Chapter 5

DUTIES

5.1: Prolegomena

The notion of obligation, in Sikhism, reveals two stages of its development, both of which, however, are not independent of each other; rather the second and later stage in development is an attempt at an elaboration of the first, with some additions inspired by the genius of the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. It may not be possible to affirm that all these elaborations as contained in various Sahitnamas are directly related to him yet, chronologically at least, these rules, in the form of Sahitnamas, must have gained currency after the inauguration of the Khalsa, the present institutionalized form of Sikhism, in the year 1699.

A general principle of duties appeared first in Sikhism in the teachings of Guru Nanak and some of the prominent personal and social duties, relating the person to the organization, evolved gradually later. We may follow the same scheme in the present chapter.

5.2: General principle of duties—Rasa

We may observe that persons are born in different
socio-geographical environments, take up different vocations and live in varied family groups. This indicates a vast expanse of possibilities in terms of life situations. Now, it may be conceded that if one was to compile a detailed list of duties, which would cater to all the life situations, the list so prepared may, apart from remaining imperfect, also involve the difficulties and problems associated with casuistry.

It is perhaps these factors which led Guru Nanak to lay down the general principle of the duties of the 'stations' which could be applicable to all life situations. The general principle, so laid down by Guru Nanak, enjoins that "whatever be the duties, entailed by one's station, these ought to be performed to the best of one's ability till one may move to the next station, and then perform duties of the next station." This notion of the duties of the stations is laid down in Sikhism by the tenet of 'raza'. The scholars of Sikhism have generally not paid attention to the interpretation of this notion though it contains an important principle of the Sikh ethics and also reflect the great vision of the Guru. The scholars have generally rendered raza as "resignation" or "surrender to God's will." This interpretation appears to lay undue emphasis on

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1 We should not confuse the 'stations' here with any principle of social division on basis of castes or classes as these are not accorded any locus standi in Sikhism.
passivism, or even fatalism, in addition to its failure to bring out the distinguishing mark of the principle denoted by rasa.

We had referred to rasa earlier while discussing Moral Standard. We may now examine it in some detail.

Guru Nanak has laid down that one ought to realize the universal will in rasa. What, then, is rasa? It is a vital question. Is it passive surrender to the universal will or is it active appropriation of the universal will as integral to the self? The answer to these questions depends upon the analysis of the notion itself.

The term rasa in Sikhism is a borrowed one. It was in use by the Sufis (Muslim mystic saints) with whom Sikhism has some doctrinal as well as historical affinity. The full significance and meaning of the term 'rasa' are given in detail by Abul Hassan Ali, son of Usman Hujviri, the author of Kashful-Mahajub. According to him, the Muhasibi school, founded by Haris, son of Asad Muhasibi, believed in rasa, a word, which can be used as "meaning maqam (station) as well as ahwal (state). Rasa, according to Hujviri, is understood in two senses: rasa of God with human beings which means the divine reward for man's endeavour in doing good and the rasa of human beings with God which consists in

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their submission and service to God. Man's raza depends upon God's satisfaction with him. Raza is considered to be higher to suhud or renunciation (sanyasa) as the former is the result of love for God and the latter that of indifference to worldly enjoyments." It is further explained about station and state that the former means "stationing on the way leading towards God, and fulfilling the duties connected with that station until the seeker is able and is fit to proceed to the next station. State or hal is not attained by self-discipline, but is a gift from God. Thus, the former is connected with human action and the latter with divine mercy." (Emphasis added.) Guru Nanak, who moved among the Suffis and the followers of Islam, must have learnt the usage of this term from them.

While applying this principle of raza to Sikhism, we may remember that, socio-economic context of the 'householder' only is accorded merit. Thus station and its duties, as understood in ethics, ought to be interpreted in terms of obligations connected with the social-situations of the person on his journey towards the realization of the ideal.

The principle of raza as applied to ethics, clearly reveals that the person who does not perform the duties of his station to the best of his ability is morally inferior.

1Ibid., p. 373.
A conscious recognition of duties as such, as well as their performance, is in fact the realization of "hukam in raza." It may, however, be only too proper to add here that the social-situation is not to be understood in the narrow terms of conforming to the ethos of one's own communal or social group because the ethics suggested by the Gurus was meant to transcend beyond narrow sectarian considerations.

