Chapter IV

The Sikh Identity: Mediations in Religious

and Historical Paradigms
We have observed that the faith in Akal Purkh, commitment with Guru and the institution of Gurdwara and Sangat play a central role in the formation of Sikh identity. In this chapter, we shall try to find out combinations in religious and historical paradigms of the Sikh identity.

**Early Sikh Tradition of Sikh Identity**

Sakhi experience of Sikh spirituality itself embodies/recollects meta-signs/symbols and has potential to enforce these in the present. It acts as a support to understand the various dimensions of the inner experiences of a devotee/seeker. Sakhi, on one side crosses the limitations of the time and space and on the other hand projects the transcendental experiences in the mundane world. When Guru Nanak receives spiritual enlightenment, he enunciates that there is neither Hindu nor Muslim. Actually, Guru Nanak has given an insight that they have gone astray from the realizations of Ilhaam\(^{320}\) and Sharuti\(^{321}\) experiences. Guru Nanak gives the signs of the realizations of Shabad through Bani. Guru Nanak is the first Guru of the Sikhs and according to the Sikh faith the next nine Gurus are embodiment of the light of Guru Nanak. As Guru Granth Sahib says that;

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\text{‘The proclamation concerning Lehna by Nanak was now spread:}
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\text{The same light permeated him the same praxis –}
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\text{Only the Master his visible form had changed.}
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\(^{320}\) *Ilhaam* is the reveal experiences, which was done by Prophet Mohammad and the Quran is the revealed book in Islam.

\(^{321}\) *Sharuti* is also the revealed realizations, which were experienced by the ancient saints of the Hindus and they manifested this through the *Vedas*.
Over Lehna’s head waved the immaculate umbrella,

As in the Guru’s home on throne he was seated’.\(^{322}\)

Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh declared that the final and Ultimate Guru, is Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Due to this, ultimately Sabad is the Guru in the Sikh realization and experience. Guru Nanak establishes the third path of spirituality. Guru Arjan explains about the distinct mode of the third path clearly. As he says that;

‘I observe neither fasting nor the ritual of the Ramdan month:

Him I serve who at the last shall save.

The Lord of the universe of the Hindus and Allah to me are one:

From Hindus and Muhammadans have I broken free.

I perform neither Kaaba pilgrimage nor at bathing spots worship:

One sole Lord I serve, and no other.

I perform neither the Hindu worship nor namaz:

To the Sole Formless Lord in my heart I bow.

We neither are Hindus nor Musalmans:

Our body and life is Allah-Rama’s Thus has Kabir preached:

By contact with the Preceptor, the Lord have we realized’.\(^{323}\)

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\(^{322}\)Sri Guru Granth Sahib

\(^{323}\)From SGGS; 966

\(^{323}\)From SGGS; 966
Sikh Gurus created a new called the third path of spirituality. The conceptualizations of Sikh identity such as Ultimate Reality, universe and being are much distinct rather than other faith; while in practice, the foundations of institutions, sacred pools, and the other praxis make a distinct history. But, Harjot Oberoi like McLeod is not ready to accept the Sikh identity in the context of whole unity. He accounts Sikh identity gradually as per historical marching. In his view, Sikh identity is in process. He makes comment upon the above verse of Guru Arjan. As he says that, ‘Guru Arjan is only reinforcing Kabir’s thought. In the line with a dominant theme in the medieval sant poetics, both Kabir and Arjan speak of rejecting the received Hindu and Muslim orthodoxies, of not taking part in their formal modes of worship and pilgrimage, of finally asserting that the mystery of the Supreme Being is to be resolved in one’s heart……The quest of early Sikh identity is clearly full of pitfalls’.324

He also writes that, ‘a narrative tradition which represents an image of Nanak in constant flux thus has manifold ramifications for early Sikh-identity. Just as there is no fixed Guru Nanak in the Janam-sakhis, there is no fixed Sikh identity in the early-Guru period’.325 Oberoi observes that the early Sikh identity was unfixed. He also make a statement upon Bhai Gurdas that he is not completely aware about the distinct identity of the early Sikhs. With the reference of an anthology of poetry which was compiled in Rajasthan, he points out the Sikh identity on behalf of the compilation of Guru Granth Sahib. J.S. Grewal says that, ‘his insistence on ‘unfixed’ identity of the Sikh Panth does

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325 Ibid, p. 56.
not appear to be an inference drawn from empirical evidence but a prior assumption. His interpretation of the evidence used becomes forced and far-fetched. The statement that ‘identity’ of the early Sikh Panth was fluid and unfixed essentially means that the Sikh Panth was not distinct from the ‘Hindu’ society. This poses the problem defining ‘Hindu’ society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and of placing ‘religious communities’ or Panth in that society. But Oberoi does not do this. His conception of the ‘Indic’ blurs the issue. Consequently, the term ‘Nanak-Panth’ or ‘Sikh-Panth’ appears to lose all meaning for Oberoi though it carried a lot of significance for the contemporaries, both Sikh and non-Sikh.  

Bhai Gurdas is completely aware about the Sikh identity. He writes that Guru Nanak made his panth distinct. It can never be mixed. ‘The way of life of Gurmukhs is invaluable. It cannot be purchased; on weighing scale it cannot be weighed. Stabilizing in one’s own self and not getting frivolous is his way of life. This way is distinct and does not become defiled even when joined with someone else. Its story is indescribable. This way transcends all omissions and all anxieties. Absorbed in equipoise this gurmukh-way of life gives balance of life. The gurmukh quaffs from the tank of nectar. The end result of lacs of experiences is that the gurmukh never exhibits his ego’. Why did Harjot Oberoi ignore these facts?

