈ । ਅਨੇਕ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਈਸ਼ਵਰ ਦੇ ਸਵਾਸ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ । ਮਨੂ ਨੇ ਅਗਨੀ ,ਵਾਯੂ ਅਤੇ ਸੂਰਯ ਤੋਂ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਣਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ॥ (ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼ ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੦੮)

<sup>75</sup> It is called *Sarvanukarmani* and is the one greatly appreciated by Prof. Max Muller who translated the Rig Veda into German.

most of them are composed by clans. According to this Katyana's *Anukarmani* ten clans have written more than 95% of the total number of hymns. These clans are Angiras, Kanva, Bhirgu, Kasyapa, Gritsamada, Agastya, and Bharata. For example the eighth *Mandal* is written entirely by the *Kanva clan*. Other writers of the *Rig Veda* are Vishvamitra, Vamadeva, Atri, Bharadvaja, and Vashishta.

The names of some writers are inherent in the Vedas. The following Statements betray the names of their composers.

1. "Nodhas, descendant of Gautma, fashioned this new hymn for (thee), Indra, who art of old, and who yokest thy steeds."
2. " O, Indra, the Kanvas make a prayer to you, hear well their invocation'
3. "This hymn O, opulent Asvins, has been made for you by the Manas"
4. "O, Asvins, These magnifying hymns have been made for you by Gritsamadas."
5. "O Indra, the Kusikas, aspiring for heaven, have composed this hymn with praises to thee."
6. Ayasya, friend of all Indra's worshippers, has generated the fourth song of praise."
7. "We, the Raghuanas, have uttered this honeyed speech to Agni

Some hymns of the Vedas are written by women like Gosh, Uppla, and Mudgalini etc.

## 2.14 Are the Vedas sacred and infallible?

Vedas were composed as poems written by learned and well educated citizens expressing hopes, desires and wishes of the ordinary Aryans. They were not considered sacred or infallible at the time of their writing. The writers praised their ancestral gods and sought health, wealth, long life, good cattle, obedient offspring, victory over their enemies, forgiveness of sin etc. Prayers like, “May I see well, May I die today (RV.VII.104)” occur frequently. At one place there is a censure on dice used by the gamblers and at another a commendation for agriculture. Rishi Virihan drives away disease from a person with the following hymn:-

1. I banish disease from thine eyes, from thy head, from thy nose, from thy ears, from thy chin, from thy brain, and from thy tongue.
2. I banish disease from thy neck, from thy sinews, from thy bones, from thy joints, from thy upper arms, from thy shoulders, and from thy fore-arms.
3. I banish disease from thine entrails, from thy anus, from thine abdomen, from thy heart, from thy kidneys, from thy liver, and from thy viscera
4. I banish disease from thy thighs, from thy knees, from thy heels, from thy toes, from thy loins, from thy buttocks, and from thy private parts.
5. I banish disease from thy urethra, from thy bladder, from thy hair, from thy nails, and from thy whole person.

6. I banish disease from each limb, from each hair, from each joint where it is generated, from thy whole person.

Right from the time of the Vedas there have been people who opposed the Vedas not only on conceptual grounds but also on moral grounds. They were not ordinary citizens but very respectable Rishis. Prominent among them was Brahaspati who was opposed to calling the Vedas sacred and infallible. We find Gautama, (the founder of Nayaya system of philosophy) mentioning such critics in Sutra 57 of his Nayaya Shastra. Jaimini in his Purava Mimansa justified the authority of the Vedas in Sutra 28 and 32 and discusses the objectionable phrases quoted by the opponents of the Vedas. For example he picked out such phrases as "An old ox, in blanket and slippers, is standing at the door and singing benedictions," "The cows celebrated this sacrifice'." In our own time Brahma Samaj, a sect of the Hindus, flatly declined to accept the authority of the Vedas

*Dharma Sutras* tell us that the dogma of the infallibility of the Vedas is a historical product. In the time of the *Dharma Sutras* of Vashistha and Baudhayana (600 and 200 B.C) the Vedas were not considered infallible. It was only in the time of Gautama that they came to be regarded as infallible and authoritative.

The Mahabharata also refers to two later reformers Dirghatama and Shwetaketu. Shwetketu argued that the marriages should be indissoluble and there should be no divorce. Dirghatama was against polyandry and argued that a woman should have only one husband at a time and Nyog should be allowed only under certain conditions. Sexual relations between the wife of the Guru and his pupil should be banned. Eventually some of these reforms did take root. This goes to show that the Vedas were not always looked

upon as sacred and infallible and that reformers continued to question the old ideas offering suitable amendments.

## 2.15 Views of the Europeans

According to Prof. Wilson there is scarcely any indication of doctrinal or philosophical speculation in the Rig Veda. It is full of curiosity but there is nothing elevating. There are more vices and few virtues. The four Vedas may be useful only as a source of information regarding the social life of the Aryans giving a picture of the primitive life. The word *Dharma* occurs in the Rig Veda 58 times. It is used to denote (1) Ancient customs and traditions, (2) rules for society (4) the course of nature, (5) the quality of a substance and (6) good and evil according to Vedas. It will thus be seen that the word '*Dharma*' in Hinduism means only Hindu law and Vedic interpretation of morality and ethics.

Prof. Muir writes that the Vedas (and other Hindu books like *Simrtis*) simply praise certain gods and ask for health, wealth, long life, and offspring etc. and do not teach any uplifting ethics or morals for society. Each hymn has a deity who is propitiated for gifts or for fulfilling certain desires. For example "*O Indra, give us best cows and best horses, and make us famous in the world.*" (Rig Veda.I.22.11).

Western writers are of the opinion that the Vedas are a confusing jumble of words. Perhaps they are right. Some hymns in the Vedas are very difficult to interpret. Here are some examples.

Gaytry, which is a hymn (and a poetic meter), is also something more than that when we read. "Closely was Gaytry conjoined with Agni, and closely Savitar combined with Usnih. Brilliant with



Ukthas, Soma joined Anustup: Brhaspati's voice by Brhati was aided”.

(Rig Veda 10.130.4)

*“Earth sprang from the Productive Power the regions from the earth were born. Daksa was born of Aditi and Aditi was Daksa's Child*

(Rig Veda 10.72.4)

*“When, O ye Gods, like Yatis, ye caused all existing things to grow, then ye brought Surya forward who was lying hidden in the sea.”*

(Rig Veda 10.72.7)

## 2.16 The Sikh View

Does Guru Granth Sahib teach fundamentally the same as the Vedas? According to some Hindu scholars, the answer is ‘yes’. They say “*Guru Granth Sahib is the sacred Gangotri River flowing out of the Vedas*”. This claim needs to be examined in the light of what we have recorded above.

### 1. Authorship

The authorship of the Vedas is uncertain. We have listed some of the theories concerning the composition of the Vedas. It is worth noting that the Vedas were created by ordinary but well-read leaders of the time who may not be very religious.<sup>76</sup> Infallibility and sanctity were attached to them by the later Hindu priests who made them a source of their income. Compared with this Guru

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<sup>76</sup> ਚਤੁਰ ਬੇਦ ਮੁਖ ਬਚਨੀ ਉਚਰੈ ਆਗੇ ਮਹਲੁ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੭੬)

Granth Sahib clearly states the names of the writers of the hymns and the octaves in which they have to be sung. The number of lines in a hymn and the total number of hymns in a section are numerically recorded ensuring to foil any attempt at interpolation. Also the Sikh Scripture was created as a religious treatise by the Sikh Gurus right from its origin guaranteeing its sanctimonious character.<sup>77</sup>

## 2. Subject matter

The subject matter of the Vedas and the Guru Granth Sahib is not the same. Whereas the Vedas pray to numerous mythical gods and goddesses seeking individual benefits,<sup>78</sup> Guru Granth Sahib addresses God and persuades the followers to involve in social service instead of putting their faith in *yajus* (incantations) for doing harm to others. Strangely God is nowhere mentioned prominently in the Vedas. The Rig Veda does not have any invocation to God at the start like Guru Granth Sahib. It starts with a hymn addressed to Agni (*Some Hindus have now started saying 'Hari Om Sahsa Shirsha' before starting to read the Vedas. Others simply say 'Hari Om'*). The Vedas also suggest making (*Dakshna*) (offerings) to the Brahmins. This is scathingly condemned in Guru Granth Sahib and discouraged. The Guru says, "*How ironical that those who give go to hell, and those who receive reserve heaven for themselves.*"<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰ ਬੀਚਾਰੰ ॥ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਉਰਧਾਰੰ ॥ ਕੁਲਹ ਸਮੂਹ ਸਗਲ ਉਰਧਾਰੰ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੬੧) People read and contemplate on Vedas and Puranas. If only they enshrine God in their hearts they will not only save themselves but also their tribes.

<sup>78</sup> ਵੇਦ ਨ ਜਾਣਨ ਭੇਦੁ ਕਿਹੁ ਲਿਖਿ ਪੜਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ॥ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

<sup>79</sup> ਦੋਦਾ ਨਰਕਿ ਸੁਰਗਿ ਲੈਦੇ ਦੇਖਹੁ ਏਹੁ ਧਿਛਾਣਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੯੦)

### 3. Creation

The one Vedic thought that comes closer to Guru Granth Sahib is the mention of creation. Both Rig Veda and Guru Granth Sahib agree that prior to creation there was utter darkness (Rig Veda No.10. 129).This is where the comparison ends. The Sikh Gurus say that the creation started with 'Air'. The Vedas have more than one divergent view as follows:-

(a) *"First Agni sprang to life from out of Heaven"*.  
(Rig Veda 10-45.1)

(b) *"These Brahmanaspati produced with blast and smelting, like a Smith Existence, in an earlier age of gods, from Non-existence sprang. Thereafter were the regions born. This sprang from the Productive Power. Earth sprang from the Productive Power the region from the earth were born."*  
(Rig Veda 10.72.3)

(c) *"What time the mighty waters (salil) came, containing the universal germ, producing Agni, Thence sprang the gods' one spirit into being. What God shall we adore with our oblation?"*

(Rig Veda 10.121.7)

(d) *"From Him Viraj (semen?) was born; again Purusa from Viraj was born. As soon as he was born he spread Eastward and Westward o'er the earth."*  
(Rig Veda 10.90.5)

(e) *"From that great general sacrifice the dripping fat was gathered up. He formed the creatures of-the air, and animals both wild and tame from that great general sacrifice Rcas and Sama-hymns were born: There from were spells and charms produced;*

*the Yajus had its birth from it. From it were horses born, from it all cattle with two rows of teeth: From it were generated kine, from it the goats and sheep were born.”*

(Rig Veda 10.90.8-10)

(f) *“When they divided Purusa how many portions did they make? What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet? The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanya made. His thighs became the Vaisya; from his feet the Shudra was produced. The Moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth; Indra and Agni from his mouth were born, and Vayu from his breath. Forth from his navel came mid-air the sky was fashioned from his head. Earth from his feet and from his ear the regions. Thus they formed the worlds.”*

Guru Granth Sahib is crystal clear about creation. It says that *“God created Air (oxygen & Hydrogen etc), which (on integration) soon turned into water. It was in water that life first developed and multiplied. It then spread through all parts of the universe.”*<sup>80</sup>

#### **4. Morality/Ethics**

According to the Hindus the Vedas are holy. *“Rig verses are honey, Sama-verses butter, Yajus-verses nectar (amrita)”*. As the Vedas are called religious books, one would justifiably expect the highest moral and spiritual standards from them. This is also the view of Yaska the author of Nirukta. Without morality religion has no driving force. But we find that morality and ethics, the foundation of any human society, are mostly ignored in the Vedas.

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<sup>80</sup> ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਪਵਨੈ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੋਇ ॥  
(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੯) ਪਉਣੁ ਉਪਾਇ ਧਰੀ ਸਭ ਧਰਤੀ ਜਲ ਅਗਨੀ ਕਾ ਬੰਧੁ ਕੀਆ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੫੦) ਪਉਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ  
ਸੁੰਨੈ ਤੇ ਸਾਜੇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੩੭)

Take for example the Indra who is the main god of the Vedas. He is later depicted as a sex maniac.<sup>81</sup>

## 5. Social context

In the Vedas we find *mantras* designed to do harm to others. For example there are hymns asking a deity to increase the production of milk from the devotee's cows and dry up the milk from the cows of the opponents. "*Your enemies who do not make any offering to you may disappear and let your followers who do prosper.*" "*Oh! Indra give us best cows and best horses and make us famous in the world.*" (1.29.4.) Rishi Vishwamitar prays, "*Give us power and make our bulls strong. Grant might to our sons and grandsons. May they live happily.*" (Rig Veda 3-53.18) . "*Let blinding darkness follow our foes and let shining light shine on us .*(Rig Veda X 89.15) .This is selfishness of the worst order.<sup>82</sup>

Sikhism says, "*Earn through honest hard work and help*

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<sup>81</sup> Indra (son of Dayus and a cow named Nishtigri), is shown as a lazy god interested only in watching the dances of the beautiful *Apasras*. His only job is to violate the meditation of the truly spiritual gods by sending characterless women to sully their characters and tarnish their reputation. He also controls storms, lightning, and thunder. In later writings he is shown as the ruler of *Swarg* (Heaven). In *Sri Ram Chrit manas* he was defeated by Ravna and carried to Lanka. The gods had to sue for his release. Ravna agreed to release him on condition that he (Ravna) was offered immortality in exchange for Indra's release. He raped Ahalya (wife of Gautma)

<sup>82</sup> ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, "ਪਰ ਕਾ ਬੁਰਾ ਨ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਚੀਤ ॥ ਤੁਮ ਕਉ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਭਾਈ ਮੀਤ (ਪੰਨਾ 386) ॥ ਅਉਗੁਣ ਸਭਿ ਮਿਟਾਇ ਕੈ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੁ ਕਰੋਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੧੮)॥ ਮੰਦਾ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਆਖੀਐ ਪੜਿ ਅਖਰੁ ਏਹੋ ਬੁਝੀਐ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੩) ), ਸਿਖ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ ॥

others, that is the way you should follow”<sup>83</sup> Sikhism expects good moral character and says, “ Truth is above all, but higher still is truthful living”<sup>84</sup> " Welfare of all (ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ) is main stay of Sikhism. There is no elevating example of such ideal character in any of the four Vedas (see Rig Veda Mandal 10 for sexual depravities).

## 6. Conceits

The Vedas are full of conceits, quaint fancies, contradictions, incredible happenings and tautology. For example in one hymn it is argued that a beast sacrificed in *Jyotishtoma* rite goes to heaven; one wonders why the priest did not offer himself or his parents for the same ritual sacrifice? A *sharadha*<sup>85</sup> is mentioned to feed the departed ancestors. One wonders why we cannot similarly feed the travellers in this world. The oaths and curses like “May I die today, if I am a Yatudhana, (Rig Veda VII.104, 15) add nothing to our knowledge or morals.”<sup>86</sup>

## 7. Dowry

The Vedas recommended dowry to be given by the bride's family to the groom. It states that cows and other gifts should be given by the father of the bride to his daughter. This was known as *Kanyadan* and another custom was *Var dakshina* where the father presented the groom with other precious gifts

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<sup>83</sup> ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੪੫) ਸਿਖ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ ॥

<sup>84</sup> ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੨)

<sup>85</sup> ਜੀਵਤ ਪਿਤਰ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ਕੋਊ ਮੁਏਂ ਸਿਰਾਧ ਕਰਾਹੀ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੩੨)

<sup>86</sup> ਬੇਦ ਪੜੇ ਪੜਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਹਾਰੇ ਇਕੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਮਤ ਪਾਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੪੭)

[X.85 and I.126] .The Sikh Gurus disapproved taking or giving of Dowry. <sup>87</sup>They considered it as open exhibition of ego. Vedic hymns do not wash the mind of human weaknesses but on the other hand increase them. Egoism and selfishness are openly preached by Vedas. It is for this reason that the Guru says “*Even if the Brahman reads his Vedas for four ages his ego will not get washed.*” <sup>88</sup>

## 8. Sacrifices

It needs to be noted that Vedas preach different *Yajnas* (sacrifices) for which elaborate arrangements have to be made. Sikhism condemns both magic and ritual sacrifices because they cannot produce a balanced mind. <sup>89</sup> Since the Vedas preach no spiritual truths nor leave any instructions to control human weaknesses, they cannot lead humans to God. In Sikhism the only sacrifice is the sacrifice of “Self” for an approved cause. <sup>90</sup> This was demonstrated

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<sup>87</sup> ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ ਹਰਿ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਮੈ ਦਾਜੋ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਕਪੜੇ ਹਰਿ ਸੋਭਾ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਸਵਰੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਕਾਜੋ ॥ ਹੋਰਿ ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਦਾਜੁ ਜਿ ਰਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਲਹਿ ਸੋ ਕੂੜੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ ਕਚੁ ਪਾਜੋ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੮-੭੯)

<sup>88</sup> ਪੰਡਿਤ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਚੁਕਈ ਜੇ ਵੇਦ ਪੜੈ ਜੁਗ ਚਾਰਿ (੬੪੭) ਪੜੇ ਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਵੇਦ, ਨਹ ਚੁਕੇ ਮਨ ਭੇਦ, ਇਕੁ ਖਿਨੁ ਨ ਧੀਰਹਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਘਰ ਕੇ ਪੰਚਾ (ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮ: ੫) ਪੰਡਿਤ ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਮੋਨੀ ਭੁਲੇ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਾਇ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇਆ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੫੨) ਪੰਡਿਤ ਪੜਹਿ ਪੜਿ ਵਾਦੁ ਵਖਾਣਹਿ ਤਿੰਨਾ ਬੂਝ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੦੯) ॥ ਅਲਬੈਰੂਨੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ “ਕਿਤਾਬ-ਅਲ-ਹਿੰਦ” ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ, “ ਉਹ ਬੜੇ ਹੰਕਾਰੀ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਵੈ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾ ਵਿਚ ਫਸ ਕੇ ਮੂਰਖ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਭਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਕੁਝ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਸਦੇ ।” (ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਸੰਕਲਨ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਪੰਨਾ ੪੧)

<sup>89</sup> ਕਰਮੀ ਸਹਜੁ ਨ ਉਪਜੈ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਹਜੈ ਸਹਸਾ ਨ ਜਾਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੧੯)। ਨ ਹਮ ਕਰਮ ਨ ਧਰਮ ਸੁਚ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਗਹਿ ਭੁਜਾ ਆਪਾਇਓ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੪੧), ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਸੂਲ ਨਾ ਸਹਹੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੪੩), ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਸਭਿ ਬੰਧਨਾ ਪਾਪੁ ਪੁੰਨ ਸੰਨਬੰਧ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੫੧), ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕਰਤੇ ਬਹੁ ਸੰਜਮ ਅਹੰਬੁਧਿ ਮਨੁ ਹਾਰਿਓ ਰੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੩੫)

<sup>90</sup> ਮਰਣੁ ਮੁਣਸਾ ਸੂਰਿਆਂ ਹਕੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ਮਰਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੮੦)

by the fifth, ninth and the tenth Gurus and later by numerous martyr Sikhs.

Gurbani argues that reading of the Vedas is a worldly exercise which has nothing to do with spiritualism.<sup>91</sup> Even Bhagvad Geeta says that Vedic sacrifices are man-made and worldly. They carry no spiritual merit.

The Bhagvad Geeta says, “*Arjuna, Yogis, who partake of the nectar in the form of remains of sacrifice, attain the eternal Brahma. To the man, who does not offer sacrifice, even this world is not happy; how then, can the other world be happy?*” Many such forms of sacrifice have been set forth in detail through the mouth of the Vedas; know them all as begotten of the actions of body, mind and the senses. Thus knowing the truth about them, you shall be freed from the bondage of Karma.

(Bhagvad Geeta IV.31-32)

Over and above *Yajna*, the Vedas also suggest many other rituals<sup>92</sup> which carry no spiritual value. The Sikh Gurus say that they studied the Hindu scriptures and discovered that none of them produced thirst for God.<sup>93</sup>

## 9. Magic

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<sup>91</sup> ਬੇਦ ਪਾਠ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਕੀ ਕਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੯੧) ਵੇਦੁ ਪੁਕਾਰੈ ਤ੍ਰਿਬਿਧ ਮਾਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੮)

<sup>92</sup> ਸਾਸਤ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਪੁਕਾਰਹਿ ਧਰੁਮ ਕਰਹੁ ਖਟ ਕਰਮ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਈਆ, ਮਨਮੁਖ ਪਾਖੰਡਿ ਭਰਮਿ ਵਿਗੂੜੇ ਲੋਭ ਲਹਰਿ ਨਾਵ ਭਾਰਿ ਬੁਡਈਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੩੫)

<sup>93</sup> ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਭ ਸਾਸਤ ਇਨ ਪੜਿਆ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੪੭)



In the time of Guru Nanak Atherva Veda was commonly believed and Indians had so degraded themselves that they addressed God as “Allah” instead of sticking to their own beliefs.<sup>94</sup> When Babar invaded India (1526 AD) no magic or incantations worked although thousands tried their magical tricks.<sup>95</sup> The Sikh Gurus condemn magic and incantations as useless and misleading whereas the Vedas are full of them.<sup>96</sup>

## 10. Ideology

The teachings of the Vedas have created the myths of sin and virtue, hell and heaven, Karma and transmigration. The Vedas have also created the fallacy of inequality of caste and gender for the world.

By reading the Vedas one only comes across various gods and goddesses whose existence is doubtful. It is because of such Vedic influences that the Guru said, “*Vedas simply involve humans into worldly activities and detach them from God. The gullible follow the Brahmans and suffer*”.<sup>97</sup> The Guru suggests worship of God and God alone, “The Merciful One is the only Emancipator (*Maula*), not the holy men (*pir* and *sheikh*), or Prophet. The Master of every

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<sup>94</sup> ਕਲਿ ਮਹਿ ਬੇਦੁ ਅਥਰਬਣੁ ਹੂਆ ਨਾਉਂ ਖਦਾਈ ਅਲਾ ਭਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੦).

<sup>95</sup> ਕੋਟੀ ਹੂ ਪੀਰ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਏ ਜਾ ਮੀਰੁ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਧਾਇਆ ॥ ਕੋਈ ਮੁਗਲ ਨ ਹੋਆ ਅੰਧਾ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਰਚਾ ਲਾਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੧੮)

<sup>96</sup> ਤੰਤੁ ਮੰਤੁ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੬੬) ਕਹਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਭਲੇ ਅਸਵਾਰਾ ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਤੇ ਰਹਹਿ ਨਿਰਾਰਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੨੯)

<sup>97</sup> “ਤੂੰ ਗੁਣ ਬਾਣੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਜੰਜਾਲਾ ਪੜਿ ਵਾਦੁ ਵਖਾਣਹਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਮਾਰੇ ਜਮਕਾਲਾ । ਤਤੁ ਨ ਚੀਨਹਿ ਬੰਨਹਿ ਪੰਡ ਪਰਾਲਾ, ਮਨਮੁਖ ਅਗਿਆਨਿ ਕੁਮਾਰਗਿ ਪਾਏ, ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਬਿਸਾਰਿਆ ਬਹੁ ਕਰਮ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਏ (੨੩੦)

heart, who delivers justice, is beyond the description of the Quran and other Semitic texts. (p. 897) For the Sikhs any Instruction other than that contained in Guru Granth Sahib is unacceptable.<sup>98</sup>

The Gurus ask the Sikhs to consider everybody as their brother and help all humans irrespective of their religion. Nobody is to be considered inferior or inimical.

## 11. Restricted access

The Sikh scriptures are open to anybody who wants to study them. On the other hand the Shudras and non-Hindus are forbidden from reading the Vedas and the Geeta.<sup>99</sup> It is also worth noting that the Guru Granth Sahib itself embodies the writings of the so called Shudras. The Sikhs consider Guru Granth Sahib as the only source of spiritual instruction and the Gurus have instructed the Sikhs to understand and act upon only those instructions which are contained in its pages.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਨਾ ਹੋਰ ਕਚੀ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ॥ ਕਹਦੇ ਕਚੇ ਸੁਣਦੇ ਕਚੇ ਕਚੀ ਆਖਿ ਵਖਾਣੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੨੦)  
। “ਸਭਸੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਹੋਰ ਕਥਨੀ ਬਦਉ ਨ ਸਗਲੀ ਫਾਰੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੦੪)

<sup>99</sup> ਸਰ ਵਿਲੀਅਮ ਜੋਨਜ਼ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਿੱਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਬਰਾਹਮਣ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਾ ਹੋਇਆ । ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਮਲੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਅਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਜੋ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਵਰਗੀ ਦੇਵ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖਣ ਲਈ ਯੋਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ । ਅੰਤ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਸ਼ਿਵ ਚੰਦਰ ਦੀ ਸਿਫਾਰਸ਼ ਤੇ ਪੰਡਤ ਲੋਚਾ ਰਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਮਨਾ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ।

<sup>100</sup> ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਕਢਾਏ (੩੦੮) ਮਾਂਦਲ ਬੋਦਿ ਜਿ ਬਾਜਣੈ ਘਣੈ ਧੜੀਐ ਜੋਇ, ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਮਾਲਿ ਤੂ ਬੀਜਉ ਅਵਰ ਨਾ ਕੋਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੮੧) The drum-beat preaching of the Vedas has brought disputes and social divisions. O Nanak contemplate on prayer of the one Lord.

It is absolutely wrong to say that the Sikh Gurus have borrowed any material from the Vedas because the Granth Sahib clearly criticises the Vedas and rejects them out rightly as useless and misleading.<sup>101</sup>

We leave the readers to decide how much the Sikh Gurus have borrowed from the Vedas. The Gurus openly declared that, “*The Vedas and the other Scriptures are only make-believe, O Siblings of Destiny; they do not relieve the anxiety of the heart. If you center yourself on the Lord, even for just a breath, you shall see the Lord face-to-face, present before you.*”<sup>102</sup>

“The Vedas mainly deal with the subject of the three modes of material nature.”<sup>103</sup>

(‘Geeta As It is ‘ By Swami Prabhupada page 37)

“ਵੇਦ ਪੜ੍ਹਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਇਆ । ਵਾਦ ਵਖਾਣਹਿ ਮੋਹੇ ਮਾਇਆ” । (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੮). Reading of Vedas does not lead to spiritual peace. Readers get entangled in mammon and argue uncessarily. (Guru Granth Sahib Page 128)

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<sup>101</sup> ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਪੁੰਨ ਪਾਪ ਬੀਚਾਰਦੇ ਤਤੈ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਣੀ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੨੦) ਜਿਨ ਕੀ ਲਿਵ ਹਰਿ ਚਰਨਨ ਲਾਗੀ, ਤੇ ਬੇਦਨ ਤੇ ਭਏ ਤਿਆਗੀ ॥੧੯॥ ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ॥ (ਅਧਿਆਏ ੬)

<sup>102</sup> ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਇਫਤਰਾ ਭਾਈ ਦਿਲ ਕਾ ਫਿਕਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਟੁਕੁ ਦਮੁ ਕਰਾਰੀ ਜਉ ਕਰਹੁ ਹਾਜਿਰ ਹਜੂਰਿ ਖੁਦਾਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੨੭)

<sup>103</sup> ਵੇਦੁ ਪੁਕਾਰੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਬਿਧ ਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਨ ਬੂਝਹਿ ਦੂਜੇ ਭਾਇਆ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੮) ਵੇਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਬੇਨਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਜਿਵੇਂ” ਮੇਰੇ ਖੇਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮੀਂਹ ਪਾ ਦਿਓ ਪਰ ਮੇਰੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਦੇ ਖੇਤ ਸੁੱਕੇ ਰਖੋ”, ਮੇਰੀ ਗਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਣਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਦੁੱਧ ਪਾ ਦਿਓ ਪਰ ਗਵਾਂਢੀ ਦੀ ਗਾਂ ਦਾ ਦੁੱਧ ਸੁੱਕ ਜਾਵੇ”। ਕੀ ਇਹ ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਹੈ (welfare of all) ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਿਖ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ ? ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਇੱਕੋ ਇੱਕ ਆਤਮ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਵਸੀਲਾ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ। "ਸਭਿ ਨਾਦ ਬੇਦ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ॥ ਮਨੁ ਰਾਤਾ ਸਾਰਗਿਪਾਣੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੭੯).Gurbani is the sound Naad (Yogi's spiritual tune), the Vedas and everything.Through Gurbani the mind should be attuned to the Lord of the universe.

## Chapter 3

### Hindu scripture VS. Sikh scripture

#### 3.1 The Hindu scripture

The religious literature of the Hindus includes (1) The Vedas, (2) The Brahmanas, (3) The Aranyakas (Forest books), (4) Upnishads, (5) Sutras, (6) Itihas, (7) Simrtis and (8) Puranas. They are divided into two Groups Shruti and Simrti. By Shruti is meant the Veda, and by Simrti the institutes of law which were devised afterwards and are supposed to uphold the philosophy of the Vedas. This explanation is provided by Manu in his Manu Simrti where he writes, “*By Shruti is meant the Vedas and by Simrti the institutes of the sacred law; these two must not be called into question in any matter*”

*(Manu Simriti II.10)*

In the last chapter we looked at the Vedas. Here we will get acquainted with some other important sacred books of the Hindus. Most important of them are the *Simrtis*

#### 3.2 The Simrtis

*Simrtis* (also called *Dharm Shastras* deal with such subjects as law,

government, civic rights, duties, castes, penances for sins, and punishments for offences. Mitramistra counted 57 *Simrtis*; Nilakanta raised the number to 97 and Kamalakar to 131. The *Simrti* literature is thus bigger than any other class of religious literature of the Hindus.<sup>104</sup> Most important *Simrtis* are the *Manu Simrti* and the *Yajnavalkya Simrti*. These days nearly 20 of them are labeled by the Hindu scholars as spurious. Obviously we cannot discuss all of them here.

Originally *Simrtis* were created to bring some order in the social chaos and therefore they were a set of rules, traditions, customs and social conventions (*संस्कार*). This was also the view of *Manu* who clearly states that he was producing *vyavaharapadas* (*विवहारपदाः Verses for social behaviour*). Since they were created by the Vedic scholars or the firm believers in the Vedas, they were never free from the Vedic influence and were considered as the exposition of the Vedas.

The basic difference between the Vedas and the *Simrtis* was that whereas the Vedas were supposed to have been composed by *Rishis*, the *Simrtis* were accepted as having been created by ordinary learned men. *Shruti* (Vedas) was divine and authoritative whereas the *Simrti* was an ordinary social and secular tool. In course of time these differences disappeared and the *Simrtis* too came to be considered on par with the Vedas and acquired the same status. The authors of the *Simrtis* were also elevated to the status of *Rishis*<sup>105</sup> and soon became the rivals of the Vedas. For example

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<sup>104</sup> *Simrtis* kept on being produced for years. As late as the time of Ala-ud-din *Khilji* (1314 AD) *Chandreshwar* wrote a *Simrti* for which meritorious service he was weighed in gold.

<sup>105</sup> *Manu* and *Yajnavalkya* have both written *Simrtis* and both are called *Rishis*. *Manu* is even mentioned by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagvad Geeta* where it says, “I

Kumarila in his commentary on *Purava Mimansa* accepted the *Simrtis* as authoritative as the Vedas. Soon the contempt of the *Simrtis* was considered a grave sin equal to that of the contempt of the Vedas. According to Atri knowledge was possible only through the joint study of the Vedas and the *Simrtis*<sup>106</sup>.

This does not however mean that the *Simrits* preached the same thing as the Vedas. Far from it. For example the Vedas disapproved the adoption of a son but the *Simrti* literature recommended it because a son was necessary for conducting *havan and Homas* for the departed ancestors. The Vedas mildly prohibited suicide but the *Simrtis* supported the custom of *Sati*. To overcome this conflict and to justify the edicts of the *Simrtis*, the Brahmans began to preach that the *Simrtis* were based on a *Shruti* which had been lost. For example the *Mimansa* says, "*The Simrti texts are supposed to have corresponding Shruti texts (Vedas).*" There are numerous contradictions between the various *Simrtis*.<sup>107</sup> Thus we see that the *Simrtis* flouted the authority of the Vedas and yet came to be considered scriptures on equal footing with the Vedas. Rishis like Brahaspati called the *Shrutis* and the *Simrtis* as two indispensable eyes of the Brahmana. Similarly Manu says, "*When two sacred*

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*taught this immortal Yoga to Vivaswan (Sun god); Vivaswan conveyed it to Manu (his son); and Manu imparted it to (his son) Ikshvaku.*" (Bhagvad Geeta IV.1). It is not clear if Lord Krishna is referring to a different Manu or the author of the *Simrti*.

<sup>106</sup> Atri *Simrti* argues that those who do not respect laws of the *Simrtis* will be subject to curse. He says that if a person studies the Vedas only but holds the *Simrti* in contempt he would be immediately condemned to be born as a beast for 21 generations.

<sup>107</sup> Manu allows a Brahman to marry a *Shudra* girl (Manu iii 13), Yajnavalkya condemned it strongly. Manu condemns *Nyoga* (widows involving in sexual relationship with strangers for producing a male child). (Manu ix, 59-68) but Yajnavalkya recommends it. Manu disallows inheritance to a widow; Yajnavalkya considers a widow prime benefactor.

*texts are conflicting, both are held to be the law, for both are pronounced by the wise to be valid.*” (Manu II.14). Although the Vedas and the Simritis began to be called the two eyes of religion, it is ironic that they did not always see eye to eye with each other. There are numerous contradictions between the Vedas and the Simritis and within the Simritis.

### 3.3 Manu Simrti

Manu Simrti<sup>108</sup> is the widely quoted and highly respected Simrti. It is based on a dialogue between Manu and a superior un-identified mythical authority (The sun?). Manu passed the knowledge on to his son Bhirgu. Bhirgu in turn preached it to his disciples. In this Simrti Manu has written on various topics ranging from cosmogony, sacraments (*samskaras*), initiation (*upanayana*), marriage, obsequies, hospitality, royalty, diet, defilement, castes, ritual purification, donations/offerings, Karma, soul, hell and rites of reparation etc. What is conspicuously missing from the Manu Simrti is the word for “God”. For example the words Har (ਹਰਿ) or Ram (ਰਾਮ) etc. are nowhere to be found in it.

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<sup>108</sup> The date of composition of Manu Simrti is still not settled. Mr. Daphtary gives a very recent date. He thinks it was written in or about 185 BC. Although Manu became more popular by writing *Manu Simrti* in which he wrote 27000 verses, Yajnavalkya is considered as more methodical, argumentative and clear but he has written only 1000 verses. Manu is said to have married his own mother Sharadha (See ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੁਝਾਰਤਾਂ by Dr. Ambedkar)

Another *Simrti* is written by Naradya. In many ways he disagrees with Manu and Yajnavalkya both. He allows *Nyoga* (80.8) and re-marriage (4. 97) but does not admit a widow’s right to her husband’s property. Naradya writes that a king, however devoid of virtue and morality, is still to be worshipped and a woman must similarly worship her husband (see *prakirnaka* 20.2). ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੂਲੇ ਭੂਲੇ ਅਖੁਟੀ ਜਾਂਹੀ ॥ ਨਾਰਦਿ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਿ ਪੂਜ ਕਰਾਂਹੀ ।(ਪੰਨਾ ੫੫੬)

Manu Simrti has 2685 verses divided into 12 chapters. Chapter VII is devoted to kings. It mainly deals with wars, booty, justice, punishment, witnesses, perjury, adultery, debt, taxes, stealing, toll, boat-hire and slaves etc. Chapter IX deals mainly with women and property sharing. It is not fair towards women (see IX.3.17) and prohibits them from reading the Vedas (IX.3. 18). The whole book is also heavily biased in favour of the Brahmans. It divides the society into four parts (Brahman, Kashatrya, Vaish and Shudra) and debases and dehumanizes the Shudras.<sup>109</sup>

Manu Simrti was first translated by Sir William Jones into English in 1794. Later some more translations appeared out of which Olivelle's translation is considered to be the best. Here are some excerpts from Manu Simrti

### **1. Child marriage**

"A man, aged thirty years, shall marry a girl of twelve who pleases him. A man of twenty-four can marry a girl of eight years of age; if the performance of his duties would otherwise be impeded, he must marry sooner. [Manu IX.94]

### **2. Women**

"By a girl, by a young woman or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house."  
(Manu V.147)

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<sup>109</sup> Bhagvad Geeta runs contrary to the injunctions of the Simrtis in many ways but they both support each other when dealing with lower classes (Shudras).



“Day and night woman must be kept in dependence by the males of their families”  
(Manu IX.2)

“Through their passion for men, through their mutable temper, through their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal to their husbands.”  
(Manu IX.15)

"If a woman, proud of her relations or intelligence deceives her husband then the king should have her torn apart by dogs in a place frequented by common people"[Manu 8:371] and the male offender should be burnt in a bed of red-hot iron; put logs under him until he is burnt [8:371-2]

“Neither by sale nor by repudiation is a wife released from her husband.” (Manu IX.46)

“For one year let a husband bear with a wife who hates him but after the lapse of a year let him deprive her of her property and cease to cohabit with her.”  
(Manu IX.77)

“She who shows disrespect to a profligate, drunkard or diseased husband shall be deserted for three months and deprived of her ornaments and furniture.”  
(Manu IX.78)

“Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure elsewhere, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must be constantly worshipped by a faithful wife.<sup>110</sup>  
(Manu V.154)

### 3. Brahmans

Brahmans have been treated most favourably by Manu. (Read Manu Chapter I. 90-107) .The argument runs as follows:

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<sup>110</sup> ਜੇ ਪਿਰ ਬਹੁ ਘਰ ਹੰਢਣਾ ਸਤ ਰਖੇ ਨਾਰੇ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ). If a husband is immoral, a wife must not follow his example. Worshipping a human is forbidden in Sikhism.

“As the Brahman sprang from Brahma’s mouth, as he was the first born, and he possessed the Vedas, he is by right the Lord of the whole creation. (Manu I.93)

“By his origin alone a Brahmana is a deity even for the gods and his teaching is authoritative for men.” (Manu XI .85)

“As the Brahmana sprang from Parjapati’s mouth, as he is the first born, he is by right the Lord of this creation.” (Manu 9.93, 10.3, and 2.100)

#### **4, Shudras**

“One occupation only the Lord prescribed to the Shudra, to serve meekly the other three castes.” (Manu I.91)

“A wife, a son, and a slave can have no property. Whatever they earn belongs to their master.<sup>111</sup> A Brahmana may seize the goods of his slave”. (Manu 8.416-417, 10. 129)

“Only the remnants of their (Brahman’s) food should be given to him as well as their old clothes, the refuse of their grain and their old household furniture.” (Manu 10.125, 129)

“A son whom a Brahman begets through lust on a Shudra female is called a PARASAVA (A living corpse)” (Manu IX. 176)

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<sup>111</sup>The idea is a complete negation of Sikhism where “ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ” (welfare of all) is the main principle. “ਸਚਾ ਧਰਮ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਭਲਾ ਕਰਾਏ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੪੩)॥ ਤਿਚਰੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਭਲਾ ਕਰਿ ਜਿਚਰੁ ਲੇਵੈ ਦੇਇ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੯੪) ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੇ ਸਿਮਰਨਿ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਭਲਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੬੨)

Clearly Manu permits no choice of avocation, no economic independence and no domestic security to the *Shudras* and women. According to him a wife is no better than a shudra.

## 5. Punishments

“If a Shudra tries to arrogantly teach duties to Brahmans, the king shall cause hot oil to be poured into his ears and mouth”.

(Manu 8.272)

“A Shudra who insults a Brahman with gross invective shall have his tongue cut out because he sprang from the lowest part of Brahma.”

(Manu 8.270)

“Ignominious tonsure instead of capital punishment is sufficient punishment for a Brahman adulterer. Other castes may lose their life for such an offence.”

(Manu 8.3, 7, 9)

A man who is not a Brahmana ought to suffer death for adultery.  
(Manu VIII.359)

## 6. Nomenclature:

Manu says:- “Let the first part of a Brahman’s name denote something auspicious, a Kashatrya’s name be connected with power, a Vaisha’s with wealth but a Shudra’s name should express something contemptible. The second part of a Brahman’s name shall imply happiness, a Kashatrya’s protection, a Vaisha’s will be expressive of thriving. A Shudra’s name should denote service.”  
(Manu I.31andI.32)

## 7. Education:

Manu says: - “Women have no business with text of the Vedas. A Brahman who divulges the Veda to a *Shudra* or a woman commits a grave sin. (Manu 9. 18 and 11. 199)

## 3.4 The Puranas and Upnishads

The *Simrtis* were followed by the *Puranas*.<sup>112</sup> There are 18 *Puranas* and 18 *Up-Puranas*. They deal with the creation, preservation and destruction of the world but differ from each other in many ways.<sup>113</sup> Some propagate Brahma, some Shiva, some Vishnu, some Vayu, some Agni, some Surya, and some promote the cult of goddesses and other deities. Puranas were to a large extent responsible for opposing the atheistic doctrines of Buddhism and Jainism.

For a long time the *Puranas* were not included in the Shruti literature. In course of time they were given equal status with the Vedas in spite of the fact that some of them were profane and anti-Vedic in doctrines. According to Vayu Puran, *Puranas* were uttered by Brahma before he uttered the Vedas. Matsya Purana and Brahma-Varta Purana went a step further and claimed that the Puranas were superior to the Vedas. According to the Puranas commission of a moral wrong is not a sin. On the other hand non-performance of the rituals prescribed by the *Puranas* is a grave sin.

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<sup>112</sup> ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾਂਡ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜਗਤ ਦੀ ਉਤਪਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਲੈ, ਦੇਵਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪਿਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੰਸ਼ਾਵਲੀ, ਮਨੁ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਹਾਲ, ਸੂਰਜ ਅਤੇ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਵੰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਕਥਾ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਪੰਜ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਹੋਣ, ਉਹ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਹੈ ॥” (ਦੇਖੋ ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼ ਪੰਨਾ ੭੭੮) . Historians believe that most Puranas were written between the first century and 16<sup>th</sup> century AD

<sup>113</sup> ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਦੇ ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖਿ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰ ਵੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ ॥ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ੩੯) ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰ ਵੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਸਭ ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਆਖਣੁ ਆਖ ਵਖਾਣਹਿ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ੨੩)

Soon after, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas Upnishads (like Brahadarnyaka, Chhandogya, Jaiminiya and Brahmana Upnishads etc.) came into being as commentaries on the Vedic and Puranic philosophy.<sup>115</sup> Today the deities of the Puranic literature are worshipped in preference to the Vedic deities (Agni, Indra, Fire, Vayu, Usha etc.).<sup>116</sup>

Jaimini upheld the Vedas and Brahadarnyaka upheld the Upnishads. The Vedas say 'yes' to sacrifices whereas some Upnishads say 'No'.

### 3.5 Tantras

The Puranas and Upnishads were followed by the *Tantras*. Tantriks worship *Shakti* (*power*). The followers, known as Sakats, believe that the power of the deities resides in their wives. They worship Shiva's wife and consider her as the source of all regenerative power. Tantrik Hinduism has many Tantras and they are all supposed to be based on a discussion which Shiva is supposed to have had with Durga or Kali. They believe in five Makars. These are:-

1. The drinking of liquors and intoxicating agents of various kinds .

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<sup>114</sup> ਸਾਸਤ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਪੁਕਾਰਹਿ ਧਰਮੁ ਕਰਹੁ ਖਟ ਕਰਮ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਈਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੩੪)

<sup>115</sup> Upnishads are many in number (some say 235) and they kept being produced till late. As late as the reign of Akbar the Brahmans produced "*Allah Upnishad*". Other well-known and oft-quoted Upnishads Aitreya, taitreya, Kane, Kath, Mundak, Mandookya, Kausheeqki, Maitre, and Suveta etc.

<sup>116</sup> ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਬਿਸਥਾਰਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੁ ਪਸਰਿਆ ਪਾਸਾਰਾ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੫੩)

- ..(Madya):\*
2. The eating of meat ..... (Mansa);\*\*
  3. The eating of fish ..... (Matsya);
  4. The eating of parched grain ..... (Mudra)
  5. The sexual union ..... (Maithuna).

\*Twelve kinds of liquors are mentioned by the Tantrik sages. One gives salvation, one gives learning and one gives power and wealth. They all destroy enemies, cure diseases and remove the sins.<sup>117</sup>

\*\*Three kinds of meat (that of birds, fish and beasts) are specially prescribed.

Tantras are known as *Agma* whereas the Vedas are known as *Nigma*.<sup>118</sup> Shankaracharya referred to 64 *Tantras* but their number runs into hundreds. They are believed to have been authored by Dattatreya considered to be an incarnation of the Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva). According to Kalluka Bhatta the *Tantras* are equal in authority with the Vedas. However it is a fact that the Tantriks have no respect for the Vedas. Some tantrics even claim that their Tantras are superior to the Vedas.

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<sup>117</sup> ਤੰਤ੍ਰ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਕਰਿ ਕਲਹਿ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਬਹੁ ਵਾਦਿ ਵਧਾਵੈ ॥ ( ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਸ)

<sup>118</sup> In Mahakal / Kalka temples OR Shiv / Parvati temples madira (alcohol/wine) & Bhang (marijuana) are distributed as PRASAD. Bhang is openly distributed in the temples at Benares and Ujjan. "Sixteen elements of shiva worship" include the use of bhang. It is used in abundance at Mahashivratri festival of Nepal where groups of Hindu Sadhus can be seen sitting and meditating in thick clouds of Bhang smoke. Guru Granth Sahib very strongly forbids the consumption of alcohol, wine, drugs, narcotics etc. in any form as an intoxicant: ਉਲਟੀ ਰੇ ਮਨ ਉਲਟੀ ਰੇ ॥ ਸਾਕਤ ਸਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਉਲਟੀ ਰੇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੩੫) ਮਿਥਿਆ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਕਤ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੫੪)

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

In the past Sakatas also resorted to human sacrifices<sup>119</sup> and believed that the Devi is pleased one thousand years with one human sacrifice and a hundred thousand years by the sacrifice of three men.<sup>120</sup> Chamunda, Chandika and Bhairo became notorious goddesses of sacrifice. Sakatas offered blood to the goddesses and flesh as oblations to Agni (fire). The instructions read: *"Let the performer of the sacrifice be cautious never to offer bad flesh. Let the sacrificer repeat the word Kali twice, then the words ' Devi Barjeswari, the Lawha Dandayai, Namah!"*

According to the Tantriks the best form of worship is the fullest satisfaction of the sexual desires of man therefore in Tantrik worship sexual intercourse with any woman is prescribed as a part of worship. The Sikh Gurus condemned the Tantrics and their practices.<sup>121</sup>

### 3.6 The Gaytry Mantra

Gaytry is an invocation of special spiritual efficacy for the Hindus. According to Manu Simrta (II. 76), "Brahma milked out the letters

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<sup>119</sup> Human Sacrifice became common in India and it is believed that even now it has not completely vanished. These days they sacrifice a foot long effigy made from dried milk (Khira). It is sacrificed according to the formula laid down in the Kalka Purana. It says, *"He who performs sacrifices according to these rules, obtains, his wishes to the utmost extent."*

<sup>120</sup> ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਬਹੁ ਤੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਨਾਟਕ ਅਗਲੇਰੇ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

<sup>121</sup> : ਜੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਮੈ ਨ ਤੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਮੈ ਨ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਬਸਿ ਆਵਈ ॥(ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਨਾਟਕ),

A, U, and M from the three Vedas which joined together forming the monosyllable AUM in Gaytry. The three words *Bhur (earth)*, *Bhuva (sky)* and *Svah (heaven)* taken from the three Vedas each contributed one letter to form it.<sup>122</sup>The full *mantra* is as follows:

“Om Bhoor Bhuvah Svah. Tatsaviturvarenyam Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayaat.”<sup>123</sup>

Meanings:- Sun God, the Life breath of the universe, eliminator of miseries, source of all bliss, The creator & ruler, all powerful, dispeller of sins and sorrows, inspirer of intellectual faculties is to be meditated upon.

The Rig Veda has a slightly different explanation about the birth of Gaytry. It says, “What were the rule, the order and the model? What were the wooden fender and the butter? What was the hymn, the chant, the recitation, when to the God all deities paid worship? Closely was Gaytry conjoined with Agni, and closely Savitar combined with Usnih. Brilliant with Ukthas, Soma joined Anustup: Brhaspati's voice by Brahati was added. (Rig 10,130-3-4)

Padam Puran has a still different story. According to this story Brahma organized a Yagya (ritual feast to gods) and sent Inder to

<sup>122</sup> Do they? They make BBS. Atherav Veda did not contribute anything to Gaytry although it preached magic. ਵੈਸੇ ਤੋ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਨਾਮ ਉਸ ਛੰਦ ਕਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਮੇਂ ਯਹ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਲਿਖਾ ਹੂਆ ਹੈ ਕਿੰਤੂ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਸਬਦ ਅਬ ਜਨ ਮਾਨਵ ਮੇਂ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਕਾ ਸੂਚਕ ਬਨ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ । .....ਦੂਸਰੇ ਕਿਸੀ ਮਤ ਮੇਂ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੋਂ ਕੀ ਐਸੀ ਗਹਿਰਾਈ ਔਰ ਸਚਾਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ.....(ਮਾਂ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਜਨ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਨਵੀਂ ਦਿਲੀ ਪੰਨਾ ੩-੨).ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ।

<sup>123</sup> “ ਓਮ ਭੂਰ ਭੁਵਹਿ ਸਵਹ. ਤਤ ਸਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਵਾਰੇਣਯੰ ਭਰਗੋ ਦੇਵਸਯ ਧੀਮਹੀ ਧਿਯੋ ਯੋਨ ਪਰਚੋਦਯਾਤ” “ਚਾਰੋਂ ਵੇਦੋਂ ਕੇ ੨੦ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ੩੦੦ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਬਤਲਾਏ ਜਾਤੇ ਹੈਂ। ਇਨ ਮੇਂ ਸੇ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਪੂਰਵਜੋਂ ਨੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਏਕ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਐਸਾ ਚੁਨਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸੇ ਗੁਰੁਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਕਹਾ ਜਾਤਾ ਹੈ {ਮਾਂ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਪੰਨਾ ੫੩}



bring his wife Savitri because the presence of both husband and wife at a Yagya was absolutely necessary. Savitri declined to come. Brahma asked Inder to produce another woman for him. Inder brought a cowherd (Gopi) named Gaytry from Patal Lok. Brahma married her and completed the yagya.

Yask Muni says that at the creation time God himself uttered Gaytry song from his mouth.<sup>124</sup>

The popular belief is that Gaytry *manter* was written by Rishi Wishwamitar.<sup>125</sup> Its complete rendering was found only in the Yajur Veda (Yajur Veda 36, 3). This proves that it may have been finally completed only in Yajur Veda time.