We may, consequently, conclude that the moral notion denoted by raza indicates the general principle of duties as applicable to all life situations, whether actual or possible.

However, in Sikhism, apart from the above general principle of obligation enjoined by raza we also come across some other imperatives or duties. The duties enjoined are both general as well as organizational.

5.3: *Rahitnamas* and *Rahit Maryada* as sources of duties—background

Apart from the general principle of duties denoted by raza there are some general and organisational duties which the Sikhs are required to perform. There are two major sources of these duties, namely, *Rahitnamas* and *Sikh Rahit Maryada*. These may be called the codes of conduct or life rules. We may first discuss *Rahitnamas*.

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1Sikhism does not permit the attempt to make renunciation as the life situation or station.
Rahitnamas: Before we examine the actual duties enjoined by Rahitnamas a few observations about them, which may help us to avoid hasty and oversimplified generalisation, are necessary. We may, then, be in a better position to view them in their proper perspective.

First, it may be observed that these codes were formulated after the year 1699, that is, after the initiation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh. Some of the codes are the product of the time when the Sikhs were actively involved in a strife against the forces of unrighteousness and those who were keen on putting an end to this newly emerging system which sought to transvaluate some of their traditional values. The codes, therefore, very often reflect their averse attitude towards both of them.

Second, the compilers of these codes were also faced with the problem of consolidating the forces of Sikhism. They also display their interest for the precepts which would see the growing nation through its teething period and some of the extreme positions may, therefore, be more in the spirit of conservation and internal discipline.

Third, the codes also contain some imperatives, laying down even some minute details, which may be indicative more of love, for detail, of an individual compiler than of any internal necessity of the doctrine as such.
5.4: Origin of the Rahitnamas

The origin and validity of some of the Rahitnamas is claimed on the basis of their having been dictated by the tenth Guru. Bhai Kahan Singh regards three formulations, namely, Tankhanama Nand Lal, Prashan Uttar Bhai Nand Lal, and Rahitnama of Bhai Desa Singh as codes formulated by some devotees on the basis of some dialogue between the tenth Guru and Bhai Nand Lal and Desa Singh.\(^1\) We find that Chops Singh's Rahitnama is sometimes ascribed to the tenth Guru also.

There is yet another Rahitnama for which similar origin and validity is claimed. It is reported to be a compilation by Prehlad Singh (also sometimes referred to as Prehlad Rai). This Rahitnama begins with the opening "Bachan Sri Mukhvak Patshahi 10", which may be interpreted to mean that it was uttered by the tenth Guru. It is this Rahitnama, along with the one by Nand Lal, that Ernest Trumpp claims to have taken away with him from India.\(^2\) Sir Attar Singh has also edited these two Rahitnamas.\(^3\) Ernest Trumpp has later complained that the translation of the Rahitnama by Prehlad Rai as attempted by Attar Singh was rather free. In fact the two scholars were using two different copies of the Rahitnama.

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\(^1\) Bhai Kahan Singh, _Gurmatsudhakar_, p. 422.

\(^2\) Ernest Trumpp, _op. cit._, p. cxiii.

\(^3\) Sir Attar Singh, _The Rahitnama of Prehlad Rai_ (Lahore: Albert Press, 1876).
with some slight variations in the two versions. Bhai Kahan Singh has not included this Rahitnama in his Gurmatsudhakar, though he has mentioned it in Gursabadratnakar as one of the compilations of the life rules. Sant Sampuran Singh includes this Rahitnama in his anthology of Rahitnama but has expressed doubt about the historical accuracy of the place where this Rahitnama is claimed to have been dictated since the tenth Guru could not have been at that place by any possible means.¹

Bhai Jodh Singh, while referring to the Rahitnama expresses his inability to establish which of them is "Mukhvaka"² (that is, uttered by the Guru).

These diverse views indicate that there is considerable difference of opinion amongst the scholars of Sikhism as to the origin and validity of the Rahitnama. Bhai Jodh Singh suggests that doubtlessly these have been written by faithful devotees and leading Sikhs (sidki and mukhi)³ and they have sought to describe the Sikh way of life at its best as known to them. We may infer from this that Bhai Jodh Singh, while not making any reference to the possibility of interpolations and subsequent additions to the compilations, is yet not very enthusiastic to defend each and every detail

¹Sant Sampuran Singh, Rahitnama (Amritsar: Jawaher Singh Kirpal Singh), p. 91 (note).


