Chapter III

Historical Paradigms of the Sikh Identity

Historical paradigms mean the luminous archetypes, which have been created by the Sikhs in the history under the guidance of the Guru. The foundation of Guruship, Sangat, Gurdwara, Langar-Pangat, Manji Prtha, Sri Akal Takht etc. are the new experiences in the history of human consciousness. We are trying to understand the various dimensions of these institutions and their role in Sikh faith and commitment. This chapter deals with the practical aspects of Sikh identity.

The Experience of Sikh Faith:
A Sikh lives according to Guru and follows to Guru Granth Sahib. Every day he/she starts his/her life within the recitation of Divine Nam and tries to spend day and night in the Divine obligations of Guru, who leads him/her toward spiritual life and realization. To recite the Divine Nam, Guru made Sangat, which gathers in the presence of the Guru and meditates His Nam. The recitation of Divine Nam of Guru is an important feature of Sikh life. Without him, life is worthless. Professor Puran Singh writes that ‘Guru Nanak is ‘the Name’ we sing as the birds sing the joy of the new dawn. Guru Nanak, Guru Nanak, we say and we pass on. We look neither to the left nor to the right, with our lips sealed with honey of the Name, with our eyes enraptured by the dream of a greater, nobler universe of the Guru’s mind. We go muttering even mechanically into the heart of men and things. We go mingling like a good thought in the blood of universe, ‘the Name! the Name!’. As the babe knows its mother and nothing beyond, we know our Name and nothing beyond’. 197

Sikh meditation is known to as Simran. Sikh Simran relates with the embracing of Waheguru all the time to worship 198 Him. Sikh-worship, according to Sirdar Kapur Singh is that ‘it must be related to God, His attributes and praises. It must not be sensuous and passion-generating through its musical modality and verbal content……..It must remain within the traditional confines of its verbal content, which is, the sacred texts of the Guru Granth, the pious compositions of Bhai Gurdas and approved apostle of Sikhism and the devotional Persian hymnal songs of Bhai Nand Lal Goya, a dear, close

198 It is the devotion and remembrance of Sikh towards Guru/Waheguru.
associate and Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh. It must satisfy the over-all test of leading the mind inwards.\textsuperscript{199}

In Simran, Kirtan performs musically splendorous. Gurbani is sung on the instrument of music in rags known to as Kirtan. It is wondrous to a Sikh devotee when he recites and chants Gurbani. ‘It accorded is this, Kirtan, the musical mode of worship, that has been accorded a central place in Sikh-worship and it is this mode of worship that is almost exclusively employed in the Sikh sanctum sanctorum of the Golden Temple at Amritsar. For, “the music and melody constitute the aid and catalyst to help man ascend into attunement with the Infinite, though the numinous experience itself is beyond the reach of music. “The Entrance-door of the God’s Palace is attained by myriads of modes of music and myriads of human and divine musicians”, says the famous Stair of the Japu, Sodaru. “The kirtan has the potency to rescue man from the clutches of Time”. “God (sometimes) enters human experience in the form of Music”.\textsuperscript{200} Thus, Kirtan leads a soul of devotee toward ultimate Divine.

To understand the phenomena of Sikh faith in the experience of the Sikhs Ardas (daily prayer) is very important, which is not just a text or rite, as it explains the whole Sikh practice. Ardas is a basic postulate and daily practice in the Sikh Panth, which embodies various dimensions of spirituality. Prayer is important in almost every religion.

Jainism directs towards Tap (austerities meditation). This religion is known to as the hard meditation, sadhna. However, there does not seem any rite, which presents

\textsuperscript{200} Ibid. p. 102.
any event of collective prayer. ‘Prayer is nevertheless not universally encouraged. Mahavira, for example, discouraged his followers, the Jains, from prayer, calling it of no avail since salvation lies within man himself. “Why do you want a friend beyond yourself?”

We have noted that polytheism, which has various angels, gods and goddesses. The basic activity of this religion is Puja, which is not an act of prayer. ‘During worship the Vedic Aryans used to offer God browned butter, oats, sesame seeds, fruits, and other foods they were fond of. After the offering was consumed by the fire they had the psychological satisfaction that God had accepted their offering’.

Puja is like homage to God. The varieties of material are much important which is used in Puja. The main purpose of worship is purification. So the scented material became the central part of Hindu worships. ‘The worship starts with purification. Every item used in the worship has to be purified by the thought of worshiper. Holy words associated with God, called mantras, are chanted by the worshiper along with thoughts of purification such as “may the flowers be pure and holy; may the water be pure and holy.” In this manner he purifies every item used for worship. Then he purifies every part of his own body. After that he has to think of the divinity present in himself. He prays to God that, by God’s grace, his inherent divinity becomes manifest and thus he may become fit to worship God’.

\[^{201}\text{Geddes Macgrogor, op. cit., p. 497.}\]
\[^{202}\text{Swami Bhaskarananda, op. cit., p. 138.}\]
\[^{203}\text{Ibid, p. 140.}\]
Buddhism also focuses upon meditations and emphasizes upon self-perfection with control upon mind, body and other desires. M. Anesaki describes that, ‘Buddhism teaches that there is no personal creator or ruler of the world, and that the perfection of religious and moral ideas rests solely on one’s own self-perfection. Thus in the Buddhist religion (Buddhism) there is no room for prayer, in the sense of petition, reason why Buddha so carefully guarded against a god for the purpose of securing a certain benefit throughout his special favour. But, when prayer is understood in a broader way, there is the Buddhist prayer as an expression of earnest faith, determined intention, as means of self-perfection in Buddhist ideals’.  

In Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism, there is no congregational prayer. The people of these faiths gather at a place to hear the discourse of God and Goddesses but there is no such activity of prayer ritual. 

In Islam, the main practice/form to remember the God is namaz, which is called Salat. Obligatory, the reading and performing of Salat five times in a day is compulsory for a Muslim. It can be held in the mosque or at any clean place. But in mosque, women cannot pray; they have to do it in their homes. Ibrahim M. Abu - Rabi says that ‘the intention of Quran is not to merely prescribe prayers as a ritual or an institution and communal commitment to order, punctuality, change, and coherence. Salat, in a sense, is the meeting point between the sacred and secular in Muslim life. It is a

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reflection of a divine desire to change the world in the direction prescribed by God in the Quran'.

Salat, in this sense, is a meeting point to transcend into the realm of divinity. It is also very important that how it has to be performed. The pillars of prayer consist of the following seventeen items: (1) intention (niyah); (2) the opening “God is the Greatest” (“Allahu akbar”); (3) standing (wuqaf); (4) reciting the fatihah (the opening surah); (5) bowing (ruku); (6) remaining motionless a moment therein (tumanina); (7) straightening back up after bowing (litidal); (8) remaining motionless a moment therein (tumanina); (9) prostration (sujud); (10) remaining motionless a moment therein (litidal); (11) sitting back between the two prostration (al-julus bayna al-sajdaatayn); (12) remaining motionless a moment therein (litidal); (13) the prayer’s final Testification of faith (al-tashahhud al-akhir); (14) sitting therein (julus); (15) the Blessing on the Prophet (al-salat ala al-Nabi); (16) saying “Peace be upon you” (al-salamu alaykum), the first of the two times it is said at the end of the prayer; and (17) the prophet sequence of the above integrals'. This way of Salat is not normal or easy.

In Christianity, there is personal and a collective prayer that states the fulfillment of law. It is performed in the praise of Christ. Different churches perform different prayers also. About the Christian prayer R. M. Wolley explains that ‘individual prayer is essentially private, bearing on personal and private needs. Such a prayer as ‘O God of the crosses that are laid upon us, help thy servant Apphours’, who has survived in a 4th

century fragment, may be taken as an example of prayer to God in time of intense personal need - such a prayer has been prayed millions of times. Collective prayer is public, the common prayers used when the family of God gather together to give Him the worship due from all. The history of common prayer is to be found in the liturgical service of the Church. Christ came to fulfill the law, not to destroy it. The Christian church regarded itself as the fulfillment and the perfection of Jewish church.\textsuperscript{207}

Ardas can be interpreted as multiplicities of human consciousness/sub-consciousness/un-consciousness. It is not just a prayer. It has multiple layers, which cover the disciplines of history, culture, anthropology, psychology and so on. In the Sikh experience, the word Ardas is used for prayer. ‘Ardas is a Sanskrit word, from the root, ‘ard’ to ask, to beg, to pray and ‘as’ means, wish, hope, desire. To ask for what you desire is ardas, that is prayer, though some Sikh scholars are inclined to the view that ardas is just a Punjabi form of the Persian expression, ‘arzdasht, a petition, presented to a state authority by a citizen’.\textsuperscript{208}

Ardas is a devotion to Akal Purakh. Ardas can be performed individually as well as in congregation. It is a supplication to Ultimate Beloved. It is recited twice everyday in the Sikh Gurdwaras. It is the collective experience of Sikh history, which is practiced ritually in the Sikh life.

Sirdar Kapur Singh in his book Parasaraprasna: The Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh writes a section upon Ardas. He writes that Ardas is not the application or


petition, which is given by a person to state authority. It is the wish, hope and desire which is begged by a devotee. Kapur Singh also differentiates Sikh Ardas from Hindu puja and archa. He explains that how an act of puja does not become prayer although it becomes an act of homage including that of entertainment.\textsuperscript{209}

He describes that the vision of puja and archa in the analysis of their rituals in Vedic culture and Tantrism. He defines that in Hinduism, there is no practice of congregational praying. The sects of Chaitanya and Vallabha\-carya tried to develop it but mostly the Hindu practice of praying is individual. He states that, ‘ordinarily, a Hindu worshipper goes to the temple alone or with friends and family, makes his offerings and departs. Sometimes he may linger there to watch the act of worship by regular officiants in a well-endowed temple, but he and others form an audience and not a congregation’.\textsuperscript{210}

Kapur Singh explains that in Sikhism, the canonical function is simran. It is the union with Ultimate. Through seva, the practice of a devotee enters in loving service which is glorified by prayer. He describes that, ‘the basic activity of Sikhism is simran, communion with God through the yogic discipline of Name; its obligated and mandatory context is seva, loving service of fellow beings and prayer is the prescribed vitality of this activity. Prayer supports simran which evolves and matures in social context. Congregational prayer is, thus, an essential Sikh institution’.\textsuperscript{211}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{209} Ibid. p. 277. \\
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid. p. 278. \\
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid. p. 278. \\
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Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki describes his views on Ardas in a book Ardas: Darshan, Roop, Abhias. In the first part of book, he deals with the philosophy of Ardas and in the second part he explains about the structure of Sikh Ardas. In the last part, he defines about the praxis of the Ardas. He says that ‘human is the final place of the concordance of time and timeless. Ardas is the sentimental effort of this concordance. It is summon to Ultimate that to come in time of human. It is the chance of human’s limited consciousness and exuberance to go to Infinite’.\textsuperscript{212}

Thus, \textit{Ardas} is the bridge to combine the mundane and transcendental world. It is the invitation to meet the Beloved One. In the second part of the book, Dr. Neki tries to understand the etymological, ontological and epistemological meaning of \textit{Ardas}. He explains the historical Sikh consciousness, which emerges from the spiritual and theoretical phenomena of the Sikh experiences. In last, he tells about the \textit{Maryada} (code of conduct) of \textit{Ardas} and describes about the distinct Sikh experience of \textit{Ardas}.

