CHAPTER - III

Social Expressions of Sikh Theology
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BUILDING OF HARIMANDAR

Guru Nanak while travelling through length and breadth of Indian sub-continent, had felt the social, economic, religious and political pain of common masses of India given by the so-called upper strata of society. This kind of pain was even felt by sensitive hearts of earlier saints also, such as Farid, Kabir, Ravidas, Namdev, et al who also tried to raise their voice against this injustice, but their voice being the voice of lower strata of society went unnoticed due to lack of any such practical institutional arrangement through which people could feel the sense of togetherness among one and all. Guru Nanak realized this failure and to concretize the idea of equality, love and sharing he established Sangats wherever he went during his travels. In Sangat, eschewing the sense of high or low all were required to sit on floor covered by same durrie. This indicated a striking departure from the familiar norms of medieval society.

The establishment of tradition of passing Guruship by Guru Nanak was innovative step. By nominating Angad his successor he created a tradition which moulded Sikhs into integrated community under uninterrupted spiritual leadership. No doubt,
“the disciples of Guru Nanak would have soon dispersed and disappeared, if he had not taken care to appoint his successor during his life time. It was crucial point of separation of Guru’s disciples from general body of other communities. Guru Nanak resembled other medieval reformers in revitalizing religion and morality, but he was alone in creating a distinct and self conscious community which was destined to play fruitful and glorious role in country’s history.

Although Guru Nanak remained aloof from politics but didn’t ignore the political trends effecting people’s lives. He was fully alive to the impact of politics on society and religion because he was not an ascetic in traditional Indian religious sense. He lived life of a householder and settled in a village Kartarpur during the last days of his life. Guru Nanak’s condemnation of the traditional ritualistic society was practical. He practised far better way of washing off impurities of mind by hearing, obeying and loving the inherent voice of God. In general he prescribed God’s name as the best thing in this Kali age.¹ Sangat became the ocean of Nam where the ordinary mind was not gripped under mystic experience alone rather it was activated to realise its aim of serving the mankind and for that to find out the ways to accomplish that. The creed laid down by Guru Nanak was simple and elastic enough to provide a structure within which the Sikh community
could grow for more than a century and half till an entirely new environment was provided by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth master.

Through the teachings received in Sangat, the internal darkness is dispelled away and illumination attained. Man gets enlightened in the holy company of others as the iron touched to the philosopher’s stone turns out to be gold. Moreover to have this practice, one is not required to go to jungle as was practised in medieval period because the loneliness can take man away from his responsibilities towards his society. And Guru Nanak’s Dharma is to follow a very responsible attitude towards one’s belongings and surroundings. In Medieval religious practices, very few chosen ones were allowed to enter in the fold of spirituality, but Guru Nanak’s Sangats were for one and all irrespective of their class, colour, creed or status. Social or spiritual position of any one is not fixed, one may become divine or demon on the basis of his own good or bad deeds.

The ideal man of Sikhism of Guru Nanak is Gurmukh who knows that Truth is very high ideal but higher still is the truthful living - sachau ure sab ko upari sachi acharu. So by treading the path of truthful living any one becomes competent for changing his position from demon to divine or vice-versa. ‘Kirat-Karni (working with ones own hands), Naam Japna (remembrance of
God) and Vand-Chhakna (sharing with others your earning)’ the three cardinal pillars of Guru Nanak’s theology work through the institution of Sangat. The sublime thought behind these activities is the idea of nishkam seva (duty). Community service in any form is considered essential part of Sikh religio-ethical life. Seva includes cleaning shoes of Sangat, doing minor works in langar (cooking, serving, cleaning of utensils etc.) and others. Such services give blows to cultivated ego of status, class or caste and this seems to be the perfect arrangement done by Guru Nanak to help society in shedding off deep rooted haumai - ego.

