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Development of Sikh institutions from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh (1469 --1708 AD)

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Introduction to Sikhism

The word „Punjab“ is a combination of two Persian words : Punj and Aab which literally means „five“ and „water“ respectively. Thus „Punjab“ means the territory or land of five rivers. These five rivers were: the Sutluj, the Beas, the Ravi, the Chenab and the Jhelum. The holy and great land of five rivers had been remained an important part of history of India since ancient times. All those good or bad events which occurred on stage of Punjab, deeply influenced fate and history of whole country. There had been great significance of Punjab in Indian history. Its geographical position has much contributed in forming its history.¹ The eldest and the best culture of India spring out of the Soil of Punjab and it was here that it reached its apotheosis.

The names of Punjab continued to change in different periods. In Rigvedic period, area of Punjab was very vast. At that time there flew seven rivers in Punjab. Therefore Punjab was called as Sapt Sindhu. The names of those seven rivers were Indus, Vitsata (Jhelum), Veas (Beas), Shatduri (Sutlej), Adhikani (Chenab), Paschani (Ravi) and Saraswati. Punjab has been called (Punjab) in epics and Puranas which means the land of five rivers. In Mahabharata apart from these five rivers, there is also the description about Indus river. When Punjab was occupied by the Greeks then they named it as „Pentapotamia“. Penta means five and Potamia means rivers, In that way the Greeks also called it as land of five rivers.²

The land between Indus and Beas and whole territory from the feet of mountains to Punjab had been called as „Sekia“ by pilgrim Hieun and for that century Punjab had began to be called as „Taki“ because in Punjab there was reign of a tribe called „Tak“. At that time it was also called as „Tak Desh“.

Due to many reasons Punjab has much significance in history of India. Actually its geographical situation has provided much significance to it in Indian history. While describing about much ancient period it is said that in the world the first, man was born in high territories of Punjab and Shivalik.

¹ Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Vol-I, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2012, p-40. ² B.P. Saksena, *Punjab history conference proceeding*, Publication Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Patiala, 1969, p-1.

“It is now more or less established that Early man first entered the foothills or North-West Punjab, the area traversed by soon, Haro and other rivers within the Sindus, Jehlum Doab.”²

The ancient and famous tribe of the world is in Punjab. Punjab is that holy and fortunate land, by sitting on the banks of rivers of which, the most first scripture of the world Rigveda was composed.

“So, Punjab is great contribution of the Sikh to India.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, these were the

Sikhs who formed an independent loud on the map of world.

The Sikhs also set Punjab free from Mughals and Pathans and expanded its geographical boundaries from Tibet to Balochistan and from Khyber to neighbourhood of Delhi.”³

The holy land of Punjab, the territory of five rivers has, undoubtedly, contributed to a great extent in diversified fields, not only to India but to the world also. About five thousand years ago, the Indus Valley Civilization, India’s oldest and marvelous civilization, was born and flourished on this very land. This Civilization is considered as one of world. The Aryans compiled their famous religious scripture „Rigveda“ on this holy land.⁴ The great characters of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata belonged to the Punjab only. The great Mahabharata war was also fought on this land and Lord Krishna delivered his spiritual message i.e. the Gita here.

The world famous Takshshila University and the centre of Gandhara Art was also situated here. This land has the honour of giving birth to great scholars like Kautilya, Charaka and Panini. It was the place where Chandragupta Maurya founded India’s first empire. The most important and decisive wars of Indian history were fought here.

Every new religious movement is born out of and shaped by existing faiths, and like-offspring bears likeness to them. Sikhism was born out of a wedlock between Hinduism and Islam after they had known each other for a period of nearly nine hundred years. But once it had taken birth, it began to develop a personality of its own and in due course grew into a faith which had some resemblance to Hinduism, some to Islam, and yet had features which bore no resemblance to either. In order to fully understand Sikhism and its contribution to the religious thought of the world, we have to be acquainted with early Hinduism, its reaction to Muslim invasions, and the compromises it effected in its tenets to meet the challenge of Islam. We also have to know something of the way Islam developed as it travelled away from its desert home in Arabia and domiciled itself in India. We will then know how the two rival faiths extended the hand of friendship towards each other and evolved rules of good neighborliness in order to be able to live together in peace.⁵

The followers of *Guru* Nanak came to be known as Sikhs from the Sanskrit. The word is taken from meanings hishya or disciple. Their number began to increase under his successors. Within a century of his death

² Punjabi Duniya, *Punjabi Department*, Patiala, 1930, pp-25-26.

³ Khushwant Singh, *Sikh Itihas*, Vol-I, Navyug Publishers, Delhi, 2003, p-15.

⁴ S.M. Latif, *History of The Punjab*, Progressive Books, New Delhi, 1964, P- 12.

⁵ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Sube di Gaatha*, Lokgeet Parkashn, Sirhand, 1992, p-6-7. ⁷ H.D. Sankalia, *The Vedic Age*, Popular, New Delhi, 1982, p-125.

they were found in many cities of the Mughal empire as well as in the villages and towns of the Punjab. For nearly two centuries. however, they remained confined to the Punjab as a result of the political struggle of the Khalsa instituted by *Guru Gobind Singh* at the end of the seventeenth century. Under colonial rule, once again, they began to move out, to other parts of the country and to other continents. This emigration gained greater pace after 1947 when India became independent. The partition of Punjab at the same time concentrated the Sikhs in about a dozen districts of the Indian Punjab. Thus, though it is possible to see a Sikh in every state of the Indian Union and in almost every part of the world, the great majority of the Sikhs reside in the Punjab, their „homeland“.⁷

The first *Guru* and founder of Sikhism was *Guru Nanak Dev*. He and his nine successor *Guru Sahiban* were resident of Punjab were deeply influenced by their simple and ordinary teachings. Due to fertile land of Punjab its economic prosperity contributed a lot in the development of Sikhism. Punjabis are much powerful economically, therefore after entering into Sikhism, they presented offerings much liberally in the development of the religion.

Fifth *Guru Sahib* of Sikhs *Guru Arjun Dev* ordered each Sikh for *Dasvandh* means to offer one tenth part of his income to *Guru Sahib* for religious propagation. *Guru Sahib* did not use that wealth individually. Instead *Guru Ka Langar* was started by that wealth. At Amritsar, Harimandir Sahib was constructed and other holy places of Sikhs were also established by that wealth. According to the need of time, there occurred change in Sikhism, then *Guru Hargobind Singh* and *Guru Gobind Singh* were offered horses and weapons by the Sikhs. Due to climate and geographical position of Punjab, the inhabitants of it and especially the Jats were very hale, hardworking and powerful. Sikhism also had been adopted mostly by those Jats. Afterwards, *Guru Gobind Singh* founded *Khalsa Panth* and created power and selfconfidence among the Sikhs of killing hawks by the sparrows. That is the reason that after *Guru Gobind Singh* the Sikhs encountered atrocities of Mughals and Afghans much courageously and bravely. Though their power in Punjab, they established in independent State under leadership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

This land gave birth to Sikh *Gurus*. The tenth *Guru*, *Guru Gobind Singh* spent most part of his life in Punjab. The Khalsa was created here. Thousands of Sikhs sacrificed their lives on this land to end the cruel and brutal rule of the Mughals and the Afghans. By their sheer valour, they infused a new spirit of independence among the people. Maharaja Ranjit Singh founded the first Sikh empire on this land, whose splendor is still remembered by the people. Finally, the Punjabi patriots made the greatest sacrifices to break the chains of slavery of India. Punjab is India in miniature. It is the entre pot of Indian history and culture. Its contribution to the rest of the subcontinent is immeasurable both in terms of quality and content.⁶

Punjab was called Lahore Raj during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Under his rule, its boundries were stretched till Ladakh in the North, Shikarpur in the South and from the Sutlej in the East to Peshwar in the West. When the British annexed it to the British empire, it was termed as „Punjab Province“. After the Revolt of 1857 A.D., Delhi was also included in Punjab.

⁶ B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under The Sultans*, Sterling Press, Delhi, 1968, p-4.

Thus, its boundries got stretched up to Kashmir in the North, to Afghanistan in the North-West, to Jamuna in the East and to Rajasthan in the South. We find all aspects of nature in their full bloom on this land. In the North of Punjab, are situated the great Himalayas with their high snow cold tops. The rivers flowing from the Himalayas add to the beauty and fertility of the Punjab. Its forests are an additional source of beauty. The green fields of Punjab have an enchanting effect. In fact, the interesting beauty of the physical features of the Punjab has inspired the imagination of many great poets. A famous historian writes “No country in the East presents the same variety of features as does the land of five rivers”.

When *Guru* Gobind Singh created the Khalsa, the natives of Punjab embraced Sikhism in large numbers. The Sikhs put up a strong and fearless resistance to the brutalities of the Mughals and the Afghans and laid down their lives for the sake of Sikhism. Finally, they succeeded in establishing an independent Sikh empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

“*Guru* Nanak was a not type of mystic, absorbed in the love of God seeking personal salvation but he was deeply concerned with evils of his times and the fate of human existence in the complexity of orthodox social and religious infrastructure of the society as well as corruption which had effected morality and the stability of the social order too.”⁷

Guru Nanak Dev is counted among the greatest personalities of the world. He was the founder of Sikhism. At the time of his birth in the fifteenth century, there was chaos all around. People had become very superstitious. They were stumbling in the darkness of ignorance. Impiety, falsehood and corruption were rampant everywhere. The people of the upper castes regarded it as a sin even to touch the people belonging to low castes.

Women got such inhumane treatment that it cannot be described in words. People had forgotten the essence of religion and it had been reduced to mere rituals and vain show. The rulers and the officials had no longer any concern about public welfare and remained busy in merry-making. In such a deplorable state of affairs, *Guru* Nanak Dev showed a path of truthfulness and knowledge to the humanity which had gone astray into the darkness of ignorance. People of every class and religion became his disciples under the influence of his enchanting personality and sweet voice. Undoubtedly, it was a great achievement of *Guru* Nanak Dev. That is why, he occupies unique place in world history. *Guru* Nanak Dev established new institutions of *Sangat*, *Pangat* and *Guruship*. Men and women of any caste could join the *Sangat*. The *Sangat* used to gather to listen to the teachings of *Guru* Nanak Dev. The *Pangat* means taking food in a queue.¹⁰

Everybody was entitled to partake *Langar* (common kitchen) without any discrimination of caste or status (high or low). *Guru* Nanak Dev appointed *Guru* Angad Dev as his successor and thus established a new institution of *Guruship*. These institutions proved revolutionary for the Hindu society. The period between 1539 A.D. and 1581 A.D. had a great significance in the history of the Sikhs. During that period, *Guru* Angad Dev, *Guru* Amar Das and *Guru* Ram Das succeeded *Guruship*. *Guru* Angad Dev did a lot of work for the development

⁷ Sukhdial Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas*, Publication Beauru, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2001, pp-10-11. ¹⁰ B.P. Bhatia, Persidental Address, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Patiala, 1982, p-19.

of Sikhism. He popularised Gurmukhi script, expanded *Sangat* and *Pangat*, separated Sikhism from the Udasi sect, collected hymns of *Guru Nanak Dev*, wrote his own hymns and founded Goindwal. *Guru Amar Das* gave separate and distinct place of pilgrimage (holy place) to Sikh Panth by constructing a Baoli at Goindwal. He further strengthened the two institutions of *Sangat* and *Pangat*.⁸

He prepared the base of *Adi Granth Sahib* by compiling the Bani (hymns) of the first two *Gurus* and by composing his own hymns. He founded the *Manji* system, which contributed a lot for the propagation of Sikhism. By separating Sikhism from the Udasi sect, the *Guru* did a commendable work. Besides these, he provided a new social touch to the society by opposing in strong words many social evils prevalent in the society of his times.

Sikhism succeeded in having its distinct existence due to those helping devotees of *Guru Amar Das*. *Guru Ram Das* further strengthened the basis of Sikhism by laying the foundation of Ramdaspura, effecting reconciliation with Udasis and introducing *Masand* system. *Langar* system was introduced by *Guru Nanak Dev*. *Guru Angad Dev* expanded it. In his time, the *Langar* was managed by his wife Bibi Khivi. All people ate food in *Langar* collectively without any consideration of sex, caste or creed. Money for the *Langar* was given by the Sikhs to *Guru Angad Dev*. This institution strengthened feelings of co-operation and fraternity among the Sikhs.

It also gave a shattering blow to the caste system among the Hindus. The habit of charity was developed by it among the Sikhs. It provided a powerful aid in propaganda work. It helped a lot to make Sikhism popular. The institution of *langar* proved a powerful aid in propaganda work.⁹

Guru Nanak Dev started the institution of *Langar*. *Guru Amar Das* expanded it greatly. *Guru Amar Das* declared that no visitor could meet him unless he had taken the *Langar*. He gave the injunction, *Pehle Pangat*, *Pachhe Sangat* (first eat together and then meet together). Mughal Emperor Akbar and the ruler of Haripur had also partaken the *Langar* in the *Pangat* before meeting *Guru Amar Das*. It was open for people of every religion and caste. The *Langar* was served till late at night. The remaining food was thrown to birds and animals. The institution of *Langar* proved much helpful in the propagation of Sikhism. It gave a shattering blow to the caste system and developed a feeling of brotherhood among the Sikhs. The *Guru Ka Langar* was a means of emphasizing unity and equality of mankind.¹⁰

The establishment of *Manji* system was one of the most important works of *Guru Amar Das*. During his *Guruship*, the number of the followers of Sikhism had increased considerably. Thus, it became impossible for *Guru Amar Das* to reach every Sikh. So, he established twenty two *Manjis* to convey the message of Sikhism living in far off areas. It should be kept in mind that *Guru Amar Das* did not establish all the *Manjis* at one time. Instead, the process continued throughout his *Guruship*. The head of every *Manji* was called *Manjidar*. That post was given only to a very pious Sikh. The area of propaganda of the *Manjidar* was not limited to any specific area. He could visit any place for propaganda at his will. Those *Manjidars* appealed to more and more people to join Sikhism. Moreover, they collected liberal contributions from the Sikhs and sent the same to *Guru Amar*

⁸ Kartar Singh, *Sikh Itihas Jiwan, Dus Patshahian*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 2000, pp-133-138.

⁹ Kartar Singh Dugal, *Guru itihās (Dus Patshahi)*, Bhai Chatar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2011, p-45.

¹⁰ S.S. Kohli, *Philosophy of Guru Nanak*, Unistar Book, Chandigarh, 1980, p-66.

Das. As the *Manjidars* used to sit on *Manji* (the cot) while preaching, the system came to be known as *Manji* system in history. It made tangible contribution to the development and progress of Sikhism.

The institution of *Manji* played a big role in the development of Sikh organization in the Sixteenth century. *Guru Ram Das* had started the digging work of two Sarovars (Amritsar and Santokhsar) at Ramdaspora.¹¹ He needed money to complete that work. So, he sent his representatives to different places to collect money from the Sikhs and to propagate Sikhism.

This institution later came to be known as *Masand* system. The foundation of *Masand* system proved to be a step of far-reaching importance. It contributed a lot to the spread of Sikhism in remote places. Besides, the *Masands* succeeded in collecting money required for Sarovars from the Sikhs.

Masand system played a big role in consolidating Sikhism. Development of *Masand* system was one of the greatest achievements of *Guru Arjan Dev*. This system was founded by *Guru Ram Das*. The word *Masand* has been derived from the Persian word *Masnad* which means high place. As the representatives of *Guru* used to sit on a higher place than theirs, so they were called as *Masands*. With the passage of time, the number of Sikhs had increased considerably. As a consequence, *Guru* needed money for *Langar* and other development programmes. It was enjoined upon every Sikh to give *Dasvandh* of his total income to *Guru Sahib*. For collecting this money from Sikhs, he appointed very persons called *Masands*.

These *Masands* not only collected money, but also propagated Sikhism with a vigorous zeal. The money collected by *Masands* was deposited in the *Guru's* treasury at Amritsar on the occasions of Diwali and Baisakhi. The *Masand* system played a vital role in spreading the message of Sikhism to far-off places.

The defective *Masand* system proved an important factor responsible for the creation of the Khalsa. *Guru Ram Das* had started *Masand* system for the development of Sikhism. With the passage of time, *Masands* forgot their basic ideals, became corrupt and arrogant. Instead of leading the Sikhs, they started looting them. They grew so arrogant that they started defying even the orders of *Guru Sahib*.

They began to say that they were the makers of *Gurus*. Many influential *Masands* had set up their separate Gurgaddis. In that way, they had become big hurdles in the development of Sikhism. In order to get rid of those *Masands*, *Guru Sahib* thought of organizing the Sikhs into a new form. So, a drastic remedy was needed. *Guru Gobind Singh*, the tenth *Guru* of the Sikhs, is an unparalleled hero in the history of world. *Guru Gobind Singh* satiated the forty-two years short span of his life with tremendous activities and achievements of far reaching consequence.

