ETHICS OF THE SIKHS

Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1: The definition and scope of the thesis

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

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

The scope of the dissertation is intentionally wide in the sense that it covers the teachings of all the Sikh Gurus which, in terms of time, extend nearly three hundred years from 1469 to about 1708. Nevertheless, the research may be regarded as limited in that the text is chiefly concerned with the ethical aspect of the Sikh thought.

1.2: Need for the present research project

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

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

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

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

Here it may be added that Max Arthur Macauliffe, who undertook the study of Sikhism, on the other hand, made a very generous claim in respect of Sikh morals, which more than countered the assertion of Ernest Trumpp. In a lecture in England, Macauliffe claimed, "I am engaged here tonight in offering to your attention a religion which has God and Soul, which presents no mysteries and which embraces an ethical system such as has never been excelled, if indeed it has ever

1Ernest Trumpp, The Adi Granth (London: 1877), p. cxvi. His work has been included in the review of literature, Infra.
been equalled—I mean the Sikh Religion.⁴ (Emphasis added)
But in view of his huge preoccupation with the Sikh religion
as a whole, he did not take up the task of systematic exposition
of the ethics of the Sikhs.

Again, in the comparatively more recent times, John Clark
Archer, who is generally very just and objective in his study
of Sikhism, has also pointed out in similar manner that "Nanak
himself laid too little stress on human conduct and Sikhs have
yet to formulate a code for its true guidance."² Now, Archer
cannot be taken as seriously denying that Guru Nanak laid great
stress on moral conduct and practice, as he must have been
familiar with many expressions such as, "By talk alone none
goeth to the heavens; for emancipation is by living truth."³
Then again, in the sermon to Muslims, Guru Nanak stresses
again and again the need of "Truth, honest living and good of
all" to be the proper prayer, which he calls a: "prayer of
deeds", all other prayers being declared by him as false.⁴ The
need for love and compassion⁵ toward the living beings is the

³Adi Granth, Var of Majh, M.1, p. 141.
⁴Ibid., Var of Majh, M.1 (3-7), p. 141.
⁵Ibid., (1-8), p. 141.
the subject of another declaration of Guru Nanak. In still another sermon to the followers of Islam he advises to substitute the religious rituals by ethical values and virtues. Many moral precepts, such as "mercy, faith, honest living, humility, good conduct, pious works and moral deeds" figure very prominently in these addresses. In a similar address to the Hindus Guru Nanak directs men to lead the life of the house-holders, not to usurp what belongs to others, and cleanse the mind of evil, rather than be occupied with ablutions. The need for substituting the religious ritual of the Hindus, known as thread ceremony by the ethical conduct and virtues such as "compassion, contentment and truth", is also found in the teachings of Guru Nanak.

In the light of the preceding prime facia evidence, John Clark Archer certainly could not be taken to have rightly denied the stress by Guru Nanak on the moral practice or conduct. He was in India for some time and in his firsthand contact with various scholars of Sikhism he could not have escaped knowing all this. But, then, possibly he may be simply referring to the absence of comprehensive moral code or lack of any systematic exposition of the ethics of the Sikhs by the scholars, which would highlight the type of moral conduct

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1Ibid., Var of Majh, M.1 (1-5), p. 140.
3Ibid., (2-4), p. 139.
envisaged by the Gurus in Sikhism. This indeed is the only possible inference as, to repeat, Archer is generally very fair and objective in his study. It is this absence of a systematic exposition that has led to the present research.

Lastly, even though I am a Sikh, I was, before beginning this inquiry, conscious of my own ignorance of the deeper values of Sikhism. The present work, therefore, is quite as new to me in many respects as it may be to the others.