The successor Gurus added new chapters to strengthen the institutions started by Mentor Guru, Guru Angad continued the preaching, singing, meditation on Name at Khadur Sahib as was his practice in the times of Guru Nanak. Sangats were made to sit in line for meal irrespective of their caste as well as status and this Langar became regular and most important feature of the organisation of Sikhism. These institutions increased the number of Guru’s followers. These institutions began to develop further and added to the popularity of Sikh order under Guru Amar Das also. Along with busy life at Goindwal third Guru strictly declared that he will be accessible only to those who had first partaken of food cooked and served in Guru Ka Langar.⁴
Both of ‘Langar’ and ‘Sangat’ germinated under Guru Nanak had come out as a regular feature and developed as a characteristic shape till the third Guru. The community was now well put on a platform and obtained a strong footing. The distinction began to separate the Sikhs from the other communities despite the hostility of both the Muslim Shaikhs and Hindu Pandits. Both the Shaikhs as well as Pandits of those time started harassing Sikhs and began complaining to the ruling authorities against them and their growing popularity.

The erstwhile Hindu-Muslim clergy hated Sikhs for being against the regular norms of society. They abhored Sikhs’ sitting together, sharing meals and breaking the barrier of caste system through the simple teachings of Gurus devoid of any ritual, deviating the simple minded people from the path of religion. On hearing the complaint Emperor Akbar came to meet Guru and was accordingly taken to the presence of the Guru. After sitting in Langar in one meeting with the Guru, the Emperor was so pleased that he donated land to the community kitchen in the name of Bibi Bhani. This event not only added more people from humble origin but also of higher varna into the Sikh fold. Further, the vast range of Sikh community was built with inter-connected ‘Manji System’ where Manjidaars were appointed in far off places to convey the messages of the house of the Guru.
Another important step taken by Guru Amar Das was collection of Bani of earlier Gurus. Guru Amar Das strongly urged upon followers to spurn all false or spurious hymns and to accept only those which were genuine and authoritative - *satiguru bina hor kachi hai bani.*

Initiative taken by Guru Nanak was yet to be completed and thus the Guruship passed on to Guru Ram Das the fourth Nanak, who did not deviate in any way from the principles and tenets laid by the predecessors. Sikhism had already opened its doors to all and gave men simple, basic beliefs which all could follow. Guru Nanak’s philosophy held the whole universe as incarnation of the Supreme. Guru Amar Das put forth that human self is the living abode Harimandar of Parmatman, full of bliss and God in it becomes visible through the light of the jewel of knowledge.

*Harimandaru ehu sariru hai giani ratani pargatu hoi.*

House of Nanak day by day was becoming centre of unity, equality and brotherhood. The third Guru provided different and simple ceremonies of birth, death and marriage etc. for the community. He constructed a Baoli at Goindwal, establishing a new tradition, that for place to earn status of religious centre, it must be in a position to serve humanity physically also. Two occasions, Diwali and Baisakhi were designated as festivals. On
these occasions, the *sangat* from far and near used together at Goindwal wherein the Guru personally met to know the well-being of the *sangat*. Guru created appropriate atmosphere for the Sikhs to grow into a well-knit community with distinct ideology, belief system and distinct institutional structures.

Further to crystalize the theology of Guru Nanak succession was passed on to fourth Nanak, Guru Ramdas bypassing sons of third Guru. Guru Ram Das shifted his residence to present site of Amritsar on advise of Guru Aman Das to avoid possible unpleasantness with the relatives of third Guru. Guru Ram Das being a pleasant personality, composed hymns with high poetic and musical skills that they act as a stream of love whose cooling melody had immense transmuting potential. In his hymns, Guru re-emphasised the doctrines of predecessor Gurus and made them more clear. God in Bani of Guru Ramdas was posed as friend, a father, a mother, and Guru. Hence, they were not to look for any worldly helper, God in his Guru form was a sure help.\textsuperscript{10} This was remarkably a new theology about the concept of God in Sikhism, as earlier God was an unapproachable identity who need special type of status of a disciple or seeker who want to reach Him. But in Sikhism God was as nearer as a mother, father or friend could be. This thing provided optimism to Sikhs. Public reading and listening of Gurbani was practised unlike the
traditional way of secret learnings. By this time, Guru established a new society at ‘Chakk Guru Ka’ where the so called low castes people including artisans, peasants, traders, petty shopkeepers, labourers were welcomed to join fold of Sikhism without any hesitation and was devoid of caste hierarchy. Guru Ramdas constructed a ‘pool of Nectar’ Amrit Sarovar in mid of the town and encouraged people of all professions to take up residence in the town.¹¹

The mission of Sikhism had been made clear by its founders. It was aimed at establishing a society on the basis of social equality bounded by the ties of faith in the oneness of God and supported by the firm belief of stopping any kind of restriction on the worshipping of Him. Attempts were made by Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, but still the road was long and the goal was distant.