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326 J.S. Grewal, Recent Debates in Sikh Studies: An Assessment, Manohar, New Delhi, 2011, p. 112.
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Bhai Gurdas describes about the distinctness of Panth/Sikh/Gurmukh. About the distinct experiences and practices of a Gurmukh, he writes that the person having attained the status of Gurmukh in the holy congregation does not mix up with any bad company. The way (life) of Gurmukh is simple and enjoyable; he does not enrapt himself with the concerns of the twelve sect (of yogis). Gurmukh go beyond the castes, colours and go about in equanimity like the red colour of betel leaf. Gurmukh behold the Guru's school and put no faith in six schools (of Indian tradition). Gurmukh has steadfast wisdom and do not waste himself in the fire of duality. Gurmukh practice the (Guru) Sabad and never forsake the exercise of touching the feet; i.e. he never abandons humility. Gurmukh abounds in loving devotion.\textsuperscript{329}

In the whole context, we observe the terminology and connotations coined by Guru Nanak and his successors have declared the third path. Bhai Gurdas clearly and insistently announces that in this mundane world, Guru Nanak has coined the new path that is Nirmal Panth.\textsuperscript{330} Guru Nanak creates the symbol of Ek oankar (Ý) for His faith. There is no doubt that every religion has its own faith, structure and practice, which make it different among the other religions. Dharam Singh writes that 'different religions have genuine differences, for each religion is a different historical

\textsuperscript{329} Dharm Singh, \textit{Gurmukhology}, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{330} ibid, p. 53.
manifestation of that reality and it presents visions of God, world and humanity from a localized, historically particular perspective. In other words, it can be said that the essence of the Divine revelation is universal but when shared by the receiver-prophet with mankind in a mundane language in a specific historic-religio-cultural context, it acquires limitations as well as the apparent differentiations'.

Guru Nanak through many Sakhis gave the symbols of his new path. One of the sakhis which describes Guru Nanak’s visit to Multan is very important for understanding this phenomenon. In Multan, Guru Nanak was offered a symbolic bowl of milk by the Sufis. They were curious of his path. Guru Nanak replies symbolically and mixes the flower of jasmine in milk. Through this, Guru Nanak was saying that I have my own path like the distinct fragrance of jasmine.

The compilation of Guru Granth Sahib is the major event in the formation of Sikh identity. The Bani is the scripture of the Sikhs. Therefore, the Sikhs had based their whole life upon the ideology, philosophy and vision of the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Granth Sahib teaches the lessons of kindness, liberation, humbleness, love, honour, sacrifice, help to everyone. The conceptualization of Kirat Kro/Nam Japo/Vand Chhko shows the hard work, dedication and honest earning in the remembrance of Waheguru. It is much important to know that Guru Granth Sahib has a distinct place among the scriptures of the world. The verses of Guru Granth Sahib have been written by different traditions of spirituality that makes it distinct. When fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan

331 Dharam Singh, Guru Granth Sahib: Guru-Eternal for the Sikhs, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2005, p. 82.
333 hwQ pwAu kir kwmu sBu cIqu inrMjn nwil } (SGGS; 1376)
compiled Sri Granth Sahib, ‘he included in it certain hymns and poems of God’s lovers who had preceded Guru Nanak or were even singing the praises of God in India. Muslims and Hindus alike were thus honoured, provided their songs did not offend the fundamentals of the Guru’s doctrine; and the hymns of Kabir, Farid and Namdev were especially drawn upon to enrich the Guru Granth Sahib’.  

There are distinct features of Guru Granth Sahib. It combines the varieties of music, which comes from various cultures, regions and faiths. To unite the people on the point of higher spirituality, Guru worked a pluralistic way within the multi-languages, multi-cultures and multi-faiths. Guru Granth Sahib is the beautiful compilation of various forms of music. Kirpal Singh observes that ‘there are various strands of spectrum of ragas in the Adi Guru Granth. It is not the music of single people. The thirty-one ragas in the Adi Guru Granth make symphony of various ragas of different countries and melodies of various regions. Besides this a large number of folk tunes and meters from different regions and localities have been used’.  

It is very important to know that Guru Granth Sahib is not a Holy Book or Scripture such as others. It is the living Guru of the Sikh. Sikhs practice in the meditation and realization of the presence of Guru. Khushwant Singh explains that ‘despite all this, the Guru Granth Sahib is not like an idol in a Hindu temple or a crucifix in a church. It is the source and not the object of prayer or worship. The Sikhs revere it

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because it contains the teachings of their Gurus. It is more a book of divine wisdom than the word of God’.  

Guru Granth Sahib is not also the synthesis of different faiths. But, the experiences of Sikh differ from other. Dharam Singh states that ‘it, no doubt, accepts plurality of faiths but this acceptance is not passive, rather it is critical. This critical spirit is quite explicit on at least two very vital points. One, the Sikh Gurus are highly critical of any religion and tradition which sanction and safeguard hierarchical division in our social structure... Two, the Sikh Gurus and the Sikh tradition condemn the religion that mobilizes mass support in the name of religion to actually serve the interests of the contemporary ruling political class. Sikhism is against religion becoming an instrument of political dominance in the hands of the select few’.  

The Guru Granth Sahib has its uniqueness due to the above mentioned experiences and realizations. Its multi, pluralistic and faith uniqueness makes the distinct disciples of Sikh spirituality, which is also a big component of Sikh identity. As per view of Pashaura Singh, ‘the place and the function of the Adi Granth as Guru has inspired Sikhs throughout history in personal piety, liturgy, ceremonies and communal solidarity. It has given them a sacred focus upon which to reflect and in the process discover the meaning of life as Sikhs. It has provided a framework for shaping a  

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distinctive Sikh identity. Thus the ultimate authority within the Sikh tradition, for a wide range of personal and public conduct, lies in the Guru Granth Sahib'.