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

1.3: Sources of the ethics of the Sikhs

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

**Sources**

**The Adi Granth** (primary source)

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

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

**Sikh Rahit Maryada** (published by Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee - a secondary source)

**Janam Sakhis** (a secondary source)

**Vars of Bhai Gurdas** (a secondary source)

**Historical sources**

**Guru Pratap SuraJ Granth** (contribution of Bhai Santokh Singh)

**Guruvilas** (by Bhai Sukha Singh)

**Gurushobha** (credited to Kavi Senapat, the court bard of the tenth Guru)

All of the sources cited above are in the Punjabi language. However, the **Adi Granth**, some of the **Janam Sakhis** (not the one by Meharban) and two **Rahitnamas** by Nand Lal and Prehalad Singh have been rendered into the English language.
It was observed by A.E. Taylor that "No living theology has ever arisen from mere intellectual curiosity and the serious theologies have always come into being as the fruit of reflection upon lived and practised religions." Any new religion in its acceptance of the contents of the older faiths and traditions appears very close to them, but its individuality and distinction is marked by what it rejects of the old and what it introduces afresh, thereby precipitating a new gestalt. When the differences reach a stage that departure becomes irreversible, then it is neither necessary nor perhaps possible to reduce it to the earlier traditions, to which it may be indebted in many ways. Sikhism, too, is obliged to the older theologies, critical reflection on which, coupled with the genius of its ten Gurus from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh, led to its own distinct emergence and development. Let us now refer briefly to various stages of the development of Sikhism in terms of its literature.

It may indeed be added here that it is rather difficult and perhaps even arbitrary that a continuous stream of human thought and literature may be divided by any student into well marked different periods and the cross sections thus abstracted be cited as exclusively representative of some particular trend and true in their aloofness. However, if we bear in

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mind that the division of the literature of Sikhism into different periods attempted here is not indicative of any such claim of their being absolutely unconnected or any argument for the discontinuity of thought or moral principles, then the attempt to so refer to them here may not only be accepted but also be seen as necessary.

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

In a way, it may not be erroneous to say that Sikhism is partly older than its exposition by the Gurus, namely Guru Nanak onwards. The holy Book of the Sikhs, The Adi Granth, contains the hymns and tenets preached by the devotees (Bhagats) who lived much earlier than the appearance of Sikh Gurus and the emergence of Sikhism in its present form. In terms of communities, these saint-poets whose hymns have been included in the Adi Granth are both Hindus and Muslim. The period covered by these Bhagats is long; from Jaidev onwards (1170) to Kabir (1398-1518) and Sheikh Farid (1173-1266) in addition to which there are some saint-poets whose hymns have been included in the Adi Granth but we do not know the exact time during which they lived and preached their views.

The selection of compositions of these saints is based on their ideology (Guru Vi
das of VI Guru). This shows that Sikhism was marking its disagreement with a multitude of other saints whose hymns were not included.

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

Second stage of the exposition of Sikhism and its literature

(1) The Gurus and the Adi Granth: The most comprehensive literature on Sikhism, which is the primary source of the present research as well, is found to belong to the period
of its exposition by the Gurus. The principal and primary source is the Adi Granth, compiled mainly in 1604 by fifth Guru, Arjan Dev. Formerly, it was called only Granth Sahib but later, in order to distinguish it from Dasam Granth, ascribed to tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, the prefix (prior or first) was added and it is now generally called Adi Granth or Sri Guru Granth Sahib, to denote the fact that it is at present the Guru (teacher) of the Sikhs. It includes the hymns and teachings of first Guru, Nanak Dev (1469–1538), Second Guru, Angad Dev (1504–1553), Third Guru, Amardas (1476–1574), Fourth Guru, Ramdas (1534–1581), Fifth Guru, Arjan Dev (1563–1606), Ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur (1622–1675). There is one Shaloka which some scholars credit to Behind Singh, the tenth Guru (1666–1708). Besides the hymns of the Gurus the Adi Granth includes the hymns of Saint-poets, to whom we had referred while dealing with the first stage of the exposition of Sikhism, termed by us as potential Sikhism. The last human Guru, Gobind Singh, did not include his own hymns in the Adi Granth, which has given rise to various speculations among the

1 A movement had emerged in Sikhism, before the partition of India in 1947, spearheaded among others by an organization named Panch Khalsa Dewan or Khalsa Parliament, at Bhasour, in Punjab, which argued for the exclusion of the hymns of the Bhagats or saint-poets. Their contention seems to rest, firstly, on some contradictions which these hymns of the saint-poets (Bhagats) appeared to introduce into Sikhism, and secondly, that the words (Bani) of persons other than Gurus is Kashi (frail and imperfect). The movement lost its momentum during and after the partition of India. (Refer, Harbhajan Singh, Satguru bina hor kachhi hai Bani, Panch Khalsa Dewan, Bhasour, 1946).
scholars. However, we must also add here that the last recension of the *Adi Granth* was dictated by him and it was he again who bestowed the guruship to *Adi Granth*. His own compositions, it is believed by some scholars, are contained in what is now called as *Dasam Granth*.

