

Sikh Religion and Christianity
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Third Edition

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G.S.Sidhu

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Information

This is the second of a series of publications addressing the major religions of the world. These works are researched and the content tested thoroughly via wide consultation and elicitation of comments before the final publication.

The objectives are to undertake comparative studies of the most widely practised faiths of the world with a view to promote better understanding and acceptance of differences.

The author, Mr. Gurbachan Singh Sidhu, is a well known Sikh writer who has dedicated his efforts towards researching Sikhism and other world faiths to help promote tolerance and understanding.

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Abbreviations used

GGS = Guru Granth Sahib

Foreword

(S. Gurmukh Singh, Principal, UK Civil Service retd.)

More is known about the Sikhs and Sikhism worldwide today than ever before in the short but eventful history of the Sikh nation. Indeed, as a complete theo-political philosophy which anticipates the “confluence of the world-cultures into a universal culture of mankind” (*Sardar Kapur Singh*), Sikhism, unshackled from the strong Vedic influences in India, is emerging in its true form as the way of life which embraces the plurality of religions and social systems. Sikhism therefore has no difficulty in agreeing with other world religions like Christianity regarding what is “Good” and what is “Evil” in relation to the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of mankind.

Sardar G.S. Sidhu, in this long overdue comparative study of the Sikh religion and Christianity, has brought out the differences between these two world religions. This is a difficult and highly sensitive task, which he has tackled with great dedication. While it is not possible to satisfy all criticisms and comments, on reading this book, I am sure the reader will conclude that he/she has developed a sound research basis for further work.

Sardar G.S. Sidhu has levelled some strong criticism at the semi-literate Sikh priests and *sants*. Such criticism is well deserved. However, the problem also lies with the followers. Sikh immigrants who ape the majority trend for material gain, regardless of the impact on their sense of orientation in a plural society, are heading towards the open seas without a sail. Let them discover the hard way why identification with some established values is a basic need of any civilised society. Cultural pluralism is to be understood and enjoyed in all its variety. That is the underlying theme of the Sikh way of life. Young Sikhs owe it to themselves to know more about their own religion and the religion of the majority community.

Gurmukh Singh
Principal (retired)

Introduction

Some years ago I was invited to address a meeting organised by the Community Relations Council in Gravesend (Kent-U.K.). The topic was “Religion in modern society”. At the end of my speech, a Jew stood up to ask, “In what way is your God different from Jewish God?” I explained that, “God is one. Like the three proverbial blind men we are all trying to comprehend one and the same reality putting emphasis on different aspects.” The man was not convinced. His argument was that the God of the Sikhs couldn’t be the God of the Jews. No amount of rhetoric at my command could convince him.

Since the above incident, it has often come to my mind that perhaps a different approach to the subject would prove more useful to bring people closer and to understand each other’s point of view. This approach is to look upon other religions through our own beliefs and practices, to pinpoint differences and to accord due respect to them as a parallel approach to reality.

These days a lot is being done to bring people closer to each other. Interfaith meetings are held and ethical similarities between different religions are highlighted. This is a very commendable step but it should be noted that unless we learn to understand, appreciate, and tolerate the varieties of doctrines, we will simply be papering over the cracks and not bringing people any closer. The way forward is to identify the areas where we differ and learn to respect these differences.

I find some areas where Sikhism and Christianity differ in fundamentals. This should not in any way diminish my respect for Christian history, beliefs, and practices. In using this booklet I wish to remind the Sikh readers the instruction of Kabir Ji which reads, “Do not call the Vedas or the Semitic books false. Rather he is false who does not use discriminative intelligence in understanding their message (GGS Page 1350)”. (byd kqyb khhu mq JUTy JUTw jo n ibcwrY- pMnw 1350).¹ From the Sikh point of view some of the ideas expressed in this booklet may be unacceptable to Christians but then Sikhism does not claim monopoly of truth. All religions are like different paths to the summit of a mountain. Some may pass through thick forests, the others may cross rocky ravines, but the goal remains the same.

In the following pages an attempt has been made to spotlight some of the areas where Sikhism diverges from Christianity. I can only hope that the readers will look upon it as a sincere attempt to understand the two religions rather than an attempt to implant the superiority of one religion over the other. Our aim, according to Guru Granth Sahib, should be “Awvhu BYxy gil imlh AMik shyLVIAh (pMnw 17)” (come, let us sit down together in common sisterhood and embrace each other as bosom friends GGS Page 17).

My sincere thanks are due to Eleanor Nesbitt Lecturer in Religious Education University of Warwick, Professor C.S Syan of Nottingham, Principal Gurmukh Singh of Southall, Professor A.K.S. Aujila of Huddersfield, Mr. Ranjit Singh Wahiwala of Birmingham and S. Inderjit Singh ‘Editor Sikh Messenger’ for reading the proof and suggesting various changes in the text. Thanks are also due to Sikh Community and Youth Service Nottingham, Mr.S.S.Saran of Birmingham, and a host of other friends who not only read the manuscript and suggested changes but also

¹byd swsqR kau qrkin lwgw qqu jogu n pCwnY (pMnw 381) He finds fault with the Vedas and the Shaastras, and does not know the essence of knowledge (GGS Page 381).

offered positive financial assistance in bringing out this edition. My special thanks are due to Mr. Bakhtawar Singh Sehra of Nottingham who not only persuaded me to write this booklet but also went through the text time and time again to prepare it for the press.
G.S.Sidhu. Nottingham (England)

Opinions

Comparative study of world religions is a most challenging task but one which is made necessary in any multi-cultural environment. Ethnic minorities are justifiably concerned about the erosion of their religious and cultural values. This concern is also shared by all those who are aware of the dangers faced by a disorientated new generation unable to relate to any set of moral or cultural codes of conduct.

In this well researched publication, Sardar G.S. Sidhu has made a most commendable effort to bring out the main differences between Sikhism and Christianity. This is a significant response to an urgent need. The book offers an excellent opportunity, especially for the young reader, to understand the main differences between Sikhism and Christianity. This book is highly recommended for wide reading in the Sikh community and for students of world religions.

Mohinder Singh
Hon. General Secretary,
The Sikh Missionary Society, UK (Regd.)

The author, founder of the Sikh Missionary Society, has written several books/discussion papers and has become a well known and accredited Sikh Scholar. He has made a commendable effort to present a brief comparative account of Sikhism and Christianity in a very systematic, coherent, and logical way. He has carefully extracted the basic concepts of both religions and has illustrated his findings, in depth, applying a simple, clear, and precise style. The writing is scholarly, thought provoking, compact, and lucid. It deserves to adorn the reading shelves not only of every Sikh household, but also merits a place on the shelves of all lovers of religion. It will be well received by general readers, students, scholars, researchers and particularly by the Sikh Youth.

We are living in a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-religious western society infected with drug, drink, smoking, sex, and violence. If we want to protect our next generation from the curse of the western disease, we must think seriously about imparting religious education to Sikh youth and make them aware of their glorious heritage. We must bring out authentic literature in English and Punjabi on Sikh philosophy, culture, and history. This book is a right start towards meeting an overdue need of the Sikh youth. I wish the learned author Sardar G.S. Sidhu every success in this noble task. I am sure this will bring about better understanding, tolerance, and goodwill between the two communities. Sarup Singh Narang

Author/writer

Sikh Religion and Christianity

Background

When people from one geographical region migrate to another they bring with them their cultural and religious values and beliefs. These values and beliefs react with the values and beliefs prevalent in the host community and result in two types of by-products- an additive culture where in the host culture absorbs some of the values and beliefs of the immigrants and enriches itself and a subtractive culture wherein the immigrants lose some of their beliefs and cultural values under the influence of the predominant host culture. The Sikhs migrated to England in large numbers in the sixties and since then many Gurdwaras have sprung up in England. However the dominant Christian religion and culture was bound to affect the Sikh immigrants and the beliefs. Consequently most of the second and the third generations of the Sikhs seem to have lost their moorings and find it difficult to understand what Sikhism means to them.

The situation is further deteriorating because little precious instruction in Sikhism is imparted to the youngsters in our Gurdwaras. In spite of the noble affirmations of Sikhism our Gurdwaras have lagged behind in coming to grips with real issues. Our preachers have been, and still are, content to utter pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities irrespective of the fact whether their audience understand them or not. They repeat the liturgies parrot fashion knowing full well that people's faith is imperceptibly undergoing change and some comprehensive well thought out plans for preaching are necessary. As a result the attendance of youngsters in our Gurdwaras has dwindled down to insignificant numbers and the Guru's message has become for them dull, drab, dreary, and uninspiring. Some Sikh youngsters have been heard saying", There is no difference between Christianity and Sikhism. "Others say, "There is no need for religion". They call religion hotch potch of nonsense' and argue that they get more satisfaction from spending time in the garden or taking a dog for a walk than wasting valuable time in the Gurdwara. For most elderly Sikhs a Gurdwara is little more than a secular meeting place for socialisation, which has a thin veneer of religiosity. Sikhism today is like a switched off boiler whose pilot is still on.

I was utterly bamboozled when one of the local Gurdwaras organised an *Akhand Paath* on Christmas day and the Secretary stood up to say that "Sikhism and Christianity are the same." The *Granthi* then performed *Kirtan* and taking a cue from the line, 'ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸਕ੍ਯ ਜਗ ਕ੍ਯੈ ਸ੍ਵ' ²spoke at length eulogising Lord Christ and confirming the Secretary's views that Sikhism and Christianity are the two sides of the same coin. I have no qualms of conscience in accepting Lord Christ as a religious Leader and showing him due respect but I cannot bring myself to compromise the doctrinal aspects of Sikhism with those of Christianity. "The habit of agreeing", as Cicero puts it, "is dangerous and slippery". The *Granthi* and the secretary were totally wrong. "This thesis is commonly supported by indifferentists, those generous but loose-minded persons who would have us believe that all religions are equally true and that proselytism of any sort is therefore wrong, and that the spirit of God manifests in different guises throughout the length and breadth of this wide world, adapting itself to the different conditions of men and exhibiting the One Truth here in Jesus Christ, there in Krishna or in the Buddha, or again in Lao Tzu or Mohammad. The view may be dictated by greatness of heart; it has, however, all too frequently

² These lines do not occur in Guru Granth Sahib, the religious book of the Sikhs. The meaning is "The omnipotent (literally the sword bearer) is the Lord of the Universe.

been associated with a distaste for constructive thought exhibiting itself in theology, and for dogmatism of any kind, and it has so often sprung from an intellectual laziness which would content itself with comfortable half-truths rather than come to grips with the hard facts which so persistently and unkindly break into the fine-spun web of good intentions. It is only when the facts have been grasped and the differences analysed that there can be any hope of discerning a divine purpose behind the always antagonistic and sometimes warring creeds. The function of the student of comparative religion must be to analyse the facts and point out the differences.” (*Mysticism sacred and profane* by R.C. Zaehner page 198)

John Bowker in his book ‘Worlds of Faith’ writes about oriental religions in Britain and says that these “religions are changing and they are becoming more westernised” (page 19).³ This is not correct. It is not the religion that changes but the practice of a religion that undergoes changes in a new environment. It is now common among Sikh families in Britain to find three types of Sikhs under the same roof. The grandparents appear to be practising and preaching strict moral principles associated with their ancestral religious practices. The parents have comparatively weaker religious convictions but their inherited moral standards keep them attached to parental religion and tradition. The children tend to have neither religious beliefs nor moral behaviour acceptable to the first generation. The situation is further complicated by some jealous Christians who find little good in the oriental religions because according to them wisdom dawned upon this earth only with the coming of Lord Christ and ended with Him. For example Baron Jean Pellec in his book “L’Indes Entrouvre” (India through French Eyes) writes, “Of the two religions whose theories he (Guru Nanak) assimilated, one was Sufism- the other doctrine which deeply influenced the founder of Sikh religion was that of Christianity. *Many pages in the Granth are strikingly akin to the Christian New Testament; indeed it would not be too much to say that a good half of Nanak’s work deals uniquely with the gospel narrative from birth of Christ to the ascension*”. Similarly V. Smith writes, “*Guru Gobind Singh bound the Sikh fraternity together by instituting and adopting two sacraments perhaps suggested by Christian example*”.⁴ These are extremely exaggerated statements and show utter ignorance of the authors about the contents of the Guru Granth Sahib and historical events necessitating the birth of the Khalsa. It should be noted that neither Guru Nanak nor Guru Gobind Singh had the opportunity to meet any Christian scholar.

I think it is high time the Sikhs realised that they have to meet this challenge and spread the truth. For this reason, if not for personal mental equipment, it is absolutely necessary that we study the religious books of other faiths and try to separate the chaff from the grain. Side by side with this we need to review our methods of preaching to our youngsters. Our Gurdwara committees must realise that traditional Granthis, performing Kirtan and expounding Sikhism in Punjabi alone, do not meet our needs and some of them are not even conversant with Sikh tenets themselves.

This book is simply a drop in the ocean. It is not possible within the scope of this study to discuss all aspects of religion in detail. Here only some salient points have been discussed. Much has been left out for the reader to explore.

³ “Religion does not consist in turning unceasingly towards the veiled stone, nor in approaching all altars, nor in throwing oneself prostrate on the ground, nor in raising hands before the habitation of gods, nor in deluging the temples with the blood of the beasts, nor in heaping vows upon vows, but in beholding all with a peaceful soul.” Lucretius: *De reum Natura*.

⁴ Christian Missionary Miss Charlotte Marie Tucker wrote”, As far as I have read, the Guru Granth is wonderfully pure and spiritual. If you could substitute the name, Almighty for *Hari*, and Lord Jesus for *Guru* it might almost seem the composition of hermits in the early centuries, except that celibacy is not enjoined. One might call the Granth the Book of yearning, and I feel humiliated, that I, with gospel light, should in spiritual contemplation and longing for the closest communion with Deity, come so far behind the poor Sikhs”. *Life and letters of A.L.O.E.* Page 289

Chapter 1

History

1.1 History of Christianity

Lord Jesus Christ (Real name Esau), the founder of Christianity, was born in a Jewish family some time between 4 B.C and 29 AD⁵ in Bethlehem (Palestine). His parents Joseph and Mary (Original name Yahoshia) were carpenters by profession. Jesus was born before Joseph and Mary married and the Christian belief is that an angel named Gabriel had appeared to Mary at night and told her that she would be conceived without the agency of Joseph and would give birth to a son who would liberate the world. Joseph first cast aspersions on his fiancé's fidelity but later, on Gabriel's intercession, accepted her as his wife. Very little is known about the early life of Jesus.

The astrologers had told Herod, the king of Palestine that a Jew boy would kill him and bring an end to his kingdom. He, therefore, ordered all Jewish children under the age of two to be killed at once. To save him from certain death Joseph and Mary secretly took Jesus to Jerusalem and ceremoniously offered him in a Synagogue to "serve God". Thus anointed he became Christ (Greek Christos- rubbed with oil)⁶. Later they slipped into Egypt. After the death of Herod they returned to Palestine and settled in Nazareth. When Jesus grew up to be thirty he got baptised at the hands of his cousin John, the Baptist (This is celebrated on the 6th of January as Epiphany).⁷

⁵ There is no agreement on the date of birth. A Jew named Josephus was the first historian to mention the name of Jesus. He gives the date of birth as April 17, 4B.C. The word *cataluma* (meaning the upper room) used by him has been wrongly translated as an *inn* in which Jesus is supposed to have been born. Christmas is celebrated in Britain on 25th December but in some Eastern Churches January 6th is the Christmas day. The last day of the pagan festival of Saturnalia was known as *Ruman Brumalia* and was celebrated with great pomp and show. It is believed that in the Mid-fourth century Pope Julius I decreed December 25th to be Christmas day to overshadow the popular *Brumalia* celebration by imparting Christian connotations to that day. "Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church" (encyclopaedia Britannica 1946 Edition)

How can we say that Jesus was born in 4 B.C (Before Christ)? Time is measured as B.C (before Christ) or AD (*anno Domini* =in the year of the Lord). This practice was started in the sixth century AD by an Italian monk Dionysius Exiguus. He worked on chronological royal tables and started measuring time from the date of the founding of the city of Rome. Unfortunately he miscalculated this date and we are still using his miscalculated dates.

"Historically it is quite doubtful whether Christ ever existed at all, and if he did, we do not know anything about Him". (Bertrand Russell in *Why I am not a Christian*" page 21). The image of Jesus seen today dates to the 5th century AD. The BBC has now reconstructed his image from skulls of Christ's times. This image matches with Indian features and is entirely different from the traditional image.

Nothing much is known about the genealogy of Jesus. Matthew records 26 ancestors but Luke gives 41 and they are all different. The only names common among their lists are David and Joseph. Matthew (1:6) says that Jesus was the 26th descendant of David through Solomon but Luke (3:31) says that he was the 41st descendant from Nathan. "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli (Luke 3:23)". Many Jewish historians do not even mention Jesus. The Talmud describes Jeshchu son of Pandria who was crucified about 100 years before Christ.

⁶ . The word *Messiah* is a Hebrew word. It is the exact translation of Greek word *Christ* (anointed one)

⁷ . Some western churches remember the coming of ' the wise men ' on this day to see Jesus. For some sections of Christians this falls on the 18th January every year.

A Spirit came down from heaven to Jesus as a white dove and he heard a voice saying, "Jesus is the Son of God". Afterwards Jesus devoutly spent 40 days in prayer. John was arrested for preaching that the prophesied liberator had taken birth. He was later slain.

It is said that Jesus changed water to wine, walked on water, stopped a storm, and cured a patient from leprosy. One day he climbed a mountain and preached his religion to the Jews. This speech is known as "The Sermon on the Mount". He said that God had sent him to show the right path to the people and to forgive people's sins. He trained 12 followers one for each of the 12 tribes of Israel (Matt 4:18-22) to preach his mission far and wide. Soon he became so popular that some people tried to crown him as their king.⁸

When Jesus entered Jerusalem the Jewish priests opposed his entry and called him an infidel. Complaints against him reached the king. Judas, one of his twelve followers, was won over by the opposition through bribery and was instrumental in having Jesus arrested. Jesus was charged with (a) profaning the synagogues and preaching heresy and (b) treason against the Government for preaching the establishment of a New Kingdom. He was sentenced to death and later crucified on a cross. He was 33 years old and had preached his religion only for three years. At the time of his death he is supposed to have said, "Father, why have you forsaken me?" His body was placed in a tomb on Friday. On Sunday some of his women followers found the tomb empty and proclaimed that they saw Jesus alive (This is celebrated as resurrection).⁹ After coming to life he is reported to have conversed with his twelve followers for 40 days and to have promised them of coming back to earth once again. Later he is supposed to have ascended bodily into heaven (This is known as Ascension. It falls on a Thursday 40 days after Easter).¹⁰

A few days after his Ascension Jesus' spirit descended upon his twelve disciples. (This is celebrated as The Feast of Pentecost)¹¹. The disciples now took upon themselves the onerous task of preaching Christianity¹² far and wide. Saint Paul (Real name Saul) preached Christianity in Greece, Malta, and Asia Minor. Peter converted 3000 Jews to Christianity in a single day in Jerusalem. Persecution¹³ soon drove the Christians to Syria and Galilee where they established their first places of Christian worship. Peter went away to Rome in Italy. Nero, the Emperor of Rome, accused Christians in 65 AD of burning Rome and fomenting trouble. Peter was sentenced to death. Before his death he wrote 12 letters, which form part of the Holy Bible¹⁴. Civil war

⁸ Lord Christ himself is recorded having said, "But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them, bring them before me and kill them" (Luke 19:27).

⁹ The Jews used to have Saturday as a holiday (Sabbath), Emperor Constantine declared Sunday as Holiday in 321 AD to honour the rising of Christ on that day.

¹⁰ It is believed that two men wearing white robes took him up to the skies (Acts 9-10). While he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:51 Mark 16:19).

This sentence was not found in the Revised Version edition of 1952. It was later included into the later versions of the Bibles (See Collins preface page vi-vii). For a similar story see Muhammad's rise to heaven on *Buraq*. The Muslims (especially Ahmediyas) do not believe that Jesus died on the cross. "They slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them; and Lo! Those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture; they slew him not for certain." (The Holy Quran IV-157). Dr Trevor Lloyd wrote an article titled "*Jesus did not die on the cross*" in '*Today*' Newspaper and claimed that Jesus was still alive when he was taken from the cross and that he later recovered.

¹¹ The word is derived from the Greek word *Pentekoste* (fiftieth day after Passover). Originally it was a Hebrew agricultural festival. On the first Pentecost the apostles congregated in Jerusalem. There was sudden sound from heaven like the sound of rushing wind. With this sound "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:3)

¹² The word "Christian" was first used by the pagans for the followers of Jesus. For the first time it occurred in Antioch about 43 AD. It is mentioned in the New Testament only three times.

¹³ The great persecutors of the Christians were Nero (54-68AD), Domitian (81-96AD) who outlawed Christianity and Diocletian (284-305AD)

¹⁴ It was Paul who first insisted that Jesus should be called Christ (The anointed one or saviour). He was executed by

broke out in Italy and the Romans, who ruled over Palestine, demolished the city of Jerusalem (70 AD). Christians were tortured and killed in thousands.¹⁵ Underground Christian resistance movements sprang up in many places. They were known as 'Kuriakon' (which latter changed to Church). Christianity grew stronger and stronger in spite of persecution. The Romans tried their hard to suppress Christianity around 250 AD but by the fifth Century Christianity got permanent hold in Spain and France.

In 313 AD Emperor Constantine¹⁶ declared Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire. He also held the council of Nicea (325AD) and the Chalcedon Council (451AD) to standardise Christian worship. After 476 AD the Pope¹⁷ of Rome, having become the spiritual leader of the Christians, took steps to spread Christianity throughout the world. Although Christians split into Catholics and Greek Orthodox in the year 1054AD, by the year 1500 AD Christianity became one of the world's greatest religions. During French Revolution (1780-1810AD) Christianity was violently attacked in France and Pope Pious VI was imprisoned in the South of France where he died. In the end the Christians succeeded in achieving a compromise in 1810AD through Napoleon. Today there are about 1000,000,000 Christians in the world.¹⁸ In the following pages we will look at some of the basic points from the standpoint of Sikhism.

1.2 History of the Sikhs

Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, was born in a Hindu family at Nanakana Sahib 48 miles to the south of Lahore (now in Pakistan) in the year 1469AD. His father Mehta Kalyan Das was a revenue officer under a potentate Rai Bular Bhatti. At the very early age of five when Nanak was sent to school, he showed signs of spiritual excellence and divine knowledge. His acrostic called *Patti Likhi* was composed at this early age and is now recorded in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Nanak was married in 1485AD and had two sons. His father, realising that Nanak was showing scant regard for family traditions, tried to involve him in business. Guru Nanak, much to his father's annoyance, showed little desire to accumulate wealth. Finally at the age of 38, after making due arrangements for his family, he decided to travel extensively to preach his religion. He preached unity of human race, Fatherhood of God, equality and fraternity of man, dignity of women and the abolition of orthodox social conventions. He exposed the evils of the caste system and condemned the oppression by the ruling class. He brought people to worship one God and to mix freely irrespective of belief. He was so popular that at his death in

Nero in 64 AD

¹⁵ Most revered among them were Bishop Polycarp and Saint Alban.

¹⁶ Flavius Valerious Constantinus I Emperor of Rome (306- 337AD) founded the city of Constantine in 324 AD on the site of the former Greek city of Byzantine and made it the Capital of Roman Empire. It was he whose synod selected the 27 books of the New Testament from the many that were available.

¹⁷ The word 'Pope' means father. In old times it could be used for any Bishop but later its use was restricted to The Bishop of Rome. Peter is looked upon as the first Pope. In England Henry the 8th, through an article of parliament (Article 37), repudiated the authority of the Pope and declared himself as the Head of the Church. Those who followed him are called Protestants (in England Anglicans).

¹⁸ According to Encyclopaedia Britannica there are 1,700,000,000 Christians in 254 countries of the world and form 32.9% of the whole world population. Bible has been translated into 1950 world languages.

It should be noted that like other world religions Christians are also split into many denominations and sects. Their first schism came in 1054 AD, when with the break up of Roman Empire into eastern and western parts, Christians of Byzantine Empire came to be known as Orthodox (Ortho= true and doxa means belief) with their centre at Constantinople. Those in the west came to be known as Western Catholic Christians with their centre at Rome. Later Martin Luther's reforms (1483-1546AD), Calvin's reinvigoration movement, and St. Ignatius' opposition brought further divisions into being. Now there are about 100 factions. Prominent among them are Protestants, Jesuits, Baptists, Quakers, Methodists, Pentecostal, Ecumenical, and Salvation Army. Fairly new additions are Scientologists and Moonies. The statements we make in this booklet may not be applicable equally to all these factions.

1539AD the Hindus and the Muslims both claimed his body and raised mausoleums with a common wall separating them.