Now the succession was passed on to Guru Arjan and steps which Nanak V taken during his Guru period were completion of Amritsar and construction of Harimandir, raising of cities Tarn Taran and Kartarpur, setting up of Masand system, strengthening of economic base of the Sikhs, and the most important one was compilation and editing of Adi Granth earlier known as ‘Pothi Sahib’ and installing this compilation in the midst of Amrit Sarovar in ‘Harimandir.’
Harimandir now known as the Golden Temple was designed as a symbol of such a faith to demonstrate its universality that has no match in the whole world. This temple is accessible to one and all men and women of all faiths, castes and nationalities. Normally the Indian places of worship were having a single door to restrict the entry of the so-called low caste people but Harimandir was built with four doors opening towards four directions to prove availability of God everywhere in all directions at all times and free entry to people irrespective of their caste, creed and gender. In medieval times temples were opened for people of higher caste only and similarly mosques were also open for worshipping by men only. However, Golden Temple opens its doors to everyone, giving them dignity and equality thus enriching Guru Nanak’s theology of one God and unity among his creation.

Earlier temples were erected on a level above the surface of earth but Harimandir was constructed on the surface which was lower than the surroundings, this was again done according to Guru Nanak’s theology of proving God residing at the lowest place among its creation and not somewhere on some other world in the sky away from the reach of the normal man.

In other religious places there was a range of idols of gods and goddesses along with their belongings but in Golden Temple no physical manifestation of God is found; it was only the sacred
Granth ‘Adi Granth’ which when completed was placed in the inner sanctuary and was declared by Guru Arjan, “the abode of True Guru.”

Thus was transformed Harimandir into symbolic authority of True Lord because Adi Granth or ‘Pothi Sahib’ was considered as explicit embodiment of God or True Guru and was installed in Harimandir.

Installation of ‘Pothi Sahib,’ also speaks of the continuity of thought of the founder of Sikhism because Pothi contained the words of Guru Nanak and his successor Gurus along with bhaktas, bhaps and the devotees of Sikh Gurus. By placing the Pothi at Harimandir Sahib Guru Arjan established a landmark in the spiritual history of India.

The primary feature of Adi Granth which makes it distinct is authenticity of its content and variety of its contributors from different socio-religious backgrounds high and low, Hindu and Muslim. Some of them are even represented by only a verse or two while others’ contributions are voluminous. While editing the bani of Pothi Sahib Guru Arjan was very conscious about the thought line of the contributors where equal concerns for quality of life in totality has been expressed. All the concerned issues - social, economic as well as political are dealt with in detail. They all tried to visualise a world of equality. One of the fundamentals
of interfaith understanding in the holy Granth is the recognition of capability of other faiths that in dealing with ills of the society all religions are competent and equal. It is only the contributors of the Adi Granth, who recognized that all religious dispensations are capable of elevating human soul though the way could be different. Says Guru Amar Das - O God, this world is burning (in the fire of hatered, jealousy, fanaticism etc.). Save it, O Lord through any gate (of any religion).

\textit{Jagatu jalanda rakhi lai apani kirapa dhari.}
\textit{jitu duarai ubarai titai laihu ubari.}\textsuperscript{13}

The Gurus not only accepted the separate identity of Hindus and Muslims with their diverse customs and ceremonies, they rather respected and protected it as we see in the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur who offered his head to the tyrannical emperor for the safety of Hindu brahmin community of Kashmir whose he was neither a member nor a practitioner of their faith. In fact the Guru believed in the freedom of faith to one and all.