Guru Gobind Singh was one of the greatest personalities, not only of India but also of the world. At the time of his assumption of *Guruship* in 167, he was hardly 9 years old. At that time, India was ruled by a cruel Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb. He was determined to convert the whole of India to Islam. His iconoclastic fury was at its worst and the Hindus were chafing under the iron heel of repression of the fanatics of Islam. His religious fanaticism was responsible for the martyrdom of *Guru Tegh Bahadur* in 1675 A.D. It was at that critical juncture, that *Guru Gobind Singh* assumed the *Guruship* of the Sikhs. With his appearance, the ray

¹¹ Jodh Singh, *Guru Arjan Dev Ji di Saheedi Te Rachna*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2007, p-153.

flashed by piercing the enveloping darkness of disaster.¹² He was a born leader, a great warrior, a remarkable commander, a builder par excellence, a great social reformer, a great religious leader and a bright luminary on the literary horizon of India.

Thus, *Guru Gobind Singh* played a wide diversity of roles with extraordinary skill and purposefulness. The creation of the *Khalsa* by *Guru Gobind Singh* was his greatest contribution. By doing so, he galvanized a despirited and politically subdued people in history. Undoubtedly, Sikhism made rapid strides in diversified fields, during the pontificate of *Guru Gobind Singh*. *Sangat* means a congregation of the Sikhs. The *Sangat* gathered in the morning and evening to listen to the Bani of *Guru Angad Dev*. This institution of *Sangat* was established by *Guru Nanak Dev*. *Guru Angad Dev* developed it further. Any man or woman could join *Sangat* without the *Pangat* or *Langar* was established by *Guru Nanak Dev*. *Guru Angad Dev* continued it and *Guru Amar Das* further developed this institution. *Guru Amar Das* declared that none could meet him without taking *Langar*. He gave the slogan of first *Pangat* and *Sangat*. This institution greatly helped in eradicating caste system and untouchability in the society. The history of Sikhism started with *Guru Nanak Dev*, the first *Guru* in the fifteenth century in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent.

The religious practices were formalised by *Guru Gobind Singh* on 13th April, 1699. The later baptised five persons from different social backgrounds to form *Khalsa*. The first five, Pure Ones, then baptised *Gobind Singh* into the *Khalsa* fold.¹³ This gives the order of *Khalsa*, a history of around 300 years.

The history of Sikhism is closely associated with the history of Punjab and the socio-political situation in 16th-century Northwestern Indian subcontinent (modern Pakistan and India).

During the Mughal rule of India, Sikhism was in conflict with the Mughal empire laws, because they were affecting political successions of Mughals while cherishing saints from Hinduism and Islam. Prominent Sikh *Gurus* were killed by Islamic rulers for refusing to convert to Islam,^[3] and for opposing the persecution of Sikhs and Hindus. Of total 10 Sikh *Gurus*, last 6 *Gurus* were persecuted, *Gurus* themselves were tortured and executed (*Guru Arjan* and *Guru Tegh Bahadur*), and close kings of several *Gurus* were brutally killed (such as 6 and 9 years old sons of *Guru Gobind Singh*) along with numerous other main revered figures of Sikhism were tortured and killed (such as *Banda Bahadur*, *Bhai Mati Das*, *Bhai Sati Das* and *Bhai Dayala*), by Islamic rulers for refusing to convert to Islam, and for opposing the persecution of Sikhs and Hindus. Subsequently, Sikhism militarised to oppose Mughal hegemony.¹⁴ The emergence of the Sikh Confederacy under the misls and Sikh Empire under reign of the Maharaja *Ranjit Singh* was characterised by religious tolerance and pluralism with Christians, Muslims and Hindus in positions of power. The establishment of the Sikh Empire is commonly considered the zenith of Sikhism at political level during that time the Sikh Empire came to include Kashmir, Ladakh, and Peshawar. *Hari Singh Nalwa*, the Commander-in-chief of the Sikh army along the North West Frontier, took the boundary of the Sikh Empire to the very mouth of the Khyber Pass. The Empire's secular administration integrated innovative military, economic and Governmental reforms.

¹² Prithi Pal Singh, *The History of Sikh Guru*, Lotus Press, New Delhi, 2006, p-59,83.

¹³ Jaspal Singh, *Sikh Dharam te Rajneeti*, Bharati Printers, Delhi, 1996, p-43.

¹⁴ Madanjit Kaur, *Guru Gobind Singh*, Unistar Book, Chandigarh, 2007, p-252.

The months leading up to the partition of India in 1947, saw heavy conflict in the Punjab among Sikh and Muslims, which saw the effective religious migration of Punjabi Sikhs and Hindus from West Punjab which mirrored a similar religious migration of Punjabi Muslims in East Punjab.

Guru Nanak Dev and his nine spiritual successors blessed this sacred land of five rivers by their in carenation. The development and growth of Sikhism is very closely related to the geographical features of the Punjab. People of this land were economically rich, so they contributed a lot towards the development of Sikhism. They never hesitated in contributing for the *Langar*, historical buildings and other necessary projects of the Sikh Panth. They always helped the needy and the poor who became the followers of Sikhism. The Jats of Punjab were very brave, fearless and self-respecting. When *Guru* Gobind Singh created the Khalsa, they embraced Sikhism in large numbers. The Sikhs put up a strong and fearless resistance to the brutalities of the Mughals and the Afghans and laid down their lives for the sake of Sikhism. Finally, they succeeded in establishing an independent Sikh empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Sikhism is a way of life or self-discipline coupled with a belief in the unity of God, equality of human beings, faith in the *Guru*'s word and love for everybody. The steppingstone for a Sikh is to accept the existence of God and worship Him and Him alone with his tongue, his mind and his actions. A Sikh puts more trust in God than in his relatives or his possessions and acts in God's name. Gradually he reaches a stage where as the *Guru* says, "Water mingles with water and the light merges with light, discarding their separate existences." According to Sikhism, man's salvation lies not only in his faith but also in his character and his eagerness to do active good. "Life without virtue runs to waste" says *Guru* Nanak. The *Guru* gives practical tips to achieve the goal. Every Sikh is expected to replace lust, anger, greed, pride and undue worldly attachment with their virtuous counterparts, self-control, forgiveness, contentment love of God and humility before going to the next step of doing active good. It is like sweeping the floor. As a rule where broom does not reach, the dust will not vanish off itself. "The new thing will fill the vessel only if the existing one is emptied out," says the *Guru*. The *Guru* compares this step to a wrestling match where one wrestler is to fight with five (i.e. five evils).

"The *Guru* has patted me on the back"

And I have defeated the five doughty wrestlers"¹⁵

The next step is to do three-fold service physical, mental and material. The Sikh is called upon to work with his hands, head and heart (qn, mn, Dn) to help others. The *Guru*'s command is:

"Those who work hard and share their honest earnings with others, Nanak they alone tread on the true path."

On the physical level of service a Sikh has to work hard, live by honest earnings, and offer help to others. He is not to live on the charity of other people or by misappropriating other's earnings. Practical training for this is given to the Sikhs in the Gurdwara (Sikh Temple) where they do manual service with humility and voluntarily offer food and money. There they sweep the floor, clean the utensils, distribute food, dust the

¹⁵ Rajinder Singh Ahluwalia, *Dashmesh Pitta Guru Gobind Singh*. Chandigarh, 1966. P-22

people's shoes and do other manual jobs, however inferior, voluntarily. Out in the world the Sikhs are required to defend the weak, help the needy and stand for truth and justice even if it requires self-sacrifice.¹⁶

On the spiritual level a Sikh serves by enlightening others about God and by guiding them on the path of righteousness. He is supposed to study *Guru Granth Sahib* (The Sikh Holy Book) and to keep his knowledge up to date. For this purpose his visit to a Gurdwara is a necessity where he can come across the best in Society. The *Guru's* instruction is "Pray to God and help others pray to Him."

On the material level the Sikh has to give alms, donations, and charity for noble causes. The Sikhs run many schools, colleges, dispensaries and institutions for the blind and the handicapped. For this purpose every Sikh is supposed to keep apart at least one tenth (*Daswandh*) of his income for material service of this sort. Some people offer their *Daswandh* in a Gurdwara in cash or kind. (This is akin to tithing - also seen in some churches.)

In doing the three-fold service a Sikh has to be selfless and to expect no reward for his services in this world or the next. "He who serves selflessly meets the Lord,"¹⁰ says the *Guru*. This type of service purifies the Sikh's senses and liberates him from egocentric judgments. His senses become organs of pure perception and, if focused correctly, can have the reflection of fully perfected divinity.¹⁷

The Sikh is now ready for the next step where he surrenders his 'ego' and submits to God's Will. In self surrender the Sikh has not only to steer clear of the arid rocks of egotism but also to avoid the engulfing whirlpools of nihilism. Unlike a Sufi, he is not to go to the extent of *Anal haq* (I am God) neither is he to withdraw from the world like an ascetic or a hermit. The idea is that the 'I' the 'me' and the 'mine' should be ejected from the Sikh's consciousness. He should surrender his deeper self, or what Plotinus calls 'higher self' to God and act in His name. Call it purgation, selfsimplification, or selfnegation. The *Guru* wants the Sikh to feel and say from the innermost recesses of his heart "I am nought, my ego is a nonentity, and nothing do I call my own. Sadhna is yours alone Lord, save me in thy mercy" "Where there is "I" 'You' are not, Now there is 'You' and 'I' has vanished."

Another most important thing a Sikh is required to do is to "remember God through the *Guru's* word and to enjoy His blissful presence at all times." This goes on side by side with the steps outlined earlier and usually starts when the Sikh is a child of school-going age. The parents' example (and advice) in remembering God is of paramount importance. The Sikh starts from repeating 'Wahe *Guru*' (O Lord you are wonderful) time and again and then passes on to the basic concept of Sikhism which runs as follows:

"God is one. His name is Truth. He is the all-pervading Creator, without fear, without enmity, immortal, unborn and self-existent. He is the greatest and the bounteous."

It is the firm belief of the Sikhs that God "existed in the beginning; He has existed through the ages. He exists even now and says Nanak He shall exist forever." At first the Sikh repeats the basic concept mechanically

¹⁶ Ardaman Singh, *A peep into Sikhism ; the failure of the Guru? Victories of Guru Gobind Singh, unity of tolerance and culture*. Guru Nanak Dev Mission, Patiala, 1978. P-75

¹⁷ Attar Singh, *Sakhi namah; sakhee book or the description of Guru Gobind Singh's religion and doctrine*.

Medical Hall Press, Banaras, 1873. P-86

just like a child learning his multiplication tables. This sort of repetition has very limited merit. The *Guru* Says, “People utter the name of God with their lips but bliss dawns only when it fills their hearts.”

Slowly and steadily the Sikh begins to understand the Word and concentrates on its meanings. The object of worship remains the abstract and transcendental

Almighty. No idol or human being is thought to be worthy of worship.” The Lord, who gave us everything, should not be forgotten even for a second.”¹⁸

The *Guru* is very firm with those who forget God and start worshipping the various Gods and Goddesses. He says, “Why worship Gods and Goddess? What can you ask from them and what can they give?”

The more a Sikh concentrates on *Naam* (the *Guru*’s word), the sooner he reaches a stage where the sense of duality vanishes altogether and the Sikh is fully in tune with the Creator. “God and devotee become as close as a fish is to water and there is no distance between them.”¹⁹ This ultimate union with God is the goal of the Sikh.

Religion as taught by the Sikh *Gurus* is not only international but it binds humanity together for a higher purpose. For a Sikh, God is one and whole human race is one family. Colour, caste creed, sex and other artificial barriers have no meaning. The Sikh is not to debate about the existence of God but to remember Him and love His creation. It is therefore a religion, which represents humanity and is badly needed in this strife-torn world heading towards mutual annihilation due to internecine wars resulting from hatred, greed, pride and undue worldly attachment.

The history of Sikh religion dates from the birth of *Guru* Nanak in 1469. In his day (as perhaps now) virtue had come to be identified with virtuosity, prayer with pretentiousness, and piety with perjury and welfare with wealth. Political authority was unjust and extortionate. Land was owned by “contractors who fleeced the people to the utmost so as to get enough for their own profits and for the heavy bribes which secured privilege for the future. Corruption and disorder everywhere rampant, the country a prey to brutal murders and dacoits, desolated by cruelty, wastefulness and vice. Honours and places freely bought and sold. The rulers sunk in luxury and vicious debauchery. Terrible famines swept the land. Irrigation was totally neglected.

Dynastic wars and rebellions were incessant and travel was excessively unsafe and perilous”

Religion was nothing but a refuge for superstition, bigotry, ritualism and obscurantism. It was “confined to peculiar forms of eating and drinking, peculiar way of bathing and painting the forehead and other such mechanical observances. The priests alone could study the scriptures, and to them alone were accessible the highest truths and consolations of Hindu philosophy. Even they, however, had fallen to the dead level of scribes and Pharisees. Some of them still remembered the scriptures by heart but in their practical life they were mostly the opposites of what they were required to be by their scriptures. They were required to be good shepherds to their flocks, but the only function of shepherd they performed was to fleece their Gospel of the *Guru Granth Sahib* by Duncan Greenlees page-21 flocks. As for administering to their spiritual needs; the hungry sheep looked up and were not fed. The springs of true religion had been choked up by weeds of meaningless

¹⁸ Bachan Singh Bachan, *Guru Gobind Singh*. Veeklay Weekly, Bombay, 1971. P-179

¹⁹ S.R. Bakshi, *Saints of India*. Clarion Press, New Delhi, 2002. (vol. 9), P-203

ceremonial debasing superstitions, the selfishness of the priests and the indifference of the people. Form had supplanted the reality and the highly spiritual character of Hinduism had been buried under the ostentatious paraphernalia of sects.”²⁰

On the other hand the Muslims hunted the Hindus like bloodthirsty hounds. On his “History of the Punjab” Mohammed Latif has quoted the sermon of a Muslim priest. He reports, “A drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer. He who perished in holy war went straight to heaven. In paradise nymphs of fascinating beauty impatiently waited to greet his first approach. There the gallant martyrs lived forever a life of happiness and bliss, free from sorrows and liable to no inconvenience from excess. They would possess thousands of beautiful slaves and get houses furnished with splendid gardens and with all the luxuries of life to live on.”²¹ The intolerance and fanaticism so vehemently preached by the Mullahs could not but lead to bloodshed, tyranny, oppression and high-handedness. Therefore “great jealousy and hatred existed those days between the Hindus and the Mohammedans and the whole non-Muslim population was subject to persecution by the Mughal rulers.”

Hindus were allowed to keep only enough corn for six months. The official orders were,” Hindus are like the earth, if silver is demanded from them, they should with the greatest humility, offer gold. And if a Mohammedan desires to spit into a Hindu’s mouth the Hindu should open it wide for the purpose. God created Hindus to be slaves of the Mohammedans. The prophet had ordained that, if the Hindus do not accept Islam, they should be imprisoned, tortured and finally put to death and their property confiscated.”²²

“Temples were desecrated, destroyed or converted into Mosques. Hindus were killed indiscriminately setting flowing seas of blood or forcibly made to renounce Hinduism and work as slaves. Those who did not accept Islam were burnt alive.” (See Tabaqat-e-Nasiri by Minhajul-sira). Idols were broken in thousands a day and bathed in Hindus’ blood (see Twarikh-e-Alai by Amir Khusrau). As the Muslims treated the Hindus so did the upper caste Hindus treat the Shudras and murdered them with hatred, contempt and social exclusion. So utterly had the Indians degraded and subjected themselves to self-abasement and servility that they had lost all natural manliness. Religious and social revival seemed well nigh impossible.

It was out of this wretched, trampled, hag-ridden nation of cowards that the *Guru* had to build a nation of self-respecting, pious brave men ready to die as martyrs for the sake of their religious beliefs and country. The rule of law had to be created out of the chaos that prevailed.²³

Having been born in a Hindu family *Guru* Nanak knew full well the consequences of his birth and agitation. Very carefully he studied the whole situation and reached the conclusion that constitutional agitation

²⁰ Ravi Batra, *Leadership in the finest mould*. Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, 1979. P-21

²¹ G.S. Bedi, *Guru Gobind Singh; a hero whose worship will bring peace and contentment*. Sikh Tract Society, Lahore, 1934. P-135

²² Gurbachan Singh Bedi, *Guru Gobind Singh*. The Sikh Tract Society, Lahore, 1934. P-205

²³ Bhagat Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh and Muslims*. Sanjwal Trust Society, Lahore, n.d. Bir Singh, tr. *Baramasa Guru Gobind Singh*. Montgomery Press, Lahore, 1874. P-33

and active resistance to the ruling despotism were out of question. He, therefore, visualised that this gigantic task would have to be done slowly and patiently in more than one generation.

He began his work by ridiculing superstition, snobbery and sycophancy and by tearing down the caste prejudices, which had appallingly divided the people. On the one hand he awakened the demoralized and disheartened millions from sloth giving them new hope and on the other he started winning and wooing the Muslims over giving them the message to regard all human beings as equal.

The chief features of his teachings were simple and direct. God is one. He is free from birth and death. He is not born so no human being can be called God. Man should worship God alone. Idol worship is useless. God's presence should be felt everywhere. God is unseen and can only be realized in the heart. Rituals, ceremonies, pilgrimages, and fasts have little merit for the soul. Only pious deeds done in the midst of worldly surroundings raise the spirit. Women are equals of men and have equal rights. The human race is one and the barriers of caste, religion, countries and creeds are only impediments in the way of spiritual progress. Man is not sinful by birth and the sins of the forefathers do not descend upon their progeny. "Whoever does his duties without worldly attachment, consecrating his deeds to God, verily, sin does not touch him. Just as a lotus leaf, though in water, is not affected by it," he said.