### 3.7 Importance of the Gaytry mantra

Katha Upnishad says:-

*"The goal, which all Vedas declare, which all austerities aim at, and which humans desire when they live a life of continence, I will tell you briefly, it is Aum"* (1.2,15)

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<sup>124</sup> ਗਾਯਤ੍ਰੇ ਮੁਖਾਦਿ ਉਤਪਤਤਿ ਗਾਯਤ੍ਰੀ ( ਯਾਸਕ ਮੁਨੀ)

<sup>125</sup> The words OM and the three words Bhur, Bhavo, Svah were added to the *mantra* at a later date. The original mantra (as record in Yajur Veda 36.3) did not contain these words. It is said that Brahma changed Gaytry into a cow. The cow began to eat Lodha's wheat crop at which the farmer hit her with a stick and Gaytry lost her one leg. Bhagat Namdev mentions it when he says, "ਪਾਂਡੇ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਲੋਧੇ ਕਾ ਖੇਤੁ ਖਾਤੀ ਥੀ, ਲੈ ਕਰਿ ਠੇਗਾ ਟਗਰੀ ਤੋਰੀ ਲਾਂਗਤ ਲਾਂਗਤ ਜਾਤੀ ਥੀ (ਗੌਂਡ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਪੰਨਾ ੮੭੪). ਕੁਝ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਦੀ ਟੰਗ ਵਸ਼ਿਸ਼ਟ ਰਿਸ਼ੀ ਨੇ ਤੋੜੀ ਸੀ ਕੁਝ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਸਪਤੀ ਨੇ ਤੋੜੀ ਸੀ । ਵਿਚਾਰੀ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਟੰਗ ਤੁੜਾ ਬੈਠੀ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਾਪ ਨਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਰਾਪ ਤਾਂ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਹੀ ਦੇ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ !!

This *mantra* is known as the gist of the Vedas. Manu says, “A Vedic priest who pronounces to himself Gayatri morning and evening shall attain sanctity which the Veda confers”.

(Manu II.78).

“The three words preceded trilateral syllable OM and followed the three footed<sup>126</sup> Savitri should be considered as a mouth or an indispensable part of the Veda leading to Braham”

(Manu II. 81).

Whoever repeats Gaytry for three years without fail shall approach the divine essence and move in the air freely as an ethereal being.

(Manu II.82)

Maharishi Charak has outlined how the Gaytry Mantra should be internalised and what benefits accrue from its repetition. We give his view in his own words in the footnote.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> . It is said that Brahma changed Gaytry into a cow. The cow began to eat Lodha's wheat crop at which the farmer hit her with a stick and Gaytry lost her one leg. Bhagat Namdev mentions it when he says, “ਪਾਂਡੋ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਲੋਧੇ ਕਾ ਖੇਤੁ ਖਾਤੀ ਥੀ, ਲੈ ਕਰਿ ਠੇਗਾ ਟਗਰੀ ਤੋਰੀ ਲਾਂਗਤ ਲਾਂਗਤ ਜਾਤੀ ਥੀ (ਗੌਂਡ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਪੰਨਾ ੮੭੪). ਕੁਝ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਦੀ ਟੰਗ ਵਸ਼ਿਸ਼ਟ ਰਿਸ਼ੀ ਨੇ ਤੋੜੀ ਸੀ ਕੁਝ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਪਤੀ ਨੇ ਤੋੜੀ ਸੀ । ਵਿਚਾਰੀ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਟੰਗ ਤੁੜਾ ਬੈਠੀ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਾਪ ਨਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਰਾਪ ਤਾਂ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਹੀ ਦੇ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ ।

<sup>127</sup> ਏਕ ਵਰਸ਼ ਤਕ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਚਾਰੀ ਰਹਿ ਕਰ ਗਾਏਂ(cows) ਚਰਾਵੇ ਔਰ ਰਾਤ ਕੋ ਉਨਹੀਂ ਕੇ ਬੀਚ ਮੋਂ ਸੋਵੇ ਤਥਾ ਮਨ ਸੋ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਕਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਕਰਤਾ ਰਹੇ। ਫਿਰ ਪੌਸ਼, ਮਾਘ ਯਾ ਫਾਗੁਨ ਕੀ ਕਿਸੀ ਸੁਭ ਤਿਥੀ ਮੋਂ ਤੀਨ ਦਿਨ ਤਕ ਉਪਵਾਸ ਰਖ ਕਰ ਅੰਵਲੇ ਕੇ ਜੰਗਲ ਮੋਂ ਘੁਸ ਜਾਏ ਔਰ ਅੰਵਲੇ ਕੇ ਕਿਸੀ ਬ੍ਰਕਸ਼ (tree) ਪਰ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਕਰ ਬਹਿ ਜਿਤਨੇ ਅੰਵਲੇ ਖਾਏਗਾ ਉਤਨੇ ਹੀ ਵਰਸ਼ ਕੀ ਆਯੂ ਉਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਗੀ । ਅਰਥਾਤ ਦੋ ਸੌ ਅੰਵਲਾ ਖਾਏਗਾ ਤੋ ਦੋ ਸੌ ਵਰਸ਼ ਕੀ, ਤੀਨ ਸੌ ਖਾਏਗਾ ਤੋ ਤੀਨ ਸੌ ਵਰਸ਼ ਕੀ ਆਯੂ ਹੋਗੀ” (Quoted in ਮਾਂ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਜਨ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਨਈ ਦਿਲੀ ੧੯੬੯ ਸੰਸਕਰਨ ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੦ )

### 3.8 Bhagvad Geeta and Gaytry

Bhagvad Geeta too eulogizes the Gaytry *Mantra*. It says, “*OM, Tat, Sat is declared to be the threefold designation of the absolute. At the beginning of creation, the Brahmans, the Vedas, and sacrifices were created by it. Therefore acts of sacrifice, gift and penance as enjoined by the scriptures are always commenced with the utterance of the word OM by those who are entitled to chant the Vedas.*”<sup>128</sup>

(Bhagvad

Geeta XVII, 23-24)

### 3.9 The Sikh View

Sikhism completely discards the reading of the Vedas, Puranas, Upnishads, Tantras<sup>129</sup> and other Hindu religious books. It says, “Reading of the Vedas; the Simrtis and other Hindu religious books bring no spiritual merit.<sup>130</sup> “They define sin and virtue and camouflage the truth. They confuse the people with the three *Gunas*”<sup>131</sup>

According to Sikhism Vedas are worldly and without spiritual content.<sup>132</sup> Ironically the Vedas are similarly belittled by Bhagvad

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<sup>128</sup> Shudras are not permitted to utter Gaytry. The Sikh Gurus said ਸੰਧਿਆ ਤਰਪਣੁ ਕਰਹਿ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਬਿਨੁ ਬੁਝੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੦੩)

<sup>129</sup> ਕਿਤਿਓ ਤੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਸਾਧੇ ਜੁ ਜਨਮੰ ਬਿਤਾਇਓ, ਭਏ ਫੋਕਟੰ ਕਾਜ ਏਕੈ ਨ ਆਇਓ॥ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਨਾਟਕ) ਨ ਭੂਲ ਜੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਤੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਭਰਮ ਭੇਖ ਮਾਨੀਐ (੧੦੪) (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਨਾਟਕ)

<sup>130</sup> ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਭਿ ਸਾਸਤ ਇਨ ਪੜਿਆ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ਏਕੁ ਅਖਰੁ ਜੋ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਪੇ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਸਇੰ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੪੭)

<sup>131</sup> ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਪੁੰਨ ਪਾਪ ਬੀਚਾਰਦੇ ਤਤੈ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਣੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੨੦).... “ਤਿਹੀ ਗੁਣੀ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਭਰਮਿ ਸੁਤਾ, ਸੁਤਿਆ ਰੈਣ ਵਿਹਾਣੀ (ਪੰਨਾ 920)

<sup>132</sup> “ਬੇਦ ਪਾਠ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਕੀ ਕਾਰ” (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੯੧)

Geeta as worldly pursuits. We give here some quotations from Bhagvad Geeta.

*“Arjuna, the Vedas deal with the three Gunas or modes of Prakirti and their evolutes in the form of worldly enjoyments as well as means of attaining such enjoyments; be thou indifferent to these enjoyments and their means.”*

*(Bhagvad Geeta II.45)*

*“Arjuna, those who are obsessed by desire and devoted to the letter of the Vedas, who look upon heaven as the supreme goal and argue that there is nothing beyond heaven, are unwise.”*

*(Bhagvad Geeta II 41)*

Like the Vedas the Simrti too are rejected by the Sikh Gurus.<sup>133</sup> Bhagat Kabeer calls the Simrtis rope or a chain that binds people unnecessarily and unfairly. He says, *“The Simrti is the daughter of the Vedas, O Siblings of Destiny. She has brought a chain and a rope. She has imprisoned the people in her own city. She has tightened the noose of emotional attachment and shot the arrow of death. By cutting, she cannot be cut, and she cannot be broken. She has become a serpent, and she is eating the world. Before my very eyes, she has plundered the entire world. Says Kabeer, chanting the Lord’s Name, I have escaped her.”*<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਪੌਥੀ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਪਾਠਾ ॥ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਪੜੇ ਸੁਣਿ ਬਾਟਾ ॥ ਬਿਨ ਰਸ ਰਾਤੇ ਮਨੁ ਬਹੁ ਨਾਟਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੬੨) ਸਾਸਤ ਬੇਦ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਬਹੁ ਭੇਦ ॥ ਅਠਸਠਿ ਮਜਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਰੇਦ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੫੩) ਜਿਨ ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਚਰਨਨ ਠਹਿਰਾਯੋ ਸੋ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਨ ਕੇ ਰਾਹ ਨ ਆਯੋ ॥ (ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ ੬.੧੮)

<sup>134</sup> ਬੇਦ ਕੀ ਪੁਤ੍ਰੀ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਸਾਂਕਲ ਜੇਵਰੀ ਲੈ ਹੈ ਆਈ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਆਪਨ ਨਗਰੁ ਆਪ ਤੇ ਬਾਧਿਆ ॥ ਮੋਹ ਕੈ ਫਾਧਿ ਕਾਲ ਸਰੁ ਸਾਂਧਿਆ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਕਟੀ ਨ ਕਟੈ ਤੂਟਿ ਨਹ ਜਾਈ ॥ ਸਾ ਸਰਪਨਿ ਹੋਇ ਜਗ ਕਉ ਖਾਈ ॥ ੨ ॥ ਹਮ ਦੇਖਤ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਲੂਟਿਆ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਮੈ ਰਾਮ ਕਹਿ ਛੂਟਿਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੨੯)

Brahmans have always commanded unique power and privilege.<sup>135</sup> They have written Puranas and Simrtis inventing unbelievable mythical stories for the gullible people.<sup>136</sup> The Simrtis are heavily biased in favour of the Brahmans. In them everything gravitates to benefit the Brahmans (see Manu chapters 1, 6, 9 and 77). It condemns the Shudras as nonentities (see Manu chapter 4 and 8). The same line was later adopted by Tulsi Das, the veteran Hindu writer (author of the *Ram Chrit Manas*). He writes, “Serve the Brahman even if he has no morals but avoid serving a Shudra even if he be an intellectual scholar.”<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> “True was overwhelmed by false. The chaos of Brahmanical religion with all its conflicting theories reached a climax. The period was one of spiritual dryness. Truth had hardened into tradition and morality stiffened into routine. Life became a series of observances. The mind of man moved within the iron circle of prescribed ceremonialism.” (**Indian Philosophy** by Dr. Radha Krishan former President of India). Some well meaning Hindu intellectuals called the Brahmans of their time , “A procession of dogs”(See Chhandok Upnishad or Read ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਪੰਨਾ ੨੧੭-੨੧੮). Brahmans divided themselves into numerous branches. Some only performed religious ceremonies (havan etc), some only conducted Saradh, and some only performed last rites of the dead (ਅਚਾਰਜ)

<sup>136</sup> For example mother Ganges (Ganges River) was brought down from heaven with the connivance of Lord Shiva in order to purify the ashes of King Sagar’s 60,000 sons who had been reduced to ashes by the wrath of a sage. Bhagirath did penance for the sin but could not break the force of Mother Ganges therefore Shiva absorbed the whole river in his matted hair. Hanuman was born of wind and swallowed the sun. August Rishi drank all the water of the oceans. Shiva decorated his hair by putting the moon in his hair like a flower. The Brahmans even strongly preached the ceremony of *Narmedh Yagya* in which a man was ritually slaughtered to please the stone gods. Somebody asked Swami Dya Nand, “Why do you oppose the Puranas? His answer was, “No body likes to eat poisoned food.”

<sup>137</sup> ਸੇਈਐ ਵਿਖੁ ਗਯਾਨ ਗੁਣ ਹੀਨਾ, ਸੁਦੁ ਨ ਸੇਈਐ ਗਯਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨਾ” (ਰਾਮ ਚਿੰਤ ਮਾਣਸ) {ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਗਿਆਨਹੀਣ ਹੁੰਦਿਆਂ ਵੀ ਪੂਜਣ ਯੋਗ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸੂਦਰ ਗਿਆਨਵਾਨ ਹੁੰਦਿਆਂ ਵੀ ਨਖਿੱਧ ਹੈ } Also see Bhagvad Geeta XV, II- 47 and read “Were castes formulated in the age of Rig Veda?” by V.M.Apte.

Hinduism justifies class distinctions and promotes the creation of a class of supermen called Brahmans. These supermen of Hinduism are supermen by birth. There is no chance for the lower classes to rise to their level or make progress and add to the national wealth of the country. The interests of the common man as well as of society are denied; suppressed and sacrificed to the interests of these Supermen. This makes Hinduism a leading light of inequality. Sikhism condemns such treatment of human beings and the creation of bad blood among different members of society. According to Sikhism it is the duty of a learned man to offer spiritual guidance to all the four (so-called) classes.<sup>138</sup>

Manu made *Vanprastha* (renunciation) and *Sanyasa* (wandering mendicancy) obligatory for Hindus (Manu IX, 11). As a result nearly half the society lived in forests under the guidance of chosen teachers each of whom had his own set of rules. Sikhism preaches family living.

The Puranas talk of thousands of years of worship. In the Bhagvad Geeta even Krishna is mentioned as having performed austerity for a thousand years propitiating Lord Shiva. This is unbelievable and the Sikhs treat such statements as myths. They remember God daily morning and evening and attach no importance to austerities performed for thousands of years.

As for Gaytry its origin is doubtful. Taking out a letter from here and a letter from there to form a *Mantra* is ridiculous and there is no evidence to show who selected and later added these words to the *mantra* and what criteria was used to select the letters. The

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<sup>138</sup> ਚਹੁ ਵਰਨਾ ਕਉ ਦੇ ਉਦੇਸੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਸੁ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਕਉ ਸਦਾ ਆਦੇਸੁ” (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੭੪) “ਬੀਜ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਸਰਬ ਕੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ” (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੭੪)

whole *mantra* is addressed to the Sun god. The Brahmans use this *mantra* for *Sandhya* prayers and offer water to the sun god at the end after repeating the Gaytry *Mantra* but their behaviour does not alter an iota. These morning and evening rituals are known as *Sandhya* and *Tarpan*. The Sikhs do not accept the Sun as their God nor do they attach any importance to *Sandhya* or *Tarpan*. Their God is unfathomable, unapproachable and beyond human understanding. Guru Amar Das says, “An acceptable *Sandhya* prayer is one which brings to mind God”.<sup>139</sup>

Sikh scripture says: “*I have searched many Shastars and Simrtis, they do not show the way to God, but contemplation on God is invaluable*”.<sup>140</sup> *Prahlad, the son of a demon, did not perform any Sandhya or Gaytry and yet became a man of God.*<sup>141</sup> *For the Sikhs their Guru is everything.*<sup>142</sup>

“ਸਾਸਤ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬੇਦ ਚਾਰਿ ਮੁਖਾਗਰ ਬਿਚਰੇ, ਤਪੇ ਤਪੀਸਰ ਜੋਗੀਆ ਤੀਰਥ ਗਵਨੁ ਕਰੇ ॥

ਖਟ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਤੇ ਦੁਗਣੇ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਨਾਇ, ਰੰਗ ਨ ਲਗੀ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਤਾ ਸਰਪਰ ਨਰਕੇ ਜਾਏ॥”

“One may recite shastras, Simritis and the four Vedas by heart. He may be a great ascetic or a self-disciplined Yogi, visiting scared shrines. He may perform all six ceremonial Vedic rituals many times over and ritually cleanse himself daily. If all this fails to inculcate in him love for God, then he is living in hell.” (Guru Granth Sahib Page 70)

<sup>139</sup> ਏਹਾ ਸੰਧਿਆ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਚਿਤਿ ਆਵੈ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਊਪਜੈ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੁ ਜਲਾਵੈ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੫੩) ਸੰਧਿਆ ਤਰਪਣੁ ਕਰਹਿ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਬਿਨੁ ਬੂਝੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੦੩)

<sup>140</sup> ਬਹੁ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਬਹੁ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਪੇਖੇ ਸਰਬ ਢਢੋਲਿ ॥ ਪੂਜਸਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਅਮੋਲ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੬੫) ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਪੁਕਾਰਨਿ ਪੋਥੀਆ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਸਭਿ ਰੂੜੁ ਗਾਲੀ ਹੋਛੀਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੬੧) ਕੋਟਿ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਾਸਤਰ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਵਹਿ ਚਿਤ ॥ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਨਾਟਕ)

<sup>141</sup> ਦੈਤ ਪੁਤ੍ਰੁ ਪ੍ਰਹਿਲਾਦੁ ,ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਤਰਪਣੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ, ਸਬਦੇ ਮੇਲਿ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੩)

<sup>142</sup> ਗੁਰੁ ਸਾਸਤਿ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਖਟੁ ਕਰਮਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਅਸਥਾਨਾ ਹੇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੭੪)

## Chapter 4

### Images of God

#### 4.1 gods and goddesses

The Hindus are polytheists. Belief in numerous gods and goddesses is one of their cardinal principles. Their gods and goddesses are known as Avatars, Devtas or Devies.<sup>143</sup> Air, fire, mountains, sun, trees, rivers (like Ganges), food, water, butter and salt etc are all gods.<sup>144</sup> These gods and goddesses also have their parents and the offspring. For example Hanuman was born to Vayu god (Air), Parbati (Shiva's wife) was the daughter of the Himalayas

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<sup>143</sup> In Zind Avesta, the first religious book of the Parsi Aryans, the word *Dev or Devta* was used for Asur (devils) but later in the Hindu scripture it began to be used for angels (gods and goddesses).

<sup>144</sup> ਅੰਨੁ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਬੈਸੰਤਰੁ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਲੂਣੁ ਪੰਜਵਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਘਿਰਤੁ, ਤਾ ਹੋਆ ਪਾਕੁ ਪਵਿਤੁ॥ ਪਾਪੀ ਸਿਉ ਤਨੁ ਗਡਿਆ ਬੁਕਾ ਪਈਆਂ ਤਿਤੁ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੩). This hymn is addressed to a Brahman. It means, "The corn is sacred, the water is sacred, the fire is sacred, and so is the salt considered sacred by the Brahman. The fifth element is Butter which is also sacred. When they enter the human body, why do they become impure and are spat on? Does it not prove that it is humans who are sinful?"

"Even Brahmans and Emperors become gods. "ਕੋਊ ਦਿਜੇਸ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ, ਕੋਊ ਮਹੇਸ ਕੋ ਈਸ ਬਤੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਕੋਊ ਕਹੇ ਬਿਸਨੋ ਬਿਸਨਾਇਕ, ਜਾਹਿ ਭਜੈ ਅਘ ਓਘ ਕਟੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਬਾਰ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਅਰੇ ਜਤੁ ਅੰਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਤਜ ਜੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਤਾਰੀ ਕੋ ਧਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨ ਹੀਏ ਜੋਊ ਥਾ, ਅਬ ਹੈ ਆਗੇ ਊ ਹਵੈ ਹੈ " (੩੩ ਸਵਈਏ)



Mountain, and Karan was the son of the sun God. In spite of this some scriptures testify that all gods were born to one mother called *Aditi*. Rig Veda mentioned only three thousand three hundred and nine gods and goddesses but now the total number of gods is usually claimed to be 300,000,000. Some even put the number still higher.<sup>145</sup>

In passing we would like to record here the views of Manu Simriti on the point of the birth of gods and goddesses. Manu Simriti says, “*Then, I, desiring to produce created beings, performed very difficult austerities, and thereby called into existence ten great sages, lords of created beings. Mariki, Atri, Angras, Pulsatya, Pulaha, Kratu, Praketas, Vaishsshtha, Bhirgu and Narda. They created seven other Manus possessing great brilliancy, gods, and classes of gods and great sages of measureless power.*” (Manu Simriti 1.34-36)

The Hindus believe that their gods affect every aspect of human life. For example to ask for ‘beauty’ the Hindus would worship Ashwani Kumar (son of a horse), for long life they worship Markanday, for learning music Saraswati is worshipped. For getting rid of disease and disadvantage the Hindus worship Shani god (the eighth and the youngest son of the Sun).

*“A diseased person is recommended to worship the sun god, a person wanting education may worship the goddesses of learning, Sarasvati, and a person wanting a beautiful wife may worship goddess Uma, the wife of Lord Siva. In this way there are*

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<sup>145</sup> ਤੇਤੀਸ ਕਰੋੜੀ ਦਾਸ ਤੁਮਾਰੇ ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਅਧਾਰੀ ॥ ਤਾਕੇ ਰੂਪ ਨ ਜਾਹੀ ਲਖਣੇ ਕਿਆ ਕਰਿ ਆਖਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੨੨) The Sikhs are montheists. They believe in one God, the creator of the Universe. The Guru says,” ਸਾਹਿਬ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੫੦) ਪੂਜਹੁ ਰਾਮੁ ਏਕੁ ਹੀ ਦੇਵਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੮੪)

*recommendations in the Shastras (Vedic scripture) for different modes of worship of different demigods”*

(‘*Geeta as it is*’ By Swami Prabhupada Page 140)<sup>146</sup>

## 4.2 Some popular Hindu gods and goddesses

For the purpose of brevity we can divide Hindu gods and goddesses loosely into the following categories.

1. Superhuman gods Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Indra etc.
2. Animal gods Fish (ਮੱਛ), <sup>147</sup>Boar (ਵਰਾਹ), <sup>148</sup>Tortoise (ਕੱਛ) and Sheshnag (Serpent), Rats<sup>149</sup> etc.
3. Female gods Durga, Kali and Saraswati etc.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Ironically Swami Prabhupada also writes, “Worship of demigods is not approved in Bhagvad Geeta.” (‘*Geeta As It Is*’ page xix)

<sup>147</sup> ਵੇਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੁੱਕ ਕੇ ਰਾਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਲੁਕ ਗਏ । ਵਿਸ਼ਨੂੰ ਨੇ ਮਛੀ ਦਾ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਧਾਰਿਆ ਤੇ ਰਾਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੇਦ ਖੋਹ ਲਿਆਇਆ।

<sup>148</sup> ਰਾਖਸ਼ ਲੋਕ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਮੇਟ ਕੇ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਜਾ ਵੜੇ। ਵਿਸ਼ਨੂੰ ਜੀ ਛੁਡਵਾਉਣ ਗਏ ਤਾਂ ਰਾਖਸ਼ ਰੂੜੀ (ਗੰਦ) ਵਿਚ ਜਾ ਲੁਕੇ। ਵਿਸ਼ਨੂੰ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਵਰਾਹ (ਸੂਰ) ਦਾ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਧਾਰਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਗੰਦ ਵਿਚ ਮੂੰਹ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਧਰਤੀ ਕੱਢ ਲਿਆਂਦੀ । ਹੈਰਾਨੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਛ, ਕਛ ਅਤੇ ਵਰਾਹ ਆਦਿਕ ਦੇਵਤਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੰਦਰ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਵੀ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣੇ । ਕੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਵਤਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਕੋਈ ਲੋਕ ਭਲਾਈ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਵੀ ਕੀਤਾ?

<sup>149</sup> Thousands of all types of rats are worshipped daily at Mata Karni Mandir in Rajasthan (India). Ironically the snakes are worshipped too even though they eat the rat gods .

<sup>150</sup> Rig Veda mentions *Prithvi, Aditi, Diti, Nishtigri, Indrani, Prisni, Usha, Surya, Agni, Varunani, Rodasi, Raka, Sinivali, Sradha, Asrami, Apsaras and Sarasvati etc.* Modern devis are Oma, Gauri, Parvati, Saraswati and Jagdamba etc who are considered non violent. The violent Devies are Chandka, Durga,

4. Human gods Sri Ram Chander, Sri Krishna<sup>151</sup>

5. Half animal half human gods Hanuman (Kapi), Narsing, Ganesh etc.

6. Tree and plant gods Tulsi,<sup>152</sup> Peepal tree<sup>153</sup>, fig<sup>154</sup>, coconut etc.

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Bhairvi, Chandi and Syama. There are numerous local goddesses in addition to these.

<sup>151</sup> Although nobody knows for certain when Ram Chander and Krishna lived on this earth, their birthdays are fixed. Ram Naumi (birthday of Ram Chander) is celebrated on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of March /April. Janam Ashtmi (birthday of Krishna) is celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Hindu month of Bhadrapada (ਭਾਦਰੋਂ) which falls in August/September. . ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵ ਨ ਸੇਵਕਾਂ ਤੰਤ ਮੰਤ ਨ ਫੁਰਿਨ ਵਿਚਾਰੇ ॥ ਪਰਸਰਾਮੁ ਰਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਇ ਕਿਲਕਿ ਕਲੰਕੀ ਅਤਿ ਹੰਕਾਰੇ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ੪੦/੬) ॥ ਕਾਹੂ ਨੇ ਰਾਮ ਕਹਯੋ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾ ਕਹੂੰ, ਕਾਹੂੰ ਮਨੈ ਅਵਤਾਰਨ ਮਾਨਯੋ ॥ ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਬਿਸਾਰ ਸਭੈ, ਕਰਤਾਰ ਹੀ ਕਉ ਕਰਤਾ ਜੀਅ ਜਾਨਯੋ (੩੩ ਸਵਈਏ)॥

<sup>152</sup> Tulsi was the devoted wife of Shankhachuda. She is said to have cursed Lord Krishna to become a stone (shaaligraama). However in consideration of her prayers Krishna blessed her saying that she would become the worshipped plant Tulsi. The Tulsi plant is therefore ritually married to Lord Krishna with great pomp and show (especially in the weddings). This is because according to another legend, Lord Krishna blessed her to be his consort. Krishna's *gopi* Satyabhama once weighed Lord Krishna against all her wealth. The scales did not balance until a Tulsi leaf was placed along with the wealth on the scale by Rukmini. Tulsi is worshipped with the following Mantra: *Yanmule sarvatirhaani, Yannagre sarvadevataa, Yanmadhye sarvavedaascha, Tulsi taam namaamyaham*, (I bow down to the Tulsi at whose base lie all the holy places and at whose top reside all the deities and all the Vedas. ). "Tulsi leaves are very important, and Krishna has recommended this in Bhagvad Geeta." ('*Geeta as it is*' page 199)

<sup>153</sup> "He who knows to the Peepal tree, which is said to be imperishable, with its roots in the Primal Being whose stem is represented by Brahma and whose leaves are the Vedas, is a knower of the Vedas." (Bhagvad Geeta XV-1) Before Pakistan was created, Shia Muslims used to take out their Tazia (ਦਰੋ) processions. At times when they cut a peepal tree to pass safely without lowering their flag, the Hindus would object strongly and there were bloody clashes. The

7. Nature gods Earth, Sun, Moon,<sup>155</sup> Water and fire etc.

8. Bird gods Nilkanth,<sup>156</sup> Garud.<sup>157</sup>

9. River gods Ganges,<sup>158</sup> Jamuna<sup>159</sup> and Godavari etc<sup>160</sup>

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Hindus apologize to a plant or tree before cutting it to avoid incurring a sin named **soona**. Certain trees and plants like Tulsi, and peepal etc. are commonly worshipped these days. It is believed that divine beings manifest as trees and plants. Another sacred tree to the Hindus is *Asvattha* (The fig tree). "The fig tree is one of the most beautiful and tall trees, and people in India often worship it as one of their daily morning rituals." ('Geeta As It Is' Page 177)

<sup>154</sup> The marks on the coconut are thought to represent the three-eyed Lord Shiva. Coconuts are offered in temples. Here and there they are smashed to please the deities. Tons and tons of coconuts are offered at Batu caves in Malaysia before the Hindu deities.

<sup>155</sup> ਕੋਈ ਪੂਜੇ ਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਸੂਰ ਕੋਈ ਧਰਤਿ ਅਕਾਸੁ ਮਨਾਵੈ, ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮੀ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਵੈ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ੧/੧੮). ਸੂਰਜ ਅਤੇ ਚੰਦਰਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸੂਰਜ ਗ੍ਰਹਣ ਅਤੇ ਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਗ੍ਰਹਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਵਿਚ ਰੁੱਝ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਐਸਾ ਕੋਈ ਹੁਕਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ।

<sup>156</sup> Nil-kanth means "blue throat". It is a bird with a blue throat. A temple to Nilkanth is situated near Rishikesh. This is the spot where Lord Shiva swallowed poison, which got stuck in his throat which then turned blue.

<sup>157</sup> Garuda is known as the king of the birds in Hindu circles. It was used by Vishnu for riding. Again it was the bird Garuda who was instructed by Vishnu with nineteen thousand shaloks now known as Garuda Puran. The latter half of this Puran deals with life after death. Hindus generally read this Puran while cremating the physically dead bodies of departed relatives.

<sup>158</sup> Hindus regard the Ganges as the holiest of rivers. It was named after the goddess Ganga, the daughter of the mountain god Himalaya. Pilgrimage sites along the river include Haridwar, the place where the Ganges leaves the Himalayas, and Allahabad, where the mythical Saraswati river is believed to enter the Ganges. Ganges water is used by the Hindus to cleanse any place or object for ritual purposes. To bathe in the Ganga is a lifelong ambition for Hindus because a bath here is believed to cleanse all sins. Hindus also cast the ashes of their dead in the river in the belief that this will guide the souls of the deceased straight to paradise.

## 10 Stone gods Statues and unchiselled stones.<sup>161</sup>

The female gods can be further divided into categories

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<sup>159</sup> Named after The goddess Yami, (sister of Yama, god of death, and the daughter of the Sun god) it is connected with Lord Krishna in Hindu mythology. This is where he killed Kaliya, a poisonous *Nāga* snake, which had inhabited the river and terrorized the people of Braja. This river accounts for more than 70 per cent of Delhi's water supplies. It is highly venerated in Hinduism and worshipped as goddess Yamuna (or yami) . Bathing in its sacred waters is believed to free one from the torments of death. Its water is greatly polluted these days.

<sup>160</sup> Godavri is another sacred river that runs from western to southern India starting near Nashik and ending up in bay of Bengal. Legend has it that Sage Gautama lived here and kept his stock of rice in a granary. A cow entered his granary and ate up the rice and died. Gautma wanted to relieve himself of the sin of 'Gohatya'. He worshipped Lord Shiva and requested him to bring Ganga to purify his hermitage. Lord Shiva pleased with the rishi brought along river Ganga. She is known here as Gautami Ganga. Its name Godavari originates from Sage Gautama. Every twelve years, Pushkaram fair (Kumbh Mela) is held on its banks at which thousands of Hindus have a holy dip in the sacred waters of the river to purify themselves of all their sins.

Those who, for some reason or the other, cannot make to the rivers, worship water from sacred rivers in a Kalasha (metal pitcher). The waters from all the holy rivers are poured into a Kalasha, the knowledge of all the Vedas and the blessings of all the deities are then invoked. Afterwards this water is used for all the rituals, including the **abhisheka**. The consecration (*kumbhaabhisheka*) of a temple is a grand ritual including the pouring of one or more *kalashas* of holy water on the top of the temple or the statue. In the traditional *abhishekha* ritual several other materials are substituted like milk, honey, curd, coconut water, sandal paste, holy ash etc. Each material is supposed to bestow certain specific benefits on worshippers.

<sup>161</sup> Adherents prefer to worship the gods that they themselves make and not the God that made them. They believe, " *the form of the Lord, even when represented by the material qualities such as stone, wood or oil paint, is not actually material. That is the absolute nature of the Supreme Lord.*" ..... *This arca-vigraha is an incarnation of the Spreme Lord. ('Geeta As It Is ' Page 203-204)*

(a) Wives of superhuman Gods: Sarasvati,<sup>162</sup> Lakhshmi, Parvati etc.

(b) Local goddesses: Naina Devi in Nainital, Kali in Calcutta, Mumba Devi in Mubai etc.<sup>163</sup>

(c) Some people worship light goddess and (usually) use a traditional earthen lamp. They believe that light (knowledge) drives away darkness (ignorance). The belief is that the oil or the ghee in the lamp symbolizes *Washna* (वासना) or negative tendencies and the wick represents the ego. Lighting a lamp brings knowledge and destroys ego. When lighting the lamp they pray: “*Deepajyothi parabrahma, Deepa sarva tamopahaha, Deepena saadhyate saram, Sandhyaa deepo namostute*”.<sup>164</sup>

(I prostrate to the morning/evening lamp whose light bestows Knowledge and dispels darkness. May I achieve my aim in life?)

With the exception of Sri Ram Chander and Sri Krishna whose parentage, birth places and approximate times of living are known,

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<sup>162</sup>Sarasvati is worshipped by the following *mantra*. “Saraswati namasthubhyam, Varade kaama roopini, Vidyaaarambham karishyaami, Sidhirbhavatu me sadaa” (O Goddess Saraswati, the giver of boons and fulfiller of wishes, I prostrate to you before starting my studies. May you always fulfill me?) . About the worship of goddesses the Guru Granth Sahib says, “ਮਰਾ ਮਾਈ ਕੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰੈ । ਨਰ ਸੈ ਨਾਰਿ ਹੋਇ ਅਉਤਰੈ । ਤੂ ਕਹੀਅਤ ਹੀ ਆਦਿ ਭਵਾਨੀ । ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ ਕਹਾ ਛੁਪਾਨੀ”। (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੭੪)

<sup>163</sup> It needs to be noted that South Indian Hindu gods are too numerous and they are different from the Northern Hindu gods. South Indians do not like the North Indian Hindu gods.

<sup>164</sup> Almost on all important occasions like Arti worship and opening ceremonies of the Hindus lighting a lamp is considered necessary. A lamp is also placed at place where a Hindu dies.

nothing much is known about the other gods. Most Hindu gods are married and the gods' wives automatically become goddesses worthy of worship by the followers of the god. *Sarasvati* is the wife of Brahma, Lakhshmi is the wife of Vishnu and Parvati is the wife of Shiva and they are worshipped as goddesses.

Hindus believe that gods (especially Vishnu and Shiva) send *avatars* to bring peace and prosperity in the world and to punish the wrong doers. The number of gods and the number of *avatars* each god has differs from one Hindu scholar to another. For example some scholars believe that Brahma had two Avatars (1) a Boar and (2) a fish. But the same two *avatars* are also attributed by a section of the Hindus to Vishnu. Different Puranas give different numbers of Vishnu's avatars. For example Harivansha gives the number of Vishnu's Avatars as 6 whereas Bhagvad Puran gives the number 12. Some others have increased the number to 24. How many avatars each main god had cannot be satisfactorily confirmed and neither is it possible to be sure about the total number of gods and goddesses<sup>165</sup> that the Hindus believe in. We will record here only the known information about some of the well-known gods.

### **4.3 Dattatraya/Trimurti**

According to The Hindu theology Brahma (first Parjapati?) creates the world, Vishnu preserves and Mahesh destroys it for the purpose of recreation. These three gods are spoken of as forming a

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<sup>165</sup> Some Hindus justify the worship of gods (or goddesses) by saying that it is the power of God they worship. It is worth noting that the power of God cannot exist away from God. It is in God and as such it can be worshipped only by worshipping God. No god/goddess has so far left any spiritual instruction for its followers or done any good act worth emulation.

Trimurti<sup>166</sup> and in this form they are equal in status and engaged in complementary work. But since creation comes first, Brahma is given the first place. It is he who creates work for Vishnu and Shiva. He has also been the arbitrator in the conflicts that took place between the other two gods (Rudra and Narayan).

The three main Hindu gods were combined into one (known as Trinity) by Rishi Dattatreya. The trinity is represented in stone statues with the three faces of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva together and is the most sacred relic of the Hindus. According to Devi Bhagvad a Devi named *Shri* rubbed her palms and a blister appeared out of which Brahma was born. As soon as Brahma was born the Devi asked him to marry her but Brahma refused. She rubbed her palms again and this time Vishnu was born who too declined to marry the Devi. The Devi rubbed her palms once again and this time Shiva appeared.<sup>167</sup> He agreed to marry the Devi provided she produced two more women for his brothers Brahma and Vishnu. The Devi agreed and they were all married. This is how the Trinity was born.

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<sup>166</sup> ਤ੍ਰੈਤੀਆ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੩੯) । ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤਿੰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਵਤਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਰਵੋੱਚ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ “ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਉਪਾਏ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੁ ਵਧਾਇੰਦਾ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੩੬) “ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਗੁਣਿ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਈ”॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੦੯) । ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਸੈਸਾਰੀ ਭੰਡਾਰੀ ਰਾਜੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੬) ਇਹ ਗਲ ਵੀ ਨੋਟ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਗਨੀ, ਵਾਯੂ ਅਤੇ ਸੂਰਯ ਨੂੰ “ਤ੍ਰਿਮੂਰਤੀ” ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ । Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are afflicted with self-centeredness (*Haumai*) like the rest of the world. Only those are free from these afflictions who realize God through the Word (Truth). (p. 1153).

<sup>167</sup> Some scholars believe that Shiva was a non-Vedic, non-Aryan god. He is identified with god Rudra mentioned in the Vedas. In Taitreya Samhita of the Yajur-Veda there is a hymn in praise of god Rudra. In it Rudra (i.e. Shiva) is described as the lord of thieves, robbers and dacoits. He is worshipped by the sacrifice of a bull and the drinking of intoxicants.



Another story behind the formation of Trimurti is said to be as follows. Sarasvati, Lakhshmi and Parvati, the wives of the three gods were engaged in conversation when a question arose as to who was the most chaste woman in the country. Narada appeared at the meeting and stated that Anusuya, the wife of Rishi Atri was the only chaste woman in the world. This incensed the three ladies, each one of whom claimed to be chaste. They wanted to prove their own chastity vis-a-vis Anusuya so they decided to prove that Anusuya was unchaste. The three women told their husbands what Narada had said. The three husbands decided to commit adultery with Anusuya and disprove Narda's conclusion.

They disguised themselves as three Brahmins and entered Atri's house when he was away. Anusuya welcomed them as Brahman guests and prepared food for them. When the meal was ready the three gods declined to eat unless Anusuya served the food to them in a naked condition. According to the rules, the Brahmin guests had to be obeyed and fed before they left. For fear of offending the Brahmans and being ostracized, Anusuya agreed to serve them naked. As she was serving food to them in the naked condition Atri came home. On seeing Atri the three gods immediately took the form of new born babies and Anusuya placed them in a cradle. In the cradle the babies integrated into one but their heads remained separate. This became a Trimurti which came to be known as god Dattatreya. Dattatreya has one body and three heads representing the three gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Shiva). He is also known to be the author of the Tantras.

## 4.4 Brahma

Lord Brahma<sup>168</sup> is the most important member of the Brahmanical Trinity and is traditionally referred to as the Creator of the entire universe.<sup>169</sup> The Vedas, the oldest and the holiest of Hindu scriptures, are attributed by many Hindus to him and he is commonly represented as having four heads, four arms, and red skin. Instead of carrying weapons like other gods he holds a water-pot (Kamandlu), a sacrificial spoon (*Saruvā*), a book of prayers (Ved?), and a rosary (Mala). He sits on a lotus wearing the hide of a black antelope and moves around on a white swan, possessing the magical ability to separate milk from a mixture of water and milk. He is often depicted as having long white beard.

The birth of Brahma is recorded differently by different scholars.

1. During a dialogue between Yudhishtira and Bhishma the birth of Brahma is mentioned as follows.

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<sup>168</sup> There is no mention anywhere about the time Brahma lived or moved on this earth. However we find references to him in many Hindu books. Brahma appears to have crossed the boundaries of Yugas. ਭਾਗਵਤ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਚੁਰਾਏ ਤੇ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਉਸਤਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਆਇਆ । ਰਾਮਾਇਣ ਦਾ ਲੇਖ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਉਣ ਆਇਆ (ਸਰਵੋਤਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਰਾਮ ਤੀਰਥ ਦੰਡੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਪੰਨਾ ੨੦) ਯਾਦ ਰਹੇ ਕਿ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਤੋੜੇ ਯੁਗ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਦਵਾਪਰ ਯੁਗ ਵਿੱਚ । ਯੁਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਫਰਕ ਹੈ । ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਦਾ ਸੀ ।

<sup>169</sup> In order to create the universe, Brahma gave birth to the 11 forefathers of the human race called 'Parjapatis' and the seven great sages or the 'Saptarishi'. These children or mind-sons of Brahma, who were born out of his mind rather than body, are called the 'Manasputras'. **“Many a Brahma got tired of studying Vedas, but they could not estimate even an iota of God’s greatness. Ten incarnations of Vishnu and the famous ascetic Shiva, who got tired of smearing his body with ashes, could not fathom God’s extent”.** (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 747).

Bhishma says, “*Having created matter and spirit by his power, this god of gods (Bhava) and Lord of creatures (Parjapati) thence created Bramha. What human being like me, who has been subject to gestation in the womb, and to birth, and is liable to decay and death, can declare the attributes of Bhava?*”

2. The *Shatpatha Brahmana* says that Brahma was born of the Supreme Being Brahm and the female energy known as Maya. Brahm first created water, in which he placed his seed. This seed transformed into a golden egg. The egg burst giving birth to Brahma. For this reason Brahma is also known as ‘Hiranyagarbha’.

3. According to another legend, Brahma was born out of a lotus flower<sup>170</sup> which grew from the navel of Vishnu.

## 4.5 Vishnu and Shiva

Vishnu<sup>171</sup> is said to look after the universe. He is “Lord of all living creatures, all worlds, and all beauties. He is also the protector of everyone.” (*‘Geeta as it is’* page 51) He is usually depicted in human form, sleeping on the great serpent Shesha Naga and floating on the waters. Some Hindu devotees call him the creator of the universe.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> ਨਾਭਿ ਕਮਲ ਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਉਪਜੇ, ਬੇਦ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਮੁਖਿ ਕੰਠਿ ਸਵਾਰਿ ॥ ਤਾ ਕੋ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਣਾ, ਆਵਤ ਜਾਵਤ ਰਹੈ ਗੁਬਾਰਿ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੮੯)

<sup>171</sup> In Katak Mahatam (ਕਤਕ ਮਹਾਤਮ) Vishnu has been depicted as a shameless sex maniac. (ਦੰਡੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ibid ਪੰਨਾ ੨੧). ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਇਸਦੇ ੧੦੦੦ ਨਾਮ ਦਸੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਇਸੇ ਲਈ “ਵਿਸ਼ਨੂ ਸਹੰਸਰਨਾਮ” ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਸ਼ੁਭ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ।

<sup>172</sup> ਕੋਊ ਕਹੈ ਬਿਸਨੋ ਬਿਸੁਨਾਇਕ (੩੩ ਸਵਈਏ). ਬਿਸੁਨਾਇਕ = ਵਿਸ਼ਨੂ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦਾ ਨਾਇਕ (ਮਾਲਕ) ਹੈ ।

Shiva (or Natraja when in dancing mode)<sup>173</sup> is supposed to destroy the creation. He is usually shown sitting against the white background of the snow-capped Himalayas in Mount Kailas.<sup>174</sup>

## 4.6 Supremacy of Gods

At one time Indra was called the supreme god (“Supreme is Indra over all”- Rig Veda X.86) "Indra is sovereign Lord of earth and Heaven. Indra is Lord of waters and of mountains. Indra is Lord of prosperers and sages. Indra must be involved in rest and effort (Rig Veda X 89.10)

Soon after Agni began to occupy that first place (Brahma, the creator of the universe, is not even mentioned). After this Surya took away the heat from Agni and He became the supreme god. Yet at another place in the Rig Veda Soma is called the king of the universe. This place is then offered to Varuna (Rig II, 27.10) who is called the Lord of heaven and earth. This indicates how the relative importance of gods suffered vicissitudes of fortune even during the Vedic period.

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<sup>173</sup> At one time Vishnu was connected with the Vedic god Sun but the devotees of Shiva later connected Vishnu with Agni. They apply ash (*Bhasma, Vibhuti*) on their bodies because they believe that Shiva too applied it on his body. The *Upanishads* state that while applying Bhasma a devotee must recite the following *Mrityunjaya mantra* “*Tryambakam yajaamahe, Sugandhim pushtivardhanam, Urvaa rukamiva bhandhanaan, Mrytyor muksheeyamaa amrutaat.* (“We worship the three-eyed Lord Shiva who nourishes and spreads fragrance in our lives. May He free us from the shackles of sorrow, change and death – effortlessly, like the fall of a ripe brinjal from its stem.”) Gurbani says, “ਸਿਵ ਸਿਵ ਕਰਤੇ ਜੋ ਨਰੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥ ਬਰਦ ਚਢੇ ਡਉਰੂ ਢਮਕਾਵੈ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੭੪) “ਮਹਾਂ ਦੇਵ ਅਉਪੂਤੁ ਹੋਇ ਤਾਮਸ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ( ਭ: ਗੁ ੧੨/੯)

<sup>174</sup> Hindus worship his penis (ਸਿਵਲਿੰਗ)

Brahma is not worshipped widely these days<sup>175</sup>. The main stream of the Hindus worships only Vishnu, Shiva, Sri Ram Chander and Sri Krishna. The last two (Sri Ram Chander and Sri Krishna) are not equal in status to the other two. They are said to be the Avatars of Vishnu hence not their equal.

The relative position of Hindu gods to one another is rather confusing. One would imagine that Brahma being the creator of the Universe must have created the other two gods as well but that is not so. According to Skanda Purana Vishnu lay asleep on the bosom of Devi (which one?). A lotus arose from his navel. Out of this sprang Brahma.<sup>176</sup> He imagined himself to be the first born in the world and therefore resolved to investigate if his claim was true. He glided down the stock of the lotus and found Vishnu asleep. He asked him who he was and Vishnu replied that he was the first born. As they were arguing Mahadev (Shiva) appeared and said, "It is I who am truly the first born but I will offer this honour to anyone of you who reaches behind my head or touches the sole of my foot. Brahma played a trick. He falsely claimed that he had reached the head and called a cow as his witness. Shiva saw through his trick and did not like the false claim.<sup>177</sup> Vishnu however truthfully acknowledged that he had not been able to see the feet of Mahadev. Vishnu was declared the first-born (superior) by Mahadev and he cut off the fifth head of Brahma to punish him for his lies.

We also read in Bhagvad Puran that Brahma had incestuous

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<sup>175</sup> There is only one temple dedicated to Brahma. It is located in Pushkar (Rajasthan).

<sup>176</sup> ਪ੍ਰਥਮੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਕਾਲੇ ਘਰਿ ਆਇਆ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕਮਲੁ ਪਇਆਲਿ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੨੭)

<sup>177</sup> He ordered that Brahma will not be worshipped anywhere.

relationship with his daughter in spite of being restrained by his son Marichi and was therefore demoted.<sup>178</sup> The other two gods vied with each other for supremacy. The Puranas are full of rivalry between them. The followers of Shiva claimed that Shiva had more *Avatars* than Vishnu. They attributed the origin of river Ganges to Shiva's hair. Vishnu's followers claimed that the river flowed from the foot of Vishnu in *baikunth* (heaven) and fell on the head of Shiva proving that Ganges was not brought by Shiva and that Shiva was inferior because he received the water emanating from Vishnu's feet.

When the gods and the demons churned the ocean using *Mandara* Mountain as a churn and the *Shesh Naga* as a rope, the earth began to shake violently and could have been destroyed. Vishnu immediately changed himself into a tortoise (*Kurma*) and held the earth on his back. Thus he did a very good job of saving the universe from disaster. The Shaivites however tell a slightly different story. According to them Vishnu's act resulted in the production of 14 things out of the ocean. One of them was poison.<sup>179</sup> This poison could annihilate all life on earth if only Lord

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<sup>178</sup> Some Hindu books say that it was for this offence that Shiva cut Brahma's fifth head off but the head stuck to Shiva's hand for many years until he came for a pilgrimage to *Gopal Mochan* and had it removed after a ritual bath. Shiva's exploits of illicit sex are many and weird which we do not wish to record here. Readers may refer to *Shiv Puran Kot ruder Samhita* chapter 8 and 12.

<sup>179</sup> Some others are said to be (1) the moon which Shiva decorated his forehead with (2) *Rambha*, the beautiful, was taken away by *Indra* (3) *Lakshmi* was made wife by Vishnu and (4) *Liquor* was devoured by the demons. Actually only "*Kaustubh Mani*" was the only item which could be called a gem. Sikhism produced 14 gems as follows:

(੧) ੧ (੨) ਓ (੩) ਸਤਿ (੪) ਨਾਮੁ (੫) ਕਰਤਾ (੬) ਪੁਰਖੁ (੭) ਨਿਰਭਉ (੮) ਨਿਰਵੈਰ (੯)  
ਅਕਾਲ (੧੦) ਮੂਰਤਿ (੧੧) ਅਜੂਨੀ

Shiva had not drunk it. Thus they proved that Vishnu instead of preserving life was in fact the cause of bringing it to extinction and the only compassionate god was Shiva who saved the earth from being poisoned to death.

The story of Akrur<sup>180</sup> is very interesting. Pleased with Akrur's prayers Vishnu blessed the demon with a boon according to which no one anywhere in the world could kill him. Akrur being insolent began to tease and oppress the gods and goddesses. The gods ran to Vishnu asking him to save their lives from Akrur. Vishnu was greatly perturbed at the malignant ingratitude of the demon but he could not take his boon back. When he was sitting in anger Mahadev emerged from his eyes. He requested Mahadev to make the boon ineffective. Mahadev agreed and saved the gods by making the boon ineffective. The story proves Vishnu to be a dullard because he failed to know if the recipient was a deserving case or not.

Another equally interesting story is about a demon named Bhasmasura. Bhasmasura received a boon from Shiva by which he could burn anybody on whose head he placed his hand. Bhasmasura threatened Shiva himself so Shiva ran to Vishnu who agreed to help him. Vishnu turned himself into a very beautiful woman and appeared before Bhasmasura. The later was enticed but the woman agreed to marry him only if he obeyed him in all respects.

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(੧੨) ਸੈਭੰ (੧੩) ਗੁਰ (੧੪) ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ ਇਹ ਹਨ ਜਗਤ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇ ਚੌਦਾਂ ਰਤਨ॥  
“ਚਉਧਰ ਰਤਨ ਨਿਕਾਲਿਅਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਆਵਾ ਗਉਣੁ ਚਿਲਿਕਓਨੁ ॥ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਅਹਿ ਵੇਖਾਲੀਅਨੁ ਜਿਣਿ  
ਏਵਡ ਪਿੰਡ ਠਿਣਿਕਓਨੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੬੭)॥

Shiva is also said to have cheated Raja Bal out of his kingdom. ਸਤਿਯੁਗ ਤੈ ਮਾਣਿਓ  
ਛਲਿਓ ਬਲਿ ਬਾਵਨ ਭਾਇਓ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੯੦)

<sup>180</sup> Akrur was a demon and had a face of a bear. He was well versed in the Vedas.