The Guru's torch was then taken up by his devoted follower Angad who popularised Panjabi script (*Gurmukhi*) and strengthened the institutions of *Sangat* (Free association) and *Pangat* (convivial socialisation). Next came Guru Amar Das who preached strongly for the emancipation of women and spoke openly against *pardah* (veil of women) and *Sati* (immolation of women on the funeral pyres of their husbands). Guru Ram Das, the fourth guru, founded the city of Amritsar in 1574AD. His son, Guru Arjan Dev built the *Harimandar* (Golden Temple) and edited the first copy of the Guru Granth Sahib by collecting the hymns of his predecessor Gurus and those of many other Indian *bhagats* (saints) from different religious and social denominations, and by adding his own to the collection. Emperor Jehangir¹⁹ did not like the growing power of the Sikhs and tortured the Guru to death in 1606 AD²⁰ The sixth Guru Hargobind wore two swords (One of *miri* = temporal power and the other of *Piri* = spiritual power), raised an army of seven hundred horses and sixty artillery men and gave a tough fight to the imperial army. Tempers cooled down for some time until in 1675AD Emperor Aurangzeb once again arrested Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, for espousing the cause of free worship and opposing the forcible conversion of the Hindus to Islam. He was put to death and his mutilated body was ordered to be left for rotting. The 10th Guru laid the foundation of The Khalsa, an army of dedicated saint soldiers who would wear five Ks (*Kesh*=unshorn hair, *Kangha*=a comb, *Kachh*=shorts, *Kara*=a bracelet and *Kirpan*= (a sword). The Khalsa was instructed to "have the name of God on their lips and think of battle (i.e. to remain ever vigilant against the forces of evil) in their hearts." Guru Gobind Singh fought a number of battles in which he lost his four sons.²¹ He died in 1708AD. Before his death, however, he had ordained that after him the Guruship would rest in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib.

After Guru Gobind Singh's death the state declared the Sikhs outlaws and on 10th December 1710AD orders were issued to "kill the disciples of Guru Nanak wherever they were found". Hundreds of Sikhs were daily brought to Lahore in chains and butchered in cold blood at *Nakhas* (Cattle market). Even women and children were not spared. The Sikhs took to the jungles and deserts. However, by 1799AD they had gained sufficient strength to conquer most of the present Punjab (India and Pakistan combined) and established their kingdom under Ranjit Singh. By then the British, under the pretext of establishing trade relations through The East India Company of 1600AD had conquered almost the whole of India. They enticed the Dogra brothers, the influential ministers at the court of Ranjit Singh through bribes and attacked the Sikhs. Five battles took place - Mudki (December 18,1845AD), Ferozeshah (December 21), Baddowal (January 21,1846AD), Aliwal (January 28) and Subhraon (February 10). A treaty was signed in 1846 (Treaty of Bhairawal (December 16, 1846AD) followed by another one on March 11 allowing British troops to remain in Lahore for one year. Soon, however, another treaty was foisted on the 5 year old Duleep Singh extending the British lease up to September 4,1854AD. Later Lord Dalhousie declared war against the Sikhs on October 5,1848AD and Punjab was annexed to the British Indian Empire on 29 March, 1845AD.²²

¹⁹ In his autobiography *Tuzak-e-Jahangiri* Jahangir writes "For years the thought had been presenting itself to me that I should either put an end to the false traffic towards the Guru or that he should be brought into the fold of Islam I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures on some pretext". (Page 35)

²⁰ He was killed under the law of *Yasa*, which used to be applied to kill religious men without letting blood.

²¹ Two of them fell fighting in the battle of Chamkaur and the other two were bricked alive in a wall at Sirhind under orders from the Governor of Sirhind.

²² Read "*Are we bound by our treaties?*" by John Sullivan.

The total population of the Sikh is about 25,000,000. A majority of them live in the Punjab, a Northwest province of India, and they are now well established in almost all parts of the world.

Chapter 2

Scriptures

2.1 The Holy Bible

The religious book of the Christians is called "The Bible". It has two main parts.

(a) **The old testament-** a covenant or agreement between man and YHWH²³ (pronounced by some as Jehovah), the God of the Jews.

(b) **The new testament-**²⁴ a collection of biographical sketches of Jesus and an interpretation of his philosophy as understood by his disciples.

(a) Most of the copies of the Old Testament were created (in Hebrew and Aramaic) before the advent of Jesus.²⁵ They outline the life history and teachings of Moses²⁶ and those of the tribes in the Eastern Mediterranean between 6000B.C and 100 AD. A number of versions were circulating therefore King Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 BC) collected them and employed seventy two translators. It resulted in 50 volumes. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD the Jews got all the sacred books collected into one volume and discarded the source material, which had come down from generation to generation. It was re-arranged and committed to writing once again around 135 AD when Rabbi Akiba was tortured to death and there was danger of it being lost. Later a Christian scholar named Origin produced an edition called Septuagint in 245 AD giving six different versions in parallel columns. This came to be known as Hexapla (six versions).²⁷ The

²³ Orthodox Jews consider that the name of God is too sacred to be uttered by mouth or expressed in words. Even when it is written only the consonants YHWH are used. The Hebrew Bible or Old Testament was originally written only in consonants. This caused enormous variations in interpretations. For example the word DBR could be read as *Dabar* (meaning word), *Debar* (meaning pestilence), or *Dabber* (to speak). Vowel points were added only in the 10th century. This reformed text was known as *Messorah*. Two *Messorahs*, known as Ben Asher *Messorah* and Ben Napthali *Messorah* appeared side by side. They differed in many ways. Later the first one became the accepted standard text. Rules for pronunciation appeared along with translations. They were known as *Targum*. *Targum Onkelos* and *Targum Jonathon* became widely accepted.

²⁴ The words "New Testament" and "Old Testament" do not appear anywhere in the Bible. Even the word "Bible" as a name was given to this literature later. It is derived from a Greek word (Biblia) meaning book (βιβλίον). The name "Old Testament" was first used by Melito of Sardis around 180 AD

²⁵ Original or contemporary copies of these writings are not available. They probably perished within a few years of being written. Some written later were again destroyed in the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in 587 B.C and once again in 70 AD. The Jews in old times usually buried their sacred books to avoid them being handled carelessly or shown disrespect. This also resulted in their paucity and non-availability.

²⁶ Imran's son Moses was born in Egypt 450 years after Joseph (XUSP)

²⁷ Hexapla was deposited in the library at Caesarea. It was probably destroyed when the Muslims conquered Palestine in 638 AD. An incomplete copy of it, prepared by Eusebius, was published by Monfacon in Paris in 1714 and later by Field in Oxford.

present Bible now consists of 39 books, the first five of which are about the life of Moses and are known as 'Pentateuch'. The Most important part is "Ten Commandments" which God is said to have literally handed over to Moses on a stone tablet. The books in the Old Testament range from 5th century BC. (I.e. Malachi) to 8th Century BC. (I.e. Amos, Isaiah, Micah, and Hosea etc.) .

(b) The New Testament contains 27 books, which differ in detail among them, but nevertheless all talk about Jesus and other lesser prophets. The authors of most of these books are unknown. Some of these books had been written before 60 AD but Matthew was added probably between 65 and 75 AD. 'Revelations' was added in 95 AD. The Latin Vulgate version of St. Jerome (382 AD) and The Syriac version of Bishop Rabbula (411 AD) are considered by some to be the secondary sources which were destroyed by Turks in 1453 AD when they captured Constantinople. The first English version was the work of William Tyndale.

Scholz, a German scholar, made a catalogue of all available biblical material in 1830AD which runs up to 5000 manuscripts, all claimed by one scholar or the other to be part of the Bible .Carl Lachman and Tischendorf of Germany published yet more material afterwards in their Bibles in 1831AD and 1840AD. Westcott and Hart worked in a committee and published the English "Revised Version" in 1881-85AD on the lines of the Authorised Version caused to be prepared by King James in 1611AD.²⁸American version of this appeared much later in 1901AD. Later its copyright was acquired by the International Council of Religious Education based in America.

Another Bible commonly known as Chester Beatty Papyri, was discovered in 1930AD buried in jars in the ruins of a church in Egypt and was published in series during 1933-37AD. One jar contained the four gospels and "The Acts", another contained 12 Epistles of St. Paul which he wrote from Rome while in prison. And yet another contained books of Ezekiel, Daniel and Esther. Some scholars maintain that Codex Alexandrinus of Cyril Lucer²⁹ written on vellum in the first or second century AD is also a part of the Bible. Stephnaus, Mill, Wallace, Edward Wells, and William Mace published their own Bibles with additional material, which they claimed to be genuinely part of the Bible. Dead Sea scrolls discovered in 1947AD are still being deciphered and studied. They may offer some more authentic material for inclusion in the Bible.

The present Bible: The 66 books of the present Bible were written by no less than 40 writers over a period of nearly two centuries. Unlike the Sikh scripture (see below) God is not mentioned in the Bible at the start of any book or chapter but only as a part of the story. Here are some examples from the beginnings of some chapters.

(1) Genesis: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.³⁰

(2) John: In the beginning was the word.³¹

²⁸ It was later revised in 1952AD. Thirty-two scholars and fifty representatives of co-operating Christian denominations again revised it in 1971AD because as they themselves wrote "*The King James Version has grave defects. These defects are so many and so serious as to call for revision.*" Some even now find the very first English translation done by William Tyndale as the best translation. Tyndale was executed in 1536AD for his so-called faulty translation of the Holy word. He was accused of making wilful mistakes.

In their magazine Awake dated 8 September 1957AD The Jehovah's Witnesses had claimed that there were " 50,000 errors in the Bible "and that "None of the thousands of copies extant today in the original language are perfect duplicates. The result is that no two copies are exactly alike ".No miracles, however numerous, could remove a contradiction which lies on the surface of the teachings and records of Christianity " (Albert Scheizer in his book *'In search of the historical Jesus'* page 22)

²⁹ It was purchased from Russia in 1933 AD and is now in the British Museum. It contains the whole Greek Bible except the forty lost pages.

³⁰Mark the words 'Heaven and Earth'. They are in singular form. The Sikhs believe that there are an infinite number of earths and universes. kyqy ieMMd cMd sUr ..., DrqI horu pry horu horu etc.(Numerous are the suns and the moons Countless are the earths)

- (3) Matthew: This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ.....
- (4) Joshua: Now after the death of Moses.....
- (5) Judges: Now after the death of Joshua.....
- (6) Samuel: Now there was a certain man.....

(a) The Christians believe that every word in the Bible is the word of God but the internal evidence does not appear to substantiate it. For example the Quotation (No.1) from Genesis given above can not be the writing of God unless it reads, “In the beginning I created.....”

(b) With the exception of a very small part (Psalms) the whole book is in prose.

(c) Christ himself did not write or dictate anything. The accounts were written much after his death.³²

(d) The whole book is in stories or parables and the details differ from chapter to chapter. Some stories are repeated with some variations.³³

(e) Protestant and Catholic Bibles are different from each other.³⁴

(f) Miracles are performed by Christ and others throughout the book. Some of them are incredible.

2.2 The Holy Guru Granth Sahib

A large part (roughly 80 %) of the hymns in the Sikh scripture (Guru Granth Sahib) were composed and recorded for posterity by the Sikh Gurus themselves. The Sikh religion is therefore unique in receiving the Word directly from their Gurus without the agency of an intermediary. The writings of various Hindu and Muslim saints were included in the Holy Guru Granth by Guru Arjan Dev³⁵, the fifth Guru, when he edited the scriptures in 1604AD. The 10th Guru later included the hymns of the ninth Sikh Guru in 1705AD. Nothing has been changed since then. The serial numbers of Stanzas together with running totals of hymns are recorded throughout the book making interpolation impossible.

The Gurus respected the authenticity of the Word so much that when the Guru's own son Ram

³¹ 'Word' or 'Logos' has been described differently by different people. According to Philo, The Logos is declared to be the first born son of God, the prototypal man in whose image all men are created". "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God (John 1:1-4).

³² Jesus neither wrote anything nor instructed any of his followers to record his philosophy. The Bible itself tells us that Jesus was not educated "The Jews marvelled saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"(John 7:14-15)

³³ Here and there Mark and Luke are word for word the same .For example see II Kings 19 and Isaiah 37 -2,3,5,11-15,37 and 38 etc .

³⁴ The Roman Catholic Bible is called **Douay**. It was prepared from Jerome's Latin Vulgate and first published at Rheims in 1582AD and later re-produced in 1609AD. It contains 73 books. Some of the extra ones are Judith, Tobias, Baruch, and Esther etc. The Protestants call them **Apocrypha** (i.e. doubtful).

³⁵ This volume is now in Kartarpur

Rai³⁶ said, “the word *Musalman* (mus1mw1) is a misprint for *Beiman* (bye1mw1 =unbeliever, dishonest),” he was ostracised and the Guru did not pardon him throughout his life.

The Holy Guru Granth Sahib does not contain history or biographies of the Gurus or their followers except for some indirect references here and there to important historical events. The hymns can be roughly classified into three categories:

- 1 Addressed to God as prayer
- 2 Addressed to human beings or their consciences imploring ideal behaviour and devotion.
- 3 Addressing harmful social practices and suggesting remedies.
- 4 Highlighting human weaknesses and their treatment

Every chapter in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib starts with an invocation to God. Even the sub-headings begin with similar invocation.

Guru Granth Sahib is written in poetry and covers 1430 pages. Thirty one different tunes (*Raags*) have been used suggesting their singing. Although the language used is mostly Sadh Bhasha (A mixture of Indian languages which was understood through out India), the whole book is written in Panjabi (*Gurmukhi script*). At the time of his death (1708AD) the last Guru of the Sikhs (Guru Gobind Singh) instructed the Sikhs to regard the Holy Granth Sahib as their perpetual Guru (spiritual guide) after him.

In search of happiness

ikn ibiD kuslu hoq myry BweI] ikau pweIAY hir rwm shweI] rhwau
] kuslu n igRih myrI sB mwieAw] aUcy mMdr suMdr CwieAw] JUTY
lwlic jnmU gvwieAw] hsqI GoVy dyiK ivgsw] lskr joVy nyb Kvsw
] gil jyvVI haumY ky Psw] rwju kmwvY dh ids swrI] mwXy rMg Bog
bhu nwrI] ijau nrpiq supnY ByKwrI] eyku kuslu mo kau siqgurU
bqwieAw] hir jo ikCu kry su hir ikAw Bgqw BwieAw] jn nwnk haumY
mwir smwieAw] ien ibiD kusl hoq myry BweI] ieau pweIAY hir rwm
shweI] 1] (pMnw 176)

How can happiness be found, O my Siblings of Destiny? How can the Lord, our Help and Support, be pleased? There is no happiness in owning one's own home, in all of Maya, or in lofty mansions casting beautiful shadows. In fraud and greed, this human life is being wasted. He is pleased at the sight of his elephants, horses, armies, assembled servants, and his soldiers. But the noose of egotism is tightening around his neck. His rule may extend in all ten directions; he may revel in pleasures, and enjoy many women — but he is like a beggar, who experiences royalty in a dream. The True Guru has explained that there is only one pleasure. Whatever the Lord does, is pleasing to the Lord's devotee. Servant Nanak has abolished his ego, and he is absorbed in the Lord. This is the way to find happiness, O my Siblings of Destiny. This is the way to please the Lord, our Help, and Support. (GGS Page 176)

³⁶ He was the son of the seventh Guru (Har Rai) of the Sikhs

Chapter 3

God

3.1 God

The Christians believe that Lord Christ himself was God and there is no other God except him. This was first declared a long time ago by the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. The Council concluded that Jesus Christ was “*Very God of very God*”. Christ himself is reported as having said”, *I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.* (Isaiah 44:6)

The Bible however also seems to testify that God had human origin. In Romans 1:3 we read,” Concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, which *was made of the seed of David according to the flesh* ”Again in John 1:45 it is clearly stated that Jesus Christ was “*The son of Joseph*”.

The human characteristics of Christian God are pretty clear in the Bible itself (John 4:6). He was hungry (Matthew 4:2 & 21:18 and Mark 11:12),³⁷ angry (Mark 11-12-13), and was wearied (John 4:6) like us. He learned like us (Luke 2:52), loved (Mark 10:21) like us, prayed like us (Mark 1:35 and Luke 6:12), and experienced depressions (John 11:-35) like us. He worked like us (Mark 6:3) and paid taxes (Matthew 22:21) like us. He was also sorrowful (Matthew 26:37-38) like all humans. He even wept (John 11:35) “*And Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost*” (Mark 15:37). Like all humans he also died. (John 19:33).

At the time of crucifixion Jesus prayed, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me” (Matt 27:46). It would seem that Jesus himself regarded God as a separate entity otherwise why should He seek help from another God when He Himself was God.

The Sikh View

According to the Sikh belief there is only one God and He is not born. He is not human and does not suffer from human failings of tiredness, sleep, and hunger etc. There is none else like Him. He can be seen only through the mind’s eye.

“ nw iqsu mwq ipqw suq bMDp nw iqs kwmu n nwrI
Akul inrMjn Apr prMpr sglI joiq qumwrI (pMnw 597)

“He has no mother, father, sons, or relatives; He is free of sexual desire; He has no wife and no ancestry. He is immaculate, infinite, and endless. His light is pervading everywhere. (GGS Page 597)

iqsih sRIku n dIsY koeI Awpy Apr Apwrw hy “He has no rival and is infinite and

³⁷ “If Christ had only eaten to show that he could eat, while he really had no need of nourishment, it would have been a pretence”(*In Quest of the Historical Jesus* page 64)

endless”(GGS P.597)

The Guru further says,

“eykm eykMkwr inrwlw] Amr AjonI jwiq n jwlw”
Agm Agocru rUpu n ryiKAw] Kojq Kojq Git Git dyiKAw (pMnw 838)

“The One Universal Creator is unique, immortal, unborn, beyond social class or involvement. He is inaccessible and unfathomable, with no form or feature. My search ended when I saw Him present in every thing.” (GGS Page 838)

“sgl prwD dyih laronI so muKu jlau ijqu khih Twkur jonI”
jnim n mrY n AwvY n jwie nwnk kw pRB rihE smwie “ (pMnw 1136)

You seek God in human form — this is the source of all your sins. Let that mouth be burnt, which says that our Lord and Master is subject to birth. He is not born, and He does not die; He does not come and go in reincarnation. Nanak believes that God is pervading and permeating everywhere. (GGS Page 1136)

To say that ‘a certain human is God’ is a heresy according to Sikhism. The very basic concept of Sikhism is AjUnI sYBM “He does not have to be in the womb. He is self-existent.”(GGS P. 1)

One wonders how the Christian scholars interpret “No one has ever seen God, the one and only, who is at the Father’s side”. (John 1:18)

eyk Anyk ibAwpk pUrK jq dyKau qq soeI] mwieAw icqR bicqR ibmoiHq
ibrLw bUJY koeI] sBu goibMdu hY sBu goibMdu hY goibMd ibnu nhI
koeI] sUqu eyku mix sq shMs jYsy Eiq poiq pRBu soeI] rhwau] jl
qrMg Aru Pyn budbudw jl qy iBMn n hoeI] iehu prpMcu pwrbrRhm kI
lilw ibcrq Awn n hoeI] imiQAw Brmu Aru supn mnorQ siq pdwrQu
jwinAw]suikRq mnsW gur aupdysI jwgq hI mnu mwinAw] 3] khq
nwmDYau hir kI rcnw dyKhu irdY bIcwrI] Gt Gt AMqir srb inrMqir
kyvl eyk murwrIN]4]1] (pMnw 485)

“In the one and in the many, He is pervading and permeating; wherever I look, there He is. The marvellous image of Maya is so fascinating; how few understand this. God is everything, God is everything. Without God, there is nothing at all. As one thread holds hundreds and thousands of beads, He is woven into His creation. The waves of the water, the foam, and the bubbles, are not distinct from water. This manifested world is the playful game of the Supreme Lord God. Reflecting upon it, we find that the world is not separated from Him. Man considers the false doubts and dreams as real and true. The Guru has instructed me to try to do good deeds, and my awakened mind has accepted this. Says Naam Dev, see the creation of the Lord, and reflect upon it in your heart. **In each and every heart, and deep within the very nucleus of all, is the One Lord.**

3.2 Abode of God

According to the Bible God lives high in heaven separate from His creation. “Our father, *art in heaven. Hallowed be thy Name.....etc.*” (Matthew 6:9) It is also stated in the Bible that God lives in Zion. “Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill Jerusalem will be holy, never again the foreigners will invade her”. (Joel 3:17)

Christ (in the form of God) lived and died on the earth like other human beings. He could not be at two places (heaven and Zion) at the same time. If He lived in Zion (and Zion is heaven) then this would mean that people can come and go into heaven (Zion) at will. Heaven is mentioned in the Bible many times but its description is not very clear.

As for the invasion of Jerusalem, we know that it has been invaded many times after Christ's death. Even now it is in a very vulnerable area.

The Sikh View

God, according to Sikhism, lives in His Own Creation not in any imaginary heavens or on any hills away from His creation.

sgl bnspiḡ mih bYsMqru sgl dUD mih GIAw]
aUc nIc mih joiḡ smwxI Git Git mwDau jIAw] (pMnw 617)

“As there is fire in all vegetation and butter in all milk so is the Creator in all, high and low, and in everything” (GGs P. 617)

bilhwrI kudriḡ visAw qyrw AMḡ n jweI liKAw] (pMnw 469)

“It is wonderful that You live in your creation and yet we cannot fathom Your limits.”(GGs Page 469)

lgVIAw ipriAMin pyKMdIAw nw iqpIAw]
hB mJwhU so DxI ibAw n ifTo koie] (pMnw 1101)

“My eyes are set on God and are never tired of seeking Him. I see the Lord in everything and have never seen anything without Him”.

God is non-corporeal and resides in our mind. The purer the mind, the nearer we are to God.³⁸

mn qmU joiḡ srUpu hY Awpxw mUlu pCwxu] (pMnw 441)

“O my mind thou art Godly, recognise thy roots”. (GGs P. 441)
The Gurus further say,

myrI myrI Dwir bMDin bMiDAw
nrik surig Avqwr mwieAw DMiDAw (pMnw 761)

“Man's ego ensnares him in bondage. Too much hankering after worldly pursuits creates his heaven into hell”. (GGs Page 761)

qhW bYkuMTu jh kIrqnu qyrw qUM Awpy srDw lwieih (pMnw 749)

“Heaven is where Your praises are sung. O Lord You Yourself plant devotion in us so that we enjoy heaven”. (GGs page 749)

³⁸ The Holy Quran says, “Psumw v`julw” (God's light pervades everywhere) and “vPIAw-nPos-kum” (Look for me within yourself) “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21)

3.3 Birth and death of God

In the Bible we read that Christ was born to Mary. Whether he was conceived through God himself or his agent angel, his birth is accepted by everybody. The agency of an angel simply proves that God as Jesus was dependent on the angel and Mary for His own birth. In other words God was created by an angel through Mary's help. His death is also recorded in the Bible (John 19:33, matt 12:46.16:27). So he could not be God because the Bible says that God does not die (Ps 90:2 and I Tim 6:16).³⁹

The Sikh view

According to Sikhism God is Akwl mUurq (timeless-deathless) .
qMU pwrBRhmu prmysru join n AvhI]
qMU hukmI swjih isRsit swij smwvhI]

(pMnw 1095)

“You are the Lord of all and do not enter the womb. You create the Universe in Your Will and assimilate it within yourself when you wish otherwise”. (GGS Page 1095)

3.4 The only Son of God

Christians sometimes call Jesus God but at other times they call him the only Son of God. “God so loved the world that he sacrificed His only begotten son for it. Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”. (John 3:16-18)

“He is the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. *Begotten, not made*, of one being with the Father, by whom all things were made” (Nicene Creed).⁴⁰

“The father-son paradigm is ageless. It is older than human history.⁴¹ The rays of father-hood contained in this formulation belong to the Trinitarian mystery”. (*Crossing the threshold of hope page 227 Pope John Paul II*)

According to the Bible itself, if God did have a son then it must have been Adam not Jesus because Jesus was the son of Adam's descendants Joseph and Mary and Adam was the first man created by God on earth. Bible itself says, Adam was the 'Son of God' (See Luke 3:38) “Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the Son of God”. (Hebrews 7:3).

As for being the only son, we know that David and Moses lived before Jesus. Even David is referred by God to be His son "Thou art my son (Psalm 2:7). So David, Moses, and Adam, who lived before Jesus, were not the Sons of God or Jesus was not the only son. Again we find in Matt 12:46-47 the phrase “Mother and His brethren” which implies that Mary had other children

³⁹ Prior to his natural and final death he is also recorded as having died for three days.(Matt 12:46,16:27)

⁴⁰ And Lo a voice came from heaven,” “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased”(Matthew 3:17,26:63-64, John 1:14-18,3:16,1:8,14:7-10, 4:9 Mark 14:61 Luke 1:32) “He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the father which hath sent him” (Thessalonians 2:16, 3:11). About this the Holy Quran says, “And they say God gracious has *begotten a son*. Indeed they have put forth a thing most monstrous. At it the skies are ready to burst, and the earth to split asunder and the mountains to fall down in utter ruin that they should invoke a son for God. It is not consonant with the majesty of God that He should beget a son. (The Holy Quran 19: 88-92) He begets not nor is He begotten (Holy Quran 112:3)

⁴¹ The paradigm can not be ageless. It was Paul who called Jesus ‘Son of God’ for the first time (See Acts 9:20). Paul had never met Jesus.

besides Jesus.⁴²

This point has been discussed threadbare by the Christian Scholars for years. We give below some views for and against this belief.