Kirat Kro, Nam Japo, Vand Chhko is the central idea of the Sikh vision. McLeod says that, ‘the teachings of Nanak and his early successors focused on the nam or divine name, a term which we have already noted as the dominant feature of the popular nam dan isnan formula. For entire humankind, the fundamental problem is the suffering imposed by the cycle of transmigration. Nam, is the sure remedy offered by Akal Purakh, the ‘Timeless One’ who created the universe and is lovingly watching over it. Akal Purakh, the Creator, Sustainer, dwells immanently in all creation and, because all that exists is an expression of the divine being, his creation represents the supreme manifestation of the nam. The nam is the ever-present and all-pervading presence of Akal Purakh’.

Guru creates new person that is Gurmukh. The recitation of Nam makes the person Gurmukh, which is the ideal person of Guru’s vision. The entire creature, living entities, the skies, the universes, the sacred texts and scriptures exist due to the Nam. As;

‘All beings by the might of the Name are sustained.

By the might of Name are sustained continents and universes.

By the might of the Name are sustained the Simritis, Vedas and

Purans.

By the might of the Name are sustained the processes of listening, enlightenment and meditation.

By the might of the Name are sustained the skies and nether regions;

By the might of the Name are sustained all beings.

By the might of the Name are sustained all habitations and abodes.

All by listening to the holy Name find liberation.

Whomsoever by His grace to devotion to the Name He attaches,

Saith Nanak, entering the Fourth State finds liberation.\textsuperscript{340}

The Sikh institutions are the practical form of Sikh faith. Guruship, Gurdwaras (Dharamsals), Baolies, Sangat-Pangat etc. are the manifestations of the Bani. About the character and distinctness of the Sikhs, the writer of Dabistan-I Mazahib writes that, ‘Guru Hargobind could think of giving practical lessons to his opponents in the battlefield in effective use of the sword. The Sikhs did not observe any Brahmanical taboos about food and drink. There was nothing of the worship (‘ibadat) and austerities (riazat) stipulated by the law books of the Hindus (shara’-i Hinduan) among the Sikhs. The Sikh belief in transmigration distinguished them from Muslims, and the Sikh

\textsuperscript{340} \text{SGGS; 284}
insistence on the unity of God distinguished them from Hindus. The followers of Guru Nanak had nothing to do with idols in temples.\(^{341}\)

The Sikhs have established their matchless character in this world. Sikh thought gives a universal message and because of this, non-Sikh scholars praise the Sikhs. Historically, the practices of Gurus were unique. Although it was the matter of worship of one God, institutions, respect of the others, honour of the women; though it was the fighting against political state etc. The Sikhs made the Gurdwaras where they were living and every Gurdwara was open to everyone. In the langar anyone can take food.

Gurdwara, Sangat, langar and Pangat are interlinked in the Sikh vision and practice. Gurdwara relates with Guru, there Guru is present. Sangat gathers around the Guru and the langar is for the sangat. This unique combination creates the Sikh identity. Now, these institutions have become the major projections of the Sikh identity because the whole world respects the Sikhs due to their service of free food and the other facilities for everyone without any discrimination. A Sikh has to be a hard worker and he has to share his earning with others who are not able to earn. Like this, a person can find the way of Waheguru. Guru Granths Sahib states that;

> ‘Some sing song of devotion, yet of illumination are empty.

> The starving mulla makes of his house a mosque.

> Others, incapable of earning a living, get ears slit like Yogis;

> Practice mendicancy, losing their caste respect.

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One claiming to be a religious teacher, and going out to beg, Touch
not his feet ever.

Those that eat the bread of their labour and give away something in charity,

Saith Nanak, truly recognize the way’.\textsuperscript{342}

The above account shows that how in the pre-Khalsa period; there were clear
elements of distinct Sikh identity. Although McLeod and Harjot Oberoi will not
acknowledge this reality but there does not seem any gap between Sikh theory and
practice. In the sense of Pierre Bourdieu, who tells us about the habitus\textsuperscript{343} of a culture,
community and group, which makes them distinct from others, the Sikhs followed their
own path.

**The Creation of the Khalsa and Sikh Identity**

The creation of the Khalsa is a climax in the history of the Sikhs. As a quasar\textsuperscript{344} the
Khalsa is the unique personality of the Sikh identity. The Nirmalas, the Udasis, the
Seva-Panthi, the Sehejdhari and the Khalsa are representatives of the Sikh Panth. But,
traditionally, due to the guidance and direction of Guru Gobind Singh, the Khalsa is the

\textsuperscript{342} igawn ivhUNw gwvY glq | BuKy mu1W Gry msIiq ]
mKtU hoie kY kMn pVwey } PkrU kry horu jwiq gwwey ]
guru pIrU sdwey mmqN jwie ] qw kY mUil n lgIaY pwie ]
Gwil Kwie ikCu hQhu dyie | nwnk rwhu pCwNh syie ]1} (SGGS: 1245)

\textsuperscript{343} “The habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulating improvisations, produces practices which
tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative
principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the
cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus”.