In recent times some people advocate that to achieve equality we must have unity even among our philosophies and political systems but it seems as if they are not talking about unity in diversity rather they are stressing upon uniformity of mankind. Sikhism does not believe in this kind of Monomania. Sikhism accepts 'positive differences' among all and not the
negative difference opposed to each other. We are talking about global consciousness today but the Gurus had practised it about 500 years ago. The ideology of Guru Granth advocates brotherhood, fraternity and culture of love creating awakening of new global atmosphere. Long before the dawn of this civilization and establishment of organizations for world peace (UNO) Sikh Gurus had the vision of universal religion for the entire humanity. We are living in polymorphic age where several cultures have to co-exist. Needless to say that if we understand different religions and ideologies from the point of view of Guru Granth we would live in a more dignified and harmonious co-existence. Guru Granth Sahib focussed on the dignity of mankind, the sense of self sacrifice, the theory of Sabad as Guru, the philosophy of dialogue and considers Truth as the basis of spirituo temporal life. Taking truthfulness of Ultimate Reality as granted, the truthful worldly life is the way of reaching Him. It is of utmost importance and the inner core of Guru Granth Sahib wherein Gurmukh is advised to perform concrete good deeds in this world and at the same time constantly to remember the Divine Name.14

Guru Granth teaches everybody to be true to his or her faith; a Muslim should be a true Muslim and a Hindu should be a true Hindu because the true spirit of religion teaches mutual respect as declared by Guru Arjan - sarab dharma mahi sresath
dharm. hari ko namu japu nirmal karam. History is evidence that Sikhism never forced anybody to convert to the fold of Sikhism only because of the fact that Sikhism seeks to unite people belonging to different religious traditions into a broader unity of mind and soul. Sikh Theology emphasises unity in the diversity of mankind and this unity becomes possible only by being truthful to one’s own religion.

Thus the sublimity of Guruship in the form of Guru Granth saved Sikhism from splitting into rival sects because the Gurbani became the Guru and the Guru remained the Gurbani.

**MIRI-PIRI**

The aim of life, in traditional Hindu thought, presents spiritualism above worldliness. The idea shows that a man is much more concerned with his future rather than present.

For the realization of Ultimate Reality people were required to cultivate deep faith in the metaphysical world, but if religion continues to cater only spiritual needs of man ignoring his temporal problems it is bound to lose its hold because the primary concern of individuals mainly lies in their worldly problems.

Guru Nanak delved deeper into this problem and provided a ‘unique synthesis’ of balanced temporal and spiritual realities of human life wherein ‘co-existence’ and ‘inter-dependence’ were advocated.
A rational synthesis of both the needs, physical values as well as values of spirit, is the necessity of the present time because the dependence on any one of them had already shown disastrous results.

Guru Nanak’s thought presented the image of man in a unique and different way when he described human life as a ‘rare gift’ of God, to cultivate divine life and to establish re-union of Atman with Parm-atman. In this way status of the human life even surpasses the life of the so-called gods and goddesses who as per general belief always lived above in the sky and come down very rarely. The whole Sikh spiritual thought reminds man of his ‘divine origin’ and his implicit resemblance with God.

Ancient traditional faiths of India have treated worldly existence as a transitory phase and advised man to forsake the world to attain higher spiritual life. Paul Brunton gives a brief account of the religious tradition prevailing in India in earlier days in the following words:

“In ancient times, advanced spiritual methods were almost always prescribed only for those who had renounced the world and its temptations, who had withdrawn into the monasteries or convents or who had run away into the desert, the jungle and the mountain caves.”16

Sikh thought does not sanction renunciation and it also does not treat this phenomenal world as mere ‘maya’ or illusion;
in fact it calls the world ‘true’ because the spirit of God prevails in it - *Ihu jagu sache ki hai kothari.*\(^{17}\)

The reason behind this escapist (renunciation) theory of earlier times was found in the theory of *Karma* where actions keep human soul bound in the continuous cycle of births and deaths. To overpower this process people were required to be actionless so that they could be free from binding results of those actions.