The *Guru's* teachings threatened the popularity of the priestly class and challenged the inhumanity of the ruling tyrants. He was stoned, imprisoned, maligned and ridiculed but he weathered all storms cheerfully and travelled far and wide delivering his sermons to millions. Through his efforts the seed had been sown. It had fallen on a good soil awaiting careful nursing to make it yield a plentiful crop.²⁴

After the master's death in 1539, *Guru Angad*, the second *Guru* of the Sikhs continued the work and made extensive arrangements for education of his followers. He popularised the Panjabi script and like *Guru Nanak* preached his message in Panjabi language, which was the language of the common people. *Guru Angad's* efforts brought out religion and learning from the grip of the pedantic Sanskrit scholars and highbrow Brahmans bestowing it on the man in the street. Knowledge was now not considered as the right of the elite. In addition to undermining the authority of the priests and Brahmans, the *Guru's* efforts increased the percentage of literacy. For the first time in the history of India, people began to realize that they had direct access to knowledge unfettered by the agency of the greedy and selfopinionated priests.²⁵

After *Guru Angad* the third *Guru Amar Das* strengthened the second *Guru's* arrangements for education. He laid extra stress on the equality of all human beings and on spreading the philosophy of the *Guru* far and wide. For this purpose he attached free kitchen to every Sikh place of worship so that people of all religions and castes could not only have convivial relations, shun untouchability and bias but also learn the *Guru's* teachings first hand. King Akbar came to visit the *Guru* and was declined conference unless he sat down and dined with the ordinary people in the *Guru's* kitchen. The *Guru* was thus a great leveller. He established *Manjis* (bishoprics) under men and *Peerhis* (seats) under women in various places to preach Sikhism far and wide.

²⁴ Bir Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*. Montgomery Press, Lahore, 1874. P-10

²⁵ D.N. Chatterjee, *Guru Gobind Singh*. Chander, Nagore, 1960. P.55

Guru Ram Das, the fourth *Guru* bought some land and founded the city of Amritsar (then known as Chak Ram Das) around a pool of water. Amritsar attracted throngs of people and the *Guru*'s popularity increased by leaps and bounds. Since Amritsar was on the trade route between India and the Middle East, so very soon it became the centre of trade and flourished into a big market place.

Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth *Guru* in turn wrote a lot of hymns, collected the hymns of the predecessor *Gurus* and compiled them into *Guru Granth Sahib* (The Sikh Holy Book). The book soon became the sacred and the secular law for the Sikhs. It is written in sublime poetry, which can be sung to the tunes suggested at the head of each hymn or chapter. He added to the sanctity and splendour of Amritsar by building Harimander (the temple of God) in the middle of the pool of immortality. This temple is now called the Golden Temple because the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh later draped it in gold.²⁶

Amritsar became the hub of Sikh activity and a rallying point. The Sikhs began to take keen interest in trade and industry. They traded in Turkish horses and travelled to the western Muslim countries. This not only broke the Hindu superstition of sin in crossing the river Indus but also enriched the Sikhs. It also developed in the Sikhs a taste for horse riding and served as a test for religious faith because it required a staunch belief to come out unscathed through the fanatical and aggressive Muslim population of Turks and Afghans with whom they engaged in trade.

The fanatical and bigoted ruler of India, Jehangir, could not tolerate the growing popularity and influence of the *Guru*. On his memoirs *Tuzak-e-Jehangiri* he writes, "At Goindwal, on the river Beas, lived a Hindu named Arjan in the garb of a saint. Many simple-minded Hindus and some ignorant and imbecile Muslims were attracted and ensnared by his ways. He was noised about as a spiritual master and people called him a prophet. Shoals of people came to him from all sides and made declarations of faith in him. This imposturous shop had been running briskly since three or four generations. For years it was coming to my mind either to abolish this emporium of falsehood or convert him to Islam. I was fully aware of his heresies and false cult. I, therefore, ordered him to be arrested and made over his house and family to Murtza Khan. I attached and confiscated his property and issued orders that he should be imprisoned, tortured and executed under some political pretext.

The *Guru* was arrested and kept hungry for days. Later he was brought out of his cell and hot sand was poured over his body while he was made to sit on a hot iron plate. Burnt and blistered he died on May 30, 1606 AD at Lahore (now in Pakistan). After the martyrdom of *Guru Arjan Dev* there was a real danger of mutiny. Therefore *Guru Hargobind*, the sixth *Guru* of the Sikhs, was imprisoned at Gawalior. Having been released after some years, the *Guru* organised the Sikhs into an army under his command. He established a stable of 800 horses and enlisted 300 horsemen and sixty artillerymen. Soon after he was attacked but the Sikhs defended themselves bravely and won four battles against the Government. The *Guru* did not lay claim to even an inch of territory and fought all battles only in self-defense. After the death of the sixth *Guru*, tempers cooled down for some time and the seventh and the eighth *Gurus* lived relatively peacefully without much interference from the Government. The pot of hatred and fanaticism among the court advisors was, however, still boiling.²⁷

²⁶ Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Guru Gobind Singh, 1666-1709; third birth centenary of Guru Gobind Singh*. Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1967. P-333

²⁷ A.C. Dakshit, *Guru Gobind Singh*. Tract Society, Lahore. 1919. P-231

Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth *Guru*, was approached by a number of Brahmans from Kashmir for help against their forcible conversion to Islam under the sword of Emperor Aurangzeb. They reminded the *Guru* that he had once said to the congregation, “Sacrifice your head but do not desert those whose hand you have taken as a protector. Fall dead on the ground but do not give up your Dharma (faith)” The *Guru* assured them that he would do his utmost to dissuade the Emperor from resorting to forcible conversion. The *Guru* was charged of sedition and heresy and summoned to Delhi. Finding the *Guru* adamant on supporting the helpless Brahmans and unflinching in his faith, the Emperor offered him two choices. He should either accept Islam or death. The *Guru* accepted the latter and was publicly beheaded at Chandni Chawk Delhi (1675AD). At this time his dear Sikh Bhai Divala was boiled in water and Bhai Mati Das was sawed alive. The bodies of the martyrs were displayed at the gates of Delhi.

The whole country began to burn with indignation and revenge at the uncalled for and unprovoked atrocious butchery of the *Guru*. The Sikhs only wanted a leader under whose banner they could avenge the death of their revered *Guru* and make amends for the insult done to their religion. Once again they were reminded of the martyrdom of *Guru* Arjan Dev and the steps taken by *Guru* Hargobind to strengthen the power of the Sikhs.

The *Guru*'s martyrdom once again stirred up the dying embers of Hindu hatred against the Muslim rule. The Hindus were excluded from all Government offices and had to pay Jazia (a special tax imposed on the Hindus). They were forbidden from riding on horses and their temples were destroyed or desecrated. There was no alternative left for the Hindus but to cast their lot with the Sikhs. They began to accept Sikhism in greater numbers than before. *Guru* Gobind Singh had only to infuse a new life into the dead bones of the Hindus, make them forget caste differences and present a united front against the cruelty and persecution to which they were exposed day in and day out.²⁸

In order to confront the tyrant Government the *Guru* founded the 'Khalsa' (The army of the pure). Khalsa was free from the prejudices of caste, colour or social status and had to fight voluntarily against all types of tyranny and injustice. The first five people who offered their services to the *Guru* for this noble cause were reverently called “Panj Pyaras” (the five beloved ones). They were baptised by the *Guru* and were followed by thousands. Very soon the *Guru* had a formidable army of dauntless warriors ready to lay down their lives at his bidding. For his Khalsa the *Guru* prescribed five symbols called The Five Ks. They were Kesh (hair), Kangha (comb) Kara (a wrist bangle), Kachha (shorts) and *Kirpan* (sword).²⁹

The Khalsa fought many battles in the course of which the *Guru* lost all his four sons, his mother and a lot of valuable literary work. Two of his four sons were entombed alive in a wall at Sirhind and the other two fell fighting in the battle of Chamkaur. For a time the *Guru* was left helpless and friendless wandering in the forests hotly pursued by the royal army and their spies. When the dust settled down, he gathered a big army once more but very soon the spies of the Government succeeded in stabbing him to death (1708 AD).

²⁸ Daljeet, *Guru Gobind Singh*, by Daljeet and P.C. Jain. Aravali Books International, New Delhi, 1999. P-331

²⁹ S.F. Deane, *Saint warrior Guru Gobind Singh*. Dass Brothers, Ambala Cantt, P-21

Before his death the *Guru* had edited the Holy *Granth* and declared that after him the Sikhs will consider *Guru Granth Sahib* as their spiritual *Guru*. He also ordained that five fully baptised Sikh leaders will act as the guardians of the Sikh interests and all Sikhs will follow their command.

The chief characteristic of *Guru Nanak's* religion is its emphasis on the ethical aspect of social life. This is however, the indispensable aspect of all the religions. Nanak attached great importance on Nam. By repetition of Nam, according to Nanak, one can conquer his evils. Three important commandments of Nanak are 'Kirt Karo', i.e. 'do your duty', 'Nam Japo', i.e. 'repete the Name of God' and 'Vand cako' i.e. 'give in charity'.³⁰

Nanak rejected the distinction of castes in society and established 'hangar or 'Community Kitchen' as a practical step to break the barriers of castes in society. 'Sangat' or 'holy assemblies' is also an important institution started by *Guru Nanak*. Another most notable point of *Guru Nanak's* religion is that by living in a householder's life one can attain salvation. *Guru Nanak* rejected the orthodox view of Laws of Karma and reinterpreted it by providing more room for freedom of man.

The works of *Guru Nanak* not only provided the doctrinal base of Sikh religion, but also promoted its institutional growth and development by setting up *Sangats* (holy con-claves) during his extensive travel for over thirty, years in India and abroad. He visited Arabia, Mesopotamia, Afghanistan, Tibet, Burma and Ceylon.

Nanak died on September 22 in 1539. Before his death he nominated his successor Angad as the second *Guru*. And this custom of selection of *Guruship* was followed until the time of fifth *Guru Arjun Dev*.

About the teachings of *Guru Nanak A. Banerjee* stated that "*Guru Nanak's* teachings represented a great moral force which brought out all the virtues of the common people and enabled them not only to survive cruel persecution but also to create a sovereign state in a period of ruthless strife"

Second *Guru Angad* (Lehina) was bom in a small village in Ferozpur district on March 31st, 1504 *Guru Angad* continued the institution of *Langar* which was started by *Guru Nanak*. He also improved upon the old Punjabi script which is known as Gummukhi script, i.e. the language spoken from the mouth of the *Guru*. *Guru Angad* carried the message of *Guru Nanak* as the Oneness of God and brotherhood of mankind.

The third *Guru Amar Das* was bom in 5th May, 1479. His fathers name was Tej Bhan and his mother's name was Mata Bakht Kaur. He thoroughly organised the Sikh Gurdwara, and remained the religious leader of the Sikhs for twenty two years. He concentrated on social reforms. Gum Amar Das introduced new ceremonial forms for birth and death. He strictly forbade the practice of tried to liberate woman from the practice of Purdah. Other social reforms made by third Gum Amar Das were remarriage of widows, intercaste marriage etc. He divided the whole country inhabited by his followers into twenty-two missionary units or *Manjis* as they were called. The literal meaning of the word '*Manji*' is 'Charpoy' or 'Cot'. As *Guru Amar Das*, preached his sermons by sitting on the charpoy, likewise his devotees were also preach their duties in distant places by sitting on a charpoy or cot. The necessity of the *Manji* system was explained by Dhillon as "in those days it was not possible for them to visit the Gum frequently for die sake of joining the *Sangat*. Gum, therefore, appointed his pre-eminent devotee to impart his teachings to the followers who were at far-off places."³¹

³⁰ Piara Singh Datta, *The saint soldier; Guru Gobind Singh*. National Book Shop, Delhi. 2004. P-127

³¹ Dharmanant Singh, *Glimpses of the mission of Shri Guru Gobind Singh*. The Author, Amritsar, 1963. P-46

Fourth *Guru* Ram Das was a Khatri and of the Sodhi sub-caste. He was the son-in-law of third *Gum* Amar Das. Till the time of *Gum* Ram Das, *Gumship* was based purely on merit. But after the fourth *Gum* it became hereditary and meritorious. *Guru* Ram Das was bom at Lahore in the year 1534. He founded the religious capital of the Sikhs, known as Ram Das pura, later known as Amritsar. *Gum* Ram Das excavated a big tank and it was given the name 'Sar of Amrit'. And for the expenses of construction of the big tank *Gum* Ram Das appointed some agents for collecting money from different areas. These agents were known as 'Masand'.

The youngest son of *Gum* Ram Das was Arjun Mai, the fifth *Guru* of the Sikhs. At the beginning of his *Guruship* Arjun Dev completed the Golden Temple at Amritsar. *Gum* Arjun invited, a Muslim saint, Mian Mir of Lahore to lay the foundation of the temple at Amritsar. In A.D. 1590, 5th *Guru* Arjun Dev excavated another tank at *Tarn Taran*. He also built a large temple at *Tarn Taran*, and the place became very important place of pilgrimage. He also founded the towns of *Tarn Taran* in Amritsar District and Kartarpur in Jullundur District. *Guru* Arjun also founded another town known as Horgobindpur, after the name of his son Horgobind. But besides these contributions, *Gum* Arjun's crowning work was the compilation of the *Adi Granth*, the authentic holy scripture of the Sikhs. *Adi Granth* contains the writings of the first five *Gums* and the ninth *Gum* including *Gum* Atjuns composition the Sukhmani Sahib, the writings of the sixteen Hindu and Muslim saints and the compositions of thirteen bhakts (bards).³²

After the extreme tortures by the orders of Moghul Emperor Jehangir, *Guru* Arjun breathed his last on June 1606. The martyrdom of *Gum* Arjun was the turning point in the history of the Sikhs. Arjun was the first Sikh martyr.

After the murder of Arjun, his son Horgobind became the sixth *Guru*. *Gum* Horgobind guided the Sikhs in the spiritual and worldly matters for thirty eight years. During his reign, the history of the Sikhs took a different turn. Horgobind built the Akal Takht, a platform of about 12 feet high, which resembles the raised platform of the emperor. Sikhs were trained the use of arms during the period of *Gum* Horgobind. He himself assumed two swords, 'Piri' and Miri. According to Dhillon, Pin" signified spiritual guide and "Min' symbolised the 'Secular Authority'. Khushwant Singh also endorses the same view. Thus in Sikhism the idea of militarism developed during the period of sixth *Gum* Horgobind. From the time of *Gum* Horgobind, the Sikhs became a martial race from a purely religious sect.

Seventh *Gum* Har Rai was the grandson of *Gum* Horgobind. He was bom on 26th February, 1630. *Guru* Har Rai had friendly relations with Dara Shikoh, eldest son of Moghul Emperor Shah Jahan. As a result of this friendly relation, Har Rai supported Dara Shikoh, to fight against Aurangzeb. *Gum* Har Rai offended against his elder son Ram Rai because he explained the verses of *Guru Granth* Sahib wrongly to emperor Aurangzeb. For this reason Har Rai qualified his younger son Harikrishen as the eighth *Guru* and disqualified his elder son Ram Rai. *Guru* Har Rai remained the spiritual leader of the Sikhs for seventeen years.³³

Eighth *Guru* Hari Krishen was "bom at Kiratpur in the year A.D. 1656". He was the youngest son of *Guru* Har Rai. Har Rai's eldest son was deprived of *Guruship* because of his villainous activities. Ram Rai

³² Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*. Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Chandigarh, 1966.

³³ Ajit Singh and Rajinder Singh, *Glimpses of Sikh religion*. National of Book Shop, Delhi, 1988, p-24

reported the matter to the emperor Aurangzeb. It was for the first time in history that the emperor had to interpose with the matter of succession of *Guruship*. Then the *Guru* Hari Krishen was summoned to Delhi by the emperor. But he was stricken with small pox and died on A.D. 1664. Ninth Gum Tegh Bahadur was the youngest son of sixth Gum Horgobind. He was bom at Amritsar in A.D. 1621. He was a man of solitary nature and devoted to peaceful activities with religious sermons and discussions.

According to Sikh tradition, Tegh Bahadur with his wife and other companions visited the important places of religious importance. Khushwant Singh holds that Tegh Bahadur travelled through Agra, Allahabad, Benaras, Gaya and arrived at Patna. On his way towards eastern countries Gum Tegh Bahadur stayed at Dacca (presently in Bangla Desh) for about a year. Gum was in Dacca when he received the news of birth of his son at Patna. During his eartward journey Tegh Bahadur also visited Assam. In this context Khushwant Singh observes that "From Bengal the *Guru* went on to Assam. He spent nearly three years in the province before returning to Patna to join his family." *Guru* Tegh Bahadur accompanied Raja Ram Singh of Amber, who was deputed by Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb to make an expedition against Assam.