\textsuperscript{344} “A ‘quasar’ is a distinct heavenly body distinguishable by its extraordinary radio-action, smaller than galaxies,
yet emitting many million times of energy released by any ordinary star. A quasar is incredibly luminous though
such stellar objects are estimated to be about 5.300 million light-years away from us, while an asteroid or
planetoid is just a junior member of our own solar system, just a little planet”.

eldest son of the Guru who is the main representative of the Sikh Panth. Although all of
the above panths are very respectful in the Sikh Panth but the Khalsa, in the words of
Guru Gobind Singh, is his own form. It has already discussed in the last chapter about
the creation of the Khalsa on the day of Baisakhi, March 30, 1699. Khalsa is the
ultimate manifestation of the Dhur ki Bani. In the history, the Khalsa practiced his life
according to Guru Granth Sahib. For examples, the Bani says that;

‘Shouldst thou seek to engage in the game of love,
Step into my street with thy head placed on thy palm:
While on to this stepping,
Ungrudgingly sacrifice your head’. 345

Khalsa in the view of Guru Gobind Singh is that Khalsa is my persona exclusive. I
reside within Khalsa the excellence. The Khalsa is my front line dependence. I reside
within all time of Khalsa. Khalsa is my Deity intimate. For me Khalsa has the heritagial
repute. The yeaming and the concern of my quest, Khalsa is the evidence of my respite
permanent. Khalsa is the friend superlative. He belongs of parentage concern care-
worn. Khalsa is my elegance elite, friendly relation but stout always. Khalsa is my
brother house-holder that absolves me of burden obviety. Khalsa is the life time of my

345 jAu qAu pRym Ky1N kw cwAu } isru Dir q1I q1I myrI awAu }
iequ mwrig pYru DrIjY } isru dIjY kwiN n kIjY } (SGGS;1412)
bodied feelahle. He is prime source of my vital persona. Khalsa is my guru the most perfect. Khalsa is my literal being in total.\textsuperscript{346}

In history, we see that in the commitment of Guru, the uncounted Sikhs sacrificed their lives. On the other hand, Guru has also committed his life toward Khalsa. The martyrdoms of Guru Arjan, Guru Tegh Bahadur, four sons of Guru Gobind Singh and the uncounted Sikhs show the faith and commitment in Sikhism. Baba Deep Singh, near Amritsar, fought with incredible bravery against the Mughal General. He fought with his head on his hand. Bhai Mani Singh was a very respectful personality in the Guru’s court and he also became the chief Granthi of Sri Harmandir Sahib with the ordinance of Mata Sundri Ji. In the service and love of Guru, he gave his great martyrdom. The executioner of Mughal state cut his body in tiny pieces. It was the true spirit and love of the Sikhs for their Guru which continues. The Guru Granth Sahib says that;

‘In the seat of superconsciousness was struck the kettle-drum
And the weapon hit the target of the heart.

\textsuperscript{346}Dwlsw myro rUp hY Kws] Dwlsih hAux krhuM invws] Dwlsw myro muD hY aMg] Dwlsy ky hAu bsiq sd sMg]

Dwlsw myro ieSt suihrd] Dwlsw myro kihXq ibrd] Dwlsw myro pzC ru pwd] Dwlsw myro suK aihlwd]

Dwlsw myro imqR sKweI] Dwlsw mwq ipqw suKdweI] Dwlsw myrI SoBw SI] Dwlsw bMDu sDw sd fIl]


Dwlsw myro siqguru pUr] Dwlsw myro sijn pUr]

\textit{Sri Sarabloh Granth Sahib ji,} Singh Sahib Baba Santa Singh Ji Chhianve Krori, Sri Anandpur Sahib, pp. 667-68.
As the hero has taken the field, now is the occasion to wage battle.

The true hero is one who fights in defense of the humble;
Is cut limb after limb, and flees not the field."  

The modern western historians of Sikhism like McLeod could not justify their writing due to their methodological approaches. McLeod tries to find the gap between Sikh and Khalsa. Due to this, he understands and writes that before the creation of Khalsa, early Sikh tradition was the Sant tradition. As he assesses that, ‘it was Sant tradition, which provided the basis of Guru Nanak’s thought, an inheritance which like Kabir, he reinterpreted it in the light of his own personality and experience. This is not to imply that he should be regarded as in any sense a disciple of Kabir. There is no sound evidence to support the popular tradition that Guru Nanak met Kabir and little to suggest that he knew any of his work. It is however; clear that Sant tradition was by far the most important element in all that he inherited from his past or absorbed from contemporary patterns’.

Historically, McLeod makes demarcations between Sikh and Khalsa. For him, the Rahit of the Khalsa makes him distinct rather than other. He also writes that with the passage of time, the above difference has become inadequate. He says that, ‘the Rahit lies at the very heart of the Khalsa and to be a Sikh of the Khalsa one must observe it, at least in a rudimentary sense. Not all who regard themselves as Sikhs would claim to

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347 ggn dmwmw bwijE pirE nIswnY GwAu ] Kyqu ju mWifE sUrmw ab jUJn ko dwAu ]
    sUrw so pihcwnIaY ju lrY dIn ky hyq ] purjw purjw kit mrY kbhU n CwfY Kyqu
} (SGGS:1105)

belong to the Khalsa also, though one should acknowledge that the terms ‘Sikh’ and ‘Khalsa’ are becoming synonymous. It is, however, a distinction which deserves to be retained, particularly as so much of this investigation will concern the eighteenth century when many Sikhs in fact did not belong to the Khalsa’.  

McLeod do not to assess the spiritual phenomena of the Sikhs, which was generated by the Sikh Gurus. Actually, the Rahit of the Sikhs and the Khalsa has the base of Guru Granth Sahib. McLeod and his team of scholars interpret the Sikh history on behalf of available facts or documents. They did not pay any close intention to the oral and living history, which is manifesting in the experience of Sikh and literature. The philosophy of history is very important to know about any history, which seems missing in the writings of McLeod and his followers. Nicolas Berdyaev says about the philosophy of history that, ‘the philosophy of history studies man in the concrete fullness of his spiritual being; psychology, physiology and other spheres of human knowledge study him incompletely in one order of his aspects. The philosophy of history examines man in relation to the world forces which act upon him, that is, in his greatest fullness and concreteness. By comparison all other ways of approaching man are abstract’.  