As to the *Adi Granth*, it is a huge scripture, of fourteen hundred and thirty pages, written in languages more than one, and further many dialects of these languages. The attempt to expound the faith in the language of the common people, which changes rather often, has led to a state where a part of the *Adi Granth* is no more accessible to the persons for whom it was meant. Consequently, the initiative again gradually appears to be passing into the hands of priests, scholars and interpreters.

The medium used by the Gurus in the *Adi Granth* is poetry and the master poets have also kept the rhythm and metre in consideration along with their thought-content. It is relatively difficult to interpret and analyse the philosophy contained in poetry, as the poet very often uses symbolism for the communication of his personal frame of reference and experience which at times involves equivocation. And when this frame of reference and experience is of the nature of mystic intuition, the message communicated through symbols is very often only felt vaguely. Here while the inner self seems to know all about it, the thought still seems to be groping for its essentials. The difficulty of any critical
The above difficulty, however, is not unsurmountable, and with patience and concerted efforts it indeed becomes possible to reach the message directly. But a person with no such aptitude may become a victim of some hasty generalizations, such as one made by Ernest Trumpp that the *Sikh Granth* is a very long volume, but incoherent and shallow in the extreme, and couched at the same time in dark and perplexing language, in order to cover these defects. The remarks is an exaggeration and a result of what Max Arthur Macauliffe later called "odium theologicum".

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

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

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

The Gurus were men of vision and the Adi Granth is full of their ethico-spiritual insights. They were sensitive to the socio-natural environments of man. Guru Nanak, after witnessing the great bloodshed during Babar's attack on India, had proclaimed, "And there shall arise another Son of Man!" (hor bhi Uthasi Marad ka Chella). He was not predicting the rise and fall of any ruler or empire. He was rather plainly pointing to the crisis which was to lead to the unchaining of the spirit of man and incarnation of humanistic age which was to be the rise of the "Son of Man". We may now refer to other literature contemporaneous with the Gurus.

1 Adi Granth, Tilang M.i (2-3-5), p. 723.
Bhai Gurdas: Bhai Gurdas was the scribe to whom the first recension of Adi Granth was dictated by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev and consequently his personal contribution also claims a high degree of authenticity and validity. His compositions are Var, Kabit, Swayyas.

His contribution among which specially Var is mostly an attempt to render in simple language the centrality of the moral virtues and values as cherished by the Gurus in Sikhism. In seeking to cite the source of moral precepts, he has delved in the teachings of the Gurus and while presenting the moral norms he displays a deep concern to relate them to the man and his natural surroundings. His Var shows that even though he was keenly and directly interested in delineating clearly the moral precepts, but his method of many times simply stating or enumerating certain virtues and values, without entering into any detailed analysis, was conditioned by his immediate task of showing the "Raha" (path); the Sikhism being termed by him as "Gaddi Raha" (the grand highway).

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

Some of the Vars of Bhai Gurdas were elaborated and commented upon in Bhagatratnavali and Gianratnavali by Mani Singh, the scribe to whom the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, dictated the final recension of the Adi Granth. These commentaries show a continuity of same ethical precepts and values even during the time of Tenth Guru, which were in extent during the life-time of earlier Gurus.

Bhai Gurdas has combined in him the rare synthesis of religious ideals with humanistic moral precepts. His attention was incessantly focussed on the moral character and conduct of man: the rising son of man. It is, therefore, no wonder that his Var is held in Sikhism as the key to the Adi Granth, the main scripture of the Sikhs.
Janam Sakhis - literature contemporary with Sikh Gurus:

Janam Sakhis are the scattered biographical sketches of Guru Nanak, ascribed to various narrators, principal among whom are Bala (also called Paide Mokhe wali Janam Sakhi) and Manohar Das Meharban (1581-1640). The latter Janam Sakhi has been edited in Punjabi language in 1962 under the auspices of Sikh History Research Department, Amritsar. Generally a great number of Janam Sakhis, with some differences in versions and contents, are current.