David Icke the BBC sports presenter declared in a press conference in 1992 that he is “The Son of God”. He was interviewed on BBC on 30.7.97 and still sticks to his claim. Bamber Gascoigne in his book ‘*The Christians*’ (page 44) writes, “If the Father begot the son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence; hence it is clear that there was a time when the son was not.”(In other words there was a time when God did not exist).

In “*Bible Basics*” Duncan Heaster writes, “Mary, being born of a woman had our unclean, human nature, which she passed on to Jesus who was ‘made of a woman’.” (Page 231)

The Scholars however argue “No. The son has always been with the Father, not only since time began, but before all time. For the Father could not have been so named unless he had a son; and there could be no son without a father.”⁴³

It appears that some scholars are taking literal meanings of 'God's son' rather than its metaphorical meanings. Jesus himself says that he was the “Son of Man” (Daniel 7, 13-14, Matthew 26,-2, Luke 22,-48) The Bible uses similar terminology for others calling them sons of God. For example see Exodus 4:22 (Israel or Jacob Son of God), I Chronicles 22:10-II Samuels 7, 13-14, Jeremiah 31:9. The Bible even calls common people 'sons and daughters of God.' (See Romans 8:29, Corinthians 6:18 Deuteronomy 14:1)

The Sikh view:

According to the Sikh belief all human beings are sons and daughters of God. Every Sikh considers himself or herself as the son/daughter of God and repeats:

qUM myrw ipqw qMU hYN myrw mwqw] (pMnw 103)

“O God, You are my Father and You are my Mother.” (GGS P.103)

qUMM sWJw swihbu bwpu hmwrw] (pMnw 97)

“You are the common Father of us all.” (GGS Page 97)

hir Awpy mwqw Awpy ipqw,ijin jIau aupwie jgqu idKwieAw (pMnw 921)

“God Himself is our father and He Himself is our mother because He brought us into the world putting His spark in us”. (GGS P.921)

3.5 God and son in one

⁴²Mary also had other children, 4 brothers, and 2 sisters of Jesus. “And his brethren James, and Jose, and Simon, and Judas and his sisters” (Matthew 13:54-56)

⁴³ It is worth noting that the Bible nowhere preaches merger with God. Even after resurrection, Jesus ascends to heaven and “*sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty*”. The father and the son are always two not one.

Pope John Paul II is reported to have said, “He is the mediator because He is both God and man” (*Crossing the threshold of Hope*’ page 43).

This concept is not very clear. Man can exist at one time only at one place. This would mean that the rest of the world would be without God. Christ himself had limitations. All through his life he did not move out of the Middle East. It is his greatness that he preached a unique philosophy to the world and there is no doubt of his being a man of God, a pious preacher, and a martyr to his cause but he was not God. ‘My father I am one (Acts 1:11)’ means that Jesus always remembered God with every breath and acted according to his Will. His ego was completely conquered. Such statements are made by many others religious preceptors. For example Kabir says”, qUM qUM krqw qUM hUAw, muJ mih rhw n hUM (pMnw 1375) “Remembering you at all times I have now lost my individuality and have become YOU”. Similarly Bhagat Ravi Das says, “qohI mohI mohI qohI AMqr kYsw”(You are ‘me’ and ‘I; am ‘You’ where lies the difference ?)⁴⁴

The Sikh view:

According to Sikhism man can not be God and therefore all the so called incarnations/ prophets/ preachers of God were no more than human beings albeit morally and spiritually super human beings. The Guru says,

koit ibsn kIey Avqwr] kot bRhMf jwkY Drmswl]
koit mhys aupwie smwie] koit bRhmy jg swjx lwey] (pMnw 1156)

“He has created millions of Vishnus in His millions of Universes for maintaining morality. Millions of Sivas have been created and destroyed. Millions of Brahmas have been created who are engaged in the promotion of the evolution of God’s creation” (GGs page 1156)⁴⁵

3.6 Sacrifice of God

The Christians believe that God sacrificed his *only* son to wash away the sins of humanity. Whether the sins have since been washed or not is anybody’s guess. The strange thing is that God sacrificed his *only* son whereas the Devil escaped him even when every living creature was destroyed in the Noah’s flood. Devil outlived Adam, Jesus, and Noah. On the face of it Devil appears to be mightier than God and is perhaps immortal. If the Devil was sacrificed in place of Jesus, there would have no sin now. Nobody would deny that the Devil (if there is one) still exists and is instrumental in making us sinful.

Perhaps there is more sin in the world today than it was in the times of Jesus. If Jesus died for defending his principles and his philosophy then he was one of the greatest martyrs of the world but if he died for washing away the sins of humanity then he failed miserably.

The Sikh view

⁴⁴ Muslim Sufis particularly mentioned this. For example “mn qU Sudm qU mn sUdI, mn qn Sudm qU jW SudI” (You are me and I am you. I am body you are the spirit in it) Shamas Tabrez

⁴⁵ Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva are three gods of the Hindus. Brahma creates, Vishnu is the provider, and Siva destroys the creation. The idea conveyed here is that all prophets are God’s creation. They are not God.

For a Sikh it is difficult to understand if death and resurrection were the only possible ways for God to cleanse the world of sin and He had to imprison Himself in the womb of a mortal for nine months.

Brim BUuly nr krq kcrwiex] jnm mrx qy rhq nwrwiex
.....
jnim n mrY n AwvY n jwie nwnk kw pRBu riHE smwie] (pMnw
1136)

“Deluded and confused by doubt, the mortal practices falsehood. The Lord is beyond birth and death. He is not born, and He does not die; He does not come and go in reincarnation. Says Nanak God is pervading and permeating everywhere.” (GGS P.1136)

According to Sikhism God is all powerful. His one word, nay even his Will, can wash away the sins of the whole world. The Sikhs believe that the greatest sacrifice for anybody is to wash his own sins by leading a pious life and to lay down his/her life for an approved good cause.

The Guru says, “mrxu muxsw sUuirAw hku hY jo hoie mrin prvwxo. (pMnw 579)

“The death of the brave heroes is blessed if they lay down their lives for approved good causes”. It is on this principle that the fifth and the ninth Gurus of the Sikhs laid down their lives and the tenth Sikh Guru sacrificed his four sons. (GGS P.579)

3.7 God is tempted

The Bible (James 1:13) says, ‘God can not be tempted with evil’ but we read in the Bible itself that Christ was tempted by Satan, “*And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan*” (Mark 1:12-13). “*And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a reason*” (Luke 4:-1-13).

The Sikh View

According to Sikhism God is bymuhqwj (independent). He can meet his needs Himself and is never tempted by anything. Temptation pre-supposes need. It is the desire to meet a need or satisfy a craze.

The Guru says, loB moh mmqw Puin Aau ibiKAn kI syvw] hrK sog prsY ijh nwihin so mUriq hY dyvw” (pMnw 220) “Where temptation, attachment, greed, possessiveness, and service of evil does not exist, Where pleasure and pain do not afflict there exists the image of the Lord”(GGS P.220). This means that God and men of God do not suffer from these weaknesses.

3.8 God is Fearful

God is fearless but Christ was fearful. “*After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him*”. (John 7:1) “They sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand”. (John 10:39) “He hid himself and went out of the temple” (John

8:59).

The Sikh view

According to Sikhism God is fearless (inrBau)

inrBau sdw dieAwlu hY sBnw krDw swr (pMnw 27)

“The fearless Lord is merciful and looks after all his creation”. (GGS P. 27)

3.9 God is fallible

“There came a day when the Lord repented that he had made man, because his wickedness was so great. He therefore resolved to bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life”.⁴⁶ (Genesis 6: 6-9 and 7:23)

It is inconceivable that God punished every form of life simply because man had become wicked. One is left thinking why the flora and fauna suffered for the wickedness of man?

Again God appears to be capricious. After wilful destruction He realised His folly and said, “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood and never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done (Genesis 8:21)

“Lord grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel” (1Samuel 15:15)

The Sikh view:

Sikhism believes that God is infallible and beyond reproach. He can foresee events and does not grieve or make mistakes.

Bulx ivic kIAw sBu koeI krqw Awip n BULY] (pMnw 1343)

“All humans make mistakes but God is infallible.” (GGS P.1343)

⁴⁶ Christians believe that God sent a flood for 150 days (Genesis 4:24). Only Noah and his wife, who took two of each species of life (What about hermaphrodites?) in their boat, survived. The boat was caught on Mount Ararat (Armenia). One can imagine how long will it have taken for such a big boat to be made, how were the animals fed for 150 days and who rowed the boat?

According to David Attenborough there are four million different forms of life (excluding marine life) on earth (*Life on earth* 'page' 11). So the boat carried at least 8,000,000 terrestrial forms of life many of which kill each other for their food and many of them barely visible. Separation of carnivores and herbivores and storage of their foods must have required very spacious places and armed guards. Feeding them all must have been a big problem for Noah. Poisonous snakes, fleas, scorpions and other blood-sucking creatures must have caused havoc for 150 days. Modern archaeologists are reluctant to accept that such a universal cataclysmic destruction that destroyed every living creature upon the face of the earth (except Noah) did really happen. If it did happen, it was only a local Middle Eastern tragedy. One wonders if God really was just, wise, infallible resolute and without rancour. What sin had the newly born babies or those still in the womb, committed? Similarly when God killed the entire first born in Egypt, one wonders on what criteria were they selected for mass murder? He saved Noah for no apparent reason. Genesis itself tells us that Noah was not innocent.

Although there is no mention of the Devil or Satan but he is seems to have boarded the boat and God could not destroy him even in this mass killing. He must have gloated over this major victory against God.

According to oriental belief there are 8,400,000 species of life out of which roughly half i.e. 4200,000 live in water.

Bulx AMdir sBu ko ABulu gurU krqwrU]
60)

(pMnw

“Everybody makes mistakes but God and His messengers do not make mistakes.” (GGS Page 60)

Sikhism believes that God is devoid of enmity.

qUM inrvYru sMq qyry inrml] ijn dyKy sB auqrih klml
(pMnw 108)

“O Lord, You have no hatred or vengeance; Your Saints are immaculate and pure. Meeting them, all sins depart”.

3.10 God is a glutton

All through the Holy Bible we find that God is interested in eating meat and drinking wine and expects the humans to bring to him burnt offerings. Various kinds of burnt offerings and sacrifices are mentioned to atone for sin and moral weaknesses. *“Bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock”*.
(Leviticus 1:1-5).

“Every day during the seven days of the feast he is to provide seven rams without defect as a burnt offering to the lord and a male goat for a sin offering”.
(Ezekiel 45-23)

God said”, The multitudes of sacrifices are meaningless for me. I have more than enough burnt offerings of rams and fattened animals. I derive no pleasure from the blood of ordinary bulls, the lambs, and the goats”.
(Isaiah I-ii)

“God smelt the sparrow’s meat” and was tempted.
(Genesis 8 Noah’s sacrifice)

God was so fond of eating that as soon as He smelt the pleasing aroma of the burnt offerings, prepared for him by Noah, He immediately changed his policies of wanton death and destruction and said, “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood and never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done now”.
(Genesis 8:20-21)

Jesus Christ is also mentioned to be a glutton and a drunkard. The son of man came eating and drinking and they said, “Here is a glutton and a drunkard”.
(Matthew 11-19)

We also read that God sat down with Sarah, ate food, and then blessed her with a son when she was 90 years old.(Her husband was over 100 years old).One wonders if this was a blessing or a punishment.

The Sikh view

The Sikh belief is that since God has no body, he does not require any food like us. He is not dependant on the humans to feed him neither is He a wine-bibber. Pleasures of the flesh are afflictions only of the humans. God is far above these weaknesses. He is merciful and would not kill His own creation to satiate his non-existent desires.

3.11 God is not invincible

God wrestled with Job and lost the match. He even played a trick with Job when in the act of wrestling He loosened the socket of Job’s ship to divert his attention. (Genesis 32:24-28). Having won the match Job demanded of God to bless him and God obliged by changing his name from Job to Israel (Matthew 26:53).

Obviously God was human, had human characteristics, and played a trick. One wonders why God had to do so. What do we learn from this story other than playing dirty tricks? Again what blessing is ‘the change of name’ from a vanquished weak God? Job could give himself a good name any time without any extraneous agency.

The Sikh view

The Sikhs neither believe that God can be human or that humans can physically defeat all powerful God.

vfw myrw goibMdu Agm Agocru Awid inrMjnu inrMkwru jIau]1] qw kI
giq khI n jweI AimiQ vifAweI myrw goibMdu ALK Apwr jIau] qUM
Awid purKu AprMpru krqwqyrw pwru nw pwieAw jwie jIau] qUM Gt Gt
AMqir srb inrMqir sB mih rihAw smwie jIau] qUM siq prmysru sdw
AibnwsI hir hir guxI inDwnu jIau] hir hir pRBu eyko Avru n koeI
qUM Awpy purKu sujwnu jIau] (pMnw 448)

“My God is great, Transcendent, unfathomable, self-existent, pure and without physical form. He is incomprehensible and indescribable. My God is above human understanding and is physically inaccessible. You are self-born O, God and You are the supreme Creator and yet Your light shines everywhere and in every object. You are latent in all creatures’ .O God You are True and immortal. You are the storehouse of all goodness. O, God You are unique and there is none like You. O, Father, You are peerless in wisdom.” (GGS Asa M:4 Chhant 7)

3.12 God is unjust

“I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children unto the third and the fourth generation of them.” (Exodus 20, 5)

In Genesis (20:17-18) we find that God closed up every womb in the house of Abimelech because He was not happy with Abraham’s wife Sarah. Later on after Abraham’s prayer God relented and healed Abimelech and his wife. He even went a step further and blessed the slave girl with children. It sounds rather unjust that all women should be punished for the fault of one and God, the Almighty, should be dependent for his judgement on a particular person.

In the book of Numbers God says to Moses, ‘take vengeance on the Midianites. Capture their herds, flocks, goods, women and children. Then kill all the boys and kill every woman who has slept with a man but save for yourselves every woman who has never slept with a man.’ (Numbers 31.1,2,9,12,15,17,18 etc).

“The angels warned Lot that the city of Sodom was to be destroyed and directed him to escape to the mountain and look not behind. Lot’s wife, unmindful of the injunction to her husband, looked

back as they ran and was turned into a pillar of salt". (Genesis 18-22)

“Life for life, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, hand for hand and foot for a foot.” (Deut 19-21)

“A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord”. (Deuteronomy 23:2)

“At midnight the Lord struck down all the first-born in Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh to the first-born of the prisoner in the dungeon and the first –born of the live stock as well”. (Exodus 21:2-29)

One wonders how merciful and just God is and how our Christian brothers interpret, “He is the rock. His works are perfect. All his ways are just. He never goes wrong. Upright and Just He is”. (Deut 32:4). “I will have mercy and not sacrifice.” (Matthew (:13)

The Bible tells us that the sons of Ham (*the present day Africans*) were doomed to perpetual slavery because their father did not cast a piece of cloth on their grandfather (Noah) when the latter was lying asleep naked and heavily drunk.⁴⁷ (Genesis 22-25)

The Sikh View:

According to the Sikh belief God is not jealous and revengeful. He is devoid of revenge (inrvYr) The Guru says,

sicArw dyie vifAweI hir Drm inAwau kIEey] (pMnw 89)

“God glorifies the virtuous and dispenses justice without discrimination.” (GGS Page 89)

“krm DrqI srIru jug AMqir jo bovY so Kwiq” (sRI rwg m.5)

From the soil of the body a man reaps what he sows.

Sikhism does not approve of extramarital or pre-marital relations. It does not regard illegitimate children as sinful but believes that it is the deeds that matter, not their birth.⁴⁸Therefore the bastards are supposed to have committed no sin but their parents are looked upon as sinners against society. A bastard⁴⁹ is born of a sin of others not his/her own. The Guru says,

“jwiq jnmu nh pUCIAY sc Gr lyhu bqwie, sw jwiq sw piq hY jyhy krm kmwie”]

⁴⁷ The Bible was quoted in Granville and Sharpe Court case and philosophical logic was manipulated to give credence to slavery. The following Aristotelian syllogism was quoted "All men are made in the image of God .God, as everyone knows, is not a Negro: Therefore, the Negro is not a man."

“The churches opposed the abolition of slavery as long as they dared”(Bertrand Russell “*Why I am not a Christian*” page 28). In South Africa the Dutch reformed church has been in the forefront to defend apartheid. In America slavery could not have existed for 250 years if the church had not sanctioned it.

⁴⁸ No action whether foul or fair, is ever done, but it leaves somewhere,

A record written by finger ghostly” (Longfellow)

⁴⁹ A bastard boy was discovered by Guru Har Gobind lying on a dunghill. The Guru had him washed clean and brought him up lovingly. This was “Suthra” who later became well known for his quick wit, pithy humour, and devotion to God.

(pMnw 1330)

“Do not ask about social class or birth, you must expect piety. That decides your social class and your status—the result of your own actions” (GGP.1330)

According to Sikhism God is neither jealous nor unjust. He metes out just punishments to those who do misdeeds and rewards those who lead a virtuous life. He does not punish children for the transgressions of their fathers and forefathers.

BweI vyKhuu inAwau scu krqy kw, jyhw koeI kry qyhw koeI pwey]
(pMnw 308)

“O Brother understand the justice of the Lord. As one sows so does one reap”. (GGP Page 308)

scw Awip qKqu scw bih scw kry inAwau]
(pMnw 949)

“True is He, true is His authority and He dispenses correct judgements”. (GGP Page 949)

qh swc inAwie inbyrw aUhw sm Twkuru sm cyrw] (pMnw 621)

"In God's court Justice is true and no distinction is made between a master and a slave." (GGP Page 621)

As for the Bible story of drinking, Sikhism does not approve of drinking nor does it believe that those who do not help drunkards should be punished. In Sikhism the sins of fathers are not supposed to visit upon their descendants.

The Sikhs consider the descendants of Ham, Sham, and Japeth (Noah's sons-) as their equals because for them the whole human race is one family. sBu ko aUcw AwKIAY nIcu n dIsY koie (pMnw 62) “Consider everyone honourable, never downgrade anybody”. (GGP.62).

The Sikhs are forbidden from making distinctions between human beings on the basis of high or low status.

3.13 God is vindictive

In the Holy Bible God sends plague (21:14), locusts, pestilence, famine, floods, droughts, and frogs to chastise his own creation. He sends Satan (Job 2-6) to afflict Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head (Hebrew 26:53). He rained down burning sulphur on Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-25, 31-36). God closed up every womb in Abimelech’s household because of Abrahams’ wife Sarah (Genesis 20:17-18).

“On the same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every first-born men and animals and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord”. (Exodus 12:12-13, 29-30). Seventy thousand people from David to Beersheba were killed. (Samuel 24:15)

The Lord said to Moses ‘take vengeance on the Midianites, capture their flocks, plunder goods, kill boys and kill all women who have slept with a man but save for yourselves all virgins’. (Numbers 31:2-18). Against this we also read in the Ten Commandments “Thou shalt not kill” and “thou shalt not commit adultery”.

“Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights and will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made”. “Everything that moved on the earth perished; birds, livestock, wild animals, all creatures that swarm on the earth and all mankind”. (Genesis 7:4, 21)

“I sent plagues among you as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men along with your captured horses. I filled your nostrils with the stench of your corpses. yet you have not returned to me”. (Amos 4-10)

Because the Israelites forsook the Lord and no longer served Him, He became angry and sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the ammonites. (Judah 10-7)

“Go to Zedehiah king of Judah and tell him, this is what the Lord says: I am about to hand over the city to the king of Babylon who will burn it down”. (Jeremiah 34:2)

The Sikh view

To a Sikh, God that rains fire and brimstone on His own creation would appear to be vindictive, unjust, partial, angry, capricious and jealous God for the Sikhs is devoid of enmity (inrvYr) . He is merciful, all-powerful, omnipresent, omniscient, and invincible. He is just and would not punish all women of a particular locality because of one. He is impartial and unattached to any particular religion.

‘Inciting people to kill’ is something nowhere found in the Sikh Holy book on the other hand compassion and fellow feeling are emphasised as the greatest virtues.

3.14 Moral or immoral God?

The Holy Bible tells us that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, killed its inhabitants, and destroyed its vegetation to punish the cities for immorality. Only Lot was saved. Lot drank excessive wine every night and slept with his two daughters turn by turn who became pregnant. (Genesis 19: 25-36).

Tamar’s father-in-law offered her a seal and a cord and got the right to sleep with her. Tamar gave birth to twins. (Genesis 38:18, 27-29)

In Corinthians (7:36) a father is advised to get married with his daughter. “If she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should marry her. He is not sinning”.

The Sikh view

The Sikhs believe that piety and morality are essential parts of religion. It is only religion that inculcates in humans the love for spiritualism and advises them to shun carnality and vendetta. The sanctity of parent-child relationship is the basis of human society. Any infringement of this relationship leads to the law of the jungle and turns the humans into lascivious animals.

schu ErY sBu ko aupir scu Awcwru] (pMnw 62)
Truth is the highest virtue but higher still is moral living. (GSS P.62)

3.15 Remembrance of God

The Bible says, "Thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain". (Exodus 20)⁵⁰

The Sikh View:

The above Christian injunction is exactly the opposite of the instruction to the Sikhs. The Gurus instruct that man should remember God with every breath and that spiritual maladies visit human beings when they forget the Lord.

prmysr qy BuilAW ivAwpinH sBy rogu] (pMnw
135)

"All afflictions visit the person who forgets God's name". (GGS P.135)

AwKw jIvw ivsrY mir jwau] (pMnw 9)

"When I repeat His name I am alive, when I forget to do so, I die". (GGS Page 9)

ismir ismir nwm bwrMbwr, nwnk jIA kw iehY ADwr] (pMnw 295)

"Repeat the name of the Lord again and again.O Nanak it is the support of the soul". (GGS P.295)

3.16 God's chosen people

According to the Bible the Lord instructed Moses to say to the children of Israel, "When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Cannan (*Present day Israel*) then ye shall drive out all inhabitants of the land from before you and destroy all the pictures and destroy all their images, pluck down all their high places, and ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell therein, for I have given you that land to possess it"⁵¹ (Numbers 32)

"Thou shalt smite them hard and destroy them lock stock and barrel. Thou shalt make no covenant with them nor show compassion. Destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down

⁵⁰ The word for God appeared in the original manuscripts as YHWH. The Jews consider this Tetragrammaton YHWH as the original and the only name of God **which should not be spoken**. It also occurs in the Holy Bible 6855 times. The Jews avoid saying it and believe that by saying this word they take **God's name in vain**. Wherever it occurs they read *Adonai (Lord)*. Septuagint translations left it un-translated and the later translators used the word *Kurios* for it. William Tyndale in his English translation used *Lehouah*. These days it is pronounced as *Yahweh (or Jehovah)* but its correct pronunciation is not known. The Sikhs believe "siq nwm qyrw prw pUrblw (Truth is thy primeval name mwrU solhy m: 5) which they are required to repeat ad infinitum. Jehovah was worshiped as a brazen serpent until Hezekiah destroyed it (II Kings 18.4). Quakers do not swear by God because that involves **taking God's name in vain**.

⁵¹ Abraham, who is supposed to have lived 4000 years ago, had two wives Sarah and Hagar. According to the Jews Hagar was a slave. Children were born to Abraham's wives only when he was 100 years old (Genesis 17:17-18 and 21:1-2). Jews are the progeny of Sarah through her son Isaac and Arabs are the descendants of Hagar, whose son Ishmael is considered by the Muslims as a Prophet. Staunch Jews consider the Arabs "inferior breed "

their groves. Thou art holy people of God".⁵² (Deut 7: 1-6)

This gives one the uneasy feeling that peace in Israel is a wild goose chase. The very concept that some people are chosen and the others are not brings into play discrimination and injustice. We find that God ordered the destruction of Canaanites and the Amalekites (Deu 7.1,2 and Joshua 6.21, 24) and a gruesome and fearful massacre is recorded in II Samuel 8.1, 5.

"Although the people of Israel were "chosen people" God destroyed 70,000 of them through a pestilence (I Chr 21:14). Christ himself thought that he was chosen by God. He said, "All who came before me were thieves and robbers".⁵³ (John 19:8)

The Sikh view:

The Sikhs do not believe that God gives any special place on earth to any special tribe or religion or orders killing. They believe that God does not discriminate in any body's favour and there are no supranational chosen people. God is without spite (inrvYr).

nw ko bYrI nhI ibgnw] sgl sMig hm kau bin AeI]
(pMnw 1299)

"Nobody is the enemy and none is a stranger, we are everybody's friends". (GGS P.1299)

sBu ko mIqu hm Apn kInw hm sBnw ky swjn]
(pMnw 671)

"I contract friendship with everybody. I am a universal friend". (GGS P.671)

Apno sUAwn jYsy lgq ipAro jIA]
jwnIAY vYsoeI pXwro skl sMswr ko]
(kib`q BweI gurdws 398)

"As you shower all your love on your own children, so should you love the whole world".(Kabit B.Gurdas No. 398)

mn Apuny qy burw imtwnw] pyKY sgl isRsit swjnw]
(pMnw 266)

"Drive out all enmity from your mind and consider the whole world as your friend". (GGS Page 266)

3.17 Spiritual message

In the New Testament we find that Lord Christ reserved his message for the people of Israel. For example in Matthew 10:5-6 he says, "Go ye not in the way of the gentiles..... Go ye to the *lost sheep of Israel*". Again in Matthew 15,-24 when a Canaanite woman⁵⁴ came crying to

⁵² Also see Exodus 23:22 and Psalms 139:22-23. In Deu. 6:10-11 Jehovah promises his followers, "I will acquire for you great cities you built not, wells you dug not ,vineyards and olive trees you planted not"

⁵³ One wonders if this remark applies also to Adam, Moses, David , Abraham, Isaac, and Israel who came before Jesus.