³It can perhaps be inferred from this description as "sidki and mukhi" that the possibility of these Rahitnama
of the life rules current under the title of Rahitnamas.
He, however, quotes in his book under reference, from the Rahitnamas of Bhai Prehalad Singh, Chopa Singh, Desa Singh and Nand Lal. Incidentally, it may be pointed out here, that he does not include the quotation from the life rules by Bhai Daya Singh. That may be taken to mean that he did not consider this particular code as authentic or valid. The code, in fact is unduly extremist and at times even against the spirit of tolerance which is contrary to the general spirit of Sikhism. The code, however, includes some altruistic imperatives as well.

It is interesting to note that the various Rahitnamas included by Bhai Kahan Singh in Gurmatshakar are studded with comments mostly to soften the extremist views and injunctions laid down in them. There is the possibility of these comments being mistaken as an apologetic attitude of the commentator towards some of the details contained in the formularies. It is also indicative of a sort of 'orthodox liberalism' in the sense that while the author is not willing to completely reject them he is equally not prepared to lend credence to them in the form these were available to him.

As regards the rest of the codes or life rules the question of their being the dictation of tenth Guru does
not arise since these are commonly acknowledged to be the contributions of some votaries of Sikhism. The compilation called _Premsumarag_ may also be included in this category. This composition, even though also prefaced with "Patshahi 10", is regarded to be the contribution of some devotee, who according to Giani Randhir Singh, the editor of the manuscript, appears to have copied it from some other composition. The book, among various other things, also contains some common place culinary recipes, all of which may be difficult, if not improper to trace to Guru Gobind Singh. In itself the composition might have been inspired from some of the teachings of the Gurus but, as it is, the whole of it cannot be traced to the Guru. Bhai Kahan Singh also does not accept it to be the "Mukhvak" (from the Guru).

All of these codes reflect in their contents the general spirit of consolidation of Sikhism as was the need of post-Gobind Singh era. These votaries were perhaps convinced in themselves that their contribution would serve to colligate Sikhism as a nation.

Ernest Trumpp is quite outspoken about these life rules and rejects them as dictation from the tenth Guru. In his own words, "these injunctions are laid down in a number of so-called _Rahitnamas_ or books of conduct, which all pretend to have been dictated by the Guru himself, but none of which appear to be genuine, since they vary greatly, and were, as
may be easily proven, all composed after the death of the Guru, some of them as late as the end of the last century. They cannot, therefore, be considered a direct testimony of what Govind Singh himself ordained and introduced into Khalsa, but only as an evidence of the later development of Sikhism. His argument that great variance among them can be an evidence that all are not genuine is indeed very sound and logical. Ernest Trumpp, however, does not offer any proof to support the easy "possibility" as mooted by the second part of his argument.

In view of the whole of the preceding evidence the possible conclusion may be that the codes, in their present form, cannot be described to have been directly dictated by the Guru, partly because of their great variance, and partly due to the fact that many injunctions contained therein are unequivocally against the avowed declarations of the tenth Guru. It may be suggested that the life rules have also been interpolated and contain some of the personal views of the subsequent copyists. The codes, however, have a

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We may take this opportunity to express our surprise over rather a paradoxical position adopted by Trumpp. He, at the same place, accuses Guru Gobind Singh of introducing some additions in terms of ceremonies etc., as contained in these Rahitnamas but at the same time very soundly refuses to accept that these codes were dictated by the Guru. The self-contradiction is glaring and destroys some of his scathing criticism of the Guru for these details as he himself does not trace the formularies to the Guru. We may also add that his rejection of the Rahitnamas does not
core which could have been inspired by the tenth and the earlier Gurus. This core, apart from some organisational duties, also embodies the moral duties to which we refer now.