In Assam, Gum Tegh Bahadur visited Dhubri and Kamakhya. Regarding Tegh Bahadur's visit to Dhubri Macauliffe maintains that at Dhubri, the capital of Kamrap, "the Gum informed Raja Ram Singh's officers that Gum Nanak had visited the place and rendered it holy by his footsteps."³⁴

The Gurdwara of Dhubri is a monument of Assam history which commemorates the love and compassion of *Guru* for the Assamese people. *Guru* Tegh Bahadur was executed on November 2, 1675. *Guru* Tegh Bahadur suffered martyrdom for religion. And his martyrdom was unique in the history of India or world.³⁵

The last *Guru* was Govind Singh. He changed the whole tenor of life of the Sikhs. He was bom at Patna on December 26, 1666, in the absence of his father, *Guru* Tegh Bahadur, who had left his family at Patna and gone on a missionary tour to Bengal and Assam. He was only nine years old when the charge of *Guruship* was given to him. He reorganised Sikhism into a martial form. Gobind Singh was a great organiser and had the vision of a great leader. Like his grandfather Horgobind, Gobind also trained his followers the use of arms as well as the technique of fighting. Gobind built four fortresses, viz, "Anandgarh, Keshgarh, Lohgarh and Fatehgarh." Then he sent five of his disciples to "Benares to learn Sanskrit and the Hindu religious texts."

Besides these, the crowning event of Gobind's life was the creation of the 'Khalsa'. On the one day before 'Baisakhi'69 in 1699, the *Guru* assembled the Sikhs at Anandpur. A special tent was fixed on the raised platform. After the morning prayer, Gobind Singh went inside the tent and remained there for some time. After some time he came outward with a sword in hand and announced that his sword was eager for blood of five Sikhs. Then five Sikhs one by one rose to offer himself. After a long time *Guru* came out of the tent with the five Sikhs. Then the *Guru* announced that 'five beloved Sikhs' Panj Piyare "were to be the nucleus of a new community" known as the 'Khalsa' or the pure ones. The baptising ceremony or 'Pahul' (Sikh initiation) was that *Guru* Gobind poured water mixed with sugar in an iron vessel, stirred it with a Khanda (double edged

³⁴ Dalip Singh, *Eight Divine Guru job : Guru Anged to Guru Teg Bahadur*. Bhai Chatter Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2004, p-430

³⁵ Daljeet Singh, *Five Gifts of the Gurus*. Abstracts of Sikh Studies.1995. p-26

sword) and recited the compositions of earlier Gurus and his own. The members of different castes drink out of the same bowl. This process of drinking from the same bowl indicates their initiation into the 'Khalsa' and renamed them with the suffix 'Singh' (Lion) to male members and 'Kaur' to female members. After giving "Amrit" to the five beloved Sikhs the Guru asked them to give him the 'Amrit' from the same vessel.

They were surprised and expressed their inability to do so. Then the *Guru* told them "the Khalsa is the *Guru*, and the *Guru* the Khalsa." Then the five beloved Sikhs baptized the *Guru* with 'Amrit'. In this way *Guru* Gobind Singh transferred the authenticity of *Guru* to the Panth.³⁶

As the outward sign of the disciples, members of the Khalsa were ordered to wear five K's. These five K's are known as Panca-Kakara, Resh (uncut hair), Kangha (comb), Kaccha (short dhoti), Kara (iron bangle) and *Kirpan* (small sword). The religious symbols, according to Neville, "expressing beliefs, function in various intentional contexts." Besides these, members of Khalsa were asked to follow four rules of conduct, such as not to cut hair, abstain from tobacco and other alcoholic drinks, refrain from adultery and to eat Jhatka meat instead of Kosher meat. From that time onwards Gobind Rai was known as Gobind Singh. And the new greetings given to the Sikhs "WaheGuru ji Ka Khalsa. WaheGuru ji Ki Fateh". (The Khalsa are the chosen of God ; victory be to God).

Like the first Sikh *Guru* Nanak, Gobind Singh also believed in the authenticity of the *Adi Granth* and never granted the same sacredness to his own works. The work of the last *Guru* Gobind Singh is *Dasam Granth*. Like the former *Gurus* in Sikhism, Gobind Singh also attached great importance on 'Nam', i.e. repetition of the Name of God and rejected the Division of castes in society. Khushwant Singh observes about the change of *Guru* Gobind Singh as the "only change Gobind brought in religion was to expose the other side of the medal. Whereas Nanak had propagated goodness, Gobind Singh condemned evil."³⁷

From the days of Gobind Singh onwards there arose in Sikhism two main sects as Nanakpanthis or the Sahajdharis (followers of Nanak) and the 'Khalsa' or Keshdharis (followers of Gobind Singh).

During the period of Guraship of Gobind Singh, one Raja of Assam, whose name was Rattan Rai visited him with some precious gifts. Rattan Rai's father Raja Ram Rai was a disciple of *Guru* Tegh Bahadur.

Gobind Singh, the last *Guru* of the Sikhs died in 1708, and the line of personal *Guruship* ended with his death. From that time onwards, *Granth Sahib*, the spiritual text of the Sikhs, installed as the *Guru* - the symbolic representation of the ten *Gurus*. *Guru* Gobind Singh gave the status of *Guru* to *Guru Granth Sahib* and told the Sikhs to seek their future guidance from it. *Guru Granth Sahib* is an unusually rich collection of poetry, which is not only educative, but also, philosophically uplifting and aesthetically satisfying.

After the death of *Guru* Gobind Singh Banda Bahadur, who was enlisted in *Khalsa Panth* in 1708 by the tenth *Guru*, came into power. But Banda Singh was brutally killed at Delhi.³⁸

Sikhism is born from the spiritual experience of *Guru* Nanak. According to *Guru* Nanak the main purpose of human life is to reconnect with Akal Purakh. Sikhism has its own distinctive ideology. It gives a fresh approach and vision towards the problems of life. In this chapter we will discuss the Sikh thought of peace

³⁶ Balwant Singh Dhillon, *Sikh Guru and Mughal state : A study into political Attitude*. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.1983. p-455

³⁷ Harish Dhillon, *Lives and Teachings of the Sikh Gurus*. UBS Publishers, New Delhi, 1998. p-308

³⁸ J.R. Dass, *Economic thought of Sikh Gurus*. National Book Organisation, Delhi 1988. p-192

from its basic principles. As per Sikh tradition there are three main features of Sikh spiritual life mainly Kirat Karo (work diligently), *Naam Japo* (contemplate on Holy Name) and Wand Chako (sharing). These principles further respectively fulfill the ideals of self- sacrifice, equality, and justice. Sikh life starts from former principles and finds peace. We can understand a peaceful status of human being on the basis of self- sacrifice, equality and justice which are interrelated with Kirat Karo, *Naam Japo* and Wand Chako. This chapter is divided into two sections. In first section, we will trace the relationship of Kirat Karo, *Naam Japo* and Wand Chako with the concept of peace and in second section, we will try to understand how these principles flourish in self- sacrifice, equality and justice.

The founder of Sikhism, *Guru Nanak Dev ji* gives a unique and practical method to live a peaceful life. He believed that religion does not consist only in philosophical speculations, ritualistic practices and chanting of verses from scriptures. Religion should play a creative role in individual and social welfare. Its message should be simple so that ordinary masses can understand it without the mediation of priestly class. So he put forward the teachings of Kirat Karo, *Naam Japo* and Wand Chako. These teachings have an immense relevance to attain peace. In this section, we will explore the relevance of these teachings in relation to the concept of peace.³⁹

Punjabi word Kirat means work diligently. Concept of Kirat has a spiritual significance in Sikhism. Kirat is a part of Sikh way of life. It is not an individual act rather it is associated with social and spiritual concerns. Through Kirat, an individual satisfies his physical needs. It has two fold implications. First, it reflects the idea to live and satisfy the physical needs with honesty in an honorable manner and second aim of Kirat is not to become selfish and to participate in social life. Kirat is associated with *Naam* which makes it pure. These both injunctions distinguish the Sikhism from other Eastern traditions. Sikhism inspires man to do his daily activities and do not run away from corporate social life.⁴⁰

Kirat signifies the dignity of labour which has been missed in the life of yogis and sanyasis. N. Muthumohan draws the distinction between earlier philosophies and Sikh way of life :

The soul-liberating philosophies of earlier time's inculcated contempt towards human body. Thinkers of such philosophies, despite their sincerity and mental capability, were living a life alienated from human labour and collective social living. Their general frame of thought was individual contemplation and they evolved out a concept of human liberation in the same realm of individual contemplation. Sikhism does not share the contempt towards human body. On the other hand, it condemns a way of life based on contemplation only. The Sikh *Gurus* themselves lived the life of hard labour and Sikhism as a faith is based on the value-system of hard working peasants, artisans and workers.⁴¹

This thinking is evolved through the perception of God which is quite different from earlier religious traditions. In previous metaphysical thought, it was believed that “karma- activity leads to the bondage of the jiva or soul... If jiva wants to merge into Sat, Chit, Anand Brahm then he must also become Akari, actionless.

³⁹ Gurdev Singh Deol, *Social and Political Philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh*. New Academic publishing, Jalandhar. 1976. p-120

⁴⁰ Darshan Singh, *Indian Bhakti Traditions and Sikh Guru*. Punjab Publisher's, Chandigarh.1968. p-233

⁴¹ Kartar Singh Signal, *Sikh Guru : Their Lives and Teachings*, UBS Publishers, New Delhi.1993. p-251

Hense started the Yoga system of withdrawing the mind from the active field to the inner unconscious recesses of the soul.” The Sikh *Gurus* has reinterpreted this thought. Sikh *Gurus* describes the attributes of God as Karta Purakh or Kartar. Karta Purakh denotes that he is the creator of all creation.

He is the sustainer and destroyer of everything. In the same way, concept of Hukam (Divine Will) also shows his activeness because through it He [Akal Purakh] pervades everywhere “When God is acting in the process of creation, sustenance and destruction of appearances, then why should the jiva, which is also the result of God's activity should reverse the process from action to inaction. That will be unnatural and opposed to the will of God.” When a Sikh works he feels that he is working in the will of God. “The more active he is the more God like he becomes. Thus a Sikh works because that is the way of worship. A hard and honest work takes him into the presence of God where he sees nothing but God's will around. The more he works, the nearer he goes to the lap of God.” This form of God develops an entire community rests on the philosophy of work.

The Sikh *Gurus* inspired their followers to work for spiritual passion as well as economic progress. They liberated them from superfluous ascetic thoughts and put them into work. Sikh *Gurus* channeled their energy towards worldly concerns. Even they also practiced Kirat. Historically, after Udasis (Sacred tours) *Guru* Nanak settled at Kartarpur and worked in his farms which provides the basis of further development of Sikh *Sangat* (Society). Niharranjan Ray writes that:

Guru Nanak's genius lay in the fact that he tore himself away from the atmosphere of negation and declare himself positively in favor of worldly life, of acceptance of the duties and obligations of the human individual to the temporal and the material and at the same time of equal importance of the duties and obligations of religious discipline and spiritual quest for the ultimate. After long centuries he gave back to his people of India the idea and ideal of a balanced life.

Labour or actions determines the human destiny. The concept of karma (action) is quite prevalent in Eastern tradition. *Gurbani* divides the human beings into two parts. One who do bad deeds and another who do good deeds. Bad actions results in distress and sufferings on the other hand good actions bring peace and ecstasy in both worlds. According to Bhai Gurdas the deeds are the touchstone to judge the good and bad person. *Guru* Gobind Singh named asur (devil) to those who earn through superfluous means. Bhai Nand Lal ji also illustrated that the persons who are doing immoral business will have to suffer through thousands of hell. Bhai Chaupa Singh has labeled the Sikh as tankhaiya (guilty of religious misconduct) who earns through incorrect means.⁴²

Even it is believed that Kirat should be based on truth, without it all types of recitation of holy texts, penance, bathing at holy places, charities and meritorious acts are wastage of life. Sikhism develops deep relation between the nature of actions and the personality of human beings. Actions regulate the personality of human beings. Good actions make a good person and bad actions leads to the bad results. So it is not justifiable to sow the seeds of poison and demand elixir. The persons who do the business of truth would themselves become one with the Lord.⁴³

⁴² Jon Engle, *Servants of God : Lives of the Ten Sikh Guru*. Franklin, N.H. Sani, Bani Ashram, 1980. p-192

⁴³ Ganda Singh, *Lives of Sikh Gurus and Basic Principles of Sikhism*. Khalsa Diwan, Malaya, 1962 p-57

Sikh *Gurus* totally negates the idleness. Idleness is believed to be hindrance in spiritual progression and labour is considered as assistance to achieve the realm of peace. Puran Singh understands the spiritual significance of labour and note down that:

The *Guru* exalts all kinds of labour, he abhors indolence. There is indolence of body, there is indolence of mental life, of mere conceptions, and both are not of the true spiritual activity. Service through work is the best of thoughts, it is thought personalized. Mere thinking is impersonal. Labour is the worship both of man and God. Labour is the perfume of life. In the *Guru's* system, Labour is the only right knowledge. Ecstasy that is not the fruit of labour is superstition. Sweating is true praying. Tolling bells and telling of beads is the mockery.”⁴⁴

He also mentions that, “Physical labour is the only way to transcend the physical. Labour is true knowledge that resides in human limbs, it is brought out by work. Work is worship. Transcending the physical is to rise above the physical in rest, in sleep, in ecstasy, in rapture of the spiritual infinite by incessant labour. Bird and beast, man and tree are in physical labour to this great end.”

As per Sikhism, Kirat does not only fulfill physical needs but it is a way to establish connection with God. For earning livelihood, the Gurmukhs keep in mind, the Dharma and always remember the truth. By doing work in the way of God one can find peace and happiness. “Without His Love, without being wedded to Him, all labour is a curse.” Gurbhagat Singh writes that,

Fulfilling labour and sagehood are interdependent. Labour for that reason is the spiritual principle. The mind can be purified only by labour, then concepts also begin to dwell in the God- world. To grow food, with hand-craft and hard work chiseling material goods and adoring them with the semiotics of consciousness, is to transform the ordinary into priceless things. These incredible Brahm-forms then generate capital and wealth.

The dialogue of Bhagat Namdev and Bhagat Trilochan which is given in Sri *Guru Granth Sahib ji* is very significant to understand the mode and significance of Kirat. Because in it, Bhagat Namdev mentions that Kirat is fruitful when it is performed in the remembrance of God. In Gurbani it is illustrated that :

Namdev to Maya is drawn, says his friend Trilochan.

Why dye poplins and contemplate not God?

Namdev replies : Trilochan, repeat with thy tongue the Lord's

Name;

With thy hands and feet engage in work.⁴⁵

Guru Nanak says that earthly life is meaningful for the persons who are seeking peace. It means that peace is not to be sought in any transcendental world but it is to be discovered in this world. This conception brings the idea of peace linked with everyone on earthly activity :

Whether you are a student or teacher, engineer or manager, a social worker or a doctor, a businessman - whatever may be your occupation, the Great *Guru* teaches you a new work-ethos, a dynamic and pious attitude to the profession with which you are associated. This new work-ethics is not directed just to produce wealth for

⁴⁴ Surjeet Singh Gandhi, *History of the Sikh Gurus : A Comprehensive Study*. Gur Das Kapur, Delhi. 1978. p-642

⁴⁵ Mohinder Kaur Gill, *The Guru Consorts*. Radha Publications, New Delhi. 1992. p-20

your individual consumption, but your honest labour itself as expression of your existence in earth. Labour and activity transform the conditions to which man is entailed, and labour and activity transform the man and his inner world too. Labour is no more painful, it is not suffering, neither is it a curse. Labour is not related with consumption as with its opposite. Consumption is only a physical condition for our activities which are to be dyed with spirituality.⁴⁶

Guru Nanak also did Kirat and also inspires his followers to do so. He totally opposes the tradition to show reverence to any person who proclaims himself *Guru* or Pir and lives on begging. Bhai Gurdas also says that one should not live on the offerings of temple because these offerings are sugar coated poison. Santokh Singh notes that :

The philosophy behind this code of discipline was that no person who lived on begging, dacoity, stealing, parasitism, exploitation of poor, prostitution and offerings of temple could ever develop self respect and uprightness in his character, leave aside his being able to fight for the cause of Dharma. Besides such unfair means of living could never contribute to the welfare of the society.

Human life is unique and one can attain liberation only in this birth. So one should indulge in the work which would bring peace and happiness in this world and next world also. *Gurbani* also symbolizes that the earning through the vices of avarice, greed, falsehood proves to be a heavy burden on soul which disturbs peace and happiness. One can indulge in evil doings for fulfilling the desires of gold and silver for woman but all this lead to the bondage of sufferings.⁴⁷ On the other hand honest labour extinguishes all the fears with the blessing of *Guru*. So energy should not be wasted on useless things because only good deeds bring eternal joy and fame. Good deeds attracts the virtues as the result vices ends themselves and while doing work according to *Guru's* ideology we will get peace in this mortal world.

Above discussion shows that one would get peace or suffering according to their deeds. If livelihood is earned through honest work and just means then it will bring happiness and equilibrium. The earning through unfair means will bring sorrow.

The best work for human beings to earn truth, satisfaction and mercy in this world *Gurmukh* come across the lust, anger and even the great vice of ego because they do work according to *Guru's* instruction.