In these Janam Sakhis the eye of the narrator is always on the moral or the practical lesson to which these anecdotes invariably lead. It is through these moral tales of Guru Nanak's life that the young children and the lay are nurtured and introduced to the ethical precepts of Sikhism. Herein are told the morals of altruism, social service and absurdity of the claim that the rich are necessarily 'better men. In

Janam Sakhi of Bhai Manohar Das Meharban has remained neglected for a long time, perhaps, because Meharban was closely related to Prithi Chand who sought to create schism in Sikhism. The editors of the presently published Janam Sakhi have attempted to clear Meharban of this stigma. Bhai Meharban was grandson of Guru Ram Das and nephew of Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru.

The treatment of themes in this Janam Sakhi is by far superior to other similar narrations and Bhai Meharban shows deeper philosphic knowledge of the doctrine and also displays greater skill in the handling of his problem, along with some Vedantic influence.

In a way the Janam Sakhi by Bhai Meharban may be ranked equal if not higher to the Var of Bhai Gurdas in its erudition and dialectic, coeval with their simplicity and lucidity. One may also be deeply impressed by a somewhat Socratic conversational style adopted by Bhai Meharban in the Janam Sakhi under reference.
it are included various dialogues stressing the futility of asceticism or renunciation. The validity of the social context and the superiority of the life of the 'householder' is brought in broad relief. The moral of the brotherhood of mankind is encountered in the anecdotes connected with the visit of Guru Nanak to Mecca and Madina, the holy shrines of the Muslims. The individual narrator might have added some details here and there but the general trend of the religiously touched humanistic morals remains almost unchanged. Consequently, these Janam Sakhis serve to maintain the continuity and uniformity in many ethical precepts and norms.

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

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

It is to the genius of Guru Gobind Singh that we owe the baptismization and institutionalization of Sikhism, along with certain categorical organizational duties which came to mark off the final departure of Sikhism from the traditional theologies. Guru Gobind Singh is the last human Guru of Sikhism as after him the guruship was bestowed on the Adi Granth, which transfer was effected in his own life time by the Guru.

Incidentally, a question may be faced here, whether any sudden and completely new turn is given to Sikhism by the tenth Guru and with what effect on the ethics of the Sikhs. The fact of development is a historical fact and undeniable. The point, which is many times argued in public and private conversation, is whether it was a complete change in Sikhism from pacifist approach and declarations against ceremonial ritualism to what a scholar has called "militaristic energism and adoption of certain characteristic Gestalt and morphology." This

1B.K. Sarkar, The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology, "Sacred Book of Hindus", Series book No. XXXII. (Allahabad: Panini Office, 1937), p. 100. By militaristic energism, Sarkar means, the Sikhs recourse to arms, and by Gestalt and morphology, the reference is to the categorical duties of keeping unshorn hairs etc., all of which would be discussed in the chapter on Duties, infra.
question is also taken up by a scholar of Sikhism, Bhai Jodh Singh. The point which the historians seem to suggest is that of transvaluation and not of simple additions in Sikhism during Guru Gobind Singh's period. And yet the fact of simple additions and development only is a fact of history, as otherwise the stress on the values of love and devotion by Guru Gobind Singh is just the same as cherished by the earlier Gurus. The moral virtue of facing and not running away from the struggle was stressed in Sikhism even earlier to Guru Gobind Singh and the same is continued by him in keeping with the historical context. We will also refer to it in the Chapter on virtues while discussing the development of courage as a virtue in Sikhism. The historians who are unaware of the inner doctrinal aspect of Sikhism are enchanted by the external developments and proceed to infer from them that with the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, Sikhism underwent a complete transformation or transvaluation. It may, however, be conceded here that in so far as the historians seek to make a statement of fact in some particular context in respect of certain details, their assertion may be accepted. The details such as baptism or some organisational duties introduced by Guru Gobind Singh are the facts of history and


a credit to his genius. But if an attempt is made by the historians to suggest, inter alia, that this signifies a change in the doctrine or the general moral precepts of the Sikhs, then the historians may be rightly accused of going beyond their premises.