Philosophically, due to the conceptions of time and space, the Sikhs are much distinct rather than being other. It has already discussed in the last chapters about the distinct historical experiences of the Sikhs. To understand the philosophy of Sikh history, Prof. Himmat Singh says that, ‘the meta-historical phenomena of the

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Shaheedee Fauj, can never be historicised that is why the historiography and historiology in the Sikh way can never be history-oriented but meta-historically recorded. A recorded should not have mentality only, he should be a Surte otherwise he would ‘erred’ historically. So the people devoid of surte have ‘err’ but of surte has excelled them all, often in ‘accuracy’.

It is important to that the Sant tradition of India had dissolved in the main stream of Vedic India after some time. But, the Sikhs have maintain their distinct identity. The Khalsa fought for Dharma (Divine Cause) according to their Gurus in the Shabad-Surte experience. There is no gap between the words and actions of the Gurus. Some historians write that the Sikhs struggled and fought for the land or kingdom. For this, Guru Gobind Singh gave the signs and he was just a spiritual leader. As A.C. Banerjee says that, ‘Guru Gobind Singh stressed the need of resistance to oppressive exercise of political power; but he did not specifically repudiate the authority of the Mughal Empire, and he did not formulate the ideal of a Sikh state. However, he prepared the ground for political developments in the eighteenth century…He was the spiritual father of the State established by the Khalsa and raised to political pre-eminence by Ranjit Singh’.

We see here the clear distinction between auto and hetro interpretations which were indicated to us by Kapur Singh. The Khalsa has a direct relation to Akal Purakh, he is himself the Akal Purakh. He must not accept the supremacy of anyone on this

353 Sirdar Kapur Singh, *op. cit.*, 2003, p. 34.
earth. As Rattan Singh Bhangu says that the Khalsa is khuda (Waheguru) himself. His virtues are like God. He never accepted the hegemony of anyone. He just accepts the One Almighty.\(^{354}\) Also, there is not any difference among the Khalsa, The Guru and the Akal Purakh. As the Sarabloh interprets that who knows about luminous relish of the self, he is the pure spirit. There is not any distance among the Akal Purkh, me and him.\(^{355}\)

Like this, the Khalsa has the distinct status in the historical age. Khalsa is on the mission of service. It is a gift of Guru to the people of the world. Khalsa shall survive his life for other and to establish the kingdom of truth. In the whole history of Sikhism, the Khalsa is playing a vital role in society. The actions of the Khalsa made a new habit which is going on within the past memories as well as the new achievement. About the marching of the Khalsa, the talk may be understood with the definition of Pierre Bourdieu. As he says that, ‘it is just as true and just as untrue to say that the collective actions produce the event or that they are its product. The conjuncture capable of transforming practices objectively co-ordinated because subordinated to partially or wholly identical objective necessities, into collective action (e.g. revolutionary action) is constituted in the dialectical relationship between, on the one hand, a habitus, understand as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past

\(^{354}\) Kwlso hovY Kud Kudw ijm KUbI KUb Kudwie[ awn n mwnY awn kI, iek szcY ibn piqSwj]

\(^{355}\) awqm rs jy jwnhI so hY Dwls dyv] pRBu mih mo mih qws mih rMick nwihn Byv] Sri Sarabloh Granth Sahib Ji, Singh Sahib Baba Santa Singh ji chhianve krori, Sri Anandpur Sahib, pp. 669.
experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks.\textsuperscript{356}

**Raj Karega Khalsa**

Raj Karega Khalsa is the highly enunciated slogan of the Sikh which is recited every time after the Ardas. This slogan presents the multiple dimensions of the Sikh identity. ‘A work called Nasihatnama (code of guidance of advice), professedly the answer given by Guru Gobind Singh to the questions posed by Bhai Nand Lal about what the Sikhs should and should not do. There is a new feature in the Nasihatnama. The duties of the Khalsa include being armed, riding the horse, fighting in the front, killing khans and subduing the Turks. The aspiration is clearly political. Significantly, the well-known lines of the Sikh anthem appear in Nasihatnama:

\begin{quote}
Raj karega khalsa aki rahe na koi \\
Khuar hoe sabh milenge bache saran jo hoe
\end{quote}

The Khalsa shall rule and none shall remain obdurate. Humbled in the end, all shall join (the Khalsa) and only they shall be saved who take refuge (in the Khalsa). Almost certainly, this prophecy comes from the days of Guru Gobind Singh’.\textsuperscript{357} To earn the words of Guru Gobind Singh, the Khalsa Panth is much responsible. The responsibility of Sarbat Da Bhla, Guru gave to the Khalsa.

\textsuperscript{356} Pierre Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.  
Modernity had produced two main systems; Capitalism and Socialism. Unfortunately, these two systems could not fulfill the dreams and the promises of the people. Due to these systems, the political powers have become hegemonic. The West could not actualize the Utopia. Guru Granth Sahib gives the vision of counter-hegemonic state on this planet. Halemi Raj and Begampura are the dreams of the Khalsa panth which have been injected in the supra-memory of the Khalsa. To actualize it, the Khalsa is practicing the raj karega Khalsa. Guru Granth Sahib says that;

‘Listening to his holy discourse, to the Master I came;
In devotion, charity and holy bathing has he confirmed all.
The whole world, saith Nanak, embarking the boat of truth,
liberation has obtained.
The entire creation day and night worships Thee! With Thy full mind
listen to its supplication.
The whole world I have tested – Thou alone in Thy grace mayst
grant liberation.
Now is the gracious Lord’s ordinance promulgated: None to another
shall cause hurt.

All mankind now in peace shall abide – Gentle shall the governance be.’