⁵⁴ According to Matthew she was a Canaanite but according to Marks she was a Greek. The mother's name is given as Justa and the daughter's name is recorded as Bernice.

Christ because her daughter was grievously vexed by mental disease and asked for help, Jesus declined to help her and is reported to have said, "I am not sent but unto *the lost sheep of Israel*". When the woman persisted in her request He said, "It is not fair to take children's bread and *to cast it to the dogs*" In Matthew 15-26 He goes to explain this further and says, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine lest they trample them under their feet".

"Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans (Matt 10.5, 6).

Although himself born in a Jewish family, Jesus said to the Jews, "You are of your father the devil, and want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning". (John 8:44)

The Sikh view:

The message of the Sikh Gurus is exactly the opposite. People of all religions and nationalities were welcomed by the Gurus. No harsh words were uttered against any religious group, nation, or individual.

prQwie swKI mhw purK boldy swJI sgl jhwnY]
(pMnw 647)

"Godmen always offer instruction to all and sundry without discrimination". (GGS Page 647)

aupdysM sm imqR sqRh BgvMq Bgiq BwvnI]
(pMnw 1375)

"Messengers of God offer spiritual advice and guidance to friends and foes alike." (GGS Page 1375)

3.18 Resurrection and second coming

(a) Resurrection

The Christian belief is that Christ died on the cross but came out of the grave on the third day and lived for forty more days. Obviously if he died, then he could not be alive because life and death do not exist together. Death is the negation of life. Again Christ's rising would be meaningful if he lived afterwards for ever. If death took him away again then what difference does it make whether he died 40 days earlier or later!

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, then thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9)

"If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching and empty too is your faith" (I cor 15:14)

(b) Second coming

Most of the Prophecies about the Second Coming of Christ are found in three gospels of the New Testament - in Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13. We also read "I will come again to receive you unto myself" (Acts 1:11, John 6:10-16). Christ conquered death and Devil and

said, "I will come back and take you away with me" (Rev 22:12 and Hosea 13-14) .⁵⁵ "Behold, I am coming soon. My reward is with me and I will give to anyone according to what he has done". (Revelations 22:2)

While Christ was at the Mount of Olives some of his followers asked him, "When will these things be?⁵⁶ And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3) and Lord Christ's answer is recorded in Mark 13:29 as "When you see things⁵⁷ happening, know that it is near, at the very doors".

"Christ will come back to earth in resplendent glory flanked by angels and judge people. Christians will sit on his right side and will be sent to heaven to enjoy eternal life. The non-Christians will sit on his left and will be despatched to hell for eternal punishment".

(Matthew 25: 31-46 and Matthew 16; 27)

Concerning no-Christians the Bible says, "God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie"

(Thessalonians 2:11)

The Sikh view

Sikhism believes that death is the fulfilment of God's law and no one has ever conquered death.

jo dIsY so ivxsxw sB ibnis ibnwsI]

⁵⁵ Many have since exploited such words and claimed themselves to be the reborn Christ. For example on 19 April 1993 David Koresh, the leader of Branch Dravidians made such a claim and brought about the infernal death of 75 of his followers at Waco (Texas-U.S.A). The following are some others who claimed to be the reborn Christ.

1. Richard Brothers (1757-1824AD) an officer in the British Navy.
2. Joshua Southcott (1750-1814AD) of U.S.A. She claimed prophet hood and argued that since a woman brought about the fall of man, it was only through her, a woman, that salvation was possible.
3. Joseph Smith (1805-1844AD) founder of Mormons claimed that prophet hood was sanctioned by John the Baptist and only he had the keys to heaven.
4. Hun Hsu Chuan of China claimed to be the younger brother of Christ. He said that his son would establish the "new heaven". He changed the Trinity from father-son -holy ghost to father-son-grandson.
5. Keshav Chander Sen of India claimed to be reborn Jesus Christ.
6. Theudas and Bar Kochka Sebi (1621AD) had also claimed to be reborn and re-incarnated Christ.
Pol pot, Joseph Stalin, and Hitler behaved as self-appointed God but Mussolini clearly stated, "I because of God, I am called, because I am the superman incarnate. I am the law- giver as well as war lord."
7. "I am Gabriel, Michael, Israfil. I am Abraham, Moses, and Jesus". (Junaid of Baghdad)

⁵⁶The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give light. The stars will fall from heaven and the heaven will be shaken" (Matthew 24:29 Also see Revelations 6:12-17) "All the tribes of the earth will mourn ,and they will see the Son of Man riding the clouds of heaven with resplendent glory" (Matthew 24:30)

⁵⁷ Christians believe that Jesus predicted some cataclysmic events (like major earthquakes, famine, conflict, meteors, comets, solar flares, eclipses or epidemics) to precede his Second Coming. This led some Christian scholars to set a date for his Second Coming. A 14th Century English Clergyman William Whiston gave October 13, 1736AD, The German Scholar Johannes Stoeffler predicted February 1524, An American Scholar William Miller predicted October 22,1844AD as the day of Christ's return. Predictions are still being made. They quote, "As the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the son of Man be (Daniel verse 27)" "They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30) Others scoff at such predictions and quote , "But that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36) and "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Matthew 24:7) According to Christians their sins have been forgiven and **salvation is guaranteed**, one wonders why they are waiting for a Second Coming of Christ. Again they have already waited for 2000 years how long more? Great injustice will be done to those who died 2000 years ago. They will have waited much longer than those who will be alive at Christ's coming. Is God fair and just?("All his ways are just" (Deut 32:4).

iQru pwrbrhmu prmysro syvku iQru hosI]
1100)

(pMnw

“Whatever is seen shall perish; all shall perish and are perishable. Only God and His close devotees are spiritually immortal”.

(GGS Page 1100)

ijqu idhwVY Dn vrI swwhy ley ilKwie]

(pMnw 1377)

“At the time of birth, our death was also recorded”

(GGS P.1377)

To believe that somebody will be the saviour on the day of Judgement confers powers of judgement on that person instead of God, the Almighty.

The Bible states “Those who do not believe in Christ will be visited by God's wrath”. “If somebody comes to you without Jesus do not let him enter your house and do not greet him”.⁵⁸
(John's letter No. 2 . 9-11)

Sikhism does not claim that those who do not believe in Sikhism will go without salvation. In contrast they can aspire for salvation through pious deeds and God's Grace. The label of religion carries no weight with God.

jjqu jlmDw riK lY AwpxNI ikrpw Dwir]
ijqu duArY aubrY iqqY lYhu aubwir]
853)

(pMnw

“O God this world is burning in its own sins. Save it in Thy Mercy. It matters not through which door (*religion*) they approach You”.

(GGS P.853)

⁵⁸ This was written by John 70 years after the ascension of Jesus. “Did Jesus actually say this? Did he use these words? Such questions are discussed in the book ‘*The evidence for Jesus*’ written by James Dunn. Read pages 36 to 45

Chapter 4 God's Creation

4.1 Creation of the Universe

The Holy Bible states “In the beginning God created heaven and earth....let there be light... let there be a firmament... let the dry land appear...let the waters bring forth life.... Let the earth bring forth grass.....let the earth bring forth the living creature after His kind.⁵⁹ And the evening and the morning were created the sixth day. He rested on the seventh day and blessed and sanctified it”. (Genesis 1,1-31)

The chronology goes like this:-

First day:	creation of (<i>one</i>) heaven and (<i>one</i>) earth ⁶⁰
Second day:	Firmament created.
Third day:	Vegetation created.
Fourth day:	Sun, Moon and the stars created.
Fifth day:	Water, marine life and birds.
Sixth day:	Insects, animals and humans created.
Seventh day:	God rested.

“The firmament⁶¹ separated the waters above and the waters below”. (Gen1:7)

According to this schedule the days existed before the sun came into existence. The earth existed before the sun and the stars. There was vegetation without sun and water. Birds were created before the reptiles. Humans were created after everything else. Modern astronomers, biologists, geologists, and scientists see it differently.

The Sikh view

According to Sikhism God created the Universe instantaneously.

kIqW pswau eyko kvwau] (pMnw 3)

“His one Word created everything”. (GGS P.3)

⁵⁹ It is not clear if God created life in Heaven as well. The location of heaven (if there is one) is still unknown to man. “nw jwnw bYkuMT khw hI] jwnu jwnu siB khih qhwhI (pMnw 325) “All talk about heaven but no one tells where it is”.(GSS P.325)

⁶⁰ Creation is mentioned in the Bible at two places Genesis 1:1 to 2:4a and 2:4b-25 although the details are different. For example the original state of earth in one is "watery " in the other "waterless ", in the first creation is supposed to have taken six days, in the second there is no mention of time. The order of creation is also different, tree of knowledge changes to tree of life, Fish find no mention and woman was created last of all.

⁶¹ According to the Quran “lOkwk-lmw-APlwK” O Muhammad if you were not there I would not have created the firmament.

The Sikhs believe that the world is an efflux from God. It is a manifestation of His creative spirit (<Ek *Onkar*) through His creative Will (*Kavao*).⁶² Before time began to run its course only God existed.⁶³ Then He willed the creation of the Universe.

"jw iqsu BwvY qw isRsit aupwey] AwpnY BwxY ley smwey"]
(pMnw 292)⁶⁴

"He wills and creates everything; He wills otherwise and withdraws it". (GGS P.292)

Sikhism assumes that His Will evolved as follows:

swcy qy pvnw BieAw pvnY qy jlu hoie]
jl qy iqRBvx swijAw Git Git joiq smoie]
(pMnw 19)

"The Lord created air (gases) which combined to form liquids (water =Hydrogen +Oxygen). The liquids brought forth the creation.⁶⁵The Lord established Himself as a spark in it". (GGS Page 19)

As for the time and date of its creation, the Guru says:-

iQiq vwru n jogI jwxY ruiq mwhu nw koeI]
jw krqw isrTI kau swjy Apy jwxY soeI]
(jpu jI pauVI 21)

"The time, the day the season or the month of the creation of the universe are not known even to the yogis (*Those who have realised God*). Only the Creator knows this". (Sikh Morning Prayer stanza 21).⁶⁶

Pinpointing the day of creation is meaningless in relation to the universe or creation. The universe does not have a day everywhere at the same time. Even on our own planet a "day" is not the same everywhere. When there is night in the West, the East basks in the sun.

4.2 How big is the universe?

There have been speculations about the extent of the universe. Christianity and Islam talk of

⁶² " inrMkwr Awkwr hoie eykMkwr Apwr sdwieAw "The unmanifested God appeared as manifested unfathomable". (Bhai Gurdas var 26:2)

⁶³ For millions of aeons God was by Himself. Neither space nor time, neither day nor night, neither star nor did galaxies exist. God was in His trance" (GGS Page 1035-36). Also read Maru Solhey M.1 and Sukhmani canto 21. The Sikh concept of creation is very close to the one expressed in Nasa Diya Sukta of Rig Veda. The only difference is that the Vedas doubt the creative activity of Braham while the Sikh scripture is positive about it. "sgl smgrI eyks Gt mWih, Aink rMg nwnw idRstwih" All matter (inanimate and animate) is within One. He manifests Himself in various colours. The Sankhya doctrine of independent entities of Prusha (purS) and Prakirti (prikrtI) and the Mahat (mh`q = seed of the universe) has been rejected in Sikhism.

⁶⁴Also see var Bhai Gurdas 1,2

⁶⁵ Scientists believe that protoplasm is necessary for life. The vitality of Protoplasm is believed to depend on water.

⁶⁶ On the basis of The Holy Bible the Jew and Christian scholars calculate the age of our Earth (up to 1997) as 5746 years. Archbishop Usher of Ireland (1650) even gave the date and time of the earth's birth as Sunday 23rd October 4004 BC. at 9 A.M. Modern science however claims that our solar system is 4.5 Billion years old and that man appeared on the earth tens of thousands of years ago. Semitic scholars put man's appearance on earth around 21st or 22nd century BC. The Hindu scripture Mahabharata, however, mentions that families of kings from Svayambhu to Yudhishtra lived and ruled in India between 4000 and 5000 BC. Hindu scholars write that the world came into existence 1,96,085,3095 years ago (See Rig Veda Bhashya Bhumika by Swami Dyanand)

seven upper and seven lower regions of the Universe.⁶⁷

The Sikh view

The Guru says that God did not create one earth but innumerable earths and galaxies. There are countless suns, moons, and earths. Man can never know the extent of God’s creation. The Gurus simply describe God and His creation as Wondrous, infinite, unfathomable, ineffable, immeasurable, indescribable, and unknowable.

keI koit dys BU mMfl] keI koit ssIAr sUr nKHqRR] ⁶⁸ (pMnw 275)

“Countless are the universes and earths in them, countless are the moons and the stars and other heavenly bodies”.⁶⁹ (GGS Page 275)

keI koit KwxNI Aru KMf] keI koit Akws bRhMf] (pMnw 276)

“Numerous are the sources of life and numerous are the planes and places of existence. There are millions of skies and universes”. (GGS P.276)

4.3 God needed rest after creation

According to the Holy Bible God created the earth in six days and rested on the 7th day which is known as *Sabbath* day. The idea of God resting after six days does not find favour with Sikh belief. For a Sikh God has no human failings and needs no rest. The division of time into weeks, months and years etc. is man made, relates to the earth and is not absolute. The Sikhs believe that the universe was not created like a potter fashioning clay into pots step by step. It took millions of years for it to develop and the process of evolution is still continuing.⁷⁰

According to Sikhism the universe has been created and recreated many times.

keI bwr psirE pswr] sdw sdw ieku eykMkwr] (pMnw 276)

⁶⁷ Christianity and Islam believe there are 14 regions, seven above, and seven below the earth.

The Hindus also believe in 14 regions (lok). The upper seven lok are Bhurloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka, and Satyaloka. The lower seven are Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Gabhastimat, Mahatala, Sutala, and Patala. Some sections of Hindus believe only in three regions. They are Heaven, earth, and the nether world (Drq, Akws pqwl).

Sikhism considers it wrong to delimit God’s creation and talks of pqqlw pqql lK Akws Awkws (innumerable upper and lower universes and firmaments). AMq n jwpy kIqw Awkwr (There is no end to his creation). “jy ko kQY qW AMq n AMq” (jpujI) (If one tries to enumerate, there will be no end to his calculations)

⁶⁸ Scientists now accept that the creation is limitless. Mr. Mandel , a French Mathematician and scientist now working with IBM, has proved that by using Mandelbrot Set ($Z= z^2+c$) an infinite number of images can be produced on the computer from the same one source and the computer will not stop whirring till doomsday. This proves the possibility of apparently unbelievable limitlessness of God’s creation.

⁶⁹ Scientists now believe that our galaxy contains at least 100,000 Million stars like our sun. And there are many such galaxies.

⁷⁰ keI jnm Bey kIt pqMgw.....Many times was life born as worm or flying insect, Many times as elephant, fish or deer. Several times as bird or snake.....etc (For detail read Gauri M.5)

“The universe has come into existence many times. Every time it is destroyed, only God remains”.
(GGS P.276)

4.4 The earth has four corners

The Holy Bible tells us that the earth is flat and has Four Corners. “After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the world, holding back the four winds of the earth”. (Rev 7:1).

The Sikh View

The Sikhs believe that the earth is round and has been revolving round itself and around other heavenly bodies “For millions of miles it revolves and there is no end to its revolutions”. (Var Asa Guru Nanak)⁷¹. Obviously fast revolving matter tends to be round. If the earth is supposed to have corners then one wonders what is beyond those corners.

The four winds mentioned in the Holy Bible do not agree with the Sikh concept of creation. The Sikhs believe “eyko pvxu mwtI sB eykw] sB eykw joiq sbweIAw (pMnw 96)”. “There is only one air and all matter is the same. The same light shines in all”. “pauXu aupwey DrI sB DrqI] jl AgnI kw bMD kIAw] (pMnw 350). “He created the air and in it he placed the earth bound by water and heat”.

4.5 Sacred days

“Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.....the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it”. (Exodus 20: 8-10)

As far as our knowledge goes the names of the days (Sunday, Monday etc.) were coined by man. One wonders from which day God started counting and on which day did he get tired! If he ended on Saturday (as is claimed) then we know that when it is Saturday in one part of the world, it is still Friday on the other. The *Sabbath* will be on two different days on the same earth.

The Sikh view

Sikhism does not accept that certain days are sacred and the others are not so. According to Sikhism time spent in God's remembrance is sacred time and time spent in selfish worldly pursuits that make man forget the Lord, is wasted.

“idn rYix sB suhwvxy ipAwry ijqu jpIAY hir nwau ”
(pMnw 432)

“My dear friend all days and nights are good provided you remember the Lord.”(GGS P. 432)

by ds mwh ruqI iQqI vwr Bly]
GVI mUrq pl swcy Aey shij imly]

⁷¹ koh kRoVI clq nw AMq (Aaws dI vwr) It revolves millions of miles and the number of its revolutions is uncountable.

(pMnw 1109)

“Seasons, seconds, minutes, days, and the twelve months that make a year are all good if you remember God”. (GGs Page 1109)

ivsuey cisAw GVIAw phrw iQqI vwrI mwHu hoAw]
sUrju eyko ruiq Anyk nwnk krqy ky kyqy vys]
(pMnw 12)

“Seconds, minutes, hours, and days add up to months. The sun remains the same but seasons change. God reveals Himself in many ways”. (GGs P. 12)

soeI cMdu cVih sy qwry soeI idnIaru qpq rhY]
sw DrqI so pauxu Julwry jug jIA Kyly Qwv kYsy]
(pMnw 902)

“The Sun, the moon, and the stars remain the same so do the earth and the air. How can then certain times be called bad and others good for dwellers of the same earth?”. (GGs P.902)

4.6 Passport to Heaven

“Heaven⁷² is a treasure-house where more important things than money are kept for us and Hell is a place of eternal punishment. Christianity does not look for the immortality of a soul but the resurrection of the complete person in a new and wonderful body.”(Encyclopaedia of the Bible page 155)

“Christians are already saved because they already have forgiveness and new life” (Ibid page 156)

According to Christianity those who are saved by Christ will go to heaven and those not saved will suffer punishment forever. “Whosoever acknowledges me before men, will be acknowledged by me before my father in heaven but whosoever disowns me will be disowned by me in heaven”. (Matthew 10:32-33)

The Sikh view

Sikhism believes that man’s soul is immortal because it is a part of the All-soul (God) but is separated from Him. Man’s ego and misdeeds are taking him farther and farther away from God.

krmI Awpo AwpxI ky nyVy ky dUir]
(pMnw 8)

“Through deeds some go nearer to God and some go astray” (GGs Page 8)

The individual is the sole architect of his own future and is not a helpless plaything in the hands of fate or another human being. The cycle of his rewards and punishments (and therefore of births and deaths) can be broken through (a) pious deeds and (b) through God’s grace which one has to deserve.

hukm clwey AwpxY krmI vHY klwm
(pMnw 1241)

“He rules us through His Will and His pen records our deeds”. (GGs P.1241)

⁷² Heaven is but the vision of fulfilled desire
And Hell the shadow from a soul on fire

(Omar Khyam. Translation by Fitzgerald)

On the record of our deeds God grants us our next birth. When we have acquired enough merit through our deeds to deserve His Grace then our cycle of births and deaths (Hell) comes to an end and we enjoy His presence (Heaven)

krmI AwvY kpVw ndrI moKu duAru
(pMnw 2)

Through deeds we deserve Grace and through Grace we achieve heaven” (GGS P.2)

imlu jgdIS imln kI brIAw
(pMnw 196)

“Meet the Lord now (while in human form). This is an opportunity not to be missed” (GGS Page 196)

The idea of Heaven in the skies and hell in the bowels of the earth is not recognised in Sikhism. The Sikhs do not believe in any hell where people are mutilated or burnt in fire. It is not a far-away place to which we will go. For them heaven is the presence of God in which we ought to live at all times.⁷³ They believe that peace of mind and a state of equipoise obtained by training the mind and leading a pious life is heaven. Forgetting the Lord and getting too involved in selfish worldly pursuits leads to problems that create a hell for humans.

surg bwsu n bwCIAAY friAY n nrik invwsu] honw hY so hoeI hY mnih
n kIjY Aws] (pMnw 337)

“Do not crave for life in heaven and never be scared of that in hell. Whatever is to happen will certainly come to pass . Make yourself desireless”.⁷⁴ (GGS P.337)

kauqk kof qmwisAw iciq n Avsu nwau]
nwnk koVI nrk brwbry aujVu soeI Qwau]
(pMnw 707)

“Enjoying the bounties of the Lord if one does not enshrine His name in the heart, one lives in the worst possible hell”. (GGS P.707)

When Ram Das Tapaa came to the Guru he asked how the Sikhs would go to heaven. The Guru replied, “My Sikhs desire not heaven. Heaven they deem not fit for their merits. They never engage in worship which is merely intended for the admiration of the public. Their minds are absorbed in God’s love. That is their heaven and salvation.” (*Sikh religion* by M.A. Macauliffe vol. 2 page 261).

mukiq bpUVI iB igAwnI iqAwgy]
(pMnw 1087)
“Men of divine knowledge reject even salvation.” (GGS P.1087)

“jb lgu min bYkuMT kI Aws] qb lg hoie nhIN crn invwsu]
(pMnw 325)

⁷³ qh bYkuMTu jh nwmu aucrnh] (rwmkLI m:5 pMnw 890)"Heaven exists where God is remembered." (GGS P. 890)

⁷⁴ svrg ky lwlc myN jo ^udw kw nwm lyqy hYN iebwdq nhIN mihz iek qjwrq hY
AOr jo fr kr dozK sy Kudw kw nwm lyqy hYN scI bMdgI nhIN buzidlnw Skwieq hY
]

“To remember God with the object of entry to heaven is not a prayer. It is a deal. To remember God for fear of entering hell is not a prayer but a cowardly act of protest.

“As long as one desires for heaven, the mind cannot concentrate on God”

Chapter 5

Beliefs

5.1 Trinity

Christians believe in three-fold God. “In the name of the Father and the son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). This is known as *Hypostasis or Trinity*.⁷⁵

(i) God (ii) Holy Ghost⁷⁶ (iii) Son of God

The concept is very complex and turgid and St. Benedict, one of the greatest medieval saints of Christianity described Trinity as ‘incomprehensible’. Questions arise in the mind as to who is the supreme of the three? Did God disappear from the Universe when Jesus died? Whose ghost is the Holy Ghost? Shall we pray to all three or God alone? How do we understand "That which is born of flesh is flesh" (John 3,-6)

Encyclopaedia Britannica (XI-618) questions the concept as follows, “If you say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father as the son does, why you not say that he is the brother of the son? If he proceeds from the son, why do you not say he is the grandson of the father?”

The answer given to this question is “The son is not the Father, but is what father is; nor is the spirit the son but is what the son is”. The answer is equally complex. All it would mean is that more than one entity existed at the same time. Three rival gods inhabited the earth one was in

⁷⁵ Some people believe that the idea of Trinity is unchristian and that it may have come from paganism, Romans or Hindus (bRhmw, iVSnUM, iSvjI). The original Greek words *parakletos* and *Pneuma* were first translated as spirit but later changed to ghost. The Hebrew translation is *Ruach*, which actually means ‘the breath of life’. The words construed to mean Trinity appear in first epistle of John (5:7 and 8). For there are three that bear record in heaven, the father, the word and the Holy Ghost” these words were later expunged from 1952 and 1971 editions of the Revised Version. Mahayana Buddhists believe in (a) Nirman Kaya (humble body) (b) Sambhoga kaya (enlightened body) and (c) Dharmakaya (absolute body like that of Buddha). This may have been the interpretation in Christianity as well.

⁷⁶ “I will pray to the Father and He shall give you another comforter that may abide with you for ever. But the comforter which is the Holy Ghost”. (John 14-26). “Blasphemy against the Holy-Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men” (Mathew 12:31-32). Sometimes this ghost is called Spirit. For example “Worship of Spirit is the worship of father. No other worship pleases the Father.”(John 4:24)

flesh, the other two non-corporeal.

God and two smaller gods appeared in human form, shared food with people, and talked to them
(Genesis 18:3-9)

Questions have also been asked about the gender of the spirit. Is the spirit male or female and when did it separate from its source? If the functions of the Spirit are the same as those of God what was the necessity of its creation? If they are different then what are they? Is God dependant on His son and Spirit?

Some people have explained trinity by saying, "Father, son, and Holy Spirit were merely three modes of revelation." Arius (250-336 AD) considered the Holy Spirit as the power of God. Athanasius (296-373 AD) explained that "The son is of the same substance as the Father and eternally proceeds from the Father". Western Church of the 16th century considered that the "Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the son". Yet others explain that the Spirit is "the radiance or glory of God".