Moral duties enjoined in the Rahitnamas

It is neither possible, nor within the scope of the present research, to reproduce here all the Rahitnamas in toto. The manuscript copy of the Rahitnama by Chopra Singh alone consists of ninety six folios, to which if we add other Rahitnamas and also subject them to analytical examination, the whole project, apart from requiring colossal space and time, would also be unnecessary and will be needlessly cumbersome for our purpose here. The present thesis is a study of the Sikh ethics as a whole and not concerned exclusively with these formulations. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with taking into account only the main moral duties enjoined in these codes. We may, then, take up the organisational duties, some of which have been subjected to criticism by Trumpp and no less by Sikh scholars themselves, and which partly gave birth to the Singh Sabha and other movements.

establish that at least some of the organisational injunctions as contained in these formularies, which gave distinct identity to the Sikhs, were not ordained by the tenth Guru.

Main moral duties

A thorough and critical examination of these Rahitnamas reveals a predominant stress on the following three duties:

(1) Right belief, (2) Right livelihood, and (3) Chastity and fidelity, including restrictions of sexual relationship within the marital bounds.

Duties relating to right belief

In these injunctions duties of right belief are understood in the sense of non-observance of superstitious beliefs and ceremonials as enjoined in other communities. Bhai Daya Singh's Rahitnama is more pronounced in its denunciation of these beliefs and requires the Sikhs not to entertain them. The superstitions so indicated include the ones in currency both among the Muslims and the Hindus, such as, tomb worship, idol worship, sooth saying, magical janter-manter, divining by the priests, forecast by oracles, etc.

The same duty of right belief is also found in the compilation by Bhai Chopra Singh. Desa Singh stresses the

1 These duties in some cases, and predominantly in the case of the Rahitnama of Chopra Singh, are sought to be derived from the Adi Granth, as the compiler almost continuously quotes from the Adi Granth various hymns in support of his injunctions. The fact that very often there is a slight variation in spelling or a term in his manuscript and the Adi Granth may indicate either that the compiler was quoting the Adi Granth from memory or that the copyist of the manuscript, under reference, committed these errors.


3 Chopra Singh, "Rahitnama", Sant Sampuran Singh, op. cit. p.94.
same. The injunctions concerning the right belief are also contained in the codes of Nand Lal and Prehlad Singh.

The prime purpose of this duty is to ensure that the teachings of the earlier Gurus are acted upon and the new converts to Sikhism from the other communities do not import into Sikhism some of the superstitious notions and practices of the older faiths and thus corrupt the ideals of the new faith.

These duties may be understood as the application of the virtue of wisdom to every day affairs.

Duties relating to right means of livelihood

In these Rahitnamas the compilers stress that every Sikh should adopt right means of livelihood. The compiler of Premsumarag stresses the need for taking to industry, clarifying that one should not feel ashamed of industry (kamab), whatever be its nature, and may sell the produce in the market. He even cites the hierarchy in which various professions may be followed. With him industry comes first.

1 Ibid., p. 86.
3 Ibid., Prehlad Singh, p. 89.

This hierarchy of vocations seems merely to stress the dignity of labour and the need for industry. It is not meant to recognize division of men into classes on the basis of their functions or vocations.
while trade and agriculture are second and third, respectively. In respect of the salaried services the only job he seems to hold worthwhile is that of a soldier. Bhai Nand Lal requires a person not to depend on charity of others and also not to be dishonest in trade. Desa Singh also requires the Sikhs to earn their livelihood, and wants even the persons looking after the Sikh temples to take from the offering not more than what is barely minimum. In the injunctions about right livelihood, he includes imperatives against participation in dacoities. There is a similar injunction against stealing in the formulary of Chopra Singh.

These injunctions can be directly traced to the declaration of Guru Nanak "He alone, O Nanak, knoweth the way, who earneth with the sweat of his brow and then shareth it with others." And to this principle, the saying of Bhai Gurdas can also be related, when he emphasises the importance of "earning rightly and sharing it with others."