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358 nwmu dwnu iesnwnu idVwieaw } sBu mukqu hoaw sYswrVw nwnk scI byVI cwiV jIAu ]jn sB isRsit syvy idnu rwiq jIAu ]
dy kMnu suNhu ardwis jIAu ]
Toik vjwie sB ifTiae quis awpy lieanu Cfwie jIAu ] huiN hukmu hoaw imhrvwN dw ]
} pf koie n iksY rswNdw jIAu ] sB suKwlI vuTlaw iehu hoaw hlymI rwju jIAu ] (SGGS; 74)
Bhagat Ravidas ji writes that;

‘The City Joyful is the name of the city - Suffering and sorrow abide not there.
Neither is there worry of paying taxes, nor does any hold property;
Neither fear of punishment for error nor of decline.
This fine place of habitation have I found: Brother! there weal perpetually reigns.
Eternally fixed is the kingship therein: No second or third are there; all are alike.
Every fully populated, famous is the city. Those abiding therein are prosperous, opulent.
There people disport themselves as they please - All are inmates of that mansion; none bars any.
Saith Ravi Das, the cobbler, freed from all bonds; Whoever of that city is denizen, is our friend’. 359

Dr. Gurbhagat Singh says that there are three main concerns in the 21st century:
(1) Politically, body as an organized and aware being, (2) conceiving counter-

359 bygm purw shr ko nwAu ] dUKu aMdohu nhI iqih TwAu ]
nW qsvIs iKrwjtu n mwlu ] KAupu n Kqw n qrsu jvwlU ]
ab moih KUb vqn gh pweI ] AUhW KYir sdw myry BweI ] rhwAu ]
kwIemu dwIemu sdw pwiqswhI ] dom n sym eyk so awhI ]
awbwdu wU sdw shuUr ] AUhW gnI bsIh mwmUr ]
iqAu iqAu syl krih ijAu BwvY ] mhrm mhl n ko atkwvY ]
kih rivdws Klws cmwrw ] jo hm shrI su mIqu hmwrw ] (SGGS; 345)
hegemonic state and praxis, (3) to be active for justice.\textsuperscript{360} So, the Khalsa can fulfill these dreams because the creation of the Khalsa Panth had been to counter the hegemonies of the evils in the world. To liberate the people from the culture/political/social/economic/religious hegemonies, the Khalsa established the heavenly kingdom on this earth. It was the time of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur\textsuperscript{361} in the 18th century and Maharaja Ranjit Singh\textsuperscript{362} in the 19th century. The Khalsa got the sovereignty direct from Akal Purkh. It is the auto-created attribute of the Khalsa. There is no mediate between the Khalsa and the Akal Purkh.

In the distinctiveness form, the Khalsa is not in any bondage to create the political sovereignty which is the part of his complete sovereignty. J.S. Ahluwalia explains that, ‘through this institutionalized corporate identity, the Guru wanted to create a mighty force in world history - as a temporal vehicle of the Spirit - for introduction of a new societal order, free from evil, injustice and inequity, free from political discriminations and economic disparities, free from creedal exclusiveness. What

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\textsuperscript{361} “In the conquered territory extending over several Mughal sarks, Banda had virtually supplanted the Mughal empire. He heralded the new state by striking a coin, deriving his authority from God through the grace of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. He issued order under a new seal, again invoking the Gurus as the source of prosperity and power. Following the contemporary imperial practice, he initiated a ‘regnal era’ from the fall of Sarhind. On a more substantive plane, Banda set up his ‘capital’, both symbolically and metaphorically, at Mukhlishpur.......The ordinary people, including ‘a lowly sweeper or cobbler’, got opportunities for participation in the new political order”.
\textsuperscript{362} “Maharaja Ranjit Singh endeavoured to usher in an open, pluralistic society characterized by the values of ‘secularism’, justice, liberty and equality. This was a new revolutionary humanistic ethos in the medieval age that otherwise was marked by religious bigotry, communal exclusiveness, sectarian inwardness and compartmentalized value-system. In contrast to the earlier internecine warfare on religio-communal plane, the Maharaja brought in an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence of all faiths ensuring for all the fundamental right to freedom of conscience”. J.S. Ahluwalia, \textit{The Doctrine and Dynamics of Sikhism}, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2001, p. 81.
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was aimed at through the funding of the Khalsa, through the motor force of a new dispensation with a distinctive corporate identity, was the creation of a new world order characterized by pluralism - religious, cultural, economic and political.  

The Khalsa always keeps the vision of peace, love, freedom, respect and equality. There is no explanation in history that anybody had been harmed, discriminated and disrespected by the Khalsa. Guru Granth Sahib states about the respectful identity of everyone. There are many verses in Bani, which suggests to a Hindu to be a good Hindu and to a Muslim to be a good Muslim.

It is notable identity of the Khalsa Panth that in the whole history, the Sikhs never insisted anyone to be a Sikh. Although the Sikhs ruled over the wide area of south Asia, yet there is not a single example of any atrocity on ordinary and other people. Iqtidar Alam Khan says that, ‘some of the families of the Muslim gentry (ashraf) in the Punjab claimed with pride till very recently that their ancestors served in the army of Guru Gobind Singh. One such family of Saiyads of Rawalpindi is reported to have preserved in their possession a manuscript of Guru Gobind Singh’s letter to Aurangzeb… there is only one couplet in the Zafar-nama that may be construed as referring to the chastisement of a particular group for their religious beliefs. These are not Muslims but the ‘image-worshipping’ inhabitants of the hill states. The relevant couplet would translate into English as follows: ‘I have killed the recalcitrant Hillmen who worship images and I am a breaker of images’. This couplet speaks for itself. It

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does not fit at all with the theory that Hinduism then needed a defender, and that