The Americans understand Trinity slightly differently. The New American Standard Bible reads, "It is the spirit who bears witness, because the spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness, the spirit, the water, and the blood, and the three are in agreement" (1 John 5:7)

Harnack in '*Constitution and the law of the Church*' explains that the early Christians believed in Dryad, which was later introduced into Christianity to sit with God and Christ as the third deity and came to be known as the Spirit. More logical justification for the Trinitarian doctrine or the Christian triad is not yet available.

Rev K.E Kirk in his '*The evolution of the doctrine of Christianity*' writes, "We naturally turn to the writers of that period to discover what grounds they have for their belief. To our surprise, we are forced to admit that they have none. The question as it presented itself to them was not, *Why three persons?* but rather *why not?*"

There are references in the Holy Bible where Lord Christ worships God but there is not a single reference where the Holy Ghost (or spirit) worships God. This is as if a third of God worships Himself and another third does not.

According to Christianity the 'Holy Ghost' is different from the soul that exists in living creatures and is the 'élan vital' of humans. "*Parakletos*" appearing in the original text has been translated as 'spirit' or 'ghost'.⁷⁷ The word is difficult to translate and has many meanings like "one called alongside, a counsellor, a comforter, and an encourager.

⁷⁷ In his book *Questions of life* (page 104) Nicky Gumbel writes, "The Holy Spirit is not a ghost but a person" he thinks (Acts 15:28), speaks (Acts 1:16), leads (Romans 8:14), can speak in many languages (Acts 2:2-4) and can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30)". It was this Holy ghost that taught Bezalel how to make artistic designs in gold, silver, bronze and wood (Exodus 31:3-5). But Nicky also writes "There has been a great deal of discussion in recent years about whether the Holy spirit should be described as 'baptism', 'filling', 'empowering or some other term. For all that has been said and written on the subject, I do not think it is entirely clear from the New Testament which is the right term". (page 251)

The Holy Ghost works mysteriously. It did not come to Christ's rescue on the cross but it did appear to Samson although only after he had been blinded and tortured. Then it turned ropes into "charred flax" and freed Samson from the iron chains, which were smashed like glass bangles. It is not enough to have the 'Holy Ghost' once Peter had to have it three times (Acts 2:4, 4:8 Ephesians 5:18). To show that Holy Ghost has entered their body the Pentecostalist Christians faint as soon as the preacher's hand touches their forehead.

The Holy Ghost speaks like ordinary people. For example while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me, Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’ (Acts 13:2).

Christ himself seems to have declared that God is one not three when we read, “And Jesus answered him, the first of all commandments is ‘Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is One Lord’ (Mark 12:29-30). He refused to be called Son of God (See Luke 4:41 and 20:21, Timothy 2:5). Here and there he is very emphatic. For example in Matthew 15:9 He says, “But in vain do they worship me” and in John 14:28 He says, "My father is greater than I”.

Again it is not logical that God is born by a mortal as any other mortal and has to pray to himself as he does in Luke 5:16 “And he withdrew himself into wilderness and prayed”. God is God because He cannot be tempted by evil (James 1:13) but we find that Jesus was tempted by Satan for forty days (Luke 4, 1-13).

“Trinity was fundamentally a pagan idea imported into Christianity - hence the word does not occur in the Bible” (*Bible basics* page 62).⁷⁸ “Those who hold the false doctrine of ‘Trinity’ are driven to the conclusion that at one moment there were three persons in heaven and then one of them disappeared and somehow turned into a foetus in Mary’s womb, leaving just two in heaven” (*Bible Basics* page 229).

The concept of trinity becomes all the more confusing when we find that most Christians also worship Mary the mother of Jesus Christ as Theotokos (Mother of God). Pope John Paul’s motto is TOTUS TUTUS (I am completely yours O Mary) and he writes in his book ‘*crossing the threshold of hope*’, “True devotion to the mother of God is actually Christocentric; indeed it is very profoundly rooted in the mystery of the blessed Mary” (Page 213). “Mary herself and devotion to Mary, when lived out in all fullness, becomes a powerful and creative inspiration”(Ibid page 217)

Over and above this it is not uncommon to find Christians worshipping some saints here and there.

The Sikh view

Sikhism does not believe in more than one God. According to the Sikh belief God is One (<) He is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient. There is no devil, no ghost, and no special chosen Son of God.

The Guru Empahatically says, swihbu myrweyko hY] eyko hY BweI eyko hY]
(pMnw 350)

“My God is One and One only. O brother don’t be confused He is one, He is one”. (GGSP.350)

“eykY ry hir eykY jwn] eykY ry gurmuiK jwn”
(pMnw 535)

“He is One O man comprehend Him as One. O God-orientated man He is One”. (GGS P.350)

⁷⁸ “And don’t say trinity. Desist: it will be better for you: For Allah is One God” (Holy Quran 4:171)

It is understood that the idea of Trinity was invented by an Egyptian priest called Athanasius and was later accepted by the Council of Nicea in.325 AD

He resides in everything and every creature.⁷⁹

"bwjIgir jYsy bwjI pweI] nwnw rUp ByK idKlweI] sWgu auqwir QMim@E pswrwr] qb eyko eykMkwrw] kvn rUp idRsitE ibnswieE] kqih gieE auhu kq qy AwieE] rhwau] jl qy aUTih Aink qrMgw] kink BUKn kIny bhu rMgw] bIju bIij dyiKE bhu prkwrw] Pl pwky qy eykMkwrw] shs Gtw mih eyku Awkwsu] Gt PUYy qy EhI pRgwsu] Brm loB moh mwieAw ivkwr] BRm CUYy qy eykMkwr] Ehu AibnwsI ibnsq nwhI] nw ko AwvY nw ko jwhI] guir pUrY haumY mlu DoeI] khu nwnk myrI prm giq hoeI]" (pMnw 736)

"The actor stages the play, playing the many characters in different costumes; but when the play ends, he takes off the costumes, and then he is **one, and only one**.⁸⁰ How many forms and images appeared and disappeared? Where have they gone? Where did they come from? Countless waves rise up from the water. Ornaments of many different forms are fashioned from same gold but they are different only in shape. I have seen seeds of all kinds being planted — when the fruit ripens, the seeds appear in the same form as the original. The one sky is reflected in thousands of water jugs, but when the jugs are broken, only the sky remains. Doubt comes from greed, emotional attachment and the corruption of Maya. Freed from doubt, one realises the **One Lord alone**. He is imperishable; He will never pass away. He does not come, and He does not go. The Perfect Guru has washed away the filth of ego. Says Nanak, I have obtained the supreme status." (Page 736)

5.2 Immaculate birth

Joseph saw an angel in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20)

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14 Authorised version).

On the basis of the above statements Jesus is believed to have had an immaculate birth. It is believed that no human agency was involved in his conception. It is however conceded that the dream was neither related to anyone by Joseph nor did he record it in his handwriting. By its very nature a dream is not very trustworthy. In the case of Joseph his dream was written down many years after him.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Here and there the Bible does accept this point of view. For example "Know ye not that ye are the temple of living God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you" (1 Cor 1:16)

⁸⁰ It is a continuous theme throughout the Guru Granth Sahib. See pages 930, 907, 966, 1188 etc.

⁸¹ It should be noted that pregnancy before marriage was considered a disgraceful social error and a stigma. The punishment for girls who became pregnant before marriage was death by stoning (Deuteronomy 20: 20-21) at the house of her father. The Bible advised, "You must thus purge the evil among you." Unmarried mothers were usually thrown into wells. Kelsa writes that Mary had illicit relations with a roman soldier but Joseph wanted to save Mary from certain death. Therefore he kept her pregnancy secret and accepted her as his wife and made the story of Gabriel's visit current.⁸¹

In Matthew we read it was the Holy Ghost that conceived Mary (Matthew 1:18) but in Luke 1:26-27, it was angel Gabriel.

Great importance is attached to Jesus' divinity because of his birth without a male parent. But Bible itself tells us that Adam was created without both parents. Again we read in Hebrews (7:1-3) "For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the most high God was born without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life" What about his divinity? Nobody seems to know him. Again what do we make of this statement in Matthew (11:11)? "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than

The Sikh view

It is a firm belief among the Sikhs, and is substantiated by modern biological sciences, that pregnancy is possible only through the union of male sperms and female eggs. In civilised societies the offspring born of a virgin is not addressed favourably.⁸²

jYsy mwq ipqw ibnu bwlun hoeI]
(pMnw 872)

As father and mother are necessary for the conception of a child..... " (GGS P.872)

mW kI rkqu ipqw ibd Dwrw] mUriq sUriq kir Awpwrw
(pMnw 1022)

“From the union of the mother’s egg and the father’s sperm is the body created”.(GGS P.1022)

“mwq ipqw smjoig aupwey rkqu ibMd imil ipMfu kry”
(pMnw 1013)

“Through the union of mother and father the foetus is formed which is the product of the sperm and the mother’s egg”. (GGS P.1013)

ibMd rkqu imil ipMf srIAw (pMnw 1026) “From the union of the sperm and the egg, the body is formed”.⁸³

(GGS P. 1026)

5.3 Angels

“Supernatural beings surround the throne of God. Jesus tells us that they share in God’s joy over one sinner who repents” (*Encyclopaedia of the Bible.*)

Christians believe in Angels⁸⁴ who are instrumental in blessing virgins with pregnancy (as in the case of Mary) and interceding in people's private lives (as in the case of Lot and others).

John the Baptist" Two out of four gospels (Mark and John) do not mention the virgin birth. The other two (Matthew and Luke) do mention immaculate birth but differ in detail. Mithra, the founder of Mithraism (born in Persia) was born before Jesus of a virgin mother in a cave on 25th December. He is said to have come out of his grave alive on the third day and had 12 disciples.

Dr AB Davidson says that the original word (*almah*) in Aramaic means “a young woman, a girl of marriageable age”. It was wrongly translated into Greek as ‘*Parthenos*’ which means “virgin”. The word for virgin in Aramic is *bethulah*, which is used nowhere in the old copies of the Bibles. The revised version has now corrected this mistake

⁸² God created Adam without a father and without a mother but Adam is not thought to be as great as Jesus. This is explained by saying, “As in Adam all died, so in Christ all be made alive”. (I Corinthians 15:22)

⁸³ Also see GGS pages 63,706 and 945 etc.

⁸⁴ Some people (especially Muslims) believe that there are between 80,000 and 100, 000 angels. The archangels are **Gabriel**, who visited Mary and later brought Quran to Prophet Muhammad (Muslims call him rUh-aul-kuds - Holy spirit), **Michael**, who provides food and rain.(The Jews believe he looks after Israel nation). **Israfael** will beat the drum on doomsday. **Azrael**, is the angel of death {Muslims call him mlk-aul-mOq angel of death}. The Muslims add two more to archangels (krwimm kwqbYn). They are Munkar and Nakir who record man’s daily actions, test their faith, and keep the record for Doomsday. Over and above this, 8 angels carry God's throne, 19 look after hell, and Angel Rizwan is in charge of heaven.

The Sikh view

The Sikhs do not believe in the agency of angels or cherubim. They believe only in God, Who they consider to be all powerful and not in any way dependant on sub-agents like angels. The Sikhs believe:

“jo Drm kmwvY iqsu Drm nwau hovY pwip kmwxY pwpI jwxIAY]
(pMnw 138)

“One who lives righteously is known as righteous (an angel); one who commits sins is known as a sinner (a devil)”.

Some Christians think that “There is good reason to believe that each true believer has angels, perhaps one special one helping them in their lives (Ps 34:7)” (Bible basics page 15)

The Sikhs believe that God is the friend and guide of all human beings. He is capable of doing anything and does not need the assistance of any angels.

sjxu mYfw cweIAw hB khI dw imqu]
hBy jwxin Awpxw khI n Twhy icqu]
(pMnw 1096)

“My God is broad-minded and is friendly with everybody. Everybody claims Him as a friend. He does not deliberately cause harm to anyone”. (GGS P.1096)

5.4 Burning of incense

When Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron burnt incense in the fire, God burnt them alive for doing so. (Leviticus 1-18)

The Sikh view

To a Sikh it seems rather unjust that God should punish anybody for the trivial offence of burning incense. Burning of incense on fire is carried out in many Gurdwaras/Mandirs daily and has nothing to do with God. It is used for fragrance. God's bounties are used by man with gratitude to glorify Him. The Sikhs believe that God does not require man to burn or not to burn incense. They believe that nature itself is using fragrance from flowers and vegetation on the mountains.

DUpu mlAwnlo pvxu cvro kry sgl bnrwie PULMq joqI] (pMnw 663)

“Fragrance from mountains is Thy incense, wind is Thy fan and vegetation and flowers Thy offerings.” (GGS P.663)

The New Testament seems to differ from the Old Testament as far as incense burning is concerned. Zachariah was appointed in a temple to burn incense (Luke 1:9-11) and it is still a common practice in some Christian churches to burn incense.

5.5 Miracles

In the Holy Bible there are stories of sea dividing (Exodus 14,21-22), rivers stopping (Josh 3,9-17), the sun standing still (Josh. 10:12-14),⁸⁵ man disappearing into the sky in a chariot of fire (II Kings 2,11). Here Serpents (Genesis 3,1-4) and asses talk human languages (Num. 22,28-30), axe-heads float (II Kings 6,4-7), Stars move with men (Matthew 2:7-12), Dead men break out of the tombs and speak (Matthew 8:28-32 and 27:52) and the horses spit fire, smoke and sulphur (Rev 9:17). Jonah survives for a number of days in the stomach of a whale (Jonah.1: 17) and in a worm eaten gourd (John 3,6-7).

Jesus himself is mentioned to have performed many miracles⁸⁶, which became the mainstay of his proof of divinity. He cured a leper (Matthew 8-3),⁸⁷ restored eye-sight (Matthew 20:30-34), cast out devil from a Greek girl (Mark 7:25-30), cured a blind man (Mark 9,2-10), turned water into wine (John 2:1-11) and fed one man's food to thousands (Mark 6:30-44). He spoke to the wind and the waves (Mark:4-35-41). He made a cripple walk (John 5:1-9). He brought the dead to life (John: 11: 38-44).

A deaf and dumb man was brought to Jesus. Jesus said, "Ephphata" (it means open) and the man began to hear and speak. He drove some demons and made them enter a herd of pigs. The herd of pigs immediately died. (Matthew 8:28-32).

Some biblical miracles even defy belief. For example in Genesis (38:29) we find that when Tamar was about to give birth to twins one of the twins stretched out his hand from the womb. The midwife tied a scarlet thread on his wrist. The baby then withdrew the hand back into the womb. When Jesus did not find fruit on the tree (out of season) he cursed it by saying, "May you never bear fruit again" and the tree immediately withered (Matthew 21-18-19). "The stars in the sky fell like figs dropping from the tree and the sky receded like a scroll rolling up, and every mountain and Island was removed from its place".

It was on the basis of his miracles of *Tetra* (wonders), *Dunameis* (mighty acts), and *Semeia* (signs) that 451 years after his birth the council of Chalcedony declared Jesus "God in human form".

Although Christians attach great importance to Christ's miracles, Christ himself is said to have admitted that even non-Christians, non-believers and false prophets can cause miracles. For example in Matthew (24:24) Jesus says, "For there shall be false Christs and false prophets and shall show signs and wonders".⁸⁸

Miracles do not make anybody a prophet. Similar miracles were performed by other Christian and Jewish Prophets as well. For Example Elisha fed 100 people with only 20 barley loaves (II Kings 4:44), cured Naaman of leprosy (II Kings 5:14) and cured a blind young man (II Kings 16:17). Ravens brought bread and flesh to Elijah (I-Kings 17:16). Elijah raised a child from the dead (I Kings 17:22, II Kings 13:21, II Kings 4: 34) and struck a man blind (II Kings 17:22). Bendoza, a contemporary of Jesus

⁸⁵ In Hindu mythology Hanuman, the son of wind (पुत्र पुत्र), even ate the sun.

⁸⁶ The word is derived from *Miurs* and according to Oxford English Dictionary it means 'event due to supernatural agency. VC Deserts defines miracles "Physical action of an unseen intelligent agent producing results to which known laws are inadequate" *Psychic Philosophy* page 32. Dr Farrar the author of *The witness of History to Christ* is quoted in *Supernatural religion* as saying, "If miracles be incredible, Christianity is false"

⁸⁷ In Hindu mythology Kashyapa is reported to have cured many lepers and given sight to many blind people with the touch of his hand.

⁸⁸ The Bible does not tell us the difference between a true and a false miracles or prophets neither does it outline any methods for detecting false prophets. One wonders in what way was Jesus different from Sukracarya (of Hindu mythology) who brought a group of dead and buried soldiers back to life or Dhanvantri who brought to life a man after the latter had been buried as dead for many days. Such stories are incredible and there is no proof either way. A scientific mind finds it hard to accept them as true.

Christ, was quite well known for performing miracles.

It is also incomprehensible that when Jesus was being crucified and his tormentors were asking him to show a miracle by coming down from the stake and thus saving his life, he did not show a miracle.

Although Christ claimed, “My father, on my request, will put at my disposal twelve legions of angels (Matthew 26:53) on the cross he expressed his utter helplessness by saying, “*Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachtani*= My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” So much so that even his disciples (Peter & Judas Iscariot) denied him. “They all forsook him and fled” (Mark 14:50). The twelve followers (including the deserters) are now sitting on twelve thrones in heaven (Luke 22:30)

The Sikh view

Sikhism forbids performing of miracles to prove divinity and believes that miracles are born out of ego. The Guru writes

ibnu nWvY pYnxu Kwxu sBu bwid hY iDgu isDI iDgu krmwiq]
sw isiD sw krmwiq hY AicMqu kry ijsu dwiq]
nwnk gurmuiK hir nWmu min vsY eyhw isiD eyhw krmwiq
(pMnw 650)

“Without enshrining God's Name in the heart all enjoyments like wearing best garments and eating best foods are useless. Useless also are occult powers and miracles. That alone is occult and that alone is miraculous which the carefree Lord spontaneously bestows”. (GGs Page 650)

iriD isiD sBu mohu hY nWmu n vsY min Awie ..
(pMnw 593)

“Acquisition of miraculous powers only increases ego and undue attachments. Miracles keep out God's love from the heart”. (GGs P.593)

Guru Har Rai, the seventh Guru of the Sikhs, excommunicated his own son for egotistically performing 52 miracles in the court of Emperor Aurangzeb at Delhi. The Sikhs believe in abiding by God's Will. They perform personal physical service (*sewa*) in humility. Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, had founded a ‘lepers’ colony’ in Tarn Taran where he personally cleansed their wounds and applied medicine. He did not cure them through a miracle.

We see in front of our eyes Paul Mckenna, David Copperfield, and Paul Daniel perform apparent miracles by making heavy missiles and elephants disappear and re-appear but nobody accepts them as divine beings.

5.6 Death

In the story of Adam and Eve God says, “You must not eat from the tree in the middle of the garden and you should not touch it. If you do so you will surely die”. (Genesis 2:16-17)

Christians believe that death is a short time of rest after which Jesus shall return and claim his

people. "The hour is coming in which all those in the tombs will hear his voice and come out".⁸⁹
(John 5: 26-29)

The Bible also says, "Dust thou art, to dust returneth"^(ecclesiasts 30:-20-21). This means that even after having come out of the graves, the people will ultimately go back to earth.

If death was brought upon man because of the sin committed by Adam and Eve, one wonders why birds, animals, and plants etc. die.

The Sikh view

According to Sikhism the gross body that we see has a subtle body in it which consists of mind, intellect, and vital breath. When the gross body dies, the subtle body leaves it and lives elsewhere. No one knows where it comes from and where it goes.

Physical death is God's law and no one is outside this law.⁹⁰ Jesus' dying, then becoming alive and dying again is unnatural. A crucified Messiah is a contradiction in terms. Either he did not die or if he did die then he certainly could not rise. What good was served by his resurrection if he died again after some days?

The Sikhs believe:-

"jo AieAw so clsI sBu koeI AeI vwrIAY]
(pMnw 473)

"All living creatures must die one day when their time comes". (GGs Page 473)

kbIr mwns jnmu dulMBu hY hoie n bwrY bwr
ijau bn Pl pwky Buie igrih bhuir n lwgih fwr]
(pMnw 1366)

"Human life is precious. It is not repeated so often. Its death is like a fruit that falls from the tree and cannot return to the same branch". (GGs P. 1366)

jw BjY qw TIkru hovY GwVq GVI n jwie] (pMnw 138)
"Like the earthen pitcher that breaks and shatters into pieces and cannot be recreated, the human body disappears for ever." (GGs page 138)

In the Bible suffering is perhaps exaggerated and called death. When Paul says, "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31), it can only mean "I suffer separation from God daily". I forget the Lord for sometime every day and therefore die daily. This interpretation can be close to the Sikh idea where the Guru says,

⁸⁹ Roman Catholics, believe that one day Christ will return to raise the dead and restore their bodies to life again. Different people have different ideas as to what happens to the dead. Japanese think that the dead go to *Amer*, the other world above the earth which is watered by the Milky Way. Slavonic tradition believes the dead go to the East beyond the Sun. Celtic myths believe that the after world lies on the islands of the West. Egyptians believe that Heaven and Hell are both under the Earth. According to Sikhism " jwqo jwie khW qyy AwvY , kh aupjY kq jwie smwvY (pMnw 152) (The physical body must die And will not come back. Humans do not know its origin and neither do they know where it goes)

⁹⁰ iehu qau rcn ricAw krqwir Awvq jwvq hukim Apwir (pMnw 885) it is the creation of the Lord. Birth and death are under His will. nwnk eyv n jwpeI ikQY jwie smwih (pMnw 648) O Nanak nobody can know where the dead go (Page 648)

"AwKw jIvw ivsrY mr jwau".⁹¹
(pMnw 9)

"I live when I remember the Lord, but I die when He is forgotten". (GGS Page 9)

One wonders if Jesus attributed the same meaning to life and death when he said, "Just as the father raises the dead and gives them life so does the son give life to whom he is pleased to give it". (Johannes 5:21)

5.7 Voices from God

In the Holy Bible God enters into conversation with men frequently and issues verbal orders and instructions.⁹² Christ himself heard voices from God and so did Moses.

The Sikh view

Sikhism does not believe that God or his angels speak to any particular person through dreams or voices heard in the wilderness. The Sikhs believe that through the Guru's instruction conscience gets purified. The purified conscience itself becomes the vehicle of Godly thoughts. God is not living somewhere in a void or on a mountain. According to Sikhism God is within us.

ey mn mq jwxih hir dUir hY sdw vyKu hdUir]
sd suxdw sd vyKdw sbid rihAw BrpUir] (pMnw
428)

"O my mind never think that God is far from you but consider Him within yourself. He is with us all the time. He watches us and listens to us. His word fills the universe". (GSS Page 428)

Gt hI mwih inrMjnu qyrY qY Kojq auidAnw
(pMnw 632)

"The Lord is within you, and you are looking for Him in wilderness". (GGS Page 632)

Gt hI BIqir bsqu inrMjnu qw ko mrmu n jwnw]
(pMnw 632)

"The Lord is within you but you do not know this secret".(GGS Page 632)

Gt Gt mY hir jU bsY sMqn kihE pukwir] (pMnw 1426)

⁹¹ jIvq mrY mrY Puin jIvY qw mOKMqr pwvY (pMnw 550) , jIvq mry mry Puin jIvy AYsy suMn smwieAw, AMjn mwih inrMjin rhIAY bhuiV nw Bvjl pwieAw (pMnw 332). jIvq mrhu mrhu Puin jIvhu punrip jnm n hoeI (pMn 1104)."b`uilAw ihjrq ivc ieslwm dy myrw inq hY Kws mukwm] in`q in`q mrW qy inq inq jIvW myrw in`q in`q kUC mukwm" . (bulHy SwH) The Bible seems to accept this point of view when it says, "I say unto thee except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3)

⁹² God spoke to Samuel in the form of a small boy (1 Samuel 3:4-14), to Abraham, Joseph and Peter as an angel, to Old Testament prophets he spoke in dreams. Later He spoke to Muhammad through an angel.

“Men of God say aloud that God is within you”. (GGSP.1426)

Modern sciences of Auto-suggestion, Hypnotism, and Mesmerism can cause hallucinations in people who then claim to hear voices. There is no shortage of people in the lunatic asylums who claim to hear voices. When the Yorkshire ripper⁹³ worked as a sexton he heard voices from God every time a new grave was dug. The voices told him to clear the streets of vile women.

5.8 Demons, Devils, Ghosts, Spirits, and Satan

The Holy Bible says that Christians have to fight against wicked spirit forces (Ephesians 6:12) and demons responsible for spreading wickedness (Revelation 12:9).

Nicky Gumbel in his book *Questions of life* (page 150) writes, “We are not told very much about the origins of Satan in the Bible. There is a hint that he may have been a fallen angel (Isaiah 14:12-23). *He is not merely a force but is personal*”. The theme is fully developed only in the New Testament where even Christ was tempted by the devil. Devil is supposed to appear in many guises. St. Dominic was discoursing to the sisters in a convent when a sparrow flew in. Dominic caught the sparrow, plucked its feathers one by one and said, “Fly now if you can, O enemy of mankind”. He said Devil had come in the guise of a sparrow. St. Gothlac had a fight with the devil, Saint Dunstan pulled the devil’s nose with a hot pair of tongs, and Saint Luther threw a pot of ink at the devil.