Dr. Neki writes the first stage of Ardas is \textit{Darkhaasti} (It means when a devotee desires something from Akal Purakh), second \textit{Shukrana} (When a devotee pays thank to Akal Purakh), third \textit{Gunanavadi} (When a devotee recites the praises of Akal Purakh), forth \textit{Goshat} (When a devotee is able to talk with Akal Purakh) and fifth is \textit{Abol} (When a devotee achieves the position of silence).

Dr. Deepinder Jeet Randhawa understands the importance of Sikh Ardas in the memory of the Sikhs. She first writes about the theories of memory and then explains Sikh memory; at last she combines Ardas with the memory dimensions. She also writes about that uniqueness of Sikh Ardas.

\textsuperscript{212} Jaswant Singh Neki, \textit{Ardas: Darshan, Roop, Abhias}, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2008, p. 28.
In this age of globalization cultural study is becoming a major discipline. Memory is also a very important part for the study of any culture and civilization. Dr. Randhawa says that, ‘cultural memory therefore is revisiting the past from the borderline of cultural flux disrupting the homogenized remembrance. It is a push towards plural disjunctions and explosive differential where cultural identities are rapidly being eroded and supplemented’.\(^{213}\) Thus, culture memory recognize other identity and retrieves the past thoughts. To explain the Sikh memory Dr. Randhawa explores strongly the Sikh connotations such as bani/karuna/tegh/khanda/sehej/vismad/gyan/dhyan etc. She writes, ‘The memory becomes distinct by simultaneously moving in compassion (karuna) and the sword (tegh, khanda). It negotiates humility/militancy simultaneously. It is mediated by the equality of cultures/faiths (Hindu Turk kou....sabhai ekai pahchanbo) and remains ready to protect its identity against hegemony’.\(^{214}\)

She interprets the text of Ardas in the eight parts and takes these eight flashes as multiplicity of the Divine. In her views, Sikh Ardas is a junction where a devotee links with his/her past (which is full of divines, traumas, sacrifices, pain, martyrdoms etc.). But all these sufferings are in Sahaj (equilibrium). She states that, ‘the memory of Sikh is multi-mediated by Vismad, creative energy, pain, anguish, joy and martyrdom. The trace of all these mediations does not let the memory be totalitive, it remains Vismadic.


\(^{214}\) Ibid, p. 109.
(wonderous) and in Sahaj. The Ardas bestows on the Sikh memory joyful affirmation of the past and retrieves from a site of abundance that cannot be categorized.\textsuperscript{215}

The structure of Ardas is completely distinct rather than other prayers. There is no doubt, a prayer projects the conscious and unconscious worlds of a person or the followers of any faith. It signifies the traumatic, cultural, historic and existential memories in the time flow. On one side it reflects the collective experiences of divine and on the other side it magnifies the diversities and distinctiveness of any culture, community etc. In the words of Dr. Randhawa, ‘the Ardas, therefore, becomes a distinct text that simultaneously negotiates the sacred, and collective, individual, universal energies. It is structured in excess that shapes and re-contextualizes the Sikh memory. It is a text of multiple flows where cultural specificities, global heterogeneity, body and mind are free from territorializing codes to reorient the community and its memory for a journey of gift retrieval. It prepares the community for responding to the immediacy of the present and the future.’\textsuperscript{216}

**Institutions in the Sikh History:**

The Sikh institutions have played an important role to make Sikh identity. Guru himself made the institutions, which reflect the Sikh’s identity in the history. Fauja Singh writes that ‘they (Gurus) provided an effective functional organization for the propagation and spread of the creed; symbolized the essential character of the Sikh movement; institutionalized the fundamentals of its teachings and made them easier to

\textsuperscript{215}Ibid. p. 120.
\textsuperscript{216}Ibid. p.121.
be imprinted on the minds of the devotes. They also imparted to it a hallmark of
distinction and thereby smoothed the way for the development of its separate
identity'.

Guru Nanak established the institutions of Dharamsal and Langar. These
institutions accelerated by the succeeding Gurus to create the new third path. All the
Gurus performed a role of an activist to establish the various institutions. Jagjit Singh
writes that ‘Guru Nanak had started the institution of Dharamsala, Sangat, Langar and
Manjis. The succeeding Gurus further consolidated and extended these institutions.
Guru Amar Das systematized this institution of Manjis and created twenty-two centers
for the extension of the mission. Persons of high religious calibre were nominated to
these offices.....They were the links of the organization and the two-way channels of
communication between the Guru and the Sangat........the militarization of the
movement only added a new dimension to this development. Even before this
militarization, the Sikh movement had established a firm and a separate organizational
identity known as the Sikh Panth'.

The Sikh Gurus were aware of their mission and identity. It was the Guru vision
to make Dharamsal (Gurdwara) everywhere. Bhai Gurdas also writes that when Guru
Nanak came, there were abodes of Dharma all around. The music of Divine Nam was
being played. At the time of journeys, Bhai Mardana, the great musician was Guru

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217 Fauja Singh, “Development of Sikhism Under the Gurus”, in Sikhism, Fauja Singh (ed.), Punjabi University,


219 Gr Gr aMdir Drmswl hovY kIrqnu sdw ivsoaw[ (Var1; 27)
Nanak’s follower and accompanist. Everywhere Guru Nanak sang the song of Akal Purkh and bonded the people into Sangat. Teja Singh writes that ‘wherever he went, he left behind him a sangat, or association of his followers, with an injunction to build a gurdwara, or temple, for the purpose of meeting and singing his hymns together, and in a short while a network of Sikh temples sprang up all over the country. There were centers of his mission in Junagarh, Kamrup (Assam), Surat, Cuttack, Behar, Johar (Sbathu), Nanakmata (Kumaon Hills), Kathmandu, the Persian Gulf, Kabul, Jalalabad and other places’. Guru Nanak established the centers of spirituality, and the next Gurus carried on this tradition successfully. Gurdwara and Sangat are interrelated because Gurdwara emerges within the presence of Guru. Sangat comes in Gurdwara to recite the Divine Nam in the presence of Guru. Sangat does the Kirtan, which is done by musical instruments. It is the daily practice in the Gurdwaras.

The Sikhs have developed religious mode of collection the funds. Every Sikh gives Daswannd (ten percent of his/her earning) to the Gurdwara for Langar (where every can get free food without any discrimination) and the other things for needy. Balwant Singh Dhillon writes about daswannd that ‘besides the daswannd, there were some non-obligatory donations which enhanced the financial resources of the dharamsala. Firstly, there (dharamsala) was a golak, a box meant for collection of offerings. Secondly, we come across sukh-manat, a sort of thanks giving tribute which the Sikhs offered on fulfillment of their desire. Thirdly, there was a practice among the Sikhs to donate some amount for the welfare of dharamsala on the occasion of

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marriage known as kurmai. Fourthly, there was a chulia, vow to donate something in the memory of dead. Fifthly, there was a strong practice among the Sikhs to set apart some amount from their earnings in the name of Guru and present the same to dharamsala. Sixthly, there was kar-bhent, a special campaign to collect money or material to fulfil the specific needs to the central as well as local dharamsala. Lastly, charity in the form of grain and produce was also a big source of income of the dharamsala. An early 17th century source exhorts the Sikhs to carry something in kind while visiting the dharamsala. Obviously, it added to the provisions of the langar.²²¹

Langar is for the indigent persons of the society. Langar represents the Pangat. It means everyone is equal in the abode of Guru and in Pangat everyone can take food without any discrimination by the name of caste, creed, colour, tribe and nation. Nowadays, Langar has become an identity as a major institution of the Sikhs. Here, we would like to interpret the two leading institutions of the Sikh, which are the symbols and models of institutionalized Sikh identity. First, is Sri Harmandir Sahib and second is Sri Akal Takht.

**Sri Harmandir Sahib/ Sri Darbar Sahib:**

Sri Harmandir Sahib occupies an important place in Sikhism. The Sikhs take guidance for their lives from here. Everything related with Guru Granth Sahib, Sikh literature, Sikh history in Sakhi experiences, institutions and Sikh praxis project to Sikh identity. At the level of institutions, Sri Harmandir Sahib is the peerless place of Sikh

identity. It has combined vehemently to Sikh’s life-practices. For the Sikhs, Sri Harmandir Sahib is the symbol of unsayable glory. Kapur Singh writes that ‘the world-famous Golden Temple of the Sikhs, situated at Amritsar in India, bears Harmandir, ‘the Temple of God’, as its original name and it forms an island in a lake to which the name of Amritsar was given by the Nanak V. Guru Arjan (1563-1606), in the year 1589, when he laid the foundations of what is known as the Golden Temple, and the town which grew around this Mecca of the Sikhs has only subsequently acquired the name of Amritsar’. The Adi Granth Sahib was installed at 1604 in Sri Harmandir Sahib for the first time and Baba Budha ji, the eminent personality of the Sikhs was the first chief Granthi.