Sikhism is the religion of *Naam*. Both personal and social concerns for peace are related with *Naam*. Its personal experience gives the peace and tranquility and at the same time it shapes the mentality of individual for constructive participation in social life. The contributors of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji* gave importance to *Naam*. Spiritual illustrations are found in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji* which expresses the pleasures given by *Naam*. *Sukhmani Sahib* also known as 'Psalm of Peace' dedicated two *ashtpadis* to the wonderful achievements of *Naam*. In Sikhism, there is no noble deed better than *Naam*. It is considered the only base and refuge for human beings. The entire universe is the creation of *Naam*. It is the treasure of all virtues and qualities.⁴⁸

The complete comprehension of *Naam* is not possible because it is unlimited phenomena. The thought of *Naam* is not systematically explained in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* but throughout its voluminous pages, it is

⁴⁶ Balwant Singh Gujrati, *Introducing of the Ten Masters*. Sterling Publisher, Delhi, 1970. p-72

⁴⁷ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of Sikh Guru*. Uttam Chand Kapur, New Delhi 1973. p-320

⁴⁸ Gurdev Singh, *Social Reform by Sikh Gurus*. Punjab University Research Bulletin, Chandigarh. 1987. p-173

stressed, again and again, with a wealth of metaphor and imagery, illustrative material and exposition, that the Discipline of the Name is the only suitable and efficacious practice for leading to the Vision of God for final fulfillment of man, for cancelling his basic alienation and for achieving the unitive experience of the numenon. It is further sententiously declared that Sikhism is the religion of the Name. In the same sense, Dewan Singh also describes that, “Since the concept of *Naam* has infinite ramifications, it is nearly impossible to define *Naam*; it is as comprehensive and unlimited as God Himself who created *Naam* and Shabad (Word) with *Guru* as the manifest agent, in order to save and uplift the ignorant and maya-engrossed humanity.”⁴⁹

Sikhism originated with *Guru* Nanak (A.D. 1469-1539). He was followed by a continuous line of nine successors who for about two centuries guided the destiny of Sikhism. The line of the *Guru* ended with the death of *Guru* Gobind Singh in 1708.

The fundamentals of Sikhism were laid down by the first of the line, *Guru* Nanak. His concept of the Supreme Being was of a universal, all-powerful, allknowing, all-merciful and ever-kind Father-God. He regarded all prophets and avatars, all risis and munis, all siddhas, and sadhus, all buddhas and narbas, all pirs and sheikhs as his creation, executing his commission. All people, therefore, irrespective of their caste, creed, colour, clime and sex, were united in being the creation of one and the same Father-God. *Guru* Nanak recognized no distinction between the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the ruler and the subject. He equaled the low-caste Sudra with the high-caste Brahmana and the subject non-Muslim with the ruling Muslim. He wanted social harmony to replace social rivalry and hatred, and social unity to take the place of social disunity. But the unity he cherished was unity in diversity.⁵⁰

He did not support much less advocate, the merger of all cultures into a single monolithic whole. On the contrary he had no approbation for such of his people as blindly imitated the rulers in their habits of food, dress and language. To him the rituals that masqueraded as religion were meaningless, rather wasteful. Even religious symbols carried no sense if they failed to convey what they stood for. What mattered he stressed was the purity of mind the sincerity of purpose and the worship lacking in these qualities was mechanical, formalistic, and hence futile. He denounced the escapist yogis and siddhas as parasites and run-away from social responsibilities. He had all praise for those who lived in the society and faced the problems of life courageously. But living in the society, whatever be its importance was by itself not enough. He set the greatest store by the integrity of conduct one displayed in one's dealings with fellow-creatures.

He was of the view that unless the basis of this conduct was spiritual and had moral values, such as truthfulness, honesty, love, humility, forgiveness, charitableness, self-control, courage, contentment etc, there could be no sure foundations for peace, harmony and happiness in the society. He held truth very high, but truthful living was rated the highest. 'Encroachment on other peoples' rights was considered and evil and was strictly forbidden. *Guru* Nanak was well conscious of the special role of leadership in maintaining the society in a sound state of health, and was severely critical of the kings, brahmanas and qazis who, in one way or the other, had strayed from their proper functions.

⁴⁹ Jaybalan, *The concept of Guru in Sikh traction*. Abstracts of Sikh Studies, 2000. p-50

⁵⁰ Gurdev Singh, *Social and Political Thoughts of Sikh Gurus*. Punjab University, Chandigarh. 1983. p-209

For the dissemination of his precepts and ideas, *Guru Nanak* undertook long tours both in and outside India, visited prominent centre of Hinduism and Islam, and had detailed discussions with the so-called leaders of the various religious and social orders. To his precept he added the personal example of an ideal life. Himself a caste Bedi Khatri, he had the Muhammadan Mardana as his life-companion, the low-caste Lalo among the best of his followers, and the Muslim Sufi Pir of Pakpattan among the most intimate of his friends. At Kartarpur where he finally settled down with the members of his family, he took to agriculture for a living, and attracted to his congregation numerous people, irrespective of caste and creed.

Beside the fundamental principles of Sikhism, some of its basic institutions may also be traced back to the period of *Guru Nanak*. The head of the movement, the *Guru*, was assigned a pivotal position in the entire scheme of reform. He was regarded as far more scintillating than ever a hundred moons and a thousand suns, as one who made angels of men in no time and indeed, as an indispensable ladder, a boat or a raft to attain the vision of God. The *Guru*-oriented person, *gurmukh*, was considered an ideal human being, where the self-oriented person, *manmukh*, was looked upon as devoid of all worth. The holy composition of the *Guru* was called *gurbani* or *sabad* which in point of veneration was as high as the *Guru* himself. The singing of *sabads* constituted the best mode of worship. *Guru Nanak* attached great importance to the setting up of *Sangats* holy assemblies, and wherever possible, he tried to establish them. These congregations were at first primarily concerned with religious devotion, though incidentally a few secular functions were also performed by them. Another institution that of *Pangat* or *langer* (free common messing), originated almost simultaneously with that of *Sangat*. It performed a four-fold function. First, it imparted a secular dimension to the *Sangat*. Secondly, it added to the functional efficiency of the Sikh organization. Thirdly, it translated the principle of equality into practice, making it obligatory for all people, whatever their status in life, to sit on the ground and eat together. Fourthly, it served as a cementing force among the followers of Sikhism.

Before he breathed his last, *Guru Nanak* selected his successor and commissioned him to carry on the work he had started. The nomination of Angad to the *Guruship* was, in the words of Indubhushan Banerjee, "A fact of the profoundest significance." Trummpp writes, "The disciples of Nanak would no doubt have soon dispersed, and gradually disappeared, as well as the disciples of many other *Gurus* before Nanak, if he had not taken care to appoint a successor before his death."⁵¹

The period from *Guru Angad Dev*, the immediate successor of *Guru Nanak*, to *Guru Arjan Dev*, fifth in the line of succession, formed the first phase in the development of Sikhism. During this period, A.D. 1539-1606, it made rapid strides organizationally as well as in numbers and developed into a distinct community. All the *Gurus* of the period were gifted poets who like *Guru Nanak* himself, composed hymns of a high literary and religious appeal. *Guru Arjan* made a collection of all the compositions of his predecessors, and with the addition of his own and those of some like minded saints of the land compiled them into what may be called the Bible of the Sikhs. The script adopted for this purpose was neither Urdu nor Devanagari, but Gurmukhi which was the name given to the reformed alphabet the *Guru Angad Dev* had evolved from a local script of the Punjab.

⁵¹ Gurdeep Kaur, *Political Ideas of Sikh Gurus*. Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi.1990. p-84

From the very first, the *Adi Granth*, as it now called received the deepest reverence from the Sikhs, not merely as the collection of their Masters teachings but also as a living proof of the Sikh doctrine that there was no essential difference between the *Guru* and his word (*sabad* or *bani*).

There were several other factors which helped the crystallization of the Sikhs into a community. Their intense faith and devotion in the *Gurus*, "Who were regarded as embodiment of the same spirit, the spirit of the Great Master Nanak, their deep regard for fellow Sikhs and the unity of their social and religious beliefs and practices as well as their mode of worship all these gradually conferred on them an identity of their own which consolidated their ranks, and easily marked them off from the rest of the people living around them."⁵²

The further evolution of the institution of *Sangat* was another factor of immense importance in the development of the Sikhs. The *Sangat* acquired more and more functions as the range of interests of the Sikh movement widened, and gradually attained a status even superior to that of the *Guru* himself. An important doctrine of Sikhism affirmed that there was no essential difference between the *Guru* and the true Sikh. The *Sangat* being an assembly of true Sikhs was assigned even a higher position a fact which was aptly described in the statement that the *Sangat* was twenty one measures as compared with the twenty measures of the *Guru*.

From the time of the Third- Master, *Guru Amar Das*, it began to be felt that the Sikhs should have their own seats of religion and pilgrimage, so that it might not be necessary for them to go to the *utaths* (holy places) of Hindus. A *baoli* (a well with a *pakka* staircase reaching down to the water surface) was constructed at Goindwal under the instruction and personal supervision of *Guru Amar Das*. The water of this well was consecrated and a wash with it was regarded as an act of great spiritual merit. The two Masters who succeeded *Guru Amar Das*, one after the other, also evinced great interest in building up new religious centres for their followers, *Guru Amar Das*, founded the town of *Chak Ram Das* which subsequently got its present name, Amritsar, from the holy waters of pool of immortality built there. The work on this tank was commenced by *Guru Arjan Dev*, who as well built a *gurdvara* in the centre of the tank calling it *Harimandir*, i.e. God's House. Similarly, *Guru Arjan* constructed a big tank and a temple at *Tarn Taran*, a place not far removed from Amritsar.⁵³

He also founded the towns of *Kartarpur* (District *Jullundur*) and *Shri Hargobindpur* (District *Gurdaspur*). The religious centre thus built up formed a great cementing force for the rising Sikh community. The Sikh *Sangats* from far and near were drawn towards them as their holy place and visited them whenever they could, some of them even making regular annual visits. During these visits the various *Sangats* had the opportunity not only of meeting the Holy *Guru* and having his blessings, but also of coming into close contact with one another. They were provided free accommodation and free food during their stay. *Guru ka langar* (free community mess) which had gradually developed into an enduring institution, was adequate for the purpose of feeding all the people who wanted to eat there. The food of the *langar* being considered sacred, there was hardly anyone who would like to miss it. *Simran* (participation in the daily religious services, some of them conducted in the presence of the *Guru* himself) and *seva* (participation in the community project and the *Guru ka langar*)

⁵² Gurdev Singh, *Ideology of Sikh Gurus*, Hansrao Rublishers, Chandigarh. 1990. p-154

⁵³ Gurpartap Singh, *Chronological Table of Sikh Gurus*. Sikh Culture Society of Great Britain. 1978. p-54

were the two major constituents of the daily routine of the visiting Sikhs. In consequence, unbreakable bonds of union were formed which imparting solidarity and cohesion to the Sikh ranks, fused the far-flung and diverse units into a single, well-integrated organization.⁵⁴

The process of integration of Sikhism went hand in hand with the enlargement of its ranks. As early as the time of *Guru Amar Das* twenty-two *Manjis* and fifty-two *pirhis* were created which were all big or small centre for the spread of Sikhism. *Guru Ram Das* who succeeded *Guru Amar Das* established the nucleus of a new order of missionaries, called *Masands*. This new order was reorganized and elaborated by the Fifth *Guru Arjan Dev*. As was expected, these measures led to the emergence of the large number of new Sikh *Sangat* in the country. The mode of initiation of prospective Sikh through the ceremony of *caranamrit* was the one administered by the *Guru* himself, but since it was not possible for the *Guru* to be present everywhere, the authority had to be delegated to the local missionaries who were given the freedom to enroll new members of the Sikh *Sangat* through the administration of *caranamrit* prepared by themselves in the prescribed manner.

The bulk of the people who came into the fold of Sikhism as the result of the above-mentioned efforts were drawn from the commercial classes mostly dwelling in towns. These people as noticed before, possessed in ample measure both intelligence and wealth. They provided the requisite leadership which under the guidance of the successive *Gurus* dug deep the foundations of the Sikh movement. Without their practical knowledge of the affairs of the world and their organizing ability, the task of executing the plans of the various *Gurus* for the furtherance of the movement would have presented endless difficulties. Similarly, their wealth placed at the disposal of the *Gurus* enormous resources which were utilized for the consolidation and expansion of the movement.⁵⁵

It was with the help of this wealth that the huge project of *Guru Ram Das* and *Guru Arjan Dev* be could carried through. Again, if the free-community-mess remained viable and met the requirements of the ever-rising members of the Sikhs, it was largely due to the prosperity of the supporting class of traders and businessmen. During the period of *Guru Arjan Dev* the movement became popular in the countryside also, with the result that a large number of the *Majha Jats* embraced Sikhism. This fact greatly added to the strength of the movement by injecting into it traditions of martial valour.

The organization of a sound system of finance was an essential pre-condition of the success of the movement. In the beginning, the voluntary offerings of the devotees were sufficient and no special arrangement was necessary for collection of funds. But later on when big projects were undertaken, the existing practice was found inadequate. In order to meet the situation, the *Masands* were required not merely to concentrate on the dissemination of the Sikh teachings but also a collect voluntary offering from the faithful and to bring them to the headquarters of the *Guru* as and when they would come to see him. The new measure met with immediate success and there was no difficulty left regarding the availability of finance.⁵⁶

The rapidly growing proportions of the Sikh movement created some new problems. The reaction of the Muslim orthodoxy towards the Sikh suffered a radical change. To begin with, their attitude was one of

⁵⁴ Jagdish Singh, *The Founders of Sikh Religion*. Guru Nanak Foundation, New Delhi. 1996. p-51

⁵⁵ Khazan Singh, *Miracles of the Sikh Gurus*. The Author, Sialkot. 1932. p-56

⁵⁶ Kharak Singh and Gurtej Singh, *Episodes from Lives of the Gurus: Prachian Sewadas*, Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh. 1995. p-162

indifference or tacit resentment. But as the Sikh movement advanced, they began to see a danger in it and became openly hostile to it. The main reason for this changed attitude seems to be that the growth of Sikhism blocked the further progress of Islam in the Punjab. Islam had entered the Punjab in the wake of the Turkish armies of Mahmood of Ghazni. By now, most of the western Punjab had been Islamized and in the eastern Punjab, too, a sizable section of the population had accepted the creed of Islam.⁵⁷ With the progress of Sikhism, which was also a missionary creed like Islam, the pace of Islamization was considerably slowed down, if not halted. The prospects of improved status which Islam offered to the lower sections of the Hindu society were now available from Sikhism as well, because Sikhism, too, like Islam made no distinction between the high and the low. In so far as Sikhism was closer to the roots of the Hindu culture, for the Hindu masses it had an edge over Islam.

Therefore, those who wanted to change their religion with a view to improving their position in the society preferred Sikhism to Islam. But it was not merely the entry of new people into Islam that suffered a setback and as a consequence, slowed down the pace of the spread of Islam; the spell of the Sikh *Gurus* was felt even in the ranks of Islam. Some of the Musalmans, generally former converts from Hinduism began to show more interest in Sikhism than in Islam. It is possible that a few cases of reconversion also took place. All these trends naturally alarmed the orthodox elements of the Muslim population and they became progressively hostile to Sikhism.

However, the opposition of the Mulammadan orthodoxy could cause no immediate harm to the Sikh movement on account of Akbar's policy of religious liberalism. The Emperor paid no heed to the complaints of the mulias and qaziz, as his faith in them had been rudely shaken. Rather, he met some of the Sikh *Gurus* and showed his magnanimity towards them by making special royal grants. The present site of Amritsar was granted to *Guru Amar Das* for his daughter when Akbar met the *Guru* at Goindwal. On a subsequent occasion the Emperor met *Guru Arjan Dev* at Goindwal on his way back to Agra and at his request remitted the land revenue of the area for a whole year. When the same *Guru Arjan Dev* was preparing the Sikh scripture, a serious complaint was made to the Emperor pointing out that there were in this work some derogatory references to Islam and its founder. The Emperor made a personal investigation into the matter and dismissed the complaint as unfounded. A few cases of tension also occurred occasionally, the earliest of them being between *Guru Amar Das's* followers and the Pathans of Goindwal, but in the atmosphere of liberalism generated by Akbar's policy all these incidents were localized and the mischief could not spread.⁵⁸

Akbar's favorable attitude did not merely save Sikhism from the fury of the Muslim orthodoxy at a time when it was just an infant needing protection; it also provided the necessary conditions for its quick further progress. The strong and efficient administration of the Emperor established stable peace in the land, which enabled the Sikhs to march ahead unhindered by any local revolts and foreign invasions. The liberal character of the state allowed them full freedom to formulate and execute their plans of development. The goodwill of the state not only assured them of protection against the state of any individual or group of individuals interfering

⁵⁷ Kartar Singh, *Sikh Gurus and Untouchability*, JS & JS, Amritsar. 1936. p-40

⁵⁸ Kirpal Singh, *Perspectives on Sikh Gurus*, National Book Shop, Delhi. 2000. p-320

in their activities, but also helped them materially through the Emperor meeting the Sikh *Gurus* and making gifts and grants to them. These meetings and grants greatly enhanced the prestige of the *Gurus* in the estimation of the people in general, and were naturally instrumental in the further advancement of the Sikh cause. The remission of land revenue by Akbar at the instance of *Guru Arjan Dev* made the people look up the head of the Sikh movement as their friends and benefactor, and opened the way for large-scale new admission to the tanks of Sikhism.⁵⁹

The electiveness of Akbar led to a sharp and even violent reaction among the conservative sections of the Muslim population. They viewed the Emperor's policy towards the non-Muslim as extremely dangerous both to their creed and state, because it was feared that it would give fresh encouragement and strength to the Hindus. In their opinion, any step which benefited the Hindus was anti-Islamic. The Rajput policy of the Emperor was resented for the reason that it boosted the enemies of the Muslim establishments. The emergence of any religious activity among the Hindus was regarded with suspicion and was attributed to the mistaken policy of their ruler. Thus, the rise of the Sikh movement to them was the growth of a dangerous heresy which needed to be nipped in the bud.