But in Theology of Guru Nanak the theory of *Karma* has been redefined and made consistent with the worldly life on the ground that God himself is active (*karta purakh*) then why should man reverse the process from action to inaction in an unnatural way thus opposing the will of God. Further, if individuals act in sincere and honest way, they become God-like by reciting His Name.

So when worldly life is regulated by moral and ethical principles it does not stand in the way of spiritual development, rather it provides a definite impetus for realization of higher spiritual goals. Sikh thought emphatically upholds moral and ethical principles which are not of a mere theoretical nature but are of practical use in an ideal domestic life. Sikhism stresses upon truthful life through *Kirat, Naam* and *Seva* as a way to secure the rewards of this world and of the world beyond - *Halat palat dui lehu suari.*\(^{18}\)
No doubt that Sikhism stresses upon the purity of ‘soul’ as a definite means to realize God but at the same time, it asserts that body should be actively used for seva to make spiritual efforts fruitful.

Sikhism has suggested a new middle path by telling people to be in the world but not become worldly. In such position one is required to lead a family life in a detached spirit not exclusively indulging in worldliness - *Kahu Nanak guru bhetia parvan girast udas.*

So Sikh way favours cultivating higher spiritual values of ascetic life while living in this world - *Nanak satguru bhetia puri hovai jugati. hasandia, khelindian, painandian viche hovai mukat.*

According to Sikh thought renouncing of world is unnatural and opposite to the ‘Will’ of God. The right way to attain spiritual perfection is to lead normal domestic life with sanjam, that is, enjoyment of life with restraint or moderation.

The term *grīhastha udas* is also referred to as *parvīrti-nirvīrti.* Both are Sanskrit-rooted terms and both represent extreme attitude towards worldly life. However, Sikhism rejects both extremes and suggests a middle path of *parvīrti-nirvīrti* providing a practical approach to an ideal human life - *Gurmukh parvīrti nirvīrti pachanai.*

There is a co-existence of ‘divine’ and ‘worldly’ attributes of human beings in a unique manner in the fold of Guru Nanak’s theology.
Religion is generally understood to possess divine attributes termed as Bhakti and temporal tendencies as Shakti. Bhakti has been traced to Sanskrit root ‘Bhaj’ means ‘to meditate’. Sometimes dhyan is also used in the context of Bhakti. In Sikhism Bhakti is an ideal combination of Kirat, Nam and Sewa. Nam, that is, meditation upon God, does not fructify, unless it is based on the practical life of ‘Kirat’ and ‘Sewa’.

Similarly the term Shakti is derived from the root sak meaning “to be able,” “to have power” indicating the importance of capacity or activity. This term finds close association with Shaktism (a Hindu cult) that believed in the worship of great goddess (called mother goddess). Where Shakti has been considered as the source of all supreme power and all cosmic evolution. The term shakti has been defined as “Divine Power” or energy personified as female the dynamic and distinct from its passive aspect. In this sense the term denotes the dynamic aspect of the power and freedom of God.

In Tantric cult Shakti is associated with Shiva and this co-existence of Shiva-Shakti marks the highest spiritual stage of this cult. Hence the concept Ardhnarishvar exists in the Indian philosophy.

In Sikhism the idea of Shakti is always associated with the idea of Bhakti. In other words Shakti without Bhakti is inconceivable in Sikhism.
This whole cosmos seems to be consisting of opposite elements, complimentary to each other. Day is followed by night, white is complimentary to black, similarly male is complimented by female and vice-versa. As in the views of Prof. Jodh Singh, “At different stages of life male behaves like female and the female as male and this is evident from their behaviour patterns at different age levels because girl behaves like male from 8-15 years of age and the male as vice-versa. And this alternate cycle goes on upto the last moment of life.”

In the same way Miri or Shakti and Piri or Bhakti both operate through man simultaneously and importance of one can not deny the vitality of other as both are essential for successful life. However, their wrong mixing can be most harmful and balanced use can prove to be of the highest value.