It has earlier discussed about the Sakhi of Multan, where Baba Nanak explained
the secret of his spiritual identity. Similarly, when Guru Gobind Singh was born at Patna
in Bihar, that day a Sufi saint Saiyad Bhikhan Shah from Punjab did the namaj at the
sight of the East. He went to Patna when the Guru was five years old. He presented
two bowls in front of the Guru. One was full of water and there was milk in the second.
Guru Gobind Singh covered both with his hands and the saint understood mystery that
he (Guru Gobind Singh) will protect both traditions of spiritualism, which were prevalent
at the time. These traditions were Semitic and Aryan. The actual practice of the Dharma
was not being followed, only the rituals have been established by the priest class of
both the traditions. Due to this, the imbalance was created in the society by the rulers
of the state. They were misusing the religion in their favor and spreading anarchy with
hegemonic power. ‘The Khalsa Panth, or Guru Panth, was the final answer to the
contradiction between unequal power (e.g. between the rulers and the ruled) and the
principle of religious equality and plural society enunciated by the Gurus. It was not a
conjectural response only... but a structural solution of the problem of the abuse of
power. The political intent of the Khalsa, as the Army of God or Dharma was and is to
watch over the state and intervene, if necessary through dharma yuddha, to influence
and correct it. Dharma Yuddha, as an extension of the principle of service (seva) indeed, is the political ideal or the ideal praxis of the Khalsa.365

Establishment of the holy kingdom in the world is an aim of Khalsa. Within due respect of the Other, Khalsa projected the distinct identity of the Sikhs. Not only by its external form, it is also due to its nature, vision and practice. Amarjit Singh Grewal says that it is not just written or verbal form in the Sikh tradition. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur has stamped upon the new pluralistic consciousness of the world to give his life. Aurangzeb wanted to finish the other religion with sword for the establishment of Islam in the whole world but on the other side, Guru Tegh Bahadur challenged this hegemony and insisted upon the distinctness of other religions, faiths and beliefs. With his martyrdom, Guru Sahib has brought out the epistemic change in the world consciousness.366

The postmodern approach gives space to present the different identities and respect too. That’s why the vision of the Khalsa raj is relevant for the democratic world. In the words of Sirdar Kapur Singh, ‘the Sikh doctrine of Raj Karega Khalsa is a sane, scientific doctrine and legitimate religious aspiration and to attempt to wean the Sikhs, away from it, is a crime against sanity and Science, Religion and God. To exhort Sikhs to insulate religion from politics and to fall into the fatal error of believing in possibility of a full and genuine religious life without a base of political autonomy and a fulcrum of political power, is an utterly mean, unforgivable thing to do. There is no higher truth

and more reliable guidance available to mankind than the principles embedded in and implicated by the words, spoken by the ‘blessed mouth’ of Guru Gobind Singh:

Raj karega khalsa aki rahe na koe,
Khwar hoe sabh milenge bache saran jo hoe.367

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the British state declared annexation. Due to this, in the second-half of 19th century, the Punjab was captured by the Britannia kingdom completely. Under the colonial territory, the crisis of identity spread widely in Punjab. With support of State Christian Mission had become active in Punjab. To begin with, the Christian priests spread the message of Christianity and influenced rich persons of the society and the people who had respect among their folks. In this contrast, three religious organizations came forward to protect their religion and identity. At this time, the Singh Sabha was representing the Sikhs, Arya Samaj the Hindus and Anjuman-i-Islamia the Muslims. These had vast organizational networks scattered over numerous towns in the Punjab. The focal point of their activities was to serve the socio-economic interests of their communities. At the same time, these organizations were involved in defining and asserting the doctrinal basis of their religions. Whereas the resultant proselytizing activities opened debates, preaching generated both intra and inter-communal tension. The development of print culture further accelerated this trend. In fact, press was the most effective medium that was

deployed by these organizations to assert their respective identities and monitor the activities of each other.\footnote{Amrit Kaur Basra, “The Punjab Press and the Golden Temple Controversy (1905): An Issue of Sikh Identity”, Social Scientist, Vol. 24, Nos. 4-6, April-June, 1996, p. 41.}

In the search for identity, the Singh Sabha movement endeavors were appreciable. Singh Sabha, actually, was a reform movement. In this period, there were so many authors of the Sikhs, which were writing literature from various points of views. Bhai Vir Singh, Prof. Gurmukh Singh, Giani Ditt Singh, Prof. Puran Singh, Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, Giani Gian Singh etc. are the most honored and esteemed personalities of the Sikh Panth.

In the last decade of 19th century, Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha wrote the book Hum Hindu Nahin in Hindi, later it was published in Punjabi also.\footnote{J.S. Grewal, Historical Perspective on Sikh Identity, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p. 81.} He deals the question of Sikh identity in details. If we see the whole situation of the Punjab at that time, it was a colony of the British. All the above movement of various religions consciously/unconsciously followed the colonial thought of British. Due to this colonial thought, various countries of Europe captured the countries of Africa, Asia and America. Highly respected colonial thinker Frantz Fanon says that, ‘the colonized, underdeveloped man is a political creature in the most global sense of the term’.\footnote{Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, Grove press, New York, 2004, p. vii.}

The postulates of colonial thought were a new and different for the Indians, basically. It was in the favor to analyse the whole life on the base of logic. When the British priests preached the Christianity with support of state, the Indian movements
tried to counter this. There is no doubt that Singh Sabha tried well to reform and remove the counterfeits among the Sikhs. But on the other hand, Singh Sabha preached about the separate identity of the Sikhs rather than distinct.