Gradually, the above-mentioned conservative reaction gave birth to a powerful Muslim revivalist movement with its headquarters at Sirhind. Muslim revivalist movement divine, Shaikh Faizi Sirhindi "Mujaddad-i-Alf Sani" , to whom even a slight concession to the Hindus was an act of hostility to Islam. He advocated the view that "the glory of Islam consists in the humiliation of infidelity and the infidels. Anyone, who held an infidel in esteem, caused humiliation to Islam. Holding in esteem does not simply mean that one pays respect to them, or seats them in a higher position. Giving a place to them in one's company, sitting and talking with them, all are means of showing esteem. They (the infidels) should be kept at a distance like dogs. About the jazia taken from the infidels he held that its real purpose was to humiliate them (the non-Muslims) and this humiliation should reach a stage where, owing to the fear of jazia, they should not be able to wear good clothes, and should never enjoy any peace of mind and be in constant dread and fear of the king's taking away their property. He had no sympathy for those people who believed that Rama and Rehman were the same. To him such a comparison was an act of extreme stupidity, because he was of the opinion that Rama and Krishana of the Hindus were no more than "the lowliest of sweeper."⁶⁰ His view about the Muslim Shariat were very rigid, and he poured abuse upon everything that he did not understand or could not fit into his theology. He was thus the antithesis of Abul Fazal and was akin to Badauni in the desire "to imprison the mind in the narrowest theological vision."

Naturally, he was a severe critic of Akbar's policy of tolerance towards the non-Muslims. He writes of the miserable condition of the Muslim under the Emperor and calls him "an enemy (lit. denier of forbidden) of the Faith of Islam."⁶¹

The increasing influence of Shaikh Faizi Sirhindi and his orthodox views greatly added to the difficulties of the rising, Sikh movement. His attitude towards the contemporary Sikh *Guru Arjan Dev* is evident from some

⁵⁹ Kanwarjit Singh, *Political Philosophy of the Sikh Gurus*. Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi. 1989. p-147

⁶⁰ Jodh Singh, *Gurmat Nirnay : Teaching of the Sikh Gurus*, Uttam Chand Kapur, Lahore.1936. p-280

⁶¹ D.N. Khosla, *Sikh Gurus on Education*, Adi-Jugadi, Delhi.1988. p-118

of his letters. After the *Guru* had been executed by the orders of the Emperor Jehangir, the Shaikh wrote a letter to the Subedar of Lahore, Murtza Khan, saying.

"Recently, a very good thing, the execution of the accursed infidel of Goindwal, has taken place, which has been cause of a great frustration to the wretched Hindus. By the intention or the purpose with which they are killed what it may the humiliation of the infidels is a test of the seriousness of the Musalmans. This fakir (meaning himself), before the kafir was put to death, had seen a dream in which the ruler of the time had broken the skull of heathenism and indeed he (fire-worshipper meaning kafir) was the chief of the heathens and the leader of the infidels."⁶²

Like the Muslim orthodoxy, the Hindu orthodoxy was also unhappy about the progress of Sikhism which was essentially anti-Brahmanical in character. The brahmins felt that owing to this new creed, their position was being undermined and that their hold on the Hindu masses had weakened. Therefore, they were severely critical of the Sikhs and their *Gurus*, and whenever any suitable chance arose, they utilized to lodge complaints against them with the state authorities. The preparation of a separate Sikh scripture by *Guru Arjan Dev* seriously upset them and they complained about it to the Emperor Akbar. Although the Emperor summarily dismissed the complaint, yet the very behavior of the brahmanas was an indirect encouragement to the Muhammandan detractors of the Sikhs. The personal factor played its role in strengthening the hands of the opponents of Sikhism. For instance, Prithi Chand, the disgruntled elder brother and rival of *Guru Arjan Dev* indulged in all sorts of intrigues to damage the position of *Guru Arjan Dev* as the head of the Sikh movement.

Through his machinations he even succeeded in inducing a government official, Sulhi Khan, to attempt an attack upon the *Guru*. The attack was, however, rendered abortive by the accidental fatal fall of Sulhi Khan into a live kiln on the way. The strong Sikh tradition regarding the intrigues of Dewan Chandu Mal of Lahore, who bore ill will to *Guru Arjan Dev* on account of the latter's refusal to accept the hand to his daughter for his (*Guru's*) son, Hargobind, also points to the part played by the personal factor in fortifying the anti-Sikh forces in the country. But neither the opposition of the brahmanas nor the personal grudge of men like Prithi Chand and

Chandu Mal may be regarded as a major cause of the crises that over took the Sikh movement in the time of *Guru Arjan Dev*. Such elements as these merely provided a subsidiary cause, the real cause being furnished by the hostile attitude of the Muhammadan orthodoxy headed by Suaikh Faizi of Sirhind.⁶³

The accession of Jehangir to the Mughal throne after the death of his father, Akbar, in 1605 turned the situation, somewhat, and for a time at least in favor of those who assailed the liberal trends in Akbar's policy. There were some powerful people at the court of his father who were opposed to this accession and favored his son Khusrau, in preference to him. Even Akbar at one time had shared the same view, feeling sore as he did at the unfilial and rebellious conduct of Jehangir or Salim, as he was then called, during the evening of his life. At this critical juncture, the orthodox detractors of his father's enlightened liberalism came to Jehangir's rescue and

⁶² Madanjit Kaur, *A study of the Hukumnamas as Source Material for the History of the Sikh Gurus*, Punjab History Conference Proceedings (13th session). 1979. p-110

⁶³ Clarence O McMullen, *The Concept of Guru in Indian Religions*, I.S.P.C.K., Delhi. 1982. p-157

smoothed his way to the throne. Thus when he ascended the throne, he not only did not have his father's opposition to the Muslim orthodoxy but was also in a frame of mind to oblige them, should an opportunity arise, although from the twelve edicts, he issued immediately after his accession, it is evident that he never allowed their influence to get the better of him.⁶⁴

The required opportunity appeared when in 1606 Prince Khusrau, goaded by his frustrated ambition, rose in open revolt against his father, Jehangir, and hastened towards the Punjab in a bid to mobilize support for this cause. The Emperor gave the rebel prince a hot pursuit and reached Lahore post-haste, where unfortunate Khusrau was produced before him in chains by the commander of the pursuing army, Murtza Khan. The occasion was marked by the award to exemplary punishments to the supporters of the rebel. The name of the Sikh pontiff, *Guru Arjan Dev*, was included in the list of such people and immediate imperial orders were issued for his arrest, the arrest of his son and the confiscation of his property. The *Guru* was soon taken captive and brought to Lahore where he was sentenced to death by *siyast and yasa*, i.e, death by torture involving no bloodshed.⁶⁵

While giving an account of this affair in his Memoirs, Jehangir has advanced two reasons in justification of his action. The first reason is related to the context in which the action was taken, while the second refers to the meeting at Goindwal between Prince Khusrau and the Sikh *Guru* at which the latter is alleged to have communicated an exaggerated view of certain things to the former and have put a saffron-mark on his fore-head as an omen of good fortune. According to the Emperor himself, of the two reasons, the first is more important, rather the basic factor determining the decision. He says:

At Goindwal which is situated on the bank of the River Bias (Bias) there lived a Hindu named Arjan. He was in the guise of a Pir or a Shaikh (religious head). Accordingly, having captivated by his manners and etiquette many of the simpleminded Hindus, many of the ignorant and lowly Muslims had beaten aloud the drum of his divinity and spiritual headship. People called him *Guru* from all sides, foots and worshippers of fools in large numbers came to him and expressed their complete faith in him. This shop had been active for three or four generations. For a very long time, I had been pondering that either this false shop should be exterminated or he (*Guru Arjan*) should be brought into the fold of Islam. (Tuzk-i-Jahangiri)

The second cause, the Khusrau affair, as the Emperor puts it, merely precipitated the situation, having convinced him that the falsehood of the *Guru* had exceeded all limits and could go no further.⁶⁶

It may be contended on some hands that the order of precedence in which the Emperor presents his reasons may not be accepted as literally true, and that it may be just an exercise in casuistry to explain the severity of his action. However, whatever view may be held about the relative importance of the two causes mentioned by Jehangir, one thing is clear that the whole statement of his bears the imprint of orthodox thinking on the subject to the extent that even the uleams would have envied him in posing the problem in such a forthright and unreserved manner. It is significant to remember that Murtza Khan, the then Governor of Lahore, who was so close to the Emperor on account of his meritorious services in the late expedition against Khusrau,

⁶⁴ Narenderpal Singh, *The Nature of Guruship*, I.S.P.C.K., Delhi. 9176. p-217

⁶⁵ Narenderpal Singh, *Gleanings from the Master*, Sikh Cultural Center, Calcutta. 1965. p-98

⁶⁶ Gobind Singh Mansukhani, *Development of Sikh institutions under the Gurus studies in Sikhism and comparative Religion*, 1992. p-41.

enjoyed the goodwill and confidence of the Naqshabandi leader of Sirhind, Shaikh Faizi, who was dead set against the Sikh movement in the Punjab.⁶⁷

The tragedy of *Guru Arjan Dev's* death in the summer of 1606 followed by the confinement of his son and successor, *Guru Hargobind*, produced a sharp reaction in the small but growing community of the Sikhs. There was a general wave of indignation and protest against the official high-handedness and tyranny, and the necessity of self-defense was strongly felt. Sensible of the mood of his people, *Guru Hargobind*, who ascended the gurgaddi in 1606, framed a program of militarizing the community. He put on two swords representing the miri (temporal) and piri (spiritual) powers of the *Guru* respectively, and announced that in future he would prefer offering of arms and horse from his devotees. Arrangements were made for imparting to the Sikh training in the art of fighting, and a small contingent of warriors was built up. Hunting was practiced, because it provided useful training in the exercise of war. However, the measures introduced by *Guru Hargobind*, whatever their importance, did not mark any abrupt change. *Guru Nanak*, the founder of Sikhism, had condemned cowardliness and applauded the qualities of self-respect, self-confidence and manliness. He had held justice to be the primary duty of the rulers, and had stressed their answerability to God and the people for their conduct and administration. He had expressed himself against the attitude of submission to an unjust ruler, dubbing it a shameful act. In the time of the succeeding *Gurus* certain stray incidents happened which awakened the Sikhs to a sense of danger from unfriendly government officials. In the time of *Guru Arjan Dev* as pointed out before, one of the officials, Sulhi Khan, became party to an intrigue, and actually set out on an expedition against the *Guru*, but he died in the act of doing so. Such incidents as these impressed upon the Sikhs the urgency of self-defense underlining the possession of such qualities as courage and knowledge of the technique of fighting. As a result of this new development, the need of *Guru Nanak's* ideology of self-respect and manliness was confirmed and reconfirmed, *Guru Ram Das* encouraged the trading in horses in the belief that this would promote the qualities of good horsemanship in his followers.⁶⁸

Guru Arjan Dev proceeded further and was perhaps that first leader who envisaged the necessity of training in the use of arms. The Sikh tradition has it that his immediate successor, *Guru Hargobind*, received his military instruction from, Bhai Budha, a prominent Sikh of *Guru Arjan*. This could be possible only if Bhai Budha had himself been instructed in the military arts in the earlier period. The tradition of *Guru Arjan* sending, on the eve of his martyrdom, instructions to his successor to sit fully armed on the gurgaddi, also points to the same conclusion.

Nevertheless the assertion of *Guru Hargobind* that he combined in his person both miri and piri powers, was a new development of momentous importance, pregnant with great future possibilities. As the subsequent events were to show, this fact constituted the basis of the Sikh polity that came into being during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even today, it is fundamental to the understanding of the Sikh politics.

Another important factor operating in the transformation of the Sikh movement was the entry of the Jats in large numbers into the fold of Sikhism during the period of *Guru Arjan Dev* and after. These people were the

⁶⁷ Heather Lenore Michaud, *Walking in the Footsteps of the Gurus : Sikhs and Seekers in the Indian Himalayas*. University of Calgary, Canada.1998. p-158

⁶⁸ Balbir Singh, *Guru Nanak Lectures 1970-71: Some Aspect of Guru Nanak's Mission*, Madras University, Madras. 1971. p-320

descendants of certain tribes that had originally come from foreign lands and settled in the country and were known for their tribal freedom and fighting traits. They were naturally an assertive and virile people who only needed a competent and gifted leader to rouse them to action. Hargobind infused in them the confidence that they could even challenge the might of the Mughat Emperor. Large numbers of them answered the *Guru's* call to arms, recognizing in him the type of leader they desired. Their swelling the ranks of the Sikh community changed its complexion and necessitated certain readjustments within the system. The attitude of non-resistance, such as the one adopted by *Guru Amar Das* towards the Muhammadans of Goindwal who constantly annoyed the Sikhs in various ways, did not suit the temper and tradition of these people. So that a new attitude to acts of high-handedness and tyranny had to be formulated in the light of the racial heritage of the new entrants, the Jats.⁶⁹

It is not known for certain when *Guru Hargobind* was imprisoned by Emperor Jehangir, though the fact of his imprisonment cannot be disputed. The probability is that he was arrested soon after his accession, and that his determination to meet the official challenge and launching the program of militarizing the Sikhs constituted the background of the government's action.⁷⁰ After some years-number not certain, the Emperor realized the futility of keeping him any longer in the prison and released him. The incarceration of the *Guru*, however, made no difference to his plans of strengthening the defense potential of his community. Rather, his convictions were reconfirmed by the behavior of the government and he addressed himself afresh and with great vigor to the noble task he had set himself at the time of his accession. His relations with the Emperor Jehangir were now better, and obviously there was no immediate danger to the Sikhs from the side of the government. But he took a longrange view of the problem and did not allow his personal relations with the Emperor to come in the way of his programme. The *Guru* also used the period of peace following upon his release from imprisonment to consolidate the ranks of his community.

During the period he was in prison, the strings of discipline had greatly loosened and several selfish *Masands* had arrogated to themselves powers that were never vested in them. They had become corrupt and strayed from he sphere of their proper functions. Some of them had begun to pose as *Gurus* in their own right and had each raised a body of followers or devotees called shehlang. *Guru hargobind* thought it high time to penalize the corrupt missionaries and made a lesson of them to impress upon other functionaries of the same category a sense of the responsibility assigned to them. But this was not enough. So long as the institution of caranamrit remained unchanged, the individual *Masands* would continue to enjoy the privilege of initiation of new Sikhs by virtue of their having been so authorized by the central authority of the *Guru*. *Guru Hargobind* realized the defect inherent in this system and declared that in future any five good Sikhs could also prepare and administer caranamrit and initiate people into the fold of Sikhism.⁷¹

This measure did not end the order of the *Masands*, nor was it intended to do so. But instituting of an alternative arrangement for the admission for new members into the community did, to a certain extent, erode the authority of the *Masands*. During the same period, the *Guru* travelled through the Punjab into Uttar Pradesh

⁶⁹ Mohinder Kaur Gill, *The Guru Consorts*, Radha Publication, New Delhi. 1992. p-200

⁷⁰ N. Gerald Barrier, *Nanak in Encyclopedia of Religions*. Macmillan, New York. 1987. p-47

⁷¹ P.L. Bedi, *Guru Baba Nanak, the Founder Master of Sikhism*. New Light Press, New Delhi. 1976. p-288

as far as Pilibhit and northwards into Kashmir. Along the route of his travels he had many new temples built and appointed missionaries for the dissemination of the Sikh teachings. Among his most renowned missionaries were Baba Budha, Baba Gurditta and Bhai Gurdas.⁷²

Jahangir died in 1627, *Guru Hargobind* had no trouble with him ever since his release from imprisonment, but the case with which under the late Emperor's son and successor, Shah Jehan, a minor incident over a bird at Amritsar between the hunting parties of the Emperor and the *Guru* sparked off a series of armed clashes between the two sides, shows that the official attitude towards the Sikh movement had not basically changed. The Amritsar incident was immediately followed by an attack upon the *Guru's* residence at Amritsar, and the wrong-doer was a Mughal official, Mukhlis Khan.