When we peep through ancient religious literature of India, we can clearly see trials of mixing both these faculties by upper two so-called higher classes of society (the Purohit and the Kshatriyas (Kings). Both of them join their hands and exploit the lower classes i.e. the Vaishyas and Shudras as and when they want, resulting in the deepening of the rift among various classes of society. And this proved to be fatal for the healthy growth of society. There was not any kind of security for the common masses. They were exploited at all levels.
Whereas on the other hand, the Indian philosophy which claims to be full of values of humanitarian nature, fails to prove its ideas about fatherhood of God and brotherhood of mankind because the practice of theology of those values could not percolate in society. That remains theory only and could not become theory for practice.

With the advent of Sikhism, the situation was reversed, Guru Nanak while travelling through length and breadth of this subcontinent minutely observed the difference in theory and practice and for that he established Sangats wherever he went so that the ego of these so-called high classes should start melting while sitting together with the so-called low classes. Guru Nanak finally settled at Kartarpur and there initiated the other institution of Pangat (Langar) and strengthened the institution of Sangat and Pangat (Langar). Successor Gurus further firmly established and developed these institutions and the institution of seva also sprouted from these institutions. Seva further strengthened the bonds of equality among various classes of society. Now onwards the situation took such a turn in the times of Guru Hargobind and the tenth Guru Gobind Singh that saints were not saints alone and soldiers were not only soldiers. It was incumbent upon all to undertake all types of works so that the humanitarian spirit could be aroused to unite the people. By the time of Sixth Guru it became
essential for him to keep aside the earlier signs of Guruship and demanded wearing Kalaghi and two Swords of Miri (temporality) and Piri (spirituality) while accepting the house of Guru.

Guru Nanak’s religious system was a radical departure from all the earlier religious systems in many respects. And this blend of temporality and spirituality shows his contrast of perception, methodologies, essentials, goals and the thought process of Guru Nanak and that of the earlier systems. His methods were opposite to every corrupt social functionary and institution whether religious, social, official, administrative, political and the tyranny of the invaders or the failure of rulers. His spirituality was so sensitive to injustice in every walk of life that he even complains to God for allowing the strong to oppress the weak.²⁵

However, the imbalance of authority of power only in favour of the upper strata of society was not acceptable to the Guru. So his followers were required to be prepared for such kind of challenges and for that all the successor Gurus followed the path of bravery and devotion to God. At the time of fifth Nanak the Mughal Emperor found that the Gurus can put forth a political challenge and hence their activities are needed to be nipped in the bud. Hence, the execution of Guru Arjan.²⁶

The Guru not only accepted the challenge boldly but his martyrdom also prepared his people for the confrontation that
he had initiated. And it was he who left instructions for his son to start military preparations for the ensuing struggle. Here it is significant to state that Guru Hargobind had started joining hunting parties even in the life time of his father.\textsuperscript{27} The Period of Guru Hargobind was of open militarisation and conflict with the empire. At the time of his initiation by wearing two swords, he conceptualised a clear idea of the role the Sikh society was to play. Military training was started. There were open clashes with the forces of the state. Akal Takht, the Centre of socio-political activity was created side by side the Harimandir Sahib. Two flags of \textit{Bhakti} and \textit{Shakti} were raised at the common compound between Harimandir and Akal Takht being the symbols of doctrine of Guru Nanak, combining spirituality with temporal life. One must take notice of the height of both the flags where flag of temporality (Akal Takht) is lower than flag of spirituality (Harimandir). This blend was innovative where temporality should be guided by spirituality and the process should not be reversed otherwise.

It is significant that the changes initiated by the successor Gurus in Sikh life were deliberate and calculated. These changes were noticed by the outsiders due to lack of understanding of Sikh ideology which is evident from the question raised by Samrth Ram Das of Maharashtra to Guru Hargobind as to how it was,
that while he called himself a successor of Guru Nanak, he was so anamalously wearing a warrior’s armour and riding a horse. The Guru’s reply as was earlier the reply of Guru Nanak to Naths, was prompt and categorical - Guru Nanak had given up mammon and not the world. My sword is for the protection of the weak and destruction of the tyrant.\(^{28}\) In fact the ideological revolution Guru Nanak had brought about was so great that some people were unable to grasp the doctrinal unity of all the Gurus.