Bhasmasura agreed. The woman (Vishnu) told him to put his hands on his own head. Bhasmasura had to do what he was told to do and got burnt. Thus Vishnu saved Shiva from his own blunder. This story may have been invented to restore Vishnu's honour.

According to Bhagvad Puran when Daksha entered the assembly of gods all except Brahma and Shiva (Daksha's son-in-law) rose up to show him respect. Daksha felt offended at the treatment he received from his own son-in-law (Shiva) and castigated him in public. Soon after, Daksha organized *Vrihaspatisava* sacrifice. Everybody attended it but Shiva did not attend it. He even advised his wife not to attend it but she did attend the function nevertheless. Daksha completely ignored his daughter at the ceremony. She felt humiliated and committed suicide. At this Shiva's army fell upon Daksha and tried to kill him but through Bhirgu's timely help Shiva was defeated. Thereupon Shiva tore a lock of hair from his wife's head which turned itself into a demon. The demon destroyed Daksha's sacrifice, attacked his guests and insulted the attending ladies. Shiva even plucked Bhirgu's beard. In the end he cut off Daksha's head. Brahma had to intervene to pacify Shiva and his men.

## **4.7 Wars of the gods**

Vedic literature (especially the Brahmanas) is full of references to internecine wars and those against the *Asuras* (Demons). We do not wish to go into the details of these wars here. All these wars were fought by the male Vedic gods and the goddesses took no part in them. The situation however changed with the Puranic goddesses. In the Puranic times wars (especially with the *Asuras*) were left to be fought by the goddesses alone and the gods took no part in them.



The internecine enmity of the gods was also evident even in their pets. Shiva had a snake around his neck which was the enemy of the mouse used by Ganesha for riding. Kartkaya rode on a peacock which was the enemy of Shiva's snake. Parvati rode on a lion which was the enemy of a cow ridden by Nandi.

In Hinduism there are wars where the *Asuras* (demons) were routed and killed by the *gods* (devtas) and on the other hand there are also wars where the gods (devtas) are killed or harassed by the demons. One wonders what spiritual lessons can one draw from such wars fought without any aims.<sup>181</sup>

## 4.8 Sri Ram Chander

According to Ramayana, Ram Chander was born to human parents in *Treta Yuga* at Ayodhya.<sup>182</sup> His father Dasratha was a king who had three wives but no son. He performed *Putreshi Yajna* under directions of the sage named Shrung. Shrung gave *pindas* (rice dumplings) to the wives of Dasratha and as a result they all gave births to sons who were named Sri Ram Chander, Sri Lakshmana, Sri Bharata and Sri Shatrughana.<sup>183</sup> As the princes grew up

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<sup>181</sup> ਕਬਹੂੰ ਦੈਤ ਦੇਵਤਨ ਮਾਰੈ ॥ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਦੇਤਨ ਦੇਵ ਸੰਘਾਰੈ ॥ ਦੇਵ ਦੈਤ ਦੋਊ ਸੰਘਾਰਾ ॥ ਵਹੈ ਪੁਰਖ ਪ੍ਰਿਤਪਾਲ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥੧੦੪॥ ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ

<sup>182</sup> “ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਹੋਰਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਰਾਮ ਰਵਾਲ ॥ ਕੇਤੀਆ ਕੰਨ੍ਹ ਕਹਾਣੀਆ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਦ ਬੀਚਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੬) “O Nanak only fearless God is worth worshipping. There are numerous others like Sri Ram Chander, the dust of God's feet p.46) ਰਾਮ ਰਹੀਮ ਉਬਾਰ ਨ ਸਕ ਹੈ ਜਾਕਰ ਨਾਮ ਰਟੈ ਹੈ (ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ). Sri Ram Chander's exact date of birth or the period is not known.

<sup>183</sup> Sikhism believes that birth and death are powers of God. Humans should not depend on other humans for children. “ਮਾਨੁਖ ਕੀ ਟੇਕ ਬ੍ਰਿਥੀ ਸਭ ਜਾਨੁ॥ ਦੇਵਨ ਕਉ ਏਕੈ ਭਗਵਾਨੁ ॥ ( ਪੰਨਾ ੨੮੧)

Dasratha expressed his intention of passing on kingship to Sri Ram Chander but his youngest wife Kaikei raised an objection. She demanded Sri Ram Chander to be exiled into the forest for 14 years and her son Bharata to be anointed as the next king. The king had earlier given a word to the queen and therefore had no alternative but to accept her demand. Sri Ram Chander, along with his wife and brother Lakshman, left for the exile. In the forest Ravan's (King of ceylone) Sister Saroop Nakha approached Lakhshman and said, "My beautiful complexion must have charmed you therefore you can happily take a jaunt all over Dandaka forest along with me (Ramayana 3-18-7)." At this Lakhshman got infuriated, drew his sword and chopped off her ears and nose before the very eyes of Sri Ram Chander (3-18-21).<sup>184</sup> Bathed in blood Saroop Nakaha reported the incident to her brother Khara (3-18-26). When the news reached Sri Lanka it angered Ravna beyond control.<sup>185</sup> He crossed over to India and abducted Seeta, the wife of Sri Ram Chander and took her forcibly away to Lanka.<sup>186</sup> Thus a war broke out between Sri Ram Chander and the king of Lanka. Sri Ram Chander and Lakhshman met Hanuman and Sugriva and requested them to raise an army to attack Lanka.<sup>187</sup> A bridge (100 yojan long

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<sup>184</sup> ਨਾਸਕ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਨੱਕ ਵਢਿਆ ਲੰਕਾ ਤੋਂ ੧੮੬੭ ਕਿਲੋਮੀਟਰ ਮੀਲ ਦੂਰ ਹੈ । ਸਮਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਕਿ ਲੰਕਾ ਦੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਦੀ ਭੈਣ ਐਨੀ ਦੂਰ ਘਣੇ ਜੰਗਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਆਈ ਤੇ ਕੀ ਕਰਨ ਆਈ ਸੀ? ਇੱਥੇ ਤਾਂ ਸ਼ੇਰਾਂ ਵਰਗੇ ਜੰਗਲੀ ਜਾਨਵਰ ਵੀ ਸਨ । ਕੀ ਉਹ ਰਾਵਣ ਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੇ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਬਗੈਰ ਬਾਡੀ ਗਾਰਡਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਐਨੀ ਦੂਰ ਜੰਗਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਆ ਗਈ ? ਨੱਕ ਵੱਢਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਜਗਾ ਨਾਸਿਕ ਤੋਂ ਦੋ ਕੁ ਮੀਲ ਬਾਹਰ ਗੋਦਾਵਰੀ ਦੇ ਕੰਢੇ ਤੇ ਹੈ । ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਚਵਟੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

<sup>185</sup> How long would have it taken for the news to reach Sri Lanka? What arrangement was made? No mention.

<sup>186</sup> Seeta is said to have requested Ravan to avoid keeping her under roof because that would have broken her vow of exiled life. Ravan is said have agreed, He kept her in Ashok Batika (Ashoka Garden) and appointed his wife Mandodri and her maids to attend to the comforts of Seeta.

<sup>187</sup> ਰਾਮੁ ਝੁਰੈ ਦਲ ਮੇਲਵੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਲੁ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ॥ ਬੰਤਰ ਕੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਜੁਝੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥ ਸੀਤਾ ਲੈ ਗਇਆ ਦਹਸਿਰੋ ਲਛਮਣੁ ਮੁਢਿ ਸਰਾਪਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰਣਹਾਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਥਾਪਿ ਉਥਾਪਿ

and ten yojan broad) had to be built between India and Lanka. Sri Ram Chander spoke to the Ocean and threatened to destroy it (6-22-1) and shot an arrow (6-22-6) at which mountains shook, rivers overflowed, the moon shuddered and the creatures cried out in pain. Fearing disaster the Ocean swelled high (6-22-15) and humbly suggested that Nala (Son of Vishvakarma) should be asked to start the construction work. (6-22-26 to 6-22-29). Sri Ram Chander said, “Listen to me Ocean. This great arrow of mine should not go in vain. Tell me in which region should I strike my arrow to begin work? (6-22-29). The Ocean pointed Northwards. The arrow was shot (6-22-34) which brought out soil and sand. The bridge began to be built. On the first day they built 14 yojan, second day 20 Yojan, third day 21 Yojan, fourth day 22 Yojan and on the fifth day 23 Yojan.(6-22-55 to 6-22-76). A total of 100 Yojan (800 Km) bridge was built in five days.<sup>188</sup>

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॥ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਝੂਰੈ ਰਾਮਚੰਦੁ ਸੀਤਾ ਲਛਮਣੁ ਜੋਗੁ ॥ ਹਣਵੰਤਰੁ ਆਰਾਧਿਆ ਆਇਆ ਕਰਿ ਸੰਜੋਗੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੪੧੨)

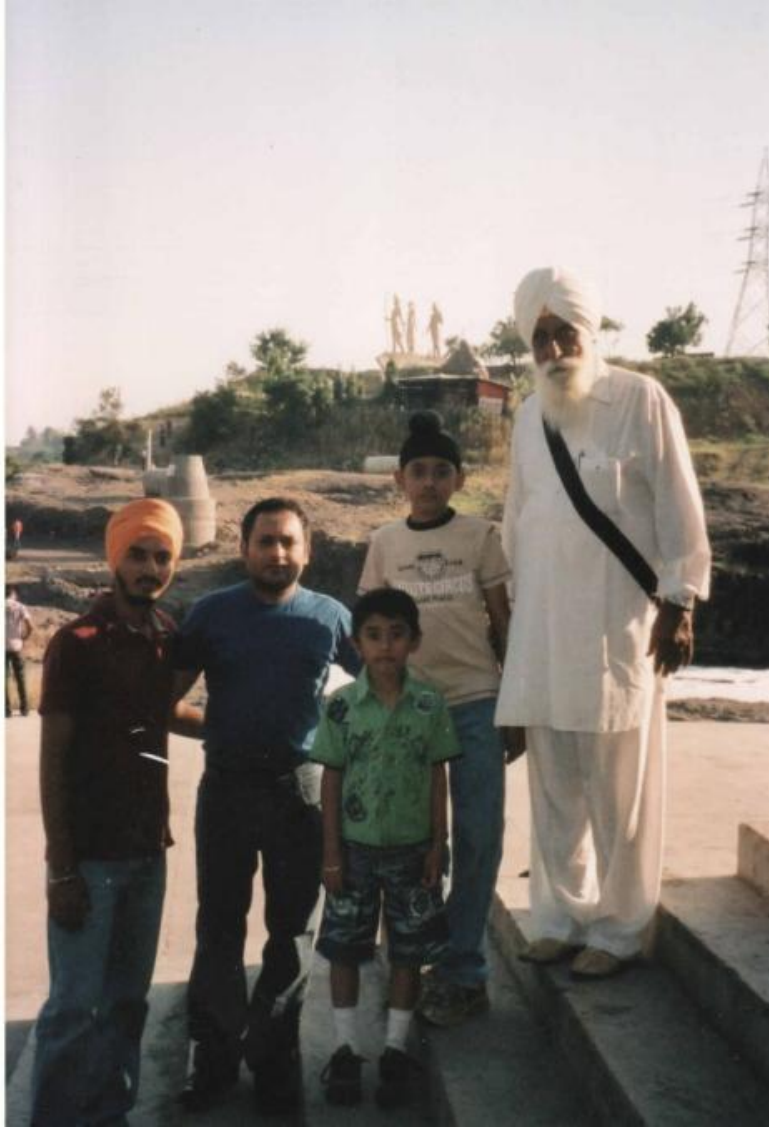
<sup>188</sup> The gap between Lanka and India is known as Palk Strait. On one side of the Adam’s bridge (now called Ram Setu) is Gulf of Mannar and on the other side is the Palk Strait. The whole distance between Lanka and India on this point is only 48 KM covered by a natural bridge like structure made of a chain of limestone shoals. At some places the water is only 36 feet deep. The claim that Hanuman floated stones on the water (which did not sink) to build this bridge is not substantiated in Balmik Ramayana.

According to the Dictionary of Islam when God expelled Adam and Eve from Heaven, Adam fell in Sri Lanka. This bridge is therefore called “Adam’s Bridge”. There is also a 7426 ft. high hill in Ceylon known after Adam’s name.

In the war Ravana was defeated. Since the time of the exile was now over, Sri Ram Chander returned to Ayodhya. Bharata vacated the throne and Sri Ram Chander once again was installed as the king. During his life or before his death Sri Ram Chander preached no religious philosophy, wrote no Granth and left no written records for his followers.



Hindu Mandir at Panchvati  
Lakshman attacking Sarup Nakha



The three statuettes mark the place where Ram Chander, Sita and Lakshman lived in a cave at Panchvati during their exile.

## 4.9 Some facts about Sri Ram Chander

1. Bali, the ruler of Kishkindha, was at war with a *Rakshasa* named Mayavi. Bali pursued Mayavi up to a deep cave in the earth. Before going into the cave to kill Mayavi, Bali asked his brother Sugriva to wait outside the cave and wait for his orders. But Sugriva had other plans in mind. He left the cave immediately after Bali went into the cave and came to Kishkindha. There he declared himself as king appointing Hanuman as his Prime Minister. He did not even care to consult Bali's son Angad, the legal heir to the throne, whom he despised.

When Bali came out victorious from the cave, he did not find Sugriva there. Having come to know about the whole episode of deception, Bali was furious. It was a clear cut case of usurpation and greed on the part of Sugriva. Bali gathered an army, drove out Sugriva and re-occupied the throne. The two brothers became mortal enemies and a war of succession ensued. In spite of open and clear deception of Sugriva, Ram Chander supported Sugriva. During a duel between the two brothers, Sri Ram Chander hid behind a tree and was instrumental in giving directions to kill Bali through deception. After Bali's contrived death, he established Sugriva on the throne. In gratitude Sugriva offered to help Sri Ram Chander conquer Sri Lanka. The murder of Bali, an honest and rightful king, is a blot on the character of Sri Ram Chander. His act cannot be justified at all. Bali had no quarrel with Sri Ram Chander. It was a premeditated and carefully planned murder of a rightful king and a human being.

2. According to Balmik (Sarg 6-115) when Ravan and his son Inderjit were killed, Hanuman brought Seeta in the court of Sri

Ram Chander. *“From the pitiless facial expressions of Sri Ram Chander, everybody present judged that Sri Ram Chander was indifferent to Seeta. There was clear displeasure towards her (6-115-1). He remained quiet for a while and then spoke; I have recovered you as war booty from my enemy after defeating him. I have accomplished what humans could possibly accomplish in a situation like this (6-115-2). My indignation and outrage have been required. It gives me immense pleasure that my labours in regaining my lost honour have been rewarded (6-115-3). My toil has borne fruit and people have witnessed my military strength. My vow has been fulfilled and I am now the master of myself (6-115-4).The wrong was done to you by a fickle-minded demon. It was an act of destiny which has now been corrected by me (6-115-5). What use are the power and pelf of a man who cannot wipe out the insults fallen to his lot (6-115-6). By killing Ravan I have done what needed to be done and have wiped away the insult meted out to me (6-115-13). Let it be known to you that this war, which has been won successfully by me and my friends was not undertaken for your sake This was started by me to wipe off the evil-speaking from all sides as well as the insinuation on my honourable dynasty (6-115-16).Your presence before me is extremely disagreeable to me because I suspect your character (6-115-17). I give you permission to go wherever you like. All ten directions are open to you. I do not need you (6-115-18). Which noble man, born in an illustrious dynasty like me, will take back a woman who has lived with another man (6-115-19)? While respecting my lineage, how can I accept you back after you have enjoyed Ravan's lap who will have glanced you with evil looks? (6-115-20). you were won back by me to retrieve my lost honour. Now that my honour has been restored I have no need for you. You may go wherever you like (6-115-21).I*

cannot believe that Ravan would have failed to enjoy a beautiful woman like you with whom you stayed for so long. (6-115-24).<sup>189</sup>

Seeta's reply, was, "*O long-armed one you misunderstand me. Have faith in me. I swear to you by my own character. By the conduct of any vulgar woman you cannot distrust the entire race of women. Give up this doubt, if I have been actually tested (and found trustworthy) by you*" (6-115-7). *You are a noble king but like a feeble and fickle minded man you are giving way to an emotion of anger* (6-116-14). *Because you are not satisfied with my traits, the only appropriate course open to me is to enter a fire amidst an assembly of men* (6-116-19).

After this Lakshman prepared fire. *Seeta did a circumambulation of Sri Ram Chander, offered salutations to gods and Brahmans with folded hands* (6-116-24) *and said, "My heart has never moved away from Sri Ram Chander, so let the fire-god, the witness of the world, protect me from all sides.* (6-116-25). *Decked with refined gold ornaments Seeta plunged into the fire while all people (gods, sages and gandharvas too) were watching her* (6-116-32, 33). *Shaking off the funeral pile and taking Seeta in his arms the fire-god forthwith sprang up at once in a personified form and Seeta came out unscathed* (6-118-2).

The fire god then said, "*Here is your Seeta. No sin exists in her. This auspicious lady has never been unfaithful to you* (5-118-6). *Take back Seeta who is sinless and has a pure character. She should not be addressed harshly. **I hereby command you.**"* (6-118-10).<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> How long did Seeta stay in Lanka? Some put this duration as 10 years which sounds unbelievable. Some say two years. Some others say 'a few months'. Balmik does not mention this period.

<sup>190</sup> The quotation above however shows that Ram Chander was an inferior god as compared to god of fire.



It is said that a woman's character is her shield. Since Ram Chander was god, (and god is considered all knowing) he should have known the facts and there was no need of testing Seeta's fidelity by asking her to enter fire to prove her innocence. Seeta came out pure even after this bloody and unnecessary test but this was not the end of the story. Balmik tells us that after occupying the throne once again Sri Ram Chander did not treat her as his queen. After some time Seeta became pregnant. Sri Ram Chander's court Jester Bhadra reported to Sri Ram Chander that a malicious gossip was circulating among the common people about the source of Seeta's pregnancy. Sri Ram Chander was now a king and could punish those who floated wrong news but he did not do so nor did he make any enquiries about the calumny. He even ignored that he had satisfied himself of Seeta's purity through a test which he himself had devised. He considered Seeta a disgrace and decided to get rid of her in spite of the fact that she was heavily pregnant. He disclosed his intentions to his brothers and said that he was more interested in his public image than Seeta's purity and fidelity. The easiest way to get rid of Seeta was to banish her from his kingdom. Having taken the decision he kept it as a guarded secret. One day when Seeta expressed a desire to go into the open air to river Ganges, Sri Ram Chander secretly called Lakhshman and told him to escort Seeta to the Ganges and leave her there alone friendless and shelter less in the forest. Having obeyed his brother faithfully Lakhshman left Seeta in the forest and according to Balmik he said, "*I beg your pardon innocent queen. My orders were to leave you here and that is what I am doing. The reason for this is that people foist disgrace on your husband because of your imagined conduct in Lanka.*" Sage Balmik,<sup>191</sup> the first writer of Seeta's story

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<sup>191</sup> Balmik is said to have looked after Ram Chander's sons and wife and is the

(Ramayana ), took her to his *ashram* nearby. In course of time Seeta gave birth to twin boys who were named Lava and Kusa. They grew up to be 12 years old and were provided good drill in archery. One day Balmik received an invitation from King Sri Ram Chander for a *Yajna* (religious ceremony) in the forest. Balmik attended the function along with the two boys. The boys sang the story of the trials and tribulations of their mother at which Sri Ram Chander enquired who they were. The boys told that they were the sons of a queen who was banished into the forest by an unworthy husband. Ram Chandar was now sure they were his sons but asked if their mother could come into the assembly of the saints and prove her innocence.

Seeta presented herself in front of the august assembly and swore “*I swear that I have never thought of any man except Sri Ram Chander even in my dreams. Let mother Earth open and bury me.*”<sup>192</sup> As soon as she said this, the earth opened and Seeta was carried away downwards into the abyss.<sup>193</sup> Clearly Seeta preferred

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first person to have recorded the story of Sri Ram Chander. Balmik’s time is uncertain. This alludes to the fact that the historical story of Sri Ram Chander cannot be definitely placed in time frame. The story was once again written by Goswami Tulsi Dass (1532-1623AD) He was born in Rajapur (Banda District), Uttar Pradesh, during the reign of Akbar and wrote twelve books. He is considered the greatest and most famous of Hindi poets and an incarnation of Balmik. His Rmayana is called Ram Chritram Nasa (The Lake of the Deeds of Sri Ram Chander), usually called *Ram Chrit Manas*.

<sup>192</sup> ਜੋ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਚ ਕਰਮ ਕਰ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਬਸਤ ਰਖੁਰਾਏ॥ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਵੀ ਪੈੜ ਮੁਹਿ ਦੀਜੀਏ ਲੀਜੈ ਆਪ ਮਿਲਾਏ ॥ (ਬਾਲਮੀਕ ਕਾਂਡ ੭ ਅਧ ੯੭)

<sup>193</sup> It is said that Ram Chander too committed suicide by jumping into the Saryu River and reached Saketa-Puri or Dhama. *Dekhi naakarath mag parchhayi, jimi giri krumi nabh panth udai; Karahin parad jal jo tanudhari, pai chaturbhuj roop sukhari* (when he saw the woman as if falling with a bolt from the blue, he

to die rather than go back to her fickle-minded husband. What a treatment from a god to his innocent wife!

3. Marriages are a firm commitment between a man and his wife. It is for this reason that vows of marriage are taken in the presence of a religious book or a god or goddess (fire god in case of the Hindus). Ram Chander must have taken the seven Hindu vows of fidelity and life-long companionship at the time of his marriage with Sita. Abandoning Sita meant breaking of the sacred vows. Ordinary human beings expect ideal behaviour from the religious leaders. Ram Chander (vow breaker) did not stick to the ideal and yet he is noised about as "*a person who would rather lay down his head than dishonour his word.*"<sup>194</sup>

4. The description of Sri Ram Chander's *zenana* by Balmik (Read Uttra Khand) needs special mention. This is where Sri Ram Chander watched *Apasras* (beautiful ladies) dancing and enjoyed finest qualities of liquor. His drinking bouts lasted late in the night. Balmik tells us that many beautiful ladies were brought for him from other kingdoms.<sup>195</sup> It is for this reason that Balmik calls him "*A prince among ladies'men*". His meal dishes included meat of

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touched her feet and disappeared in the water of the river.) ਸੁਨਤ ਬਚਨ ਧਰਨੀ ਫਟ ਗਈ। ਲੋਪ ਸੀਆ ਤਿਹ ਭੀਤਰ ਭਈ ॥ ਚਕ੍ਰਤ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਰਖ ਰਘੁਰਾਈ। ਰਾਜ ਕਰਨ ਕੀ ਆਸ ਚੁਕਾਈ॥ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਰਾਮਾਵਤਾਰ)

<sup>194</sup> "ਰਘੂਕੁਲ ਰੀਤ ਸਦਾ ਚਲੀ ਆਈ, ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਜਾਣੋਂ ਪਰ ਵਚਨ ਨਾ ਜਾਈ"

<sup>195</sup> ਦਏ ਚੀਨ ਮੀਨੰ ਮਚੀਨੰਤ ਦੇਸੰ ਮਹਾਂ ਸੁੰਦ੍ਰੀ ਚੇਰਕਾ ਚਾਰ ਕੇਸੰ ( ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ੬੮੧) Beautiful women with attractive hair were brought from China and Manchuria to be presented to Sri Ram Chander. Sri Ram Chander himself is recorded as having offered women to Hanuman for his services." *He offered him villages 100 cows and 16 beautiful virgins.*" (Balmik Ramayan Sarg 125 Shalok 44).

various kinds. All this does not tally with the behaviour of a religious man much less a prophet.

5. Another episode from Sri Ram Chander's life throws a lot more light on his sense of justice as a king.<sup>196</sup> The story goes that a Brahman's son died a premature death and the Brahmans blamed that this happened because a certain Shudra named Shambhuk was engaged in religious rituals which, as a *shudra*, he was not entitled to. The Brahman wanted his son restored to life and Shambhuk properly punished to redress the transgression committed by him in Sri Ram Chander's kingdom. Sri Ram Chander immediately reached the spot where the Shudra was performing ascetic exercises and without warning cut off the Shudra's head.<sup>197</sup> Surprisingly the Brahman's boy immediately came to life and uttered "*glory to Sri Ram Chander*". The gods congratulated Sri Ram Chander on this meritorious religious act. What a good example of justice from a god!

6. The story of Ramayana is full of many incredible psychological and physical feats which cannot be easily reconciled. For example (a) mysteries of Seeta's birth and death (b) monkeys communicating in human language (c) power of Sri Ram Chander's arrows which could pierce through seven trees and yet come back to him (d) detailed description of the events as if

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<sup>196</sup> According to Mahabharata "Rama always cherished his subjects as if they were the sons of his own loins. In his dominions there were no widows and none that was helpless". Mahabharata tells that Rama ruled for 11000 years.

<sup>197</sup> See Balmik Ram ayan ( Uttra Khand Sarg 73-76).

There were two other low caste Rishis named Jabali and Rishi Agasthya (a washerman) who were performing similar exercises but they were not killed. One wonders why their lives were spared. Again Balmik, the writer of the Ramayana, who also brought up Ram Chander's sons, was himself a low caste Rishi, and according to legend a robber. Why was his life spared? Agasthya Rishi was even invited at the investiture ceremony of Sri Ram Chander.

Balmik saw them all himself in Lanka (e) flying chariots (f) demons with illusory powers (g) monkeys changing their sizes at will from thumb to mountain sizes ? (h) Appearances of gods and their curses (i) monkeys crossing the great ocean by jumps (j) constructing of a bridge across a great ocean in a few days, and (k) Ravan having 10 heads, Such details make Ramayana a fiction, rather than a historical or religious document.

7. It is inconceivable and unconvincing that Saroop Nakha and later Ravan travelled from Sri Lanka to India (Nasik) without a bridge over the Ocean but when Ram Chander had to cross it, a bridge had to be constructed which took him five days to build. Ramayana itself tells us that Ram Chander had numerous flying chariots (*Pushp Vivans* = aeroplanes) driven by voice. “*Countless chariots were flying in the sky. Their shadows on earth looked like the multitudes of locusts*” (*Uttra Kaand*) .<sup>198</sup>

We summarise this section as follows

1. Birth of sons from *Pinda* is unnatural. Even Sri Ram Chander (god?) had to depend for birth on a human being like Shrung.
2. According to Balmik (the first author of the story) god Vishnu had agreed to take birth as Sri Ram Chander. In other words even Vishnu (another god) was subordinate to Shrung.
3. Killing of Bali was a sin and a blot on the name of Sri Ram Chander.
4. Sri Ram Chander’s treatment of Seeta after her recovery from Ravan is another blot on Sri Ram Chandar. He tested her chastity through a test by forcing her into the fire in which she proved her innocence. This is too much from a spiritual

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<sup>198</sup> Where did these Aeroplanes come from? Who built them for Ram Chander in the forest?

leader like Sri Ram Chander who is known as an ideal husband and usually called the Purest husband (Pati ta pawan).<sup>199</sup>

5. The death of Queen Seeta and the coming to life of Brahman's son are unnatural. The really dead people do not come to life again.<sup>200</sup>
6. Ram Chander is worshipped as a religious leader. He neither left any religious scripture behind nor went anywhere to preach his religion. His war with Sri Lanka was a personal war not for the people or for the sake of any religion.

## 4.10 Sri Krishna

Although Sri Krishna is called an incarnation of Vishnu<sup>201</sup> he was, unlike the other ethereal gods, born to human parents<sup>202</sup>. His father

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<sup>199</sup> ਰਘੂਪਤੀ ਰਾਘਵ ਰਾਜਾ ਰਾਮ, ਪਤੀ ਤਾ ਪਾਵਨ ਸੀਤਾ ਰਾਮ | Was he really a faithful ideal husband ? Some interpret it as ਪਤਿਤ ਪਾਵਨ (some body who can turn sinners into virtuous men). Did Ram Chander really do this?

<sup>200</sup> Death is like a ripe fruit which detaches itself from the branch of a tree and cannot come back to it. “ਜਉ ਬਨ ਫਲ ਪਾਕੇ ਭੁਇ ਗਿਰਹਿ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨ ਲਾਗਹਿ ਡਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੬੬)

<sup>201</sup> Puranas tell us that Vishnu had appeared on earth nine times in the past as an avatar or incarnation. This was his tenth incarnation. Gurbani condemns rebirths and the Sikhs pray that transmigration (taking birth again and again) should end. “ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣਾ ਕਿਉ ਰਹੈ ਕਿਉ ਮੇਲਾ ਹੋਈ” (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੨੨), “ਆਵਣੁ ਜਾਣੁ ਨਾ ਚੁਕਈ ਮਰਿ ਜਨਮੇ ਹੋਇ ਖੁਆਰੁ” (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੯), “ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਾਲਾਹਿ ਤੂ ਫਿਰਿ ਆਵਣੁ ਜਾਣੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ” ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੬) “ਆਵਣੁ ਜਾਣਾ ਠਾਕਿ ਰਹਾਏ ਸਚੈ ਨਾਮਿ ਸਮਾਵਣਿਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੯) But we also learn from Hindu scriptures that Krishna too appeared again and again in incarnations. This has been commented in the Granth Sahib as “ਬ੍ਰਹਮੈ ਬੇਦ ਬਾਣੀ ਪਰਗਾਸੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹ ਪਸਾਰਾ ॥ ਮਹਾਦੇਉ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਵਰਤੈ ਘਰਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਤਾਮਸੁ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰਾ ॥ ੨ ॥ ਕਿਸਨੁ ਸਦਾ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ ਰੂਧਾ ਕਿਤੁ ਲਗਿ ਤਰੈ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੫੯) The *Vishnu Purana* was the first to proclaim Krishna to be an avatar of Vishnu. In Bahgwat Geeta Krishna

was Vasudev and his mother was Devki. He was born in a prison in Dwapar Yuga at Mathura. At his birth, his life was in danger from king Kansa and therefore Krishna was exchanged by Vasudev with Nanda's newly born daughter Yogindra.<sup>203</sup> Nanda at once removed him to Gokul where he was brought up tenderly by his wife Yeshodha. Kansa sent many demons to kill Krishna but they all failed to kill him and the child proved invincible. One such attempt was made through a nurse known as Putna. It is said that she was employed to look after Krishna but she poisoned her breast and tried to kill him.<sup>204</sup> The child (Krishna) sucked the woman's breast so hard that all her blood was sucked out and she died a miserable death.

Another such incident recorded in Harivansha is that of *Sakata* (A cart).<sup>205</sup> An *asura* was sent to kill the three month old Krishna. He

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does not mention that he is the avatar of Vishnu. Instead he says that he is the supreme deity.

<sup>202</sup> Krishna himself however says in Bhagvad Geeta that his birth details are secret. "Neither gods nor the great sages know the secret of my birth" (*Bhagvad Geeta X-2*).

<sup>203</sup> According to Puranic version Kansa was told by an astrologer that the baby would kill him after growing up.

<sup>204</sup> ਆਈ ਪਾਪਣਿ ਪੂਤਨਾ ਦੁਹੀ ਬਣੀ ਵਿਹੁ ਲਾਇ ਵਹੇਲੀ ॥ ਆਇ ਬੈਠੀ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਨੇਹੁ ਲਾਇ ਨਵਹਾਣਿ ਨਵੇਲੀ ॥ ਕੁਛੜ ਲਏ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਰਾਇ ਕਰ ਚੇਟਕ ਚਤੁਰੰਗ ਮਹੇਲੀ ॥ ਮੋਹਣ ਮਮੇ ਪਾਇਓਨ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਆਈ ਗਰਬ ਗਹੇਲੀ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ) ॥ ਜੇ ਕਰ ਉਧਰੀ ਪੂਤਨਾ ਵਿਹੁ ਪਿਆਲਣ ਕੰਮ ਨਾ ਚੰਗਾ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

<sup>205</sup> Hari Vansha is largely the biography of Sri Krishna based on Mahabharata (Adi Parva, II. 69,233 plus some additional material). It has 271 chapters divided into three *parvas*, (1) Harivansha parva (55 chapters), (2) Vishnu parva (81 chapters) and (3) Bhavishya parva (135 chapters). Harivansha is considered as a supplement to Mahabharata. It is usually recommended to be read/listened to propitiate the sun god. Another version of Harivansha has been produced by the

tried to crush Krishna under a cart on which he applied all his weight. The baby Krishna is said to have broken the cart into pieces and thus foiled another attempt by Kansa to kill him. Kansa now sent a demon named Tinavarta to do the job. He changed himself into a bird and carried away the year old Krishna. Once again the bird dropped dead and Krishna did not even get a scratch.

Yet another attempt was made through two demons who turned themselves into trees. Krishna's mother had tied him to a tether but Krishna so pulled the tether that it uprooted the two trees with it. The demons died but Krishna was saved.<sup>206</sup>

Fearing continued danger to Krishna's life, Nanda left the place and moved to Vrindaban. Unfortunately the place was haunted by *Asuras* (demons). Krishna was then only seven years old. One *asura* came as a horse and another came as a bull but Krishna killed them both. Then came a group of five *asuras* but even they could not frighten Krishna and were dispatched easily. Then came Kaliya in the form of a snake but Krishna began to dance on Kaliya's head and Kaliya began to vomit blood. Krishna let him go on condition that he left the place.

Krishna was now a handsome young boy. He formed friendship with many girls with whom he used to dance every day.<sup>207</sup>The

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Jains. It presents Jaina traditions of the Krishna story which are in many ways different from the Hindu stories. It is popularly called Harivansha Budhayam.

<sup>206</sup> Many such stories are mentioned in the Mahabhart. Puranas differ a lot in details about these stories.

<sup>207</sup> His dances with the girls are called *Ras Lila* (joyful dance).. They are fully described in Vishnu Puran, Bhagvada and Harivansha. His love for the young girls is interpreted by the Hindus as piety. Hindu girls still sing songs like, (1) “  
ਮੇਰੇ ਪੰਨਘਟ ਪੇ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਛੇੜ ਗਇਓ ਰੇ । ਮੇਰੀ ਨਾਜਕ ਕਲਾਈ ਮੁੜ ਗਇਓ ਰੇ ॥ (2) ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਨਾ



amorous behavior at such dances is described by Bhagvada and Harivansha and borders on indecency which we will not describe here.<sup>208</sup> According to Bhagvad Puran one day as the girls were bathing in the river, Krishna mischievously took away their clothes and climbed up a nearby tree. He agreed to let them have their clothes only if they came out from the river naked. The maidens had no alternative. They came out naked and begged for their clothes. Krishna gave the clothes back.

According to Brahamvaivarta Purana, his love for Radha was such that her name came to be welded with his name for ever although he was married to Rukmani. He himself could not detach himself from Radha and in the end got married with her and abandoned his wife Rukmani.<sup>209</sup> Kalindi was another very devoted follower of Krishna therefore Krishna married her. It is said that later Krishna's girl friends increased to sixteen thousand one hundred and eight.

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ਛੇੜੇ ਮੋਹੇ ਪਨਘਟ ਘਨਾਈ, ਕਾਹੇ ਨਾ ਮੁੜੇ ਮੋਰੀ ਪਤਲੀ ਕਲਾਈ ॥ (੩) ਮਧੂਬਨ ਮੇਂ ਘਨੁਈਆ ਜਬ ਕਿਸੀ ਗੋਪੀ ਸੇ ਮਿਲੇਂ । ਕਭੀ ਮੁਸਕਾਏਂ, ਕਭੀ ਛੇੜੇ ਕਭੀ ਆ ਗਲੇ ਸੇ ਮਿਲੇਂ ॥ (੪) ਬੜਾ ਨਟਕਟ ਹੈ ਘਨੁਈਆ ॥ ਸਭ ਕਾ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਹੈ ਬਨਸੀ ਬਜਈਆ ॥ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੇ ਯਸ਼ੋਧਾ ਮਈਆ ॥ (੫) ਯਸ਼ੋਧਾ ਮਈਆ ਸੇ ਬੋਲੇ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲਾ, ਰਾਧਾ ਕਿਉਂ ਗੋਰੀ ਮੈਂ ਕਿਉਂ ਕਾਲਾ" ॥ Such songs are considered prayers.

<sup>208</sup> The girls are known as gopis. Drawn by the sound of Krishna's famous flute the gopis would leave their husbands in the evenings to join Krishna in a Rasa Lila. "ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਸਦ ਮਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਮੋਰੀ ਪਾਣੀ ਘਾਹੁ ਮੁੜੇ ਨੇ" (ਬਚਿੱਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

<sup>209</sup> 'ਰਾਧਾ' ਵਿਰਸ਼ਭਾਨ ਦੀ ਪੁਤ੍ਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਯਨਘੋਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪਤਨੀ ਸੀ । ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜੀ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਉਧਾਲ ਕੇ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਅੱਜ ਤਕ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ । " ਜੈ ਰਾਧਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ" ਕਈ "ਰਾਧੇ ਰਾਧੇ" ਬੋਲਦੇ ਹਨ।

Chief among them were Rukmani, Jambavati, Lakhshmana, Bhadra, Satya, Kalindi, Satya Bhama and Mitrabinda.<sup>210</sup>

King Jambavana snatched away a gem from one of Krishna's friends. Krishna attacked Jambavana and as a peace offering Jambavana offered his daughter Jambavati to him. Satya was the daughter of Nagayajit, king of Ayodhya, whom wild bulls caused a lot of trouble. Krishna killed the bulls and was rewarded with the hand of Nagayajit's daughter Satya. A number of his wives were from the harem of King Naraka whom Krishna had defeated and killed because he had carried away the earrings of Krishna's friend Indra's mother. Later when Krishna paid a visit to his friend Indra, Krishna's wife Satya Bhama demanded to have the *Parjat*, the favourite tree of Indra.<sup>211</sup> Indra did not like to part with the tree. So Krishna had to fight with Indra. He defeated him and snatched away the *Parjat* tree which he later planted in Dwarka.<sup>212</sup>

Lakhshmana, the daughter of Brihasthena of Madra was carried away by Krishna from her *Swaymbra* (wedding ceremony). Bhishmaka, the king of Vidarbha, and a friend of Jarasindh was

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<sup>210</sup> 'ਭਦਰਾ' ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੁੱਖ ਅੱਠ ਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਜਗਨ ਨਾਥ ਮੰਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਲਾਈ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪੇਟੋਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਦਸ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਏ। ਕੁਝ ਲੋਕ ਇਸ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਭੈਣ ਸੁਭਦਰਾ ਦੀ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ।

<sup>211</sup> ਜੁਜ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਰਿ ਫਲੀ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਾਵਲਿ ਕਾਨੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜਾਦਮੁ ਭਇਆ॥ ਪਾਰਜਾਤੁ ਗੋਪੀ ਲੈ ਆਇਆ ਬਿੰਦ੍ਰਾਬਨ ਮਹਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਕੀਆਂ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੦)।

Indra is mentioned in the Vedas a number of times. Later we find his mention in Ramayana (Treta Yuga). After this we find him mentioned as Krishna's friend (Dwapar Yuga). One wonders how long did he live.

<sup>212</sup> Hindus believe that there is a tree in Heaven called Elysium (*Parjat*) tree. It fulfils every desire of the residents of heaven. One wonders how a tree from heaven could be grown in this world and whether it can still be seen in Dwarka. If not what happened to this tree ?

making preparations for the wedding of his daughter Rukmani to Shishupal (a cousin of Krishna). Krishna carried away Rukmani a day before her marriage.<sup>213</sup>

The cowherds had to offer a sacrifice to Indra, the god of rain. Krishna asked them to worship the cows, woods and the hills instead of Indra. The cowherds agreed. Indra was greatly annoyed. To avenge this insult Indra started sending rain in torrents. The rain did not stop for seven days and there was danger of drowning for all cows and cowherds. Krishna uprooted a hill known as Govardhan and held it as an umbrella over the heads of the cowherds. This action prevented a great deluge which would have destroyed the whole country.

According to tradition Kansa announced the celebration of a *dhanuryajna* (a bow sacrifice) at Mathura. He invited people from far and wide to attend the function. He wanted Sri Krishna, and his Gopa friends too to visit the function. His intention was to kill Sri Krishna and his friends at the function through a subterfuge. One of Kansa's officers named Akrur persuaded Sri Krishna and his party to attend the function. Sri Krishna came with a party and killed Kansa's washerman as he offered them poisoned clothes. Later a hunch back woman (named Kubja) tried to dupe him but could only find herself anointing him with the sandal paste. He was only twelve when he killed his uncle Kansa.

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<sup>213</sup>ਰੁਕਮਣੀ ਭੀਸ਼ਮਮੱਕ ਦੀ ਪੁਤ੍ਰੀ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਦਮਘੋਸ਼ ਦੇ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਸ਼ਿਸ਼ੂਪਾਲ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਗੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ । ਮੰਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਹ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜੀ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਚੁੱਕ ਕੇ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਸਨ । ਇਸੇ ਦੀ ਕੁਖ ਤੋਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਪ੍ਰਦਮਯਨ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ । " ਬਿਧਨਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਔਰ ਕੀ ਔਰ ਭਈ ਕੰਗਣਾ ਸ਼ਿਸ਼ੂਪਾਲ ਕੇ ਹਾਥ ਰਹਿਓ ।" Similarly when Arjuna, one of the Pandus and a friend of Krishna, took fancy to a beautiful girl named Subhadra (a near cousin of Krishna) and asked Krishna how he could get married with her, Krishna advised him to carry the girl away which the latter did.

Killing of Kansa by Sri Krishna was galling to Jarasindha, the emperor of Magdha who was Kansa's son-in-law. He invaded Mathura seventeen times and was defeated by Sri Krishna time and again. Sri Krishna later moved to Dwarka along with all the Yadavas of his tribe<sup>214</sup> but even there he could not live in peace. Jarasindha instigated his relative Kalayavana to attack him. But he too was defeated. Later Sri Krishna contrived the death of Jarasindha and as a thanksgiving prayer for victory washed the feet of a number of Brahmans.

## 4.11 Some facts about Sri Krishna

1. We will briefly mention here some facts about Sri Krishna. In the battle of Mahabharata Arjun was confused as to his ability to kill Jaidratha and therefore came to Krishna for advice. Sri Krishna advised him to worship Mahadeva and ask him to lend Pashupata weapon. Both Sri Krishna and Arjuna appeared before Mahadeva and recited a hymn in his honour calling him creator of the universe. Mahadeva was pleased. He sent them to a lake where Sri Krishna and Arjuna came across two serpents emitting flames from their mouths. Sri Krishna and Arjuna offered another prayer to the serpents and they turned into a bow and an arrow. Arjuna later used that bow and the arrow in the battle. Here even Sri Krishna (the god, and the incarnation of Vishnu) is shown as incapable of using/lending his *Sudarshan Chakra* (Sure shot weapon) to Arjuna. He also accepts Mahadev as a superior god capable of doing something that he himself could not do.

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<sup>214</sup> According to Harivansha Sri Krishna brought women of low moral character and courtesans to settle in Dwarka. Binge drinking and merrymaking was the norm of enjoyment daily and it lasted till late in the night.

2. Arjun's son Abhimanyu was killed by Kuru warriors, Arjuna vowed the death of their greatest warrior, Jaidratha, next day before sunset.<sup>215</sup> He vowed, "*If I fail to kill him before the sun goes down I will burn myself in fire*". The battle ensued. The Sun was about to set, but Jaidratha could not be killed. Sri Krishna worked a miracle. He eclipsed the sun giving the impression that the day was over. Jaidratha came out proclaiming victory but Sri Krishna immediately uncovered the sun. Arjuna at once killed Jaidratha when the latter was unaware and claimed victory

3. Bhima fought bravely with Duryodhana but was unable to kill him. Sri Krishna reminded him that he had vowed the breaking of his opponent's thighs in spite of the fact that striking a rival below the navel was unfair. Bhima wanted to be fair and stuck to the rules. Sri Krishna advised him that all was fair in love and war and that he should strike him on the thighs. Bhima did as he was told. Before his death Duryodhana accused Sri Krishna of being unfair and advising treachery to Bhima. Krishna replied "Deceit in battle is no sin. Even Indra resorted to deceit to overcome the most powerful *Asuras* Virochana and Vritra." Here Dharma (Justice) is openly sacrificed to material gains.

4. Drona was a hard nut for the Pandus to crack. The only way to kill him was to attack when he was armless. It was decided to play a trick. Sri Krishna advised Bhima to kill an elephant named Asvathama and declare that Asvathama was dead. Asvathama was also the name of Drona's son. On hearing the news of his son's

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<sup>215</sup> While the Pandus were in exile Jaidratha had tried to kidnap their wife Daropadi. This was another reason for the Pandus to hate him.

death Drona got disheartened but did not stop the fight. He did not believe the news. At last he said he would stop fighting if Yudhishtra, the truthful Pandu, could convince him of Asvathama's death. Yudhishtra was unwilling to resort to cheating. Krishna had a long discussion with him and persuaded him to announce the death of Asvathama loudly but then say the word 'elephant' in a low inaudible voice so that Drona could not hear the last part. Yudhishtra agreed. Drona disarmed himself and was easily killed by Dhristdumna. Vaishista's Simrta records Sri Krishna's ethics as follows: "*According to learned people untruth should be told on five occasions (1) in time of marriage (2) in love, (3) when one's possessions are in danger of being lost (4) in war and (5) lastly when a Brahman's interest is at stake.*"

The application of the above-mentioned crooked stratagems applied by Sri Krishna does not fit well with the character of a religious leader of his caliber.

## **4.12 Krishna calls himself God**

*"Arjuna, now I shall tell you my conspicuous divine glories; for there is no limit to my magnitude. I am the self seated in the heart of all beings; so I am the beginning and middle and also the end of all beings. I am Vishnu among twelve sons of Aditi, and the high-rayed sun among the luminaries; I am the glory of the Maruts (The forty nine wind-gods), and the moon among stars. Among the Vedas, I am the Sam Veda; among the gods, I am Indra. Among the senses, I am the mind; and **I am the consciousness (life-energy) in living beings***

*(Bhagvad Geeta X-19-22).*

*“I am the abode of the imperishable Brahma, of immortality of everlasting virtue and of unending bliss.”*  
(Bhagvad Geeta XIV-27).<sup>216</sup>

Says Krishna *“The effulgence inherent in the sun, which illumines the entire universe, and that which exists in the moon as well as in the fire, know it to be my effulgence. And entering the earth it is I who sustain all beings by my power; and becoming the nectarean moon, I nourish all plants”*.<sup>217</sup>  
(Bhagvad Geeta X 12-13)

*“Since I am beyond perishable matter and superior to the imperishable Soul, hence it is that I am known in the world as well as the Vedas as the supreme Person”*  
(Bhagvad Geeta XV-18)<sup>218</sup>

From a Conversation in *Mahabharat* between Yudhishtira and Bhishma we learn *“Through his devotion to Rudra, the world is pervaded by the mighty Krishna. Having then propitiated that deity (Mahadeva) at Badari, he (Krishna) obtained from the golden-eyed Mahesvara the quality of being in all worlds dearer than wealth.*

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<sup>216</sup> ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੀਅ ਜੋਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਭ੍ਰਮਤ ਨੰਦ ਬਹੁ ਥਾਕੇ ਰੇ ॥ ਭਗਤਿ ਹੇਤਿ ਅਵਤਾਰੁ ਲੀਓ ਹੈ ਭਾਗੁ ਬਡੋ ਬਪੁਰਾ ਕੇ ਰੇ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਤੁਮ੍ਹ ਜੁ ਕਹਤ ਹਉ ਨੰਦ ਕੇ ਨੰਦਨੁ ਨੰਦ ਸੁ ਨੰਦਨੁ ਕਾ ਕੇ ਰੇ ॥ ਧਰਨਿ ਅਕਾਸੁ ਦਸੇ ਦਿਸ ਨਾਹੀ ਤਬ ਇਹੁ ਨੰਦੁ ਕਹਾ ਥੋ ਰੇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਸੰਕਟਿ ਨਹੀ ਪਰੈ ਜੋਨਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਵੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਰੇ ॥ ਕਬੀਰ ਕੋ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਐਸੋ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਮਾਈ ਨ ਬਾਪੋ ਰੇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੩੮)

<sup>217</sup> ਕਿਤੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਸੇ ਕੀਟ ਕੋਟੇ ਉਪਾਏ ॥ ਕਿਤੇ ਰਾਮ ਸੇ ਮੋਟਿ ਡਾਰੇ ਉਪਾਏ ॥ ੨੭ ॥ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ) ਜਿਤੇ ਰਾਮ ਹੁਏ ਸਭੇ ਅੰਤ ਮੂਏ । ਜਿਤੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਹੁਵੈ ਹੈ ਸਭੇ ਅੰਤ ਜੈ ਹੈਂ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ), ਬਿਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਨ ਕਿਰਤਮ ਮਾਨੋ, ਆਦਿ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਅਜੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਤਿਹ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਜਾਨੋ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

<sup>218</sup> “ਜੋ ਕਹੋ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਿਧ ਹੈ ਤੋ ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਬੱਧਕ ਤੀਰ ਲਗਾਇਓ, ਜੋ ਕਹੋ ਤਾਤ ਨਾ ਮਾਤ ਹੈ ਤਾਕੋ ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਜਠਰੰਤਰ ਆਇਓ।” (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ੩੩ ਸਵਈਏ । ਸਵਈਆ ਨੰਬਰ ੧੪). The Sikh Gurus never claimed godship. “ਜੋ ਹਮ ਕੋ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਉਚਰਹਿ, ਤੇ ਸਭ ਨਰਕ ਕੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਹਿ ॥ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

*This Madhava performed austerity for a full thousand years, propitiating Shiva, the god who bestows boons, and is the preceptor of the world. But in every mundane period (Yuga) Mahesvara has been propitiated by Krishna and has been gratified by the eminent devotion of that great personage". Here one self-proclaimed universal god (Krishna) worships other superior gods like Mahadeva and Shiva (although he is known as the incarnation of Vishnu and **the abode of imperishable Brahma**).*

At the time of this dialogue Krishna was present on the spot. Immediately after his explanation Bhishma requested Krishna to celebrate the greatness of Mahadeva and Krishna agreed to do so without feeling any offence.

And what happened to Krishna's followers and to himself?