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2Ibid., Desa Singh, p. 85, 87.
3Ibid., p. 85.
4Ibid., Chopra Singh, p. 93.
6Bhai Gurdas, Var, Stanza 1, Var 32 and also Stanza 6, Var 28.
Duties relating to chastity and fidelity

Duties relating to chastity are meant to regulate marital relations and to ensure respect for fidelity in the family and avoidance of adultery. In order to ensure that the conflict between the Sikhs and others may not lead to disrespect and molestation of the women-folk of the others, the compilers lay great stress on this duty. In many codes this aspect has been clearly identified as the compilers forbid expressly any sex relations with female members of the other communities. But the injunctions also forbid adultery in general, whoever be the parties to it. The author of Premsumarag advocates sex regulation as an apt substitute for the traditional fasting.\(^1\) Nand Lal is equally stern about this duty to avoid adultery.\(^2\) Prehalad Singh forbids, within the range of this injunction, relations with the courtesans also.\(^3\) Daya Singh forbids even the entertaining of sex ideas in the mind on one's way to the religious congregation.\(^4\) Desa Singh\(^5\) and Chopa Singh\(^6\) also lay down imperatives to forbid adultery and to maintain fidelity.

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These duties may also be the echo of some similar expressions in the Adi Granth. Guru Nanak has pointed out the evil when he says, "Indra was attracted to Ahalya, wife of Gotama, the seer, and lo, he was cursed with a thousand yonis and then he grieved." This is also in keeping with the general view on kam (concupiscence) which we have examined in Chapter 3 (supra).

5.5: Organisational duties

Apart from the preceding moral duties we also come across the injunction by Prehalad Singh requiring Sikhs to wear "kach, kes, kangha, kirpan and kara" which, respectively, are a short breeches, hairs, a comb, a sword and a steel bangle. Chopra Singh also emphasises the duty of being baptized (amrit) after which the five articles mentioned above are required to be worn.

Other miscellaneous duties

In addition to these duties we come across injunctions to be altruists and not to defame other faiths (panths). (See Chapter 6, infra.)

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1 Adi Granth, Prabhati M.1 (1-4), p. 1344.
2 This is an episode narrated in the ancient mythology.
4 Ibid., p. 94.
5 Ibid., Daya Singh, p. 95.
6 Ibid., Desa Singh, p. 96.
There are, however, in the *Rahitnamas* some minute details and injunctions which have provided ground for criticism of the *Rahitnamas*. Representative of these injunctions are: to require people to bathe in cold water; or not to use water, a part of which has been taken out to put the fire off; or to lay down the exact length of the short breeches. In one formulation we even find the quantity of water prescribed for taking the bath. These minute details led to this criticism from Truapp that "we see from these minute ordinances that the Sikh reformatory movement soon ended again in a new bondage, which was quite as tiresome as that which they had thrown off."¹

5.6: Sikh Rahit Maryada

A sub-committee of Sikh conduct-conventions (*rahireet*) was set up with its terms of reference prescribed to find out the rules for the Sikhs and the Sikhs churches. The report was submitted on 1st October, 1932 by Teja Singh, convener of the committee. Various bodies of the Sikhs considered this report and suggested some amendments and finally the report was approved in the year 1945, that is, after about fourteen years of its submission and was subsequently published by Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. One is indeed impressed by the number of persons consulted

¹Ernest Truapp, *op. cit.*, p. cxvi.
and the dynamism of its compilers for whom the main consideration appears to have been to judge whether or not any particular tradition was in conformity with the general tenets of Sikhism. One consequently finds some of the details of the Rahitnamas dropped from this code.

A fruitful result of this long and important work by the committee is that we have now a code comprising of thirty seven pages of text laying down general principles meant to guide the Sikhs in the performance of their organizational duties.

The principle of having such a convention for the Sikhs to decide about their duties themselves is provided for, in addition to other sources, in the Rahitnama by Daya Singh who envisages deliberation by the Sikhs themselves about codes of conduct (rahit bibek). The Sikh Rahit Maryada, which is the result of the deliberations by the Sikhs themselves, by virtue of the above principle, occupies a highly respected place and validity in Sikhism.

This formulary, however, does not attempt to lay down all the detailed principles of the Sikh ethics for the obvious reason that its role is mostly explanatory and in the ultimate analysis the Adi Granth is the final and complete guide.

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1Sikh Rahit Maryada (Amritsar: Shromani Gurdwara Committee, 1950).

5.7: **Duties enjoined in Sikh Rahit Maryada**

This code defines a Sikh as he who has belief (nischa rakhe) in the word of the ten Gurus, the baptism prescribed by the tenth Guru and the Adi Granth, and does not have belief in any other religious tradition. The code lays down both categorical and conditional duties. The former are required to be carried out always while the latter apply only in case of some special ceremonies.