Professor Puran Singh, who is known to be the author of the spirits, expresses the multiple spiritual dimensions in his poem ‘Harmandir at Amritsar’ in ecstatic mode. He says that it is the birth of God’s world and also the first hour of the whole creation. It is the ecstasy of finished labour and the realized life. Ultimately, it is the spot of thankfulness. Sri Harmandir Sahib has the sacred place among the world-natives’ religions, which demonstrates the continuous flow of distinctiveness of Sikhs. It is the spot of spirits, which are meditating on Akal, the Ultimate beyond time reality. Prof. Puran Singh also says that ‘It is not the place of ascetics, Yogies or the narrow minded. It is the adobe of prophet, who has loved God as an embodiment of true love. His love was such that he experienced happiness in the presence of God, in His meditation and in His praise. The great artist, creator gave the form of heart to Harmandir Sahib where

humans get together as children. There is a window in the golden pinnacle where Guru sits to see the wondrous sights till now. There are so many temples of different faiths and people celebrate happiness at various religious places but Harmandir is matchless. It is not a building; it is palpitation life which is going on with the meditation glory of its own.²²⁴

Sri Harmandir Sahib crosses the current conceptions of hybridity and incommensurability coined by Homi Bhabha due to its versatility. It is the warm realizations of distinctiveness, and there is much sky for the other. There is also no fear of fading/eroding any identity. Every spirit is respectable. In the comparative context, Sri Harmandir Sahib, for the Sikhs is such as Banaras of Hindus, Jerusalem of Jews, Rome of Christians and Mecca of Islam but it is ably known that above sacred places of various religions express particular blood, community, caste and class. These also have the voices of separateness and not distinctiveness which make them fanatic, but Sri Harmandir Sahib becomes a counter sign against any rigidity and one-dimensional programme for the whole universe. Sirdar Kapur Singh describes that ‘this position and this status of the Golden Temple is unique in the religious or political centers of world history. It is the Mecca of the Sikhs, because it is the religious centre of the Sikhs, but it is vastly more. It is the St. Peter’s Rome, for it is the capital of the Sikh theocracy, but it is very much more and also something less and more. It is the Varanasi or Banaras of Sikhism, because it is the holiest of the holies of the faith, but it is not precisely that because the true Sikh doctrine does not approve of any tradition or belief which seeks

²²⁴ Puran Singh, Nau Lakha Haar Ate Hor Kahaniya, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1994, pp. 89-90.
to tie up theophany with geography. It is the Jerusalem of Sikhism because it is the historical centre of the epiphany of Sikhism. But it is not precisely that because Sikhism, as a religion, is not history grounded, that is, its validity is not tied up with or dependent upon any historical event'.

Every corner of Sri Harmandir Sahib has been centered with Sikh meditation, service, culture, life and politics. Its presence has been important from every aspect of Sikh life. It is accepted as a gift, presented by Waheguru in wondrous mood. Sikh life revolves around Sri Guru Granth Sahib which is the ultimate guide. In the Sabad/verse/hymns of Guru, Sri Harmandir Sahib is the creation of the Akal Purkh. It is His body. The Sikh body is also Harmandir, it is the abode of the light of Akal Purkh. This concept is the Jugat (skillfulness) of Sikhi's distinctiveness. Guru Granth Sahib initiates;

‘My cherished beloved! this self is the temple by the Lord erected
Pervasive in it does He abide.’

‘To contemplate the Lord is the Divine temple erected, wherein
God’s devotees His laudation sing’.

‘That spot alone is the Lord’s Temple where Divine realization
comes’.

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226 hir mMdr hir jIAu swijaw myry lw1 jIAu hir iqsu mih rihaw smwey rwm } (SGGS; 542)
227 hir jpy hir mMdru swijaw sMr Bq guN gwvih rwm } (SGGS; 781)
‘The body is the Lord’s abode, by Him beautified; In it abides Himself the Lord the Divine Being’.

‘The self is the Lord’s Temple, by Himself attained, Inside it He abides’.

Sri Harmandir Sahib is the place of Akal Purkh which is also the centre of the Sikh religious memory. The uncountable Sikhs gave their heads for the service and care of Sri Harmandir Sahib. Puran Singh says that it is the peace of heaven send by Guru Gobind Singh to his own living children. It is the body of Guru Ramdas Ji. This Harmandir is our life, breath, earth, sky, bone, flesh, it is our heart. It is our victory of mundane and transcendental world, it is our great centre, and it is the abode of our Akal Purakh. Our Guru, with his own hands and his old Sikhs dig it, its God meditation is endless. Its self sacrifice is endless. Here thousands of Sikhs gave their heads. Every particle has filled with emotions. Here, uncountable, without names, without recognition Sikh’s eyes seem which are full of God’s love, silence and shrieking.

While you are moving around the tank of Amritsar, let the foot with care on the marbles. Beneath every marble has thousands heads of the Sikhs.

The complete Sikh memory has connected with Harmandir Sahib, which is the identity of their self, as blessed by the Gurus. The enemy of the Sikhs had known that

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228 hir mMdru soeI awKlAyi jQhu hir jwqw } (SGGS; 953)
229 kwieaw hir mMdru hir awip svwry } (SGGS; 1059)
230 hir mMdru hir swijaw hir vsY ijsu nwil } (SGGS; 1418)

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Sri Harmandir Sahib and its tank is the holiest place for the Sikhs. Muslim invaders and others tried to fill the holy tank with dust and demolished the Harmandir Sahib repeatedly. But, in the great love and passion of Guru, Sikhs rebuild it with much respect and faith. They performed their better service. Bhai Vir Singh has explained the martyrdoms of Bhai Mansa Singh, Bhai Bhara Singh and Bhai Bijla Singh in the service of Sri Harmandir Sahib.233

To visit the Sri Harmandir Sahib, Sikhs always accepted the deadly challenges of the enemies with happy faces. There are so many testimonies and events in the Sikh history. The history of 18th century is full with uncountable unimaginable actions, which have been performed by Sikhs in the love of their great Gurus and this tradition is continuing.

Recently, the Indian Government operated Blue Star operation known as military action. In this operation, they attacked Sri Harmandir Sahib and Sri Akal Takhat. This attack became a cause of million deaths. The Sikhs cannot endure a minor disrespect of their abode of Akal Purakh. For Harmandir Sahib, they feel felicity to give their head in the service of Sri Harmandir Sahib. Ajmer Singh says that what is the status of Sri Harmandir Sahib in the heart of the Sikhs? Why are they ready every time to die easily for the respect of Harmandir Sahib? To understand this mystery, it is very important to know about Sikh philosophy, history, traditions and their peculiar consciousness, which

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has been constructed in the distinctive aura. Without this cognitive, it is a very hard task to understand the depth of this mystery.\textsuperscript{234}

Sri Harmandir Sahib blesses the ways of Sikhs who are in the process of gifting some other perfumed ways to the world civilization. Sikh Gurus do not bind the Sikh in any narrow-structure rather they give the way to universal development, which is full of grace and happiness. A Sikh never looks upon anybody as other; rather he welcomes his/her inner-world. There is no fear/suspicion of dissolving any identity. It is very important in the contemporary world thought towards identity paradigm. Dr. Randhawa writes that ‘the vision to create the Darbar Sahib as a site of multilogue, cultural renewel and remembrance, was both revolutionary and futuristic. The Sikh faith and identity emerged out of the catacalysmic structures of its time when Vismadic and co-existential principle of the universe was being violated. The Darbar Sahib as a counter co-existential alterity disrupts the hegemonic paradigms of the Mughal and Brahmanical hierachization. By bringing together multiple traditions and arts the Darbar Sahib becomes a distinct site of heterology and beauty, and interspace of a variety of skills’.\textsuperscript{235}

The presence of Guru in Sri Harmandir Sahib, Kirtan of Gurbani in the gathering of Sangat, its multidimensional archetype, its four doors, Sri Akal Takhat, Parkarma, Duedies, J hande, Bunge, Baba Budha Ji Ber, Lachi Ber, Dukh Bhanjani Ber, multicultural art on buildings, the place of Baba Deep Singh Shaheed, Baba Atal, Kaulsar etc. are the multi-projections of the Sikh distinctiveness. These are the spiritual paths to the multi-

\textsuperscript{234} Ajmer Singh, op. cit., p. 6.
dimensional world of consciousness and cultures/civilizations. The Sikhs memorize and pray for world goodness here. The concept of identity, which the world academicians are discussing now, has been practiced by the Sikhs since centuries. There can be seen the picture of smoothly distinct existence in the respect of the Other. Opinderjit Kaur Takhar writes that ‘a significant assertion of a distinct Sikh identity is further illustrated by the institutions made by the fifth Guru. By establishing Harmandir Sahib as the central place for Sikhs, and installing the Adi Granth within it, Guru Arjan provided both a spiritual centre and an authoritative scripture for the Sikhs’.  

**Sri Akal Takhat**

Sri Akal Takhat is the major symbol of sovereign Sikh identity. It was established by the Sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind Sahib in front of Sri Harmandir Sahib. After the martyrdom of Guru Arjun, Guru Hargobind took the decision of making it. ‘He strengthened the city of Amritsar by putting up a small fortification, called Lohgarh. In 1609, he also built a meeting place for Sikhs and called it the Akal Takht, or the Throne of the Almighty. Here, besides praying and preaching, talks were held on questions affecting the welfare of the community. He enrolled a bodyguard of 52 stout Sikhs, who formed, the nucleus of his future army’. 

Sri Akal Takhat reflects the flashes of socio-political life of the Sikhs under the supervision and authority of timeless being, Akal. The architecture (of Sri Akal Takhat) is a symbol of custodianship or trusteeship of Akal purakh and authentic existence of

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the truth. It hinges on the Guru’s creative response to the historical atrocities of the
Mughal Emperors. The sixth Guru divined it in ecstasy and concretized it on the earth,
turning it into a symbol of sovereignty (miri) and spirituality (piri)’. According to
Major Gurmukh Singh, ‘the word akal, a negative of kal (time), is the equivalent of
timeless, beyond time, everlasting, and takht, in Persian, that of royal throne or chair of
state. Akal Takht would thus mean “timeless or everlasting throne” or “throne of the
Timeless One, i.e. God. In the Sikh system, God is postulated as Formless (Nirankar),
yet to proclaim His sovereignty over His creation, He is sometimes referred to as sultan,
patsah, sacha sah, or the True King; His seat is referred to as sachcha takht, the True
Throne, sitting on which He dispenses sachcha niao, true justice.’