Dwarka began to decline into a state of impiety and adharma (absence of piety). Krishna's friends played a trick with a sage named Durbasa. They dressed Krishna's son Samba as a pregnant woman by dressing him with an iron vessel. They then jokingly asked the sage the sex of the expected baby. The sage was offended. In a rage he said that the baby would produce a weapon of destruction for the Yadvas. Immediately Krishna's friends filed the metal on the boy's tummy to remove it. The iron dust was thrown into the sea. This produced sea reeds. Krishna's followers got intoxicated and in a drunken brawl used sea reed arrows to kill one another. It is said that the whole sea water was turned red with the death of numberless people of Yadva race.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> ਦੁਰਥਾਸਾ ਸਿਉ ਕਰਤ ਠਗਉਰੀ ਜਾਦਵ ਏ ਫਲ ਪਾਏ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੯੩)



Skandh Puran tells us that Krishna himself was killed by a Bheel hunter (named Jara) who used a part from the metal which was used to fake pregnancy on the boy Samba. His dead body lay in the forest until only bones remained. In 1076 AD Raja Anant Verma erected a temple in memory of Krishna at Jagan Nath Puri (Orissa-India). This temple came to be known as Jagan Nath and is now visited by millions of Hindus every year. There used to be a tradition that anybody who fell under the chariot carrying the statue of Krishna and gave up his ghost would go to heaven. Millions went to heaven until the British Government stopped the practice. Another tradition was that people gave away everything to Brahmans and had their body cut by a saw (*Karwat*=ਕਰਵਤ) in the hope of attaining heaven.<sup>220</sup>

Was Sri Krishna really God? Can God be killed by an ordinary human being?<sup>221</sup> We leave these questions for the reader. Sri Krishna did not leave any written record of his instructions for his followers. The scripture ‘Bhagvad Geeta’ is attributed to him and we will discuss it in another chapter in this book.

## 4.13 Ganesha

Ganesha (Also known as Ganpati), the older son of Lord Shiva<sup>222</sup> is

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<sup>220</sup> ਅਰਧ ਸ੍ਰੀਰੁ ਕਟਾਈਐ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਰਵਤੁ ਧਰਾਇ ॥ ਤਨ ਹੇਮੰਚਲਿ ਗਾਲੀਐ ਭੀ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੨) ॥ ਮਨ ਕਾਮਨਾ ਤੀਰਥ ਜਾਇ ਬਸਿਓ, ਸਿਰਿ ਕਰਵਤ ਧਰਾਏ ॥ ਮਨ ਕੀ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਉਤਰੈ ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਜੇ ਲਖ ਜਤਨ ਕਰਾਏ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੪੧)

<sup>221</sup> ਆਏ ਨ ਜਾਵੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਅਭਿਨਾਸੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੬੨)॥ ਆਵੈ ਨ ਜਾਏ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਜੀਵੈ ਤਾਸੁ ਖੋਜੁ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੩੩).

<sup>222</sup> In “Ganeshkhand” he is said to have been born to Queen Pushpika wife of Raja Varenya. Some Hindus believe that his brother Sikanda was the first born. Sikanda was worshipped from about 500 BC to about 600 CE, when his worship

the god of knowledge (Vinayak). He is also known as the remover of obstacles (Vighneshwer). He is worshipped at the beginning of any work that the Hindus undertake to do. It is believed that success is ensured after propitiating him. He has four hands, an elephant's head and a big belly. His vehicle is a tiny mouse. In his hands he carries a rope (to tie devotees to the knowledge), an axe (to cut devotees' attachments), and sweets (laddoo-to reward devotees for spiritual advancement). His fourth hand is extended to bless the devotees. Scriptures dedicated to Ganesha are the *Ganesha Purana*, and *Ganpati Athervashirsa*.

In Shiv Puran (adhyaya 14-20) we find an unchaste and indecent story of the birth of this god which we omit to record here. To celebrate Ganesha's birth his father Shiva organized a function at which the sun, the moon and Dharam Rai were invited but the Sun's son Sanichar was disallowed from seeing the baby Ganesha. In anger Sanichar cut off the baby's head. Later Vishnu brought an elephant's head and grafted it on the baby.

A different story is also told. According to this Shiva's wife Girja produced a child (Ganesha) from her sweat and installed him on the door as a door keeper with the instruction that he should not permit anyone in until she had finished her bath. Ganesha disallowed Shiva from entering and therefore a fight ensued in which Shiva was

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declined in Northern India. As Sikanda's popularity fell, Ganesha's popularity rose. Several stories are told about the rivalry between the brothers. *Budhi*, *Sidhi* and *Ridhi* are said to be Ganesha's wives. He has two sons *Shubh* (Auspicious) and *Laabh* (Profit). Ganesha's only daughter is *Santoshi Maa* (mother desireless). On Ganesh Chaturthi (which falls on the 4<sup>th</sup> of Bhadron /August) he is worshipped for ten days (especially in Maharashtra) after which his effigy is floated away in the river. In some temples his statue is installed at the door to indicate him as the door keeper of Parvati. Ganesha was not known before the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD when his iconic image was discovered in a temple at Bhumra.

defeated by the child Ganesha. Shiva ran to Inder and sought his help against the child. Inder came with a big army and cut off the boys' head. On Girja's request he later brought an elephant baby's head and grafted it on the boy. Ganesha is mentioned in Rig Veda 2-23.1<sup>223</sup>

## 4.14 Hanuman

Another god worshipped today is Hanuman. He was the great devotee of Lord Sri Ram Chander and was prominent in fighting the war against king Ravan of Sri Lanka. It is said that when during the war with Lanka, Lakshman became unconscious; it was Hanuman who brought the medicinal herb (Bisal ਬਿਸਲ= ਸੰਜੀਵਣੀ ਬੂਟੀ) from a mountain.<sup>224</sup>

According to Shiv Puran (Chapter 33) Shivji got enamoured of Mohni (also known as Anjni or Anjli) and could not restrain himself. From their union Hanuman was born.

According to Balmik Anjli was enjoying herself on the top of a mountain when Vayu Devta was tempted to rape her.<sup>225</sup> As a result

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<sup>223</sup> ਸਿਲ ਪੂਜਸਿ ਚਕ੍ਰ ਗਣੇਸੰ ॥ ਨਿਸਿ ਜਾਗਸਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸੰ (ਭਗਤ ਬੋਣੀ) (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੫੧). ਮੈਂ ਨ ਗਨੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਥਮੇਂ ਮਨਾਉ ਕਿਸਨ ਬਿਸਨ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਧਿਆਉਂ (ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ)। ਕਥਾ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗਣੇਸ਼ ਨੇ ਗਜਮੁਖ ਨੂੰ ਤੀਰ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਚੂਹਾ ਬਣਾ ਦਿਤਾ । ਗਣੇਸ਼ ਚੂਹੇ ਉਪਰ ਸਵਾਰੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਗਾ ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਚੂਹੇ ਨੂੰ ਗਣੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਸਵਾਰੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ । ਜਦ ਪਰਸ਼ਰਾਮ ਸ਼ਿਵ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਆਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਗਣੇਸ਼ ਨੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਨਾ ਜਾਣ ਦਿਤਾ ਪਰਸ਼ਰਾਮ ਨੇ ਕੁਹਾੜਾ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਗਣੇਸ਼ ਦਾ ਦੰਦ ਤੋੜ ਦਿਤਾ । ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ “ਏਕਦੰਤ” ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਣ ਲਗਾ ।

<sup>224</sup> ਦਾਧੀਲੇ ਲੰਕਾ ਗੜ੍ਹ ਉਪਾੜੀਲੇ ਰਾਵਣ ਬਣੁ ਸਲਿ ਬਿਸਲ ਆਣਿ ਤੋਖੀਲੇ ਹਰੀ ( ਪੰਨਾ ੬੯੫)

<sup>225</sup> ਇਸ ਕੰਵਾਰੀ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਸ਼ਿਵਜੀ ਦੇ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਹਨੂਮਾਨ ਨੇ ਜਨਮ ਲਿਆ । ਬਾਲਮੀਕ ਰਮਾਇਣ (੧੦੯੧.੧੬-੧੭) ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਅੰਜਨਾ (ਅੰਜਲੀ) ਇਕ ਪਹਾੜੀ ਉਪਰ ਸੈਰ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ ਜਦ ਵਾਯੂ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਕਾਮਾਤੁਰ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ । ਇਸ ਸੰਭੋਗ ਦੇ ਫਲ ਸਰੂਪ ਹਨੂਮਾਨ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਏ ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਵਨ

Hanuman was born and came to be known as Pawan Putar (son of Wind). Soon after birth Hanuman is said to have devoured the sun and the whole world was thrust into darkness. On being struck by Inder<sup>226</sup> and cajoled by the gods, he relented and the world heaved a sigh of relief.

Some Hindu sources say that he was born at Mahawalipuram (near modern Madras) others point to a cave in Nander (Maharashtra) near Gurdwara Shikar Ghat where a lamp is always kept alight in a deep cave. At Kaithal (district Karnal- Haryana) was a Mandir which was worshipped as the birth place of Hanuman for years. This Mandir was later converted into a Mosque in the time of Emperor Aurangzeb.

## 4.15 Sidhs and Naths

There are numerous other factions in Hinduism. Sidhs and Naths have been prominent in the Punjab. Guru Nanak had the opportunity to meet some well known Sidhas of his time. Their brand of Hinduism does not match up with the main line Hinduism in many ways. For Example they did not accept the Varan Ashram (caste system) and attached no importance to pilgrimages at all. They considered river Ganges flowing inside the human body.<sup>227</sup>

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ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਿਵ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਵਿਚ ਕਥਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ਿਵਜੀ ਮੋਹਨੀ ਉਪਰ ਮੋਹਤ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਬੜ ਗਏ। ਮੋਹਣੀ ਤੋਂ ਹਨੂਮਾਨ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਏ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਜੰਮਦੇ ਹੀ ਸੂਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਮੂੰਹ ਵਿਚ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਨਿਗਲ ਲਿਆ। ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਨੇਰਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਦੇਵਤਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਹਨੂਮਾਨ ਨੇ ਸੂਰਜ ਬਾਹਰ ਉਗਲੱਛ ਦਿਤਾ। (ਸ਼ਿਵ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਖੰਡ ੩੩-੭)

<sup>226</sup> As a result of this slap on his cheek Hanuman's mouth was disfigured and he began to be called Hanuman (ਹਨਨ+ਮਾਨਸ= ਹਨੂਮਾਨ.)

<sup>227</sup> “ਅਵਧ ਮਨ ਚੰਗਾ ਤੇ ਕਠੌਤੀ ਹੀ ਗੰਗਾ” (ਗੋਰਖ ਬਾਣੀ ਪੰਨਾ ਪੜ)

They were a mixture of Hinduism and Buddhism. Their principles were rigid and no follower was permitted to question them.<sup>228</sup> Their methods of achieving Mukti lay in very intricate and difficult physical exercises (known as Chakras). They hated Brahmans and women. Machchander Nath and Gorakh Nath were prominent among them.

## 4.16 Sexual morality

According to Sikh belief humans tend to become what they worship or believe in.<sup>229</sup> The ideals set by religion and religious men are copied by the followers<sup>230</sup>. Religious men are therefore pace setters and their every word is moral and spiritual instruction.<sup>231</sup> Bhagvad Geeta supports this view. It says, “*For whatever a great man does, that very thing other men also do, whatever standard he sets up, the generality of men follow the same*” (Bhagvad Geeta 3.21)

In the Vedas one finds matters relating to seduction, incest, abortion, conjugal infidelity, deception, and robbery as well. Prostitution was common and the prostitutes were called *warrangnas*. There are some very obscene passages in the Vedas. For example in Rig Veda read the lewd conversation between Pushan and Surya (Rig Veda 10.85.37)<sup>232</sup> and again a similar conversation in Ashwamedha section of Yajur Veda. We will not

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<sup>228</sup> “ ਕੋ ਬਾਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਬਿਬਾਦੀ, ਜੋਗੀ ਕੇ ਬਾਦ ਨਾ ਕਰਨਾ” (ਗੋਰਖ ਬਾਣੀ ਪੰਨਾ ੫)

<sup>229</sup> ਜੈ ਸਿਉ ਰਾਤਾ ਤੈਸੇ ਹੋਵੈ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੧੧) ਜੈਸਾ ਸੇਵੈ ਤੈਸੇ ਹੋਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੨੩)। ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਏ ਤੇਹਾ ਹੋਇਸੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੦)

<sup>230</sup> ਜਿਸ ਕੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ॥ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਸੀਖ ਤਰੈ ਸੰਸਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੬੯) ਸੰਤ ਕਾ ਮਾਰਗੁ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਪਉੜੀ ਕੇ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਪਾਏ ॥

<sup>231</sup> ਸੂਰਬੀਰ ਬਚਨ ਕੇ ਬਲੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੯੨), ਸਾਧ ਨਾਮ ਤਾ ਕੇ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੬੬)

<sup>232</sup> Refer to *Mandal10*. Puranas are full of stories depicting open sexual perversities which we cannot record here and must avoid the stink of immorality.

go into the details of such conversations which may be offensive but we will refer to some of them here briefly.

Brahma is considered to be the greatest spiritual leader of the Hindu Trinity and yet if we read Shiv Puran (Ruder Samhita 2 Sati Khand 2 Chapter 19), we find him mentioned as a cheat and a sex maniac. Even at the time of the marriage of Shiva and Parvati Brahma displayed his sexual depravity openly.<sup>233</sup> In the same Granth another lewd story is recorded concerning Shiva and Parvati.

Reading the Hindu *Shastras* and *Puranas* we find that relation of the sexes among the Vedic Aryans and gods was not ideal. Obviously these standards were later followed by the followers of Hinduism. More than one man shared one woman and none of them had any exclusive rights on the wife. Devas molested the wives of the Rishis or sexually attacked the wives of their colleague Devas. Rape of Ahalya, the wife of Rishi Gautama, by Indra is well known and Indra was the prominent god of the Rig Veda.<sup>234</sup> In Adhyaya 100 of the Vana Parva of the Mahabharata we read that Rishi *Vibhandaka* cohabited with a female deer and as a result of this intercourse Rishi Shringa was born. In Adhyaya 118 of the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata Rishi Vyas gives us a similar

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<sup>233</sup> The popular belief is that Lord Brahma produced the Vedas. He is said to have established sexual relationship with his daughter *Sarusti*. ਵੇਦਾਂ 'ਚ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ, ਹਿਰਣੈਗਰਭ, ਸਵੈਂਭੂ ਤੇ ਅਪਰ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਵਡਿਆਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਓਂਕਾਰ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪ੍ਰਜਣ ਯੋਗ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਯੋਗ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਅਚਾਰਯ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਿਵ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਰੁਦਰ ਸੰਹਿਤਾ ੨ ਸਤੀ ਖੰਡ ੨ ਅਧਿਆਏ ੧੯ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਈ ਤੇ ਧੋਖੇਬਾਜ਼ ਚਿਤਰਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। (ਸਰਵੋਤਮ ਧਰਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦੰਡੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਪੰਨਾ ੨੦)

<sup>234</sup> "ਗੋਤਮੁ ਤਪਾ ਅਹਿਲਿਆ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੁ ਲੁਭਾਇਆ॥ ਸਹਸ ਸਰੀਰ ਚਿਹਨ ਭਗ ਹੂਏ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਪਛੋਤਾਇਆ"॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੪੪) ਗੋਤਮ ਨਾਰਿ ਅਹਿਲਿਆ ਤਿਸਨੋ ਦੇਖਿ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੁ ਲੋਭਾਣਾ। (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ) The story is also found in Mahabharat. It may have come from Greece where goddess Medusa was similarly ravished by god Poseidon.

story of Pandu, the father of the Pandus, who received a curse from Rishi Kadam. According to the story Rishi Kadam issued a curse because he was engaged in sexual intercourse with a deer when Pandu disturbed him. In Adhyaya 63 of the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata Rishi Parashara had sexual intercourse with Satyawati, (also called Matsya Gandha - fisherman's girl) in public and in broad day light. In Adhyaya 104 of the Adi Parva, Rishi Dirgha is stated to have staged a similar scene in public.

**(a) Incest:-**

Father-daughter incest occurs in the story of Brahma and his daughter. *Brahma* married his own daughter *Satarupa*.<sup>235</sup> “Wise, teaching, following the thought of Order, the sonless gained a grandson from his daughter”. Fain, as a sire, to see his child prolific, he sped to meet her with an eager spirit”.

[RigVeda III .31.1-2].

Hiranyakashpu married his daughter Rohini. Vashista married Shatrupa, Janhu married Janhavi, and Surya married Usha.

**(b) Rape**

Rape was common. Some examples are Manu-Illa, Surya raped Kunti.<sup>236</sup> Vishnu raped Jalandhar's wife (Varinda) who later

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<sup>235</sup>ਭਾਗਵਤ (ਅਧਿਆਇ ੧੨) ਵਿਚ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਦਾ ਆਪਣੀ ਲੜਕੀ ਤੇ ਆਸ਼ਕ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ । ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਵੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ “ਚਾਰੇ ਵੇਦ ਵਖਾਣਦਾ ਦੇਖ ਸਰੁਸਤੀ ਰੂਪ ਲੋਭਾਣਾ। (੧੨/੨)

<sup>236</sup> Karna was Kunti's first son by Surya, the sun god, before she got married. Kunti abandoned him in a basket on the river. He was raised by a chariot driver. Later in Mahabharata he became the deadly enemy of his brother Arjun.

committed suicide. Love-lorn Vishnu did not even let her go after death. He bathed in her ashes, bereaved her death for days and cried loudly.

**(c) Sons married their mothers**

There are cases where father and son married the same woman; Brahma is the father of Manu. Manu married his mother *Sharadha*. Pushan too married his mother.

**(d) Marriage with sisters**

The discussion of open sex between a brother and sister (Yama and Yami in Rig Veda Mandal X) The description of sexual relationship between *Yam* and *Yami* (Brother and sister) is lewd, lascivious, and bawdy. It is a spur to carnality. They did not get married but discussed open sexual relations. From their discussion it is clear that in those days sisters could discuss sexual matters with their brothers and even marry them. Brahma had three sons Marichi, Daksha and Dharma and one daughter. Daksha is stated to have married the daughter of Brahma who was his sister (see Adi Parva of the Mahabharata). Other instances are Purukutsa and Narmada, Viprachiti and Simhika, Nahusa and Viraja, Sukra and Usanas, Amavasu and Go, Amsumat and Yasoda, Suka and Pivari.

Pushan is the lover of his sister Achoda. “Attendant on the Blessed Dame the Blessed one hath come: the Lover followeth his Sister.

[Rig Veda X.3.3]



Agni is the lover of his own sister. "Pūsan, who driveth goats for steeds, the strong and Mighty, who is called His Sister's lover, will we laud".  
[Rig Veda VI.55.4]

Ashvins were the sons of Savitar and Usha who were brother and sister.

Krishna was married with his uncle's Satrajit's daughter and Krishna's son Priduman was married with his maternal uncle Rukmaya's daughter.

**(e) Selling & hiring of women:**

There is evidence that the ancient Aryans also sold their women (wives and daughters). When a daughter was sold her marriage was known as *Arsha* marriage. This was done through Go-Mithuna (giving away one cow and one bull to the girls' father as price) "*When (the father) gives away his daughter according to the rule, after receiving from the bridegroom, for (the fulfillment of the sacred law, a cow and a bull or two pairs, that is named the Arsha rite*".  
(Manu Smṛiti 3.29)

*"Some call the cow and the bull given as on Arsha wedding 'a gratuity' but that is wrong. The acceptance of the fee great or small is a sale of the daughter."* (Manu II)

Women were also rented to others for cohabitation. In the Mahabharata we read that Madhavi was the daughter of King Yayati. Yayati made a gift of her to Galwa Rishi. Galwa rented her out to three kings one after the other. After the third, Madhavi was returned to Galwa. She was now given by Galwa to his Guru Vishvamitra. Vishvamitra kept her till he begot a son. After this he returned her to her father.

*(f) Niyoga /mistreatment of women*

Niyoga is the Aryan name for a system under which a wedded woman was legally permitted to beget a son from another person, not her husband. There was no limit to the number of men a woman could go for Niyoga. Madhuti and Ambika had one Niyoga each. Saradandayani had three. Vayusistasva was permitted to have 7 and Vali is known to have allowed as many as 17 Niyogas to one of his wives. With the consent of the husband a Niyoga could last from one night to twelve years or more. Jatila-Gautami had 7 husbands. In The Mahabharata Daropadi had five husbands and Pandu allowed his wife Kunti to have four Niyogas. Karna was the premarital first born brother of the Pandus through Nyoga.

Abduction<sup>237</sup> and disrobing of women in public is evident in the Mahabharata. Daropadi was disrobed in front of her near relatives.<sup>238</sup> In Shiv Puran Ruder Samhita (4.12) we read that Shiva ran after the wives of the Rishis completely naked. On account of this indecency he had to lose his male organ.

In the temples at Jagan Nath, Konark, and Bhuneshwar of Orissa there are statues of naked women in very objectionable poses. Similar poses are openly depicted on the outside of the temples at Khajuraho. Even Mahatma Gandhi was of the opinion that KhajurahoTemples should be demolished.

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<sup>237</sup> ਚੰਦਰਾਵਲ ਗੋਵਰਧਨਮੱਲ ਦੀ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਭਾਨ ਦੀ ਬੇਟੀ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜੀ ਧੱਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਸਨ । "ਜੁਜ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਰਿ ਛਲੀ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਾਵਲਿ ਕਾਨੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਜਾਦਮੁ ਭਇਆ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੦)।

<sup>238</sup> ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭਾ ਦੁਸਾਸਨੈ ਮਥੈ ਵਾਲ ਦਰੋਪਤੀ ਆਂਦੀ ॥ਦੂਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆਂ ਨੰਗੀ ਕਰੋ ਪੰਚਾਲੀ ਬਾਂਦੀ ॥ਪੰਜੇ ਪਾਂਡਵ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਅਉਘਟ ਰੁਧੀ ਨਾਰ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ॥ ਅਖੀਂ ਮੀਟ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰਿ ਹਾ ਹਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਕਰੇ ਬਿਲਲਾਂਦੀ ॥ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

Such stories do not lead to spiritualism or to ideal sexual behavior which is expected from religious leaders. It is for this reason that Gurbani says, “*Dirty was Brahma and dirtier still was the moon. Shiva, Shankra and Mahesha too did not fare well.*”<sup>239</sup> (P.1158)

### (g) Gambling

Gambling is made respectable in the Vedas. It was developed to a science by the Aryan civilization. Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kali were the names of the dices used by the Aryans at gambling. The luckiest of the dices was called Krita and the unlucky one was called Kali. Treta and Dwapara were intermediate dices. Kingdoms and even their wives were offered by the Aryans as stakes at gambling. Their examples were later followed by the common Hindus. For example King Nala staked his kingdom and lost it. Later the Pandus staked their kingdom and their wife Daropadi and lost both.

Manu did not approve gambling or betting. He goes against the Vedas when he says, “gambling and betting should be suppressed.”  
(Manu IX 221-222)

### (h) Drinking

All Vedic Rishis used to drink *Soma* and similar intoxicating

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<sup>239</sup> ਮੈਲੇ ਸਿਵ ਸੰਕਰਾ ਮਹੇਸ਼ ॥ ਮੈਲੇ ਸਿਧ ਸਾਧਿਕ ਅਰੁ ਭੇਖ ॥ ੪ ॥ ਮੈਲੇ ਜੋਗੀ ਜੰਗਮ ਜਟਾ ਸਹੇਤਿ ॥ ਮੈਲੀ ਕਾਇਆ ਹੰਸ ਸਮੇਤਿ ॥ ੫ ॥ ਕਹਿ ਕਬੀਰ ਤੇ ਜਨ ਪਰਵਾਨ ॥ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਤੇ ਜੋ ਰਾਮਹਿ ਜਾਨ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੫੮) ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਲੋਭ ਮੋਹ ਹੰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਵਡੇ ਦੁਸਮਣ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹੈ, “ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਅਹੰਕਾਰ ਨਿਵਾਰੇ ॥ ਤਸਕਰ ਪੰਚ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੰਘਾਰੇ ॥ ਗਿਆਨ ਖੜਗੁ ਲੈ ਮਨ ਸਿਉ ਲੂਝੈ ਮਨਸਾ ਮਨਹਿ ਸਮਾਈ ਹੇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੨੨)

drinks. It was a part of an Aryan's ritual. There were numerous Soma sacrifices among the ancient Aryans. Females (Even Brahmin women) too indulged in drinking because it was a respectable practice and not regarded as a sin or a vice. Ramayana in Uttar Khand admits that Sri Ram Chander and Seeta too drank wine so did Krishna and Arjuna. The Udyoga Parva of the Mahabharata says: "*Arjuna and Shri krishna drinking wine made from honey and being sweet-scented and garlanded, wearing splendid clothes and ornaments, sat on a golden throne studded with various jewels.*"<sup>240</sup> It had spread to all classes but Shudras were restricted from drinking *Soma*. They drank *Sura* which was an ordinary wine sold in the market. According to Rig Veda 10.86 and 13-14 Indra used to eat Meat and was also a drunkard.

The Sikh Gurus Vehemently preached against the use of liquors. The aim of the Sikh Gurus was to create an egalitarian social order and healthy society. Sikhism disapproves gambling<sup>241</sup>, drinking<sup>242</sup> and the degrading treatment of women.

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<sup>240</sup> ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਾ ਵਾਪਾਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ॥ ਕਿਆ ਮਦੁ ਛੁਛੇ ਭਾਉ ਧਰੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੬੦)

<sup>241</sup> ਜੁਆਰੀ ਜੁਏ ਮਾਹਿ ਚੀਤੁ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੮੦) ਜੁਐ ਖੇਲਣੁ ਕਾਚੀ ਸਾਰੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੨੨) ਜੁਐ ਖੇਲਣੁ ਜਗਿ ਕਿ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਹਾਰਿਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੬੯) ਜੁਐ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਭ ਬਾਜੀ ਹਾਰੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੦) ਜੁਐ ਜਨਮੁ ਤਿਨੀ ਹਾਰਿਆ ਕਿਤੁ ਆਏ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੮੪) ਜੁਐ ਜਨਮੁ ਨ ਹਾਰਹੁ ਅਪਣਾ ਭਾਜਿ ਪੜਹੁ ਤੁਮ ਹਰਿ ਸਰਣਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੩੩) ਜੁਐ ਜਨਮੁ ਨ ਕਬਹੂ ਹਾਰਿ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੬੬) ਜਿਉ ਜੁਐ ਜੁਆਰੀਆਂ ਲਗ ਦਾਉ ਉਪੱਠੇ, ਚੋਰੀ ਚੋਰ ਨਾ ਪਲਰੇ ਦੁਖ ਸਹਿਣ ਗੁੱਠੇ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

<sup>242</sup> “ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਮਦੁ ਜੋ ਪੀਵਤੇ ਬਿਖਲੀ ਪਤਿ ਕਮਲੀ ॥ ਰਾਮ ਰਸਾਇਣਿ ਜੋ ਰਤੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚ ਅਮਲੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੯੯) ਇਤੁ ਮਦਿ ਪੀਤੇ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਖਟੀਅਹਿ ਬਿਕਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੫੩) ਮਾਣਸੁ ਭਰਿਆ ਆਣਿਆ ਮਾਣਸੁ ਭਰਿਆ ਆਇ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀਤੇ ਮਤਿ ਦੂਰਿ ਹੋਇ ਬਰਲੁ ਪਵੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਇ ॥ ਆਪਣਾ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨ ਪਛਾਣਈ ਖਸਮਹੁ ਧਕੇ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀਤੇ ਖਸਮੁ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਦਰਗਹ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ॥ ਝੁਠਾ ਮਦੁ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਪੀਚਈ ਜੇ ਕਾ ਪਾਰਿ ਵਸਾਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੫੪)

## 4.17 The Sikh View

According to Hinduism God has a form.<sup>243</sup> He incarnates as an avatar when things in the world do not go straight. Krishna says that he comes again and again to put things right “*Arjuna, whenever there is decline of righteousness and unrighteousness is in the ascendant, then I body myself forth*” (Bhagvad Geeta IV.7). Here lies the fundamental difference between Hinduism and Sikhism. In Sikh philosophy God is not considered human or an incarnation. Guru Granth Sahib says “*Incarnated beings do not know His limit. The transcendent Lord, the supreme Lord God is infinite.*”(Page 894)<sup>244</sup> The Guru says that these so-called incarnations of God too die like other human beings<sup>245</sup> and do not take birth again and again.<sup>246</sup>

Sri Ram Chander was born when there was nothing much wrong and the people were happy. Sri Krishna was born when there was nothing wrong in the world except the fratricide war between the

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<sup>243</sup> “The Lord has a form. He is a transcendental person. This is confirmed in all Vedic literature. (*Geeta As It Is* “ by Swami Prabhupada page xv) “Krishna is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, the absolute truth, the source of both super soul and the impersonal Brahma..... He is the primeval Lord, or Bhagwan, known as Govinda. (Ibid Page 20) .Bachittar Natak says God has no form, no parents and no attachments. “ ਅਲਖ ਰੂਪ ਅਛੈ ਅਨਭੋਖਾ,ਰਾਗ ਰੰਗ ਜਿਹਿ ਰੂਪ ਨ ਰੇਖਾ॥ ਬਰਨ ਚਿਹਨ ਸਭੁ ਤੇ ਨਯਾਰਾ,ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਅਦਵੈ ਅਬਿਕਾਰਾ॥ (ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ).“ਬਰਨ ਚਿਹਨ ਜਿਹਿ ਜਾਤਿ ਨਾ ਪਾਤਾ”(ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ) .“ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਅਰ ਰੇਖ ਭੇਕ ਕੋਊ ਕਹਿ ਨ ਸਕਤ ਕਿਹ”(ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ) Simlar ideas about God are expressed in Guru Granth Sahib at various places. Did the world remain without God when Krishna was in the womb? Is there no God in the world now? Such questions remain unanswered.

<sup>244</sup> “ਲਖ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਅਕਾਰ ਕਰਿ ਤਿਲੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ਨ ਬਿਸਨ ਪਛਾਤਾ ॥ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

<sup>245</sup> ਮੁਨਿ ਜੋਗੀ ਦਿਗੰਬਰਾ ਜਮੈ ਸਣੁ ਜਾਸੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੦੦)

<sup>246</sup> ਏਕਹਿ ਆਵਨ ਫਿਰਿ ਜੋਨਿ ਨ ਆਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੫੨) ਮਾਣਸ ਜਨਮੁ ਦੁਲੰਭੁ ਹੈ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਖਟਿਆ ਆਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੬੫)

members of a family which was a private affair and which took place only after his birth. Even if we accept that the society was corrupt in their times, there is absolutely nothing these Avatars did to improve the social conditions of their times.<sup>247</sup> Sri Ram Chandar fought his own war and Sri Krishna simply egged on a pacifist Pandu to engage in killing his own kith and kin. According to Sikhism world has seen millions like Ram Chandars and Krishnas.<sup>248</sup> They were rulers promoted as spiritual giants. According to Sikhism they could not understand God much less be one.<sup>249</sup>

Hindu gods are born but according to Sikhism God does not take birth. The Guru says, “*Burnt be the tongue which says God is born.*”<sup>250</sup> The Sikhs, therefore, attach no importance to avatars who take birth like other human beings. They treat them like other human beings. Such gods as Hindus believe in (Inder, Brahma, and Vishnu etc) are born every day and die<sup>251</sup>. Without attuning to omnipresent and unborn God nothing spiritual can be achieved. All so called Avatars are God’s slaves. Bhagat Namdev (1249-1349

<sup>247</sup> ਰਾਮ ਰਹੀਮ ਉਬਾਰ ਨ ਸਕ ਹੈ ਜਾਕਰ ਨਾਮ ਰਟੈ ਹੈ॥ ਬ੍ਰਮਾ ਬਿਸਨ ਰੁਦ੍ਰ ਸੂਰਜ ਸਸਿ ਤੇ ਬਸਿ ਕਾਲ ਸਭੈ ਹੈ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

<sup>248</sup> ਕਈ ਕੋਟਿ ਹੋਏ ਅਵਤਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੭੬), ਸਿਧ ਨਾਥ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਭ ਹਥ ਜੋਤਿ ਕੈ ਹੋਏ ਖਲਿਆ॥ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ), ਏਕ ਸ਼ਿਵ ਭਏ ਏਕ ਗਏ ਏਕ ਫੇਰ ਭਏ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਕਿਸ਼ਨ ਕੇ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਭੀ ਅਨੇਕ ਹੈ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

<sup>249</sup> ਕੋਤੜਿਆਂ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਹੋਇ ਚਕ੍ਰਵਰਤਿ ਰਾਜੇ ਦਰਗਾਹੀ ( ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ) ਜੁਗਹ ਜੁਗਹ ਕੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੀਏ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਕਰਿ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ॥ ਤਿਨ ਭੀ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਕਰਿ ਆਖ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੨੩)

<sup>250</sup> “ਸੋ ਮੁਖ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੬) “ਜੋ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮੇ ਸੋ ਕਚੁ ਨਿਕਚੁ” । (੪੬੩)

<sup>251</sup> ਕੋਟਿ ਬਿਸਨ ਕੀਨੇ ਅਵਤਾਰ,ਕੋਟਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਧ੍ਰਮਸਾਲ, ਕੋਟਿ ਮਹੇਸ ਉਪਾਇ ਸਮਾਏ ਕੋਟਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਜਗੁ ਸਾਜਣ ਲਾਏ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੫੬) ਕੋਤੇ ਕੋਟਿ ਇੰਦਰ ਨ੍ਰਿਪਾਰ,ਕਈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਿਸਨ ਬਿਚਾਰ। ਕਈ ਰਾਮ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਰਸੂਲ, ਬਿਨ ਭਗਤ ਕੋ ਨ ਕਬੂਲ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ) ਕੋਤੇ ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਦੁਆਰ ਕੋਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਮੁਖਚਾਰ,ਕੋਤੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਕੋਤੇ ਰਾਮ ਕਹੀਅਤ ਹੈ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

AD), himself a born Hindu, sarcastically criticizes the Hindu gods as misguiding the people. He thinks that those who worship Hindu gods can never be sure to obtain salvation.<sup>252</sup>

No avatar has visited the world in our times although the danger to the world is more than it was in Sri Ram Chander or Sri Krishan's times. In their times the population explosion had not taken place and the economic exploitation of the poor countries by the rich was nowhere to be seen. Today atomic bombs are available with many warring factions of the world and the world is on the precipice of destruction and yet no Hindu avatar has turned up so far.

The Sikhs believe that the society needs Knowledge (*gian*) and it is only through knowledge (*gian*) that things can be sorted out.<sup>253</sup> Unfortunately *gian* has been denied to a large section of the people by the Hindu scriptures for a long time. Once people get educated and know the facts, their problems will be easier to solve. A *Gurmukh* (God-centered being) learns through knowledge of Word (Divine knowledge) that the Almighty, who is omnipresent, is not Shiva or Gorakh or Brahma or Parvati (the wife of Shiva) (p. 2).<sup>254</sup> According to Sikhism the so called Hindu gods were not perfect and did not impart proper knowledge to their followers. They were themselves suffering from numerous social and moral diseases.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> “ਆਜੁ ਨਾਮੇ ਬੀਠਲੁ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਮੂਰਖ ਕੇ ਸਮਝਾਉ ਰੇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਪਾਂਡੇ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ ਲੇਧੇ ਕਾ ਖੇਤੁ ਖਾਤੀ ਥੀ ॥ ਲੈ ਕਰਿ ਠੇਗਾ ਟਗਰੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਲਾਂਗਤ ਲਾਂਗਤ ਜਾਤੀ ਥੀ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਪਾਂਡੇ ਤੁਮਰਾ ਮਹਾਦੇਉ ਧਉਲੇ ਬਲਦ ਚੜਿਆ ਆਵਤੁ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਥਾ ॥ ਮੋਦੀ ਕੇ ਘਰ ਖਾਣਾ ਪਾਕਾ ਵਾ ਕਾ ਲੜਕਾ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਥਾ ॥ ੨ ॥ ਪਾਂਡੇ ਤੁਮਰਾ ਰਾਮਚੰਦੁ ਸੇ ਭੀ ਆਵਤੁ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਥਾ ॥ ਰਾਵਨ ਸੇਤੀ ਸਰਬਰ ਹੋਈ ਘਰ ਕੀ ਜੋਇ ਗਵਾਈ ਥੀ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੭੫)

<sup>253</sup> ਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਜਾ ਕੀ ਨੇਤ੍ਰੀ ਪੜਿਆ ਤਾ ਕਉ ਸਰਬ ਪ੍ਰਗਾਸਾ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੧੦)

<sup>254</sup> ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਦੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਵੇਦੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਈ ॥ ਗੁਰੁ ਈਸਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੋਰਖੁ ਬਰਮਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਰਬਤੀ ਮਾਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨)

<sup>255</sup> ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹਾਦੇਉ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਗੁਣ ਰੋਗੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਈ (੭੩੫) ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਗਰਬ ਕੀਆ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਬੇਦ ਕੀ ਬਿਪਤਿ ਪੜੀ ਪਛੁਤਾਨਿਆ (੨੨੪)

We have seen that Hindu gods are jealous of each other and are usually seen engaged in mutual recriminations and revenge. For example Vishnu turned himself into *Narsingh* and saved *Prahlad* from the atrocities of his father. This did not please Shiva<sup>256</sup> because Prahlad's father Hirnakashyap was Shiva's follower. Shiva turned himself into a bird called '*Sharabh*' and tore up Vishnu with his nails. Thus we see that Hindu gods were pugnacious and jealous and their stories have little, if any, merit in instructing humanity.<sup>257</sup> Hindu gods were subject to the same physical passions, infirmities, frailties and vices to which human beings were subject.<sup>258</sup> This is why these gods often indulged in the vices in which many human beings revelled. They cursed each other<sup>259</sup> and even fought among themselves. Narda (born from Brahma's forehead) and Indra have always been out to create misunderstandings and problems. Snitching and backbiting are permanently associated with these two

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<sup>256</sup> Most of Shiva's followers were cruel egoists and utterly merciless. Some of them are "Ravana", "Vanasur" and "Hirnakashyap".

<sup>257</sup> Hindus believe their gods run the universe but the Gurus say that it is a fallacy ਗੁਰਮਤ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਦੀ. ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ। ਦੁਯੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੬੩). According to Gurbani Brahma and other gods of the Hindus are equally subject to death. ਸਨਕ ਸਨੰਦਨ ਸਿਵ ਸੁਕਆਦਿ, ਨਾਭਿ ਕਮਲ ਜਾਨੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾਦਿ॥ ਕਬਿ ਜਨ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਟਾਧਾਰਿ ਸਭ ਆਪਨ ਅਉਸਰ ਚਲੇ ਸਾਰਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੯੪). Since they are subject to death, they cannot be all powerful. They were not any special creation of God. Similar Brahmas were created and are being created every minute .ਕੋਟਿ ਬਿਸਨ ਕੀਨੇ ਅਵਤਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੫੬). They also had similar weaknesses as other human beings. ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹਾਦੇਉ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਗੁਣ ਭੁਲੇ ਹਉਮੈ ਮੋਹੁ ਵਧਾਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੫੨)

<sup>258</sup> Ram bewailed in exile when he was separated from Seeta and Lachman. Even the Pandus who lived in the company of their master (Lord Krishna) cried when they were forced to do hard labour in destitution.. "ਰੋਵੈ ਰਾਮੁ ਨਿਕਾਲਾ ਭਇਆ, ਸੀਤਾ ਲਖਮਣੁ ਵਿਛੁੜਿ ਗਇਆ॥ ਰੋਵੈ ਦਹਸਿਰੁ ਲੰਕ ਗਵਾਇ, ਜਿਨਿ ਸੀਤਾ ਆਦੀ ਡਉਰੂ ਵਾਇ॥ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਪਾਂਡਵ ਭਏ ਮਜੂਰ, ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਰਹਤ ਹਦੂਰਿ"॥ ( ਪੰਨਾ ੯੫੩) "ਰਾਮ ਝੁਰੈ ਦਲ ਮੇਲਵੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਲੁ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ"॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੪੧੨)

<sup>259</sup> Brahma cursed his son Narda to be always engaged in sex. Narda cursed his father by saying that the latter will have sex with his own daughter.



gods. *Indra*, the leader of the gods, even raped *Rishi (Sant)* *Gautama's* wife *Ahalya*. *Brahma* fell in love with *Shiva's* wife *Sati*.<sup>260</sup> *Bhagvad Puran* tells us that *Brahma* was a thief. He stole *Krishna's* cows.

Most Hindu gods are fond of music and dance. *Dev Dasis* (young girls) dance to please the gods<sup>261</sup> and the 6333 *Gandharvas* (and their wives *Gandharvis*) please the gods with music and songs. Hindu gods have servants too. For example *Sri Krishna's* servant was *Gian* who for some reason annoyed *Sri Krishna*. *Sri Krishna* wanted to behead his servant but *Gian* ran away and took shelter with *Arjun*. *Sri Krishna* had a fierce and gruesome fight with his own brother-in-law *Arjun* and only *Brahma*<sup>262</sup> could stop them from fighting. The gods are not brave. Once they were tormented by the demons. Instead of facing the demons manly, they ran away and approached goddess *Durga* and beseeched her to save their lives. Such behaviour does not become the spiritual leaders.

Like us human beings the gods are also fond of pets. For example *Inder*, the leader of the gods (*Devtesh*) has a bitch called *Sarma*. For riding, *Brahma* and his wife *Saraswati*<sup>263</sup> use a Swan, *Vishnu* uses *Garud* (a bird), *Shiv* uses a bull, *Ganesh* uses a rat, *Kam Devta* (sex god) uses a parrot and the sun god travels in a chariot drawn

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<sup>260</sup> The dirtiest pervert sex story about *Shiva* and *Parvati* is recorded in *Kot Ruder Samhita* 4.12

<sup>261</sup> This practice is still current in South India in spite of legal restrictions.

<sup>262</sup> *Brahma* is called the Creator of the universe. Later he is said to have edited the four Vedas around 2500 BC. After 1728000 years of *Satyug* + 1296000 years of *Treta* + 864000 years of *Dwapar* (Total 38,88,000 years) he was still alive. Was *Brahma* God or *Krishna* god? Are these gods still alive?

<sup>263</sup> Bengali Hindus believe that *Vishnu* had three wives *Sarasvati*, *Ganges* and *Lakhshmi*. Once they had a bloody fight among themselves and therefore *Vishnu* gave *Sarasvati* to *Brahma*, *Ganges* to *Shiva* and kept *Lakhshmi* for himself.

by seven horses. Among the goddesses, Durga always uses a tiger to ride on, Bhairav uses a black dog, Sheetla uses a donkey, Mansa Devi uses a snake and Lakshami (Vishnu's wife) uses a centipede. *Shanishar* uses a vulture as his aeroplane.<sup>264</sup> Like their transport their favourite dishes are also different. For example *Shanishar* is pleased with oil, iron and lentils (ਮਾਂਹ ਦੀ ਦਾਲ). Some others are pleased with meat and intoxicating liquors.

The most important six Hindu gods are jointly called *Devshatak*. They are *Ganesh, Sun, Fire, Vishnu, Shiva, and Durga*.<sup>265</sup> Like us humans these gods and goddesses also revered a Guru. Their Guru was *Barhispati (ਬ੍ਰਿਹਸਪਤੀ)*. Sikhism believes that all so-called Avatars were human and were therefore incapable of fathoming the greatness of God.<sup>266</sup> Man can be godly by acquiring godly qualities but can never become God. Man is a part of God's creation. He cannot claim to be the creator.

The Sikhs are strict monotheists.<sup>267</sup> They are strictly forbidden from worshipping gods and goddesses because these gods' and goddesses cannot help their devotees in the attainment of emancipation. They are themselves prone to death like other

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<sup>264</sup> Lord Krishna says, "Among birds I am Garuda (the vehicle of Vishnu)" (Geeta x-30). This means that Vishnu rides on Krishna. Krishna is also known as the incarnation of Vishnu. Swami Prabhupada also writes, about Krishna "He is even the cause of Maha-Vishnu from whom the material universes emanate." All this does not make things clear as to the correct relationship of Vishnu and Krishna.

<sup>265</sup> ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਦੰਡੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਜੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, " ਇਸ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਨੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ ਨੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ । (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੪)

<sup>266</sup> ਅਵਤਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਅੰਤੁ, ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬੇਅੰਤੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੯੪ )

<sup>267</sup> ਹਉ ਤਉ ਏਕੁ ਰਮਈਆ ਲੈਹਉ ॥ ਆਨ ਦੇਵ ਬਦਲਾਵਨ ਦੈਹਉ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੮੭੪) ਇਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਇਕੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਇਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ । (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੪੯)

beings.<sup>268</sup> The Sikhs put their faith in the Guru's bani which provides them with all spiritual and worldly knowledge.<sup>269</sup> Guru Granth Sahib completely negates the theory of gods and goddesses or god's incarnations. According to it worship of gods and goddesses is a useless pursuit.<sup>270</sup> Bhagat Namdev too clearly states that worship of goddesses can never be instrumental in man's salvation.<sup>271</sup>

In Hindu scriptures sacrifices to propitiate the gods are considered pious acts and are known as *Devkaram* (Acts of piety)<sup>272</sup>. The Vedas and the Puranas are full of various kinds of sacrifices and outline the methods of sacrificing the animals. Sikhism attaches no value to the sacrifices and other Hindu rituals. The rituals of

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<sup>268</sup> ਜੋ ਆਇਆ ਸੋ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਜਾਸੀ ਉਬਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੪੬) “ਭਲਾ ਬੁਰਾ ਸੈਸਾਰ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੋ ਆਇਆ ਤਿਸ ਸਰਪਰ ਮਰਣਾ ।(ਪੰਨਾ ੩੧)

<sup>269</sup> ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖ ਹੋਇ ਆਨ ਦੇਵ ਸੇਵ ਟੇਕ ਗਰੈ, ਸਹੈ ਜਮ ਡੰਡ ਪ੍ਰਿਗ ਜੀਵਨ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ਹੈ (ਕਬਿਤ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ)

<sup>270</sup> ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਛੋਡਿ ਦਾਸੀ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਅੰਧ ਅਗਿਆਨਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੮) ਦੇਵੀਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਨੈ ਮਰਮ॥ਸਭ ਉਪਰਿ ਅਲਖ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੯੪) ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ਮੂਲ ਹੈ ਮਾਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੯), ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ(ਪੰਨਾ ੨੨੭)

<sup>271</sup> ਤੂ ਕਹੀਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਆਦਿ ਭਵਾਨੀ, ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ ਕਹਾ ਛਪਾਨੀ (ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ੮੭੪)

<sup>272</sup> In these sacrifices animals and humans were killed. Raja Sujag organised 1000 *Rajsuya Yagyas* on the banks of river Narbada in which 300,000 horses (*Aspmedh Yagya*) and 300,000 humans (*Narmedh Yagya*) were sacrificed. Later in another *Yagya* 400,000 cows (*Gomedh Yagaya*) were sacrificed to feed the Brahmins. Swami Dyanand and Aurobindo tried to interpret "sacrifices" as transcendental processes but their explanation convinced no one.

sacrifices etc mentioned in the Hindu scriptures are an anathema to the Sikhs.<sup>273</sup>

Sikhism expects ideal moral and social behaviour. We have seen that the Rishis and the gods displayed sexual perversity<sup>274</sup> instead of spirituality and morality which was expected from them. Inder tricked and raped Gautam's wife Ahalya.<sup>275</sup> On the other hand the Gurus say, "Never look upon a woman's beauty lustfully".<sup>276</sup> As for the justice of the Rishis, the less said the better. When Gautam found that Inder had forcibly raped his wife Ahalya, he cursed Ahalaya to become a stone. However it is the height of injustice that at the same time he cursed his daughter Anjli that she would become a virgin mother although she had done nothing wrong.

The four Vedas and the other voluminous literature produced no moral excellence in the Hindus. For example Ravan was a great scholar of four Vedas,<sup>277</sup> and yet he abducted Sri Ram Chander's wife Seeta. And later the illustrious Pandus are recorded as having staked Daropadi (wife of Arjan) in gambling which led to fratricidal struggle between cousins. The Kurus insisted on

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<sup>273</sup> ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਤੀਰਥ ਕੀਏ ਬਿਚਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਬਧੇ ਬਿਕਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੧੪) ਕਾਹੂ ਜੋਗ ਕਾਹੂ ਭੋਗ ਕਾਹੂ ਗਿਆਨ ਕਾਹੂ ਧਿਆਨ ਕਾਹੂ ਹੋ ਡੰਡ ਧਰਿ ਹੋ ॥ ਕਾਹੂ ਜਾਪ ਕਾਹੂ ਤਾਪ ਕਾਹੂ ਪੂਜਾ ਹੋਮ ਨੇਮ ਕਾਹੂ ਹੋ ਗਉਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਹੋ ॥ ਕਾਹੂ ਤੀਰ ਕਾਹੂ ਨੀਰ ਕਾਹੂ ਬੇਦ ਬੀਚਾਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਭਗਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਹੋ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੧੩)

<sup>274</sup> ਹੋਰ ਦੇਵਤਿਆਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਵਿਭਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਇੱਕ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਹੈ । ਵਰੁਣ ਦੇਵਤਾ: ਕਾਮ ਦਾ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ।

<sup>275</sup> ਇਸ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਰਾਮਾਇਣ ਬਾਲ ਕਾਂਡ ਸਰਗ ੪੮ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਹੈ।

<sup>276</sup> ਪਰ ਤ੍ਰਿਆ ਰੂਪ ਨ ਪੇਥੈ ਨੇਤ੍ਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੭੪)

<sup>277</sup> At various places in the *Balmiki Ramayana* Ravana is mentioned as a great scholar of the Vedas and a pious man (See *Balmiki Ramayana* 5.6.13, 5.10.15, 6.10.11) also read *Ramayana* researched by P.H.Gupta page 154.

disrobing their own sister-in-law in front of the venerable male members of their family. The once worshipped Rig Vedic warrior god Indra is shown as a voluptuous adulterer . Even religion was changed by the Hindu scholars from time to time and people accepted whatever was being preached by those who had hijacked real religion.<sup>278</sup>

The profanity and lasciviousness preached by the Puranas and the other Hindu religious books does not match up with the instruction contained in Guru Granth Sahib where morality and truthful living are preached as the highest virtues.<sup>279</sup> What the Sikhs are instructed to do is to ignore the Vedas, Simrtis and Puranas etc and instead “concentrate on understanding and acting upon Gurbani.”<sup>280</sup>

Having read the Hindu scriptures and then the Guru Granth Sahib Swami Ram Tirath Dandi Sanyasi compared them both and wrote “*Unlike the Puranas, this great Granth did not recognise any god or goddess as the Creator. Every writer of the Puranas extolled his own god or goddess to the skies and labelled other gods as the*

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<sup>278</sup> “*The Dharma of Sat Yuga, Treta, Dwapra and Kali yuga has been changing. Dharma conforms to the deterioration of man in respective yugas. In Satya Yuga the austerities were the chief thing, Knowledge was the religion of the Treta, Sacrifice was the religion of the Dwapra but Charity alone is the religion of the Kali Yuga” Manu Simirti Chapter 1 Shalok 85. This was a trick to fleece the gullible people because only the Brahmans could receive charity. Bhai Gurdas tells us ਤੇਤੇ ਛੱਤ੍ਰੀ ਰੂਪ ਧਰ ਸੂਰਜ ਬੰਸੀ ਬਡ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ॥ ਨਉਂ ਹਿਸੇ ਗਈ ਆਰਜਾ ਮਾਯਾ ਮੋਹ ਅਹੰਕਾਰ ਪਸਾਰਾ॥ ਦੁਆਪੁਰ ਜਾਦਵ ਵੇਸ ਕਰ ਜੁਗ ਜੁਗ ਅਉਧ ਘਟੈ ਆਚਾਰਾ॥ ਰਿਗਬੇਦ ਮਹਿੰ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਪੂਰਬ ਮੁਖ ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮ ਬਿਚਾਰਾ॥ ਖਤ੍ਰੀ ਥਾਪੇ ਜੁਜਰ ਵੇਦ ਦਖਣ ਮੁਖ ਬਹੁ ਦਾਨ ਦਾਤਾਰਾ ॥ ਵੈਸੋਂ ਥਾਪਿਆ ਸਿਆਮ ਵੇਦ ਪਛਮ ਮੁਖ ਕਰ ਸੀਸ ਨਿਵਾਰਾ ॥ ਰਿਗ ਨੀਲੰਬਰ ਜੁਜਰ ਪੀਤ ਸਵੇਤੰਬਰ ਕਰ ਸਿਆਮ ਸੁਧਾਰਾ ॥ ਤ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਜੁਗੀਂ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਧਰਮ ਉਚਾਰਾ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)*

<sup>279</sup> ਕਾਮ ਕਰੋਧ ਮੋਹ ਬਸਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਹਰਿ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਬਿਸਰਾਈ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੧੯) ਕਾਮ ਹੇਤਿ ਕੁੰਚਰੁ ਲੈ ਫਾਂਕਿਓ ਓਹੁ ਪਰ ਵਸਿ ਭਇਓ ਬਿਚਾਰਾ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੭੧) ਕਾਮ ਸੁਆਇ ਗਜ ਬਸਿ ਪਰੇ ਮਨ ਬਉਰਾ ਰੇ ਅੰਕੁਸੁ ਸਹਿਓ ਸੀਸ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੩੫)

<sup>280</sup> ਸਭਸੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ” (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੦੪)

*slaves. The multiplicity of gods thus generated caused dangerous dissensions in the Indian society. As a result India was enslaved by the foreigners for a long time. Even now this multiplicity of beliefs is an impediment in the path of national unity. The writers of Gurbani recognised only God as the creator of the universe and being omnipotent, the pivot of religious worship. They strongly condemned the stone worship preached by the Puranas and advised the people to traverse the road leading to the omnipresent God.*”<sup>281</sup>

For the Sikhs, religion is defined as a unified system of beliefs and practices. (1) It relates to unqualified belief in God (2) social equality (3) Moral excellence (4) and continuous spiritual advancement. Belief in God is its directing power for achieving the above ends and Gurbani is its guide. All above said responsibilities in Sikhism go together.

“ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਡੋਲਹਿ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਾ ॥ਕਹਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਅਕੁਲੁ ਨਹੀ ਚੇਤਿਆ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਲਪਟਾਨਾ ॥” (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੩੨)

**You worship gods and goddesses and have ignored the supreme Lord of all. Says Kabeer by not remembering the Lord you have involved yourself in falsehood. (Guru Granth Sahib page 332)**

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<sup>281</sup> ਇਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਨੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇਵੀ-ਦੇਵਤੇ ਨੂੰ ‘ਪ੍ਰਭੂ’ ਨਹੀ ਮੰਨਿਆ, ਜੈਸਾ ਕਿ ਪੁਰਾਣਾਂ ਨੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਹਰੇਕ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਲੇਖਕ ਨੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਸਦੇ ਨੌਕਰ ਆਦਿ । ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਨੇਕ-ਈਸਵਰ-ਵਾਦ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਭਾਈ-ਚਾਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਫੁੱਟ ਪਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ, ਜਿਸਦੇ ਨਤੀਜੇ-ਵਜੋਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲੰਬੀ ਗ਼ੁਲਾਮੀ ਸਹਣੀ ਪਈ । ਹੁਣ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਇਸ਼ਟ-ਅਨੇਕਤਾ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ-ਏਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਰਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਮੁੱਖ ਰੁਕਾਵਟ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਰਚਨਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਐਕੇਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦਾ ਮਾਲਕ ਦਸਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਿਰੋਮਣੀ ਸੱਤਾਧਾਰੀ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਉਸਦੇ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਪਾਸਨਾ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ । ਪੁਰਾਣਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖੀ ਪੱਥਰ-ਪੂਜਾ ਆਦਿ ਦੀਆਂ ਚਲਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਮੂੜ੍ਹ ਤੇ ਵਾਮ ਮਾਰਗੀ ਪੂਜਾ-ਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ੋਰਦਾਰ ਖੰਡਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਵਵਿਆਪੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਗਾਡੀ-ਰਾਹ ਤੋਰਿਆ ( ਸਰਵੋਤਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ - ਸਵਾਮੀ ਰਾਮ ਤੀਰਥ ਦੰਡੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਪੰਨਾ ੫੪)

## Chapter 5

### Social Division

#### 5.1 The Caste System.

The Indian caste system (Varan Ashram Dharma) <sup>282</sup>is usually explained by saying that at one time in the history of India the society was divided on the basis of the nature of work each person was assigned to do. This was usually done on the basis of a person's suitability or ability to do it. Later this practical division became so rigid that it did not remain a division of labour but became a division of labourers.

Some historians believe that the Aryan invaders hated the vanquished locals and reduced them to servants and menial workers.<sup>283</sup> Over a period of time the victorious classes assumed dictatorship, shunned labour, became respectable, and even worshipful but the down trodden lower classes turned into

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<sup>282</sup>Strictly speaking caste is different from Varan Ashram (colour prejudice). 'Caste' is a Portuguese word meaning 'Social division'. However in India Varan Ashram Dharma slowly degenerated into caste system and was applied rigidly by associating it with profession and birth. Thus it became a schism of the soul.

<sup>283</sup> The Aryans brought colour (later caste) prejudice with them and it is also mentioned in the Avesta literature of the Aryans. The Iranian Aryans were divided into Athervas, Rathestas, Vastrias, and Huiti.

labourers and slaves. The upper classes became richer and richer without doing much work whereas the lower working classes became poorer and poorer in spite of backbreaking hard labour. The dignity of labour was thus completely lost.

## **5.2 How did the caste distinctions start in India?**

Like any other fact in Hinduism the answer to this question is utter confusion. Even the Hindu scholars differ on how castes came into being. The 90th Hymn of the 10th *Mandal* of Rig-Veda reads:- "*The Brahman was born the first, with ten heads and ten faces. He drank the soma and made poison powerless*". This fact was later made the basis of social division (colour prejudice or caste). Rig Veda also says, "*When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make? What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet? The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanya made. His thighs became the Vaisya; from his feet the Shudra was produced.*" (Rig Veda 10.90-11, 12)

This Rig Vedic hymn is known by its general name *Purusha Sukta* and is supposed to embody the official doctrine of Varna and Caste. Later this Vedic statement was meticulously supported, sustained, nurtured and developed through the Puranas and the Simrtis of the Hindu religion.<sup>284</sup> Since Vedas were associated with religion the

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<sup>284</sup> Caste got inalienably associated with birth. No one was allowed to change his/her caste. It is said that once a Kashatrya king (Wishvamitra) requested Vashishta to permit his entry into Brahmanism. The request was spurned. Later Wishvamitra approached Lord Brahma and again expressed his desire to abjure Kashatrya caste and become a Brahman. Even Brahma declined to accept his



lower classes were forbidden from reading religious books or visiting Hindu temples. They were supposed to obey the Brahman who interpreted the scripture for them. Such was the deep-rooted effect of caste prejudices that as late as the seventeenth century AD a Brahman is said to have declined to anoint the nationalist leader Shiva Ji as a ruler just because the latter belonged to a so-called lower caste.<sup>285</sup> Further explanation of the Purusha Sukta of Rig Veda was later given as, “*The Brahman was the lord of all beings upon the earth and Kashatrya, the controller of the earth. This left the Vaisya to sustain these three classes with money and grain. The Shudra was to serve all three of them*”.

The Sama-Veda has not incorporated the *Purusha Sukta* among its hymns although it has borrowed and edited many other Rig Vedic hymns. Nor does it give any other explanation of the Varna Dharma or its omission. Yajur Veda mentions it in Chapter 31 (hymn 11)<sup>286</sup>

The Ramayana says that the four Varnas are the offspring of Manu. Vishnu Purana too traces the origin of castes to Manu. From Brahma’s right thumb was born the Parjapati Daksha; Daksha had a daughter named Aditi. From her was born Vivasvat; and from Vivasvat sprang Manu. Manu had nine sons called Ikshvaku, Nriga, Dhrishta, Saryati, Narishanta, Pramsu, Nedishta, Karusha and Prishadhra. From Karusha the Kashatryas of great power were

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request.

<sup>285</sup> Shiva Ji had to arrange *Yagyas* for 4 months and feed 11000 Brahmans before he could be anointed as a ruler. It is said that he spent 50 Lakhs of rupees just to earn the right to be anointed as a ruler. Some writers estimate it to be Rs. 700.000000 (Read *The menace of Hindu imperialism* by D.J Maharaj page 166)

<sup>286</sup> ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੇਅਸਯ ਮੁਖਮਾਸੀਦ ਬਾਹੂ ਰਾਜਨਯ: ਕ੍ਰਿਤ: , ਉਰੂ ਤਦਸਯ ਯਦਵੈ-ਸਯ: ਪਦਭਯਾਗਵੰ ਸੂਦਰੋ ਅਜਾਯਾਤ (ਯਜੁਰ ਵੇਦ ਅਧਯਾਯ ੩੧ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ੧੧)

descended. One named Nabhaga, the son of Nedishta, became a Vaisya. This explanation is incomplete. It only explains the origin of Kashatryas and Vaishyas

According to the Shantiparva of the Mahabharata Bhrigu said, “Brahma first created the Parjapatis, penetrated by his own energy. Then the lord formed truth, righteousness, austere fervour, and the eternal Veda. He also formed the gods, *danvas*, *gandharvas*, *daityas*, *asuras*, *maharagas*, *yakshas*, *rakshasas*, *nagas*, *paisachas*, men as well as all other classes (Varna) of beings. The colour (Varna) of the Brahmans was white; that of the Kashatryas red, that of the Vaishyas yellow, and that of the Shudras black.

Another explanation found in the Hindu literature is that when Brahma became desirous of creating the world, the creatures in which goodness (*sattva*) prevailed sprang from his mouth, those in whom passion (*rajas*) predominated came from his breast; creatures with darkness (*tamas*) proceeded from his thigh. The rest were created from his feet.

Yet another version speaks of castes being formed by Vishnu who sprang from Brahma and in contemplation became the Parjapati. He formed numerous creatures. The Brahmans were formed from an imperishable (*akshara*). The Kashatryas were produced from a perishable (*kshara*), element and the Vaisyas from alteration. Lastly the Shudras were created from a modification of smoke.

According to Vishnu Purana, Atri was the son of Brahma, and the father of Soma (the Moon). After celebrating the Rajasuya sacrifice, Soma became intoxicated with pride, and abducted Tara, the wife of Brihaspati. The Rishis persuaded him to restore the woman to her husband but he declined. A fiery conflict ensued

after which Brahma compelled Soma to restore Tara to her husband. She had, however, in the meantime become pregnant and bore a son named Budha. Budha married Illa, the daughter of Manu. It was from Budha's family that Gritsamada's son Saunaka founded the system of four castes Brahmanas, Kashatryas, Vaisyas, and Shudras. Vayu Purana also accepts this explanation.

“The son of Ila enquired from Vayu: *“Tell me, Vayu to whom the earth, with its wealth rightfully belongs, to the Brahman or the Kashatrya?”* Vayu replied: *“All that exists in the world is the Brahman's property by right of primogeniture. He is the chief of all the castes, the first-born and the most excellent”*.”

The Bhagvad Purana says that the *Purusha* burst an egg from which issued forth thousands of thighs, feet, arms, eyes, faces and heads. The Brahman was created through the mouth of *Purusha*; the Kashatrya from his arms, the Vaishya was born from the thighs, and the Shudra from the feet. The earth was formed from his feet, the air from his navel; the heaven from his heart, and the Mahaloka from his breast.

In order to perpetuate the division on the basis of caste, tilak *or* *pottu* began to be used. It invoked a feeling of sanctity in the wearer and was recognized as a religious mark. Its form and colour varied according to one's caste. The Brahmin applied a white chandan mark. The Kashatrya applied a red kumkum mark signifying valour. The vaishya wore a yellow kesar or turmeric mark. The shudra was instructed to apply black bhasma (Ash) or charcoal mark signifying service of the other three divisions. These days Vishnu worshippers apply a chandan Tilak (forehead mark) of the shape of "U", Shiva worshippers a tripundra, and Devi worshippers a red dot of *kumkum*.

Shudras were not to be entitled to the purificatory ceremonies. *“Just as the cloud of smoke is dissipated in the air and is of no service in the sacrificial rite, so too the Shudras are useless byproduct for purposes of sacrifice. Low of birth, devoid of purity and for want of the observances prescribed in the Veda they are the servants of the three.”*

## **5.3 The untouchables/unapproachables**

### **(a) The Untouchables**

They are those who cause pollution by touch. Untouchability observed by the Hindus is hereditary. A list of untouchables was prepared by the Government of India and attached to the Orders-in-Council issued under the Government of India Act of 1935. One of the schedules referred to the Punjab. It enumerated the castes, races or tribes of Punjabi untouchables as follows (See Part V) Schedule

Ad Dharmis, Bawaria, Baiar, Bazigar, Bengali, Banjara, Chamar, Chuhra or Balmiki, Chandal, Dhanak, Dhumna, Dagi, Koli, Khatik, Gandhila, Gagra, Kori, Marija, or Marecha, Meghi, Nat, Od, Pasi, Pema, Ramdasia., Sepela, Siridband, Sansi and Sarera

### **(b) The unapproachables**

Further down were listed the unapproachables. They were those who caused pollution even if they came within a certain distance. The lowest caste among them were the Nayadis—(called the dog-eaters).

### (c) The unseeables

Below the Unapproachable are the unseeables (*Antyajās*). Most of them live in the Tinnevelley District of the Madras Presidency. One class of them is known as Purada Vannans. They are forbidden from coming out during day time because their sight is believed to cause pollution. Scriptures say that the *Antyajās*<sup>287</sup> must live and have their abode outside the village.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> The word “Anta” means the ‘last one’. The Hindus believe and argue that Shudras/untouchables were born last of all from the feet and are therefore lower in status. The word is also applied to the village boundaries by the Hindus arguing that the *Antyajās* must live outside (on the outskirts of) the village boundary (ant अन्त). In Maharashtra the *Mahars are antyajās*. They live outside village boundaries (walls erected specially to segregate them) almost in all Maharashtrian villages. They work as labourers collecting food and corn at the time of harvesting season. They carry dead animals. In the Shanti Parvan (109.9) of the Mahabharat there is a reference to *Antyajās*. According to Manu (V.39) they are the offspring of a Chandala father and a Nishad mother. Such was the hatred with low castes that they lived outside towns and had to drag a bush behind them or ring a bell to indicate their low status. Even in the times of the Peshwas the *Mahars* of Poona were not permitted to enter the town after 3.PM lest their long shadow defiles the upper classes.

<sup>288</sup> These days the phrase “backward class” is used for Shudras and “Scheduled Castes & tribes” is used for *antyajās*.

The full list covering the whole of India included 429 Shudra or low caste communities.

## 5.4 Treatment of the Shudras

### Duties of a Shudra:

According to Manu Smṛiti, “*In order to protect the universe he, the resplendent one, assigned separate duties and occupations to those who sprang from his mouth, arms, thighs and feet.*” *One occupation only the lord prescribed to the Shudra to serve other classes meekly.*” (Manu 1.87 and 1.91)

Gautama in his *Dharma Sutra* (Chapter XIV, Verse 30) says, “*On touching an outcaste, a Chandala, a woman impure on account of her confinement, a woman in her courses, or a corpse and on touching persons who have touched them, he shall purify himself by bathing dressed in his clothes.*” (Also see Manu V. 85)

Manu Smṛiti covers many pages on this issue. We give below some quotations from Manu Smṛiti to show how the low castes were treated.

IV .81 He who explains the sacred law to a Shudra or dictates to him penances, will sink together with that man into the hell called ASAMVRITA<sup>289</sup>.

X. 51. But the dwellings of the *Chandalas* and the *Shvapakas* shall be outside the village, they must be made *Apapratras* and their wealth (shall be) dogs and donkeys.

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<sup>289</sup> In IV.88-90 Manu lists the names of 21 hells which a helper of a Shudra has to visit.

- X. 52. Their dress (shall be) the garments of the dead, (they shall eat) their food from broken dishes, black iron (shall be) their ornaments and they must always wander from place to place.
- X. 53. Their transactions shall be among themselves and their marriages with their equals.
- X. 54. Their food shall be given to them by others (than an Aryan giver) in a broken dish; at night they shall not walk about in village and in towns.
- X. 55. By day they may go about for the purpose of their work, distinguished by marks at king's command, and they shall carry out the corpses of persons who have no relatives.
- X. 56. They shall always execute the criminals, in accordance with the law, and they shall take for themselves the clothes, the beds, and the ornaments of such criminals.
- V. 143: He who, while carrying anything in any manner, is touched by an impure person (or thing), shall become impure.

## **5.5 Caste and the Bhagvad Geeta**

Bhagvad Geeta is said to be the sermon offered by Sri Krishna to Arjuna. It fully supports Manu's treatment of the Shudras. We quote some relevant portions of Bhagvad Geeta hereunder for reference.

*(1) "With the preponderance of vice, Krishna the women of the family become corrupt; and with the corruption of women, O Varsneya (descendant of Varsni), there ensues an intermixture of castes. Intermixture of castes leads the destroyers of the race as*

*well as the race itself to hell. Deprived of the offerings of lumps of rice and water (Sraddha, Tarpana etc.), the manes of their race also fall. Through these evils bringing about an intermixture of castes, the age-long caste traditions and family-customs of the destroyers of the race get extinct. (Bhagvad Geeta 1.41-43)*

2) *"The educated should not unsettle the faith of the uneducated who have become attached to their occupation. He himself should perform the occupation of his Varna and make others perform theirs accordingly. An educated man may not become attached to his occupation. But the uneducated and dull-minded people who have become attached to their occupation should not be spoiled by the educated by putting them on a wrong path by abandoning their own occupation."*

*(Bhagvad Geeta III. 26, 29.)*

(3) *"Oh, Arjun! Whenever this religion of duties and occupations (i.e. this religion of Chaturvarna?) declines, then I myself will come to punish those who are responsible for its downfall and to restore it"*

*(Bhagvad Geeta IV, 7-8.)*

(4) *"The four orders of society (viz., the Brahman, the Kashatrya, the vaisya and the Shudra) were created by me classifying them according to their parental qualities and apportioning corresponding duties to them; I am the author of this creation, know me, the immortal Lord, to be a non-doer."*

*(Bhagvad Geeta IV.13)*

(5) *"Even if it may be easier to follow the occupation of another Varna yet to follow the occupation of one's own Varna is more meritorious, although one may not be able to do it quite efficiently. There is bliss in following the occupation of one's own Varna, even if death were to result in performing it ; but to follow the*



*occupation of another Varna is risky".—*

*(Bhagvad Geeta. VI. 35.)*

(6) *“Arjuna, the duties of Brahmans, Kashatryas and Vaisyas, as well as Shudras, are divided according to the qualities born of their respective natures.” (Bhagvad Geeta XVIII.41)*

(7) *“One’s own duty, though devoid of merit, is preferable to the duty of another well performed. Even death in the performance of one’s own duty brings blessedness: another’s duty is fraught with fear.” (Bhagvad Geeta III.35 and XVIII.47).*

## **5.6 In-equality and Hinduism**

The chaos of castes in India is the result of the concoction of the theory of *Chaturvarna* (four castes) which is the basis of Hinduism. It appears that every Hindu scholar had a free hand at saying what he liked.<sup>290</sup> One thing is however common to all of them. The Brahman remains the master class<sup>291</sup> and the Shudra remains the dreg of the society. Such division of society has no parallel in the history of the comity of nations. The Hindus who touch (or come closer to) the lower castes become polluted and have to undergo purifying ceremonies but there is no ceremony in Hindu religion which can make the untouchables/ unapproachables pure. In the matter of purification process even the river Ganges (गंगा नदी) has been indoctrinated. It purifies only the Hindus and the 800 million (nearly one fourth of the population of India) Shudras remain

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<sup>290</sup> Swami Vivekananda writes, “The idea that one man is superior to another has no meaning in Vedanta.” (‘What Religion is’ By Vivekananda page 69)

<sup>291</sup> “One who is engaged in devotional service, even if he commits the most abominable actions, is to be considered saintly because he is rightly situated.” (Geeta 9.30)

unpurified even if they take a bath in the Ganges. The uneducated and underfed Shudras of India are born impure and they must remain impure till death.

Inequality denies the rights of the common man as well as those of society which are sacrificed to the interest of the class of the supposed Supermen (Brahmans). Service to humanity is the cardinal principle of almost all religions but Hinduism does not even mention it. The concepts like Sikh *Daswandh* (one tenth for charity) or Muslim *Zakat* (charity fund) are nowhere mentioned in Hinduism. *Dan* (offerings) must be given only to the Brahman. Hinduism cannot therefore be called the Religion of humanity.

Another unfortunate fact in Hinduism is that caste is associated with birth. Shudra children are considered impure by reason of their birth. The stigma of caste foisted on them by Hinduism humiliates and degrades them until their last breath on earth. To be a Hindu one has to be born in a Hindu family. You are either born a Hindu or you are a non-Hindu (Manu Simrti 10.5). Such is the segregation among the Hindus that one can become a Mussalman or a Sikh but not a Hindu.

Caste system has given rise to social inequality, bigotry and lack of respect for manual labour. The well-entrenched *Chakarvyuh* (labyrinth) of caste has become difficult to break. Even the low castes themselves have psychologically succumbed to it and do not dare to oppose it. They are fully satisfied with remaining in their caste and working as serfs. Rigid enforcement of caste hierarchy has also resulted in restrictions on connubial and convivial associations. Notions of inferiority or superiority have been enforced by written and unwritten Hindu law.

“Whatever exists in the world is the property of the Brahman.”(Manu 1.100) Even kings bowed to Brahmans. Epics like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have many stories highlighting this fact

## 5.7 The Sikh View

Vedas preach and confirm caste differences (See Rig 10-90.12). Against this the Sikh Gurus preach, “Never question anybody’s caste or lineage.”<sup>292</sup> The Sikh Gurus openly declare that God is not in the grip of the Brahmans. He is the Lord of all and makes no discrimination on the basis of castes. Even rising from the so called lower castes Namdev and Kabeer attained salvation through their devotion to God<sup>293</sup>.

The Sikhs are friends of all humanity.<sup>294</sup> Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, started the process of abolishing caste differences through preaching, through *Sangat* (free association) and through *Pangat* (*inter-dining*) institutions. At the time of Guru Nanak Sahib (1469-1539 AD) there were about 3000 sub-castes and four main divisions (Brahman, Kashatrya, Vaish and Shudra) in India. Guru Nanak Sahib clearly identified himself with the lowliest of the low<sup>295</sup> and denounced those who paraded pride in their caste. He said, “Worthless is the caste and worthless an exalted name. For

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<sup>292</sup> “ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੂਛਹੁ ਜਾਤੀ ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੪੯)”ਜਾਤਿ ਅਜਾਤਿ ਕੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਧਿਆਵੈ ਸਭਿ ਪੂਰੇ ਮਾਨਸ ਤਿਨਛੇ”(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੭੮)

<sup>293</sup> “ਨਾਮਾ ਛੀਬਾ ਕਬੀਰੁ ਜੋਲਾਹਾ ਪੂਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ”(ਪੰਨਾ ੬੭)

<sup>294</sup> ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਮੀਤੁ ਹਮ ਆਪਨ ਕੀਨਾ ਹਮ ਸਭਨਾ ਕੇ ਸਾਜਨ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੭੧)

<sup>295</sup> ਪਤਿਤ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਲੀਏ ਕਰਿ ਅਪੁਨੇ ਸਗਲ ਕਰਤ ਨਮਸਕਾਰੋ॥ਬਰਨੁ ਜਾਤਿ ਕੋਊ ਪੂਛੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਬਾਛਹਿ ਚਰਨ ਰਵਾਰੋ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੯੮)

*all mankind there is but a single refuge.*<sup>296</sup> At the pain of excommunication he even declared openly that he would associate with the so-called low castes and not play a second fiddle to the affluent and socially pampered magnates.<sup>297</sup> To give credence to his statements he befriended the so-called lowest caste Mardana all through his life.

To expose those who advanced the argument that in the next life God will offer better place to the higher castes, the Guru said that in the court of God neither caste nor power is of any value.<sup>298</sup> He dissociated caste from birth and said that the caste of a person should be associated with the person's deeds and not with his birth. Fully stated his advice runs as follows: *“Do not be proud of your caste. Only those can claim to be superior who attune to God. You will be a fool to boast of your high caste because such claims result in many problems. Like a potter fashioning earthen pots in numerous shapes our father God has fashioned us from one and the same clay. All living beings are composed of the same five elements; no one can prove any disparity in the constituents of the human body. Nanak says human beings are rewarded for their deeds and without the guidance of a true Guru, they do not stand to*

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<sup>296</sup> ਫਕੜ ਜਾਤੀ ਫਕੜੁ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਇਕਾ ਛਾਉ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੩) ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਚਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਨੀਚ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕੋਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੩੧).

<sup>297</sup> ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ ॥ ਜਿਥੈ ਨੀਚ ਸਮਾਲੀਅਨਿ ਤਿਥੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਖਸੀਸ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੮) ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਚਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਨੀਚੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਇਕਨੈ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਇਕੁ ਚਾਨਣ ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੨)

<sup>298</sup> ਅਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜੋਰੁ ਹੈ ਅਗੈ ਜੀਉ ਨਵੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੬੯) ਅਗੈ ਨਾਉ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਇਸੀ ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਦੁਖੁ ਖਾਤਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੧੪)

*get the chance of being liberated from wrong egoistic notions.*<sup>299</sup>

The Guru tolerated the profession-based tags but repudiated the social superiority or inferiority attached to professions. He said classification of caste should be based on deeds instead of profession or birth.<sup>300</sup> A bad deed should bring bad name to the doer. For example “A greedy person is a dog; and a person full of falsehood should be called a filthy street sweeper (ਚੂਹੜਾ). Cheating (ਠੱਗੀ) is like eating a rotting carcass. Slandering (ਨਿੰਦਾ) of others is putting the filth of others into your own mouth (ਹਰਾਮ). The fire of anger is the Shudra (outcaste ਸ਼ੁਦਰ) who burns dead bodies at the crematorium”<sup>301</sup> According to the Gurus a man can be a tailor, a barber, a farmer, a carpenter, a cobbler and still be equal in social status with a Brahman whereas a Brahman who is doing evil deeds is lower in status than a God-fearing street-sweeper. And the Brahmans who cheated others and in so doing sucked their blood were butchers.<sup>302</sup>

*“It was reserved for Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform, and to lay the broad foundations which enabled his*

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<sup>299</sup> ਜਾਤਿ ਕਾ ਗਰਬੁ ਨ ਕਰੀਅਹੁ ਕੋਈ ..... (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੨੭) ਜਾਤਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਨਹੀ ਦੀਸੈ ਆਖੀ ( ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੩੫)

<sup>300</sup> ਜਾਤਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਨਹ ਪੂਛੀਐ ਸਚ ਘਰੁ ਲੇਹੁ ਬਤਾਇ ॥ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੩੦) ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ਤੇਹਾ ਹੋਇਸੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੩੦), ਜੈਸਾ ਕਰੇ ਸੁ ਤੈਸਾ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ਆਪਿ ਬੀਜਿ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਖਾਵੈ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੬੨)

<sup>301</sup> ਲਬੁ ਕੁਤਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਚੂਹੜਾ ਠਗਿ ਖਾਧਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ..... (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੫), ਕੁਬੁਧਿ ਡੂਮਣੀ ਕੁਦਇਆ ਕਸਾਇਣਿ ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਘਟ ਚੂਹੜੀ ਮੁਠੀ ਕਰੋਧਿ ਚੰਡਾਲਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੧) False-mindedness is the drummer-woman (ਮਰਾਸਣ); cruelty is the butcheress; slander of others in one’s heart is the cleaning-woman, and deceitful anger is the outcaste-woman.

<sup>302</sup> ਮਥੈ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੇਤਿ ਧੋਤੀ ਕਾਖਾਈ, ਹਥਿ ਫੁਰੀ ਜਗਤ ਕਾਸਾਈ- ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੧)

*successor Govind to fire the minds of his countrymen with a new nationality, and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes.”*

(J.D Cunningham ‘A history of the Sikhs’ Page 34)

*“He (Guru Nanak) was the essence of humility. He preached with vehemence against idolatry, hypocrisy and distinctions of castes and creeds, but in so doing he never uttered a word, which savoured of personal ambition, neither did he arrogate to himself the attributes of God.”*

(Glimpses of world religion)

After Guru Nanak, Guru Angad Dev, enforced convivial dining through persuasion, Guru Amar Das specifically disallowed visitors unless they dined in his *Langar* (eatry) sitting with all other castes. This compulsory commensality brought people of different castes together as equals. Later Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Ram Das also condemned caste distinctions. Hymns of the writers from all castes were included in the Granth Sahib by Guru Arjan Dev. Bhai Gurdas mentions that the *Karah Parsad* (holy food) offered by the so-called low castes and the outcastes was freely distributed to all irrespective of their castes.<sup>303</sup>

The process was continued by the later Gurus. In the end Guru Gobind Singh finally swept caste aside from the Indian Society by

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<sup>303</sup> Bhai Gurdas has criticised caste at various places in his vars. Read ਵਾਰ ੩ (ਪਉੜੀ ੧੬), ਵਾਰ ੫ (੫:੧), ਵਾਰ ੫ (੫:੯), ਵਾਰ ੯(੫:੧), ਵਾਰ ੧੨(੫: ੧੩), ਵਾਰ ੧੨(੫:੧੭), ਵਾਰ ੧੮ (੫:੧੪), ਵਾਰ ੧ (੫: ੩੧ ਤੇ ੫੪), ਵਾਰ ੨੪ (੫:੪) ਵਾਰ ੨੯ (੫:੫)

offering Amrit to all castes from the same bowl.<sup>304</sup> His five beloved ones all came from the so-called low castes. They even included a low caste barber and a washer man who were socially ostracized in those days. Kesar Singh Chhibber writes that the Khalsa obliterated the distinctions of caste and inter-married. Bhai Dya Singh's Rehat Nama states that Guru Gobind Singh strictly forbade the mention of caste.<sup>305</sup>

Mr. M.A. McAuliffe writes, “*Prior to the time of the Sikh Gurus, no general ever conceived the idea of raising an army from men, who were believed to be unclean and polluted from their birth; but the watchword and war-cry of the Sikhs, “Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh”, and the stimulating precepts of the tenth Guru, altered what had hitherto been deemed dregs of humanity into warriors whose prowess and loyalty never failed their leaders.*”

(Sikh Religion Vol.V P.93).

Bhagat Kabbeer becomes a bit sarcastic when he talks about caste distinctions. In one of his hymns he asks, “*If you claim to be born to a Brahman Woman, can you also claim you were born through a different route?*” He also asks, “*How did you become a Braham and who made us the Shudras, Is milk flowing in your veins and*

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<sup>304</sup> ਹਮਾ ਦਰ ਯਕ ਮਜ਼ਹਬ ਰਾ ਆਇੰਦ ਕਿ ਦੁਈ ਅਜ਼ ਮਿਆਂ ਬਰਖੇਜ਼ਦ । ਵ ਹਰ ਚਹਾਰ ਵਰਨ ਕੋਮਿ ਹਨੂਦ ਅਜ਼ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਨ ਵ ਛਤਰੀ ਵ ਸੂਦਰ ਵ ਵੈਜ਼ ਕਿ ਹਰ ਯਕ ਰਾ ਦਰ-ਧਰਮ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ ਦੀਨੇ ਅਲਹਿਦਾ ਮੁਕੱਰਰ ਅਸਤ । ਆਂ ਰਾ ਤਰਕ ਦਾਦਹ ਵ ਬਰ ਯਕ ਤਰੀਕ ਸਲੂਕ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦ ॥ (Secret report of Munshi Ghulam Muhay- ud-din to Aurangzeb, the Emperor of Delhi).

<sup>305</sup> ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਕੋ ਪਾਨੀ ਕਹੈ ਸਿਖ ਕੀ ਪੁਛੇ ਜਾਤ । ਦਇਆ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਮ ਸਿਖ ਨਹੀ ਜਨਮ ਗਵਾਵੈ ਬਾਦ (ਚਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਦਇਆ ਸਿੰਘ)

*only blood in ours?*<sup>306</sup>

Since the Hindu Shastras preached caste discrimination, the Sikh Gurus rejected the Hindu scripture and the Hindu gods.<sup>307</sup> In the Guru's concept of religion there was no place for the so-called four *Varnas*. The prince and the pauper became one and came to be regarded with equal respect. It was vehemently preached that one's caste is based on deeds one performs and not on his birth. Thus we see that Sikhism accorded equal status to all and sundry.<sup>308</sup> No one was considered an outsider or lower in status.<sup>309</sup> According to Sikhism God is accessible to anybody of any caste.<sup>310</sup> When a person accepts Sikhism he loses all notions of caste or superiority/inferiority.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> “ਗਰਭ ਵਾਸ ਮਹਿ ਕੁਲੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤੀ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਿੰਦੁ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਉਤਪਾਤੀ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਰੇ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਬਾਮਨ ਕਬ ਕੇ ਹੋਏ ॥ ਬਾਮਨ ਕਹਿ ਕਹਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਮਤ ਖੋਏ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਜੋ ਤੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣੀ ਜਾਇਆ ॥ ਤਉ ਆਨ ਬਾਟ ਕਾਹੇ ਨਹੀ ਆਇਆ ॥ ੨ ॥ ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਹਮ ਕਤ ਸੂਦ ॥ ਹਮ ਕਤ ਲੋਹੂ ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਦੂਧ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੨੪)

<sup>307</sup> ਮਹਿਮਾ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਵੇਦ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੯੪), ਭਰਮੇ ਸੁਰ ਨਰ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੫੮), ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮਾ ਬਿਸਨ ਮਹਾਦੇਉ ਤੈ ਗੁਣ ਭੁਲੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੫੨)

<sup>308</sup> ਜੋ ਰਿਦਾ ਸੁਹੇਲਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਤੂੰ ਵੁਠਾ ਸਭਨਾ ਕੇ ਦਾਤਾਰਾ ਜੀਉ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਤੂੰ ਸਾਝਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਬਾਪੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥ ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਤੇਰੈ ਅਖੁਟ ਭੰਡਾਰਾ ॥ ਜਿਸੁ ਤੂੰ ਦੇਹਿ ਸੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿ ਅਘਾਵੈ ਸੋਈ ਭਗਤੁ ਤੁਮਾਰਾ ਜੀਉ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੭) ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੧੧) ਚਰਨ ਧੋਇ ਰਹਿਰਾਸਿ ਕਰਿ ਚਰਣਾਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਪੀਲਾਇਆ ॥ ਚਾਰੇ ਪੈਰ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਚਾਰ ਵਰਣ ਇਕ ਵਰਣੁ ਕਰਾਇਆ ॥ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

<sup>309</sup> ਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ( ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੯੯)

<sup>310</sup> ਜਾਤਿ ਅਜਾਤਿ ਜਪੈ ਜਨੁ ਕੋਇ ਜੋ ਜਾਪੈ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਹੋਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੫੦)

<sup>311</sup> ਹਮਰੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਪਾਤਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ, ਹਮ ਵੇਚਿਓ ਸਿਰੁ ਗੁਰ ਕੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੩੧) ਚਾਰਿ ਵਰਣ ਇਕ ਵਰਨ ਕਰਿ, ਵਰਨ ਅਵਰਨ ਤਮੋਲ ਗੁਲਾਲੇ ॥ ਅਸਟ ਧਾਤੁ ਇਕੁ ਧਾਤੁ ਕਰਿ, ਵੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਨ ਭੇਦੁ ਵਿਚਾਲੇ ॥ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ) ਖੜੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਸੂਦ ਵੈਸ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਚਹੁ ਵਰਨਾ ਕਉ ਸਾਝਾ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੪੭) ਖੜੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਸੂਦ ਵੈਸ ਸਭ ਏਕੈ ਨਾਮਿ ਤਰਾਨਥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੦੧)



Thus we see that the Khalsa stood for a casteless society but the pernicious elements of the caste, which had gone deep into the psyche of the Indians, were difficult to root out completely.<sup>312</sup> Soon after Guru Gobind Singh's death the Sikhs reverted to the forests and the caste system raised its head again under the influence of the Brahmans who had taken over the Sikh religious places. They distorted and misrepresented the tenets of Sikhism since there was nobody to counteract their nefarious designs.

It is a fact that patterns of connubial, patriarchal values and social structures take a long time to change. Such is the impact of caste in India that even in our own times it openly exists everywhere.<sup>313</sup> The prominent Hindu reformer Vivekananda once said, "*If untouchability lives, Hinduism will die.*" Mahatma Gandhi<sup>314</sup> too condemned it but the malady still persists in spite of the efforts of our national Government in curbing all sorts of discrimination and bias. Connubial and commensality restrictions are a heritage from the remotest past social customs, which had gone deep into the psyche of the village people. Over and above the conservative

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<sup>312</sup>Such has been the influence of Hinduism that the Indian Muslims, who are forbidden caste differences, became divided into castes like *Sayed, Mughal, Sheikh and Pathan* on the pattern of four Vernas of Hinduism (A.K.Najmal "Changing Society in India and Pakistan") At present there are 35 separate castes of Muslims in Bengal alone. Even Indian Christians could not escape it. In his book "Census of India" (page 380) Mr.J.H.Hutton writes, "Caste is admittedly observed by the Catholics while some Protestants, who prefer not to admit it, openly admit a ban on commensality."

<sup>313</sup>"ਸਰਬਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਧਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਮਾਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਗਤ ਪੰਗਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਕੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਕਰਨਾ,ਪਿਛਲੀ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੁਛਣੀ,ਭਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨਾ । ਇਹੋ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਹੈ । ਜੋ ਸਿਰ ਨਿਵਾਏਗਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਉਸਦੀ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਕਰਨਗੇ"॥ (ਹੁਕਨਾਮਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਮਿਤੀ ੧੩ ਜੂਨ ੧੯੩੬)

<sup>314</sup> Mahatma Gandhi simply gave a new name to the low castes. He called them "Harijan". He neither attacked the Hindu scripture, which sanctioned caste nor campaigned to admit low castes in Hindu Temples much less dining with them or entering into matrimonial alliances. Harijan is still considered a low caste.

Hindu influence the other reasons for the survival of caste are lack of education and the general inertia.

“ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਖੜੀ ਸੁਦ ਵੈਸ ਚਾਰਿ ਵਰਨ ਚਾਰਿ ਆਸਰਮ ਹਰਿ ਜੋ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਵੈ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨੁ” (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪੰਨਾ ੮੬੧)

**“Out of the four Ashrams and the four castes of Brahman, Kashatyra, Vaish and Shudra, only he is supreme who remembers God.”**  
(Guru Granth Sahib Page 861)

# Chapter 6

## Debased humans

### 6.1 Women in Hinduism

The treatment of women in Hinduism is supposed to have been fixed by the Hindu scripture. It started from the Rig Veda where we find that every woman has three husbands before getting married to man. They are gods Soma, Gandharv and Agni.

*“Long lived be he who is her lord; a hundred autumns let him live. Soma obtained her first of all; next the Gandharva was her lord. Agni was thy third husband: now one born of woman is thy fourth. Soma to the Gandharva and to Agni the Gandharva gave: And Agni hath bestowed on me riches and sons and this spouse. Be ye not parted; dwell ye here reach the full time of human life with sons and grandsons sport and play, rejoicing in your own abode.”*

{Rig Veda 10-85.40}.

Later the Taittreya Samhita declared, “A *Good woman is worse than a bad man.*” Maitrayana Samhita denounced her as ‘*untruth*’. In course of time Hindu woman came to be regarded as inferior to men. Women were not permitted to wear a Janeu (Hindu sacred thread).

Manu, the law giver of Hinduism, considered women impure, subservient to men, and lower in status. He disallowed them from listening to the Vedas. They were not permitted to offer *Srauta* or *Grihya samskaras* (Household ceremonies) or performing other sacraments like adding *Ahuti* (oblation) into the *Havan Kund fire*. (ii 66 and ix 18) . Swami Vivekananda quoting Swami Dyananda (1824-1883AD) writes, “*Dyananda pointed out that though a wife is absolutely necessary in the sacrifice of the domestic fire, which is a Vedic rite, she may not touch the Salagram Sila or the household idol*”. (ibid P.64)

The birth of a son was welcome as someone who would be instrumental in achieving salvation for his father but that of a girl was undesirable. A girl was referred to as “stone”.<sup>315</sup> Even now women are in general supposed to remain house-bound, do household chores, bring up children, and keep household accounts.

The Manu Simrti stated "a woman does not deserve independence" (*Ne stree svatantyam arahathi*). He required women to consider their husbands as 'Lords'. “*Though destitute of virtue or seeking pleasure elsewhere or devoid of good qualities, a husband must be constantly worshipped as god by a faithful wife.*” *No sacrifice, no vow, no fast must be performed by women apart from their husbands. If a wife obeys her husband, she will for that reason alone be exalted in heaven.*” (Manu V.154-155)

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<sup>315</sup> ਪੁਰਾਣਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਮਰਣ ਤੋਂ ਉਪ੍ਰੰਤ ਨਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਵਰਗ ਦੀ ਅਸੰਗਤ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਉਥੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਖਾਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਤੇ ਕੁੱਝ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮਹੀਨਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਅਤੇ ਧੀ ਆਦਿਕ ਦੇ ਜੰਮਣ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੁਭ ਜਾਂ ਅਸ਼ੁਭ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਤੇ ਅਸ਼ੁਭ ਜਨਮ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਯੋਗ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਦਾਨ-ਪੁੰਨ ਰੂਪੀ ਦੰਡ ਨਿਯਤ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਕਿ ਘੋੜੀ, ਮੱਝ ਤੇ ਗਾਂ ਆਦਿਕ ਦੇ ਅਸ਼ੁਭ ਮੌਕੇ ਸੂਣ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਉਸਦੇ ਰਖਵਾਲੇ ਲਈ ਹਾਨੀਕਾਰਕ ਦੱਸ ਕੇ ਭੈ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਮਰਣ ਉਪ੍ਰੰਤ ਪਿੰਡ-ਦਾਨ ਸ਼ਰਧ ਕਰਮ, ਆਦਿ ਦਾ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਰਚਿਆ, ਓਵੇਂ ਜਨਮ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਦਾਨ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਿਆ। (ਸਵਾਮੀ ਰਾਮ ਤੀਰਥ ਦੰਡੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਸਰਵੋਤਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਪੰਨਾ ੪੬)

*By violating her duty towards her husband, a wife is disgraced in this world and after death she enters the womb of a jackal and tormented by diseases.”* (Manu V.164)

Manu labeled women as *Satridhana* (chattels). They were, therefore, no better than a *Shudra*.<sup>316</sup> He expected them to remain under the guardianship of their father, brother, or husband throughout life. *“In childhood, a woman must be subject to her father, in youth to her spouse. When her husband dies then to her sons, and the woman must never be independent.”*

(Manu V. 148)

We also read in the Mahabharata (Chapter 12 Shanti Perv) that women were given away as gifts along with animals. "We hear also, O Srinjaya, that Vrihadratha the king of the Angas, fell a prey to death. He gave away one hundred thousand steeds. A hundred thousand maidens also, adorned with golden ornaments, he gave away as presents in a sacrifice he performed."

" King Bhagiratha, in one of the sacrifices he performed, gave away a million maidens adorned with ornaments of gold." (Shanti Perv Book 12 chapter 29 page 57)

In Hinduism women are considered impure at the time of monthly courses and after parturition. Even expectant mothers are regarded as impure and source of defilement.

## 6.2 Dev Dasis

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<sup>316</sup> “The Hindu woman, religiously, is a *Shudra* and is not entitled to the *Gaytry Mantra* (D.P.Mukerjee *Modern Indian Culture* P. 17). Ironically most Hindus worship goddesses but consider women in general as inferior to men.

At one time young girls were offered at the Hindu temples fully loaded with ornaments to stay there for life. It is assumed that this custom may have started from Rig Veda's *mantra* where women are said to have three gods as their husbands (Rig Veda 10-85.40). Kalidasa's epic "Meghadhoot" refers to dancing girls in temples. It is also said that hoards of dancing girls continued presenting themselves for worship in the Mahakal Temple of Ujjain for a long time. Some scholars have suggested that the custom of offering girls to temples became prevalent in the 6th century CE, as mentioned in the Puranas written during this period. Several Puranas strongly recommended the services of singing girls for worship at temples.

At one time people even offered their wives to the temples.<sup>317</sup> This fact is also mentioned by Guru Nanak. He wrote, "*He bathes at Kurukshetra during a solar eclipse to wash his sins, and gives away his decorated wife in offering*"<sup>318</sup>

Manu writes, "*The gift of a daughter, after decking her (with costly garments) and honouring her (by presents of jewels), to a man*

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<sup>317</sup> ਗਯਾ ਦੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਅਤਿ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਰਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਦਾਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੰਡੇ ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਦਿਤਾ ॥ ਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਪੰਡੇ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਛਤ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਰਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹਿਆ ਕਿੰਤੂ ਰਾਜੇ ਦੇ ਮਨ-ਚਾਹੇ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਬੜੀ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਪੰਡੇ ਨੇ ਰਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਨਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ॥ ਰਾਜੇ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਡੇ ਦੀ ਬਹਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਰਾਣੀ ਨੇ ਛਤ ਤੋਂ ਛਾਲ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਆਤਮ-ਹਤਿਆ ਕਰ ਲਈ (ਦੰਡੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਪੰਨਾ ੯੧)

<sup>318</sup> ਜੇ ਓਹ ਗ੍ਰਹਨ ਕਰੈ ਕੁਲਖੇਤਿ ॥ ਅਰਧੈ ਨਾਰਿ ਸੀਗਾਰ ਸਮੇਤਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੭੫). ਅਸੁ ਦਾਨ ਗਜ ਦਾਨ ਸਿਹਜਾ ਨਾਰੀ ਭੂਮਿ ਦਾਨ ॥ ਐਸੇ ਦਾਨੁ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤਹਿ ਕੀਜੈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੭੩), ਕਨਿਕ ਕਾਮਿਨੀ ਹੈਵਰ ਗੈਵਰ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਦਾਨੁ ਦਾਤਾਰਾ, ਅੰਨ ਬਸਤ੍ਰ ਭੂਮਿ ਬਹੁ ਅਰਧੇ, ਨਹਿ ਮਿਲੀਐ ਹਰਿ ਦੁਆਰਾ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੪੧) Brahmins received horses, elephants, cows, and even women as payment for their services. When this practice was banned by the British, the Namboodripad Brahmins of Calicut raised a hue and cry and became violent. They also continued sacrificing animals in the temples which was a camouflage for procuring meat.

*learned in the Veda and of good conduct, whom (the father) himself invites, is called the Brahma rite. The gift of a daughter who has been decked with ornaments, to a priest who duly officiates at a sacrifice, during the course of its performance, they call the Daiva rite.”*  
(Manu Simrti 3.27, 28)

*“The son of a wife wedded according to the Brahma rite, if he performs meritorious acts, liberates from sin ten ancestors ten descendants and himself as the twenty first.*

(Manu Simrti 3.37)

Dancing girls in the temples were known as *Dev dasis*. They danced to the deity as a prayer to seek deity’s blessings in producing good crops and plenty of milk. Although the custom has long since died out in many parts of India, it still persists in the South in the states of Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh. Young girls are offered to Goddess Yellama (in Yellama Temple Karnataka) at the age of 14. Pre-pubescent girls are given a good bath, dressed in *Neem tree (azadirachta indica)* leaves and ornaments with red and white beads hanging around. They are then marched in a procession to the temple in clouds of turmeric to be offered to the deity as *Dev dasis*. In the temple *Dev dasis* take an oath never to marry and to be available to the priest for all types of service.

Originally, *Dev dasis* remained celibate all their life but later they turned into temple harlots. These days the priests usually offer them to rich people for sex and are paid handsomely. It is believed that they also feed pimps who allure older *Dev Dasis* to the brothels of Bombay, Madras, and Delhi to work as prostitutes. The Government of India banned the practice around 1980 AD but it did not stop. In 1991AD a special inspector named Ashok Rodan

was appointed in Karnataka to root out this practice. He enlisted 130 under-cover *Dev Dasis* (leader *Dev Dasi Irawa*) to report on the practice secretly. In 1991 alone 2000 young girls of 14 were initiated on the full moon day into *Dev Dasis*. Recently Dr. Ishwar Gilda warned that unless the practice is stopped, it will accelerate the spread of AIDS in the state. The Government's curb angered priests and farmers who claimed that Yellama must be appeased for rains to fall, sons to be sired, and the crops to grow. Two policemen trying to stop the ceremony in Shumnagar District were murdered while trying to arrest the pimps and *Dev Dasis*.

According to the legend a sage ordered his son to chop off the head of his mother because of her unchaste behaviour. The son did so but grafted the head on the shoulders of an untouchable woman named Yellama who became a goddess. Yellama goddess is a blue faced female statue with golden spikes radiating from her hair. *Dev Dasi* custom is also prevalent in the predominantly Hindu country of Nepal. A four year girl is worshipped as a 'Living goddess' and then offered to the temple laden with flowers. Nobody dare oppose this custom and the erstwhile king of Nepal duly approved it.

### **6.3 The History behind the custom of Sati**

Sati has been a ritual among the Hindus for many centuries. The Hindu widows were forced to burn themselves in funeral pyres of their husbands. There are many speculated theories about the origins of Sati

1. Some people say that Sati was started compulsorily to prevent wives from poisoning their rich husbands and then marrying their real lovers.



2. Some believe that Sati began with a jealous queen who heard that dead kings enjoy Nymphs (*Apasaras*) after death. When her husband died, she burnt herself on her husband's pyre to prevent the *Apasaras* from approaching her husband.

3. Others believe that *Sati* was probably brought to India by the Scythian invaders. Rajput clans are the descendants of the Scythians and *Sati* has been a tradition among them for a long time.

4. It is also a fact that a widow was considered unwanted burden because she was disallowed from working in the home. Her touch, appearance and even voice, were considered unholy and something to be abhorred. The custom of *Sati* started to raise her status of being a pure woman.