The Mughals did not achieve much success, but the *Guru* thought it prudent to leave Amritsar for the time being and retire into the Malwa region. There, too, he was not allowed to live in peace for long, and in 1631 a contingent of Mughal troops attacked him, but in the battle which took place at Lahira, the Mughals were beaten back. The victory thus gained encouraged the *Guru* and he returned to the north and took up his abode at Kartarpur, now in the Jullundur District. But it was not long before another armed clash occurred. The imperialists were led by Painde Khan. This time, again they were defeated and their leader was found among the slain. In spite of his victories, the *Guru* realized that with his slender resources, it was not possible for him to maintain forever an attitude of open defiance towards the rulers, and prudently retired to Kiratpur at the foot of the shivalik Hills. This place being out of the way and at a distance from the main road leading from Delhi to Lahore offered a comparatively securer centre wherefrom to conduct the affairs of his still very young community.⁷³

Guru Hargobind was engaged in actual warfare for a few years only, but he had successfully faced heavy odds, which left a deep mark upon the future course of the community's development. His successes against innumerable odds could not but inspire the Sikh with self-confidence and give them an exalted sense of their own worth. They had hitherto been kept under heels by the Musalmans, but now they learnt, for the first time, that under proper guidance and control, they could meet the Musalmans on an equal footing, or even gain the better. This consciousness of their own worth arising out of their own trying circumstances became a great national asset. *Guru Hargobind* demonstrated a possibility—the possibility of the Sikh openly assuming an attitude of defiance against the Mughal Government and considerably prepared the way of the thorough reformation that they received in the hands of *Guru Gobind Singh*.⁷⁴

Another important result that flowed from the infusion of martial spirit into the community under the leadership of *Guru Hargobind* was that the Sikh movement hence forward, assumed a positively national character. The founder of the Sikh creed, *Guru Nanak*, had shown cultural awareness, no doubt, and had disfavoured the attempts of the Hindus at a blind imitation of the ways of their foreign rulers, but this cultural awareness did not immediately impart any national outlook to the Sikh. As the movement advanced and the

⁷² Harbans Singh Chawla, *Guru Nanak : The Prophet of the People*. Gurudwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha. 1970. p-49

⁷³ W Owen Cole, *Attitude of Guru Nanak And Early Sikhism to Indian Religious Beliefs and Practice 1469-1708*, University of Leeds. 1979. p-360

⁷⁴ S.R. Bakshi and Sangh Mitra, *Guru Nanak Dev : Sants of India*, Clarion Press, Delhi. 2002. p-34

hostility of the Muslims towards it became evident, the *Gurus* and their followers drew closer to the grass-roots of the Indian Culture in an effort to get for their cause popular support. The process of reorientation of the Sikhs outlook was greatly accelerated by the armed clashes occurring during the period of *Guru Hargobind*.⁷⁵

Guru Hargobind was succeeded in 1644 by the grandson *Har Rai* who was the seventh in the line of succession from *Guru Nanak*. Unlike his predecessor, he was a man of a pacifist and retiring nature. But he shared his grandfather's view regarding the need of military preparedness, and maintained a body of people well trained in the use of arms. He also continued his predecessor's practice of hunting expeditions as a means of military training and morale-boosting. Simultaneously, he attended to the demands of consolidation in the ranks of the community. He went round the different centre of his religion, reorganized them, wherever necessary, and set up a few new centre called *bakhshishes* (bounties). During his tenure of *Guruship* some notable conversions were made among the landed families of Malwa. The ancestors of the ruling houses of Patiala, Nabha, and Jind are believed to be first converted to Sikhism during this period. If the Majha tract of the Punjab became Sikh under the spell of *Guru Arjan Dev*, its Malwa territory was initiated into Sikhism by the efforts of *Gurus Hargobind* and *Har Rai*. Once the *chaudharis* or heads of some leading families of Malwa were converted, the ground was well set for the rapid spread of the Sikh faith in the region. The pace of progress in this direction was greatly accelerated during the periods of the Ninth and the Tenth *Gurus*.⁷⁹

The closing years of *Guru Har Rai's* pontificate were marked by the revival of Mughal interference in the affairs of the Sikh community. There are two possible explanation of this development. First, *Aurangzeb* won the war of succession and ascended the Mughal throne in 1658. He was a staunch Muslim who believed with the Muslim orthodoxy, particularly of the *Sirhindi* or *Naqshabandi* brand, that the resurgence of Hindu movement in the country was dangerous to Islamic rule and need to be curbed forthwith. He had convinced himself that the establishment of an Islamic state in India was dire political necessity of the Mughlas. Naturally, therefore, he had scant respect or sympathy for the Sikh movement which had by now taken deep roots in the Punjab and also was well set on the road to further progress.

Secondly, the new Emperor was angry with *Guru Har Rai* for the latter's open support to his elder brother and rival, *Dara Shikoh*. *Dara* being of Sufi persuasion, sought the company of saintly men of all denominations, and it was in this way that he had come to have some intimacy with the Sikh *Guru*. It is not clear, but the Sikh tradition has it, that when *Dara*, after his defeat at the hands of his enemy fled across the Punjab, *Guru Har Rai*, responding to his appeal for help, gathered the Sikh force, estimated at 2200 strong and tried to cover up his retreat as against *Aurangzeb's* pursuing troops. This around the wrath of *Aurangzeb* who, on the conclusion of hostilities, summoned *Har Rai* to Delhi to explain his conduct. The whole of this story does not seem to be correct, for in the case of its being true, the action of the Mughal Emperor would have been very stern, and not simply a summon to Delhi for an explanation. At the same time, the fact that he stated interfering in the Sikh affairs so soon after his action indicates that their must be something more than his mere hatred of the movement to prompt his action. When summoned by the Emperor, *Guru Har Rai*, instead of proceeding personally to the Capital, sent his elder son. *Ram Rai*, to answer the queries of the Emperor. The old charge which had been

⁷⁵ S.S. Bal, *Guru Nanak in the eyes of the eyes of non - Sikhs*, Punjab university Chandigarh. 1969. p-168 ⁷⁹ Balwant Singh Anand, *Guru Nanak : His Life Time and Teachings*. Guru Nanak Foundation New Delhi. 1982. p-159

leveled in the time of *Guru Arjan* and dismissed by the Emperor Akbar as totally unfounded, was now revived, alleging that the Sikh *Granth* contained derogatory references to Islam and its founder, prophet Muhammad. Ram Rai failed to show firmness of character and distorted facts to furnish answer which should please rather than offend the Emperor. Aurangzeb, on his part used the opportunity to win over Ram Rai. He was the older son of *Guru Har Rai* and was likely to succeed his father. In winning him over, therefore, the Mughal ruler cherished the hope of bringing the prospective *Guru* under his thumb. *Guru Har Rai* disapproved of Ram Rai's Conduct and disowning him, appointed his younger son, Har Krishan to *Guruship* after him.⁷⁶

The appointment of Har Krishan by his father as his successor was fully in conformity with the succession practice as observed since the time of *Guru Ram Das*. Prior to *Guru Ram Das* succession was open to the entire Sikh *Sangat* (congregation) and a successor was chosen irrespective of whether or not he belonged to the family of the *Guru* in office. From *Guru Ram Das* onwards the *Guruship* assumed a hereditary character, as all such institutions in those days would tend to do. But though the choice hence forward was limited to the male members of the family of the *Guru*, there was no rule as to which of them was more entitled to the office of the *Guru* than others. *Guru Ram Das* selected his youngest son, Arjan Dev.⁷⁷

Guru Arjan Dev had no difficulty as he had only one son. *Guru Hargobind* had five sons out of whom three predeceased him. The remaining two were passed over in favor of a grandson (younger son of the deceased Baba Gurditta). *Guru Har Rai*, as we have seen selected his younger son, Har Krishan, in preference to Ram Rai, his elder son. *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, as the next *Guru*.

This succession practice, though quite normal to that age, had led to the growth of some splinter groups within the ranks of the community, such as the Minas and the Dhirmalias. The Minas were the descendants of Prithi Chand, the eldest son of the fourth *Guru* whereas the Dhirmalias were the descendants of Dhirmal, a grandson of *Guru Hargobind*. Both Prithi Chand and Dhirmal were disappointed claimants to *Guruship* and had endeavoured to set up rival *Gurudoms* of their own. Now a third splinter group was in process of formation. This was to be known as Ramraias after the name of Ram Rai.

Ram Rai was very sore over his supersession in the matter of succession. Being at the Imperial Court and having good relations with the Emperor at the time he thought that he could turn the tables upon his younger brother, who, he believed, had usurped his right of becoming the *Guru*, through the support of Aurangzeb, and thus made an appeal for the Emperor's intervention. The Emperor was willing to help Ram Rai because he, for his own reason, preferred a man of his own choice and thought that a puppet. *Guru* would most suit his interests.⁷⁸

Guru Har Krishan was then summoned to Delhi. The *Guru* obeyed the orders of the Emperor, went to Delhi and there put up at the house of Mirza Raja Jai Singh (situated at the present site of Bangla Sahib). Probably, the Emperor received good reports about him through Jai Singh, and may be from some other source as well, he hesitated to take any decision in haste. It is also possible that this hesitation on the part of Aurangzeb

⁷⁶ Muhammad Ali Maulvi, *The founders of Sikhism*, Anjuman-I-Paigham-Isulh, Lahore. 1913. p-20

⁷⁷ Dharam Paul, *Guru Nanak and the Religion today*, S.G.P.C. Amritsar. 1969. p-16

⁷⁸ Ajit Singh and Rajinder Singh, *Studies in Guru Nanak*, National Book Shop, Delhi. 1986. p-58

was due to his realization of the futility of imposing an unwanted *Guru* on the Sikhs. Shortly afterwards *Guru Har Krishan* was stricken with small-pox and died.

The vacant *Guruship* went neither to Dhirmal nor to Ram Rai, both extremely impatient for this exalted office, but to Tegh Bahadur, a younger son of the sixth *Guru*, Hargobind who was, at the time of his nomination, living in the District of Amritsar. His accession was violently contested by the rival claimants, Dhirmal tried to have him murdered. Fortunately, the assassin he had hired failed to execute his mission. *Guru Tegh Bahadur* left Bakala for Amritsar. There the doors of the Harimandir were slammed in his face by the *Masands*. From Amritsar he went to Kiratpur, the town built by his father. Here, too, he found no respite. Shortly afterwards, he bought a hillock near the village of Makhowal, five miles north to Kiratpur, and laid the foundation of a new settlement there. However, he did not stay at Makhowal for long, and set out on his travels eastwards through the Malwa and Bangar areas.⁷⁹

His mother and wife travelled with him, besides a considerable following of devotees who gave his camp the appearance of the moving court of a chief. When he arrived in the vicinity of Delhi, Ram Rai, who was still in attendance at the Mughal Court, had him arrested as a imposter and a disturber of the peace. Through the intercession of Raja Ram Singh, son of Raja Mirza jai Singh of Amber, the charge was dropped, and the *Guru* allowed to proceed on his way.

During his eastward journey, *Guru Tegh Bahadur* passed through some major centre of Hindu religion, such as Allahabad, Banaras, Patna, etc. At Patna, he left his family and proceeded Further to Bengal and Assam either alone or in the company of Raja Ram Singh of Amber who had been deputed by Aurangzeb at the head of a military expedition to put down a local revolt in Assam. He spent some years in these areas, and visited important places like Duacca and Chittagong. It was probably in 1671 that he suddenly cut short his visit and hastened back to the Punjab, breaking his journey for a while at Patna to meet his family and to see his new-born child, Gobind Rai. He did not even wait for his family to accompany him.⁸⁰

The reason that he wanted to get back to the Punjab so quickly was the increasing amount of uneasiness in the minds of the people on account of the element of intolerance in the religious policy of the Emperor Aurangzeb. In 1669 orders were issued by Aurangzeb "To demolish all schools and temples of the infidels and to put down their religious practices and teaching." The magnificent and time-honored temples of Mathura and Banaras were demolished and the jizya reimposed on the non-Muslims. The custom duty on Musalmans was abolished, rewards were given to converts, and severe restrictions were placed on public celebrations. In the words of Jadu Nath Sarkar, "A systematic plan was followed for carrying out the policy of iconoclasm. Officers were appointed in all the subdivisions and cities of the Empire to enforce the regulations of Islam, such as the suppression of the use of wine and bhang, and of gambling. The destruction of Hindu places of worship was

⁷⁹ Kapur Singh, *Contribution of Guru Nanak*, Punjab University, Chandigarh. 1970. p-25

⁸⁰ Darshan Singh, *Religion of Guru Nanak*, Dyal Book Depot, Ludhiana. 1970. p-144

one of their chief duties, and so large was the number of officers employed in the task that a Director-General had to be placed over them to guide their activity."⁸¹

The Sikhs got no better treatment. "Aurangzeb ordered the temples of the Sikhs to be destroyed and the *Guru's* agents (*Masands*) for collecting the tithes and the presents of the faithful to be expelled from the cities." The indictment of Aurangzeb by Jadu Nath may be, and perhaps in a little too severe. Things were never so bad as depicted by him. In the total reign of fifty years there were only about 250 conversion, an insignificant number, considering the temper of the day. Even so, it in to be admitted that when new policy was first launched in 1669, there was widespread panic in the country among the non-Muslims. The reports of this panic reached *Guru* Tegh Bahadur while in Assam and he immediately took the decision of being with his people in their hours of great agony and suffering.

With the return of the *Guru* to the Punjab began the period of this Crowing glory. Refusing to sit idle at his headquarters, he resolved to move among his people. During his travels large crowds of people gathered around him and sought solace and guidance from him. His exhortation to them was to face the situation with courage and firmness. His motto, "Bhai kahu ko det nahi nahi bhai manatan" (fear not, frighten not) had deep effect on the panic-stricken minds of the people.⁸²

A Muslim leader, Hafiz Adim, and some prominent zamindars of the region also joined hands with him. The *Guru's* bearing was of a mighty warrior, indeed, it had been so from the very first. He had not given up the militant tradition of his father. He took delight in hunting and among his favorite gifts were swords and arrows. The sense of mission with which he undertook his extensive tour of the countryside and deep impact of his teaching on the people alarmed the official circles. Soon after this the *Guru* was arrested along with a few of his most devoted followers. They were taken to Delhi where they were charged with dangerous activities. They were offered a choice between Islam and death, and on their spurning conversion outright, the *Guru* was beheaded whereas his companions. Bhai Dayal and Bhai Mati Das, were boiled and sawn alive respectively.

Guru Tegh Bahadur thus died a people's hero, a defender of his faith, and fighter against insensate tyranny. In the words of *Guru* Gobind Singh, son and successor of *Guru* Tegh Bahadur:

"To protect their right to wear their caste marks and sacred threads"

Did he in the Dark Age, perform, the supreme sacrifice;

To help the saintly he went to the utmost limit;

He gave his head but never cried in paid,

He suffered martyrdom for the sake of his faith;

He lost his head, but revealed not his secret;

He disdained to perform miracles or juggler' tricks,

For such fill men of God with shame;

He burst the bonds of mortal clay,

And went to the abode of God,

No one hath ever performed as act as noble as his.

⁸¹ Amrik Singh, *Sat Guru Nanak Dev. The Apostle of Peace unity, Truth and Infinite*, The Author, Ludhana. 1950. p-30

⁸² Donald G Case, *Guru Nanak : Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Punjabi University, Patiala. 1992. p-165

Tegh Bahadur passed, the world was with sorrow stricken;

A wail of horror rent the earth;

A victor's welcome given by the hosts of heaven."⁸³

Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution "Undoubtedly strengthened the resistance against the religious policy of Aurangzeb and at the same time prepared the way for final stage in the evolution of Sikhism. In his death, the *Guru* surpassed anything he had done in life. He was known throughout upper India, was highly revered by Rajput princes and was actually worshiped by the peasantry of the Punjab. His execution was universally regarded by the Hindus as a sacrifice for their faith.

The immediate effect of the execution of *Guru* Tegh Bahadur, however, was terrific and stunning for the Sikhs. There were still, no doubt, daring spirits like Lakhi Shah and Bhai Jaita who could risk their all for the sake of their beloved *Guru*, and despite their small number, be a source of inspiration to the weaker spirits. But a large majority of the Sikhs were utterly bewildered and be devilled as a result of the traumatic shock, and the general situation of the community indeed seemed gloomy and sombre. A striking glimpse of this sad state of affairs was provided by some of the followers of *Guru* Tegh Bahadur at Delhi for swearing their faith in the face of Mughal interrogation and repression.

The intensity of the shock of the Delhi executions was greatly enhanced by the absence of unity and cohesion in the ranks of the Sikhs about this time. We have already referred to the Minas, the Dhirmalias and the Ramraias. They were all dissenters who had set up *Gurudoms* of their own and were engaged on an all-out campaign of vilification against the mainstream of Sikhism. The circumstances of the last decade and a half had been particularly very helpful to them. The fissiparous and centrifugal activities found a hospitable climate.⁸⁴

Guru Har Krishan, who succeeded his father *Guru* Har Rai in 1661, was just an infant of five years at the time of his succession. Moreover, he had to spend most of his time at Delhi where his elder brother Ram Rai was intriguing against him with Aurangzeb, *Guru* Tegh Bahadur who succeeded him in 1664 experienced constant difficulties at the hands of the rival groups and spent much of his time touring outside the Punjab in what are not known as Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Assam. On his return from the tour he threw himself, heart and soul into the struggle against the anti-non-Muslim policy of the emperor Aurangzeb.⁸⁵

The long absence of *Guru* Teg Bahadur from the Punjab and later, his continued pre-occupation with the resistance of the Government's tyranny helped the splinter groups to promote their interests further. They either appointed their own *Masands*, or tempered with the loyalty to the existing *Masands*, to strengthen their hold on the people. For the *Masands*, too, this was an opportunity too valuable to be missed. To all intents and purposes not all, but most of them, asserted their independence of the Sikh centre, built up their own following became corrupt, and extorted offerings from the Sikhs in utter disregard to the spirit of the *Guru's* teachings. The collections were misappropriated in most of the cases and only a small fractions of them, if at all, reached the coffers of the *Guru*.