In the doctrinal and historical perspective, we see that since establishment, Akal
Takht is playing vital functions in the Sikh life. This intention is to establish the Hlemi
Raj in the phenomenal world. In the contrast of various religious esteems, Akal Takht
presents its distinct identity. J.S. Ahluwalis writes that ‘the nature of the authority of
Sri Akal Takht is not religious in the theo-spiritual sense of the term. Its authority is
homologous to the temporal power of State, rather than to the religious authority of the
Roman Catholic Church.’ Guru Hargobind Sahib made Akal Takht under the holy
order of Akal Purakh. In the Sikh history, about the life of Guru Hargobind Sahib, the
text Gur Bilas Patshahi 6 is very important. It tells us that Akal Purkh said to Guru

238 Nirbhai Singh, The Philosophical Perspective on Sikh View of Martyrdom, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2007, p. 79.
239 Major Gurmukh Singh, “Akal Takhat”, in Encyclopaedia of Sikhism (vol. i), Harbans Singh (ed.), Punjabi
240 sB suKwlI vuTIaw iehu hoaw hlymI rwju jIAu ](SGGS; 74)
Hargobind Sahib that recognize the words of the Saints. First and foremost, make the takht at this place and put on the swords of Miri and Piri. Adorn the takht and give it my name. Remove the grief of the earth. Guru Hargobind wears the swords of Miri (symbol of temporal authority) and Piri (symbol of spiritual authority) and he laid down the foundation of Sri Akal Takht.

The concept of Miri-Piri emerges from Gurbani. It implies significance in essence the blending of sovereignty of the transcendental and mundane world. Gurbani describes the political dimensions and challenges the corrupt governess in the society. Guru Nanak explains that the real Dharam has finished. There is only the kingdom of falsehood. There is not real voice of the priests of religions. God is watching all the things. Nanak speaks only truth.

243 (SGGS; 360)
244 (SGGS; 145)

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242 aOr sMq bc atl pCwnAu [ buFy muJ mih Byd n mwnAux ]
   ipRQmy ieh QW qKq svwro[ mIrI pIrI ais do Dwro ]
   qWqy ieh QW qKq svwrXo[ myry nwm qWih mih DwrXo ]
   mIrI pIrI doAU Dwro[ Drw Bwr sB dUr invwro ]

teaches a Sikh that he must live with dignity." We have already discussed that Khalsa is directly under the supervision of Akal Purkh. There is no body between them.

Sikh philosophy presents the concept of Timeless Ultimate. Through the vehicle of the Guru, He partakes in the temporal world in the form of history. He covers both the sides. To recognize this, Niharranjan Ray writes that ‘he (Guru Hargobind) himself took to arms and used to carry two swords, miri and piri, one hanging from the right and another from the left, one representing the spiritual and another the temporal authority. He also fortified Amritsar and built the Akal Takht opposite the Har Mandir, dispensing justice and temporal orders from the former and spiritual guidance from the latter, and living all the time of like a king with all the trappings of kingship.’

For the union of humankind, soul and bodies, temporal and immortal, Sri Akal Takht makes such a way. The temporal authorities act in a bias manner due to narrowness of their fundamental traditions. A higher and cosmos vision can provide shed to various energies of the world. Sirdar Kapur Singh observes that ‘ex-hypothesis there cannot be more than one takht in the empire and indeed, in the entire world, for, a true and logically whole empire must tend to acquire a total oecumenical sway and the doctrine of co-existence of more than one takht, which is the true Takht, is a self stultification. But since the Sikh doctrine of Double Sovereignty, miri-piri envisages a sway over the minds and souls of mankind, the entire world and does not contemplate

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245 kil hoI kuqy muhI Kwju hoaw murdwru } kUVu boil boil BAukNw cUkw Drmu bICwrU }
   iJn jIVMidaw piq nhI muieaw mMdI soie } iliKaw hovY nwnkw krqw kry su hoie }
} (SGGS; 1242)

a coercive bondage of the bodies of men, it validates and promulgates a plurality of takhts, coexistent, coeval and complementary’.  

Sri Akal takht is not just a building. It is the ultra/meta-sign, which has been injected in the Sikh blood such as their genealogical genes. The whole Sikh Panth is under the supervision of everlasting energy. The Guru injects Aad Sach in the human mind/conscience, which is beyond past, present and future. Sri Akal Takht is a meta-sign, which shows the gateway of liberation of humanity. It frees the human from all strategic/narrow/nomad/frozen authorities of the world, which are always in a way to bind the human from various aspects such as physically, psychologically, culturally, genealogically.

All the Hukamnamas (sacred ordinances) of Akal Takht are respectively accepted by the Sikhs. It is also the place, where Sikh Panth makes the Gurmatas. Through this institution, the Sikhs take the decisions (Gurmatas) for the community, which may religiously, politically and socially also. This institution also emerges from Gurbani. Gurbani suggests that if you have any dilemma, then join and together. Sit together and recite the Name of Waheguru. The true Guru will save from all the critical positions. As Gurbani suggusts;

‘Brethren! all in unison meet,
And by absorption in God cast of duality.
In devotion to the Name Divine from pairs,

And by the Master's guidance spread the dice-cloth.

Brother! Thus make your throw.

Day and night the Master's guidance the holy Name utter;

Thereby in the last moment shall you feel no torment.

Of actions of piety make the gambling square, of charity make the cubes.

Defeat lust, wrath, avarice and attachment - such gaming to the Lord is dear.

On rising at dawn take bath, go to bed supplicating the Lord.

The holy Preceptor even in awkward throws grant success,

And in serene joy one returns home. The Lord Himself has created the cosmos.

Saith Nanak, servant of God: whoever by the Master's guidance plays,

Return home a victor in the game'.

Bhai Vir Singh explains that the Mata can be said to any resolution but not Gurmata because it is the institution, it is a higher hermitage. It is the temple, which has built on the foundations of sacredness, Nam and renunciation. It is a code of conduct; there is not any place for selfishness, personal profits, biasness, envy and the cheap way for the decisions of Panth.
John Malcolm also affirms that ‘the assembly, which is called the Guru-mata, is convened by the Acalis; and when the chiefs meet upon this solemn occasion, it is concluded that all private animosities cease, and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of the general good; and, actuated by principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion, and commonwealth, to which he belongs’. In history, the Sikhs took so many relevant decisions by this institution under the supervision of Sri Akal Takhat Sahib.

Authoritatively, the Jathedar is the chief of this place but he takes decisions with Gurmata. His position is also different from the Christian Pope and Islamic Caliph due to the distinct vision of Akal Takht. Dr. Ahluwalia says that ‘unlike the Pope who at one time wore two Swords representing other-worldly and this-worldly authority (both religious and temporal) the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht, like any other Singh, can wear only one sword partaking of the miri aspect and not the second sword symbolic of the piri aspect. In this way the position of the Jathedar is dissimilar to that of Christian Pope and Islamic Caliph claiming regency of God on earth and wielding as such both religious and secular authority’.  

The nature of Hukamnamas, issued by Akal Takht, is related with the temporal world. It is not like divine displeasure and sensor on spirituality against any person. It teaches the lesson of humbleness, which emerges from the Sikh spirit. According to Sikh tradition, Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Sikh King) also followed the supervisory of Sri

250 Ibid. p. 236.
Akal Takht and accepted punishment, which was given by Akali Phula Singh, who was the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht at that time. Before the establishment of Sikh Kingdom, in the Misals period of 17th-18th centuries, although all the Misals had different ruling areas and administration but they all collected under one consciousness of Sri Akal Takht. Dr. Jaspal Singh says that Akal Takht gave collective consciousness to unite Panth in Misals. Socially and politically, Akal Takht tied the Sikhs in one way, who were busy in personal fighting and had divided in various groups. Its collective consciousness and unity became the main base of Khalsa Kingdom. Total Sikh power gathered around one central power and political identity of Sikh society converted in sovereign Khalsa Kingdom.\(^{252}\) The Sikhs take the guidance from Sri Akal Takht, which is under the Meher (bless, grace) of Waheguru. Akal Takht is a distinguishable institution in the world, which represents the distinct identity of the Sikhs. The structure of its building, art on walls and surroundings are very amazing, which make it much significant.

So, in the institutionally interpretation of identity, Sri Harmandir Sahib and Sri Akal Takht are the major institutions of the Sikhs, which are the central hubs of Sikh life. Thus, the paradigms of the Sikh identity project their distinction through the institutions, which have been discussed above. The Sikhs are trying to actualize the vision of their Gurus through their institutions. It shows their great love and commitment to the Guru.

**Commitment towards Guru/ Waheguru:**

The Sikhs commit their lives in the faith of Guru who is the Master of their life. Guru Nanak was committed to create a new path of spirituality. Bhai Lehna was a faithful Sikh of Guru Nanak who gets the Guruship by his commitment. To continue the Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak has given Guruship to Bhai Lehna called second Nanak, Guru Angad. Harbans Singh writes that ‘to assure the community of his disciples a continuing witness to his teachings, Guru Nanak appointed a successor. The succession of teachers and leaders was not to be dynastic, and thus he bypassed his own sons. A disciple was chosen and was made by Guru an equal with himself. He transmitted to him not only his responsibilities but, as the poets declared, his light as well.............The Sikh community thus had ten spiritual guides succeeding one another, who are regarded with equal adoration and honour’. 253

Bhai Lehna became Guru Angad by his commitment, devotion and faith. J.D. Cunningham writes that ‘Nanak said, ‘Ye who trust in me, eat of this food.’ All hesitated save Lahna; he knelt and uncovered the dead, and touched without tasting the flesh of man; but, behold! he disappeared and Nanak was in its place. The Guru embraced his faithful follower, saying he was as himself, and that his spirit would dwell within him’. 254 Thus, a Sikh’s commitment with his Guru leads him toward the position of Guru.