The Sikh view

One may ask if God has unleashed powerful forces of wickedness and evil against man, what chance of success has poor man against God?

Sikhism does not believe in Devils⁹⁴, wicked spirits or demons. The Sikhs believe that God's activity is perfect. God would not deliberately bring into existence wicked creatures to thwart and undermine the efforts of humans. God loves righteousness. Worldly temptations are the root cause of man's distance from God and they can be eradicated by following the Guru's advice.

hm Avgn krh AsMK nIiq qum inrgun dwqwry]
dwsI sMgiq pRBU iqAig ey krm hmwry]
(pMnw 809)

“O Lord we slip into temptations daily but you are charitable and above temptations. We forget You and keep the company of Thy servant (mammon). Such are our sinful deeds”. (GGSP.809)

⁹³ A staunch Roman Catholic Peter Sutcliffe of Bradford (Now in Broad moor prison serving 10 life sentences) , a paranoid schizophrenic and serial killer butchered 13 women and maimed seven others for life between 1975-1981. He said he heard God's voices telling him to , " kill, kill and kill" He claimed clemency from the court on theological grounds saying, " I am not a mad killer. I had been told what my mission was, like a soldier in the war. I could not disobey my orders . They came from the highest authority (God)." ‘ *Voices from an evil God* ' by Barbara Jones page 3,20,38,58 etc). Peter's wife Sonia Sutcliffe claimed that she was the re-incarnated Christ specially chosen by God and that she had stigmata on the palms of her hand. (See ‘*Voices from an evil God*’ page 53 and 68). In this connection also read "*Some body's husband, somebody's son*" by Burn. George Fox, the founder of Quakerism heard voices asking him to repeat “Woe unto the bloody city of Lichfield”.

⁹⁴ The original word *diabolos* in Greek was translated in Hebrew as 'Satan' (meaning slanderer or spoilsport) which in English became Devil/demon. The word ‘Devil’ occurs in the Old Testament only 4 times but in the New Testament 109 times. At one time the churches of Rome had an order of exorcists to drive away devils, ghosts, and bad spirits. John Weasel, the founder of Methodist church said, “Giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible”. In Dante's *Divine Comedy* the devil is shown as a horned beast trudging through inferno

kwm kRoID AhMkwir iPrih dyvwinAw]

.....

ibnu pUry gurdyv iPrY sYqwinAw]

(pMnw 707)

“He goes about mad in sex, anger, and pride. Without a true spiritual guide he rushes about like a Satan”.

(GGS Page 707)

According to Sikhism sin is anything that goes against godly virtues and keeps man engrossed in himself rather than the Creator. Sin also consists in exploitation of the society and impinging on other people's rights. Evil, according to Sikhism is within us. Evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, envy, slander, arrogance, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, and lewdness etc. are human weaknesses. They result from egotistic tendencies that exist in our mind. There is no devil, demon, Satan, or spirit outside the mind.

5.9 Birth of Sin

In the book of Genesis (2, 3) we find the following story about sin.⁹⁵

God created Adam and settled him in a garden in the East of Eden. He ordered him not to eat from the tree of knowledge (some Bibles write 'Apple tree', others write 'Wheat' yet others write 'tree of good and evil' or 'tree of life'). God took one of Adam's ribs and made a woman for him named Eve.⁹⁶ The devil appeared as a serpent and beguiled them to eat the forbidden fruit. God was angry. He called them and their progeny sinners and drove them out of the garden into the world. This offence brought ' death' to humans and God said," *Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.*"

The following points need to be noted:

- (a) God created Adam alone and later realising Adam's loneliness created Eve. This only makes women inferior and second rate. They were created as after-thought.
- (b) Eve was created from Adam's ribs. “He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh and the rib which the Lord God hath taken from man made he a woman.”. (Genesis 2-21)

⁹⁵ The terms mean different things to different people. Mahabharata enumerates 10 great sins. **Violence, theft, abduction, falsehood, insult, backbiting, breaking promise, jealousy, cruelty, and expectation of reward for good acts.** Manu Simirti (chapter 11 stanza 54) lists **killing a Brahman, Consuming intoxicants, theft, sex with Guru's wife and keeping company with sinners .**

The Bible lists seven deadly sins : **Pride, adultery, anger, avarice, sloth, jealousy and overeating.** The Holy Quran lists **Lying, backbiting, fraud, extravagance, hoarding, corruption, mockery, hypocrisy, abortion, usury, drinking, gambling, adultery, and theft.**

Sikhism teaches that sins are innumerable but they all originate from five basic instincts. They are corollaries of **Carnal desire, pugnacity, avarice, over indulgence, and vanity (kwm, kRoD, loB, moh qy hMkwir).**

⁹⁶ Some Hindus believe that the word Adam is AwdmI (Awqmw) and Eve is jIv and that the idea is borrowed from Hinduism. They also claim that the word 'human' is derived from Sanskrit root Hu=God and Manas=mind, meaning 'God minded'. According to the Bible Adam lived for 930 years. The Hebrew word 'Adam' literally means "Every man".

(c) God forbade eating from the tree of knowledge (or wheat or apple). If the couple lived in a garden what would they eat but fruit? One wonders if God was reasonable in prohibiting fruit. Against this the Bible itself tells us that "The Lord gives wisdom. From His mouth comes knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 1:7)

(d) The devil beguiled the couple. One wonders how the devil could beguile God's favourite creation. Adam was the son of God (Hebrews 7:3). Devil appears to be stronger than God and his son.

(e) Adam's disobedience made the *world population* sinners forever. (Christ was born to a descendant of Adam. One wonders why He and all other prophets born after Adam did not become sinners).

(f) Man would not have died if Adam and Eve did not commit this sin. "And thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned". (Romans 5:12-14)

The Sikh view

Since Eve was created from Adam's ribs, this makes women inferior to men.⁹⁷ Biological facts do not substantiate the creation of females from the male's ribs. Females are conceived in the womb exactly like males. The fact still remains that men are born from women not the other way round. Sikhism does not accept that any human being is inferior or superior to others of his/her kind.

so ikau mMdw AKIAY ijqu jMmih rwjwn]
473)

(pMnw

"Why call her (woman) inferior who gives birth to great men?" (GGS P.473)

Reading the Holy Bible one gets the impression that the consumption of forbidden food (Apple or wheat) is a big sin that enrages God. Yet the world is eating tons and tons of wheat and apples. Christ himself ate bread at the Last Supper and said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven".

Some theologians say that Adam's fall was due to his tendency to acquire knowledge "And the Lord God commanded you are free to eat from any tree but do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When you eat from it, **you will surely die**"⁹⁸ (Genesis 2:16-17)

This would mean that ignorance is bliss and that humans should remain ignorant. It is rather strange that acquiring 'Knowledge of good' is also forbidden.

Sikhism stipulates that humans must acquire knowledge and go on doing so throughout life.

⁹⁷ Early Christians regarded woman as a temptress because she was responsible for the fall of Adam (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* Vol. 19 page 909 Edition 1977). The idea of gender inferiority may have originated in Greece where Aristotle preached, "Woman is an unfinished man left standing on a lower step in the scale of development. The male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the one ruler and the other ruled."

A conference was held by high Christian theologians in France in 587 AD. to determine whether women could truly be considered human beings or not. Henry VIII forbade the reading of the Bible by women. In the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford male and female students were not given the same rights until 1964.

⁹⁸ Adam and eve did eat from the tree of knowledge and were expelled from heaven but they **did not die**.

mn smJwvn kwrny kCUAk pVIAY igAn]
(pMnw 340)

“Knowledge is essential to condition the mind”. (GGs P.340)

igAn kw bDw mnu rhY gur ibnu igAnu n hoie]
(pMnw 469)

“Knowledge restrains the mind and it is not obtained without the spiritual Guide”. (GGs Page 340)

gur igAwn AMjn scu nyqRI pwieAw] AMqir cwnxu AigAwnu AMDyr
gvwieAw] (pMnw 124)

“The Guru has applied the true ointment of spiritual wisdom to my eyes. Deep within, the Divine Light has dawned, and the darkness of ignorance has been dispelled.” (GGs P.124)

igAwn pdwrQ pweIAY iqRBvx soJI hoie] inrml nwmu n vIsrY gux kw
gwhku hoie] (pMnw 60)

“Obtaining the wealth of spiritual wisdom, the understanding of the three worlds (past, present, and future) is acquired. So become a customer of merit, and do not forget the Immaculate Naam, the Name of the Lord.” (GGs P.60)

“AMqir igAwn n AwieE imrqku hY sMswir]
(pMnw 14)

“If there is no knowledge within, then humanity is dead” (GGs P.14)

5.10 Forgiveness of Sins

According to the Holy Bible Adam's fall from the Garden of Eden brought sin on the whole human race. ⁹⁹ Obviously, only one man sinned (if disobedience is a sin) and the whole human race became sinners for ever. Even those who are yet to conceive are sinners for no fault of theirs.

According to Matthew 9:12, 27 (and Rev 20:13) sins are forgiven but according to John (20:6, 10, 11, 12) God's justice is based on one's deeds and we must deserve to be forgiven. Jesus pardoned the sins of a paralytic person when he said, “take heart son, your sins are forgiven”. The question remains what good deeds had the paralytic done to deserve forgiveness? Again we find that every time the sins are forgiven, the Bible offers no advice on how to avoid sinning in future.

The Sikh view

Sikhism does not support this view of collective condemnation of humanity by the fall of Adam and neither does Sikhism accept the story of Adam and Eve to be true.

Guru Arjan Dev asks: jb Akwru iehu kCu nw idRstyqw pwp puMn qb kh qy
hoqw (pMnw 290)

⁹⁹ No one is sinless (Romans 1:10) because all have sinned, they are bereft of God's praises.(Romans 3:23)

“When the human body did not exist, who was virtuous and who was sinful?” (GGS P. 290)

It is our mind that gets polluted through our thoughts and actions. A polluted mind is the minefield of sins.

vis AwINxhu vy jn iesu mn kau mnu bwsy ijau inq BawidAw]
(pMnw 776)

"Control your mind which wanders all the time like a falcon looking for a prey" (GGS Page 776)

kwieAw AMdir pwpu pMunu duie BweI] duhI imil kY isRRsit aupweI]
(pMnw 126)

“Virtue and sin exist in your body brother. They are the cause of the creation (and therefore of separation from God).” (GGS P.126)

C.S.Lewis is very close to the Sikh idea of sin when he writes, “Sin is sin because ' I ' is in the middle. The path from “ME” to God has a barrier of ego. The consciousness of ones own personality stands in the way of spiritual progress. Selfhood has to be killed before reality can be tasted. The ‘I’ the ‘me’ and the ‘mine’ must be ejected from the centre of consciousness”.¹⁰⁰

5.11 Obliteration of sins

Christians believe that Jesus, by his death on the cross, paid the ransom price for their sins (Mark 10:45) therefore the moment people come to Christ they receive complete forgiveness. St. Paul says, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1)“Jesus took away all our sins – past, present and future”.¹⁰¹ “He takes all our sins and buries them in the depths of the sea”. (Micah 7:9).

To a lay man this could mean:

- (i) That the price for sinning has been paid by Lord Christ on their behalf so the Christians now have a license to commit whatever sins they like.
- (ii) That since sins are still being committed by the Christians and the death of Lord Christ has not stemmed the tide of sins among them so he died in vain.
- (iii) That God is not just as He punished Lord Christ for the sins yet to be committed by his people.
- (iv) The very idea of forgiving sins militates against divine justice and retribution. It proves that God is redundant.

The temptation for sin was brought about by the serpent and yet serpents live for hundreds of

¹⁰⁰ Sufis call this state headlessness, self-negation, or total nescience.

“The self is suppressed by self annihilation. The nearer nothing, so much more divine” (Angelus Silesius)

¹⁰¹ There has been a custom among the Christians to cleanse themselves of the sins. They used to take a goat. The sinner would lay his/her hands on the goat’s head and confess his/her sins. The sin was then believed to have passed from the human to the animal. The goat was then sent into the jungle. It was called *scapegoat*. It could be killed but not consumed for food.

years. Bible itself calls serpents' wise creatures "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves". (Matthew 10:16). One wonders what would happen if everybody became as wise as the proverbial serpent of the Bible?

And yet the idea that Adam's sin has made all human beings sinners appears to be contradicted by the Bible itself. For example in Deuteronomy 24:16 we find "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for fathers: Every man shall be put to death for his own sin". (See also Jeremiah 31:30 and Ezekiel 18:20)

The Sikh view

Sikhism believes that sins pollute the mind and no outside agency can wash them away unless the sinner meets a virtuous person (Guru) and by following his good advice changes his course of action. What is required is change of heart and sincere repentance that leads to self-examination, introspection, self-correction, and determination to shun wrong actions in future.

mUq plIqI kpVu hoie] dy swbUxu leIAY Ehu Doie] BrIAY miq pwpw
kY sMig] Ehu DopY nWvY kY rMig]
puMnI pwpI AwKxu nwih] kir kir krxw iliK lY jwhu] Awpy bIij
Awpy hI Kwhu (pMnw 4)

"When the clothes are soiled or stained by urine, soap can wash them clean. But when the intellect is stained and polluted by sin, it can only be cleansed by the Love of the Name (God). Virtue and vice do not come by mere words; actions repeated, over and over again, are engraved on the soul. You shall harvest what you plant."
(GGS Page 4)

"Avgux Coif guxw kau Dwvhu kir Avgux pCuqwhI jIau] sr Apsr kI
swr n jwxih iPir iPir kIc bufwhI jIau] 2] AMqir mYlu loB bhU
JUTy bwhir nWvhu kwhI jIau] (pMnw 598)

Renounce corruption, and seek virtue; committing sins, you shall only come to regret and repent. You do not know the difference between good and evil; again and again, you sink into the mud of evil deeds. Within you is the great filth of greed and falsehood; What is the use of washing your body only on the outside?
(GGS P.598)

Sikhism believes that every person is responsible for his/her own actions. No one else will suffer for a sin committed by others.

Aih kru kry su Aih kru pwey koeI n pkVIAY ikSY QWie
(pMnw 406)

"The hand that sins is the hand that suffers punishment. No body is punished for the sins of others". (GGS Page 406)

kIqw Apo Awpxw Awpy hI lyKw sMFIAY]
(Aww kI vwr m:1)

"Everyone is individually responsible to God for his/her actions."

5.12 Salvation

"The mystery of salvation is an event which has already taken place. God has embraced all men

by the cross and the resurrection of His son.” (His Holiness Pope John Paul II in his book ‘*Crossing the threshold of hope*’ Page 74).

According to Christianity salvation is possible only through Christ.¹⁰² His spirit will escort all Christians to God's presence. “There is only one intermediary among God's men who has paid the price for everybody's salvation”. (Timothy 2.56) “There is no salvation through anyone else; in the entire world no other name has been granted to mankind by which we can be saved “. (Acts 4:12)

“Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”. (2 Thessalonians 1, 7-9)

Bishop Westcott, a former Professor of Divinity at Cambridge says, “There are three tenses of salvation. We have been saved from the penalty of sin. We are being saved from the power of sin. We shall be saved from the presence of sin”.

Jesus himself is supposed to have said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me”. (Matthew 28:18-20), “I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the father but by me”. (John 14:16).

The Sikh view

Sikhism does not claim monopoly of salvation nor does it believe in salvation that supposedly comes after death. The Sikhs believe that salvation means, “Getting rid of the effects of mammon and illusion and to remain imbued with God's presence at all times. When death comes, to have earned the grace of merging in the All-soul (God)”.

rwju nw cwhauu mukiq nw cwhau] min pRIiq crn kmlw ry]
(pMnw 534)

“I do not aspire for worldly glory nor do I ask for salvation after death. All I want is the inebriation of His presence in my mind at all times”. (GGS P.534)

mUey hUey jau mukiq dyhugy mukiq n jwnY koielw]
(pMnw 1292)

“How would the mortals know whether salvation comes after death or not”? (GGS P.1292)

Sikhism does not believe in salvation granted by an individual to another individual. For them salvation is achieved by meticulously pursuing the spiritual path outlined by their Gurus and leading a pious life of devotion and virtue.

5.13 The dead will rise

¹⁰² Jehovah's witnesses believe that (according to Revelations 14:1.4) only 144,000 people can enter heaven. (See *Awake* dated April 8, 1997 page 10).

“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and the dead in Christ will rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air”. (I Letter to Thessalonians 4.16-17 & I Cor. 15,51-52)

There is also a belief among the Christians that the human body survives after death and Christ did not envisage merger with God in His final state. After His resurrection he ascended to heaven and now sits at the right hand of God. The father and the son are always two and remain so even after the son’s death.

The Sikh view

The Sikhs believe that on physical death the elements of the body disintegrate and remain on earth but the soul is reborn carrying with it its actions.

pvnY mih pvnu smwieAw] joqI mih joiq ril jwieAw]
mwtI mwtI hoeI eyk] rovnhwry kI kvn tyk]
(pMnw 885)

“At the time of death the breath re-enters the air, the spirit goes back to the All-spirit, and the elements rejoin the elements. Crying is in vain because nothing has been lost”. (GGS P.885)

The Sikhs do not believe that the dead have to return to life to be escorted to God by somebody. Their belief is that spiritual human identity either loses itself completely in the Almighty and its transmigration ceases or it loses its existing identity and takes on a new birth with a changed identity based on the sum total of its deeds. They seek Salvation while alive (jIvn mukqI). Salvation for them is the control of self and freedom from Mammon.

eyk ngrI pMc cor bsIAly brjq corI DvY] iqRhds mwl rKY jo nwnk
moK mukiq so pwvY] (pMnw 503)

“In the one village of the body, live the five thieves;¹⁰³ they have been warned, but they still go out stealing. One who keeps his assets safe from their three modes and the ten passions, O Nanak, attains liberation and emancipation.” (GGS P.503)

5.14 Repentance

In Christianity great importance is attached to repentance. It is claimed that “heaven has more joy over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15.7).

The Sikh view

The emphasis in Sikhism is more on righteousness and control of mind than on repentance. Repentance is only the beginning not the end. The Guru says (min jIqY jgu jIqu), conquer your mind and you conquer the world. For the Sikhs repentance means self-examination, self-

¹⁰³ kwm, kROD, loB ,moh ,hMkwr (carnal desire, Anger, greed, attachment and ego)

correction, introspection, and prevention of wrong actions in future.

“Within yourselves deliverance must be sought; each man his prison makes.” (Sir E. Arnold)

5.15 The Soul

The Christians believe in the existence of ‘soul’. For example in Psalms 22:29 we find, “None can keep alive his own soul”. They do not however believe that soul is immortal.

“Christianity does not look for the immortality of a soul but the resurrection of the complete person in a new and more wonderful way”. (*Encyclopaedia of the Bible* page 155)

It appears that according to Christianity ‘human body’ and ‘personality’ survives after death. Whether the soul lives or dies is immaterial. “The Bible sees human beings as a unity. It does not speak of an immortal soul locked up in a decaying sinful body” (*Encyclopaedia of the Bible* page 156)

“For everyone life beyond death is connected with the affirmation I believe in the resurrection of the body” (*Crossing the threshold of hope* page 185)

The Platonic idea that soul survives after death and that the goal of man is to revert to the original archetypal state and thereby to lose the individual identity was condemned at the council of Constantinople (543 AD) as an Originist error. The council concluded, “If anyone says or thinks that human souls had a previous existence anathema sit”

It should be noted that not all Christian scholars agree with the above ideas. For example Eckhart, Blois, Suso, Julian and Saint Teresa, St. John of cross, John of angels and Estella assert that Soul is uncreated and uncreateable and that God does not ever depart from the soul. Ruybroeck says, “Through eternal birth all creatures have come forth in eternity, before they were created in time. God has seen and known them in Himself”. Leon goes even further when he says, “The soul not only has God dwelling in it but is indeed God”.

The Sikh view

Sikhism believes that soul is a spark from the All-Soul (God) and is immortal. Kabir calls it “A part of God”(ੴ ਕੀ ਅਮਸ) .The Sikh Gurus refer to it as “The light of the Eternal”(ਜੀਓ ਸਰੂਪ) . The Sikh Gurus say that man’s sinful actions have clouded the otherwise pure nature of his soul and he should try to cleanse his soul so that once again it becomes as pure as the source it is separated from.¹⁰⁴

Awqmw prwqmw eyko krY] AMqr kI duibDw AMqir mrY (pMnw 661)

“When his soul and the Supreme Soul become one, the duality of the inner mind is overcome. (GGs Page 661)

Awqm mih rwmu rwm mih Awqmu cInis gur bIcwrw] (pMnw 1153))

“God resides in your purified soul and your soul ultimately merges in Him. You can understand this through the Guru’s instruction”. (GGs P.1153)

According to Sikhism the physical body is mortal but the soul is immortal. The soul transmigrates

¹⁰⁴ swbx lw lw Doqw kolw, du`D dhI ivc pwieAw] KuMb cwVH rMgx vI DirAw rMg nw Es vtwieAw] ivCV ky kwlK sI AweI ibn imilAW nhIN lihMdI] AMg A`g qy lw ky vyKo cVHdw rUp svwoeAw](Bw: vIr isMG)

into various life forms. Pious deeds and prayer can purify the soul. For purified soul transmigration ends and the individual enjoys perfect bliss in the All-Soul (God).

inj Gir mhlw pwhu suK shjy bhuir n hoiego Pwrw] (m:5
pMnw 13)

“You find your eternal home in the All-Soul and enjoy comfort and bliss. Your cycle of births and deaths comes to an end”.

(GGS Page 13)

A. J. Garibaldi was stating a Sikh belief when he wrote, “I look upon a human being as if it were composed of three distinct parts namely; body, mind, and soul. Human mind is like a garden, wherein something must grow. If neglected a luxurious growth of weeds will result”.

William Blake considered mind as a part of the body when he said, “Man has no body distinct from his soul”.

St. Augustine’s principle, “Love God and do what you like” does not fit in with Sikh beliefs. A Sikh is supposed to love God, do the pious deeds and also to control his mind from going astray.

Chapter 6

Rituals

6.1 Similarity in rituals: - Certain similarities exist in the two religions. The Sikhs practise some rituals today, which the Christians have long since abandoned.

(a) Worship:

The Sikhs wash themselves, take off their shoes, and cover their heads when they pray to God. Morning bath is mandatory for the Sikhs. Bath is one of the three requirements for the Sikhs (a) Prayer (*Naam*) (b) Charity (*daan*) and (c) Bath (*Ishnaan*).¹⁰⁵

In the Sikh temple the Sikhs sit on the floor to demonstrate their humility before God. They bow to the Holy Granth and their service consists of singing hymns from the Holy Guru Granth Sahib, which is the centre of attention in a Gurdwara.

In the Christian churches it is not necessary to sit on the floor, cover the heads, or take off the shoes. The hymns recited in the churches are not written by Christ or any Christian prophet but by devoted Christians. Such hymns are still being written.¹⁰⁶ The Christians do not cover the Holy Bible in cloth or kneel before it as the Sikhs do before the Guru Granth Sahib.

¹⁰⁵ nwmu dwnu ieSnwn idRV gurmuiK pMQu rqn vwpwrw (pMnw 23)

¹⁰⁶ Some commonly recited hymns are written by H.F. Lyte (1793-1847), Charlotte Elliot (1789-1871), I Watts (1674-1748) and F.W. Faber (1814-1863)

It is interesting to note however that in the past the Christians also conducted their religious affairs as the Sikhs do today. The reputable Christian prophets did exactly what the Sikhs do. For example Paul always took a bath before entering the Holy Temple (Acts 21:26 see also Hebrews 10:19-22). They were told to cover their heads (I Corinthians 11:5,6 and 13).¹⁰⁷ Christianity was especially hard on women who did not cover their heads while praying, “*For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn*”. (I Corinthians 11:5,6, and 13) In Psalm 95:6 we find, “*O come, let us worship and **bow down**: Let us kneel before the Lord our maker*”. And Joshua “***fell on his face to the ground and did worship***” (Joshua 5:14). Again in Genesis (17:3) we find that Moses and his brother Aaron “***fell upon their faces and the glory of the Lord appeared upon them***”. Similarly Abraham “***fell on his face***” (Exodus 3:5 and Acts 7:33) and God said to Moses, “***Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground (Exodus III,5)***”¹⁰⁸.

(b) Respect for scriptures:

The Sikhs ceremoniously open their book in the morning. It is usually placed under an awning and a *chawri* is waved over it. It is kept covered with a fine cloth and in the evening the book is once again ceremoniously closed for the night.

There was a time when the Christians showed similar respect to the Holy Bible. They used to ceremoniously place the Holy Bible in a special box when not in use and ceremoniously took it out for prayers each morning and evening.¹⁰⁹

(c) Sitting in the place of worship

Although the seating of men and women separately in a Gurdwara is not a religious requirement but a socio-cultural tradition, the Jews and Christians also had this practice in the past. In the Jerusalem temple there was a separate courtyard for women.¹¹⁰ In some Christian Churches, especially in the East, the practice can still be seen.