5. According to Hindu literature a woman named *Sati* was the wife of Lord Shiva. As a protest against her father Daksha, she burnt herself when her father insulted her husband. While burning herself she prayed to be reborn as the new wife of Shiva, which she became and her name in the new incarnation was Parvati. Since then the word '*Sati*' came to be associated with women burning themselves on the pyres of their husbands.

6. It cannot be ruled out that the custom may have come into force as a family conspiracy against the widow to benefit from her assets and jewellery.

The most plausible reason appears to be that if widows were allowed to live they may marry outside the caste and violate endogamy. On the other hand it was not an easy task to enforce widowhood on a woman for the rest of her life. A widow was like a fallow land producing nothing; on the other hand a young widow could easily fall into immoral practices for sensual pleasures. The

Hindu scholars, therefore, thought that the solution lay in asking a woman to burn herself at the funeral pyre of her husband. A dead woman presented no problem of remarriage or adultery either inside or outside the caste. This was called *Sati* (Self immolation) and began to be considered an act of piety. Hindu women began to believe that those who die with their husbands get united with their husbands once again in heaven in an eternal marriage. Strangely no one applied this logic to men who lost their wives.

It was believed that a woman's path to heaven was through *Sheela* and *Pativritya* -- her obedience and devotion to her husband. According to the *Agni Purana* the woman who committed *sahagamana* (*Sati*) went to heaven. In Jainism it was called *Sallekhana*, by which a wife dedicated her soul in prayer to her departed husband.

The Vedas were not in favour of forced suicide but the Simrtis and the Puranas recommended it. '*Let these wives step into the pyre, tearless, without any affliction, and well adorned*'.<sup>319</sup> According to *Garud Puran*<sup>320</sup> even the Chandala woman, must perform *Sati*. The only exception was for pregnant women or those who had young children. *Garud Puran* states that if a widow does not

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<sup>319</sup>*Lord Krishna's wives Rukmini, Rohini, Devki, Bhadra and Madura performed Sati upon his death. In Mahabharata Pandu's wife Madri threw herself on her husband's funeral fire and performed sati. The wives of Sri Ram Chander and those of his two brothers are also said to have committed Sati. 'ਤਿਹਾਨ ਕੀ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਤਿਹ ਆਈ॥ ਸੰਗ ਸਤੀ ਹਵੈ ਸੁਰਗ ਸਿਧਾਈ ॥ (ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ ੮੫੬).*This is the first mention of *Sati* during post-Vedic period. We also read that in *Sri Ram Chrit Manas* that Seeta had to walk through fire to prove her purity.

<sup>320</sup> The Hindus read *Garud Puran* after the death of a Hindu man or woman. It is a discourse offered to a bird called *Garud*.

perform *Sati*, she will be reborn into the lowly body of a woman again and again.

(Garud Purana II.4.91-100)

*Sati* was fully established in India by the fourth century BC at the time of Alexander's invasion. It was of various kinds. (1) *Sahmaran Sati* was burning with the corpse of the husband. (2) *Anumaran Sati* was immolation with the ashes, remains, clothes, or sword of the dead. (3) *Ma Sati* was practised by burning with the corpse of the son.<sup>321</sup> Usually a Woman was forced to commit *Sati* to earn merit after death but a pregnant woman or the one with a young baby was not forced. Others lost their rights to property if they declined to die with their husbands. "*Cases are on record where the unwilling victim jumped out of fire, but her half-burnt body was forcibly thrown back into it.*"<sup>322</sup> According to Prashar Samhita (Chapter 4) a *Sati* enjoys as many years in heaven as the number of hair on the body of her husband<sup>323</sup>.

Closely allied with *Sati* was the custom of *Jauhar* practised by Rajput women. When King Akbar laid siege to Chitaur (20 October 1567 to Feb23 1568), Rajput wives, daughters and sisters all burnt themselves on fire and 30,000 of their men folk perished fighting in the sanguinary battle. Akbar was so impressed by the heroism of Rajput defenders (Jai Mal and Fatta) of this siege that he installed their statues at the main gate of the fort of Agra.<sup>324</sup> Khonds and

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<sup>321</sup> For further information see *Glossary of tribes and castes* by H.Rose.

<sup>322</sup> "*Main Currents of Indian History* by Majumdar and P.N. Chopra P. 198

<sup>323</sup> Full details of *Sati* can be read in *Padam Puran*. It needs to be noted that in general Brahman women were exempted from committing *Sati*. *Sati's* of Brahman women are rare in history.

<sup>324</sup> Italian Traveller Pietro Della Valle (1586-1652AD) has documented a *Sati* incident ritual that he witnessed in the town of Ikkeri in November of 1623AD. Colonel William. H. Sleeman (1809 - 1856 A.D.) served as the collector

Kols of Bengal used to offer virgins as human sacrifices to their goddess.

*Sati* was first prohibited by Muslim kings Ghiyasudin and Muhammad Tughlaq. King Akbar outlawed it again in 1547 AD but the custom did not stop. Later persuaded by Raja Ram Mohan Rai, founder of Brahmo Smaj, Lord William Bentinck (1828-35AD) outlawed *Sati* on 7 December 1829 AD once more. It was outlawed in the Panjab and Rajputana only in 1847AD

## 6.4 Some prominent *Sati* cases

The latest notorious *Sati* of the 20th century was Roop Kanwar of Rajasthan. She was only eighteen years old and was forced to commit *Sati* in a Rajasthan Village in 1987. Her family and the village people escorted her to the funeral pyre of her husband. The case went to the court but no one was charged. Once again in October 1999 a woman committed *Sati* by jumping on her husband's pyre surprising everyone. Kuttu Bai, a 65 year widow committed *Sati* suicide in India on 5th of August 2002. In some very rare incidents mothers committed *Sati* on their son's pyre.

*Satis* and their families are highly honored in the belief that the woman who committed *Sati* blessed her family for seven generations after her act of piety as *Sati*. Temples, statues and religious shrines are built to honour the *Sati*.

### (a) Widows

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of Jabalpur and attended a *Sati* ceremony in a village where a 60 year woman blatantly committed *Sati* little caring for the law.

Although Hinduism has been discarding some of its old practices under the influence of its reformers a widow is still looked upon with indifference. This is an alternative to Sati. Manu's laws still govern the treatment of widows and women in general. Manu forbids them from getting remarried and they are excluded from inheritance (Manu viii, 416) except her wedding gifts. Hindu marriages are conducted with full consultation of horoscopes of the bride and the bride groom's families. But if the husband dies, the widow is usually blamed as a jinxed woman. As soon as the news of the husband's death is received the wife's bangles are smashed, her frontal mark (बिंदी) is removed, and vermilion is wiped off her hair.

In modern times widowhood in Hinduism has come to be considered superior to *Sati* because it is more practicable and humane. The widows are degraded to a condition in which they are no longer a source of allurements. Their shadow is considered inauspicious and they wear only white or colourless clothes. They are not permitted to wear ornaments or use any make up. There are instances where widows are shaved<sup>325</sup> to make them look unattractive. *"Her hair should be shaved. She shall have to lie on a low couch, receive coarse food, and wear used clothes"* (Nardya Dharam shastra P. 8) *"At her pleasure let her emaciate her body by living on flowers, roots and fruit but she must never even mention the name of another man after her husband has died."*

(Manu V.157)

Young and newly married girls are prohibited from talking to widows. They are considered unlucky and there are social functions

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<sup>325</sup> "Here and there even relatives get shaved and then after a few days offer prayers and alms at religious places to get rid of death pollution."

where they are not permitted to take part. *A widow who re-marries earns disapproval in this world and is reborn as a Jackal*".

(Manu Smṛiti Chapter 10 Shalok 123 and Chapter 5 Shalok 155 and 164).

Other Hindu scholars found yet another humane solution. This was called Nyoga.<sup>326</sup> In Nyoga a woman was permitted to cohabit with any person other than her husband to have a male child. Hindus consider that a male child is necessary to ensure the salvation of his parents. Manu writes, *"Through a son he conquers the worlds, through a son's son he obtains immortality, but through his son's grandson he gains the world of the sun. Because the son delivers his father from hell called PUT, he was therefore called Put-Tra (deliverer from Put) by the Svayambhu himself"*

(Manu IX 137-138)

Prashar Samhita (Chapter 2) goes to approve a woman's illicit relationship with people other than her husband. Basing his opinions on Rig Veda (10.10 and 10.85-45) and Atherva Veda (14.2-18) Swami Dyanand justifies Nyoga (sexual involvement of a widow with up to eleven men in order to produce a male child)<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> For details of the birth of Hindu gods through Nyoga read ਸਰਵੋਤਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ by Swami Ram Tirath Dandi Sanyasi Page 79. ਇਸੇ ਪੰਨੇ ਤੇ ਆਪ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, " ਮਹਾਂਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਨਿਯੋਗ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਸਤਯਵਰਤਾ ਨਾਂ ਵਾਲੀ ਸੱਸ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਯਾ ਨਿਯੋਗ ਤੋਂ ਅਬਾਲਿਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਦਾਸੀ ਨੇ ਵਿਭਚਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਏ ਵੇਦ ਵਿਆਸ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਬੀਜ ਤੋਂ ਧਰਿਤਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ, ਪੰਡੂ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਧਰ ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੇ ਸਨ। ਯੁਧਿਸ਼ਟਰ ਆਦਿ ਪੰਜ ਪਾਂਡਵ ਏਸੇ ਭਾਂਤ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੇ ਮੰਨੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੯)

In his Smṛiti Naradya allows Nyoga (80.8) and re-marriage (4. 97) but does not admit a widow's right to her husband's property. Naradya writes that a king, however devoid of virtue and morality, is still to be worshipped and a woman must similarly worship her husband (see *prakirnaka* 20.2).

<sup>327</sup> Such a child was called Khetraj (ਖੇਤਰਜ).

for the salvation of the dead husband as religiously sanctioned. (See *Rig Vedadebhashya Bhumika*).

Swami Vivekananda (1862-1902AD) is usually credited with denouncing untouchability and raising the status of Hindu women but when swami Vivekananda was asked his views about the treatment of the widows and widow remarriage he replied, “*Am I a widow that you ask me this question? Am I a woman that you ask me that question again and again? Who are you to solve woman’s problems? Are you the Lord God that you should rule over every widow and every woman? Hands off! They will solve their own problems.*”(Our women By Swami Vivekananda Advaita Ashram publication P.51) According to him “*Widow Marriage takes place among the lower classes*”. (P.58) Remarriage of tender-aged widows has not been given any serious thought so far.<sup>328</sup>

*Puranas*,<sup>329</sup>*Upnishads* and *Smritis* offer self contradictory and conflicting views regarding women. For example Manu allows a Brahman to marry a *Shudra* girl (Manu iii 13), Yajnavalkya condemned it strongly. Manu condemns *Nyog* (Manu ix, 59-68) but Yajnavalkya recommends it. Manu disallows inheritance to a widow. Yajnavalkya considers a widow prime benefactor.

Manu Exonerates Brahmans from all immoral actions.<sup>330</sup> Polygamy and polyandry have been prevalent in Hinduism.<sup>331</sup> Restriction on

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<sup>328</sup> Remarriage of widows’ Act was passed in 1856 AD through the efforts of Ishwar Chander Vidyasagar but it did not have the desired effect. Justice Mahadev Govinda Ranade was the greatest supporter of widow remarriage.

<sup>329</sup> Somebody asked Swami Dya Nand, "Why do you oppose the Puranas? His answer was, “No body likes to eat poisoned food.”

<sup>330</sup> ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਬਦ ਚਲਣ ਵੀ ਪੂਜਣ ਜੋਗ ਹੈ ॥ (ਪ੍ਰਾਸ਼ਰ ਸਮਹਿਤਾ ਅਧਿਆਇ ੬). “Later the celebrated Hindi poet Tulsi Das also wrote in the same strain. “ਜੇਈਏ ਵਿਪੁ ਗਿਆਨ

widow re-marriage, abduction, female infanticide,<sup>332</sup> and Sati, etc have been a common practice in India. A woman has been the object of use and abuse and it was preached that a woman's mind is very complex and is full of a bundle of tricks. Tulsi Das (15<sup>th</sup> century), known as the 'Moon of Hindi literature' (author of Sri Ram Chrit Manas),<sup>333</sup> tells us that the inferiority complex had so adversely affected the psyche of the Indian women that they

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गुह गीना॥ मृदर न मेदीये गिजान पृषीना”॥ “A Brahman must not be subject to corporal punishment. For him shaving his head or banishing from the town is enough punishment”. (*Nardya Dharamshastra* Tr. Julius Jolly P.183) .This religious law was accepted by the British Government of India as well. No Brahman was hanged for any offence, however serious, by the British Govt. of India before 1817 AD.

<sup>331</sup> Dhirtrashtra practised polygamy. He is said to have one hundred wives. As for polyandry the custom is still extant. Among the Khasa tribe of the cis-Himalayan region a group of brothers marry a group of wives and no one of them claims an exclusive right to any one wife. All belong to all. Similarly among the Jaunsa tribe of trans-Himalaya (and also in Nepal) several brothers marry one wife with the eldest having the right to property. The others have only to share the wife provided the joint family continues. If the family disintegrates, the younger brothers get nothing. (See '*Races and culture of India*' by Majumdar Asia publishing house Bombay).

<sup>332</sup> Taitrya Samhita supported infanticide (see VI.10.3). This custom was prevalent all over India. The Rajputs were notorious because of their social customs and conventions which entailed heavy expenditure on the marriages of their daughters. They continued killing their daughters up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD. It was estimated that nearly 1, 25,000 female babies every year were killed by Khariju families of Gujarat alone. Although the practice was declared illegal by the British Government of India, female infanticide is still carried out here and there. Unfortunately this practice has now received a boost from the technical advances made by modern science by which the sex of an unborn baby can be easily ascertained.

<sup>333</sup> Like the Bhagti movement writers Tulsi Das too started writing in the common language of the people and discarded Sanskrit. When asked why he discarded Sanskrit, his answer was, "Sanskrit is a vessel of Gold full of poison. Hindi is an earthen vessel full of Amrit."



themselves had started considering females as riff raff of society.<sup>334</sup> Tulsi Das himself considered woman “*Half nectar, half poison*”<sup>335</sup> and the cause of the downfall of man. It was under such detestation that Tulsi’s phrase “ਢੋਰ, ਗਵਾਰ ਸੂਦਰ, ਪਸ਼ੂ, ਨਾਰੀ ॥ ਪਾਂਚੋਂ ਤਾੜਨ ਕੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ” (Illiterates, peasants, Shudras, animals and women deserve only taunts and rebukes) became a bye word in India.

## (b) Sutak

After parturition a Hindu woman is considered polluted for a number of days differing with the caste of the woman. This is called Sutak (ਸੂਤਕ). Such a woman is prohibited from entering the kitchen up to 30 days. She is not permitted to prepare food or go near the hearth. In whosoever’s house a child is born no one can eat or drink with them for eleven days (Brahmans for 11 days, Kashatryas for 13 days, Vaish for 17 days, and Shudra for 30 days). The defilement is removed only after a certain number of days

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<sup>334</sup> ਕਿਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਕਰੋਂ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ ॥ ਅਧਮ ਜਾਤਿ ਮੈਂ ਜੜੁ ਮਤਿ ਨਾਰੀ ॥ ਅਧਮ ਤੇ ਅਧਮ ਅਧਮ ਅਤਿ ਨਾਰੀ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਮਹੁ ਮੈਂ ਅਤਿ ਮੰਦ ਗੰਵਾਰੀ ॥ ( “ਰਾਮ ਚ੍ਰਿਤ ਮਾਨਸ” ਤੁਲਸੀ ਦਾਸ ). Tulsi Das, a devotee of Ram Chander, was born in 1497AD in village Rajpur (District Banda-U.P). His magnum opus *Ram Chrit Manas* (Commonly known as *Tulsi Ramayana*) is a literary masterpiece of great value. He is said to have died in 1623AD at Benares. He was younger than Guru Nanak by 28 years. His other works are not as popular as *Ram Chrit Manas*.

<sup>335</sup> Around the 15<sup>th</sup> century Swami Ramanand is said to have advocated the uplift of women but his disciple Tulsi Das wrote, “God has made woman half poison half nectar.” “ ਅਮਿਯ ਵਾਰਿ ਗਾਰੇਉ ਗਰਲ ਨਾਰਿ ਕਰੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ॥ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਬੈਰ ਕੀ ਜਨਨਿ ਯੁਗ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਬੁੱਧ ਨ ਗਵਾਰ ॥ (ਤੁਲਸੀ ਦਾਸ). One wonders whether the mixture of poison and Amrit would taste like Poison or Amrit! The Pope solved this mystery when he said, “And yet believe me, good as well as ill, woman is at best a contradiction still”. Rabindra Nath Tagore only wrote, “ O woman you are half woman and half dream”.

(again differing with caste) when the woman must take a ritual bath. This is done after a ceremony conducted by a Brahman who is called in to ritually purify the house.

*“By burnt oblations during the mother’s pregnancy, by the Gatakarman (The ceremony after birth) and the Kauda (tonsure), and the Maungibandhna (the tying of the sacred girdle of Munga grass) is the taint of pollution removed from the parents.”*  
(Manu Smriti 2.27)

Similar restrictions and ceremonies are observed after death. When somebody in a Hindu family dies, the family is supposed to have contacted defilement for a certain number of days. The defilement has to be washed away after some time through a ritual bath. In certain cases the ritual bath has to be taken at the river Ganges. Garuda Puran is recited after death for a number of days.

Taboos like Sutak/Patak (ਸੁਤਕ/ਪਾਤਕ) introduced by the Brahman became the cause of downgrading women.

## 6.5 The Sikh view

Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru openly stated that all human beings are equal in the eyes of God. Statements like, *“O Lord, you fashioned all men and women who are all your forms”*<sup>336</sup> are recorded umpteen times in the Sikh scripture. During his times Guru Nanak found the status of women in Hinduism degrading and unjust, He wrote, *“Women have lost their vitality and become submissive and men have become brutal. Politeness, soberness (self-control) and sincerity have banished and dishonest living has*

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<sup>336</sup> ਏਤੇ ਔਰਤ ਮਰਦਾ ਸਾਜੇ ਏ ਸਭ ਰੂਪ ਤੁਮਾਰੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੪੮) ॥ ਘਟ ਘਟ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਲੁਕਾਇਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਬਾਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੯੭)

*become the way of life. The sense of shame and honour has disappeared from the society.” (p. 1243).*<sup>337</sup>

Criticizing the special attention paid to males he said, *“In this world there is only one “Man,” the rest are women”*<sup>338</sup>.(p.591). The infinite Creator has fashioned human body with beautiful countenance from father's semen and mother's blood (p. 1022). Mother and father create a child through sexual union according to the Hukam (Cosmic Law) of the Creator.(AGGS, p. 989).<sup>339</sup> How can it be believed that one parent is inferior and the other is superior?

Writing about the Sikh view of women Swami Ram Tirath Dandi Sanyasi writes, *“Here the husband is not described as God and the wife as a purchased slave, goat or sheep. Instead she has been called a human being who is equally competent for taking part in all walks of life”*.<sup>340</sup>

The Sikh views concerning Sutak are very clear The Sikh Gurus called Sutak a superstition and a schism of the soul<sup>341</sup>. Guru Nanak wrote, *“All ideas stating that Sutak travels to others are superstitious. Birth and death are according to natural laws. Food is provided by God as pure and cannot be polluted with Sutak. Those*

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<sup>337</sup> ਰੰਨਾ ਹੋਈਆ ਬੋਧੀਆ ਪੁਰਸ ਹੋਏ ਸਈਆਦ ॥ ਸੀਲੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਸੁਚ ਭੰਨੀ ਖਾਣਾ ਖਾਜੁ ਅਹਾਜੁ ॥ ਸਰਮੁ ਗਇਆ ਘਰਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਪਤਿ ਉਠਿ ਚਲੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚਾ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਅਉਰੁ ਨ ਸਚਾ ਭਾਲਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੪੩)

<sup>338</sup> ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਹੋਰ ਸਗਲੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਸਬਾਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੯੧)

<sup>339</sup> ਮਾ ਕੀ ਰਕਤੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਬਿਦੁ ਧਾਰਾ ॥ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਸੂਰਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਆਪਾਰਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੨੨) ਮਿਲਿ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਕਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਤਿਨਿ ਕਰਤੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਲਿਖਾਇਆ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੮੯)

<sup>340</sup> ਇਥੇ ਪਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਵਰ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਲ ਖਰੀਦੀ ਦਾਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਭੇਡ ਬਕਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਦਸਿਆ ਬਲਕਿ ਸਾਰੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਲੈਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਹੈ (ਸਵਾਮੀ ਰਾਮ ਤੀਰਥ ਦੰਡੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ)

<sup>341</sup> ਜੇ ਕਰਿ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਮੰਨੀਐ ਸਭ ਤੈ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਗੋਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਲਕੜੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਕੀੜਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੨)

who remember the Lord never care about Satak pollution.” (Page 472)<sup>342</sup>

According to Sikhism impurity does not lie in human birth but in evil tendencies of the mind. The Guru condemned Satak (ਸੂਤਕ) as follows:

*“If pollution attaches to birth, then pollution is everywhere.*

*Firewood and cow dung sustain life, All types of grain have life in them*

*Even the life-giving water is not without life*

*How can then we believe in pollution, when pollution inheres with staples?*

*Nanak says: Pollution cannot be washed away by purification rituals.*

*Pollution can only be removed through acquiring true knowledge”.* (SGGS P.472)<sup>343</sup>

The Sikhs are forbidden from following all the above mentioned procedures. Writing about these practices Swami Ram Tirath Dandi Sanyasi explained Sikh point of view and wrote, “*Gurbani describes birth and death as natural happenings willed by God.*

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<sup>342</sup> ਸਭੇ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਭਰਮੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਜੈ ਲਗੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਭਾਣੈ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਹੈ ਦਿਤੋਨੁ ਰਿਜਕ ਸੰਬਾਹਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੁਝਿਆ ਤਿਨਾ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਨਾਹਿ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੨)

<sup>343</sup> ਨਾਨਕ ਸੂਤਕ ਏਵ ਨ ਉਤਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਉਤਾਰੇ ਧੋਇ ॥ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੨) ਅਖੀ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਵੇਖਣਾ ਪਰਤ੍ਰਿਯ ਪਰਧਨ ਰੂਪ, ਕੰਨੀ ਸੂਤਕ ਕੰਨ ਪੈ ਲਾਇਤਬਾਰੀ ਖਾਹਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੨) ਗੰਗਾਦਿਕ ਤੀਰਥ ਨਹਿ ਜਾਵੈ। ਸੂਤਕ ਪਾਤਕ ਨਾਹਿ ਮਨਾਵੈ। ਜੰਝੂ ਤਿਲਕ ਨ ਛਾਪਾ ਧਾਰੈ॥ ਸ਼ਰ੍ਰਾ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਕੀ ਨਹਿ ਪਾਰੈ(ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਅਧਿਆਇ ੮੫)॥

*Humans have to accept them happily. No time is good or bad. People should not consider birth or death as polluters.*<sup>344</sup>

The custom of Dev Dasis was forbidden by the Sikh Gurus and women were offered complete

equality with men.<sup>345</sup>

The custom of *Sati* was snubbed by the Sikh Gurus. Guru Nanak said “A true widow is one who leads a pure life after her husband’s death”. Guru Amar Das (1479-1574AD) condemned *Sati* as follows:<sup>346</sup>

*“They are not Satis who burn themselves with their husbands,*

*Rather they are Satis who die with the mere shock of separation from their husbands.*

*And they too are considered Satis who abide in modesty and contentment.*

*Who wait upon the Lord and rising in the morning ever remember him.”*

Again in *Suhi Ki Var* the Guru argued

*“Women are burnt in fire with their husbands,*

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<sup>344</sup> ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਨੇ ਜਨਮ ਤੇ ਮਰਣ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦੀ ਇੱਛਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ-ਹੁਕਮ ਦਸਿਆ, ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਖਿੜੇ-ਮੱਥੇ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕੋਈ ਸਮਾਂ ਸੁਭ ਜਾਂ ਅਸੁਭ ਨਹੀਂ; ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਸੂਤਕ (ਜੰਮਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਅਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ) ਜਾਂ ਪਾਤਕ (ਮਰਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਅਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ) ਆਦਿਕ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। (ਸਵਾਮੀ ਰਾਮ ਤੀਰਥ ਦੰਡੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ)

<sup>345</sup> ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ ॥ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ ॥ ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ ॥ ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੨੩)

<sup>346</sup> ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੋ ਮੜਿਆ ਲਗਿ ਜਲੰਨਿ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੰਨਿ॥ ਭੀ ਸੋ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਰਹੰਨਿ॥ ਸੇਵਨਿ ਸਾਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਸੰਮਾਲੰਨਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੮੨).

*If they appreciate their husbands they undergo sufficient pain by their death.*

*If they appreciate them not, why should they burn at all?”(SGGS 787)<sup>347</sup>*

According to the Guru a woman under the spell of religious apartheid, social restrictions, and financial dependence was a mental wreck. He, therefore, sent *Hukamnamas* (edicts) far and wide asking his followers not to let women commit *sati* or wear veils and to preach vehemently against these cruel customs.<sup>348</sup>

“ਧਰਤਿ ਗਗਨ ਨਹ ਦੇਖਉ ਦੋਇ॥  
ਨਾਰੀ ਪੁਰਖ ਸਬਾਈ ਲੋਇ॥”

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪੰਨਾ ੨੩)

**I do not see a second in the earth or the sky. I see the same light reflected in men and women,”**

**(Guru Granth Sahib Page 223)**

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<sup>347</sup> ਕੰਤਾਂ ਨਾਲਿ ਮਹੇਲੀਆ ਸੇਤੀ ਔਗਿ ਜਲਾਹਿ, ਜੇ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਪਿਰੁ ਆਪਣਾ ਤਾ ਤਨਿ ਦੁਖ ਸਹਾਹਿ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੮੭)

<sup>348</sup> ਤਜੈ ਸੋਕ ਸਭ ਅਨੰਦ ਬਢਾਇ, ਨਹਿ ਪੀਟਹਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਯ ਮਿਲ ਸਮੁਦਾਇ ॥ ਪਵੈ ਸਬਦ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕੇ ਕਰੈ ਸੁਨੈ ਬੈਠ ਵੈਰਾਗ ਸੁ ਧਰੈ ॥ (ਸੂਰਜ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼) Also See Jagjit Singh ‘ਸਿਖ ਇਨਕਲਾਬ’ page 150

# Chapter 7

## Dietary Habits

### 7.1 Meat

Although Hindus are usually known as non-violent (ਅਹਿੰਸਕ), meat has also been a part of their food from time immemorial. There are numerous references in the Vedas and the Balmiki Ramayan about hunting and eating of animal flesh. In the Rig Vedic times people killed animals (especially cows)<sup>349</sup> for purposes of food.<sup>350</sup>In the

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<sup>349</sup> Professor D.N. Jha, himself a Brahman, has written a book titled "The myth of the holy cow" on the cow killing by ancient Hindus. According to him beef (Oxe's flesh) was served to gods and goddesses. Professor Jha argues that the cow became respectable only when the Aryans learnt the art of agriculture, The cows provided milk, bullocks and butter and were used for puling carts. Cow dung was used as manure in the fields. Therefore their killing was outlawed. another book on this topic is "The Glimpses Of Indian History" in which chapter 12 is entirely devoted to beef. In 1881 Dr. Raja Rajinder Lal Mitra also wrote a book on this topic for which he was awarded a PhD. The sixth chapter of his book was "Beef in the ancient Indian tradition". Cow killing was banned by Akbar, Jahangir and Shivaji. In the Punjab Namdhari Sikhs killed a number of Muslims in 1870 because they butchered the cows .In 1882 Swami Dyanand started an organisation for the protection of the cows. and vehement ally opposed cow-killing. Mahatma Gandhi called the cow "a divine mother" and showed great respect to the cows. There are roughly 70,000,000 cows in India today. Also See Rig Veda 1.164.43, .6.16.47 and 10.27.2 etc.where even cows are mentioned as sacrificial animals

<sup>350</sup> ਗੈਡਾ ਮਾਰਿ ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਕੀਏ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ 1289) Guru Nanak also writes that at the time of his Janu investiture goats were killed., "ਕੁਹਿ ਬਕਰਾ ਰਿਨਿ ਖਾਇਆ

Rig Veda Indra says, “*Fifteen in number, then, for me a score of bullocks<sup>351</sup> they prepare and I devour the fat thereof: they fill my belly full with food. Supreme is Indra over all.*”<sup>352</sup> (Rig Veda X. 86.14). According to Yajnavalika Smriti a learned Brahman was welcome by offering him meat. He also clearly states, “I, for one, eat it, provided that it is tender.” Charak Samhita suggested the use of beef for curing specific diseases like intermittent fever.

Horses, bulls, oxen, barren cows and rams were also sacrificed for Agni. “*He in whom horses, bulls, oxen, and barren cows, and rams, when duly set apart, are offered up.*” (Rig Veda X.91.14) In some Hindu books we also find references concerning the methodology adopted for killing the animals.<sup>353</sup>

The practice of meat eating in Hinduism is also evident from *Madhuparka*<sup>354</sup> described in the *Grahya Sutras*. *Madhuparka* was offered to the guests who were (1) Ritwija - the Brahman called to perform a sacrifice, (2) Acharya- the teacher, (3) The bridegroom (4) The King (5) The Snatak, (the student who has just finished his

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ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਆਖੈ ਪਾਇ” (ਪੰਨਾ 71) All this proves that the Hindus were very fond of eating meat. Guru Nanak however does not mention the killing of cows.

<sup>351</sup> Lord Shiva rides on a bullock but nowhere has any Mandir been constructed for the Bull or the cow in India.

<sup>352</sup> If Indra can devour the fat of scores of bullocks can we imagine him to be a human being?

<sup>353</sup> Aitrya Brahmana gives the details of the mode and manner of killing the cows or other animals for sacrifice.

<sup>354</sup> For details of Madhu parka read Swami Ram Tirath’s Sarvotam Dharam Granth “Smart Sutar” page 31-33. On page 33 he quotes from a Hindu scripture and writes, “*Madhuparka* cannot be prepared without cow’s meat.” Swami Ram Tirath further quotes from ‘Brahm Sutar’ written by Ved Vyas and concludes, “ਯਗ ਵਿਚ ਬਕਰੇ ਦੇ, ਗਧੇ ਦੇ, ਘੋੜੇ ਦੇ, ਗਾਂ ਦੇ, ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁਖ ਦੇ ਮਾਸ ਦਾ ਖਾ ਲੈਣਾ ਇਹ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਵੇਦ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਸਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੋਣੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਸਨਾਤਨ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ” (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੨)।



studies at the Gurukul) and (6) Any person who was dear to the host. There are, however, divergent views about the constituents of *Madhuparka*. It contained honey, curds, butter, Yava (barley) grain etc. Here and there meat is also included in the constituents.

Meat eating is mentioned in Mahabharat too. For example in Baan Perv (218.199) we find, "*At the Chaturmasya (four-monthly) and Aswamedha (horse) sacrifices, animals are offered first in his honour, and this powerful fire is indicated by numerous flames.*"

Again in Shanti Perv book 12 chapter 29 we find, "A hundred thousand elephants also of the best breed, he gave away as presents in another sacrifice performed by him. Hundreds of bulls, adorned with golden chains, with thousands of kine accompanying them, he gave away as sacrificial presents. While the king of Anga performed his sacrifice by the hill called Vishnupada, Indra became intoxicated with the *Soma* he drank, and the Brahmanas with the presents they received. In the sacrifices, O monarch, numbering by hundreds, that this king performed of old, the presents he made far surpassed those ever made by the gods, the *Gandharvas*, and men. No other man was born, or will ever be born, that gave or will give away so much wealth as was given away by the king of the Angas in the seven sacrifices he performed, each of which was characterised by the consecration of the *Soma*." (page 55)

In Anushashan Perv (Chapter 88) we find a long discussion between Yudhishtira and Bhishma about the food to be offered at a *Sharadh* ceremony. Here many kinds of meat (including beef) are recommended for *Sharadh* feast. It also states as to how long the *Piters (departed elders)* remain satisfied after eating a particular meat. It is recommended in the end that to keep the *Piters* hunger satiated forever the Brahman should be offered the meat of a red goat.

Manu deals with meat eating in chapter V of Manu Simirti. He

describes different types of meat in V 11-18, 23,27,32, and 35 and gives directions as to which meats to eat and which to avoid. He writes:

"He, who eats meat, when he honours the gods and manes commits no sin, whether he has bought it, has killed the animal himself, or has received it as a present from others". (Manu V. 32.)

"A man who, being duly engaged to officiate or dine at a sacred rite, refuses to eat meat, becomes after death an animal during twenty-one existences." (Manu V. 35)

"Svayambhu himself created animals for the sake of sacrifices; sacrifices have been instituted for the good of the whole world, hence slaughtering the animals for sacrifices is no sin." (Manu V.39)

"There is no sin in eating meat, in drinking liquor, and in sexual intercourse, for that is the natural way of created beings, but it is better to abstain." (Manu V.56)

"The flesh of an animal killed by dogs is pure,<sup>355</sup> likewise (that) of a (beast) slain by carnivorous (animals) or by men of low caste (*Dasya*) such as Chandalas." (Manu V.131)

Manu even tells the stories of the Hindu Rishis who ate the meat of dogs and still did not become impure. For example in X. 106 he writes about Vamadeva and in X. 108 he gives the example of Vishwamitra who ate dog meat. "*Vamadeva, who well knew right and wrong, did not sully himself when tormented by hunger he ate the flesh of a dog.*" (Manu X 106)

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<sup>355</sup> The Brahman gets polluted if a chandala or a dog touches him but he accepts meat killed by an animal. This proves that even a dog is better than a Shudra.

It sounds rather strange that Manu recommends meat eating but forbids eating of vegetables. For example he says, “*A twice born man who knowingly eats mushrooms, a village pig, garlic, a village cock, onions, or leeks will become an outcaste.*”

(Manu V.19)

## 7.2 Meat-eating in History:

History also testifies that meat eating has been prevalent among the Hindus since the Vedic times. Ramayana of Balmik clearly states that Rama, Sita and Lakhshman too consumed meat as food .The king of Kosala performed a Yajna in which five hundred bulls, five hundred calves and many heifers, goats and rams were sacrificed. King Ranti Dev killed 2000 cows in his kitchen to feed Brahmins.<sup>356</sup> The killing of cows for the guests was common and the guests were called '*Go-ghana*' (which means the killer of the cow). It is also a fact that cows, horses and even humans were sacrificed in *Go-medh*, *Asp-medh* and *Nar-medh* Yajnas. ( See Rig Veda CLXII 9 to 22)

Kali Mandirs in Bengal Assam and Orissa.<sup>357</sup> maintained abattoirs right up to the time of the British where streams of blood poured out daily from the Mandirs. According to the Chinese traveller Heun Tsang human sacrifices were performed in his time in a Mandir near Mirza Pur. Shiva Ji's army of Bhils was composed of voracious meat eaters. Rajput Kings never went to war without eating the meat of a wild boar which they considered a good omen.

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<sup>356</sup> See Mahabharat (Baan perv) chapter 207 and Shanti Perv chapter 29

<sup>357</sup> ਮਾਟੀ ਕੇ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਆਗੇ ਜੀਉ ਦੇਹੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੩੨) You create clay statues and then sacrifice living beings to them.

In spite of this most Hindus consider themselves as *ahinsik* (non-violent) and the cow as a sacred animal. How did the Hindus change their habit? According to Dr. Ambedkar the Hindus started cow-worship and became vegetarians in order to vanquish Buddhism which forbade killing.<sup>358</sup> According to him when Buddhists ruled India *Go hatya* (killing a cow) became *Mahapataka* (a grave sin). A cow began to be called a goddess and its killing was equated with *Braham hatya* (killing of a Brahman)

We think that Dr. Ambedkar may not be wholly correct. Firstly not all Buddhists shun eating of meat. Tibetan and Japanese Buddhists eat meat (Only Chinese Buddhists are true vegetarians)<sup>359</sup> and secondly because there are copious references in the old Hindu books showing reverence for the cow and forbidding their killing. For example in Rig Veda V1.28.1.8 we read. "The Kine have come

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<sup>358</sup> "Him I call a Brahman who lays aside the rod, who neither kills nor causes the death of creatures, moving or non-moving (meaning animals and plants)" (Dhampadam 26.409). Bhikhu Nanamoli in his book "The life of the Buddha" however opposes this view and states Buddha as saying, " I have allowed meat and fish that is pure (page 266)

Some people think that killing of cows was banned at the time when Jainism became prevalent in India.

<sup>359</sup> Buddha himself is said to have died after eating stale meat . Vegetarian Buddhists do not believe this story. They quote Lankavatara Sutra which has an entire chapter devoted to the evils of eating meat. Here Lord Buddha is stated as saying, "Meat eating in any form, in any manner, and in any place is unconditionally and once for all prohibited. Meat eating I have not permitted anyone, I do not permit, I will not permit."

and brought good fortune: let them rest in the cow-pen and be happy near us (1). The master of the Kine lives many a year with these, the Cows, whereby he pours his gifts and serves the Gods. (3), To me the Cows seem Bhaga, they seem Indra, they seem a portion of the first-poured Soma (5), O Cows, ye fatten even the worn and wasted, and make the unlovely beautiful to look at. Prosper my house, ye with auspicious voices. Your power is glorified in our assemblies.

Again in Rig Veda VIII, 101. 15 the cow is addressed as mother of Rudras, the daughter of Vasus, and the Sister of the Adityas (all gods). Again in Rig Veda VIII. 101.16 a cow is called Devi (goddess). Also see Rig Veda 10.85.13.

"One who partakes of human flesh, the flesh of a horse or of another animal, and deprives others of milk by slaughtering cows, O King, if such a fiend does not desist by other means, then you should not hesitate to cut off his head. (*Rig Veda 10.87.16*,)

"You must not use your God-given body for killing God's creatures, whether they are human, animal or whatever. (*Yajur Veda 12.32*,).

Some other Hindu books too speak against eating meat. It appears that since the Hindu scriptures were written by many Rishis each one recorded his own way of life. It is for this reason that even divergent views can be found in one and the same religious book (for example the Rig Veda) .There appears to be no consensus on this point.

### 7.3 Position in Independent India

At present Hindus living off the sea in the coastal areas of India usually eat fish. Nepal is a very orthodox Hindu country. They celebrate a religious festival known as Gadhmai which is a complete repudiation of non-violence. The festival is held in Bariyapur and runs for seven days. Hundreds of thousands of animals (goats, buffaloes and chickens etc) are sacrificed to the deities. This festival comes every five years.(The last festival was held on 24 November 2009). Hindus in Indonesia (Bali) eat meat and still strictly follow the tradition by killing animals in the temples. Brahmans of Bengal eat fish, tortoises and goats. Meat, blood and rice are the ingredients of the sacred sacrificial *Gadaba* food of the Hindus in Orissa. Some Hindu tribes in Arunachal Pardesh also eat rats.

Mahatma Gandhi admitted that killing is unavoidable. He wrote, "Strictly speaking, no activity and no industry is possible without a certain amount of violence, no matter how little. Even the very process of living is impossible without a certain amount of violence. What we have to do is to minimize it to the greatest extent possible. (*Mahatma Gandhi, My Socialism, 34-35.*) He said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be measured by the way in which its animals are treated." Later he did not mention other animals but called only the cow "A divine mother." The great Hindu scholar A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada wrote, "As long as human society continues to allow the cows to be regularly killed in slaughterhouses, there cannot be any question of peace and prosperity." In certain areas of India a festival known as *Gopastami* is held every year in honour of the cow at which the cows are washed and decorated in the temples. In the state of Kerala nearly 72 communities among Hindus eat.

Despite the sacred status of a cow, many cows wander in the streets living on garbage and gutters but the devoted Hindus collect donations to construct rescue homes (ਗਰੁੱ ਸ਼ਾਲਾ) for the cows and when something is polluted, it is re-sanctified by using *panch gavaya*<sup>360</sup>

## 7.4 Sikh Point of View

The Sikhs value peace but they do not claim to be non-violent in all situations. Their violence is restricted to self defence and the protection of the weak. As for eating meat the Sikhs believe that the fundamental question is not eating or avoiding meat. The fundamental question is whether the humans should usurp the right to life or not. The answer is ‘no’ unless it is absolutely necessary. All species of life are produced by God and each of them has a right to live. Each has a specific function to perform.<sup>361</sup> Killing life indiscriminately will eventually imperil human existence on this earth.

The Guru says, *“It is the fools who debate the point (eating or avoiding meat) because they have no knowledge on the subject and*

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<sup>360</sup> “Cow dung is sacred according to Vedic scripture. If one touches the cow dung of an animal, he must bathe his whole body, and yet cow dung can purify an impure place or person, according to Vedic scripture.”(*Geeta as it is* by Swami Prabhupada page xvi). Some Hindus sprinkle cow urine in their homes to sanctify them..*Panchhgavaya* (composed of cow's milk, curds, ghee, urine and dung ia used in *Puja* (Hindu worship). Cow dung is sometimes included in the material used for *Tilak* ( Mark on the forehead of a Hindu)

<sup>361</sup> ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਤੁਧੁ ਉਪਾਏ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਭਾਣਾ ਤਿਤੁ ਤਿਤੁ ਲਾਏ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੩)॥ ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਤਾ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੮੪) ॥ ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਖੇਲੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਕਿਆ ਕੇ ਆਖਿ ਵਖਾਣਏ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੧੮) । ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਤਿਸ ਦੇ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਸੋਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੨੫)

*neither have they the necessary insight.”(p.1289)<sup>362</sup> Most Sikhs, therefore, do not kill animals and eat meat. Those who do eat meat ensure that the animal is killed humanely with one stroke of a sharp blade so that it does not suffer unnecessary pain. The decision has been left by the Sikh Gurus for the individual with the caution that food must not disagree with the constitution of the individual or cause wicked tendencies.<sup>363</sup>*

“ਗੁਣ ਮੰਡੇ ਕਰਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਘਿਉ ਸਰਮੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਆਹਾਰੁ ॥

ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਪਾਈਐ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਖਾਏ ਜਾਹਿ ਬਿਕਾਰੁ॥”

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪੰਨਾ ੫੫੩)

**“Make virtue your bread; good conduct your ghee and modesty the meat. O Nanak, if you partake of such food, your sins will depart.”**

**(Guru Granth Sahib Page 553)**

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<sup>362</sup> ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ ॥ ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪੁ ਸਮਾਣੈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੮੯). Only fools who know nothing about what meat is (and wherein lies the sin) start unnecessary quarrels. Sikh Rahat Maryada however forbids the eating of KUTHA (Meat of an animal slaughtered in the Muslim way)

<sup>363</sup> ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਏ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰੁ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੬)



## Chapter 8

### Sikh Worship vs. Hindu worship

#### 8.1 The object of worship

The modes and objects of worship in Hinduism have been changing continually. At one time Prithvi (wife of *Dayus*) was worshipped as a goddess. Later Aditi (mother of gods *Mitra*, *Aryaman* and *Varuna*) became the main goddess for worship (her husband is not mentioned). Soon the worship of these goddesses was abandoned in favour of *Nishtigri* (mother of Indra) and Indrani (the wife of Indra). Later other goddesses came to be worshipped in large numbers. They were *Prisni*, *Usha* (daughter of sky and wife of surya), *Agni*, *Varunani* and *Rodasi*. In Pauranic times, *Devi*, *Uma*, *Sati*, *Ambika*, *Parvati*, *Haimavati*, *Gauri*, *Kali*, *Nirriti*, *Chandi* *Katyayini*, *Durga*<sup>364</sup>, *Dasbhuj*, *Singhavahini*, *Mahishasu*, *Jagaddhatri*, *Muktakesi*, *Tara*, *Chinnamustaka*, *Jagadgauri*, *Pratyangira*, *Annapurna*, *Ganeshjanani*, *Krishnakrora* and *Lakshmi* became the objects of worship.

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<sup>364</sup>Durga is the subject of Chandi di war in Bachittar Natak. It is culled from Markanday Puran. In Mahabharata there is a hymn sung by Arjuna to Durga.

These days Most Hindus worship stone idols of different<sup>365</sup> gods and goddesses. The worship involves dressing, bathing, feeding and singing hymns to the statues or pictures. Male priests in the temples give a bath and dress the female goddesses. Some worship Tulsi plant.<sup>366</sup> The worship of Shiva, Vishnu, Sri Ram Chander and Sri Krishna (their statues or pictures) was not prevalent in Vedic times when Indra, Surya and Agni were prominent. Sri Ram Chander and Sri Krishna are now worshipped almost everywhere. Only a few worship the trinity these days. Some Hindus are polytheists and worship more than one god or idol. They wash them in milk, oil or water.<sup>367</sup>

These days it is commonly believed that the true way of worshipping Shiva is to worship the Shiva Linga (Shiva's sexual organ). It appears to have been made current through the translation of the Vedic word '*Sipivista*' occurring in the Rig Veda (VII 99.7-100.5-6). The words 'Sepa, Sipi or Sipa' mean Penis. Phallus symbols first found mention in the Rig Veda as *Sisnadevesh* (*RV vii 21, 5 and X.99.3*). According to Prof. Dandekar phallus worship was originally connected with Vishnu but in the Puranas it somehow got associated with Shiva. When and how it came to be

<sup>365</sup> ਅੰਧੇ ਗੁੰਗੇ ਅੰਧ ਅੰਧਾਰੁ ਪਾਥਰੁ ਲੇ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਮੁਗਧ ਗਵਾਰ॥ । ਓਹਿ ਜਾ ਆਪਿ ਡੁਬੇ ਤੁਮ ਕਹਾ ਤਰਾਵਣਹਾਰੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੫੬), ਜੋ ਪਾਥਰ ਕਉ ਕਹਤੇ ਦੇਵ, ਤਾ ਕੀ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੇਵ,ਜੋ ਪਾਥਰ ਕੀ ਪਾਂਈ ਪਾਇ, ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਘਾਲ ਅਜਾਂਈ ਜਾਇ। (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੬੦) ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਪੂਜਤ ਪਾਹਨ ਕੋ,ਕਛੁ ਪਾਹਨ ਮੋਂ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਨਾਹੀ, ਤਾਂਹੀ ਕੋ ਪੂਜ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕਰ ਕੈ, ਜਿਹ ਪੂਜਤ ਹੀ ਅਘ ਓਘ ਮਿਟਾਹੀ (੩੩ ਸਵਈਏ-ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ) ਪਾਇ ਪਰੋ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਕੇ ਪਸੁ ਪਾਹਨ ਮੈ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਨਾਹੀ ॥ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

<sup>366</sup> ਖੇਚਰ ਭੂਚਰ ਤੁਲਸੀ ਮਾਲਾ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਪਾਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੭੩) ਸਾਲਗ੍ਰਾਮ ਬਿਪ ਪੂਜਿ ਮਨਾਵਹੁ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਤੁਲਸੀ ਮਾਲਾ॥ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਬੋੜਾ ਬਾਂਧਹੁ ਦਇਆ ਕਦਹੁ ਦਇਆਲਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੭੦) ਤੋਰਉ ਨ ਪਾਤੀ ਪੂਜਉ ਨ ਦੇਵਾ ॥ ਰਾਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਸੇਵਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੫੮)

<sup>367</sup> ਘਰਿ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਸਭਾ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਪੂਜ ਕਰੇ ਰਖੈ ਨਾਵਾਲਿ ॥ ਕੁੰਗੁ ਚੰਨਣੁ ਫੁਲ ਚੜਾਏ ॥ ਪੈਰੀ ਪੈ ਪੈ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਮਨਾਏ ॥ ਮਾਣੁਆ ਮੰਗਿ ਮੰਗਿ ਪੈਨੈ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਅੰਧੀ ਕੰਮੀ ਅੰਧ ਸਜਾਇ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੪੧)

associated with Shiva is not known.

Hindus usually worship the statues (and sometimes pictures of various gods). At the time of worship, a Hindu idol/picture/statue is believed to be brought to life through a ceremony called *Pranaprathista*. Some times even the statues of dead people (like Swami Narayan and Sai Baba) are placed in the Hindu Mandirs for worship. No knowledge about God is imparted to the worshippers and the explanation of the Vedas, Puranas and Upanishads in the temples is very rare.

Other ways of showing interest in religion are celebrations of festivals. At the festivals (like Diwali & Dussehra etc) the Hindus mostly dramatise their history and very little, if any, instruction in theology is presented to the audience. People bow to the artists in reverence as if they were the real gods and goddesses and go home after listening to their stories. Some stories have been related ad infinitum and are well-known to the audience. There are instances where people acting as gods and goddesses have been arrested for involvement in immoral and anti-social activities.

## 8.2 Sikh Worship

Hindu scripture Bhagvad Geeta says, *“Even if you are the most sinful of all sinners, you will cross over all sin by the raft of knowledge”* (Bhagvad Geeta IV.36). This is also the view of Sikhism.<sup>368</sup> Yet the Hindus seldom ever explain their scriptures in their Mandirs. On the other hand Sikhism says that *“one must read, understand and act upon the religious instruction only then can he*

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<sup>368</sup> ਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਮੋ ਕਉ ਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਨਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੫੮)

*attune to God.*”<sup>369</sup> It forbids the worship of statues and pictures and advises concentration on Gurbani for accumulation of spiritual merit through knowledge. Guru Granth Sahib says, “*Hey brother, bathing in spiritual wisdom the mind and the body become pure. Why worship idols of gods and goddesses, what can you ask of them and what can they grant? You notice that they sink as you wash them. Without a spiritual guide true knowledge is not obtained and the whole world is similarly drowning (in darkness).*”<sup>370</sup> (P.637).

The object of worship for the Sikhs, therefore, is to understand the word (Shabad) of the Guru embodied in Guru Granth Sahib. It is for this reason that the Guru’s ‘word’ (Gurbani) is studied, explained, debated and sung at all Sikh functions. The pictures, statues or figurines are not permitted in the Gurdwara. There are no Brahmans or priests to be pampered and fed. Offerings are placed before the Holy Scripture and are used for common good of the community and the humanity at large. At the times of birth or death no special scriptures like Garud Puran are consulted instead the hymns are sung and the Guru’s advice for such occasions is internalized. Birth and death are considered as natural phenomena and on both occasions “Anand Sahib (The song of joy)” is

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<sup>369</sup> ਸਮਝੈ ਸੂਝੈ ਪਤਿ ਪਤਿ ਬੂਝੈ ਅੰਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਸਾਚਾ ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਦੇਖੈ ਸਾਚੁ ਸਮਾਲੇ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਾਚੇ ਜਗੁ ਕਾਚਾ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੩੦) ਸੁਣਿਆ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਭਾਉ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪)

<sup>370</sup> ਗਿਆਨਿ ਮਹਾਰਸਿ ਨਾਈਐ ਭਾਈ ਮਨ ਤਨ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਹੋਇ॥ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ਪੂਜੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਂਗਉ ਕਿਆ ਦੇਹਿ ॥ ਪਾਹਣੁ ਨੀਰਿ ਪਖਾਲੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਬੁਝਹਿ ਤੋਹਿ ॥ ਗੁਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਲਖੁ ਨ ਲਖੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਜਗੁ ਬੂਝੈ ਪਤਿ ਖੋਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੩੭)

recited.<sup>371</sup> Newly born children are blessed and prayers are held invoking God to grant spirituality to the new born baby in life.