Similar is the case of martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, whose *bani* epitomises the pain of spiritual depth. He choses to intervene and protest against religious persecution and attack by the Emperor on the freedom of conscience in Kashmir and was beheaded in Delhi in 1675 A.D.

Later on during the last phase of Guru period, Guru Gobind Singh feeling that Sikh community had now became mature, self reliant and responsible enough to fight the socio-political injustices and battle of life that lay ahead, he passed *Guruship* to the Holy Granth and handed over strength to Guru Panth.

The Mission of Guru Nanak was completed and a religiously motivated casteless and classless ‘Khalsa’ had been created to fight for righteousness and to stand against all the socio-political injustice.
CREATION OF KHALSA

The emergence of Sikh institutions based on the religio-ethical doctrines of the Sikh Gurus proved Sikhism as a well organised distinct culture. The institutions such as Sangat, Pangat (Langar), Guruship, Seva, Manji System and above all Khalsa Panth founded by the Sikh Gurus gave a new life to the lifeless, docile and timid people of India. The ethical doctrines further developed alongwith the strengthening of above mentioned Sikh Institutions. These institutions not only spread the teachings of the Sikh Gurus but also spread ethical social concerns of Sikh theology. They made people loosen the bonds of social evils like casteism, gender discrimination etc. and infused the idea of universal brotherhood to help social upliftment of the down-trodden.29

The creation of Khalsas provided a combination of the ideas of combination of Bhagti and Shakti, of moral and spiritual excellence and the militant valour of highest order.30 Khalsa was the height of Guru Nanak’s mission. Guru Gobind Singh converted the Sangat into saint soldiers and were further taught them not to bow before the rulers except God. The Guru declared that wherever Khalsa will assemble God the Guru will be present there.
The Khalsa was a dynamic institution which transformed the outlook of the Sikh social organization. The Khalsa was a great creative accomplishment of history which wrought a revolutionary change in people’s mind and aroused their dormant energies for positive and altruistic purposes. They were made conscious of the disabilities of their state of servitude and abjectness and taught people to stand up on their feet and work ceaselessly and courageously to redeem their predicament. The people who came under the banner of Khalsa Panth became proud of their new heroism and emerged as a great motivating force with sword in their hand.

Earlier the use of sword was reserved only for one segment of society. The upper Brahmin class had given an inferiority complex to the lower so-called two vaishya and shudra castes and taught them to shun the profession of arms. Whatever be the form of Government, they were made to obey. The idea of fighting against injustice was out of their caste oriented psychology and pacifism under all circumstances was preached to them as a religious virtue and they cultivated this Dharma (duty) even at the level of cowardice.

Common man could not even think of the use of courage but Guru’s reliance was on the sword and he sought to exalt military powers in all possible ways.
Thus to create spiritual socialism in domain of religion need of sword was realised by Guru Gobind Singh. He considered the sword to be the hand of God to punish the wicked.

This transforming effect by Guru Gobind Singh could be seen in total background of Sikh thought. In Sikh way of life God Himself was portrayed as foe of evil and tyranny throughout the Sikh scripture. In medieval mythology also God was incarnated as rescuer, but the difference from Sikh Gurus was only in the portrayal -

Guru Gobind Singh himself portrayed God in various symbolic forms (like Durga, Hari, Khadagpani, Chakrapani) to arouse the spirit of bravery among the common man whom the Guru wished to prepare to take sword against the oppressor. Earlier Gurus also presented the image of God as a succourer of pure and innocent from tyrant. Guru Arjan refers to God as, “Master, the great hero.” Guru Nanak enumerates God as Akal Purakh, Fearless, without rancour, Hari, Bhagwant, Gosaieen.

Guru Gobind Singh also confirms the faith of ultimate triumph of righteousness by portraying wars among godly and demonic powers. These long battles are drawn just to inculcate faith among common people that ultimate victory will definitely be on the right side though the wars portrayed are multidimensional and miraculous.
The efforts done by heroes are full of dedication, self invited suffering, courage and sacrifice. There are anticipations of such heroism in the compositions of earlier Gurus also. As one of hymn of Guru Nanak indicates that only those should come to this way, who are ready for sacrifice of all types - \textit{Jau tau prem khelan ka chau}.