(d) Last rites

In Roman times the Christians cremated their dead relatives as the Sikhs do today. These days Roman Catholics and orthodox Christians bury their dead but the others follow either of the two practices.

(e) Celebration of festivals

The Sikhs celebrate their festivals with great pomp and show but the most important part remains

¹⁰⁷ Jesus always covered his head at the time of prayer (See Christianity and Sikhism by Owen Cole and Sambhi page 201)

¹⁰⁸ Also read Joshua V, 15 which reads”, loose thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.” The same can be found in the Holy Quran .It reads “Take off thy shoes, for lo! thou art in the holy valley of Tuwa” (Quran xx-12)

¹⁰⁹ Read "Christianity and Sikhism " by Owen Cole and Sambhi page 102

¹¹⁰ It was called *Ezrat nashim*. Women were restricted from entering the inner temple.

the offering of prayers. Things like Christmas trees or tinsels etc. have no value for the Sikhs.

The Christians are also asked to attach more importance to prayers than to outward embellishments. The custom of Christmas trees is forbidden to the Christians. For example read Jeremiah (10:2-5) where it says, "Thus sayeth the Lord, Learn not the ways of the heathenFor the customs of the people are vain. One cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with an axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers that it moves not. They are upright as the palm tree but speak not. They must needs be borne because they can not walkthey can not do evil neither also is it in them to do good".

(f) General appearance and dress

Their appearance and their dress usually distinguish the Sikhs from people of other faiths. The two most important items in their dress are the turban (ḍṣḡwr) and the drawers (k`Cw) .

Although the Christians do not wear turbans and drawers in the modern times, these two items are mentioned at various places in the Bible.

"They shall wear linen turban and linen drawers on their loins." (Ezekiel 44:18-19)

"He shall wear a sacred linen tunic and a linen drawer to cover himself and shall put on a linen sash around his waist (kṃr ksw jW kṃrbMḍ) and wind a linen turban (ḍṣḡwr) round his head and these are *sacred vestments* and he shall bathe before putting them on." ¹¹¹

(Leviticus 8:9)

(g) Wearing of a sword

Another article that distinguishes the Sikhs from the others is the wearing of a sword. The baptised Sikhs must wear a sword for self-defence and for the protection of the weak.

Sword is mentioned in the Bible at many places. For example: "Let His faithful followers take pride in victory. Let them shout for joy (jYkwrw- boly so inhwl) as they kneel in front of Him. Let the high praises of God be on their lips and a two-edged sword in their hands".¹¹²

(Psalms 149:3-6)

Jeremiah stretched out his hands and offered Judas a golden sword saying, "Take this *holy sword* as a gift from God. With it you shall strike down the evil doers".¹¹³

(Maccabees 15-15)

(h) Omnipresence of the deity

Christians believe that the spirit of Christ outlived his sojourn on earth and Jesus is physically

¹¹¹ For further references read Exodus, 28-4,28-36, 29-6,39-3, 39,27 Isaiah 3:22-23, 62:2-10 Ezekiel 23:14-17, 24:17-19,23-24, Job 29:14 Zachariah 3:4-9

¹¹² Compare it with "m`uK qy hr icq mih ju`D vIcwry"

¹¹³ Other references can be found in Hebrew 4:12, Ephesians 6:17, Matthew 10:35 and Isaiah 34:35 Compare this use with "sMqW mwnau dUqW fwnau ieh kutvwrI myrI" (pMnw 969) [Kg KMf ibhMfMg Kl dl KMfMg Aiq rx mMfMg Bwn pRBM (bic`qr nwtk)

here even now.¹¹⁴ The spirit of the Guru is believed by the Sikhs to live today in the word (*Shabad*) of the Guru enshrined in the Holy Granth, which was formally appointed Guru by the 10th spiritual master of the Sikhs.¹¹⁵ They sing “guru myrY sMig sdw hY nwly] (pMnw 394)” “The Guru is ever present with me.”

(i) Hair

Another thing that distinguishes the Sikhs from people of other faiths is the hair.¹¹⁶ The Sikhs do not shear their hair. Turbans and beards are the badges of their faith. The Bible tells us that the Christians also considered the hair sacred. Samson had long hair. Absalom's hair was considered a sign of vitality. The Nazarites used to grow uncut hair. Shaving of the head was associated with mourning (Jer9-26, 23 and 19:27 Lev. 19:27 Ezekiel 24-17). So much importance was attached to the hair that the Arabs used to cut the hair of the Christian prisoners to insult them before they were set free. White hair was considered the glory of God (2 Mac 15-13, Deut 7-8, Rev 1-14). According to the *Dictionary of the Bible* by James Hastings, the priests never allowed anyone to touch their hair.

6.2 Alcohol and burnt offerings

Jesus is said to have turned water into wine (John 2:3, 7, 8, 9). Wine is stored in the vestry in many churches (excluding Methodist and Salvation Army churches) and is used in the Mass ceremony.¹¹⁷

“No man putteth new wine into old bottles: else new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles”.

(Mark 2, 22 and Matthew 9:17)

“Drink no longer water but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities”. (1 Timothy 5:23)

Solomon recommends drinking even for the sick and dying people, “Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more”.

(Proverbs 31:6-7)

Sikhism strictly forbids the consumption of alcohol much less bring it into the Gurdwara. Guru

¹¹⁴ Read ‘*Mysticism in World Religions*’ by Sidney Spencer page 330

¹¹⁵ Guru Nanak said to one of his followers “If you meet my physical being, you will be separated from me when I die but if you meet the *Shabad* in me, which is my real spiritual self, you will never be separated from me. (*Sikhan di Bhagat Mal*” by Bhai Mani Singh Page35). *Shabad* (the word), is the Guru, the indwelling Spirit of the eternal Teacher. (*Sidh Gosht*) “SbdU gurU suriq Duin cylw” (pMnw 943)

In his var. 9:1 Bhai Gurdas goes a step further when he says, “pwrbrhm gurSbd hY sqsMg invwsI= The Guru's *Shabad* is God which manifests itself in the company of the devotees.(also see var. 24-25 ,var3:4, var. 7:20, var. 9:2).The holy Bible also says, “In the beginning was the word and the word was God” (Revelations)

¹¹⁶ It is of the greatest importance that the skin of the human species should contain hair follicles. They, as we shall see, are instrumental in repairing epidermis injured by burns and abrasions, and they make split-skin grafting possible” *Histology* by Arthur W. Ham 4th Edition Pitman Medical Publishing Co. London page 55

¹¹⁷ Mass is also known as Eucharist (Thanksgiving) Lord's supper, Holy Communion, Divine liturgy or Breaking of bread. It started from the time of Christ's Last Supper before crucifixion. The materials used are bread and wine. Bread is considered the body and wine the blood of Christ. Symbolically it means becoming pure just like Christ. It is called “Transubstantiation” In 1539. Henry VIII decreed death penalty for anyone denying transubstantiation. In Matthew 11:19 we read that Jesus drank so much wine and ate so much food that people called him, “glutton and a drunkard” References to ' Eucharist Institution' appear only in Luke 22:19 and these have been omitted from certain translations.

Arjan Dev says,

durmiq mdu jo pIvqY ibKlI piqkmlI]
rwm rswieix jo rqY nwnk sc AmlI]
(pMnw 399)

“Those who consume liquor are in error. True inebriation comes only through remembering the Lord”.

(GGS Page 399)

ijqu pIqY miq dUr hoie brlu pvY ivic Aie]
Apxw prwieAw n pCwxel Ksmhu Dky Kwie]
(pMnw 554)

“Wine goes in and wisdom goes out. It interferes with natural functioning of the body and renders the victim incapable of distinguishing between good and evil. Such a person is forsaken by the Lord”.¹¹⁸ (GGS Page 554)

igXwn AO idXwn sXwn bfo nr, hoq psU sm vwruxI pIqY]
(kib`q BweI gurdws 328)

“Great, thoughtful and learned people have been seen to behave like animals after consuming liquor”.

Although the Christians use wine in their Mass ceremony, the above words of Bhai Gurdas find full support from the Bible. Lot¹¹⁹ was a very virtuous and pious man who offered shelter and accommodation to the angels. The angels repaid his generosity by saving him from the destruction of Sodom. But Lot later drank wine (Genesis 9-21) and thus intoxicated he had sex with his own two daughters producing two sons named Moab and Ben Ammi. (Genesis 19, 27-37)

Instead of punishing Lot for serious incestuous moral lapses and transgression God ordered the Jews to slaughter the Philistines mercilessly and kill even their children or animals but not to molest the Ammonites (sons of Ammi) and Moabites (sons of Moab) because they were “*the seed of Lot*”¹²⁰ (Deuteronomy 2:19).

The New Testament however suggests that drinking is not good for pious people. About the

¹¹⁸ Scientists at Centre for liver research in Newcastle have discovered that there is a direct relation between alcohol intake and liver disease--- deaths from cirrhosis almost doubled in Britain between 1987 and 1997. Drinking affects two of the most significant genes known as Interleukin-10 and TNF-Alpha, which are key agents in the body's immune system.(Sunday Telegraph 31.12.2000).

William Booth, the founder of Salvation Army, did not consider that Jesus gave instructions for drinking wine. He writes, “If I believed that my Lord Jesus required of me that I should take so many pieces of bread and so much wine everyday of my life, I should unhesitatingly carry out his commandments. There is nothing that I am conscious of that he requires me to do and I have not done.”

¹¹⁹Prophet Lot, son of Haran and nephew of Abraham, had settled in the town of Sodom. The angels appeared to him and announced that his city was going to be destroyed. They urged his family to flee and not to look back. Lot, his wife, and two daughters left the town, but Lot's wife looked back. As punishment God turned her into a pillar of salt. later the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (Genesis 19:1-26)

¹²⁰ It is difficult to find the exact number of modern day "Lots" but the well known American writer Kathryn Harrison has exposed her father, a charismatic ordained Protestant minister, as one Lot in her book "*The Kiss*" published by Fourth Estate. In this book she gives graphic details of her incest with her father which lasted for four years. According to Sikhism it is religion that builds and sustains morals but in the Bible we find God telling Moses (31, 1-29, 12, 15, 17, 18) to take vengeance on Midianites and to kill “All boys and kill women who have slept with man but save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man”.

coming of John, the angel says to Zachariah, "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord and shall drink neither wine nor any strong drink". ((Luke 1,-15) Again in Ephesians (5:18) we find "And be not drunk with wine" In spite of all this we find that the great Prophet Noah lay sloshed after binge drinking (Genesis 9, 20-22) and Christ produced wine at a marriage party(John 2:7-9).

St. Benedict's rule 8-44 reads, "We read that wine is not suitable for monks. Because in our day it is not possible to persuade monks out of this, let us agree at least that we should not drink to excess. We believe that one pint a day is enough". In contrast read Romans 14 verse 21 where the Bible says, "It is better not to support eating meat or drinking wine or to do anything else that may cause your brother to fall".

As for eating meat we find that the Bible itself states that God also ate meat. "I have more than enough burnt offerings of rams and fattened animals. I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, and goats". God and two angels ate meat of a calf (Genesis 18:1-8) .Jesus is reported to be a meat eater in Luke 24:42

Although Christians today do not offer animal sacrifices Noah offered burnt offerings to God (Genesis 8:20-21). The Lord called Moses and said," Tell the Israelites to bring offerings of animals from either the herd or the flock (Leviticus 1:1-5). "Every day during the seven days of the feast he is to provide seven bulls and seven rams without defect as a burnt offering to the Lord, and a male goat for forgiveness of sins."(Ezekiel 45:23)

Sikhism condemns offering animal meat to God and does not believe in any merit occurring through such bribes to the deity.

6.3 Priesthood

Christianity believes in intermediaries and has trains of Popes, Archbishops, Bishops, Cardinals, Canons, Chaplains, Pastors, Priests,¹²¹ Deacons, Archdeacons, Ministers, Padres and moderators each having certain powers of redemption from sin. They preach that "Outside the church there is no salvation". They also perform Unction.¹²²

There are special dresses for priests for special occasions. Here are some of the things they have to wear. Alb, Amice, Apparel, Cassock, Chasuble, Cope, Crozier, Girdle, Hood, Maniple, Mitre, and Orpheys, preaching bands, Rochet, Stole, Surplice, and Tippet. Their colours also differ on different occasions and with different denominations.

There is no institutionalised, ordained or structured priesthood in Sikhism therefore there are no special requirements of dress except that gaudy and bawdy dresses are discouraged.

Sikhism does not believe that priests can pardon other people's sins and no monopoly of salvation is claimed in Sikhism by anybody. They believe that salvation is possible only through personal effort, prayer, and good deeds.

¹²¹ Like the Sikhs, the Quakers too have no priests. Any Quaker can conduct the Service which they call "*meetings*"

¹²² Anointing of the terminally Sick (Mark 6:13 James 5:14) to restore health. In the Eastern Orthodox Church the rite is called Euchalaion and is administered by seven priests working together.

6.4 Repentance

The Christians believe that repentance in front of a priest assured forgiveness of sins. Pope Clement VII forgave Cellini's sins when the latter repented. "He gave me his blessing and forgave me all the deaths I had caused and all that I ever would cause". (Cellini Benvenuto's autobiography page 71 translation by George Bull)

Sikhism believes in repentance, which must result in change in the course of life for a better and virtuous behaviour. Openly confessing a wrongdoing in public and willingly undergoing a penance and/or punishment helps the devotee to overcome self-deceit and transgression. To believe that forgiveness of sins automatically follows repentance as a day follows the night is alien to Sikh thought. Christ would not have automatically pardoned Hitler's sins if the latter had repented and still continued the carnage.

In Sikhism a person who leads a godly and virtuous life in this world is called a Sant (ਸਮਾਦ ਸaint). Unlike Christianity, Sikhism does not canonise people as saints after they are dead and gone.¹²³ Sikhism expects everybody to live their lives as saints.

ijnHW swis igrwis n ivsrY hir nwmw min mMqu]
DMnu is syeI nwnkw pUrnu soeI sMqu]
(pMnw 319)

"Only those who do not forget God at any moment deserve to be truly called saints". (GGS P.319)

6.5 Prayer

The Lord's Prayer which is said almost everyday in all Christian Churches consists of a supplication or address and six petitions, three for God's glory, and three for man's needs. The fifth petition reads as follows: (Matthew 6:9-13)

"..... Give us this day our *daily bread* and forgive us our trespasses as *we forgive them who trespass against us*".

Asking God to provide us with daily bread, which He is providing all creatures anyway, sounds like saying, 'send us a sun everyday'.¹²⁴

¹²³ Pope John Paul II alone (died 2005) beatified 1300 saints .

¹²⁴ In the Daily Telegraph dated 12.2.98 Christopher Howse wrote, "82% who know the Lord's Prayer off by heart probably think that the current version is the one that was always used. It is not quite. The phrase 'our father who art in Heaven' used to be which art in heaven and the rather puzzling "on earth" used to be "in earth". The English version authorised by Henry VIII used to have "Forgive us oure dettes as we forgeve our detters" against us. In AD 1000 the West Saxon translation read, "Forgyf us ure gyltas swa swa we forgyfth urum gyltendum." Now it reads, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." This is not all. A new version of the Lord's Prayer has been introduced to Anglican services from January 2001. The General Synod decided on 11.2.98 that the word "trespass" will read "sin" and "temptation" will be changed to read, "The time of trial". The new prayer will be called ELLC version. The new prayer (introduced by international ecumenical body ELLC) now reads, "**Our Father in Heaven hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**"

The Sikhs believe that God has been meeting the physical needs of His creation irrespective of whether they believe in Him or not. According to the Sikh belief asking for the fulfilment of the needs of flesh means attaching more importance to worldly life than spiritual eternal life or salvation.

dydw dy lYdy Qik pwih] jugw jugMqir KwhI Kwih]
(jpu jI)

“The provider provides until we get tired (grow old and die). He has been feeding us throughout the ages”.

(The Sikh Morning Prayer)

The Sikhs ask for His benediction in bestowing His grace so that His name is always enshrined in their heart.

ivxu quDu horu ij mGgxw isir duKw kY duK] dyih nwm sMqoKIAw
auqrY mn kI BuK] (pMnw 958)

“Asking for anything other than Your grace leads from one problem to the other .O God bless us with Your *Name* so that the hunger in the mind is satiated once and for all”.

(GGS Page 958)

According to the Sikh belief one weakness in human beings is that they find it hard to forgive and forget. The Sikh Gurus place great emphasis on inculcating these virtues. If humans could learn to forget and forgive, this world would be a heaven on earth. History of mankind testifies that man has not learnt to forgive others' trespasses.

The Sikhs will hesitate to say that God should ‘*forgive our trespasses*’ because *we humans forgive our fellow trespassers* Instead a Sikh would pray to God to bestow on him the blessing of forgiveness which he lacks and which God has in abundance.

AsMK Kqy iKn bKsnhrw] nwnk swihb sdw idAwrw]
(pMnw 260)

“O Nanak, My Lord is always forgiving. He forgives innumerable sins in seconds.”(GGS Page 260)

piqq pwvn mwDau ibrdu qyrw]
(pMnw 694)

“O God it is **your** prerogative to forgive us our sins”

(GGS Page 694)

myry gux Avgn n bIcwirAw] pRiB Apxw ibrdu smwirAw]
(pMnw 72)

“O kind father ignore my sins because you are a great forgiver by nature”.

(GGS P.72)

The sixth petition in the Christian Prayer reads as follows:

“Lead us not into temptation

Again the Sikhs believe that although evil exists in this world under God's will, God does not lead us to temptation. It is our own weaknesses that pull us away from Him towards evil.

AsI Kgy bhug kmwvdy AMq n pwrwvwrul hir ikrpw kir kY bKis lYhu
hau pwpI vf gunhgwrul (pMnw 1416)

“We commit mistake after mistake without end. Forgive us in Thy mercy O Lord. We are big sinners”. (GGS Page 1416)

St. James came up with some modification to Christian prayer and said, “Let no man say when he is tempted, he is tempted of God; for God can not be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man”.(James 1:13)

6.6 Christian baptism and Sikh Amrit

John the Baptist immersed Jesus in river Jordan and declared him as having been baptised.¹²⁵ In Sikhism only five *Amritdhari* (fully initiated into the *Khalsa order*) Sikhs are authorised to *initiate* (offer *Amrit*) others after ceremoniously performing five prayers and preparing 'Amrit (Ambrosial water) in the presence of the Holy Guru Granth Sahib. Even the Guru had to take *Amrit* from his Five Beloved Sikhs.

It is a normal practice in most Christian sects (i.e. Roman Catholic and Anglican) to baptise babies. In Sikhism babies do not undergo *Amrit Sanchar* because *Amrit sanchar* is considered spiritual not ritual. The concept of *Amrit Sanchar* and the associated life discipline of *Rehat* have to be fully understood by the neophyte. The neophyte then approaches the five *Amritdhari* officiants (The *Panj Pyarey*) in a begging posture with folded hands seeking *Amrit initiation*. If the five officiants find the applicant below standard, *initiation* can be refused.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ The Baptists baptise only adults. They immerse the body fully in water and consider the person as dead. When the person re-appears from water he is considered as reborn in Christian faith. Some Baptist churches have a small pool at the front of the Church. It is usually concealed with a false floor.

Baptism is a Greek word meaning simply to wash or make clean with water. It is administered by immersion in water or by pouring water over the head. Washing gives symbolic cleansing from sin. In old times baptism was delayed until just before death. The reason was that baptism could only be administered once and any sins committed subsequently could not be forgiven. Infant baptism is not mentioned in the New Testament, although probable reference can be found in The Acts 16:25-34. Baptism has to be followed by "Confirmation"(literally it means anointing into eternal life). Roman Catholics confer confirmation at the age of eleven when the Bishop anoints the candidate by pouring on the head oil with the sign of a cross and then putting his hand on the head as a blessing. The Methodists renew their vows on the first Sunday in January in an annual covenant. At one stage a pillar was anointed (Genesis 31:13) and Moses anointed a tabernacle (Leviticus 8:10)

Baptism of water was prevalent among the Jews even before Christ and was called *Tabilash*. “I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean” (Ezekiel 30,6,25) . They baptised and circumcised the children when the children were eight days old. “He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised”. (Genesis 17:9-12). A special person called *Mohel* conducted Circumcism.

¹²⁶ Baptists believe that one should not get baptised until old enough to understand what baptism means. They bless the babies but do not baptise them. Methodists require their members to sign a covenant quarterly or annually and to carry a ticket of membership as a proof that they are baptised and follow Christ.

Quakers do not administer sacraments. They consider that references in the Bible to baptism are inconclusive. According to them God can be experienced through His personal power. In his book *Fruits of Solitude* William Penn writes, "God is a spirit. The more mental our worship the more adequate to the nature of God, the more silent the more suitable to the language of the spirit". They do not consider Sunday as a Sabbath day but say, “Every day should be a Lord's day”.

Chapter 7

Life and society

7.1 Philosophy of life

The Holy Bible says, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”. (Letter to Corinthians 15)

The Sikh view

According to Sikhism too much involvement in physical enjoyment and needs of the body dampens ones interest in spiritual living. Sikhism preaches moderation (Aḷp Awhirl sup is indri = eat in moderation and do not over sleep). The Guru further says,

“isiPiq slwxu Cif kY krMgI lgw hMsu]
iPtu ievyhw jIivAw ijqu Kwie vDwieAw pytu]
nwnk scy nwm ivxu sBo dusmnu hyqu]” (pMnw 790)

“The Swan-soul (human being) gets misdirected from the Lord’s Praises, and gets attached to eating carcass (eating meat) for pleasure of the palate. Cursed is that life, in which one only eats to fill his belly. O Nanak, without the True Name, all one’s friends (pleasures) turn enemies”. (GGS Page 790)

“ibstw kIt Bey auq hI qy auq hI mwih smwieAw]
AiDk suAwd rog AiDkweI ibnu gur shju n pwieAw]” (pMnw 1255)

“He behaves like a maggot in manure, and is absorbed in pleasures of the palate. The more he relishes tastes, the more he is diseased; without the Guru, there is no peace and poise”.

(GGS P. 1255)

The main aim of human life is to remember God, lead a virtuous life, deserve His grace, and to merge in Him. Even on deathbed the Sikhs pray.

pRwxNI qUM AieAw lwhw lYix] lgw ikqu kuPkVy sB mukdI cLI rYix]
(pMnw 43)

“O man you were given human form to gain merit but you are engrossed in futile activities and your time is running out”.

(GGS Page 43)

jy jwxw mir jweIAY Guim nw AeIAY] JUTI dunIAw lig nw Apu v\weIAY]
(pMnw 488)

“Since we know that death is certain and we may not come back, why waste this life in false pursuits”.

(GGS Page 488)

7.2 Retaliation

"Let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. You have heard it said an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak as well" (Matthew 5, 37-40)¹²⁷

Christ's follower Peter asked him, “How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?” Christ responded, “I say not unto thee, until seven times: but until seventy times seven”.

At the time of Christ's arrest a follower took out his sword and cut off a soldier's ear. Jesus restored the ear and said, “They that take the sword shall perish with the sword”.(Matthew 27:51-52 Luke 22-52)¹²⁸

The Sikh view

In this hard cold world the philosophy of unlimited forgiveness and non-violence works only for a limited period. The Herods, Halakus, and Hitlers do not understand the language of forgiveness. History is cluttered with the wreckage of communities, which submitted to violence and as a result disappeared from the face of the earth.

Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur amply demonstrated that 'matching the capacity to inflict suffering with capacity to endure suffering' does not always succeed. In the end defence must take over to forestall extinction. The Sikhs do believe in forgiveness but they do not accept unlimited forgiveness. When they take *Amrit*, they wear a sword for self-defence and use it only as a last resort. It is one of the five essentials for an *Amritdhari* (*initiated*) Sikh. The Guru says,

¹²⁷ In contrast read “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise”(Exodus 21:24 and Luke 6:29)

¹²⁸ Quakers will not fight under any circumstances. Their Peace Testimony reads “We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fighting with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatever; this is our testimony to the whole world”..... (Declaration presented to King Charles II in 1660)

“Learn to receive blows and forgive those who insult you” (*Wisdom of Israel* page 204)

cMUM kwr Az hmw hIlqy dr guzSq] hlwl Asq burdn bw SmS1r dsq]
(gurU goibMd isMG)

“When all means to achieve justice fail, it is lawful to use the sword.” (Guru Gobind Singh)

War is the history of mankind and defence is the birth right of all individuals.¹²⁹ The Christians know very well the fate of Samson who always kept his natural hair intact and a weapon with him and when these things were gone from him the consequences were terrible.

Reading the Bible one finds that even Christ felt in his heart of hearts that a sword is necessary for defence otherwise he would not have said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword”. (Matthew 10:34) “And he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one”. (Luke 22:36)

We also know that Pope Julius II kept an army, waged war and conquered cities. Crusaders were sent to Eastern Europe by the Christians to chastise the Muslims.

Will Durant writes, “The sixth commandment was a counsel of perfection. Nowhere is there so much killing as in the Old Testament; its chapters oscillate between slaughter and compensatory reproduction. The prophets were not pacifists. The priests - if we may judge the speeches they put into the mouth of Yahweh - were almost as fond of war as of preaching. Among 19 kings of Israel, 8 were assassinated.” (*Our oriental heritage* page 334).