Bhai Kahan Singh interpreted the Sikh identity as per quam. He explains the separate formation of Sikh identity. He seems much aware about the distinct existence of the Sikhs in the multi-faith society. As he says that, ‘but a part of the Sikhs in the Army and the education that is now being received, Sikh religion would have been an historical event, only in papers. In His mercy, Waheguru has made the Sikhs aware that taking advantage of the present ‘benevolent’ rule they need to improve their religious and social conditions. And that believing in the sacred Bani of the Gurus they can maintain their existence in the world’. 371

Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha’s ideology about quam also reflects the political identity, which creates the idea of separateness. The practice of the Sikhs in history makes them distinct. About the battles of Guru Gobind Singh, Dr. M.S. Gill says that, ‘Guru Sahib was living in the distinct form. Khalsa Panth was also created as a distinct entity, which was the result of Parmatam ki Mauj. The Singhs were very few in all the battles but they were always in victory. It was due to that the Sikhs were intoxicated with higher objectives. They were creating the atmosphere of freedom and without discrimination world for life and society’. 372

371 Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, Sikhs...We are not Hindus, Jarnail Singh (trans.), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2006, pp. 135-36.

On the other side, Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha relevantly is indicating the signs of Sikh distinctiveness. One of them is interpretation. The book has been read as per identity perspective. In the view of Dr. Gurmit Singh Sidhu, it is right that the crisis of Sikh identity has been presented with arguments in this book but all the arguments are based upon Gurbani. So, this book has much importance in interpretation of Gurbani because this interpretation has been done as per the angle of Sikh identity. In the starting of the book, to give the answer of the basic question that the Sikhs are not Hindus, Bhai Sahib presents the reference from the Gurbani (1) Na hum hindu na muslamaan (2) Hor fakkar hindu muslmaanea. After this he gives the references from the Vaaran of Bhai Gurdas Ji as vaar 38, pauri 9 and vaar 39, pauri 10. In this line he gives the references from Gian Ratanavali of Bhai Mani Singh and 33 Swayyas of Guru Gobind Singh. In this extension, to the distinctiveness of the Sikh identity, he mentions Rahitnama Bhai Chaupa Singh, Rahitnama Bhai Daya Singh, Gur Bilas, Panth Parkaash and Gurpartap Suruj Granth'.

At that time, the Sikhs tried to develop the institutions and have control upon their heritage. The Sikh organizations such as Singh Sabha, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and Shiromani Akali Dal brought the awareness of Sikh identity. The dominant Sikh response to modernity conditioned by the need to enforce clear definition of authority and community in the face of the double challenge of colonialism and of neo-Hinduism. The main purpose impetus behind

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this response was to secure permanent control of Sikh institutions in the Punjab. A government within a government was created as the price of a restored acceptance of the British among Sikhs. In the course of the time, the SGPC became the ‘authoritative voice’ of the Sikhs. As a democratic institution, it has always represented the majority opinion. As such, it has laid the claim to represent the authority of the ‘Guru-Panth’.\(^{374}\)

Thus, in the history, the Sikhs identity seems qualitative rather than quantitative. In the present context, the Sikh diaspora is taking its new shape. Now the Sikhs are spreading in whole world. Consequently, Sikh diaspora is facing new challenges for their identity. Not only Sikhs but also, the other minorities of the world are struggling for their identities. On one side, the technology and globalization has shrunk the world, on the other hand, it has opened a vast area for the talent. Now everyone has time to actualize the self. About the Sikhs, Dr. Muthu Mohan says, ‘the Sikh programme is very much actual. It is to achieve a concrete from a real result in the form of a living or a way of life of an individual and society. Thus, travelling from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, one finds the project of Sachiar or Truthful living realised in the Sant-Sipahi (at the individual end) and in the Khalsa (at the social end). It is thus the concrete idea which took birth in the First Guru, becomes an identity in the Tenth Guru and, the Khalsa comes into existence’.\(^{375}\)

We have observed that Guru Granth Sahib is a main source of Sikh identity. Guru is the pivot of the identity of a Sikh. To actualize it, theoretically he put on the ideas in


\(^{375}\) N. Muthu Mohan, “The Khalsa: Idea and Identity”, in The Creation of the Khalsa and Indian Culture, Madurai Kamraj University, Madurai, 1999, p. 44.
Guru Granth Sahib which expresses the commitment of a Sikh with his Guru and faith in Waheguru. Through Sikh institutions the emergence of social associations, the historical Sikh identity comes forward. The completely Sikh history is the manifestation of Guru Granth Sahib.

**Conclusions:**

1. We have made and attempted to observe the combinations of Sikh theory and its historical practices and we found that there is no gap between Sikh theory and practice.

2. A Sikh leads his daily life according to Guru Granth Sahib and takes directions from Gurus life. Guru is a unique paradigm of Sikh identity. It is also the uniqueness that there is no difference between Guru and a Sikh. In history, a Sikh achieves the position of Guru due to his/her commitment.

3. The Guru gives his powers to the Sikhs and the Sikhs show their commitment towards Guru. A Sikh becomes a great warrior, fighter, knight and martyr. In the love of Guru, uncountable Sikhs sacrifice their lives for to maintain their identity.

4. Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikh identity. It has proliferated by his successors and followers as per his vision. Khalsa is the climax of Sikh identity, which is responsible for completing the vision of Guru Granth Sahib. He is also creditworthy for establishing the Halemi Raj and fighting against injustice. Sangat runs all the institutions, which are based upon the Sikh theory. Sangat
is the Panth, which has the right to take decision for the Sikhs as per Guru Granth Sahib.

5. Sikhs always tried to interpret their self as per Guru Vision. At the time of late 19th and beginning of 20th century, the Sikhs faced identity crisis. But, the Sikhs reinterpreted their identity as per Guru Granth Sahib. It is remarkable that Guru has been the central pivot in all Sikh literature which shows the Sikh faith and commitment.

6. Ultimately, the Sikhs have their faith, love and commitment with their Guru. In history, when the Sikhs faced any problem, they come under the supervision of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. A Sikh always put in his/her best effort to keep the actual identity which has been gifted and blessed by their Gurus.