Guru Nanak even took notice of duplicate life of martial class of that time (the Kshatriyas) who adopted the ways, customs, language of the ruling class just to take favour of them - \textit{Antari puja pare kateba}.\textsuperscript{32} The Guru forbade his followers not to follow such path of cowardice. His community was to stand firm against the temptations of the world and endurance in all the sufferings must be like a superhuman. While Guru Nanak himself did not use arms at all but his words continued to be the seed from which emerges the heroic history of Sikh resistance to the tyranny.

Earlier to Sikhism, the need of religious as well as political and social revival was felt but there was hardly any policy or even consciousness of having lost their freedom and all were subjected to the will of arrogant alien conquerors. There was not at all any organized resistence to the aggressions and people had completely failed to respond to the call of the society. Society looked static in its vision and they were waiting for some mythological miracle to take place; no one appeared to formulate
anything for the basic unity of native creeds of India; no one assured them about strength of their unity and victory of rightiousness rather demoralization was bound to set in their minds and they were prepared to accept the circumstances as their destiny. There might be some noble dignitaries, who could have been able to take active steps to secure superiority of common people and do something as a mark of national protest against the tyrants, but unfortunately nothing was done in this direction.

Guru Nanak was unique in the spiritual scenario of erstwhile India who showed his sensitiveness on the question of national honour and self respect. He was bold enough even in asking the creator (God) that why He is allowing the tyrant Babar to act mercilessly on the innocent who are shrieking and writhing in pain. Don’t you feel any pangs of their’s - *Khurasan khasamana kia*.

However Guru Nanak admonished severely to the native people also who, through their merry making and low character had put to dust the jewel like India. He rather loudly said that such leachoures society is bound to be punished and nobody would like to weep over their sufferings.

The shame, the degradation and helplessness of the people, no one has felt prior to Guru Nanak. This is what had
distinguished Sikh movement from all the earlier and contemporary religious as well as revolutionary movements. None had a creative character other than Sikhism who could have created a new history in this subcontinent. The aim of Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus was to take people away from fanaticism, superstitions and in general to help people for their moral upliftment. Gurus advocated universal love, peace and justice and kept themselves away from political matters upto the times of fifth master Guru Arjan Dev, but later on the situation took a new turn when sixth Guru adopted two swords of Miri and Piri instead of seli and topi of his predecessors. He just on a small distance from Harimandar created Akal Takhat the “Throne of the Timeless” where spirituo temporal affairs of the fast growing Sikh community were taken care of by the Sixth Guru Himself. Now the Sikh community had to make itself militant in order to survive the onslaughts of Mughal Empire. The concerns of adherents of House of Nanak can be seen in the action of Ninth Guru, who being a person of retiring temperament expressing deep non-attachment to worldly affairs, quit from his saintly life and intervened into the contemporary conflict when Aurangzeb’s campaign against Hinduism touched high limits. He stood against the tyrant Mughal Empire for the sake of religious belief of some other faith. This was not at all a general revolt rather was an
assertion and gesture of national honour and self-respect. It was action to raise voice against the oppression and not a revolt in any political or selfish sense. Guru Tegh Bahadur gave his life for the protection of Hindu religious ethos. This was the fruit of teachings of Guru Nanak who had taught that one should accept the existence of other religious traditions and if need be, one should also defend the religious rights of other religious traditions. Similarly Kabir had also said that there is none good or bad because everything had been created by the same Almighty - *Avali alah nooru upaia*.34

Guru Gobind Singh created the Sikh way of life by giving baptism of steel to everyone whosoever came into fold of Sikhism. He handed over the sword in the hands of common man and gave them a common platform to fight against tyrant of any type.
References

3. Ibid., p.62.
5. Ibid., p.107.
6. Ibid., p.73.
9. Ibid., p.1346.
11. Ibid., p.319.
15. Ibid., p.266.
17. Ibid., p.463.
18. Ibid., p.293.
19. Ibid., p.496.
20. Ibid., p.522.
21. Ibid., p.941.
27. Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin, pp.84-85.

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