“ਤੀਰਥ ਵਰਤ ਸੁਚਿ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਰਮੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਨਹੀ ਪੂਜਾ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਭਾਇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨਿਸਤਾਰਾ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਵਿਆਪੇ ਦੂਜਾ ॥”

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪੰਨਾ ੭੫)

“Pilgrimage, fasts, purification and austerities are meaningless and so are rituals and religious ceremonies and show-worship. O Nanak emancipation comes only by involving in worship of God and controlling duality.”  
(Guru Granth Sahib Page 75)

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<sup>371</sup> ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਜੋ ਦੀਸਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਜਮੁ ਜਾਗਾਤੀ ਲੂਟੇ, ਨਿਰਬਾਣ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾ ਨਿਮਖ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਜਿਤੁ ਛੂਟੇ ।(ਪੰਨਾ ੭੪੭)

## Chapter 9

### Japuji and the Bhagvad Geeta

#### 9.1 Ideology of Japuji and Geeta

Some zealots are always on the look out to prove that their religion is the only one true religion and the others are copies of it or mere heresay. One such zealot wrote some time ago that Gurbani (Sikh scripture) “*is the purest fruit of the sacred tree of the Vedas.*”<sup>372</sup> We have discussed the Vedas in the last pages briefly and the reader can see that Gurbani and the Vedas have nothing in common. If anything Gurbani even criticizes the Vedas as useless.

Recently another stalwart has come out with a fantastic statement. He says, “*Japuji (Sikh morning prayer) is the gist of the Bhagvad Geeta*”. This critic must have known that a gist does not differ in the main issues discussed in the original document. As a matter of fact there is not an iota of coincidence in Japuji and Bhagvad Geeta. We give below a brief description of each.

#### 9.2 The Holy Bhagvad Geeta

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<sup>372</sup> “ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਲਪ ਬ੍ਰਿਖਸ਼ ਦਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਫਲ ਹੈ” (ਰਵਾਨੀ ੧੯੯੮)

Bhagvad Geeta, known as the essence of the Vedas, is very close to the heart of every Hindu.<sup>373</sup> It is a discourse delivered by Sri Krishna to Arjun (Son of Kunti) at Kurukshetra. It is said to have been recorded by Ved Vayasa who claims that Lord Vishnu himself expressed these thoughts through Sri Krishna. In it Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to fight against his cousins and relatives to regain his usurped royal rights and thus justify his duty as a Kashatrya. According to the Bhagvad Geeta Press of Gorakhpur, (which has been quoted in this book throughout) Bhagvad Geeta is based on two principles Sankhyoga and Karmayoga. Sankhyoga preaches that since life is nothing more than a dream, therefore humans should forget that they perform any actions (V.8-9) and trust that everything is done by God.<sup>374</sup> Sankhyoga is synonymous with Sanyas (Forest dwelling). Karmayoga stipulates that failures and successes should be taken as equal and actions should be performed according to God's behests (V-10). Obviously the two paths cannot be traversed by the same man at the same time. The Sanyasis cannot practise Karmayoga because they have to renounce all actions and abandon social living.

### **9.3 Synopsis of the Holy Bhagvad Geeta**

(Abridged from Gorakhpur English Translation of Bhagvad Geeta 1964 edition):

#### **Chapter 1 titled Yoga of dejection.**

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<sup>373</sup> No mundane book compares with *Bhagvad Geeta*.....the non-devotees approach to the teachings of Bhagvad Geeta is something like that of a bee licking on a bottle of honey. One cannot have a taste of honey unless one can taste within the bottle." (*Geeta As It Is*" By Swami Prabhupada page 25-26)

<sup>374</sup> This seems to exonerate the thieves and cut-throats.

It has 47 hymns describing warriors on both sides of the fight and their conches/weapons etc. At the end Arjuna expresses faint heartedness and grief in attacking his own relatives.

### **Chapter 2 Titled Sankhyoga**

It has 72 hymns. Hymns 1-10 discuss Arjuna's faint-heartedness, 11-30 deal with explanation of Sankhyoga, 31-38 deal with fighting as a duty, 39-53 deal with Karamyoga and 54-72 describe men who practice Sankhyoga or Karamyoga.

### **Chapter 3 titled Karamyoga**

It has 43 hymns. 1-8 describe duty and detachment, 9-16 describe the necessity of performing ritual sacrifices, 17-24 deal with necessity for action, and 25-35 deal with marks of the wise and the unwise, 36-43 deal with overcoming desire.<sup>375</sup>

### **Chapter 4 titled Yoga of knowledge**

It has 42 hymns. Hymns 1-18 deal with Karam yoga and selfless action, 19-23 with conduct of the yogis, 24-32 with different kinds of ritual sacrifices, and 33-42 deal with glory of knowledge.

### **Chapter 5 titled Yoga of Action**

It has 29 hymns. 1-6 deal with Sankhyoga, 7-12 deal with identification of Karam yogis and Sankh yogis, 13-26 deal with Gian yoga, and 27-29 deal with Dhyan yoga or meditation.

### **Chapter 6 titled Yoga of self control**

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<sup>375</sup> If Arjun had acted upon this advice he would have abandoned his desire to regain his lost kingdom.



It has 47 hymns. 1-4 describe Karam yoga, 5-10 deal with marks of the god-realized soul, 11-32 deal with Dhyan yoga; 33-36 discuss mind control, 37-47 deal with the plight of those who fail to perform Yoga.

#### **Chapter 7 titled Knowledge of Nirgun Brahm**

It has 30 hymns. 1-7 deal with manifest divinity, 8-12 describe God in all objects, 13-19 deal with condemnation of bad men and praise of devotees, 20-23 deal with Worship of lesser gods and 24-30 deal with those ignorant of God.

#### **Chapter 8 titled Yoga of Indestructible Brahm**

It has 28 hymns. 1-7 answer Arjuna's seven questions on Brahm, 8-22 deal with Bhagti yoga, 23-28 describe bright and dark paths.

#### **Chapter 9 titled The Yoga of Sovereign secret**

It has 28 hymns. 1-6 deal with knowledge, 7-10 deal with origin of the world, 11-15 condemn bad men, 16-19 describe God as soul of everything, 20-25 deal with fruits of worship, 26-28 deal with devotion practised with disinterestedness.

#### **Chapter 10 titled Yoga of divine glories**

It has 42 hymns. 1-7 describe power of Yoga, 8-11 describe Bhagti yoga, and 12-18 contain Arjuna's praises of God. In 19-42 The Lord describes his Glories and powers of yoga.

#### **Chapter 11 titled Yoga of vision**

It has 55 hymns. In 1-4 Arjuna prays for universal vision, In 5-8 Krishna describes universal vision, In 9-14 Sanjay describes universal form to Dhritrashtra, In 15-31 Arjuna witnesses Krishna's

universal form, 32-34 deal with exhortation of Arjuna to fight, In 35-46 Arjuna prays for Krishna's four-armed form, in 47-50 Krishna reveals to Arjuna his four-armed form, in 51-55 is discussed the impossibility of witnessing four-armed form without full devotion.

### **Chapter 12 titled Yoga of devotion**

It has 20 hymns. 1-12 deal with worshipping Nirgun and Sargun forms, 13-20 describe a God-realized soul.

### **Chapter 13 titled Yoga of discrimination**

It has 34 hymns. 1-18 deal with the subject of field and the knower of field, 19-34 deal with matter and spirit.

### **Chapter 14 titled Yoga of Classification**

It has 27 hymns. 1-4 describe Prakriti and Purusha, 5-18 describe Rajas, Tamas and Satva qualities, 19-27 deal with men who transcend the three *Gunas* (qualities).

### **Chapter 15 titled Yoga of supreme person.**

It has 20 hymns. 1-6 describe world as a tree, 7-11 Describe the Jivatma, 12-15 describe God and his glory, 16-20 describe Perishable and imperishable Jivatma (soul).

### **Chapter 16 titled Yoga of discrimination<sup>376</sup>**

It has 24 hymns. 1-5 describe divine and demonical properties; 6-20 describe marks of demonical persons, 21-24 deal with Exhortation to follow the scriptures.

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<sup>376</sup> This title is repeated in 13 and 16

### **Chapter 17 titled Yoga of three-fold faith**

It has 28 hymns. 1-6 deal with men who perform austerities not sanctioned by scriptures, 7-22 deal with different kinds of food, sacrifices, penance and charity. 23-28 deal with meaning of OM TAT SAT.

### **Chapter 18 titled Yoga of liberation**

It has 78 hymns. 1-12 deal with Tyag (relinquishment), 13-18 deal with the cause of Karma according to Sankhya system, 19-40 deal with classification of knowledge, 41-48 deal with duties of different castes, 49-55 describe the path of knowledge, 56-66 describe path of Karam yoga, and 67-78 describe the glory of Bhagvad Geeta itself.

## **9.4 The Holy Japuji**

Japuji is a composition of Guru Nanak, the first Guru of the Sikhs (1469-1539AD). It starts with invocation to God describing His attributes. It has 38 stanzas known as Pauries (steps). The start and the end are marked with two Shalokas. The starting Shaloka describes God as truth and the ending Shaloka summarises how humans (living a social life) can achieve this truth through devotion and prayer to the Almighty.

## **9.5 Synopsis of the Holy Japuji**

Japuji opens with an invocation (ਮੰਗਲਾਚਰਨ) to God which reads. “God is ONE. His name is Truth. He is the creator. He is fearless

and not inimical. He is without death and without birth. He is self-existent. Humans can attune to him through Guru's grace.

**Shalok:** God existed in the beginning, He existed when time started running its course, He exists even now and He shall exist forever and ever.

**Stanzas 1-3** outline how to efface falsehood which has poisoned the human mind and how to become one with God.

**Stanzas 4-7** talk of charity and the futility of penances, pilgrimages and other rituals. Meditation on God's universal presence is suggested for God realization.

**Stanzas 8-11** deal with virtues of hearing God's praises and the benefits accruing there from.

**Stanzas 12-15** deal with True devotees of God, divine knowledge and God's grace.

**Stanza 16** talks of the high status of God's devotees referred to in stanzas 12-15.

**Stanzas 17-19** Countless are sinners and countless are good men. Countless are species. God's limits cannot be described

**Stanzas 20-27** Sincere devotees and purified souls are the highest specimens. God's gifts and bounties are countless.

**Stanzas 28-33** describe the object of life-devotion. To pray on man-made gods and goddesses is useless pursuit. Humans must deserve grace through right action.

**Stanza 34** Humans can realize the object of life through God's grace.

**Stanza 35-37** Here five spiritual regions are described leading to the region of truth with which this composition started.

**Stanza 38** like a goldsmith purifying gold human mind is purified by passing through the stages described in Japuji. Union with God is achieved.

**Shalok:-** This Shalok sums up human life on earth. It delineates its purpose as right action which leads to devotion and salvation.

## 9.6 Comments

Bhagvad Geeta is an advice given by a particular person to another particular person in a warlike situation where conches, kettledrums, tabors and trumpets blared forth tumultuously. This war is supposed to have been fought at Kurukshetra (Haryana-India) between the two factions of a family for personal interests and not for the sake of the country or any religion. Geeta runs into 18 chapters and has 700 *Shalokas*. It is unlikely that such a long discourse was faithfully recorded there and then as if a short-hand knowing person had already been arranged and knew before-hand that Bhagvad Geeta was going to be revealed to Arjun.

1. Bhagvad Geeta deals with the war only in chapter1, partly in chapter 2 and then in chapter 11. The larger part of the book deals with spiritual pursuits which could not be discussed at a time when the two warring factions were facing each other with lethal weapons of war ready to fight and shed blood. A serious spiritual topic (like Geeta) is impossible to be discussed in such noisy environment.

2. Such deep spiritual matters, as discussed in Bhagvad Geeta, require concentration and peaceful atmosphere. If we estimate that one Shaloka of Geeta could be composed in one minute then the 700 Shalokas of Geeta will take 12 hours (a full day) to compose. I wonder if the enemy waited for twelve hours to attack their

opponents. It is my feeling that Bhagvad Geeta must have been composed away from the theatre of war.<sup>377</sup>

3. Another rather unconvincing thing about the Bhagvad Geeta is that whereas Sri Krishna himself supported the Pandus (Arjun and his brothers), Krishna's army was lent to the opposing Kurus (Arjun's cousins) to fight against Arjun. There was no justification for a religious leader to support a usurper and to involve in bloody personal jealousies and domestic clashes. His role as a religious person would have been praiseworthy if he had brought the two warring sides together and settled the issue peacefully. A truly religious person does not take sides.

4. The war was fought because the Kurus usurped the kingdom and disrobed Daropadi (Arjun's wife).<sup>378</sup> But this was no valid reason for fighting a bloody war which destroyed the culture of a country and resulted in the cruel butchery of millions of innocent people. The defenders (Pandus) were gamblers who had shamelessly gambled away their wife who (under the then current law) had become the property of the Kurus. Instead of condemning gambling as a vice Sri Krishna says, "*In those practicing fraud, I am gambling; I am the glory of the glorious.*" (Geeta X.36)

5. Geeta is a conversation between Arjun and Krishna which Sanjay heard and reported to Dhritrashtra and Vayasa wrote it

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<sup>377</sup> Some scholars like Mr. Kinsley believe that the *Bhagvad Geeta* was composed much later to combat a religious challenge from Jainism and Buddhism which arose in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Buddhists and Jains were atheists and Geeta strongly opposes atheism

<sup>378</sup> When Daropadi was being disrobed in public the grand old man Bhisham Pitama did not object nor did Dronacharya, the head priest of the two factions, say a word. What an ideal character!

down. We all know that heard conversations do not reach their destination in pristine purity. They change on the way. One wonders if all shalokas were faithfully reported by Sanjay and then accurately recorded by sage Vayasa.<sup>379</sup>

6. Some Shalokas are spoken by Dhritrashtra (For example No.1), some others are Arjun's questions. We cannot therefore conclude that the whole of Geeta is composed by Sri Krishna. It is for this reason that some scholars believe that Sri Krishna composed only 7 Shalokas. Some others however say that Geeta contains one Shaloka of Dhritrashtra, 80 of Arjun, 40 of Sanjay and 575 of Sri Krishna. Some scholars even believe that Krishna only uttered seven shalokas and the rest were added later.

7. It is not convincing that Arjun came to know about his opponents as being his kith and kin only when facing them in the battlefield. Did he not know beforehand that his fight was going to be with his relatives? How could he forget the cause of the conflict (injustice by relatives)?<sup>380</sup> Did he realise kinship only when the war was about to begin?

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<sup>379</sup> There is no indication that Vayasa was present with Dhritrashtra when Sanjay related Geeta to the latter. Vayasa's name is also associated with Vedas. It is not clear that this Vayasa is the same mythical figure or a different one. The story goes that when Rishi Vyasa did not find peace after writing 'Vedant', he created Geeta on the instructions of Rishi Narada. Bhai Gurdas mentions this when he writes, "ਸ਼ਾਂਤ ਨ ਆਈ ਵੇਦ ਮਥਿ ਅਗਨੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਤਪਤ ਤਪਾਇਆ॥ ਮਾਯਾ ਦੰਡ ਨ ਉਤਰੇ ਜਮ ਦੰਡੇ ਬਹੁ ਦੁਖ ਰੂਆਇਆ ॥ ਨਾਰਦ ਮੁਨਿ ਉਪਦੇਸਿਆ ਮਥ ਭਗਵਤ ਗੁਨ ਗੀਤ ਕਰਾਯਾ॥ Did Vyasa live that long?"

<sup>380</sup> ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੀ ਕਰਦੇ? "ਕਿਸਹੂੰ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਕਾਣ ਨ ਧਰ ਹੈਂ, ਰਾਜ ਕਰੈ ਇਕੇ ਲੜ ਮਰਹੈਂ ॥" ( ਬਚਿੱਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ) ਜਾਂ ਰਾਜ ਖੋਹ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਜਾਂ ਬੇਇਨਸਾਫੀ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਲੜ ਕੇ ਜਾਨਾਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦੇ ॥ ਪਾਂਡੂਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ ਨਾ ਦੇਣਾ ਸਰੀਯ ਧੱਕਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਜੂਏ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜ ਭਾਗ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਹਾਰਨਾ ਮੁਰਖਤਾ ਸੀ ।

## Japuji cannot be a gist of the Bhagvad Geeta

1. Bhagvad Geeta was never intended to be a scripture for the world. It was an incidental advice to Arjun on a particular issue. If the war had not occurred, Geeta would not have been written. At the end of Bhagvad Geeta Krishna asks Arjuna a personal question, “*O son of Kunti has your delusion born of ignorance been destroyed?*” On the other hand Japuji (and other Gurbani) was composed specifically as a religious guide for use by the humanity as a source of moral and spiritual instruction. It has no connection with any individual and is impersonal.<sup>381</sup>
2. Japuji starts with an invocation (Mool Mantra) to God, outlining its attributes and the way humans can attune with God whereas Bhagvad Geeta has no such beginning and does not even mention God. Its first line is as follows:-

*“Dhritrashtra Vach: Sanjay, assembled on the holy field of Kurukshetra, eager to fight, what did my children and the children of Pandu do?”* (Bhagvad Geeta 1.1)

3. The aim of Japuji is clearly stated by Guru Nanak as “to be truthful” (ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ). The aim of Bhagvad Geeta is nowhere as clear. Can it be anything other than internecine fighting with which the discourse starts?
4. Japuji says that when intellect becomes full of sins it can only be cleansed through prayer to God (ਭਰੀਐ ਮਤਿ ਪਾਪਾ ਕੇ ਸੰਗਿ ਓਹੁ ਧੋਪੈ ਨਾਵੈ ਕੈ ਰੰਗਿ॥ ਪੰਨਾ ੪) whereas in Bhagvad Geeta Krishna

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<sup>381</sup> No human is addressed here. " ਹਰਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਹਰਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਬੰਧੁ ਹਰਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਭਾਈ"॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੯੦) is the theme of Gurbani throughout and Japuji sets this theme.



says, “Surrendering all duties to me, seek refuge in me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins; grieve not.” (XVIII-66). Bhagvad Geeta preaches hero worship not God worship.

5. Throughout Japuji Guru Nanak nowhere mentions the caste distinctions of people. Bhagvad Geeta however openly declares caste system as a divine ordination. (Geeta I-42, 43). It favours the Brahmans who were feeding fat on the labours of the common people and degrades the Shudras. Bhagvad Geeta thus divides the society on the basis of caste. The Japuji brings people closer. It says “*All humans originate from the same God, let us not forget Him*”. (ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਸੋ ਮੈਂ ਵਿਸਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥੫॥ ਪੰਨਾ ੨)<sup>382</sup>
6. Japuji is a poem that can be read at any time to achieve spiritual merit. There are no rituals to be performed. Bhagvad Geeta however leaves instructions for rituals to be performed. “*Keeping the trunk, head and neck straight and steady, remaining firm and looking at the tip of the nose, without looking in other direction.* (Bhagvad Geeta VI-13)
7. Bhagvad Geeta talks of the necessity of sacrifices. Japuji is dead against sacrifices and rituals. “*Fostered by sacrifice, the gods will surely bestow on you unasked all the desired enjoyments. The virtuous, who partake of what is left after sacrifice, are absolved of all sins.*” (Bhagvad Geeta III-1213)

Different kinds of sacrifices are described in Bhagvad Geeta (IV.24-32).The argument runs as follows: “*All beings are*

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<sup>382</sup>“*In its social doctrine, the Bhagvad Geeta was not egalitarian, but staunchly attached to the caste system, and to it only the Brahman and the Kashatrya were noble by birth.*” (‘Hinduism’ by Niradh Chaudhri Page 266).

*evolved from food; production of food is dependent on rain; rain ensues from sacrifices, and sacrifice is rooted in action. Know that action has its origin in the Vedas and the Vedas proceed from indestructible (God); hence, the all pervading infinite is always present in sacrifice.”*

(Bhagvad Geeta III-14 &15)

8. Bhagvad Geeta defines and explains the various Yogas and is terse and turgid in their description. Japuji has nothing to do with any Yoga and is comparatively more easily understood.
9. Bhagvad Geeta is full of mythology, tautology and intellectual metaphysical somersaults offering no instruction for the ordinary reader to apply in daily life. Japuji is closer to life. Many of its phrases (like:- ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ ॥) have become sayings even among the non-Sikhs.
10. Bhagvad Geeta is a historical and narrative document mentioning historical characters like Krishna, Arjuna, Kunti, Sanjay, Purujit, Saibya, Daropdi, Daryodhana, Darona, Bhishma, Karna Abhimanyu and a host of others. It also outlines their part in the story under discussion. Japuji does not tell any story. Its contents are spiritual, to the point, direct, pithy and altruistic. No name is mentioned in Japuji.
11. Bhagvad Geeta believes in omens whereas Japuji condemns them. Arjun says, *“I see the omens also inauspicious; nor do I see any good in killing my kith and kin in battle.”*

(Bhagvad Geeta I-31)

12. Bhagvad Geeta is not fair to women and Shudras and has a strange theory of the origin and social implication of castes. It

says,” *With the preponderance of vice, the women of the family become corrupt; and with the corruption of women, O Varsneya, there ensues an intermixture of castes.*” (Bhagvad Geeta I-41). **“The four orders of society (viz; the Brahman, the Kashatrya, the Vaisya and the Shudras) were created by me classifying them according to their prenatal qualities and apportioning corresponding duties to them.”**

(Bhagvad Geeta IV.13).

*“Arjuna womenfolk, Vaisyas, Shudras and even those that are born of the womb of sin (such as the Pariah) taking refuge in me, they too attain the supreme goal.”*

(Bhagvad Geeta IX-32)

Japuji avoids such prejudices altogether. It does not propound any such theories and is fair to everybody. According to Japuji all humans are equally blessed by the same God)<sup>383</sup>

**13.** Although Krishna was born in Dwapar Yuga he claims to be the author of the Vedas (written much earlier). **“I am the sustainer and ruler of this universe, its father, mother, and grandfather, the knowable, the purifier, the sacred syllable Om and the three Vedas –Rk, Yajus and Samas.” (IX-17).** How could Guru Nanak ignore such an important personality as the **“sustainer of the universe”** while producing an alleged gist of the Bhagvad Geeta? How could he have the audacity to ignore the writer of the three Vedas and enter his own name

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<sup>383</sup> Gumat brings people closer. It says, ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆਂ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਸੇ ਮੇਂ ਵਿਸਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ । (ਪੰਨਾ ੨) "ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਐਸਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜੇ ਸਬਸੇ ਲਏ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਜੀਉ" (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੨) .This theme runs all through Guru Granth Sahib.

instead and write “*the lowly Nanak offers this instruction (ਨਾਨਕ ਨੀਚੁ ਕਹੈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ਪੰਨਾ ੪)*”.

14. Sri Krishna says that he is God and is the creator of the universe but we find in the same Bhagvad Geeta Brahma mentioned as the creator. **“Having created mankind along with the spirit of sacrifice at the beginning of creation the creator, Brahma said to them, “Do you multiply through this; may this yield the enjoyment you seek.”**

(Bhagvad Geeta III-10).

15. Sri Krishna claims to be the author of all the Vedas (IX-17) and yet he associates himself only with Sam Veda alone when he says, “*Among the Vedas, I am the Sam Veda.*”

(Bhagvad Geeta X-22).

16. Japuji is impersonal and Guru Nanak nowhere mentions his name as God or God’s representative. In The Bhagvad Geeta, however, Sri Krishna calls himself God umpteen times and claims that he is the creator of the universe. He says, “*I am the source of entire creation and in Me again it dissolves.*” (VII-6) “*I am the self seated in the heart of all beings; so I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings*”(X-20). If Japuji were a gist of Bhagvad Geeta, the Guru would have named Krishna as creator of the universe in the composition at least once.

17. It needs to be noted that Bhagvad Geeta is not open to all and sundry. It is not meant for the whole of humanity. Ordinary men and women are not permitted to read or recite it because it is a secret incantation open only to a few deserving people. Sri Krishna says, **“This secret teaching should never be imparted to a man without austerity, nor to one without devotion, nor even to him who is unwilling to hear, nor again to him who finds fault with me.”**(Bhagvad Geeta

**XVIII-67) “Thus knowledge more secret than secrecy itself has been imparted to you by me.”**

(Bhagvad Geeta XVIII-63).

On the other hand Japuji is recited by everybody high and low and is not a secret formula. The Guru nowhere mentions that it is exclusively available to only a limited number of people.

**18.** Brahma is mentioned as the creator of the universe (See number 14 above). In the so-called gist of the Bhagvad Geeta Guru Nanak does not refer to this one Brahma but on the other hand says that every creator is Brahma and therefore there is no end to the number of Brahmas (ਕੇਤੇ ਬਰਮੇ ਘਾੜਤਿ ਘੜੀਅਹਿ ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਕੇ ਵੇਸ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ ੭)<sup>384</sup>

**19.** The stanzas of Japuji are logically and scientifically arranged where as in the Bhagvad Geeta one and the same subject crops up again and again. For example caste is discussed at various places. ( see 1.41-and 13, 3543, iv 7,8 and 13, Vi. 35, xviii 18,41 and 47)

**20** Posturing is necessary in prayer according to Geeta. “*Keeping the eyes and vision concentrated between the two eyebrows, suspending the inward and outward breaths within the nostrils and thus controlling the mind, senses and intelligence, the transcendentalist becomes free from desire, fear and anger. One who is always in this state is certainly liberated.*” (Geeta 5-27, 28 also read 6-11 to 15). No such instruction is found in the Japuji.

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<sup>384</sup> According to Gurbani Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are nowhere outside the human body. They are the three functions (of creation, sustenance and destruction) the human body performs “ਕਾਇਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸਾ ਸਭ ਓਪਤਿ ਜਿਤੁ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੫੪)”

- 21** Certain mystical ideas in Geeta are mentioned twice and stand against each other. They cause confusion as to which one of them is correct. For example “Of the mountains I am Meru” (10.23), “Of the immovable things I am the Himalaya. (10-25). “Of the demigods I am Indra (10.22), “Of the demigods I am Narda” (10.26) One wonders which statement is to be believed. There is no such confusion in Japuji.
- 22.** The most important and universally accepted spiritual essence of the holy Geeta is chapter 11 titled “vision of the Universal form (*Vishva-rupa*)”. In it Lord Krishna shows millions of gods and demigods in his mouth and armies being chewed under his teeth. Geeta has no value without this central mystical representation of Krishna but Guru Nanak has not even mentioned Krishna in Japuji much less produce a gist of this so important chapter.
- 23** Again Lord Krishna showed his “*four-armed form*” to Arjuna” (Geeta 11.50) which according to Swami Prabhupada even Brahma and Lord Siva cannot see (*‘Geeta As it is’* page 197). Even this important point is completely omitted in the Japuji by Guru Nanak.
- 24** The styles of the two compositions are different. Geeta is recorded in a conversational style where Dhritrashtra and Arjuna ask questions and Sanjay and Krishna give answers. Japuji is written in a compact logical philosophical style peculiar to Guru Nanak where no outsider asks any questions.
- 25** In the Geeta the first chapter is nearly completely devoted to listing the names of the warriors and charioteers and descriptions of their weapons, flags and respective fighting capabilities. There is absolutely no spiritual value in this

chapter. As compared to this the Japuji jumps straight in spiritualism right from the first verse and maintains it right to the end.

If Japuji were a gist of Bhagvad Geeta, Guru Nanak would have stated it clearly and not used his own name as the author of Japuji. By calling Japuji a gist of Bhagvad Geeta, the detractors simply try to belittle Guru Nanak and his contribution to Indian religious thought and label him as a plagiarist.

Bhagvad Geeta is a piece of ancient religious literature and as such it is incumbent upon every Indian to show it due respect. It is not only a milestone in the history of religious thought in India but is also the source of belief of millions of Indian people. However it must be understood that it is not obligatory for anyone to accept anything without critical examination. One's religion depends on one's personal critique of the available religious principles. The Sikhs who believe in Japuji have every right to stick to its principles and ignore the Bhagvad Geeta. To foist the principles of Bhagvad Geeta on the believers of Japuji is high-handedness and bigotry which can only create bad blood between the two communities. Have the detractors forgotten the following instruction of the Bhagvad Geeta? **“He who is free from malice towards all beings, who is friendly as well as compassionate.....He who is not a source of annoyance to the world, and who never feels offended with the world, who is free from delight and anger, perturbation and fear, he is dear to me.”** (Bhagvad Geeta XII 13-15)

If some people really believe that Japuji is the gist of Bhagvad Geeta, then it is advisable for them to read Japuji daily because Bhagvad Geeta is written in a language (Sanskrit) which is not

spoken or understood by most of the people and is difficult to understand

Only a fool would believe that Bhagvad Geeta is the gist of Japuji. In his Rehatnama named "Khalsa Shatak" ਭਾਈ ਬੁੱਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ " ਵੇਦ ਸਮ ਲਖ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਗੁਰ, ਸੋਹੰ ਸੋ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ॥ ਗੀਤਾ ਪਾਠ ਸਮ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਸੋ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਲਲਾਮ " (The Sikhs should consider the Granth as their veda,chant Satnam and consider the reading of Sukhmani as the reading of Geeta."

ਧੰਧੁ ਪਿਟੇ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਸਚੁ ਨ ਭਾਇਆ॥

ਕਿਆ ਭਵੀਐ ਕਿਆ ਢੁੰਢੀਏ ਗੁਰ ਸ਼ਬਦਿ ਦਿਖਾਇਆ॥

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪੰਨਾ ੪੧੯)

**“The worldly wise are entangled in bigotry and intolerance and cannot appreciate the truth. Why wander around and why go searching when the Guru’s shabad reveals the Truth.”**

**(Guru Granth Sahib Page 419)**



## Chapter 10

### Hindu Rituals

In this chapter we will highlight some Hindu rituals with which Sikhism has nothing to do. If anything, Sikhism condemns them as useless pursuits. Some of these rituals and beliefs have already been discussed elsewhere. We will therefore briefly discuss only a few that have not been mentioned elsewhere in this book.

#### 10.1 Janeu

It is a thread that each Hindu is supposed to wear at a certain age.<sup>385</sup> The age and the type of thread differ from one caste to the other. Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru, was asked to wear this thread but he politely declined saying that the thread cannot have any influence on his morals and spirituality. It is perishable and does no good to its wearer.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> According to the Simrtis a person without a 'Janeu' has no right to worship God.

<sup>386</sup> ਤਗ ਕਪਾਹਹੁ ਕਤੀਐ ਬਾਮਣ ਵਟੇ ਆਇ (੪੭੧) ਚੌਕੜਿ ਮੁਲਿ ਅਣਾਇਆ ਬਹਿ ਚਉਕੈ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਿਖਾ ਕੰਨਿ ਚੜਾਈਆ ਗੁਰੁ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਬਿਆ, ਓਹੁ ਮੁਆ ਓਹੁ ਝੜਿ ਪਇਆ ਵੇਤਗਾ ਗਇਆ ॥ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀ ਤਗੁ ਨ ਨਾਰੀ ਭਲਕੇ ਥੁਕ ਪਵੈ ਨਿਤ ਦਾੜੀ (੪੭੧) ਹੋਇ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ ਸੁਟੀਐ ਭੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਹੋਰੁ (੪੭੧)

The society was divided on the simple question of wearing a *Janeu*. Only the Brahman was permitted to wear the Janeu made of cotton. The Kashatrya had to wear Jute and the Vaisha was supposed to wear woolen Janeu. Women and Shudras were forbidden from wearing a Janeu at all. Again only the Brahman was permitted to perform Sandhya, Gaytry recitation and Agni Hotra ceremonies.

## 10.2 Curses

Curses are common in Hindu scriptures. We find a lot of them in the Vedas. It is a common feature of the Upnishads and Puranas where the gods and *Rishis* curse each other and do harm to their opponents. Yajur Veda is full of *mantras* soliciting harm to the enemies and asking for benedictions to their own families. According to Sikhism, religion should teach fellow feeling and brotherhood and not hurl curses at others.<sup>387</sup>

## 10.3 Sharadh

A *Sharadh* is a feast given to a Brahman at the death of a near relative. It is believed that whatever is given away to the Brahman (clothes, shoes jewelry etc.) or fed to him reaches the departed soul (See *Garud Puran*). According to Manu Simrti (Chapter 5 Shalok 64) *Sharadhs* must continue to be organized for seven generations after the death of a relative.<sup>388</sup> Manu Simrti also adds that in a *Sharadh* a Brahman should be offered the meat of a boar

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<sup>387</sup> ਏਹ ਵੈਰੀ ਮਿਤ੍ਰ ਸਭਿ ਕੀਤਿਆ ਨਹ ਮੰਗਹਿ ਮੰਦਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੯੬) ਮੰਦਾ ਮੂਲਿ ਨਾ ਕੀਚਈ ਦੇ ਲੰਮੀ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲਐ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੨੪).

<sup>388</sup> Perhaps Manu forgot to calculate time. Seven generations would mean at least 400 years and unfortunately during this period many more will have died. How many Sharadhs and how long would they last? Forget the cost.

or a bull. This satisfies the hunger of the departed ancestors for ten months.<sup>389</sup>

*A Sharadh can only be offered to a Brahman. Manu says, "Let him take pains to feed at a Shardha an adherent of Rig Veda who has studied one entire Veda or a follower of the Yajur Veda who has finished one Sakha, or a singer of samans who likewise has completed the study of an entire recension."*

*(Manu III.145)*

He who offers a Sharadh has to be liberal in rewarding a Brahman for his services. Manu says, *"One should give according to One's ability, wealth to the Brahman, thus one obtains after death heavenly bliss."*

*(Manu XI .6)*

Hindu scriptures say, ***"Matrudevo bhava, pitrudevo bhava, acharyadevo bhava.*** (Consider your parents and teachers as you would the Lord). They believe that even after death it is only through the living that any food reaches the dead.

*"If a lame man, a one-eyed man, one deficient in a limb, or one with a redundant limb, be even the servant of the performer (of the Sharadh), he must be removed from that place (where the Sharadh is held)".*

*(Manu 3.242)*

To the Hindus the worst form of pollution (known as Patak) is death after which the family undergoes many purifying ceremonies

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<sup>389</sup> One of my friends named Kapur Singh invited a Brahman for Sharadh and placed before him a lot of opium and a bottle of Whisky. He asked the Brahman to send them to his departed father who used to eat opium and drink liquor. The Brahman took to his heels. Strangely only rice-pudding can be parceled by the Brahmans to the dead ancestors.

and rituals. All these ideas may have originated with Manu who divided defilement into Physical and notional categories. Manu says, “*A Brahman shall be pure after 10 days, a Kashatrya after 12, a vaisha after 15 and a Shudra is purified after a month* . (Manu V.83)

Garud Puran says that a dead person has to cross a river full of blood and puss. Only a cow’s tail, if held tightly, can help cross it. Therefore it is necessary that a cow is offered to a Brahman by the departed person’s relatives after the *Sharadh* ceremony. The Sikhs call this a story without head or tail. How can a cow, which stays in this world with the Brahman, help anyone in the next world? Again why a cow? Why not a fast horse (or a motor boat) which can carry its rider across easily?

The Sikh Gurus right from Guru Nanak called it cheating perpetrated by the Brahman on the gullible people. He said, “*It is strange that they care a fig for their ancestors when they are alive but after their death they organize Sharadhs for them*”<sup>390</sup> He called Brahman a thief and argued that if what the Brahman says is true then it is the cheat go-between (Brahman) who will suffer removal of his hands for sending the dishonest earnings to the ancestors.<sup>391</sup>

The Sikh Gurus condemned the notions of defilement attached to births and deaths.

## 10. 4 Good /bad days

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<sup>390</sup> ਜੀਵਤ ਪਿਤਰ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ਕੋਊ ਮੂਏਂ ਸਿਰਾਧ ਕਰਾਹੀ ॥ ਪਿਤਰ ਭੀ ਬਪੁਰੇ ਕਹੁ ਕਿਉ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਕਊਆ ਕੂਕਰ ਖਾਹੀ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੩੨)

<sup>੩੯੧</sup> ਜੇ ਮੋਹਾਕਾ ਘਰੁ ਮੁਹੈ ਘਰੁ ਮੁਹਿ ਪਿਤਰੀ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਅਗੈ ਵਸਤੁ ਸਿੰਵਾਣੀਐ ਪਿਤਰੀ ਚੋਰ ਕਰੇਇ ॥ ਵਢੀਅਹਿ ਹਥ ਦਲਾਲ ਕੇ ਮੁਸਫੀ ਏਹ ਕਰੇਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਅਗੈ ਸੋ ਮਿਲੈ ਜਿ ਖਟੇ ਘਾਲੇ ਦੇਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੨)

Certain days, times and months are considered inauspicious by the Hindus.<sup>392</sup> Great care is taken to fix the wedding on a certain date and meticulous care is taken to utter the related *mantras* exactly at the most auspicious time considered by the Brahman. Yet like the non-Hindu women, the Hindu ladies too turn widows.<sup>393</sup>

The Sikh Gurus attached no importance to such beliefs. They declared that all days, months and times are sacred if God is remembered.<sup>394</sup>

## 10.5 Omens

The Hindus believe in omens and make elaborate arrangements with necromancers and consult horoscopes to obviate their influences. The Sikh Gurus condemned this practice.<sup>395</sup> They attached no importance to omens and called them useless practices.<sup>396</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> ਚਉਦਸ ਅਮਾਵਸ ਰਚਿ ਰਚਿ ਮਾਂਗਹਿ, ਕਰ ਦੀਪਕੁ ਲੈ ਕੂਪਿ ਪਰਹਿ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੭੦)

<sup>393</sup> ਸਾਹਾ ਗਣਹਿ ਨ ਕਰਹਿ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਸਾਹੇ ਉਪਰ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੦੩)

<sup>394</sup> ਨਾਨਕ ਸੋਈ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਸੁਹਾਵੜਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਆਵੈ ਚਿਤਿ, ਜਿਤੁ ਦਿਨ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਫਿਟੁ ਭਲੇਰੀ ਰੁਤਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੧੮) ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਅੰਧੁ ਗੁਬਾਰ, ਬਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ ਸੇਵਹਿ ਮੁਗਧ ਗਵਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੪੩) See also ਸ਼ਬਦ ਛਨਿਛਰਵਾਰਿ..... (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੪੧) ਮਾਹ ਦਿਵਸ ਮੁਰਤ ਭਲੇ ਜਿਸ ਕਉ ਨਦਰ ਕਰੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੬) ਪੂਛਤ ਨ ਜੋਤਕ ਕਉ ਬੇਦ ਬਿਤ ਵਾਰ ਕਛੁ, ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਅਉ ਨਿਛਤੁ ਕੀ ਨ ਸੰਕਾ ਉਰ ਧਾਰੀ ਹੈ (ਕਬਿਤ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)॥

<sup>395</sup> ਸਗੁਨ ਅਪਸਗੁਨ ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਲਗਹਿ ਜਿਸ ਚੀਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ (੪੦੧) ਸੋਈ ਸਾਸਤ ਸਉਣੁ ਸੋਇ ਜਿਤੁ ਜਪੀਐ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਉ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੮) ਪੁਛੁ ਹਮਰੈ ਸਾਸਤੁ ਸਉਣੁ ਸੁਖ ਸਹਿਜ ਅਨੰਦ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਭਉਣ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੭੩)

<sup>396</sup> ਮਾਨੈ ਨਾਹਿੰ ਵੇਦ ਭੇਦ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਪੁਰਾਨਨ ਕੇ, ਪੁਜਤ ਨ ਭੈਰੋਂ ਭੂਤ ਗਿਰਿਜਾ ਗਣਿੰਦੂ ਹੈ ॥ ਤਿਥਿ ਵਾਰ ਸ਼ਗਨ ਮਹੁਰਤ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਕਿਛੁ, ਰਾਹੁ ਕੇਤੁ ਛਨੀ ਸੁਕਰ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਦਿਨਿੰਦੂ ਹੈ ॥ ਜਾਤਿ ਪਾਤਿ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਤੰਤ੍ਰ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਸ਼ਾਧ ਹੋਮ, ਸੰਧਯਾ ਸੂਤਕਾਦਿ ਕੋ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸੀ ਨਹਿੰ ਬਿੰਦੂ ਹੈ ॥ ਦਸਮੇਸ਼ ਕੋ ਸਪੂਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੈ ਭਿੰਨ ਪੰਥ, ਮਹਾ ਹੈ ਅਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੋਊ ਯਾਂਕੋ ਕਹੈ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਹੈ ॥ (ਕਬਿਤ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

## 10.6 Varat (ਉਪਵਾਸ-fasting)

There are many fasts in Hinduism which only women are required to undergo. Almost every month has a fast or two. *Sanghera, Ahoee, Santoshi Mata, Maha Lakshami, Karva Chauth, Nauratas, Ekadshi, Chaudash*<sup>397</sup> etc. There are many rituals (like floating lamps in water, putting dough plums on bushes etc. that go with these Hindu Varats). Different foods (like spaghetti, fruit etc.) are prescribed for breaking different *Varats*.

The Sikh Gurus condemned fasting as a useless exercise. It may be efficacious for health but it has no merit in spiritual terms.<sup>398</sup> The Sikh Gurus say, “*By fasting you simply harm your body. Without receiving knowledge from a preceptor you will not receive peace of Mind.*”(p.905) The Sikh Gurus attached no importance to keeping womenfolk hungry. The Guru said, “*By starvation one gains nothing but loses the taste of the tongue*”<sup>399</sup>

## 10.7 Child marriage

Child marriage was approved by Manu.

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<sup>397</sup> ਚਉਦਸ ਅਨਾਵਸ ਰਚਿ ਰਚਿ ਮਾਂਗਹਿ ਕਰ ਦੀਪਕੁ ਲੈ ਕੂਪਿ ਪਰਹਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੭੦)

<sup>398</sup> ਪੂਜਾ ਵਰਤ ਤਿਲਕ ਇਸਨਾਨਾ ਪੁੰਨ ਦਾਨ ਬਹੁ ਦੈਨ ॥ ਕਹੂੰ ਨ ਭੀਜੈ ਸੰਜਮ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਮੀਠੇ ਬੈਨ” (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੭੪)

<sup>399</sup> ਅੰਨ ਨ ਖਾਹਿ ਦੇਹੀ ਦੁਖੁ ਦੀਜੈ, ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿ ਨਹੀਂ ਥੀਜੈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੦੫) ਅੰਨ ਨ ਖਾਇਆ ਸਾਦੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੬੭)। ਵਰਤ ਕਰਹਿ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਾਇਣਾ ਸੇ ਕਿਤੈ ਨ ਲੇਖੰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੯੯) । ਅੰਨ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਦੇਹੀ ਸਹਤਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੪੮), ਹਮਰੇ ਗੁਰੁ ਕੇ ਸਿਖ ਹੈਂ ਜੇਈ,ਅਲਪ ਆਹਾਰ ਵ੍ਰਤੀ ਨਿਤ ਸੇਈ॥ (ਸੂਰਜ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼).

*“A man, aged thirty years, shall marry a maiden of twelve who pleases him, or a man of twenty-four a girl of eight years of age; if (the performance of) his duties would otherwise be impeded, he must marry sooner.”*<sup>400</sup> [Manu IX.94]

## 10.8 Food

Manu Simrti instructs the Hindus not to eat food produced by using organic compost. They are specially instructed to avoid eating garlic, carrot, onion, mushrooms (खुंभ्रां), leeks and greens (See Manu V.5 and V.19). It also restricts the types of meat a Hindu should eat or avoid. Another thing a Hindu must do is to offer prayers to food itself before eating it. *“Let him always worship his food and eat it without contempt”* (Manu II.54). *“Food that is worshipped gives strength and manly vigour.”* (Manu II.55)

When eating food the Brahmans sprinkle water around their plates. Then they place five morsels of food aside and utter five *mantras*. The first *Mantra* is addressed to gods and is called **devta runa**, the second *mantra* is for ancestors. It is called **pitru runa**. The third *mantra* is for sages. it is called **rishi runa**. The fourth *Mantra* is for people. It is called **manushya runa**. The last *mantra* is for spirits. It is called **bhuta runa**. In the end the Brahmans are remembered. This practice is known as *Neiybed* (नैयबेद). The *Mantra* is follows:

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<sup>400</sup> Since child marriage was sanctioned by religion, it was not easy to stop it. The British Government of India banned child marriage by “Child marriage restraint act of 1929 but it is a fact that in many areas of India (especially in Andhra Pardesh) child marriage is still practiced openly.

*Praanaaya swaahaa, apaanaaya swaahaa, vyaanaaya swaahaa, udaanaaya swaahaa, samaanaaya swaahaa, brahmane swaahaa.*

Before starting to eat the Sikhs wash their hands and say a short thanksgiving prayer to God. In the Gurdwaras a big drum is beaten after the prayer. Anybody (of any caste creed or country) hearing it is welcome to share meals with the Sikhs. As to the type of food the Sikh Gurus leave this question for the individual to decide what to eat and what not to eat.<sup>401</sup> The Sikhs are however advised not to consume anything that does not agree with their constitution and leads to baser tendencies

## 10.9 Ritual baths in the Ganges

The story goes that Raja Sagar's 60,000 sons died because of a curse by a *Rishi*. In order to sanctify their ashes Shiv ji brought Ganges from heaven. The Hindus believe that bathing in the river Ganges washes away all sins and such a person goes straight to heaven. The Sikh Gurus attached no importance to baths at religious places unless the pollution of mind is cleared. Gurbani says, “*If ritual baths could obliterate sins then a frog has better chance of washing away sins than a human being*”.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਹੈ ਦਿਤੋਨੁ ਰਿਜਕੁ ਸੰਬਾਹਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੨)। “ਜੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਦੇਹੀ ਮਾਫਕ ਹੋਵੇ ਸੋ ਖਾਏ, ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਮੁਖ ਔਰ ਹੰਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅੰਨ ਨਾ ਖਾਏ” (ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਸੁਮਾਰਗ)

<sup>402</sup> ਜਲ ਕੈ ਮਜਨਿ ਜੇ ਗਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਮੈਂਡੁਕ ਨਾਵਹਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੮੪) ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਇ ਨ ਉਤਰਸਿ ਮੈਲੁ॥ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਸਭਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਫੈਲੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੯੦) । ਮਨਿ ਮੈਲੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਮੈਲਾ ਤਨਿ ਧੋਤੈ ਮਨੁ ਹਛਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ । (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੫੮) ।



It is sad fact that the Hindus discard the dead bodies of their ancestors in the so called sacred river. Factories near the river pollute the water by depositing their refuse in it.<sup>403</sup>

## 10.10 Yajna/ Yagya or Homa sacrifices

Right from the Vedas, Hindus have been instructed to get involved in sacrifices and *havan* (burnt offerings) which are a ritual sacrifice to the fire god.<sup>404</sup> Yajur Veda is full of such instructions and rituals stating what sort of vessel is to be used, how long and wide is the pit (*Havan Kund*) to be dug and how much butter is to be used and how. Different types of *Havans* are performed for different occasions. They are done for weddings, births, deaths, festivals, prosperity, education, victory and peace etc. The Sikh Gurus have condemned them as useless waste of time and food stuffs.<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> Sri Krishna says , “Of the flowing rivers I am the Ganges”( Geeta 10.31) On 14.10.2010 Star news broadcast a discussion about Ganges water with Hindu Scholars and scientists. After clinically testing the water at 5 different places, it was disclosed by the scientists that Ganges water had 1,70,000 disease germs of various kinds. One Hindu Scholar however said that such reports were broadcast to wean away Hindu devotees from taking a bath in the holy Ganges. According to him a Hindu mind cannot be purified without a dip in the holy Ganges and without drinking its water. He called the water *Amrit*. Hindu philosopher Swami Ram Dev, who was present there, disagreed strongly and said that he would neither drink the water of the Ganges nor take a bath in its polluted water. Millions of Hindus take ritual baths in this river every year.

<sup>404</sup> Manu has given the names of five most essential sacrifices as follows. Ahuta, Huta, Prahuta, Brahmaya Huta, and Praseeta (Manu II.73). Bhagvad Geeta supports this view and says, “A man who does not follow the prescribed Vedic system of sacrifice certainly leads a life of sin. (Geeta 3.16)

<sup>405</sup> ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਤੀਰਥ ਕੀਏ ਬਿਚਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਬਧੇ ਬਿਕਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੧੪) ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਜਪ ਤਪ ਸਭਿ ਸੰਜਮ ਤਟਿ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਹੀ ਪਾਇਆ, ਮਿਟਿਆ ਆਪੁ ਪਏ ਸਰਣਾਈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਗਤੁ ਤਰਾਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ

“An oblation duly thrown into the fire, reaches the sun; from the sun comes rain, from rain food, there from the living creatures derive their subsistence” (Manu Smṛiti 3.76)

One wonders how the non-Hindu countries receive rain. They do not throw oblations in the fire.

## 10.11 Vanprasth Ashram

Vanprasth Ashram is a peculiar feature of the philosophy of Hinduism. It is not found in any other religion of the world. According to the Ashram theory life is to be divided into four stages called *Brahamchari*, *Grahastha*, *Vanprastha* and *Sanyas*. According to Manu (See Manu VI.33) the object of *Sanyas* is to reach God.<sup>406</sup> Yet Manu says that *Sanyas* is the privilege of the higher classes alone. It is not open to the *Shudra*.

Although not many Hindus these days go to the forests for *Vanprasth* or *sanyas*, Vanprasth principles were preached by Manu as the cardinal principles of Hinduism. He made *Vanprastha* (renunciation) and *Sanyasa* (wandering mendicancy) obligatory for Hindus (Manu VI.33 and IX, 11). As a result nearly half the society lived in forests under the guidance of chosen teachers each of whom had his own set of rules.