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

Let us now make a brief attempt to find out whether the institutionalisation of Sikhism took place suddenly with the tenth Guru or it was only consolidating finally the gradual development which had been taking place right from the first Guru onwards. It may be submitted here that the first step towards the institutionalisation of Sikhism was taken with the initiation by Guru Nanak, the first Guru, the system of succession of the Gurus. The second major step was to compile a separate scripture, the Adi Granth, by the fifth
The third event is the wearing of the sword by the sixth Guru, Hargobind at the time of his succession to the guruship. In fact, it is said that two swords were worn by him, one each to signify the spiritual and temporal power; though the second was perhaps worn to correct the accidental mistake whereby the first sword was put on the wrong side by the initiator. We may also notice that the name of the ninth Guru is "Tagh Bahadur" which means "brave at sword", and this may indicate in some measure the thinking then current in Sikhism. All this brief account would perhaps remove the impression that any sudden violent changes were introduced by the tenth Guru, as the institutionalisation and gradual development of moral precepts has been continuing from the first Guru onwards.

There is, however, another question and of entirely different nature, whether the Gurus from the very beginning had with them a complete idea about all the details of the form which Sikhism was to be given in terms of Khalsa. Jodh Singh, to whom we have referred earlier, answers this question in affirmative. To me, however, it seems rather an open question. Such an anticipation to the last detail involves two difficulties. The first is to deny the role of historical changes, but for which certain additions and developments would perhaps have not become necessary. Secondly, it also seems to deny the genius of the latter Gurus under whose
inspiration these gradual developments were wrought and brought to their fruition. The argument of Bhai Jodh Singh in *Gurmat Nirna*, cited earlier, indeed establishes on the support from tenth Guru's *Sarbloh* and Prehlad Singh's *Babita- pane*, that Guru Gobind Singh cherished Khalsa as his own form. But this does not in any way establish his view that no development took place in Sikhism right after the first Guru. It would, perhaps, be more appropriate and correct if we take a developmental view of the process of institutionalisation of Sikhism, at least in matters of general details and historical responses of the Gurus to certain situations. In the realm of cardinal moral precepts too, while the fundamentals remained unchanged, some developments in terms of increased stress here and there is a historical fact. On the whole, however, after one keeps in mind the above observations, one can clearly notice the continuity of such moral principles as equality, universal brotherhood and other ethical norms and ideals, which have accompanied the rising humanistic moral precepts of Sikhism ab ovo.

The literature of Guru Gobind Singh's period has a coincidence of din and noise produced by the cluttering and smiting of weapons, with a calm composure of man, charged with the confident belief that it would atlast succeed against the near noisome heteronomy of barren ethos and mores which had taken hold of man during a few centuries in the past and had resulted in his moral and political subjugation. We
finally hear the sound of breaking chains and somewhat as symbolised in the Biblical Samson, we witness the rising of another son of man which was so succintly prophesised by Guru Nanak "Hor bhi Uthasi Marad ka Chella" (And there shall arise another son of man). This son of man, which is 'all-men', is the culmination of the humanistic ideal of Sikhism.

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

It may, however, be necessary to remark here that the consciousness of power, political and otherwise, newly gained, was required to be controlled by moral precepts. The Rahitnamas seek to perform this task as well. The compilers, such as Chopa Singh, Nand Lal and others draw upon the Adi Granth for reinforcing the validity of their formularies. The compilers of these codes also ascribe the Rahitnama in many case to tenth Guru and call it as "Mukh Vak". But various Rahitnamas, in the total form they are now available, including the one manuscript by Bhai Chopa Singh, described to be the earliest available copy in Sikh Reference and Research Library, Amritsar, cannot be traced to the tenth Guru. The
Guru is known for his catholicity and universalism. He had both the Muslims and Hindus as his followers. But various Rahitnamas contain an element of antagonism towards other communities. Again, the stress in these compilations seems to be increasingly laid on the brotherhood of the Sikhs, which shows that these formularies belong to the period when Sikhism was being consolidated after the Sikhs were deprived of the leadership of the tenth Guru on his death in 1708. The Rahitnama of Prehalad Rai and Bhai Nand Lal were included by Ernest Trumpp in his translation of the Adi Granth. We will refer to Ernest Trumpp in the period on recent literature to which we may turn now.