There is no difference between Guru and God in Sikhism. In Adi Sakhian, it has mentioned that God was Nanak; Nanak, God’. 255 The Sikhs sacrificed their lives in

commitment of Guru. Through commitment, they maintain their identity. On the other hand, anti-Sikhi (state) has been trying forcefully to finish their identity. In India, before the Sikhism, Mugal rulers tried to convert the non-Muslim into Islam. But the Sikhs challenged it and even gave their lives. Chhanda Chaterjee writes that ‘the concept of Shahadat or martyrdom is the central idea of Sikhism. Those who embraced this faith had necessarily to be prepared to lay down their lives in defence of the oppressed and for the sake of their faith and the Panth. The history of the progress of Sikhism is replete with tales of heroic sacrifices by a long line of martyrs struggling against Mughals and Afghans, and making a gift of their lives for the cause of ‘sovereignty’.256

Since Guru Arjan, the millions Sikhs sacrificed their lives in the commitment. The martyrdoms of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh and the countless Sikhs are highly respected in the Sikhs. Behind all the martyrdoms, religious fanaticism was one of the major causes. Since the time of Gurus, the Sikhs are struggling for their sovereign identity. Dharam Singh writes that ‘though Aurangzib had nothing personal against Guru Tegh Bahadur, yet both of them stood clearly for ideals in stark opposition to each other – the former for religious exclusiveism and the latter for the freedom of conscience. The severe persecution that the community went through during the eighteenth century when prices were fixed on their heads and

efforts were made to exterminate them is also indicative of the Sikh stance against religious intolerance and exclusivism'.

In the continuity of Sikh commitment, the creation of the Khalsa is a climax of Sikh experience. To follow the words of Guru Nanak, all his successors made efforts to build a divine community. Bhagat Singh writes that ‘the last important aspect of Guru Nanak’s work was his selection of Bhai Lehna as his successor in preference to his own sons, and his formal installation was the first step in the process which issued in the founding of the Khalsa and ultimately in the emergence of a Sikh nation. During the next two centuries, under the Gurus, the Sikh institutions were mainly the interpretation or extension of Guru Nanak’s ideals’.

**Experience of Sangat to Khalsa:**

In the courtyard of Guru Gobind Singh, Bhai Gurdas IIInd was a poet. He writes that let take the Pahul of the double-edged sword and get liberation of life. Guru has transformed the Sangat into Khalsa. According to him, there were not real priests and followers of religions. There was only complex in society. In the crisis of Hindu and Muslim’s religions, Guru Gobind Singh created the third religion Khalsa who has the sword in the hand and recites to Akal Purkh. Thus, the creation of Khalsa is very

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259 He is known to as second Bhai Gurdas Ji.
261 mIr pIr sB Cip gey mjhb Aultwnw[ mlvwny kwI piV Qky kCu mrmu n jwnw[ 1K pmIfq bRhmn joqK I ibK isAu Aurrwnw[ Pun pwQr dyvl pUij kY aiq hI Brmwnw
important to understand the identity of the Sikhs because it is the climax of Sikh identity.

Khalsa has created with the ceremony of Khande ki pahul. Every religion and spiritual community has some special rite and ceremonies to express the spiritual visions of the people, particularly associated with them. Through ceremonies or rites, they perform their spiritual realizations and make way to touch noumenal in the phenomenal world. The rituals make junction among the sacred process of spheres of a human’s internal world. As Hans Mol describes, ‘our dominant and most general assumptions has been that this cluster creates the necessity for its own counterbalance in emotionally anchored meaning, integration, and identity. Ritual together with other sacralization mechanisms is thus part of his balancing act’.\textsuperscript{262} Sikhs have such rites, which are remarkable and essentials of the Sikh Panth.

Khande ki pahul is the most relevant ceremony when a Sikh becomes Singh/Khalsa\textsuperscript{263}. Through this, a Sikh is enrolled as the member of Khalsa Panth. We know that every step and movement of a religion is very important on the way of practice. There are certainly elements of ritual activities that can be understood

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\textsuperscript{263} ‘Khalsa’, from Arabic khalis(lit. pure, unsullied) and Perso-Arabic Khalisah (lit. pure; office of revenue department; lands directly under government management), is used collectively for the community of baptized Sikhs. The term khalisah was used during the Muslim rule in India for crown-lands administered directly by the king without the mediation of jagirdars or mansabdars. The term "Khlasa", however, acquired a specific connotation after Guru Gobind Singh(1666-1708) introduced, on 30 March 1699, the new form of initiating rites-khande di pahul (rites by khanda or double-edge sword).
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through looking at meanings and symbols. Rituals do involve elements of performance, communication, and repetition, and obvious purpose of many rituals is to create transformations.’\(^{264}\) The practice of initiation in every religion is different. There are many important meanings behind performing this rite, which project various aspects and dimensions of spirituality. Every act of the rite of initiation is very rich symbolically that can be understood with the essentials and essences of the particular religion.

In Christianity, to initiate a person, the rite of baptism is performed. About initiation Mircea Eliade gives an observation that ‘the term initiation in the most general sense denotes a body of rites and oral teachings whose purpose is to produce a radical modification of the religions and social status of the person to be initiated. In philosophical terms, initiation is equivalent to an ontological mutation of the existential condition. The novice emerges from his ordeal a totally different being: he has become “another”. Generally speaking, there are three categories or types, of initiation - Puberty rites, secret cults and Shamans and medicine men’.\(^{265}\)

It means, initiation has the spirit to change anyone. Christianity, as we see, performs three types of rite of initiation. This rite is called baptism. ‘John baptized Jesus, like others who came to him, in the waters of the Jordan, but manifestations of the Father and Holy Spirit during Jesus’ baptism give it a completely new dimension. Baptism as the gift of “a bath of regeneration and renewal; the baptismal water is at once the water of death in which the old, Sinful man is immersed and the water of life


from which he emerges renewed. Every detail of the Christian ritual is intended to symbolize birth to a new life in Jesus Christ: nudity (at least for men) during immersion; conferral of new names on the neophytes, who are also given new, white garment; imposition of the sign of the cross, understood as the seal (sphragis) and dispensation of a drink of milk and honey to the newly baptized'.

Therefore, we see some specific symbols are present in Christian baptism such as water, sin, new birth, nudity, white garment, milk, honey etc. These symbols direct towards spiritual symbolism that is full of mystical experiences. In Islam, there is no rite of Baptism to be seen. ‘The only allusion to baptism in the Quran if found is Surah ii.132: “(we have) the baptism of God?” the word here translated baptism is sibghah, lit. “dye”, which, the commentators al-J alalain and al-Baizaw, say, may, by comparison, refer to Christian baptism, “for”, says al-Baizawi, “the Nasara” (Christians) were in the habit of dipping their offspring in a yellow water which they called al-Mamudiyah and said it purified them and confirmed them as Christians’. Islam is the last religion of Semitic tradition of religions which faiths upon the prophets and scriptures of Judaism and Christianity. It also projects the symbolized death through baptism.

In Hinduism, the initiation of a neophyte is to take diksha. The life of a Hindu is divided in four stages (ashrams) according to Vedic literature. J.P.S. Uberoi observes

268 The asramas are four in number: (1) the brhmacharya – that of a student, (2) the grihastha – that of a married man, the house-holder, (3) the vanaprastha – that of retired life in the forest, after abandoning the home, preparatory to complete renouncement of worldly relations, and (4) the samnyasa – the life of complete renunciation of worldly relations and attachments".
that ‘the candidate intending to attain renunciation must first go on a pilgrimage to find a guru, who should be a Brahmin; and then the latter on his part, satisfies himself as to his fitness and proceeds to initiate him. The neophyte commences with the shraddha (obsequies) to his ancestors to fulfill his obligations to them. He next performs the sacrificial baji hawan and gives away whatever he possesses, severing all connection with the social world. His beard, moustaches and head are entirely shaved (mundan), retaining only the scalp-lock (shikha), and the sacred thread is put aside. He then performs the atma-shraddha or his own death rites’.269

The ceremonies of diksha and mundan are performed by Jainism and Buddhism also when a devotee of these faiths take entry into the religion. The yogis also follow mundan at the time of initiation. They wear mudra in the ears and known to as Darshani, Kanphatta and Naths. ‘In Jogi initiation the neophyte (chela) is first made to fast completely for two or three days. A knife is then driven into the earth, and the candidates vows by it not to (a) engage in trade, (b) take employment, (c) keep dangerous weapons, (d) become angry when abused, and (e) marry. He must also scrupulously protect his ears, for ‘a Jogi whose ears were cut used to be buried alive, but is now only excommunicated’. The neophyte’s scalp-lock is removed. He bathes and is smeared with ashes, then given other clothes to wear, including the kafni (shroud). The guru-mantra is communicated secretly, and on probations his ears are pierced and

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ear-rings inserted by the guru or an adept'. Thus, these are the different types of initiations in Hinduism.

Khande ki pahul in Sikh Panth or Amrit is the higher spiritual stage to initiate a being. ‘Pahul or Amrit sanskar, is the name given in the Sikh tradition to the ceremony of initiation. The word pāhul or pahul is a derivative from a substantive, pahu - meaning an agent, which brightens, accelerates or sharpens the potentialities of a given object. In the history of Sikh faith, the initiation ceremony has passed through two distinct phases - from the time of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder, upto 1699, charanamrit or pagpahul was the custom. Charanamrit or pagpahul meant initiation by water touched by the Master's toe - the charan and pag both being equivalent of the word 'foot'.

Amrit is the Divine element, which has been blessed by the Guru. Guru Nanak got the Amrit from Akal Purkh. In the conceptual philosophy of Guru Granth Sahib, it is the Divine Nam of Ultimate One. By partaking it, one can cross the fear of death. The whole Bani of Guru Granth Sahib is Amrit. He, who enshrines in his heart the immortalizing Gurbani, begins to meditate on the Divine Nam. Mcleod makes a comment on the production of rahit (code of conduct of Khalsa) and tries to find some differences between the practice of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. As he writes

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272 hAu FwFI vykwru kwrY lwieaw ] rwiq idhY kY vwr Durhu Purmwieaw ]
   FwFI scY mhil Ksim buiwieaw ] scI isPiq swlwh kpVv pwieaw ]
   scw aMimRq nwmu Bojnu awieaw ] gurmqI KwDw rij iqin suKu pwieaw ]
   FwFI kry pswAu sbdu vjwieaw ] nwnk scu swlwih pUrw pwieaw ] (SGGS; 150)
273 gurmuilK sbdu pCwNIaY hir aMimRq nwim smwie ](SGGS; 29)
that ‘pre-1699 sources do little to complicate the issue because there is little in them which one identifies as typical Rahit material. Attention has frequently been drawn to an apparent difference in the spirit and general approach which evidently distinguishes the practices of the tenth Guru from the teachings of the first (the so called ‘transformation of Sikhism’)... Rahit is recognizably a product of the latter period’. McLeod does not know that the understanding of Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak demands the heads from his devotees and challenges the religious orthodoxy and cruelty of state. Khalsa is not a simple movement but a product of whole practice performed by the Gurus. Here it is important to note that McLeod is a historian. Methodological, he does not know that how to understand a religious phenomena. It is fact that Guru Nanak has laid down the foundation of Khalsa. All the Gurus used the name “Nanak” in their own bani. It is clear that it is the thought and vision of Guru Nanak, which has been practiced through the various bodies of Guru. Therefore, the actions of Guru Gobind Singh cannot be unplugged from Guru Nanak. Both are same in the Sikh vision.