Some of the bloodiest battles in history have been waged by Christians. “No nations are more warlike than those which profess Christianity”, observed Pierre Bayle, a 17th century French Philosopher of Christian Europe. (*What is a real Christian?* page 1 published by Plain Truth). These comments have been made by referring to Luke6 verse 27, which reads, “Love your enemies, do good to them, which hate you”.

“I shall greatly increase the pain of your progeny, in the birth pangs you will bring forth children, and your craving will be for your husband who will dominate you”. (Genesis 3:16-19)

Women suffer birth pangs just because Eve transgressed but one wonders why the other female animals also suffer similar birth pangs. The Bible is silent about it. Again women have a craving for their husbands because of the sin committed by Eve but why do husbands have a similar craving for their wives? Adam and Eve both disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit. Why should only Eve be held responsible for this so-called sin? Who created the devil that brings sin into play?

Women priests in some sections of Christianity have started working only recently after so much canonical controversy, which has still not abated.

7.3 Women

St. Paul thought it was shameful for a woman to speak in a church. The situation in modern Christian churches is now much improved but in Sikhism women have been conducting services and delivering sermons since the advent of Sikhism without let or hindrance.

¹²⁹ Even Buddhism, which is known as the most non-violent religion, could not remain non-violent when threatened by extinction. “Sieges of monasteries and battles with monks are of constant occurrence in Japanese history” (*The problem of China* by Bertrand Russell Page 9192)

Women's birth from the ribs of man as preached in the Bible gives women a lesser status than men and puts women under the command of men.¹³⁰

The Sikh view

Guru Nanak started women's emancipation with following words

"BMif jMmIAY BMif inMmIAY BMf mMgxu vIAwhu] BMfhu hOvY dosqI
BMfhu cLY rwhu]
BMfu muAw BMfu BwllIAY BMif hovY bMDwn] so ikau mMdw AwKIAY ijqu
jMmih rwjwn] (pMnw 473)

"Of a woman we are conceived, of a woman we are born.
To a woman we are betrothed and married,
It is a woman who is a friend and partner for life.
It is a woman who keeps the race going.
Why should we consider women cursed and condemned
When from her womb are born leaders and rulers."

(GGS P. 473)

lok vyd guX igAn ivic ArD srIrI moK duArI]
(vwr BweI gurdws)

Through folklore, virtues and knowledge a wife acts as a door to salvation.

7.4 Family life

Lord Christ is reported to have said, "He that curseth father or mother let him die the death". (Matthew 15,-4) However, on one occasion when Lord Christ's own mother came to meet him, he sounded rude and said, "*Woman, What have I got to do with you?*" (Mark: 3,-34).

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple". (Luke 14:26) "I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies will be members of his own family". (Matthew 19:35-36)

The Sikh view

Sikhism believed right from the start in family life and the shouldering of social responsibilities. The Sikh Gurus were married and had children. Sikh women have equal rights with men and can conduct any service in the Gurdwaras.

¹³⁰ Women in Spain were banned by the monks from visiting the 16 eleventh century Goya frescoes lodged in Aula Dei monastery eight miles from Zaragoza. Goya frescoes were painted in 1774 and depict scenes of the life of Virgin Mary. Since their inception monks have denied the right of women to see the pictures relating to another woman. Even the Pope said, "*It is a matter for the monks to decide*". In January 1998 the monks agreed on condition that the women visit the place through a secret corridor unseen by anyone.

sB prvrY mwih sryst] mqi dyvI dyvr jyst]
(pMnw 370)

“A woman is an important member of the family and for consultation is an asset to her brothers-in-law”.
(GGs Page 370)

suKI krY Gr is`KxI Blw idKwvy rwh]
(rqn mwlw)

“A wife provides home comforts and keeps her husband on the right track”.

The Sikh Gurus respected all relationships and preached full respect for parents and family members.

kwhy pUq Jgrq hau sMig bwp] ijn ky jxy bfIry qum hau iqn isau
Jgrq pwp] (pMnw 1200)

“Why O son do you argue with your father. It is a sin to quarrel with him who gave you life and brought you up”.
(GGs Page 1200)

7.5 Marriage

The Holy Bible says “Be fruitful and multiply.” (Genesis) but Jesus himself did not marry. There are nuns and monks who go without marriage throughout their lives. Apostles did not seem to consider it a good idea that women should act as priests and have authority. The Holy Bible gives the general impression that it is better to remain unmarried (I Cor. 7:7-9, 32-38, Matt 19:11, 12, 29).

On the other hand the Christians believe that “marriages are arranged in heaven and solemnised on earth” and that “Those brought together by God should not be separated by man”. (Mark10-9)

The Sikh view

There are no such beliefs among the Sikhs.¹³¹ While Sikhism preaches that everybody should get married, it also admits that like other acts of man, marriages can also get into trouble. It advises fidelity to each other. It expects husband and wife to honour the vows entered into at the time of marriage. There is no mention of divorce in the Sikh scriptures.¹³²

gurmuK mwrG BY Bwie inbwh krY] DMnX gur isK Aid AMq TihrwveI]

¹³¹The Sikh Gurus condemned the life of a recluse and forbade women from remaining unmarried like nuns. Just as Zarathustra pronounced that ‘the man who has a wife is far above him who lives in continence,’ the Guru said that the “*life of an unmarried woman is accursed*” (Sikh religion Vol. IV page 175)

¹³² In the Old Testament times a woman was considered the property of her husband. women could not own or inherit property . No woman could divorce her husband although the husband could, if he so desired, divorce her (See Deut. 24: 1) For the first time under Roman law marriage came to be defined as "a lifelong partnership and a sharing of civil and religious rights" but marriage between free people and slaves was still forbidden to Christians.

Jesus does not seem to have accepted the idea of divorce (See Mathew 5:31 and Mark 10:2-12) but has condemned remarriage (I Peter 3:1-7). Many Christians, especially Roman Catholics, still consider that " marriage is indissoluble " but they do not allow priests to get married. If for any genuine reason the marriage is annulled neither party can marry again while the other partner is alive. Other Christian denominations accept celibate as well as married priests. Church of England is still divided on the question of divorce.

The low status accorded to marriage seems to have originated from Augustine of Hippo who argued that mankind's original sin was indulgence in sex . In 1549 Church of England's baptism service stated, "All men are conceived in sin " and suggested a prayer for getting rid of all carnal desires. In 1980 the wind changed its course when the Service book said that marriage was for service and comfort.

(kib`q BweI gurdws 119)

“Blessed are those who throughout their lives follow Sikh path and live in fear of God and obedience of the vows taken at the time of marriage.” (Bhai Gurdas)

7.6 Incest and adultery

According to the Holy Bible God first created only Adam and Eve and no other human being. It is not clear how Adam's sons Cain, Abel and Seth produced children. The Bible only says, “When men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them. The sons of God¹³³ saw the daughters of men that they were fair and they took them wives of all which they chose”.

(Genesis 6: 2-3)

Here we either believe that "Sons of God" were also created in addition to the creation of Adam and Eve or that the reference to “sons of God” is towards sons of Adam who may have committed incest with their own sisters (if there were any). Lot’s daughters seduced their drunken father ‘to preserve his seed’ and out of this incestuous relationship Ammonites and Moabites were born (Deuteronomy 2:19) The Bible also mentions marriages between fathers and their daughters (Corinthians 7:36)

The Sikh view

Sikhism forbids incest and expects all ordinary Sikhs, especially preachers and religious leaders to set high moral standards. In Sikhism lewdness and moral depravity in prophets and religious leaders is not acceptable. Lust is illicit illegal desire, which needs to be curbed.

pr bytI ko bytI jwnY pr iesqRI ko mwq bKwnY]
(rihq nwmw BweI nMd lwl)

“Look upon another's daughter as your own daughter. Look upon another's wife as your mother”.

dyK prweIAW cMgIAW mwvW DIAW BYxW jwxy]
(vwr BweI gurdws 29)

“Look upon other women as mothers, daughters, or sisters”.

7.7 Prophets and Saints

The great philosopher and prophet¹³⁴Jacob was infatuated with Rachel but married her sister Leah on condition that he worked for seven years for Leah's father Laban. Later he married Rachel as well in violation of the canonical command and worked for another seven years as a slave. (Genesis 29:28), David another prophet, whom God called His son, committed adultery (II Samuel 11:4-5) and his infatuation with Bathsheba is well known. David's son Ammon committed incest and rape with

¹³³ How can then Jesus be the *only son* of God when there were other *sons of God* ?

¹³⁴ The word prophet is from Greek word Pro + phetes. Pro means 'for' and phetes means 'to speak'. So a prophet is one who speaks for his faith. It is in this sense that The Bible calls all those mentioned here as prophets. The Bible mentions the names of 22 prophets but according to the Muslim traditions the number of prophets (including Muhammad) is 124000.

his half sister Tamar (II Samuels 13:14),¹³⁵ another of David's sons Absalom committed rape with his father's concubines "*in the sight of all Israel*" (II Samuels 16:33). Prophet Judah committed incest with his daughter-in-law (Genesis 38:18). Isaiah walked the streets of Jerusalem '*naked and barefoot*' for three years. The details of the story of two sisters Aholah and Aholibah (Ezekiel: 23) are too explicit to record here.¹³⁶ Noah was so dead drunk that he became naked in the presence of his grown-up sons (Genesis 9:23-24)

In Genesis 20:12 Abraham, the great prophet, says, "And yes indeed she (Sarah) is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife". History also tells us that even a Pope was found in the 15th Century to have committed simony, fornication, sodomy, and murder. In Genesis 38:27-29 we find that Tamar slept with her father-in-law and gave birth to two sons.¹³⁷

It was perhaps on this account that George Bernard Shaw is said to have remarked that the Bible is "*The most dangerous book on earth. Keep it under lock and key*".

One wonders how these saints,¹³⁸ prophets, and Popes, who are supposed to uphold morality and ideal conduct, would have interpreted the Bible's commandment "*Thou shalt not commit adultery*"? How did they interpret the following lines?

"I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart". (Matthew 5:28) "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be".¹³⁹ (Romans 8:7-8)

The Sikh view

To a Sikh it would appear that Christian standards of ethics and morality are different from those

¹³⁵ "Howbeit he would not listen to her protest but being stronger than her, overpowered her, and lay with her" (II Samuel 13:14)

¹³⁶ No wonder films like "The last Temptation" and "*The sex life of Christ*" are appearing and John Austin Baker, the Bishop of Salisbury, is espousing the appointment of gay priests in the Churches. For further information on this topic read, "*Split Image: God's true intentions for Male and Female*" Published by Hodder & Stoughton London. Another book on the topic, written by a team of academics headed by Elizabeth Stuart (Senior lecturer University of Glamorgan) editor of *Journal of theology and sexuality* is '*Religion is a queer thing*'. This book claims that 19 Christian Saints were homosexual, transsexual or bisexual.. Dr Stuart's other book "*Daring to speak Loves's name: A Gay and lesbian prayer Book*" also deals with this topic. In England 21 Catholic priests were convicted of offences against children during 1995-99AD. Right-thinking Christians worried about this trend, established an independent committee under former Judge Lord Nolan to eliminate paedophilia from churches. This committee made 50 recommendations on 17.4.2001

¹³⁷ One Italian Christian Saint is inalienably associated with romance and courtship. His name is St. Valentine. King Claudius forbade romance and marriage through public courtship around 200 A.D. St. Valentine disobeyed the royal orders, married couples secretly, and even fell in love himself with the daughter of a member of the royal family. His motto was *Amour vincit omnia* (Love conquers all) He was beheaded on 14 February 269AD. A Basilica was built in his honour in Rome in the year 350 A.D. In 496 AD Saint Pope Gelasius named 14 February as St. Valentine's Day. This day is favourite for Christian marriages, courtship, games such as 'Lady Anne and King William' and 'Cupid and Venus'. Love poems, love letters, love plays, and some times very lewd and sexy cards are exchanged while music stimulates amorous ideas whipping up carnal desires. Sometimes romance results in bloody clashes. For example in 1929AD four youngsters shot down seven people at a Valentine party in Chicago. Some historians think that the real St. Valentine was the Bishop of Interamna (Now known as Terni) which is situated at a distance of 60 miles from Rome. He was also beheaded on 14th February, 269AD.

¹³⁸ In Christianity persons are canonised as saints after their deaths. In the new Testament St. Paul defines 'Saint' as a committed believer (Ephesians 1.1 and 1.15)

¹³⁹ The author sought clarification on this point from the 'Plain Truth' and received the following reply on 12.3.2001 from Cliff Neill of Borehamwood (Hertfordshire). "As far as Bible is concerned, sex was designed to be used within a loving marriage relationship, any use beyond that is sin, which, of course, includes incest"

of Sikhism. The Sikh Gurus considered moral life as the temporal aspect of religion. According to them morality is the touchstone of religion and is the pre-requisite to spiritual perfection. Immorality is the antithesis of spirituality. No one can reach the higher spiritual plane without first acquiring moral purity. Moral standards of the average man are unconsciously kept up by the morals of the best men and women. When the best men (saints and pious people) cease trying, the world sinks back into immorality like lead. The saints exhale holiness as the sandalwood exhales perfume. Guru Nanak said,

scoN Ery sB ko aupr sc Awcwr]
(pMnw 62)

“Truth is higher than everything, but higher than truth is character” . (GGS P.62)
About the saints and prophets the Guru says:

duK rog ibnsy BY Brm swD nwm inrml qw ky krm]
(pMnw 296)

“Their grief, ailments, fears, and duality vanish. They become saints and their actions are ideal and virtuous.” (GGS P.296)

kwm kROD loB md Koey swD kY sMg iklibK sB Doie]
(gauVI m:5)

“If a man gives up inebriation of cupidity, anger and greed and joins the company of saints, all his sins are washed off”. (Gauri M:5)

According to Sikhism too much indulgence in ‘sex’ is morally degrading and drags one away into immorality and suffering. Sikhism advises control on all desires especially sex.

kwm kROD sbl sMswrw , bhU krm kmwvih sBu duK kw pswrw]
(pMnw 1060)

“Sexual desire and anger are very powerful in the world. They lead to all sorts of degrading actions and only add to pain”. (GGS P.1060)
Over indulgence in sex is also detrimental to physical well being.

kwmu kROD kwieAw kau gwly, ijau kMcN sohgw Fwly]
(pMnw 932)

“Carnal desire and anger waste the body away as gold melts in borax” (GGS P.932)

Saints are considered to be the people who have sublimated and controlled their sexual desire and are therefore in a position to advise the ordinary people on the right path. Their company is the company of the best in society. They are not slaves to any desires.

“Trees that grow near sandal are perfumed like sandal; if any of the eight metals are touched by the philosopher’s stone it becomes gold. As river, streams and watercourses, which fall into the Ganges, become holy. So does the society of holy men save sinners and wash away the filth of sin”. (Bhai Gurdas)

hau bilhwrI sMqn qyry injin kwmu kRODu loBu pITw jIE]
qUM inrvYr sMq qyry inrml injn dyKy sB auqrih klml]
(pMnw 108)

“O God, I am a sacrifice to Your Saints, who have crushed their sexual desire, anger and

greed. You have no hatred or vengeance; Your Saints are immaculate and pure. Meeting them, all sins depart”.

(GGS P.108)

Without the company of saints and Holy men, a human being is an animal more bestial than other beasts. The Guru says:

sMqn kY sunIAq pRB kI bwq] kQw kIrqnu Awnud mMgl Duin pUir
rhI idnsu Aru rwiq] rhwau] kir ikrpw Apny pRiB kIny nwm
Apuny kI kInI dwiq] AwT phr gun gvwq pRB ky kwm k@oD iesu
qn qy jwq] iqRpiq AGwey pyiK pRB drsnu AMimRq hir rsu
Bojnu Kwq] crn srn nwnk pRB qyrI kir ikrpw sMqsMig imlwq]

(pMnw 820)

“Only God’s eulogies are heard in the Saints’ presence. Their words’ explanation, the musical sound of His Praises, and the songs of bliss perfectly resonate, day and night. In His Mercy, God has made the saints His own, and blessed them with the gift of His Name. Singing the Glorious Praises of God in their company day and night sublimates sexual desire and anger. I am satisfied and satiated, gazing upon the blessed vision of God in His saints. There I enjoy the Ambrosial Nectar of the Lord’s sublime food. Nanak seeks the Sanctuary of Your Feet, O God; in Your Mercy, unite him with the society of the Saints.”

(GGS P.820)

Moral codes in Sikhism for both men and women are the same. The Sikh moral code runs as follows:

To develop Truth, Contentment and Reflection (sq, sMqoK, ivcwr)

To develop Compassion, Righteousness and Charity (idAw, Drm, dwn)

To develop Faith, Tolerance and restraint (isdk, sbr, sMjm)

To develop Forgiveness, Humility and Service (iKmw, grIbI, syvw)

To develop Knowledge, Philanthropy and honesty of purpose (nwm jpxw, vMf Ckxw, Drm dI ikrq krnw)

Chapter 8

Virtue

ikv sicAwrw hoeIAY ?

Q ikn ibiD kuslu hoq myry BweI] ikau pweIAY hir rwm
shweI (pMnw 175)

How can we obtain spiritual happiness brother and how can we deserve God's grace?

A poQI purx kmweIAY] Bau vtI iequ qin pweIAY
(pMnw25)

Live your religion practically and keep the fear of God in mind.

Q so AsQwnu bqvw hu mIqw] jw kY hir hir kIrn nIqw]
(pMnw 385)

Which is the place my friend where God's eulogies are sung?

A swDsMig hir kIrn gweIAY] ieh AsQwn gurUu qy pweIAY]
(pMnw 58)

Join the company of the virtuous as the Guru guides and sing the praises of the Lord with them.

Q hir jI sUKmu Agmu hY] ikqu ibiD imilAw jwie
(pMnw756)

God is subtle and beyond our reach. How can we realize Him?

A gur ky Sbid BRm ktIAY] AicMqu vsY min Awie]
(pMnw 356)

Remove the doubts through the Guru's instruction and the Lord will sanctify your mind spontaneously.

Q vfVY Jwil JluMBLY nwwVw leIAY iksu ?
(pMnw 1420)
Early in the morning what thought should visit my mind?

A nwau leIAY prmysrY] BMnx GVx smrQ] `
(pMnw 1420)
Utter the prayer to the Lord who is the creator as well as the destroyer.

Q AaugxI BirAw srIru hY] ikau sMqhu inrmlu hoie
(pMnw 311)
I am full of sin. How can I be purified?

A gurmuiK gux vyhwJIAih] mlu haumY kFY Doie]
(pMnw311)
Acquire virtues through the Guru's word. The dirt of egoism will be washed .

Chapter 9

The Final Word

Ad Majorem dei Gloriam (To the great Glory of God)

All religions (except Buddhism)¹⁴⁰, seem to agree on the existence of God, love for others, helping the needy, not to commit adultery, working hard and not to misappropriate other's property. But ethics is only one part of religion.

Doctrinal purity is guarded zealously by all religions and cannot be easily ignored. This is where claims of different religions are evidently incompatible. One reveres the cows, the other considers it acceptable to eat beef. One hates ham and bacon, the other relishes it. One thinks that fasts bring religious merit, the other considers it an exercise in futility unless taken as an aid to health. One butchers millions of animals on religious days to please God, the other calls it sin against God to harm life. An impartial scholar of religion is irresistibly drawn to the conclusion that while all religions may be wrong, they cannot all be possibly right. In fairness though it must be said that all religions were attempts by their preceptors to reform society as they found it in their days.¹⁴¹ We need religion because as Mr J.C. Hare puts it, "Man without religion is the creature of circumstances".

In the current age of altruism and enlightenment, religion must provide a moral, psychological,

¹⁴⁰ Pencer in his book *mysticism in world religion* (page 78) however quotes the following lines from *Hinayana* sources to prove that Lord Buddha did have belief in some mysterious power. He quotes, "Were it not for this unborn, not-become, not-made, un-compounded, no escape could be shown for what is born, has become, is made, is compounded".

O cry not that all creeds are vain
some scent of truth they have
Else they would nor beguile.
Say not ' how utterly fantastic'
No fancy in the world is all untrue.

(Jalal-ud-Din Rumi)

and scientific basis for judgement. It must stand as a rock against discord, intolerance, theological dogma, fanaticism, self-righteousness, exclusivity, spiritual pride, and bigotry. What humanity needs today are the qualities of compassion, fellow feeling, friendship, tolerance, racial harmony, goodwill, social justice and above all understanding and respecting others' points of view. We must either learn to live together or we shall die together in a holy war resulting in internecine religious conflagration. The next generation is already showing signs of neurosis, disobedience, delinquency, atheism, and immorality. If religion fails to tow the line now, there surely will be chaos and confusion in the world sooner or later.¹⁴² Humanity is bleeding to death; let us stop disputing about God and start obeying Him.

Sikhism passes the acid test of time and is a religion of the future. It is non-sectarian, seeks everybody's welfare, and aims at producing a fair and just society for the human race irrespective of caste, creed, colour, gender, or religious orientation. It recognises all religions as valid and spiritual in their own right. It is for this, if for nothing else, that the true message of Sikhism should reach every hearth and home in the spirit of cementing the bonds between and within different sections of Society.

In the world today the common denominator is “srbq kw Blw” (Good of everybody) and “mwns kI zwq sB eykY pihcwnbo” (Recognise ye the whole human race as one). And this essentially signifies the spiritual and social fundamental principles inherent in the Sikh tradition. Sikh religion is known as “Sikh *Dharam*”. In Asian literature the word *Dharam* means, “That which holds together and that which all should practise in life”(Manu Simirti 6,92). It is the opposite of sin and evil.

“The world fellowship of religions seeks that all shall understand love and work together. To my mind the Sikh religion exemplifies that it is one of the most international of all religions. Also, alas, one of the least known and understood” (Baron Fray Von Bloomberg - ‘President of World fellowship of Religions’ - Sikh Courier spring 66 page 26)

“lib iqSnw rw iz Awib lbq hsq AwrzU
qskIny mw iz iKzr-E-msIhw nmI Sv`d ”.¹⁴³

(dIvwny goieAw - BweI nMd lwl

ji Zzl 24-2)

“I crave for the ambrosial instruction from your lips
Khizar and Christ can not quench my thirst.”

(Diwan-e-Goya - Bhai Nand Lal 24-2)

A sinner's prayer

¹⁴²“The only danger to religion is indifference towards it because indifference is half infidelity” (Burke).

¹⁴³ (hy gurU)myry iqRhwey bulHW nUM qW qyrIy bwxI dy AMimRq jl dI hI qWG hY [iKzr jW msIhy qoN myrI sMquStqw nhIN ho skdI [

kwim k@oiD Bry hm AprwDI] ikAw muhu lY
bolh nw hm gux n syvw swDI] fubdy pwQr
myil lYhu qum Awpy swcu nwmu AibnwsI hy
]

(pMnw
1048)

I am a sinner, overflowing with sexual desire and anger. With what mouth should I speak? I have no virtue, and I have rendered no service to humanity. I am a sinking stone; please, Lord, unite me with you. Your Name is eternal and imperishable.
(GGs page 1048)

I have read the manuscript of Mr. G.S. Sidhu's book Sikh Religion and Christianity with interest. It is a very bold and useful attempt to compare the fundamental concepts of the two world religions. Though I personally do not agree with a number of definitions and explanations given by Mr. Sidhu, but I still feel that this book will prove a milestone in understanding the basic ideas of the two important religions. Sikh religion is a very young religion and most of its concepts are still undefined and a lot of research is needed to explain the meaning and explanations of its theological and philosophical ideas. The work of Mr. Sidhu towards this end, indeed, needs praise and encouragement. I congratulate Mr. Sidhu for his courageous and brave step. May Waheguru give him health and long life to serve the religion and the community for a long time to come.

Dr. SS Kapoor M.A,PhD,PCMA,FCCA
Editor Sikh Courier
Vice Chancellor World Sikh University, London.

It's been a pleasure to read Mr. Sidhu's scholarly comparison of Christian and Sikh teachings. Sikh teachings lay great stress on tolerance and respect for other faiths and throughout his treatise, the author repeatedly emphasises his respect for the teachings of Jesus Christ and the sincerity of Christian belief. Mr. Sidhu, a sincere and practising Sikh writes from a Sikh perspective. His book is particularly targeted at young Sikhs who often have only a hazy knowledge of their own faith and frequently find themselves the focus of missionary activity of others who see their way as the only way. Anyone reading Mr. Sidhu's thought provoking work will be richly rewarded, better informed and more sensitive to the teachings of both faiths.

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Director: Network of Sikh Organisations. U.K.
Editor: Sikh Messenger.

I have read with interest the book "Sikhism and Christianity" written by Mr. G.S. Sidhu. I find it very interesting and extremely useful for Sikh youngsters living in the western world. If Sikhism is to survive in the western world such books is the need of the hour. I can hope that this book is not to be the last and that Mr. Sidhu would devote some more time to write books differentiating Sikhism from other world religions. I know he has the ability and the acumen to do this much-needed work.

Ranjit Singh Wahiwala
European Sikh Representative (Multi-Faith).

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