(6) Recent period: translation of the Adi Granth into English language and impact of foreign scholars on Sikh ethics: The era of Rahitnamas mark the last original attempt at the formulation of moral precepts in Sikhism. Thereafter, most of the contribution towards the general literature on Sikhism, is merely expository and interpretive. This period began around the establishment of British supremacy in Punjab. We will only mention general trend of this period and its impact on the general ethical viewpoint of the Sikhs.

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

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

However, it would be unfair and distortion of the spirit of scholarship, if the merit of his contribution is not recognized. His role is very important mainly for his critical study of Sikhism. His acute criticism of the minute ordinances as conduct rules, into which Sikhism had the danger of lapsing, through authoritarian approach and large number of _Rahitnams_ served to caution the Sikhs, against any re-chaining of the spirit of rising humanistic ideals, though one may concede that some organisational norms are necessary to keep some organisation or institution as fit and going. The contribution of Ernest Trumpp is important and immense by way of what he has provoked. One of the reasons for the appointment of a Committee by _Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee_ (the central religious organisation of
the Sikhs) to consolidate the code of duties for the Sikhs in 1932, might well be due to the scathing criticism of these minute ordinances and codes by Ernest Trumpp, along with some other internal requirements. The recommendations of this Committee, which took more than ten years to finalise them, have now been published as Sikh Rahit Maryada; a booklet of thirty-seven pages. This has been examined in some detail in the chapter on Duties in the present dissertation.

(6) Max Arthur Macauliffe: The excessively critical translation of the Adi Granth by Ernest Trumpp was almost a case of still-birth and cause of resentment among the Sikhs. Max Arthur Macauliffe, another scholar, then undertook extensive study of Sikhism and resolved, according to his own claim, to "endeavour to make some reparation to the Sikhs for the insults which he [Trumpp] offered to their Gurus and their religion." Macauliffe, however, reached another extreme, and included everything in his writings, which was handed over to him by persons devoted to Sikhism. Thus some of the things found in his treatment of Sikhism, can now be accepted only by an unduly long stretch of imagination and credulity. His work, in six volumes, however, till today remains most popular and widely quoted on Sikhism, particularly among the Western scholars. We have already referred to a generous claim of Macauliffe about ethics of the Sikhs in one of his

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the view that a movement started during Guru Gobind Singh's period. The letter Gere deputed some Sikhs to go to Varanasi, the then centre of learning, to receive education in classical languages and thought and then impart the same to all persons irrespective of caste distinctions. The Nirmalas have, however, under increasing Vedantic influence, gradually veered round to a position when their influence and contact with the main stream of the Sikhs has been reduced considerably. The Nirmala followers stress simplicity of life and preach the moral precepts as contained in the Adi Granth. We may call them 'Purists'.

(10) Panch Khalsa Dewan, Bhasour: A code of conduct (Sibek Bhabi) was also formulated by leaders of a movement called as 'Panch Khalsa Dewan, Bhasour' or 'Sikh Parliament, Bhasour'. The code compiled by them is mostly based on the earlier Bhabi namas, though an attempt has also been made to support it from the teachings of the Adi Granth. They may be called as 'Rigorists', as they have pleaded very often the exclusion of the hymns of poets other than the Sikh
Gurus. We have referred to them in a footnote earlier also. The movement is almost extinct now.

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

(12) Namdhari tradition: Baba Ram Singh (1814—1885), a pious and devoted Sikh, during the course of his teachings has founded a school, now called as 'Namdhari tradition', or alternatively, sometimes also known as 'Kooka' Sikhs. It has continued to follow the fundamental precepts as embodied in the Adi Granth, but have also accepted some variations in the practical matters such as marriages etc. The imperatives and guidance in all matters is provided by the living Guru in the light of Adi Granth, past traditions and the intuitions of the living Guru.

(13) Sat Sangh, Beas and Nirankari Mandal, Delhi: These two traditions are, in the main, the devotional cults inspired by
Sikhism. The teachings of the Gurus of these traditions is based on the Adi Granth. Both the Sikhs and the Hindus are the members of these cults and consequently no stress is laid down on the observation of injunctions in regard to the keeping of hair, sword etc. The moral and spiritual inspiration is drawn by the followers of these cults from the teachings of Adi Granth and examples of their living Gurus. Their role as integrative factor is very important.

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

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