Before the ceremony of Khande ki pahul, to initiate a neophyte the rite of Charanamrit was being practiced. In this rite, the water was touched to the toe of the present Guru and it was given to neophyte to drink. But, the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh on the day of Baisakhi, completed the Sikh identity by the creation of Khalsa. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh say that ‘on the Baisakhi day, March 30 of 1699, he called a big meeting at Anandpur. When all were seated, he drew out his sword and cried, ‘Is there anyone here who would lay down his life for dharma?’ At this the whole assembly

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was thrown into consternation; but the Guru went on repeating his demand. At the third call, Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore, rose from his seat and offered himself... He came out with the dripping weapon and flourishing it before the multitude asked again, 'Is there any other Sikh here who will offer himself as a sacrifice?' At this Dharam Das, a Jat of Delhi, came forward and was taken into the enclosure... In the same way three other men stood up one after another and offered themselves for the sacrifice. One was Muhkam Chand, a washerman of Dwarka; another was Himmat, a cook of Jagannanth; and the third was Sahib Chand, a barber of Bidar'.

At that time, a large section of the society had marginalized by the upper caste people. They were ruling and acting the supremacy upon the poor. Unfortunately, Hindus were following the rigidities of casteism and Muslims had social stratification. Hegemonically, the people of upper classes were suppressing others and enjoying the power. Caste was a social division but lower caste people generally belonged to lower class. The experiences of the class can be understood in the words of Frances Angela that ‘class for me was labour, a lack of social rights and the heavy weight of servility which harnessed me to the whims, desires and uses of others. If I have to think of one word that could work as a motif of this experience it is confinement’.

It was such that the people had lower caste identities in the compatibility of the upper class. Everywhere, they had become mere creatures. They had no place in politics and the matter of the state. However, Guru has given them new identity. Their

old identities have replaced into new. There was a need of new identity because ‘identity is a matter of considerable political significance, and is only likely to be advanced when both the necessity and the ‘impossibility’ of identities, and the suturing of the psychic and the discursive in their constitution, are fully and unambiguously acknowledged’.277

Guru Nanak says that if there is a dishonor in life, it is morally wrong to eat anything.278 After demanding the heads from the audience, within some time, Guru appears on the stage in front of the gathering Sikhs, with his five beloved ones adoring new appearances. The five wore new blue clothes, and fully armed. As Prof. Puran Singh explains ‘the Blessed Five were as full-armed soldiers in appearance, with the tresses of each tied in a knot of disciple Dharma gathered on the crown of the head and covered by a graceful turban; and they wore a kind of half-trousers. From within, the Master’s tent came out a new incarnation of the disciple, a new face of the Saint-soldier who had accepted death in love. It was a moment of creation whose full fruition requires the lapse of aeons’.279

The steel-vessel full of water was brought and Guru recited the various Banis. At the time of recitation, the Khanda (double-edged sword of pure steel) was being moved in the water. Khanda is the most relevant here. It is not simply just a weapon. It has so many dimensions of the transcendent and mundane world. Sirdar Kapur Singh says that the Khanda, which was used by Guru Gobind Singh at the day of Baisakhi, March 30,

278 jy jlvY piq 1QI jwie j sBu hrwmu jyqw ikCu kwie j (SGGS; 142)
1699 and now, is in Anandpur Sahib, reflects the dimensions of Bodhisattva, Manjusri and Gita also. He writes that, “Saddharmapundarka, ch. I, where the Bodhisattva, Manjusri, is described as “bearing a double-edged sword, that clean discriminating weapons.” There is remarkable likeness between the double-edged sword preserved at Takhat Kesgarh, Anandpur Sahib as the identical sword….., shown as held in the right hand of bronze padmasana image of Manjusri sculptured in Java, in the seventh century, now preserved in Berlin Museum. It is reproduced in Grunwedel’s Buddhist Art in India, which has been translated into English by Gibson, 1901, p. 200. Compare this esoteric significance of the double-edged sword with the exhortation of Guru Gobind Singh to the Khalsa bidding them to “take up the sword of the true knowledge in hand and destroy the illusion and ignorance of the mind, from the very roots”. Also compare with the Bhagavadgita: with the sword of true knowledge cut out the roots of the nescience and perplexities that invade the mind’.\(^{280}\)

Kapur Singh interprets the Khanda in the essences of True and Ultimate knowledge, which is the highest quest, and actual aim of the human as per the way of Sikhi. Within this, we see the Samurai warriors had a double-edged sword. It was their traditional weapon and they were also the protectors of the Kings of Japan. They were very adept in the hand to hand fighting with sword. This sword was honorable for them, which they got from their ancestors. The movie/documentary The Last Samurai\(^{281}\) projects the vision in its starting that ultimate power moved the sword and in the end, the two drops fall on the earth. One of them was Japan, but they didn’t


discuss about the second drop. It means according to the tradition of Samurai, who are the followers of Zen saints (the peak of Buddhism) presents that Japan was born from sword. In the vision of Guru Gobind Singh, first and foremost, Akal Purkh created the Khanda and then generated the whole world. He says that, ‘The Lord first created khanda, the double-edged sword and then this manifest world. Having created Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, He created the entire play of qudrat (manifest world)’. It means Khanda projects the multi-dimensionalities of the creation and creator. To take a Khanda in the hand means understanding of both worlds.

Similarly, water is also very important in Amrit. Water plays an amazing performance in the initiation ceremony in all the religions, when they baptize a neophyte. The documentary, Water: the Great Mystery of the Universe tells us that water has memories. It has the magnetic frequencies, which preserve the countless experiences and realizations of the human memories. Every sound/music/vibration influences upon it heavily. Through feelings and emotions, water creates stunned and extra-ordinary result. The Eastern and Western philosophies, both regard it as an important element of creation. And Guru Granth Sahib says about water that;

‘the first of living thing is water,
Whereby is each object sustained’. 

284 pihlw pwNI jIAu hY ijqu hiraw sBu koie ] (SGGS; 472)
The Western thought accepts the four elements of creative process of the universe creation such as water, fire, earth and air. M. Night Shyamalan directed a beautiful movie; The Last Airbender\textsuperscript{285}, which teaches the lesson of ‘acceptance’. In this movie, when the angel of air seems feeble and could not make concentration, then he goes to water-land. There the teacher of water-philosophy tells him that the major attribute of water is acceptance. It gives place to you for releasing your motions as such.

The water has supra-consciousness and multiple dimensions. Jean Rudhardt states that ‘water often assumes a feminine character. The Apsarasas of India and the Greek Naiads and Nereids, are young women caught up in erotic adventures. But water can also be masculine. “They rest on sperm, as Varuna rests on the waters”, says the Brhadaranyaka Upnisad 3.9.22. to the Greek poets, the heavens send rain, like seed, to the earth, in an amorous outburst. The Egyptian god of the floodwaters of the Nile - Hati, the dispenser of life - is androgynous, and Nile is imagined as half man and half woman. Its water are father and mother. In Greece the rivers are strongly masculine, and like the gods of the storm and of rain, have the attributes of a bull’.\textsuperscript{286}

Thus, the water has so many attributes, which project it as the power. Due to this, it has been respected as God in various traditions of faith. Psychologically, the water’s mind faculties are uncountable. The science has not been able to trace these till now. However, the spirituality knows about it very well. The prophets of religion give

\textsuperscript{285} M. Night Shyamalan (producer & director), The Last Airbender, Paramount Pictures & Nickolodeon Movies.
blessing through this as per their own way. ‘Water can be ambiguous. As a fluid, it can symbolize a pure absence or as yet still amorphous material that will be used by the gods. It may fulfill a positive function. It bathes, dissolves, and purifies. It symbolizes a generative or life-giving quality, very similar to creative power. It is thus divine and sacralizing’.  

Guru Gobind Singh chooses the way in the Hukam of Akal Purakh. When Guru was preparing the nectar of immortal, the wife of Guru comes with sugar-plums. Prof. Puran Singh says that ‘the Nectar was ready as he had just finished the chanting of his Mantram, when the Mother of his disciples came with sugar-crystals and stood waiting before the Master. “Welcome, good lady!” said he, “power without sweetness of soul means little. Pour the gift into the Nectar, so that our disciples may be blessed not only with power but with the grace of a woman-sweet soul”. And the Mother thereupon sweetened the Nectar. The incoming of Mata ji and her contribution to prepare the Amrit states that women play an important role in Sikhism. Khande ki pahul has three main features. First, the initiation process is rather different from the other faith. Second, the objective of Amrit is to live on this earth with dignity and in the service of whole creation but other faiths have motive to disconnect the person from this planet. Third, Khalsa (who has blessed by Amrit) is the responsible person and fights for justice and equality. He loves the cosmic and luminous world.

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When the Guru was preparing Amrit, at that time every moment and action was in cosmetic vision. Khanda, round-able vessel, water, sugar-plums, chanting Bani creates the sacred music. Through the initiation of Khande ki pahul, a Sikh becomes Khalsa. Guru Gobind Singh gave right to the five beloveds to perform this ceremony. Therefore, five blessed beloveds can do this ceremony under the supervision of Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh had created Khalsa and he had gifted five special features, Kakars {Kesh (unshorn hair), Kangha (comb), Kirpan (sword), Kara (steel bracelet) and Kacchehra (long breech)} which are the symbols of distinct Sikh identity.