The code envisages two aspects of a Sikh's life, namely, personal and organisational (sakshi and panthak).

5.8: **Personal aspect of duties**

The personal aspect is comprised of various prayers, living according to the teachings of the Gurus and service to others.

'Nam bani da abhyas' refers to various prayers in Sikhism. It includes a standard form of supplication which ends by praying for the good of all (sarbat da bhala) and for the regulation of passions by reason (mun neevan, mut ucchi).

The second part of the personal duties enjoins that the views and living of the Sikhs should be according to the teachings of the Gurus.¹ Some duties are enumerated

¹ *Sikh Rahit Maryada* (Amritsar: S.G.P.C.), pp.22-37. The discussion in the following pages is based on this reference.
which every Sikh is required to perform. It is not difficult for us to trace the origin of these duties to various *Rahitnamas*, even though the compilers of *Sikh Rahit Maryada* do not refer to the *Rahitnamas*, with the exception of *Premsumarag*. The duties may be stated as follows:—

1. **Right belief**: This duty requires of a Sikh to have belief in One God (*Akal Purukh—xxx*, Timeless Entity). The Sikh should not believe in the existence of gods and goddesses. He should regard only the ten Gurus and their teachings as the medium of salvation (*mukti da data te ishat*). He should not practise caste, untouchability and magical rites. The injunctions require a person to accept the unity of existence in terms of One spiritual Entity and reject all superstitions.

The compilers require of a Khalsa (Sikh) to maintain his distinctive way of life and not to lapse into superstitions. But the Khalsa should not injure the feelings of the followers of other faiths.

A Sikh should seek the blessings of God in his acts. The supplication, which requires him to pray for the good of all, is meant to remind him that he should desist from acts which are inconsistent with this prayer. The prayer is meant also to reinforce his will and exert a healthy moral effect on his activity and conduct. It is what we have called religious sentiment in the chapter on motives (supra). The duty of right belief is thus a great aid in
guiding moral actions apart from being a moral duty in itself.

In this code baptism (amrit) is another requirement for the Sikhs. It is a provision whereby the person elects to fulfil all the duties enjoined in Sikhism. It is the affirmation of a voluntary choice by the person, by which the duties become self-imposed on him and not externally imposed. It, thus, signifies freedom associated with self-imposition.

Education for right belief: The compilers, in order to spread literacy and right belief as embodied in the Adi Granth, have stressed the learning of Gurumukhi language. According to the formulation, however, the Sikhs should get all other forms of education as well.

(3) Prohibition of the use of narcotics and intoxicants: According to this code a Sikh should not take intoxicants and narcotics, such as, bhang, opium, spirits, tobacco, and like stimulants. He should be an addict to daily meals only.

(3) Respect for life and women: The code requires that the Sikhs should not commit female infanticide and they should also refrain from social relations with the one who commits this immoral act. (See Chapter 6, Infra.) Child marriage is prohibited as immoral. Monogamy is normally the ideal. Widow remarriage is permitted.
There are also injunctions against adultery, both by men and women. Extra marital relations are declared immoral. Men are directed to respect women and regard daughters of other men as their own and other men's wives as their mothers or sisters. It is only such a Sikh who carefully follows this injunction that is considered to be a moral man.

(4) Right livelihood and helping the needy: According to this formulary a Sikh should earn his livelihood through right and honest means (dharam ki kirit). A Sikh should also help the needy. He should regard such a help as an act of service to the Guru (garib di rasna nu Guru ki golak jane). A Sikh should not steal and should not gamble.

(5) Duty of serving others: The third aspect of personal duties covers the injunctions concerning social service (see Chapter 6, infra.)

5.9: Organisational duties (panthak rahni)

Discussion of the Sikh ethics would remain incomplete if a reference were not made to the organisational duties which have partly come to distinguish the Sikhs from other traditions.

The compilers explain that a Sikh must live his life as an altruist. Altruism does not merely mean service in the community kitchen or among the congregation, even though such service is covered by it. Social service, in order
to be wider in scope and more effective, must be processed through an organisation. That service can be described as successful which achieves more with relatively lesser effort. However, this can be possible only through a well-knit organisation. The organisation of the Sikhs is called panth.