⁸³ W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. 1998. p-259

⁸⁴ Avtar Singh, *Ethics of the Sikhs*, Punjabi University, Patiala. 1970. p-67

⁸⁵ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, Manohar Press, New Delhi. 1970. p-56

A disintegrated and disunited organization, such as the Sikh community was at the death of *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, could hardly be expected to meet the challenge of the mighty Mughal government. In the recent executions of a Sikh *Guru* and some notable Sikhs, the Mughals had shown their hand in unmistakable terms, creating thereby a question of life and death for the new community. A state of confrontation with the Government was there and if the Sikhs were to survive, they could afford to ignore it only at their own risk.⁸⁶

Fortunately, *Guru Gobind Singh*, son and successor of *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, was a great organizer, and had the vision imagination and magnetism of a great leader. His grasp of the issues was firm and clear. He had also a clear understanding of the remedies that could resolve these issues and defeat the nefarious designs of the oppressor.

He embarked upon his difficult task of reorganizing and rejuvenating his people so as to fit them for all eventualities with a definite mission, which in his own words was as follows.

"I came to the World charged with the duty to uphold the right in every place and to destroy the wicked and the evil. O ye holy men, know it well in your hearts that the only reason I took birth was to see that the righteousness my flourish" that the good may live and tyrants be torn out by their roots.⁸⁷

True to his heroic mission, he put the ideal of dharmayuddha before the people. They were exhorted to live and die for the cause of dharma or righteousness. The Sikh concept of the Supreme Being was reinterpreted emphatically, bringing out his martial attributes. That God helped and protected. His dear ones or the good, and destroyed the evil was an old recognized strand of the Sikh metaphysics. *Guru Gobind Singh* not only laid more emphasis on this strand than was the case before but also evolved the idea further. He envisaged God as a mighty, invincible warrior armed to the teeth and ever ready to use his powers in support of the good. History abounds in examples where. He saved his people from the clutches of wicked tyrants. Goddess Durga or Chandi was commissioned by him to help the Gods to destroy their enemies, the demons. Subsequently, several avatars such as Rama and Krishna were, sent to wage war against tyranny. *Guru Gobind Singh* also viewed himself in the role of a savior divinely commissioned to uphold the cause of the weak and the oppressed.

To inculcate the martial spirit of heroism in the minds of the people he ransacked the old Indian literature with the help of a number of poets and scholars living at his court, and brought out the heroic tradition enshrined therein. The most important of these works is *Chandi di Var* which is a free rendering in Punjabi of an old saga heroism. The virile and martial style of the blank verse indicates the extent to which the purpose of the attempt has been fulfilled.

Martial valor and weapons of war go hand in hand. The *Guru* regarded weapons as object of great sanctity and inculcated the idea of their worship. He even deified them and identified them with God. Hence he used such names of God as *sarabloh* (All Steel) and *khadagketu* (Emblem of the Sword).⁸⁸

But weapons of war were not merely to be worshipped. They were to be used, and their use was to be learnt through the hard way of training and practice. Therefore, soon after his accession in 1675 *Guru Gobind Singh* started training his followers in the use of arms as well as in the technique of fighting. Like his grandfather,

⁸⁶ Balwant Singh Dhillon, *Early Sikh Scriptural Traditional*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar. 1999. p-26

⁸⁷ A.C. Bannerjee, *The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Religion*, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal Press, Delhi. 1970. p-45

⁸⁸ Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia, *Metaphysical Postulates of Sikhism*, Godwin Publishers, Chandigarh. 1976. p-31

Guru Hargobind, he showed preference for offerings of horses, weapons and other things that might be useful in fighting. He also got prepared a big drum and named it Ranjit-Nagada. The Sikhs at Makhawal were trained to observe their daily program to the beat of this drum. This device was useful in imparting to the Sikh ranks the qualities of regularity and discipline. From the beginning of his career, the *Guru* was very particular about going on hunting expeditions.⁸⁹

Such exercises, he believed, were useful for learning war maneuvers. In a short time he had the nucleus of a body of trained warriors. In fact, this idea of practising people in the art of fighting was no innovation introduced by him. It was simply a continuation of the tradition which had come down to him from the time of the Sixth *Guru* through the succeeding *Gurus*. However, the degree of emphasis laid on this aspect under him was far greater than had been the case ever before.

When the above-mentioned measures were in progress, alongside of them *Guru* Gobind Singh endeavored to secure solidarity with the hill chiefs of Rajput extraction. They were known for their gallantry, and also had some valuable resources at their command. Besides the hold of the Mughal government over them was not complete, and there was a possibility that with a little support and guidance from outside they would like to throw away completely the yoke of the Mughal overlordship. But the *Guru's* experience with them for some years convinced him that they might be a liability rather than an asset to him. These hill chiefs were traditionbound and caste-ridden, and too much entangled in their petty politics to be exposed to the inspiration of any high national ideal. Rather, they got alarmed by the growing influence of the *Guru* as also by his social reforms which equated the high-born with the low-born.

The hostility of the Rajput princes made the *Guru* pay greater heed to Anandpur. Anandpur was strategically a much better place than Paunta in the state of Nahan. That is why after about three years only, the *Guru* had returned to Anandpur. But Anandpur, too, lost much of its natural security, the moment the hill chiefs became unfriendly towards the *Guru*. Hence the urgency of fortifying the town and building some forts to strengthen its defences arose. The forts built there, namely Anandgarh, Kesgarh, Fatehgarh, Holgarh and Lohgarh were all situated on carefully selected sites in and around the town.⁹⁰

The creation of the Khalsa was the crowning event of *Guru* Gobind Singh's life from the standpoint of both organization and ideology. Organizationally, it completely eliminated the need of the order of the *Masands*. The *Masand* system had become corrupt, decrepit and creaky, and needed to be replaced immediately by a better system. But so long as caranamrit (nectar prepared by a toewash) remained the mode of initiating new aspirants into the fold of Sikhism, *Masands* could not be completely done away with.

The introduction of Kande di pahul (nectar prepared by stirring a khanda i.e. two edged sword in it) by *Guru* Gobind Singh rendered the washing of the toe for amrit preparation unnecessary. As the new baptism could be administered by any five good Sikhs (called panj piyare) the elements of sole dependence upon a few individuals, such as the *Masands*, was removed. After this step was taken, it was not difficult to abolish the order of the *Masands* publicly, and this was soon done but the *Guru* was not content with

⁸⁹ Gopal Singh Dardi, *Guru Gobind Singh*, National Book Trust, India 1966. p-97

⁹⁰ J.H. Gordin, *The Sikhs*, Language Deptt. Patiala. 1970. p-34

that. He caught hold of some of the *Masands* and made a public example of punishing them. He also inserted in the rahit code of the Khalsa that any kind of association with the *Masands* was forbidden.

Ideologically, the creation of the Khalsa aimed at a well balanced combination of the ideals of bhakti and shakti, of moral and spiritual excellence and militant valor or heroism of the highest order. The use of a double-edge sword in the preparation of the amrit (nectar) was psychological booster. The changing of names at the time as part of the new mode of the baptism was also intended to revolutionize the psyche of the Sikhs. All names of the baptized Sikhs were now to end in the uniform appellation of singh meaning 'Lion', "Thus making lions of humble disciples and raising them with one strike to a position of equality with the noblest and most war like class in India, for up to that time only the Rajput bore the exalted tile of Singh." "They were now to feel as good and as great as the members of the Solar and the Lunar dynasties."⁹¹

Still another means to promote the spirit of martial valor among the Sikhs was the inclusion in the code of the Khalsa of an injunction for the compulsory wearing of arms, *kirpan* being one and the most important of them.

Further, the *Guru* impressed the Khalsa with the belief that they were under the special control and protection of God. "They were taught an article of faith to believe that God was always present in the general body of the khalsa and that wherever even five Sikhs were assembled, the *Guru* would be with them." "They were also told that they were born to conquer. The new salutation given to the Sikhs was wahe*Guru* ji ka khalsa wahe*Guru* ji ki fateh (the Lord's is the Khalsa, the Lord's is the victory). The *Guru* by this means instilled into the minds of his followers the idea that they were the chosen instrument of God and must win, whatever be the odds against them; on wonder, then, that the singhs of *Guru* Godind Singh, thus leavened, did not hesitate to dare all and risk all."⁹²

But the singhs were not to be merely soldiers. It was imperative that they must at the same time be saints, deeply devoted to God, singing. His hymns as composed by the *Gurus*, observing the daily religious discipline prescribed in the rahit of the khalsa and bearing a high moral character. There was no contradiction between the twin ideals of soldiering and saintliness. In fact, they were complementary to each other. Spiritual and moral values had to be protected with military strength, if they were to be saved for humanity. In the same way, military strength needed to be guided and directed by goals set by high moral and spiritual values, otherwise there was a likelihood of its being misused.

While creating the khalsa, *Guru* Gobind Singh did not forget to confer upon it a mark of distinctiveness in the form of unshorn hair of the body. Without any cost, this measure not only gave the Sikhs a manly bearing suited to the ideology in which they were nurtured, but also made it impossible for them in future to conceal their identity as some Sikhs at Delhi had done at time of *Guru* Tegh Bahadur's execution.

All these measures helped to frustrate the centrifugal forces that were in operation in the ranks of the Sikh community at the time of *Guru* Gobind's accession. The community was now united and integrated as never before. All members of the community enjoyed equal privileges with one another, and there was no high

⁹¹ I.H. Qureshi, *A Short History of Pakistan*, University of Karachi. 1985. p-79

⁹² W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Oxford University Press. 1975. p-135

and low, so far as rights were concerned. Nor was the *Guru* superior to them, for by receiving amrit from the panj piyare he had exploded the myth of his superiority to his followers. This equality of privileges with one another and with the *Guru*, common external appearance, common leadership and the community of aspirations bound the Sikhs together into a compact mass, raising their strength manifold.⁹³

Neither the hill chiefs of the neighborhood nor the Mughal government could tolerate the great revolution that the Sikh *Guru* had effected with such tremendous success. Therefore, they combined with the avowed object of destroying his power and laid siege to Anandpur. The *Guru* gallantly held out for several months, but finally the people around him, overcome by a feeling of despair at the continually worsening situation, appealed to him to quit the place.

According to their appeal, he quietly marched out on a cold, rainy and dark December night of 1705, but he was soon overtaken at a place called Chamkaur, where a daylong bloody battle raged between the two sides. The *Guru*, however, could not be captured, and he escaped into the interior of the Malwa region. The enemy was still in pursuit of him, and another armed clash took place at what is now called, Muktsar. Here the victory sided with the *Guru* and the enemy beat a hasty retreat. About this time, wishing to settle the matter diplomatically, he wrote a letter in Persian verse, *zafarnama* to emperor Aurangzeb, making a bold protest against the attitude of the local Government officials. The Emperor invited him to a personal interview in the Deccan.

The *Guru* set out to the south to meet the Emperor, but on the way when the news of his death reached him, he retraced his steps and proceeded to Delhi. He met the new emperor, Bahadur Shah, at Agra. The Emperor treated him with great honor and distinction, but with regard to the issue raised by him, always counseled him with patience. When the emperor set out towards Rajputana, and later, marched from Rajputana towards the Deccan, The *Guru* accompanied him and reached Nanded in the Deccan. By then, he had made careful study of the political situation in Rajputana and in the south, and had also observed the inside decay of the Mughal structure. A conviction had grown upon him that the Mughal Empire had lost its grip on the country and was disintegrating.⁹⁴

With this conviction in his mind, he abandoned the idea of pursuing the negotiations with the emperor any longer, and decided to send Banda Singh, A bairagi sadhu, of Nanded recently converted to Sikhism, along with a few other prominent Sikhs to the Punjab to take what action he could against the enemies of the Khalsa. A little before the party of Banda Singh left for the north, the *Guru* was stabbed fatally by a Muhammadan assassin, probably hired by the Fanjdar of Sirhind, Nawab Wazir Khan. This incident must have also added to the urgency of an early action of the type visualized by the *Guru*. Banda Singh, on arriving in the Punjab, mobilized a large fighting force, captured Sirhind (capital of Sirhind sub-division) and established the first independent Khalsa state.

Guru Gobind Singh breathed his last at Nanded on October 7, 1708. A day before his death he made the historic announcement abolishing the line of personal *Guruship* and conferring the powers of deliberation upon the Khalsa. By this act of investiture, individual leadership was replaced by collective leadership. The khalsa,

⁹³ M.A. McAuliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Chandra & Co Press. Delhi. p-123

⁹⁴ Marenc Ethnek, *The Transformation of the Sikh Society*, Heritage Publications, Delhi. 1976. p-89

whatever its discipline, was before this act a dependent organization. *Guru* Gobind Singh had no doubt, visualized a great role for it from the time of its creation. He had volunteered to receive, and had received baptism from the panj piyares (Five Beloved Ones who were the first to be initiated into the order of the Khalsa) and he had also sung high praises of it. But the step which changed the Khalsa into a sovereign body with the power to shape the destiny of the nation, a commonwealth, was the momentous declaration at Nanded.⁹⁵

Guru Gobind Singh was, thus, the last of the line of the Sikh *Gurus*. The ending of the line with his death was a deliberate act, and was the outcome of a position of strength rather than that of weakness, as it is usually the case in history.

His pontificate, though coming at the end of the line, may rightly be regarded as the period of culmination in the development of Sikhism under the *Gurus*. He completed the evolution of the Sikh *Sangat*. In the beginning, it was merely a religious gathering of devotees, functioning more or less in isolation. Gradually, there was an increase in its functions, and the isolation of one from another was lessened by the forging of common links, such as the preparation of a scripture, the building up of certain religious centre, institution of *Manjis* and *Masands* as the agencies of the central leadership and the assertion of the principle of the supremacy of the *Guru*. With the foundation of the Khalsa the new work of semi integrated *Sangats* was fully integrated. The investing of the Khalsa with supreme powers later on, marked completion of the historical process long underway.⁹⁶

Guru Gobind Singh also completed the social and religious revolutions inaugurated by *Guru* Nanak. The successor of *Guru* Nanak had guided these revolutions with great devotion and ability. Yet there were some lapses to be seen at the time of *Guru* Gobind Singh's accession. The creation of the Khalsa by *Guru* Gobind Singh's was not merely an endeavor to integrate the members of his community, it was also and as much a powerful bid to carry to completion his predecessor revolution in the fields of social and religious life.

The code of conduct prescribed for the newly created Khalsa was so devised as to impose a strict discipline on the Sikhs so as to ensure firm adherence on their part to the lofty ideals of Sikhism. Still another respect in which he brought to completion the development of an important old institution was the evolution of the Sikh scriptures. *Guru* Arjan Dev had accomplished a Herculean task by authenticating the diverse compositions and preparing a single holy book for the benefit of his people. But since then the work had remained where it was left. *Guru* Gobind Singh included in it the salokas of his father and put the seal of finality on it. Subsequently, this finalized version of the *Adi Granth* was invested with *Guruship*.⁹⁷

But the period of *Guru* Gobind Singh was not merely a period of culmination. It was also a period of beginnings. By his reforms, and under the impact of his dynamic and magnetic leadership, the Sikh community was not only strengthened but also converted into a great vehicle of revolution. Cunningham writes, "The last apostle of the Sikhs effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty though fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the proper adjuncts of that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak." In the words of Narang: "Though he did not break the shackles that bound

⁹⁵ Muhammad Akbar, *Lahore- Past and Present*, Punjab University Press, Lahore. 1952. p-156

⁹⁶ Gurmukh Singh, *Historical Sikh Shrines*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar. 1999. p-134

⁹⁷ Surjeet Hans, *A Reconstruction of Sikh History from Sikh Literature*, UBS Publication, New Delhi. 1988. p-23

his nation, he had set their souls free and filled their hearts with a lofty longing for freedom and ascendancy. He had broken the charm of sanctity attached to the lord of Delhi and destroyed the awe and terror inspired by Muslim tyranny." The Khalsa accepted the challenge of the powerful Mughal Empire and embarked upon a national struggle of liberation. The first independent Khalsa state was created within two years of *Guru* Gobind Singh's death. This success, however, proved short-lived, and moreover, provoked the Government to follow a policy of ruthless persecution towards the Sikhs. But the Khalsa ultimately won the struggle against the Mughals and later, against their successors, the Afghans, and established their sovereign rule in the Punjab in the beginning of the sixties of the eighteenth century.⁹⁸



⁹⁸ J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, Punjabi University, Patiala. 1963. p-78