Symbols of Sikh Identity:

Keeping uncut hair is essential for a Khalsa. In Guru Granth Sahib, there are many references towards cosmos beauty and importance of the hair. For example, Akal Purakh has long hairs. The hairs are like fans which are for whisking upon the saints. Every single hair meditates on the name of Lord.289

Unshorn hair is an essential part of Sikh rahit. In rahitnama literature, there are compulsions to keep hair intact and strict prohibition to cut the hair. Tankhahnama Bhai Nand Lal290, Rahitnama Prem Sumarag291 and Rahitnama Bhai Chaupa Singh292 state

289 sohNy nk ijn lûmVy vwlw } (SGGS; 567)
kysw kw kir bIjnw sMq cAuru FulwvAu } (SGGS; 745)
kysw kw kir cvru Fulwvw crN DUiV muiK lweI } romy roim roim mY gurmuiK rwmu iDawey rwm } (SGGS; 443)

290 kMGw donAu vkq kr
   pwg cunih kr bWDeI]
291 isr kys rzKY, dûir n krY, Bdr nw krY]
292 gurU kw isK kysW dI pwlnw krY[ do vkq kMGw hovY]
that keep the hairs and comb them twice a day. Don’t perform the ceremony of Bhaddar. Sainapat was a great poet in the court of Guru Gobind Singh. He is also the first biographer of Guru Gobind Singh. In his Sri Gur Sobha, he insists upon Khalsa rahit very much. For him, Khalsa is the greatest creation of the world and Guru is the cover-shed of the whole universe. He is against the ceremony of Bhaddar. In this ceremony the persons cut their hair on the time of any death and also at the moment of initiation. He explains that Guru directs the Sikhs to avoid Bhaddar. Although the parents have died, there is no need to cut the hair. Bhaddar must not happen in omission also. Follow the sermon as truth.\textsuperscript{293} Sainapat says that who neither smokes nor cuts the hair of the head and beard; he is the true Khalsa of the Guru.\textsuperscript{294} In the love of Guru Gobind Singh, Bhai Nand Lal writes that, ‘my faith and action, both are prisoners of the fairy-faced. The present and the here - after weigh less than a single hair of my Beloved’.\textsuperscript{295}

The Sikhs keep the hair with respect and in a cultured way. We see that in the rahitnamas, there is a clear mention about the combing of hairs twice a day. It also highlights the selection of dastar (turban). The kesh are very mystical and have much relation to spirituality. Prof. Puran Singh says that, ‘Don’t you know these tresses of ours are the wandering waves of the sea of illusion? Guru Gobind Singh gathered the waves of the Ocean of Consciousness as the mother gathers the hair of the child. What is man but an ocean of consciousness. The master washed them, combed them and

\textsuperscript{293} Sainapat, Sri Gur Sobha, Ganda Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1996, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{294} Ibid, p. 81.
bound them in a knot as the vow of the future manhood which shall know no caste, no
distinction between man and man, and which shall work for the peace and amity of
spiritual brotherhood. He who wears His knot of hair is a brother to all men, freed of all
ill-feeling of selfishness'.

The unshorn hairs are the symbol of unique Sikh identity. The turban and the
unshorn hair constitute the symbol of uniqueness. In the world, there are various faiths,
traditions and many historical personalities, icons and models; but Sikhs keep the hairs
in their own way. As G.S. Sidhu says that the Sikhs must not be worried about the
people of other religions that they keep their hairs or not. Because the Sikhs did not
decide to keep their hair on seeing other religions, rather these are the part of their
religious identity. Of course, the hairs are natural gift to the human but for Sikhs; these
are the blessings of Guru and the stamp of Sikhi. To follow the message of Guru in
practice, it is the holy duty of the Sikhs.

Kangha (comb) has the spiritual importance in Sikh faith. In the Indian spiritual
tradition, mostly the hairs of the angels, prophets, god and goddesses are unshorn. On
the other hand in the practices of Indian ascetics and certain monastic order, hair
seems to be in matted conditions. They do not care for their body and its parts, in the
meditation. But we saw in the above discussion of Kesha that Sikhs respect their hair
and they always keep it neat and clean. Combing of hair, twice a day has been
mentioned in the Rahitnama literature.

Puran Singh said about the hairs that these are the waves of consciousness. Bhai Vir Singh in his poetry expresses the inner experiences. To symbolize these he uses the metaphors of Bijliyan De Haar, Leheran De Haar etc. To control the flashes of religious light, Guru gifted a comb to the Sikhs. Maulana Hamid Shayar Kalandar in Khair-ul-mjalis informs us that Baba Shaikh Farid had a comb. He tells a Sakhi about Shaikh Farid ji that once a Sufi saint came to Baba ji and at the time of valediction, the Sufi demanded a comb from Baba ji.

The Sakhi indicates about the Sufi desire of zabat (equilibrium). The demand of kanghi has been fulfilled at the time of Guru Gobind Singh when the Sufi saint Pir Buddhu Shah demanded the Kangha after the war of Bhangani. In the love, Guru Gobind Singh gifted the Kangha and also half of his turban. Avtar Singh tells us about the degrees of human consciousness that the journey of human’s I Quo (intelligent quotient) to E Quo (emotional quotient) and S Quo (spiritual quotient). According to him, the uncombed and open hair of the poets, painters, filmmakers and sculptures tells us about the beauty of openness and intemperance. In the way of E Quo, the consciousness of a human doesn’t cling in Seva (service). In the aura of S Quo, the beauty (suhaj) transforms in equilibrium (seheja). The Kanghi is the symbol of beauty and the Kangha is the symbol of equilibrium.

Kangha creates the balance and controls various dimensions of mind and others. In the battle of Chamkor, once a Sikh came to Guru Gobind Singh and said that my
arrows are missing the target. Guru Gobind Singh asked him that did you comb the hairs at evening. The Sikh remembered that he had not, as he had no time to comb in the evening. The Sakhi expresses that the Kangha covers the human tendencies and the layers of mind.

Every Khalsa must keep the sword (kirpan/khanda/sri-sahib/bhagauti/kharag/teg) obligatory. In the previous pages, it has discussed the various dimensions of Khanda, the double-edged sword. One meaning of the Kirpan is blessing with honour. At the front of Kirpan, there is actually no enemy. Kirpan just blesses upon the jiva and gives the emancipation from evil spirit. The Kirpan symbolizes the light of true knowledge. It cuts the darkness of nescience. The Khalsa was born through the double-edged sword. The Sikh experience of sword is also such as Ultimate Almighty. In the Dasam Granth, Shashtamammala explains the various names of the weapons which symbolize the Akal Purkh/Waheguru. According to this, Akal Purkh is tir/ass/kirpan/khanda/kharag/tupak/tabar/talwar/teg etc.\textsuperscript{301}

Due to the codification/conceptualization of Sant-Sipahi, the Sikh way of life about war and peace is different from others. A Sikh uses the Kirpan for defence as well as offence. The Sikh experience of Teg describes to create the balance on the earth. Due to this, in the Sikh realizations, concepts such as Miri-Piri, Deg-Teg, Sant-Sipahi

\textsuperscript{301} as ikRpwK MfKo Kvq quqk qbr aru qIr| sYP srohI sYhQI XhY hmwrY pIr| qIr quhI sYhQI quhI quhI qbr qlwrr| nwm iqwwo jo jpy Bey isMD Bv pwr| kwI quhI kwI quhI quhI qyg aru qIr| quhI inSwnI jI qI awju quhI jgbIr| Rattan Singh Jaggi and Gursharan Kaur Jaggi (eds.), op. cit. (vol.3), p. 402.
and Sangat-Pangat perform in a parallel manner. A Sikh raises the Kirpan when all the means are finished.  

The iron bracelet on the right wrist of a Sikh symbolizes the whole spirituality of the universe. The iron, pure steel is the preventer from evil spirits. The earth, sun, moon etc. are round in shape and the planets move around the sun in circles. In Shurti experiences, we see the Chakarvarti, who moves around to pursue the dharma. The yuga experience of time is also in circles. Satyuga, tretha, dwaparr, kulyuga come again and again. In Kurkushetra, the battlefield of ancient fighters Kauravs and Pandavs, there is a temple, which signs that you will come back here after 5000 years. The Hindus believe that life is in circle, which they want to cross through the chakarvarti. The Buddhists also establish the Dhammachakka to pursue their religion. In the present human consciousness, it is for the first time that the Sikh Guru tells us that no one knows when the earth came into existence. The wise men of the universe do not know about the creation of universe and what the date, day, month, season was exactly. Only and only He (the creator) knows about it.  

Before Sikhism, every religion laid a claim about the creation of the universe. But the Sikh experience denies it and explains that there is no beginning or end. The Kara shows this. Kapur Sigh says, ‘A circle, a chakra, is a perfect figure, all-inclusive in its circumference and without a beginning, without an end, in its structure. Symbols like

\[ 302 \text{cUM kwr aZ hhm hIlqy dr guZSq[ hlwl asqu burdn b SmSr dsq]} \]
\[ \text{Ibid. p. 678.} \]
\[ 303 \text{iQiq vwru nw joqI jwNY ruiq mwhu nw koeI ]} \]
\[ \text{jw krwq isrTI kAu swjy awpy jwNY soeI ]} \text{(SGGS; 4)} \]
the circle, the disk, the cube, Carl Jung explains, have been considered symbols of
wholeness, perfect divinity. So must a Sikh aim to be God-centered, with the whole
creation as the objective of his compassion and activities. 304

The iron bangle covers the Dhammachakka and Chakarvarti experiences. In the
right hand, it directs a Sikh to move on the right path. The spiritual experienced being
can raise the sword perfectly otherwise, the sword becomes the reason of cruelty. The
iron-bangle takes hold on the hand to think the path of truth, which is gifted by Guru.