The guru panth, according to this code, consists of all the Sikhs (tirar-bar-tirar singhan da samucha samoch). This panth has been made the leader of the Sikhs. Thus leadership among the Sikhs has been vested by the Guru in the Sikhs themselves.

We have already referred to baptism, in Sikhism, which represents an individual's acceptance of the duties through self-imposition. We may now refer to some of the duties enjoined by the code upon the members of the organisation. The duties are laid down in the positive as well as the negative imperatives.

**Positive imperatives:** Sikhs, apart from performing some religious duties, should also wear the following five 'kakas' (K's): (1) kes (unshorn hairs); (2) kirpan (sword); (3) kaahchera (shorthreakes); (4) kangha (comb); and (5) kara (a steel bangle, 'sarabh loh').

These are called the five kakas, as the initial alphabet of all the items is a 'k', and it is spoken as kaka in Punjabi language.
Negative imperatives: The code expressly prohibits the committal of the following four acts which may be termed as negative prescriptions: (1) cutting of hairs (kes)\(^1\); (2) eating of meat prepared by the process of a gradual and painful slaughter of the animal (kutha) (3) adultery and (4) use of tobacco.

The code lays down that in the case of a violation of these imperatives the defaulting person may himself appear before any religious congregation of the Sikhs, seek their award and be rebaptized. Even if the defaulter be a priest he must present himself before a congregation of the common Sikhs and go through the same process.

Negative injunctions regarding social relations: The code forbids social relations such as marriage, etc., with the following defaulters: (1) Certain categories of persons who sought to create schism in Sikhism; (2) persons who use tobacco; those who commit female infanticide; and those who have removed hairs;\(^2\) (3) the Sikhs who have not been baptized or those who eat with non-baptized ones; (4) those who dye their hairs (5) those who sell or buy brides or bridegrooms;

\(^1\)It may be noted that the imperative regarding the keeping of hairs figures in both the negative and the positive imperatives, which may indicate its importance.

\(^2\)A note on page 36 and 37 of Sikh Habit Maryada clarifies that the persons included in this list are those who profess to be Sikhs and still commit a breach of these imperatives.
(6) the users of intoxicants and narcotics; and (7) those who act against the Sikh way of life (gurmat) and are, therefore, defaulters in Sikhism.

Other injunctions: The compilation also contains injunctions about the manner of disposal of appeals, the prominent characteristic of which is the democratic approach to such matters.

5.10: Concluding remarks

We have, in this chapter, referred to the two aspects from which the problem of duties in Sikhism may be examined. These are, the general principle of duties, raza, and some specific ethico-organisational duties, rahit. The most conspicuous among the organisational imperatives relate to the wearing of the five 'kakas', namely, unshorn hairs, sword, a short breeches, comb and a steel bangle. While, generally, no casuistry is allowed in respect to these organisational duties, and all of them are held as categorical injunctions, there has been some attempt in recent times at determining which is the most important of the five kakas. Bhai Jodh Singh maintains that the habitnamas reveal that there is some distinction among these duties. He expresses this distinction by the use of two terms, "patit" for those who cut the hairs and "tankhaia" for others who violate any one of the remaining four kakas.¹ The former violation is

¹Jodh Singh, Gurmats Nirman (Ludhiana: Lahore Book Shop), vii, p. 290.
thus considered to be the more serious. However, this

distinction is not sustained in Sikh Rahit Haraya and

consequently we may regard all the five duties as categori-

cal injunctions of the organisational technology.

A question may now be asked whether these personal

and organisational duties are the substitutes for the

ethico-spiritual teachings of the Adi Granth. The question

may sound preposterous to the Sikhs but it is worthwhile to

refer to it here. The answer generally is in the negative

as the organisational duties are primarily meant to bring

the Sikhs closer to the teachings of the Adi Granth which

is recognised as the ultimate guide. The principle of raza,

therefore, is more fundamental to Sikhism though the organi-

sational duties also occupy an important place. The raza

and rahit, as the principles of duties and the life rules,

respectively, taken together are the vade mecum of obliga-

tions in Sikhism. The Sikhs do not envisage any conflict

between the raza and the rahit.