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੧੧੩੯) ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਸਭਿ ਤੀਰਥਾ ਪੜ੍ਹਿ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਥਕੇ ਪੁਰਾਣ, ਬਿਖੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੁ ਨ ਮਿਟਈ ਵਿਚਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਆਵਣੁ ਜਾਣੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੪੧੭)

<sup>406</sup> The Guru instructed a Sidh Brahmachari as follows, “ਸਬਦੈ ਕਾ ਨਿਬੇੜਾ ਸੁਣਿ ਤੂੰ ਅਉਧੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਜੋਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੪੬)

“A twice born who has lived as a householder, taking a firm resolution and controlling his organs, should dwell in the forest.”  
(Manu VI.1)

“Abandoning all his belongings and food raised by cultivation, he may depart into the forest, either committing his wife to his sons, or accompanied by her. “  
(Manu VI.3)

Guru Nanak condemned forest dwelling and instead preached family living (Grahastha).<sup>407</sup>

## 10.12 Hindu Religion is not constant

Hindu scholars preached that religion changes from time to time. For example Manu writes; “In the Krita age Dharma was four-footed and so was truth. In the other ages Dharma was successively deprived of one foot.”(Manu I.81-82) it was therefore preached that people should accept what was being preached during their life time and need not bother about old ideal religious practices and beliefs.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਭੋਟਿਐ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ॥ ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੨੨) ਇਕਿ ਗਿਰਹੀ ਸੇਵਕ ਸਾਧਿਕਾ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਲਾਗੇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੧੯)

<sup>408</sup> This was a trick to fleece the gullible people because only the Brahmans could receive charity. Bhai Gurdas tells us ਤੁੱਤੇ ਛੱਤ੍ਰੀ ਰੂਪ ਧਰ ਸੂਰਜ ਬੰਸੀ ਬਡ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ॥ ਨਉਂ ਹਿਸੇ ਗਈ ਆਰਜਾ ਮਾਯਾ ਮੋਹ ਅਹੰਕਾਰ ਪਸਾਰਾ॥ ਦੁਆਪੁਰ ਜਾਦਵ ਵੇਸ ਕਰ ਜੁਗ ਜੁਗ ਅਉਧ ਘਟੈ ਆਚਾਰਾ॥ਰਿਗਬੋਦ ਮਹਿੰ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਪੂਰਬ ਮੁਖ ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮ ਬਿਚਾਰਾ॥ਖੜ੍ਹੀ ਥਾਪੇ ਜੁਜਰ ਵੇਦ ਦਖਣ ਮੁਖ ਬਹੁ ਦਾਨ ਦਾਤਾਰਾ॥ਵੈਸੋਂ ਥਾਪਿਆ ਸਿਆਮ ਵੇਦ ਪਛਮ ਮੁਖ ਕਰ ਸੀਸ ਨਿਵਾਰਾ॥ਰਿਗ ਨੀਲੰਬਰ ਜੁਜਰ ਪੀਤ ਸਵੇਤੰਬਰ ਕਰ ਸਿਆਮ ਸੁਧਾਰਾ॥ਤ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਜੁਗੀਂ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਧਰਮ ਉਚਾਰਾ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

*“The Dharma of Sat Yuga, Treta, Dwapra and Kali yuga has been changing. Dharma conforms to the deterioration of man in respective Yugas. In Satya Yuga the austerities were the chief thing, Knowledge was the religion of the Treta, Sacrifice was the religion of the Dwapra but Charity alone is the religion of the Kali Yuga” (Manu Simrti Chapter 1 Shalok 85).*

## 10.13 Bhadan

Although Vedas talk highly of long hair, most Hindus these days remove hair from their body (especially the head hair). The custom appears to have started with Manu. He writes, *“The ceremony called Kesanta (clipping of hair) is ordained for a Brahmana in the sixteenth year from conception, for a Kashatrya in the twenty second and for a vaishya two years later than that.”* (Manu Simrti 2.65). These days the North Indian Hindus go to Chint Purni goddess in the Himalayas mountains to have their head hair removed. The South Indian Hindus (especially 10-12 year old girls) walk bare-footed to Simhachalam temple at Myoor (Bengalore) covering long distances. In Bengal the Hindus go to Maddi Para Temple for tonsure. Tons and tons of hair are auctioned at these temples in March/April every year.

The *Puranas* dictate that when a person dies, his/her relatives should get shaved and visit all religious places in India to get the pollution off their body. On this point Kabeer says, *“You do not clean your mind but unnecessarily resort to tonsure. It is your mind which is polluted not your hair.”* (p. 1369)<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> ਕਬੀਰ ਮਨੁ ਮੂੰਡਿਆ ਨਹੀ ਕੇਸ ਮੂੰਡਾਏ ਕਾਂਏ॥ ਜੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਕੀਆ ਸੇ ਮਨ ਕੀਆ ਮੂੰਡਾ ਮੂੰਡ ਅਜਾਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੬੯)

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, ordained that the Sikhs will never remove hair from any part of their bodies. A beard and long hair on the head are the Sikh identity.

### **10.14 Re-conversion (Shudhi)**

If a Sikh commits any sacrilegious or immoral act, he can be excommunicated from Sikhism. However when such a person realizes his folly and truly repents, he/she is re-admitted into Sikhism. This is not so in Hinduism. To be a Hindu one has to be born in a Hindu family and once he/she renounces Hinduism he/she cannot come back. In his book Sarvotam Dharam Granth (page 77) Swami Ram Tirath Dandi Sanyasi tells of a Brahman Scholar who married a Muslim princess and converted to Islam. Later when he became the king, he desired to re-convert to Hinduism but the Brahmans flatly declined to re-convert him. The king was furious and ordered the general massacre of the Hindus and especially the Brahmans and killed thousands of them.

"There seems to be a positive relation between the amount of hair on a person's face and the perception of him as masculine, mature, good looking, self confident, courageous, liberal, non-conformist and industrious (The Tribune daily Chandi Garh 10.7.1973)

### **10.15 Cow worship**

Although we have seen that during Vedic period cows were slaughtered and eaten up, the Hindus have great regard for the cow. Cows may have acquired sanctity because Lord Krishna grazed cows. Writing about the duties of a Brahman Manu says, "*During*

*the day he shall follow the cows and standing upright inhale the dust raised by their hoofs, at night after serving and worshipping them, he shall remain in the posture called VIRASANA.”*  
(Manu XI.111)

## 10.16 The object of worship

The concept of God in Hinduism and Sikhism is not the same. Hindus believe in millions of gods and goddesses and worship their Statues.<sup>410</sup> Sikhism believes only in one omnipresent and omniscient God who is the creator of this universe. He does not take birth like Ram Chander and Krishna nor does he die like them.<sup>411</sup> Hindus believe that their gods incarnate and come into the world again and again whereas the Sikhs believe that religious men come only once and do not return.<sup>412</sup>

The most sacred way of worshipping Hindu gods and goddesses is the “Havan”. A square pit in the East, A pit like a crescent moon in the South, A triangular pit in the North or a circular pit in the West are necessary for a Havan. The depth of the pit varies according to the number of Havans to be performed at one place. Only chandan wood and cow butter are permissible in a Havan fire along with other offerings. Full details of the timing and procedures of a Havan can be read in Satiarath Parkash written by Swami Dya Nand. The Sikhs do not perform ‘Havan’ Blowing of conch shells is a common Hindu ritual for morning and evening prayers. Stauch

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<sup>410</sup> ਜੋ ਪਾਥਰ ਕਉ ਕਹਤੇ ਦੇਵ। ਤਾ ਕੀ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੇਵ॥ ਜੋ ਪਾਥਰ ਕੀ ਪਾਈ ਪਾਇ। ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਘਾਲ ਅਜਾਂਈ ਜਾਇ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੬੦)

<sup>411</sup> ਭਰਮਿ ਭੂਲੇ ਨਰ ਕਰਤ ਕਚਰਾਇਣ। ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੬) ਜਨਮਿ ਨ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ। ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੩੭੦)

<sup>412</sup> “ He comes Himself in different incarnations, or else He sends confidential servants as son or as teachers, to reclaim the conditioned souls (*‘Geeta as it is’* by Swami Prabhupada page xviii) Gurbani disagrees with this ”ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਦੁਹਰੂ ਮਹਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਨ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਆਏ ॥ ਜੀਅ ਦਾਨੁ ਦੇ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਾਇਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਲੈਨਿ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੪੯)

Hindus also paint their foreheads. Some draw verticle lines ,others draw horizontal lines and yet others paint the whole forehead. Even their colours differ according to their beliefs and status. All this has no value for the Sikhs. The Sikh Gurus attached importance to moral character rather than to outward show.<sup>413</sup>

## 10.17 The festivals

Hindus have numerous festivals. Some of them like *Holi* and *Divali* are celebrated by the Sikhs as well but for different reasons. On the Holi day the Sikhs do not besmear each other with colour as the Hindus do but engage in mock fights. They call it *Holla Mohalla*. They celebrate Divali because their sixth Guru was released from prison on this day. The Sikhs have nothing to do with other Hindu festivals like *Navratri*, *Ramnaumi* or *Krishna ashtami*.<sup>414</sup>

Birth, death, baptism and wedding ceremonies of the Sikhs are entirely different from those of the Hindus. For example the Hindus worship Ganesh for success of the wedding ceremony and nine planets for good household life of bride and bridegroom. The couple go round fire and the following hymns are read by the officiating priest

*"May Brahma, the Lord of wisdom, Shiva the Lord of all beings, Sun the Lord of all planets of the solar system, Shukra the Lord of Devatas, and Skanda the Lord of army, always bring good fortune. May Vishnu the Lord of Yagya, Yama the Lord of ancestors, Moon, the Lord of stars always bring auspiciousness. May Lord Hari who is on the lotus flower, Lord wind, fire, moon, sun, water, wealth, Pret and all planets cause the good things in life. Pradumna, Nal, Kuber, holy elephant, jewel and the Lord of power cause the good*

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<sup>413</sup> ਮਥੈ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੇੜਿ ਧੋਤੀ ਕਖਾਈ ॥ ਹਥਿ ਛੁਰੀ ਜਗਤ ਕਾਸਾਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੧)

<sup>414</sup> ਸਗਲੀ ਥੀਤਿ ਪਾਸਿ ਡਾਰਿ ਰਾਖੀ ਅਸਟਮ ਥੀਤਿ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਜਨਮਾ ਸੀ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੬)

*things in the life. May the three eyes of Shiva, and three feats of Lord fire, three feats of Lord Vishnu, that three Ramas (?), three Lokas bring good fortune. May the three ways of Ganga, three Vedas, three times prayer of Priests cause always good things in the life. May the goddess of prosperity, Dhanwantari, holy mother cow, and Rambha always bless y, poison, fourteen kinds of jewels brings good fortune. May Gauri, the goddess of family lineage, Savitri, Shiva, goddess of Knowledge and Truth Goddess Arundhati bring auspiciousness." The Sikhs pray only to God through the hymns written by their 4th Guru.*

At the time of death, the Hindusou. *Horses of Gods, seven kinds of happiness, bow of the Lord, conch* read Garud Puran but the Sikhs read Guru Granth Sahib.

## 10.18 Yoga

Forest dwelling and mortification of body were greatly appreciated as spiritual exercises. They were considered necessary to merge the human soul into the universal soul (God). This merger was called *Yog* (merger or union). The *Upnishads* and the *Mahabharat* supported such practices. Around 150 BC Patanjli collected such traditions and their rules and placed them in a book. The Hindus, especially the *Yogis*, believed in esoteric powers which Guru Nanak condemned.<sup>415</sup> Guru Nanak also condemned Yogic practices<sup>416</sup> undertaken for the purpose of spiritual benefit.

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<sup>415</sup> ਆਪਿ ਨਾਥੁ ਨਾਥੀ ਸਭ ਜਾਕੀ ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਅਵਰਾ ਸਾਦ (ਜਪੁਜੀ ਪਉੜੀ ੨੯)

<sup>416</sup> ਜੋਗ ਨ ਖਿੰਥਾ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਡੰਡੈ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਭਸਮ ਚੜਾਈਐ ॥ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਮੁੰਦੀ ਮੂੰਡ ਮੁੰਡਾਈਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਸਿੰਝੀ ਵਾਈਐ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੩੦). “ਬਨ ਖੰਡ ਜਾਇ ਜੋਗ ਤਪ ਕੀਨੇ ਕੰਦ ਮੂਲੁ ਚੁਨਿ ਖਾਇਆ ॥ ਨਾਦੀ ਬੇਦੀ ਸਬਦੀ



# Chapter 11

## The truth

### 11.1 What is religion?

Religion is a set of doctrines enunciated by some wise man for the spiritual guidance of the people.<sup>417</sup> Sometimes more than one person contribute to the enunciated doctrines and clarify the concepts further. This process of clarification continues for years and years. Some general principles (For example speaking the truth, helping the needy and social harmony etc) are common to almost all world religions but they still differ from each other in their historical backgrounds and ritual practices. Since the object is the guidance of society, which is never static, in course of time some ritual practices are abandoned and new ones take their place. Abandoned practices however still remain a part of the history of that religion and can not be separated from them. Therefore “*We see that the apparent contradictions and perplexities in every religion mark but different stages of growth*” (‘What Religion is’ By Swami Vivekananda Page 3)

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ਮੋਨੀ ਜਮ ਕੇ ਪਟੇ ਲਿਖਾਇਆ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੫੪) “ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਮੋਟਿ ਖਿਮਾ ਗਹਿ ਰਹਹੁ॥ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਸੂਲ ਨ ਸਹਹੁ॥” ( ਪੰਨਾ ੩੪੩)

<sup>417</sup> According to Vasheshak Shashtar Religion is “a way of achieving comforts of this world and the next.”

There are two main parts of any religion (1) history which keeps changing with time and (2) doctrines which remain static.

## 11.2 History

Around 1500 BC (or earlier) Aryans invaded India and settled here. They were comparatively wheatish in colour and called the local population black. They even made them into slaves (According to Rig Veda they called them *dasyus or Rakhshasas*) and became the rulers of India. In course of time they changed the country's name from *Sapt Sindhu* to *Arya Varat*. Their wise men (called *Rishis*) propagated their own religion through their religious books<sup>418</sup> called The Vedas, which were forbidden to the *Dasyus*. The repressed and helpless indigenous people began to accept the new religion as a fait accompli.<sup>419</sup> Thus we see that Hinduism was not an indigenous religion. It was a religion foisted by the Aryans on the indigenous population to whom they addressed as *Dasyus* or *Shudras* (untouchable or inferior). In course of time the Aryan religion disintegrated into six different schools which we have discussed elsewhere in this book. Even their doctrines began to clash. Some began to kill cows (*Go-medh Yagya*), Horses (*Asp-medh Ygya*) and believed in sacrifices, others resorted to the worship of statues of gods and goddesses and shunned killing.

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<sup>418</sup> "Books never make religions, but religions make books." (Swami Vivekananda 'What religion is' page 8)

<sup>419</sup> The local population was under great pressure. They were killed like flies if they declined to accept the new religion. Indra killed them in thousands (see Rig Veda. iv 14.3, iv 30.21, iv3015, I. 174.7) Even pregnant women were not spared (see Rig Veda I, 101.1). If they hid in the forests, they were set on fire (Rig Veda VII 5.3). Rig Veda IX 33-35 reads "I can not bear the sight of black Dasyus; therefore I have expelled them from earth and heaven."



## 11.3 Nomenclature

The names of religions either have a meaning or they are corruptions of the names of their originators. For example Sikh (leaner), Jain (victor-who controls human weaknesses) and Buddhist (knowledgeable), Islam (submission) have a meaning but Christianity is based on the name of its preceptor Christ. Hinduism is neither based on the name of a person nor has the word 'Hindu' any meaning in any Indian language. Some people have unsuccessfully tried to prove that the word "Hindu" is a corruption of the word "Sindhu" (River Sindh). It was corrupted by the Greeks who did not have the sound "S" in their language. This is not correct. Greek language does have the sound "S" in it and the names like Socrates, Sophocles and Seleucus are common names in Greece. Again the word "Sindh" is used for a river and not for any community. Corruption of "Sindhu" to "Hindu" could be applied only to the river and not to a religion.

Hinduism is a great religion and majority of Indians are Hindus. However it is also a fact that the word "Hindu" is not found in the Vedas or any other Hindu religious books. It was not in use in India before Muhammad Bin Qasim's attack on India in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Muslim invaders used this word contemptuously and disdainfully for the Indian people and later changed the name of India from 'Bharat' or 'Sapt Sindhu' to Hindostan. Its origin has been traced back to Persian roots.<sup>420</sup>The question about its meaning was first

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<sup>420</sup>In Persian/Arabic the word 'Hindu' means a thief, a dishonest person or a cheat. Professor Sher Singh was taken to High court at Chandigarh on 27 January 1984 (F.I.R No. 40) for interpreting "Hindu" like this. "ਮਹਾਂ ਰਿਸ਼ੀ ਦਿਆਨੰਦ ਸਰਸੋਤੀ ਔਰ ਉਨ ਕਾ ਕਾਮ" by Lala Lajpat Rai, "Annihilation of Castes" by Dr. Ambedkar and many other sources were quoted in the court. The Judge

raised in Civil and military gazette on 16 April 1913 when numerous definitions of 'Hindu' were produced. Later in 1920 Forty five learned Brahmans of Benares concluded that the word "Hindu" was a Muslim word therefore it was not proper to be called a "Hindu". Hindu leader Swami Daya Nand did not like this word and suggested that the word 'Arya' should be used instead of 'Hindu'. A section of the Hindus changed the name of their religion to 'Sanatan Dharm' (ancient religion). Swami Vivekanand too did not like the name 'Hinduism'. He called it 'Vedic Religion'.

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also consulted Persian Dictionary 'Lughat-e-Kishwari' Lucknow page 615 which confirmed the meanings of 'Hindu'. The case against professor Sher Singh was dismissed. It remains a fact that words like "Hindu", and Hindostan were coined by Persian Muslims. They did not exist before their advent into India.

Monier-Williams compiled a dictionary of Sanskrit literature. He could not find any indigenous root for "Hindu" and says explicitly that the word is derived from Persian. Dictionaries of all indigenous languages say the same, So also the dictionaries of European languages. Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang who visited India between AD 630 and 645 says that while the word "Shin-tu" for "Hindu" could be heard outside India, it was unknown within the country. For the first time it was discovered written for Vijayanagara king VirûpâkSa dated 1467 AD. It describes the king as *hindurâya-suratrâNa*.

## 11.4 Defining Hinduism

Every effort to define Hinduism has failed. According to Mr. W.Crooke, “No problem is more difficult than that of framing a definition of Hinduism.” In the same strain Mr. Macnicol writes, “The question, what is Hinduism, is one to which no one is likely ever to be able to give a simple or quite intelligible answer. It has no creed summing up authoritatively its tenets. It has no historical personality at its centre whose life dates its beginning that can be discerned. .... It is an amalgam of often contradictory beliefs and practices, held together in one by certain powerful ideas and by a system of social regulations.” According to Sir Alfred Lyall Hinduism “is a troubled sea without shore or visible horizon, driven to and fro by the winds of boundless credulity and grotesque invention.”<sup>421</sup>

It is not only the non-Hindus who find it difficult to define Hinduism. Trying to define it, the Hindu Philosopher Dr. S. Radha Krishnan (ex President of India) was equally confused. He wrote: “To many it seems to be a name without any content. Is it a museum of beliefs, a medley of rites, or a mere map, a geographical expression? Its content, if it has any, has altered from age to age; from community to community. It meant one thing in the Vedic period, another in the Brahmanical and a third in the Buddhist. It seems one thing to the shaivite, another to the vaishnavite, a third to the sakta.” (“The Hindu view of life’ P.12). Similarly R.N.Surya Narain in his book “Universal Religion (1952)” writes, *I am not clear about the meaning of Hinduism. The foreigners who coined*

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<sup>421</sup> ਕਾਹੂ ਲੈ ਪਾਹਨ ਪੂਜ ਧਰਯੋ ਸਿਰ, ਕਾਹੂ ਲੈ ਲਿੰਗ ਗਰੇ ਲਟਕਾਇਓ । ਕਾਹੂ ਲਖਿਓ ਹਰਿ ਅਵਾਚੀ ਦਿਸਾ ਮਹਿ, ਕਾਹੂ ਪਛਾਹ ਕੋ ਸੀਸ ਨਿਵਾਇਓ । ਕੋਊ ਬੁਤਾਨ ਕੋ ਪੂਜਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ, ਕੋਊ ਸ੍ਰਿਤਾਨ ਕੋ ਪੂਜਨ ਧਾਇਓ । ਕੂਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਉਰਝਿਓ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਜਗ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਕੋ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ॥ (ਬਚਿੱਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

*this word may have a meaning attached to it but this name cannot with any justification be given to our nation or the Brahmans.*

All we can safely conclude from this discussion is that Hinduism is a heterogeneous intermixture of disjointed and contradictory ideas. In the strictest sense of the word it is not a religion but a set of diverse polytheistic beliefs and practices—a collection of numerous different ways of life.<sup>422</sup>

For our purpose we would define a Hindu as somebody who believes in *Vedas*, *Puranas* and *Simritis*.<sup>423</sup> The four Vedas are considered the source of Hinduism.<sup>424</sup> In course of time different interpretations of the Vedas gave rise to different religious groups. They were (1) Vedant (2) Vaishnav (3) Shiv (4) Sakat (5) Brahman and (6) Adwait. Most often they contradicted each other. For example Vaishnavas are vegetarians but some other Hindu sects are meat-eaters and have been so for centuries.<sup>425</sup> Some worship fire, others worship statues (of Ram Chandar and Krishna etc). There are myriads of sects worshipping snakes, rats, phallus, fire, air, cows, and trees etc as gods.

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<sup>422</sup> There is not a single system of beliefs in this religion. So many thinkers describe Hinduism as a set of rites and rituals rather than a religion. Its dogmatism varies considerably in different parts and different sections of the people. (Rationalisation in Punjab by Rajpal Singh page 27)

<sup>423</sup> This definition was given by Swami Viveka Nand when he visited Chicago in 1893AD. He disliked calling the religion 'Hindu' and suggested that it should be called 'Vedic religion'.

<sup>424</sup> Strangely most Hindus consider Ram Chander as a foremost Hindu prophet (originator or founder) but his name does not appear in any of the four Vedas.

<sup>425</sup> ਘੋੜਾ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਅਸ਼ਵਮੇਧ ਯੱਗ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ । ਝੋਟੇ ਅਤੇ ਬਕਰੇ ਦੀ ਬਲੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ । ਗੋਮੇਧ ਯੱਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਾਂ ਮਾਰੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ । (ਪੜ੍ਹੋ 'ਗੀਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਵਚਨ' (by Vinoba Bhave) ਨਰ-ਮੇਧ ਯਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਨਸਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਲੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ । "ਵਿਆਹ ਵੇਲੇ ਗਾਂ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ "ਮਾਤਾ ਰੁਦਰਾਣੀ" ਆਦਿ ਮੰਤਰ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਨਵੀਂ ਬਹੁ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਸ ਖਵਾਉਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਸੀ । ਅਜ ਕਲ੍ਹ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਲਈ ਕੇਵਲ ਤਿਣਕਾ ਕਟਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ "ਤ੍ਰਿਣ ਛਿਧਯਾਦਿ" ਦੀ ਰਸਮ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ"। (ਸਰਵੋਤਮ ਧਰਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਪੰਨਾ ੮੭ ਤੇ ੯੩).

## 11.5 Sikhism is independent

Having read the previous chapters the reader may have formed some ideas of Hinduism and its beliefs. Anybody who has studied Sikhism carefully would know that Sikhism has little, if anything, in common with Hinduism. Unlike Hinduism, Sikhism started with a historical personality and has a definite set of doctrines unchanged since the time of its preceptor. It also has a name which has a meaning. A Sikh is a “learner” who learns piety from the Guru Granth Sahib and does not believe in any other Granth or religious leader.

In spite of this Mahatma Gandhi wrote, *“It cannot be said that Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism are separate religions. All these four faiths and their off-shoots are one. Hinduism is an ocean into which all rivers run.”* (Collected works of M.K.Gandhi Vol. 90 page 177). One wonders if Gandhi had read the Holy Granth of the Sikhs or knew that Guru Gobind Singh had openly declared that those accepting Sikhism will have *“Dharam Nash, Karam Nash Kul Nash”* (No previous religion, no rituals and no caste affiliation).

These days it has become a fashion to label Sikhism as an off-shoot of Hinduism. Some have acerbity against Sikhism and the others (like M.K.Gandhi) have never read the Guru Granth Sahib with a view to compare it with Hindu scriptures. There are yet others who selectively quote from Bachittar Natak to prove their point. Little do they realize that even that Granth forbids following Brahmanism. It clearly states *“So long as the Khalsa is distinct, I*



*will shower blessings on it. When it resorts to Brahmanical practices, I will not put any faith in them*<sup>426</sup> (Bachittar Natak)

The following arguments are usually advanced to prove that Sikhism is based on Hinduism

### **(1) The Gurus were born in a Hindu family**

Some people argue that since Guru Nanak was born in a Hindu family and moved among Hindu *Saints* he must have acquired spiritual instruction from a Hindu. It is erroneous to associate a person with the religion of his parents or teachers. Christ was born in a Jewish family but nobody calls him a Jew. Gautama Buddha was born in a Hindu family and was instructed by Hindu teachers but he was not a Hindu. All Muslims of India were once Hindus but nobody calls them Hindus now. Nostradamus was born in a Jewish family but died as a Christian. As for birth, where could Guru Nanak have taken birth other than in a Hindu family? There were only Hindus and Muslims in his time.

### **(2) The Sikh Gurus used Hindu vocabulary**

The argument is fallacious. Languages do not belong to any particular religion. Any religious leader can use any language which the people understand. No religious leader in the world has ever invented a new language and a new vocabulary to preach his new religion. It is only natural for anybody to use the vocabulary of the language spoken around him and learnt by him from his parents

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<sup>426</sup> ਜਬ ਲਗ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦੀਓ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਰਾ, ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੇ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ, ਮੈਂ ਨ ਕਰੋਂ ਇਕ ਕੀ ਪਰਤੀਤ । (ਬਚਿਤਰ ਨਾਟਕ).

and teachers. Islam has borrowed terminology from Christianity and Judaism but it will be wrong to say that Islam is a copy of those religions. It is interesting to know that Hindus call Guru Nanak a Hindu for using Hindu terminology and Muslims call him Muslim for using Persian and Arabic vocabulary.<sup>427</sup> He has used thousands of Persian and Arabic words like Shaikh, Malik, Azrael, Dozakh, Rasool, Lehbar, Musalman, Khuda, Allah, Rahim, Karim, Malaon, Khaliq, Razaq, Sharik, Haq, Pak and Namaz etc, which are an anathema to the Hindus. Would the use of such Islamic vocabulary make Guru Nanak a Muslim?<sup>428</sup> Guru Nanak used words from all the prevalent Indian languages according to the audience he was addressing. When addressing Hindus he used the names of Hindu gods/goddesses and Hindu terms and when addressing a Muslim gathering he used various Muslim terms.

The Indian Hindus use thousands of English words like rail, ticket, signal, school, college, library, pen, pencil, button etc. can we call them English (or Christian?). The detractors ignore that the Sikh

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<sup>427</sup> Read “Sat Bachan” by Mirza Ghulam Ahmed. Also read Hughes dictionary of Islam P.3, 6, 30,124. *Sewapanthis* and *Adanshahi* Sikhs have utilised Persian mystical writings such as *Masnavi* of Jalal-ud-din Rumi. Imam Ghazali’s “*Keemaya-e- Suadat*” was translated by them as ਪਾਰਸ ਭਾਗ to propagate Sikhism among Muslims. “*The use of Islamic terms certainly does not guarantee an Islamic content (Dr.C.Shackel)*. It is interesting to note that the two diametrically opposing religions (Hinduism and Islam) both claim that Sikhism is a copy of their religions.

<sup>428</sup> It is worth noting that Hindus in general and Vaishnava *Saints* in particular did not like foreign languages and considered only Sanskrit as “Dev Bhasha”. For example Namdev suffered tortures but did not utter “Khuda”(Islamic word for God) “ਰੁਦਨੁ ਕਰੈ ਨਾਮੇ ਕੀ ਮਾਇ ॥ ਛੋਡਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਕੀ ਨ ਭਜਹਿ ਖੁਦਾਇ” (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੬੬). ਮਲੇਛ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਸਿਖੇ (ਵਸਿਸ਼ਟ ਸੰਹਿਤਾ ਅਧਿਆਯ:੬)

Gurus have themselves declared that they are “neither Hindu nor Muslim” (GGS P.1136).<sup>429</sup>

Recently some people have argued that since the word “Ram” is used so often in the Granth Sahib, the Sikhs are Hindus. It is true that the Hindus use the word “Ram” for their god Ram Chandar and the same word has also been used in the Guru Granth Sahib. However it needs to be noted that the Sikh Gurus refer to Ram Chandar as a historical figure here and there when they comment on past history.<sup>430</sup> Even the Muslim king Babur and Sulhi Khan are mentioned in Gurbani. Nowhere do the Gurus say that Ram Chander was god and should be worshipped. In the Granth Sahib “Ram” is used for God and invariably conveys the meaning of omnipresence (ਰਮਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ).<sup>431</sup>

If the use of the word “Ram” makes one a Hindu then the Muslim divines like Kabeer<sup>432</sup> and Bhikhan<sup>433</sup> should have been accepted as Hindus long ago. They too used the word “Ram”. Malik Muhammad Jayasi wrote in Hindi all his life and used Hindu concepts, Hindi language and Hindi vocabulary but no Hindu has ever accepted him as a brother Hindu. King Akbar wrote very good

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<sup>429</sup> ਵਰਤ ਨ ਰਹਉ ਨ ਮਹ ਰਮਦਾਨਾ ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਸੇਵੀ ਜੋ ਰਖੈ ਨਿਦਾਨਾ ॥ ਏਕੁ ਗੁਸਾਈ ਅਲਹੁ ਮੇਰਾ ॥ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਦੁਹਾਂ ਨੇਬੇਰਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਹਜ ਕਾਬੈ ਜਾਉ ਨ ਤੀਰਥ ਪੂਜਾ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਸੇਵੀ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੂਜਾ ॥ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਉ ਨ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰਉ ॥ ਏਕ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਲੇ ਰਿਦੈ ਨਮਸਕਾਰਉ ॥ ਨਾ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ॥ ਅਲਹੁ ਰਾਮ ਕੇ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਪਰਾਨ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੬)

<sup>430</sup> Historical Ram: “ ਰਾਮੁ ਗਇਓ ਰਾਵਨੁ ਗਇਓ ਜਾ ਕਉ ਬਹੁ ਪਰਵਾਰੁ । (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੪੨੯)

<sup>431</sup> Spiritual Ram: “ ਤਿਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਮ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮), ਐਸਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੬੫), ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੮੫) , ਮਾਧੋ ਰਚਨਾ ਰਾਮ ਬਨਾਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੧੮)

<sup>432</sup> ਰਾਜਾ ਰਾਮ ਮਉਲਿਆ ਅੰਤ ਭਾਇ (ਕਬੀਰ ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੯੩), ਰਾਮ ਰਸਾਇਣ ਪੀਉ ਰੇ ਕਬੀਰ (ਕਬੀਰ ਪੰਨਾ ੩੨੫)

<sup>433</sup> ਰਾਮ ਰਾਇ ਹੋਇ ਬੈਦ ਬਨਵਾਰੀ (ਭੀਖਣ ਪੰਨਾ ੬੫੯)

poetry in Hindi language and was related to the Hindus but no Hindu ever welcomed him in the Hindu fold.

### **(3) The Gurus used Hindu Concepts**

Mr. Hew McLeod says that Guru Nanak only regurgitated the Hindu religious ideas prevalent in his time and did not lay the foundation of a different religion. He writes, "*Guru Nanak may have founded a new panth or religious community within the larger Hindu fold, but he neither violated nor abandoned the Hindu tradition. Born a Hindu, he remained one until the day he died, and so too did his successors.....Nanak did not found Sikhism for this would have meant founding something which already existed.*" ("The Sikhs' page 16) .He tried to describe Guru Nanak as the product of *Sant* tradition knowing well that Sikhism in fact, evolved against the variegated and contradictory teachings of Hindu *Saints*. It is ironic that the Hindu priests treated Guru Nanak as an outcaste and a heathen for declining to wear a *Janeu*, a necessary adjunct for Hindus, and yet Mr. McLeod says that Guru Nanak preached nothing new but Hinduism.

Every new religion relies on the current language and religious concepts and uses them as points of reference giving them new interpretations. It is true that Guru Nanak inherited all the wisdom of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Muslim thinkers before him but it does not mean that he gave us nothing new. Such a statement can be made about any religious leader of the world because some of his ideas and vocabulary can be traced back to other religions. Christianity did not invent any new language, vocabulary or concepts but used the same language and concepts as were prevalent among the Jews. It is a fact that the first available

manuscripts of the Bible were written in Greek language. Religious terms like Guru, Nam, Bhana, Gurmukh, Shabad, *Anhad nad*, Mukti, Sadhu, Ram, Punn and Paap etc are indeed used both in Hinduism and Sikhism but their meanings and the concepts behind them are not the same. Some Hindu concepts like heaven, hell, and sin etc match with similar concepts in Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism but we cannot address the Hindus by any other name but Hindu.

New religious leaders always give new interpretations to old established concepts. For example the word “Allah” was used for a ‘statue’ before Prophet Muhammad’s advent but afterwards it began to be used for God and Muslims became iconoclasts. The same thing applies to the Hindu concepts borrowed by the Sikh Gurus from the Vedas and other religious books. For example take the concept of “the Bull” which according to Hindus supports the earth.<sup>434</sup> The Guru interpreted it as “Dharma” (spiritual stand/duty) instead of an animal. The Hindus have numerous *Devatas* (gods) like Varuna, Mitra, Surya, Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma, Agni, Indra, Rudra, Usha and numerous more mentioned in the Vedas but the Sikhs believe only in one God.

#### **(4) Sikhism and the Vedas**

To state that Guru Granth Sahib is based on the Hindu scriptures is a pre-judgment and is absolutely wrong. Two prominent Hindu

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<sup>434</sup> According to another Hindu belief there are eight elephants supporting the earth at eight different points. Their names are *Anjan, Sarvbhom, Vaman, Kumud, Pushpdant, Pundrik, Airavat and Supratik*. Below them in the nether world there are other elephants to support them. Their names are *Bhadra, Mahapadma, Saumanas and Virupakh*. All of them are jointly known as Digaj (द्विगज).

scholars have differentiated Guru Granth Sahib from the Hindu scriptures step by step. One of them is Swami Ram Tirath Dandi Sanyasi (who later accepted Sikhism) and wrote a book titled, “*The best scripture, Guru Granth Sahib.*” The other one is Swami Maheshwara Nand Mahan Mandleshwar who wrote *Chaturwarnya Bhartya Sameekhsha.*<sup>435</sup>

This topic has also been discussed at length by Bhai Jodh Singh giving quotations from both Hindu and Sikh scriptures in his book titled “Guru Granth Sahib Ate Ved” (1911) and “Gurmat Nirnai” (1932). Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha has also written a book on the same topic titled “Ham Hindu Nahin”(1907). The contents of the Vedas and the Guru Granth Sahib have nothing in common except that both are religious scriptures.

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<sup>435</sup> The first of these books is now available in Panjabi translation (ਸਰਚਵੇਤਮ ਧਰਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ) published by Gurmat Sahit Charitable Trust Amritsar. The second book is in Sanskrit. In part two it carries a chapter on Guru Gobind Singh titled *Bhartya Veeragargnayo Gobind Singh*. No one has differentiated Sikhism from Hinduism better than these two scholars ਬ੍ਰਹਮੈ ਬੇਦ ਬਾਣੀ ਪਰਗਾਸੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹ ਪਸਾਰਾ॥ ਮਹਾਦੇਉ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਵਰਤੈ ਘਰਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਤਾਮਸੁ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰਾ॥ ਕਿਸਨੁ ਸਦਾ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ ਰੂਪਾ ਕਿਤੁ ਲਗਿ ਤਰੈ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੫੯). ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਇੰਦ੍ਰਾਸਣਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਜਮ ਕਾ ਭਉ ਪਾਵਹਿ॥ ਜਮੁ ਨ ਛੋਡੈ ਬਹੁ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਵਹਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੪੯) ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਪੜੇ ਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਗੁਨੁ ਖਰ ਚੰਦਨ ਜਸ ਭਾਰਾ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੦੨) ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ॥ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਗੁਣ ਬਧਕ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨਿਰਾਰੀ (ਪੰਨਾ) ਮਹਿਮਾ ਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਬੇਦ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਭੇਦ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੯੪) Do such statements prove that Sikhs are Hindus? Brahma, Krishan, Mahadeo and Inder are the most revered and commonly worshipped gods of the Hindus and so is the Ved. Here they are all rejected. Hindu scriptures are numerous. There are more than a thousand Upnishads alone. These books do not teach one set philosophy which can be given one name. They are consistent only in contradicting each other. However it must be admitted that they provide a good source of information on how the Indians of yore developed their religious ideas at different times.

## (5) Guru Gobind Singh and goddess worship

Some people selectively quote from Bachittar Natak (which has been intentionally labeled by some people as Dasam Granth) to prove that Guru Gobind Singh worshipped Hindu gods and goddesses. Connecting a goddess with Guru Gobind Singh is atrocious because it negates all that the forerunner Gurus had done. Even Bachittar Natak portrays that Guru Gobind Singh worshipped God and God alone and did not put faith in any other gods or goddesses.<sup>436</sup> He could not have gone against his own philosophy and that of his father and his grandfather in the house of Guru Nanak.<sup>437</sup>

If Guru Gobind Singh had really worshipped a goddess, he would have left clear instructions for his followers or entered hymns in honour of the goddess in Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru nowhere mentions any Vedic/Puranic hymns for his descendants to be used as guides.

Again it should be noted that in the Bachittar Natak Granth quoted by such unscrupulous people, we find the worship of gods and goddesses strictly forbidden. It forbids worshipping of creation in preference to the worship of the Creator. McAuliffe writes, “*Durga could never be an object of worship to the Guru, for he reiterated again and again, that it was the Creator alone who should be worshipped and Durga had been created by the creator for the*

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<sup>436</sup> ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਏਕ॥ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਜੋਤ ਜਾਨਵੇ ॥ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

<sup>437</sup> “ਸਿਦਕ ਬੁਏ ਖੈਰ ਮਗਜ਼ ਖੈਰ ਸੁਦਹ, ਬੇਸਿਦਕੇ ਬੁਏ ਗੰਦ ਆਮਦ ਮੰਦ ਆਮੰਦ” Pleasing is the sweet smell of the faithful. Foul smell is emitted by those who have no firm faith in one God.” Guru Gobind Singh could not be unfaithful to Guru Nanak.

*destruction of the demons* (p.82).<sup>438</sup> How could the same Guru worship Durga (in Chandi Charitter) or Kalka, who was a creature created by God. Would the Guru violate his own principles?<sup>439</sup>

In Sikhism the word *Devta* (*angel*) is used for a pious person and the word *Devi* is used to denote a pious and faithful female.<sup>440</sup> Worship of gods and goddesses is forbidden and they are described as beings of no consequence and even their existence is denied.<sup>441</sup> The Sikhs are instructed to accept no gods or goddesses but only to direct their prayers to God.<sup>442</sup> Bachittar Natak itself describes God

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<sup>438</sup> ਤੁਮਹਿ ਛਾਡਿ ਕੋਈ ਅਵਰ ਨ ਧਿਆਉਂ ॥ ੨. ਭਜੋਂ ਸੁ ਏਕ ਨਾਮਯੰ ਜੁ ਕਾਮ ਸਰਬ ਨਾਮਯੰ ॥ ਨ ਜਾਪ ਆਨ ਕੋ ਜਪੋਂ ਨ ਅਉਰ ਥਾਪਨਾ ਥਪੋਂ (੩੭) There are numerous statements like these in Bachittar Natak

<sup>439</sup> Guru Gobind Singh himself writes that Bhagauti sits as a slave at the feet of God. ਅਨਹਦ ਰੂਪ ਅਨਾਹਦ ਬਾਨੀ ॥ ਚਰਨ ਸਰਨ ਜਿਹ ਬਸਤ ਭਵਾਨੀ (ਬਚਿੱਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ) and Gurbani says, । "ਚੇਰੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੀਸੈ ॥ ਪੋਖਰ ਨੀਰੁ ਵਿਚੋਲੀਐ ਮਾਖਨੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੀਸੈ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੨੯) ਦੇਵੀਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਨੈ ਮਰਮ । ਸਭ ਉਪਰ ਅਲਖ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੯੪) "ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਛੋਡਿ ਦਾਸੀ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਅੰਧ ਅਗਿਆਨਾ" ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੮). How could Guru Gobind Singh be Manmukh?

<sup>440</sup> ਮਾਣਸ ਤੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਭਏ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਨਾਮੁ ਹਰੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੯੦) ਸਾਧ ਕਰਮ ਜੋ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਨਾਮ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਜਗਤ ਕਹਾਵੈ (ਬਚਿੱਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ). "ਵਿਚ ਰੰਗ ਦੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਹੈ ਨਾਰ ਸਾਡੀ, ਵਿਚ ਜੰਗ ਦੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਕਟਾਰ ਸਾਡੀ" (ਪ੍ਰੋ: ਮੋਹਣ ਸਿੰਘ)

<sup>441</sup> ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ । ਅਵਰ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੩੫) ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ਪੂਜੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਗਉ ਕਿਆ ਦੇਹਿ (ਪੰਨਾ ੬੩੭) ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਹੈ ਮਾਇਆ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੯) ਦੇਵੀਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਨੈ ਮਰਮ । ਸਭ ਉਪਰਿ ਅਲਖ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੯੪) ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿਖ ਮਠ, ਬੁਤ, ਤੀਰਥ, ਦੇਵੀ, ਦੇਵਤਾ, ਬਰਤ, ਪੂਜਾ, ਤੰਤ੍ਰ ਜੰਤ੍ਰ, ਪੀਰ, ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਗਾਇਤਰੀ, ਕਿਤੇ ਵਲ ਚਿੱਤ ਦੇਵੇ ਨਾਹੀਂ ( ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਭਾਈ ਦਯਾ ਸਿੰਘ)

<sup>442</sup> ਤਿਆਗਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਆਨ ਕਉ ਚਿਤਵਤ ਮੂੜ ਮੁਗਧ ਖਲ ਖਰ ਤੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੬੭) ਨਿਹਫਲੁ ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿ ਖਸਮੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਆਪਣਾ ਅਵਰੀ ਕਉ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੦੯) ਦਰ ਮਜ਼ਹਬੇ ਮਾ ਗ਼ੈਰਪਰਸਤੀ ਨ ਕੁਨੰਦ । ਸਰ ਤਾ ਬਕਦਮ ਬਹੋਸ਼ ਓ ਮਸਤੀ ਨ ਕੁਨੰਦ= ਸਾਡੇ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ । ਸਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਪੈਰਾਂ ਤਕ ਹੋਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਮਸਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਨਚਦੇ ( ਤੋਸੀਫੋ ਸਨਾ ਭਾਈ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ)



as without physical shape, omnipresent, and without contours.<sup>443</sup> It instructs the readers never to put faith in statues (which the Hindus usually worship).<sup>444</sup> According to Bachittar Natak a goddess has no power. God is the only source of all power. The others simply beg Him for it. Why would Guru Gobind Singh beg from a beggar?<sup>445</sup>

It is alleged that Guru Gobind produced the translation of “Chandi di var” which is a part of Markanday Puran. If this is accepted it must also be accepted that it is only a translation and not the religious philosophy preached by the translator. Even in this translation it needs to be noted that Chandi helped Inder. Inder is a known voluptuary interested only in dances of the *Apasras* (beautiful damsels). He sent women of bad character to the Rishis (*Sants*) to prevent them from praying to God. He himself raped Rishi Gautam’s wife Ahalya and suffered severe punishment for this transgression. In Chandi Di war the goddess Chandi fought in

<sup>443</sup> “ਤਾਹੀ ਕੇ ਧਯਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨ ਹੀਏ; ਜੋਊ ਥਾ,ਅਬ ਹੈ, ਅਰ ਆਗੇਊ ਹਵੈ ਹੈ” “ਬਿਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਨਾ ਕਿਰਤਮ ਮਾਨੇ।ਆਦਿ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਅਜੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਤਿਹ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਜਾਨੋ” (੭੧੦) “ਇਕ ਬਿਨ ਦੂਸਰ ਕੇ ਨ ਚਿਨਾਰ ॥ ਭੰਜਨ ਗੜਨ ਸਮਰਥ ਸਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜਾਨਤ ਹੈ ਕਰਤਾਰ”(੭੧੧) ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਨਿਤਯੰ ਨਿਰੂਪੰ ਨਿਰਬਾਣੰ ॥

<sup>444</sup> ਪਾਖਾਣ ਪੂਜਹੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ। ਨ ਭੇਖ ਭੀਜਹੋਂ ਕਹੀਂ ॥ ਅਨੰਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਗਾਏ ਹੋਂ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਪਾਇ ਹੋਂ (੩੫) ਅਛਤ ਧੂਪ ਦੀਪ ਅਰਪਤ ਹੈ ਪਾਹਨ ਕਛੂ ਨ ਖੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਤਾ ਮੈਂ ਕਹਾਂ ਸਿਧ ਹੈ ਰੇ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਤੋਹਿ ਕਛੂ ਬਰ ਦੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਕਾਹੇ ਕੇ ਪੂਜਤ ਪਾਹਨ ਕਉ ਕਛੂ ਪਾਹਨ ਕੈ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਨਾਹੀਂ। ਤਾਹੀ ਕੇ ਪੂਜ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕਰਕੈ ਜਿਹ ਪੂਜਤ ਹੀ ਅਘ ਓਘ ਮਿਟਾਹੀ (੭੧੪) ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਭਯੋ ਫਲਹੀਨ ਜੋ ਪੂਜ ਸਿਲਾ ਜੁਗ ਕੋਟ ਗਵਾਈ ॥ ਸਿਧ ਕਹਾਂ ਸਿਲ ਕੇ ਪਰਸੇ ਬਲ ਬ੍ਰਿਧ ਘਟੀ ਨਵਨਿਧ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥ (੩੩) ਸਵਈਏ) This statement of Bachittar Natak coincides with what the Sikh Gurus had been saying before Guru Gobind Singh. ਅੰਧੇ ਗੁੰਗੇ ਅੰਧ ਅੰਧਾਰ। ਪਾਥਰ ਲੇ ਡੂਬੇ ਮੁਗਧ ਗਵਾਰ (ਪੰਨਾ ੫੫੬) The writer of Bachittar Natak also declares that he is an iconoclast. “ ਮਨਮ ਕੁਸ਼ਤਨਮ ਕੋਹੀਆਂ ਬੁਤ ਪੂਜਤ, ਕਿ ਉ ਬੁਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਤੰਦ ਮਨ ਬੁਤ ਸ਼ਿਕਸਤ” “ਪਾਇ ਪਰੋ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕੇ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਪਾਹਨ ਮੈਂ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਨਾਹੀਂ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ੯੯)

<sup>445</sup> ਤੈਂ ਹੀ ਦੁਰਗਾ ਸਾਜ ਕੇ ਦੈਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਾਸ ਕਰਾਇਆ। ਕਿਨੀ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤ ਨਾ ਪਾਇਆ। (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ)

favour of Inder to help him regain his throne. She is eulogized by saying, “You committed a great act by killing the demons and securing kingdom for Indra, on this account your reputation has enhanced in the whole world.”<sup>446</sup> Would Guru Gobind Singh worship such a goddess who promoted prudery, prurience and lasciviousness by helping Indra?

“The Sikh community was conceived right from the very beginning as a distinctive entity distinguishable from the Hindu as well as the Muslim community.<sup>447</sup> Guru Nanak had declined to wear the sacred thread of the Hindus; the point was not merely the rejection of the Hindu formalism but also the Hindu nomos, the Hindu value syndrome. Significantly enough, Guru Amar Dass, the third Sikh prophet, was exempted by the Mughal Government from payment of pilgrimage tax, leviable on all the Hindus, on the ground that the followers that he was leading to various holy places were not Hindus.” (The Sovereignty of Sikh doctrine- Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia) <sup>448</sup>

**“ Sikhism is not a reproduction of earlier religions, but a profound modification of them so profound that it cannot critically be regarded otherwise than as a new revelation altogether.” (Duncan Greenlees *Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib*. P. CLXXI).<sup>449</sup> If Sikhism were a copy of Hinduism, there was no**

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<sup>446</sup> ਦੈਤਨ ਕੋ ਮਾਰ ਰਾਜ ਦੀਨੋ ਤੈ ਸੁਰੇਸ਼ ਹੂੰ ਕੋ, ਬਡੋ ਜਸ ਲੀਨੋ ਜਗ ਤੇਰੋ ਈ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪ ਹੈ (ਚੰਡੀ ਚਰਿਤ੍ਰ ਉਕਤ:ਬਿਲਾਸ:ਅੰਕ ੨੨੭)

<sup>447</sup> “ਕੀਤੋਸੁ ਆਪਣਾ ਪੰਥੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ, ਕਲਿਜੁਗ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਸੁਖਾਲਾ” ॥ (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ੧.੩੧)

<sup>448</sup> ਜੇਕਰ ਗੁਰੂ-ਘਰ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਨਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਾ ਦੇ ਵੇਦ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਖਰੇ ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦੇ ਰਚਣ ਦੀ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ॥ (ਸਵਾਮੀ ਰਾਮ ਤੀਰਥ ਡੰਡੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਪੰਨਾ ੯੧ )

<sup>449</sup> "The Sikh is not a Hindu or a Muslim;he is the disciple of the one Eternal Guru of the world,and all who learn of Him are truly Sikhs and must not corrupt His teachings with the confused utterances of men who live among them and around. Sikhism is no disguised Hindu sect. It is no variant of Muslim

need to produce a new Granth called Guru Granth Sahib which says, ਨਾ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੬). We are neither Hindu nor Muslim. <sup>450</sup> Again the Guru says, “ਹਮਰਾ ਝਗਰਾ ਰਹਾ ਨਾ ਕੋਊ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਮੁਲਾ ਛਾਡੇ ਦੋਊ ॥ ਪੰਡਿਤਿ ਮੁਲਾ ਜੋ ਲਿਖ ਦੀਆ ਛਾਡਿ ਚਲੇ ਹਮ ਕਛੂ ਨ ਲੀਆ ॥” (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੫੮). Our case is settled. We have discarded both the Hindu priest and the Muslim Mullah. We have totally rejected their writings.” (Guru Granth Sahib Page 1159)

"Sikhism is the only living faith that gives the healing outlook on life. It is a wholly new, original and monotheistic religion. It is an independent religion which naturally may be said to have a background of Hinduism as much as Christianity has background of Judaism and Judaism has a background of Akhnatonism and Zoroastrianism and previous Semetic paganism. (Professor Bittencourt in his forward to The Sikh Way of life p.vi" )

### The End

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teaching, save in that it too proclaims the love of God and the need for men to hold Him always in their heart. It too is a distinct religion like the other great religions of the world." (*The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib* Duncan Greenlees page 216)

<sup>450</sup> ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਵਖਰੇ ਧਰਮ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਮਹਾਂ ਮੂਰਖਤਾ ਹੈ । (ਸੁਆਮੀ ਦੰਡੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਪੰਨਾ ੭੭) “ਪਾਏਂ ਗਹੇ ਜਬ ਤੇ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਤਬ ਤੇ ਕੋਊ ਆਖ ਤਰੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਨਿਓ ॥ ਰਾਮ ਰਹੀਮ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਅਨੇਕ ਕਹੈਂ ਮਤ ਏਕ ਨ ਮਾਨਿਓ ॥ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਸਤਰ ਬੇਦ ਸਭੈ ਨਹੁ ਭੇਦ ਕਹੈਂ ਹਮ ਏਕ ਨਾ ਜਾਨਿਓ ॥੮੬੩॥ (ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ). "ਮਾਰਿਆ ਸਿਕਾ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾਇਆ" (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ) )

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