Kacchehra/Kachh/Kachha, a short drawer covers the genital organs and the
thighs upto knees. It is obvious that when the body of a person goes through the
meditative/mystical/spiritual experiences, it realizes the experiences of nature and
universe. Due to this, the monastic and ascetic experience covert a devotee from
nudity, for example Degamber in Jainism, Naked saints of India, Sufis like Sarmad in
Islam etc. But the Sikh experience achieves a state of equilibrium (Sahaj) in this life.
According to Gubhagat Singh, ‘The Sahaj of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is simultaneously
enlightened thought, quintessence of knowledge, manifestation of light (jot) and Sahaj
Samadhi. It is listening to the anhad dhuni (unstuck/ceaseless sound)... Sahaj is an
eccstasy-giver or kalalan. But this ecstasy is a combination of transmittal bliss and
knowledge that arises from being with Waheguru, the Guru of Wonder. The “sexoyogic” joy of the tantric Sahaj, and the rise of the Kundalini in the daswan duar/tenth
door integrating Siva-Sakti. The moon and the Sun of the Hath Yoga, has been

transformed into the joy and sacred meeting with the Guru of Wonder. It is a sense of “Bismad”.305

The Sikh Kacch is the symbol of civilized way to live on this planet. No doubt, the Sikh Gurus within their innumerable efforts carried on the process of civilization. The Sikh religion, on the other hand postulates social organization as the necessary context in which the Sikh way of life must be practiced. It conceives of the summum bonum as gradual enrichment and enlargement of human personality through a systematic cultivation of human values. It, therefore rightly repudiates this ascetic ideal based on the Sankhya system of which digambara nudity is the primary characteristic. The wearing of the kaccha is indicative of this repudiation.306

Thus, Symbols are the projection of unsayable experiences, things and secrets. Symbols are different from signs. The sign is interchangeable at will. It does not arise from necessity, for it has no inner power. The symbol, however, does possess a necessary character. It cannot be exchanged. It can only disappear when, through dissolution, it loses its inner power. Nor can it be merely constructed; it can only be created. Words and signs originally had a symbolic character.307

The symbol by its inner power has the secrets. Every symbol has its distinct meaning but in different traditions, regions, faiths, culture, it may be different also. The religious symbols have their distinct attitudes, tendencies and meanings. Paul Tillich

says that ‘the fact that religious symbols are distinguished from all others in power of expression and immediacy, can be explained only by the fact that it pertains to the soul, and this also holds for the soul of a culture, must be defined precisely by the relation to the unconditioned transcendent. When this “soul” - apart from all objective, empirical relations - expresses itself, it does so religiously. It is in this context that the connection between the vital and the culture elements in the “soul” can be understood’.308

Religious symbols have the power to explain and connect the transcendental world with this mundane world. The connection between symbols and identity is very important. Every religion has their own symbols. Their symbols explain their identity. It does not matter that any symbol may be having different meanings in different traditions. For example, in Christianity, snake is the symbol of Satan but in Hindu tradition, it is worshiped. So, different symbols have their different experiences that project their own faith.

Significantly, symbols are very authoritative in every tradition of faith. Through symbols, every mode of realization and thought reflect the unseen and inner experiences. There are so much correlation among myth, ritual, spiritual and symbols. Due to much relevance, the study of symbols has become a major part of world academics especially in religion, psychology, history and cultural studies. About the importance of symbol, Malory Nye says that ‘in each case the symbols are important because of their specific culturally determined meanings. A Christian may know why the eucharist or mass is important and the place within that ritual of bread and wine is

symbolic of the ‘body of Christ’ - because they have some ideas that lie behind it. Likewise a Hindu may take for granted the significance of ghee in sacrificial Vedic ritual. Looking at another’s symbols, however, the substances may appear meaningless (and sometimes even repulsive), because we have no idea of their meanings’.  

Symbol gives the meaning according to the praxis of that age which is being practiced in its unconscious world. There memory is also very important because symbols are the way to memorize the past. In religion and the study of religion, the symbols of any religion give the sacred and secret meaning of their religiosity. The thinkers of religions confess that spiritual experiences and realizations of a person cannot be said directly. Due to this, experienced spirits/bodies use the symbols to say the unsayable things. For example, Islamic thinker Faridudin Ataar in his masterpiece Mantikutair through the conferences of birds explains the seven valleys of spiritual world. For spirit, he uses the symbol of birds. The processes of spiritual realizations are much different from the imaginative thoughts because in the whole writings of the prophets and holy persons, the mind is rejected at the first stage. When a person realizes the experiences of inner world and the metaphysical things/place, to describe these, he finds and chose the symbols from his/her tradition/culture/civilization etc.

Symbol is not an object. Sirdar Kapur Singh says, ‘A symbol is different from a thing in so far as it has meaning also, while a thing has mere utility and no meaning. A

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309 Malory Nay, op. cit., p. 132.
symbol must have a meaning, primarily, but it may be a thing of utility also’. Symbol plays a very vital role in religion. ‘Every sentiment, every ideal, every institution associated with the phenomenon of religion, be it noble or ignoble, subsists in an atmosphere of symbols. It is through symbols that religions survive in our midst and through symbols that we gain access to the religious life of past or alien cultures’.  

So, the intimacy between religion and symbols makes the hub of conscious and unconscious experiences. Symbols are very important in the Khalsa identity. Kakars are the main symbols of Khalsa. These symbols are the tokens of love, blessed by the Guru to the Sikhs. In Sikh Panth, Khalsa is the representative entity. Khalsa is the climax of the Sikh identity. His experiences, outlook, praxis and such, are much distinct rather than others. He seems clearly distinct among the thousands people of other traditions, beliefs and faiths.

At the time of creation of Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh states that the Khalsa will wear the five symbols which are mandatory for him. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh explain that ‘they (Khalsa) were to wear the same signs, all beginnings with the letter K: long hair (kesh), a comb (kangha), a pair of shorts (kacchha), an iron bracelet (kara) and a sword (kirpan). They were to have a common surname, Singh or lion. Bravery as much as peace and purity, was to be their religion’.  

313 May be, these authors have not attention about the difference between sign and symbol. We have already discussed that there is much difference between signs and symbols.
To more details see – Paul Tillich, op. cit.
314 Teja Singh Ganda Singh, op. cit., p. 69.
Prof. Puarn Singh says that, Sache Patsah (Guru Gobind Singh) blessed his beauty to his child Khalsa, blessed the sword, blessed the kara, kachh, sword and kangha, blessed the kesh, blessed the horse to ride, blessed the supra-consciousness, blessed the everything and said that surely I shall meet you in my own form, keep it my remembrance, it is my worship and love. These things are mine not yours. I know that you don’t know about these, you are not aware, but keep the deposit. It means Guru knows about the relevance of symbols that have been coined by him. It is also very notable that the symbols have specific meanings. They must be interpreted according to the particular tradition, in which they have emerged in their own way. For example, snake in Christians is the symbol of Satan but in the Hindu tradition, snake is respected and worshiped.

Thus, the five ‘K’ explores the meaning, which directly seems distinct rather than other. The Sikh experience accepts the truths of other traditions and gives them a new meaning, interpretation and a way of path. JPS Uberoi says, ‘The primary meaning of the five symbols, when they are taken together, lies in the ritual conjunction of the two opposed forces or aspects... The aspect of assertion and aspect of constraint combine to produce what we may call for want of a better word the spirit of affirmation in history and society, characteristics of Sikhism as an example of modern non-dualism.’

The five symbols or Kakars are the highest signs of the distinct Sikh identity. Although before the administration of Khalsa, the Sikhs were practicing the life

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distinctively but these symbols made them clearly distinct from others. Niharranjan Ray says that, 'be that as it may, one can hardly doubt the hypothesis that these symbols worn externally, differentiated them socially from the Hindus and the Muslim alike. They also seem to prove that, symbolically speaking, they illustrate the Sikh concern for achieving a harmonized balance between negation and acceptance.'

The Khalsa must avoid the four transgressions;

1. Dishonouring the hair;
2. Eating the meat of an animal slaughtered the Muslim way;
3. Cohabiting with a person other than one's spouse;
4. Using of tobacco.

And the Khalsa must boycott following people;

1. Anyone maintaining relation to communion with elements antagonistic to the Panth including the minas (reprobates), the masands (agents once accredited to local Sikh communities as Guru's representatives since discredited for their faults and aberrations), followers of Dhirmal or Ram Rai, et. al., or users of tobacco or killers of female infants;
2. One who eats/drinks left-overs of the unbaptised or the fallen Sikhs;
3. One who dyes his beard;
4. One who gives off son or daughter in matrimony for a price or reward;

5. Users of intoxicants (hemp, opium, liquor, narcotics, cocaine, etc.);
6. One holding, or being a party to, ceremonies or practices contrary the Guru’s way;
7. One who defaults in the maintenance of Sikh discipline.\textsuperscript{319}

\textbf{Conclusions:}

1. Sikh identity takes its real form through the institutions. Guruship is the most important institution for Sikh identity. Guru Nanak created Dharamsala/Gurdwara, the major institution of the Sikhs, which is a center of Sikh spirituality. The Sikh principles take practical shape in Gurdwara. Sikh experience of Nam, Dan, Isnan, Sangat, Sewa, Simran, Langar and Pangat makes an empirical paradigm of Sikh identity.
2. Sri Harmandir Sahib is the unique model of Sikh Gurdwara. Sri Haramndir Sahib, situated in Amritsar (the holy tank) is the place of emancipation from all the evils. The structure, formation, archetype and vision of Sri Harmandir Sahib refer to a unique formation of Sikh identity. The four doors of Sri Harmandir Sahib indicate the Sikh vision of equality and plurality.
3. Sri Akal Takht in front of Sri Harmandir Sahib is the symbol of Sikh religio-socio-political Sikh identity. It is also the symbol of Sikh sovereignty. It creates an awakening in a Sikh, whom is not under any spatial power; instead, he has a direct link with Akal Purkh (the timeless Being).

\textsuperscript{319} Ibid, pp. 38-39.
4. Commitment of the Sikhs in history projects the divine practice of the Sikhs. The uncountable martyrdoms of the Sikhs show the commitment toward Guru. The Khande ki pahul, which created the Khalsa, is the climax of Sikh identity. A Sikh is blessed through the ceremony of Khande ki pahul, which has been blessed upon by Guru Gobind Singh on the day of Baisakhi 30 March, 1699.

5. Khalsa is the Sikh, Gurmakh, who is expressed in Guru Granth Sahib. Khalsa seems distinct not only due to its outlook, which has been beautified within five k’s (Kesh, Kangha, Kara, Kirpan, Kachhehra) but also due to its amazing practice. To keep these symbols, a Sikh seems distinct and on the other hand, these symbols realize him for his ultimate mission and duty on this planet. Within these symbols, a Sikh makes the connection with his Guru and memorizes his Divine Word. He is the Sant-Sipahi, who is responsible and dutiful for the world civilization and society.

6. Ardas is the climax combination of Gurbani, Sangat, Seva, Simran and Kirtan. It memorizes the whole practice of the Sikhs because it explains the great martyrdom, bravery and fighting tradition of the Sikhs. It expresses the whole memory, devotion, commitment, sacrifice and love towards Guru/God/Waheguru. The structure, content and vision of Ardas also make it distinct as compared to other traditions of faith.